

STUDIA DE HISTORIA SALVATORIANA

MEMORIES

of

Mary of the Apostles

Therese von Wüllenweber

Sectio 3.1

STUDIA DE HISTORIA SALVATORIANA

Sectio 3.1

MEMORIES

of

Mary of the Apostles

Therese von Wüllenweber

Study Group Mary of the Apostles
Original German Edition 2006
English Edition 2010

Villa Salvator Mundi
Rome

Published with permission of the General Administration
of the Sisters of the Divine Saviour
(Salvatorian Sisters)

Original Edition

Erinnerungen

an

Maria von den Aposteln

Therese von Wüllenweber

Translation into English by

S. Maryclare Hart, SDS

Prepared for Printing by
S. Aloysia Kliemke, SDS



Mother Mary of the Apostles

Therese von Wüllenweber

Co-foundress and First Superior General
of the Salvatorian Sisters, 1888

* **February 19, 1833** + **December 25, 1907**



Resting Place of Blessed Mary of the Apostles
Motherhouse of the Salvatorian Sisters
"Mother Mary Chapel"

CONTENTS

Preface	ix
Technical Information	xi
Sources	xii
Opening letter from Mother Liboria Hansknecht	xiii
Words of Father Francis Jordan about and to Mother Mary	xvi
Words of Mother Ambrosia Vetter	xviii
Memories of the Sisters	1
Adelgundis Acker	3
Agatha Mangold	5
Alberta Franke	6
Alexia Kauppert	8
Alfonsa Franke	11
Augusta Benz	14
Bibiana Hall	18
Blanche Kinzer	20
Bonaventura Zenker	22
Brigitta Roos	72
Carolina Dingler	73
Cecilia Angelosanto	75
Christina Altmann	79
Chrysostoma Svoboda	82
Clara Krauer	87
Claveria Stadler	98
Clementine Benz	101
Cleofa Rupp	103
Columba Kohlmann	105
Dominica Vieregg	110
Eleonora Wetzel	112
Emilia Hoffmann	113
Fabiana Kerzel	114
Fabiola Kerzel	121
Florentina Dengler	125

Fridolina Mayer	129
Gabriela Bohnheim	130
Galla Linz	134
Genovefa Stienen	136
Gonzaga Foglietti	139
Hieronyma Schmerbeck	143
Hilaria Poetsch	147
Hildegard Dombrowski	161
Huberta Reichmann	165
Hyacintha Leuner	170
Ignatia Greiner	172
Jakoba Stumfall	178
Juliana Scheller	179
Leokadia Kolb	181
Leonia Gabriel	183
Liboria Hansknecht	185
Lidwina Diegmann	214
Lucia Siegmund	215
Ludgeria Mertens	220
Ludmilla Sendner	223
Magdalena Franke	225
Martha Storchenegger	227
Mathilda Maas	243
Melania Bauernschmitt	244
Nicoletta Baus	246
Othmara Scheffer	249
Pia Bochenek	250
Priska Vaassen	252
Pudentiana Maiss	254
Rosa Schwarzmann	259
Rosalia Gutschera	262
Simforosa Garofali	266
Sofia Wurm	269
Stanislaus Raczkowska	270
Stefania Barthelmes	274
Theresia Becker	276
Valentina Wirth	291
Valeria Behr	306
Veronika Schleicher	318

Viktoria Steuer	320
Walburga Sieghart	322
Xaveria Amrhein	323
Sister's name unknown (1)	334
Sister's name unknown (2)	336
Sister's name unknown (3)	338
Other Memories	341
Fr. Bonaventura Lüthen, SDS	342
Fr. Alfons Federspiel, SDS, letter	347
Fr. Alfons Federspiel, SDS, report (from a conversation with Sisters Emilia and Genovefa)	348
Fr. Clemens Hofbauer Sonntag, SDS	351
Fr. Thomas Breitkopf, SDS	354
Giuseppina Flumeri	356
Mother Maria Catherina Möhring, OSF	358
Gretchen Dammers	359
Daughter of former Sacristan in Neuwerk	360
Clara Holl	361
School directress Raab	362
Sister Hilaria, Nonnenwerth Franciscan	363
Caspar Thiwessen	364
Matthias Weuthen	367
Baroness Adolfine von Böselager	372
Baroness Elisabeth von Wüllenweber	375
Bishop Antonius Nemes, Hungary	376
Glossary	377

PREFACE

“Each of us has surely often wished to have a complete life of our deceased Rev. Mother in order to be able to form herself more and more according to her spirit and to study her virtuous life.” With these words, Mother Liboria Hansknecht, the then Superior General and second successor to this office after Mother Mary, began her letter to all the Sisters in 1940. She required all the older Sisters who had known Mother Mary personally to write down their memories of her. Over the years, the number of sisters who had had personal contact with Mother Mary and could pass on first-hand knowledge to their fellow-sisters had decreased. We have such reports available to us from 69 Sisters.

Their memories are retained in this volume, shortened just a little where there was clear repetition. Sometimes, even these repetitions have been left when a different formulation or context shed further light on the character of Mother Mary. Repetitions mentioned by several individual Sisters have always been retained since they indicate that several, or many, experienced Mary of the Apostles in this way and had not forgotten it even more than 30 years after her death. The second section holds further memories that were requested from other persons. The responses to the questionnaire distributed at the start of the Beatification Process have not been included here.

The reports of the Sisters demonstrate much love and veneration for this woman who was humanly and spiritually strong and ready for sacrifice. Her simplicity and warm-heartedness surprised the candidates, some of whom were very young, when they came to Rome from afar into another world. Many mention her “motherly embrace” and how she straightaway called these girls or young women ‘Sister’ and how they felt welcome and at home. She was too old and not healthy enough to go to the missions herself, but the formation of the future missionaries was entrusted to her – always in the spirit of Father Jordan. She said: “I want strong, self-sacrificing Sisters who can suffer something. Those who are oversensitive and those who think only of themselves are not suitable for the apostolic work to which we are called.” (p. 110) In her eyes, only holy persons open to the spirit of God and not afraid of the Cross and suffering could really work apostolically. One Sister

quoted her words: "Strive to become holy so that you are fit to go to the missions." (p. 225)

Only from this standpoint and keeping in mind the totally different time in which she and her sisters lived, can we understand her methods of training. In families, schools and convents, the methods used were very different from those of today. Even though she could be very strict in correcting and this – as she was convinced – derived from her responsibility, we find it emphasised throughout that she could forgive very quickly and never held anything against anyone. "She was always kind toward everyone. Even the newest novice could go to her at any time and she would receive a friendly welcome." (p. 90)

In the memories of the sisters found in this volume, we are also confronted with practices of penance that make, to some extent, an unfavourable impression on us today. They were, however, taken very seriously at that time and practised as acts of virtue. We see how Christian spirituality – like everything human – finds itself in a process of growth and strives to lead toward an ever deeper knowledge of God, without overlooking the danger of exaggeration and of unhealthy practices of penance.

In her educative methodology, Mother Mary was a woman of her times – and yet, she was not! When reading, it is worth taking the trouble to note where she brushes aside the convent rule and just through this reveals her human and spiritual greatness. To her, observance of the religious rule meant living her vocation and holding fast to the spirit of the Founder but she clearly gave priority to humaneness and love. The sisters experienced as exemplary the way in which she herself strove to grow in the spiritual life and in union with God, seriously and in humility.

Many of the sisters, when writing their reports, expressed the wish that the Beatification of Mother Mary would be soon. On October 13, 1968, we were able to experience this event. Blessed Mary of the Apostles can and will be an example and intercessor for us today in living our apostolic vocation – for the glory of God.

Rome, July 22, 2006

"Study Group Mary of the Apostles"
S. Helene Wecker

Technical remarks

In those early days, the sisters' names were frequently spelled in different ways. The name headings given in this volume are in accord with the spellings used in the General Directory of the Salvatorian Sisters. Signatures have been left as they stand in the original reports.

The originals of all photographs can be found in the Archive ASDS, apart from those of Father Jordan and Father Lüthen which are in the Postulation Archive of the Society (APS). Some photos of the Sisters are Jubilee photos (gold or silver wreaths on their heads).

The biographical dates of the Sisters are given in detail only up to the death of Mother Mary, that is, for the period in which the Sisters were in contact with her.

If the date on the report or letter of an individual sister is enclosed in square brackets, it is not the date of the Sister's report but it is taken from the 'Witness Confirmation'. There is no date given on some reports.

Many sisters have left us several reports. In each case, one of them was chosen for inclusion in its entirety. Whatever was included in the other reports that is special to them and is not a direct repetition has been added to the chosen report in an appropriate place or as a supplement. The insertions are noted.

We should also mention that the Sisters' way of writing has been retained in essence but small adjustments have been made so that the content is readable and understandable. Over time, several sisters had become unaccustomed to using the German language and found difficulty with the formulation. A sister might sometimes use different styles within her various reports. Sometimes, another sister helped with the writing.

In order not to disturb the flow of reading, only the most necessary footnotes have been given. Abbreviations have, for the most part, been written out in full. Whatever is enclosed in square brackets has been added to the text, all other texts in brackets are in the original report of the sisters. Words marked with an asterisk * are clarified in the Glossary (p.377f). When such words are repeatedly used, the asterisk is omitted.

Sources

APS	Postulation Archive of the Society of the Divine Saviour, Rome
ASDS	General Archive of the Sisters of the Divine Saviour, Rome
DSS	The series: "Documenta et Studia Salvatoriana" Published by the Society of the Divine Saviour, Rome
SHS	The series: Studia de Historia Salvatoriana" Published by the Sisters of the Divine Saviour, Rome

INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO THE WRITTEN MEMORIES from the then Superior General of the Salvatorian Sisters

Mother Liboria (Elisabeth) Hansknecht ¹



*28.05.1869 in Sundern, Diocese of Paderborn, Germany
Entered: 06.12.1893 in Tivoli
Investment: 23.01.1894 and Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 29.01.1895 in Tivoli, then in Rome
March 1899 to beginning of 1901 Novice Directress in Tivoli
From June 1902 in USA
1906 to 1921 Commissary of the houses in North America, almost always Novice Directress as well
1921 to 1947 Superior General
+ 15.05.1947 at the Motherhouse, Rome

Rome, on the feast of our holy Patrons
SS. Peter and Paul, 1940

My dear Sisters,

Each of us has surely often wished to have a detailed life of our deceased Rev. Mother in order to be able to form herself more and more according to her spirit and to study her virtuous life. The booklet of Fr. J. Berg is certainly very good but it is not enough for us. We want to know her life of virtue better as well as her great spirit, which was averse to all petty, affected ways.

Through a singular or one could say: remarkable dispensation of God, we came to know Mons. S. Natucci, Promotor of the Faith,

¹ ASDS, E-41

who was exceptionally pleased with the spirit of our Congregation. He very much wanted to get to know the life of the Rev. Mother and co-foundress of the Congregation. He therefore sent a writer, the Rev. Fr. Gislar S.J., to us repeatedly in order to help us put together a portrayal. I therefore ask and oblige all the elderly sisters to write down everything they remember: the good and edifying things and also those that one might have taken exception to, things that one viewed as imperfect and incorrect. It should result in a portrayal for those who did not know Rev. Mother – and did not have the grace of living under her guidance. –

Certainly, our Rev. Mother was understood in those days by only a few persons and those who dealt or lived with her had to bear all sorts of things. – But today, when we have had more experience and have acquired a little more knowledge of human nature, we have a much better understanding of many of her remarks and actions and feel fortunate to have had the grace of being under her direction and to have acquired something of her spirit. Therefore, all elderly sisters should write their memories, sign them with their name and send them to me as soon as possible. It is not necessary to put these memories in any particular order. Note them down as they come to you.

I intend to call a trained Sister to come here and prepare everything for printing under the guidance of the Rev. Jesuit.

The following questions are to be answered when writing down the memories of our dear Rev Mother and co-foundress:

1. What can you say about her prayer life? - did she pray a lot? Did she like to visit the holy places? - Did she show great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar? – to the dear Mother of God? – the Saints? In what way did she give evidence of this love and devotion? – Did she remain a long time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament? – Did she meditate often and gladly on the sufferings of Christ? – through which practices did she show her devotion to the same?
2. What was her obedience like toward holy Church? – toward the Holy Father? – toward our Ven. Father and Founder? –

- her confessor? – did she show respect towards priests and bishops? – How? – Did she like to pray for them?
3. How did she practice holy poverty in regard to clothing? – in the items she used? – in her room? – in her furniture? – Was she a lover of holy poverty? How did she bear privation? –
 4. Did she hold her feelings in check? – Was she mortified in regard to food? – How was her spirit of penance? – What practices of penance did she use? – How did she bear the various blows of fate?

In addition to the above, please note down and communicate whatever seems good to you.

I also want to impress on the superiors and novice-mistresses in particular to instil a great respect for our Rev. Mother in the young members for she certainly deserves this to a high degree. – What sacrifices she made for the developing work, already before it began! When she had to wait for many years and was repeatedly promised by Ven. Father: Soon! Soon! Then the more than great poverty in Tivoli, and in Rome six years later. – Mustn't this have been doubly difficult for her, a Baroness from the beautiful castle of Myllendonk, who was used to a completely different life and totally different surroundings!

Let us put all prejudice aside. Let us gratefully acknowledge her great spiritual gifts without being untruthful in enumerating her peculiarities of character. God has clearly and richly blessed the work begun by our revered Co-Foundress and it would therefore be wrong if we had even the slightest doubt in regard to her great life of virtue.

Firmly relying and trusting in your childlike attachment to our dear Congregation whose honour must be as dear to us as our own, I send you all the most motherly blessing.

With my love and prayer for you,
M. Liboria

Father Francis M. (John Baptist) of the Cross Jordan

Words about Mother Mary of the Apostles or to her



* 16.06.1848 in Gurtweil, Baden,
Diocese of Freiburg, Germany
Ordained priest: 21.07.1878
Foundation of the Salvatorian Society:
08.12.1881 in Rome
Religious name: Fr. Francis Mary
of the Cross Jordan
Foundation of the Salvatorian Sisters
with Therese von Wüllenweber:
08.12.1888 in Tivoli
+ 08.09.1918 in Tafers, Switzerland

Highly esteemed Lady

Rome, 23.3.83

[...] God bless you. Be assured that I will not cease praying for you and for the other sisters. Here we are striving for apostolic poverty above all, because only on this foundation can we erect a great spiritual edifice. Indeed, it is the way that our incarnate God himself walked. Pray for us, too. [...]

(A cordial 'May God reward you' for all the goodness you have already shown toward our Work.)

(DSS X, Letter no. 164)

Honoured Lady in Christ,

Rome, 14.10.83

[...] My heartfelt good wishes for happiness and every blessing for your holy nameday. May heaven continue to enrich you with more gifts to strengthen and encourage you along the thorny path of this earthly life. The Lord will regard your spirit of sacrifice. He knows your works, [all] that you have already done for our Society. I hope that you will remain united with our apostolic work your whole life long. [...]

(DSS X, letter no. 172)

Beloved Daughter in Christ,

Rome, 1.1.84

[...] I know your spirit of sacrifice and consider you called to higher things; [...]

(DSS X, no.174)

Pax Jesu

Honoured Sister in Christ, Rome, 11.1.85
[...] At this time, beloved in Christ, I urge you most earnestly to be deeply filled with genuine apostolic spirit and to strive as far as possible to become like our Divine Exemplar. Let us die always more to ourselves and let Christ live in us. Our holy Rule will guide you if you really observe it. Indeed, there shall be no limits set to your apostolic zeal by me. Pray and work. The Lord will surely show you the way. [...] Oh, how great is the field of labour everywhere! [...] Apostolate! Apostolate! Let us leave the future to the Lord. Let us steadily move ahead, seeking holiness: our own and that of others. So, courage and confidence. [...] (DSS X, n. 186)

Autumn 1894

I am not accepting Baroness v. W. into the Society because of money, but for other sound reasons. (SDF 1/213)

Letter to the Sisters in Rome

Rome, 30.12.07

Dearly beloved spiritual Daughters in Christ!
[...] In the New Year strive with renewed zeal as true Salvatorians for your own [growth in] holiness and for the good of your neighbour. It is a great consolation for me to see how you work and suffer for the holy cause of God! What a sublime task! What a holy vocation! May our Divine Saviour console and strengthen you also in the coming year both in the sufferings and trials, which a bride of the Crucified cannot be spared! May he give you his peace! Rejoice, too, that you belong to a family whose members work and suffer in the north and south, in the east and in the west for the glory of God and to help the neighbour! Do not give the evil world the joy of a possible lack of unity.

Keep in loving memory, too, your good spiritual Mother, whom the Lord has called to eternal life. I greet and bless you all.

Your spiritual Father in Christ
Francis Mary Jordan, S.D.S.
General Superior

(DSS X, Letter no. 915)

Mother Ambrosia (Ursula) Vetter

Second Superior General



*21.10.1866 in Freimarkt, District Heilsberg, Diocese Ermland, Germany
Entered: 28.10.1894 in Rome
Investment: 29.01.1895,
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 05.02.1896 in Tivoli
From Nov. 1896 Vicaress for M. Mary and local superior in Rome
From April 1899 in Hungary
Hungarian Delegate to the 1st General Chapter, 1905
At the 2nd General Chapter in 1908 elected 2nd General Superior
General Superior from 1908-1921
+ 25.06.1925 in Rome

Circular letter for the 25th Jubilee of the Congregation ²

Rome, Feast of All Saints 1913
Salita di Sant'Onofrio, 11

Dearly beloved Sisters in Christ,

[...] 25 years ago, the Congregation was called to life by our Venerable Father. To his undoubted joy it is granted him to join in the celebration of this Jubilee and it is certainly a consolation for him to see that the work founded by him with God's help is today, after 25 years, already working in his spirit in three continents and seeking to promote the glory of God. To our regret, the first member of our Congregation, our first Reverend Mother and Superior General, was not to experience this joyful celebration. You know how many great sacrifices she made for this work; the dear Lord wanted to reward her for this and called her to himself. Like her, a further 94 members have already gone to eternal life. [...]

Mother Ambrosia
Superior General

² Gen-Adm. 04-1913, C-16

MEMORIES

OF THE SISTERS

S. Adelgundis (Jovita) Acker¹



* 15.02.1874 in Neufra,
Diocese Freiburg, Germany
Entered: 06.11.1903 in Rome
Investment: 08.02.1904 in Rome
Novitiate in Tivoli and Rome
Vows: 09.02.1905 in Rome
Renewals in Rome
+ 29.05.1956 at Börwang, Germany

Berlin-Waidmannslust, July 1940

Notes regarding our late² Reverend Mother and Co-Foundress

Reverend Mother greatly loved and revered the most holy sacrament of the altar. One could sometimes hear her say: "Jesus is my best friend"!

Reverend Mother also had a great love for the child Jesus. At Christmastime, I myself once watched her go on her knees toward the crib which was standing close to the floor, take the Christ Child into her arms and kiss it.

Reverend Mother showed great obedience toward Reverend Father and Founder. She was a humble soul, she practised humility whenever the occasion presented itself. She also took care that the sisters entrusted to her loved and practised the virtue of humility. The example for it, they had in Rev. Mother herself. She saw it as a matter of responsibility before God to give the Sisters the opportunity to practise humility.

Reverend Mother loved and practised holy poverty in everything, in matters of clothing as well as in room furnishings and items for everyday use.

¹ ASDS, E-01

² short form for "God rest her soul."

Reverend Mother loved the Cross. She accepted the various difficult events with complete submission to the will of God – Reverend Mother was a self-sacrificing, strong, heroic soul in regard to her own person. She also tried to enthuse those entrusted to her with the same spirit of self-sacrifice and zeal for souls, in order to make them fit for their future work in religious life.

Reverend Mother was a true, loving mother to her spiritual daughters. She greatly encouraged the family spirit. She always kept us informed about the houses and establishments and about the sisters who lived in the various parts.

Reverend Mother was well aware of her duties as Superior General and tried to fulfil them conscientiously, just as she did those of a religious sister.

This, in brief, regarding our Reverend Mother, written from personal conviction and without the assistance of written statements

Sister M. Adalgundis Sor.D.S

S. Agatha (Margaretha) Mangold³



* 05.07.1871 in Wachenroth, Diocese of Bamberg, Germany
Entered 30.10.1892 in Tivoli
Investment: 30.11.1892,
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 10.12.1893 in Tivoli
Final vows: 09.12.1895 in Rome
from 1896 in Akyab and Dacca, Burma
from 1899 in the USA
+ 05.02.1955 at St. Nazianz, USA

I have always loved and esteemed dear Rev. Mother. She had a great reverence for priests. Dear Rev. Mother had no patience for false piety but she was endowed with a firm faith and one could observe how she prayed fervently, trustfully and with deep piety.

Reverend Mother also gladly gave praise. In a letter of 1896, dear Rev. Mother wrote to me: "May none of us ever be a hindrance to the fulfilment of God's will in the spreading of his kingdom. Let us follow the voice of our superiors. Then there will be the blessing of the fourth commandment."

Written by Sister Agatha

³ ASDS, E-02

S. Alberta (Sofia) Franke⁴



* 06.02.1873 in Sundern, Diocese of Paderborn, Germany
Entered: 12.05.1895 in Rome
Investment: 05.02.1896.
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 08.02.1897 in Tivoli
Renewals in Rome
from 1901 in the USA
+ 01.06.1940 at St. Nazianz, Wis., USA

Rev. Mother's rewarded trust in God

A Sister, still a candidate at that time, was unfortunately hit and crushed by a collapsing wall on August 20, 1895 and was pulled out injured. To everyone's great amazement, she was not fatally injured and gradually regained consciousness. However, she suffered great pain interiorly and exteriorly and, during the following night, the interior pain was so great that Rev. Mother was woken early to see what could be done. Rev. Mother came immediately and in her motherly love and simplicity knelt with some sisters at the sickbed and ceaselessly repeated the urgent petition: "O Fourteen Holy Helpers, please help."

She prayed so fervently for a long time, not saying anything other than a repetition of the same words: "O Fourteen Holy Helpers, please help" until, suddenly, all the pain stopped and the relieved patient slept.

Today, after almost 30 years, this insistent prayer still rings in the ears of the Sister and the fulfilment and reward of that trust in God surely deserves to be made known. During her whole life, the Sister will never forget the motherly love and care that Rev. Mother showed towards her always and especially at the time of her

⁴ ASDS, E-03

illness. At that time, she wrote to her parents: "I have really found a mother in the convent."

I could say much, much more about the kindness of Rev. Mother, but the Rev. Sisters are better able to express their thoughts than I am.

from Rev. Sr. Alberta



First House in Rome, Via della Lungara, 1894
(Photo taken 1989)

S. Alexia (Anna Maria) Kauppert⁵



* 16.04.1869 in Wachenroth,
Diocese of Bamberg, Germany
Entered: 12.03.1898 in Rome
Novitiate: 02.07.1898 in Tivoli
Vows: 03.07.1899 in Tivoli
from November 1899 in Rome,
Marocco Clinic
from March 1902 in Vienna, Austria
+04.04.1949 at Börwang, Germany

To comply with the request of dear Reverend Mother,

by writing down memories regarding our dear deceased Reverend Mother, as follows: I was in Rome and Tivoli from March 10, 1898 until the beginning of February 1902.

1) Dear Rev. Mother fostered the life of prayer, we were urged to pray zealously, she herself prayed much, always kept an eye on us, we shouldn't sprinkle so much holy water on the floor – it is a bad habit, a lack of respect for holy things.

She liked to visit the holy places; on special occasions she went with us herself. When, during our retreat, we went to St. Ignatius on the feast of St. Aloysius, she received holy communion with us.

She had great reverence for the most holy sacrament of the altar, the dear mother of God, the saints, especially St. Joseph. When I entered, I was given a place in chapel near the statue of St. Joseph and showed that I was happy about it. "O", said dear Rev. Mother, "that is beautiful, never lose your devotion to the saints."

⁵ ASDS, E-04

In the year 1900, we were also with Rev. Mother at the opening of the Holy Door in St. Peter's. As soon as the door opened, she went through it on her knees. On a visit to the Basilica of St. Paul's, dear Rev. Mother left the house with six sisters at 3 o'clock in the morning to reach St. Paul's at the Three Fountains and later on, went to the entry of the 7 o'clock candle procession to St. Mary Major. We held a short adoration before the Blessed Sacrament in every church. She always spoke of the following of Christ, showing the way by her example.

2) Dear Rev. Mother was obedient to Holy Church. We also had to study the catechism every day. She herself questioned us during the spiritual reading and gave such good instructions at the same time regarding ready obedience to the Holy Father. In regard to our Ven. Father, she was exact in everything, careful to ask him about everything and also carried out his wishes. We also were asked whether we had understood well; then we would also have to obey. She was always respectful toward priests and bishops, she prayed much, in general also for them.

3) She was a great lover of holy poverty in clothing, in the rooms and furnishings. We went for a walk with dear Rev. Mother and she told us how the Rev. Fathers were progressing so well. She had given all the money⁶ to them; however, she said, we should only love holy poverty.

Then she told us she had begun with Bavarians, with three from Bamberg, and that they first met each other in Munich. They had brought food with them and invited dear Rev. Mother to eat with them and she did so gladly. They spread out a cloth and were glad that they had something to eat, and Rev. Mother was glad with them, and she enjoyed their childlike simplicity.

She formed the sisters to holy poverty and we certainly had and practised it in the beginning. She wanted us to dispense with things, to be sincere and show love to those around us without

⁶ *Clarification:* Fr. Jordan borrowed money from the dowries of the Sisters to buy the Motherhouse Palazzo Morone in 1895 (cf. DSS XV E, p.357-358) but it was then repaid conscientiously (cf. APS, p. 158, Responsio ad Animadversiones of Fr. Timotheus Edwein).

making a to-do about it. We should not make excuses but simply say the truth. I once heard her say at the chapter of faults*, straight out: "I was lazy". It seemed strange but I myself was in awe of Rev. Mother though, in time, I loved her like a mother and how can one understand such things at the beginning. She was so concerned that we should become happy, contented sisters.

In the year 1901, I was sent to nurse at the Marocco Clinic. I was called from the laundry to dear Rev. Mother; " but I cannot speak Italian, I am only at the 16th lesson." "Just go in holy obedience, you will be able to do everything well." Oh, how she was concerned about that. She often came to see how things were getting on, I could go to the Motherhouse from time to time and also sit next to Rev. Mother at mealtimes. Once I was allowed to go to the Motherhouse for the feast of the Three Kings but I had to go home again very soon and so I arrived there at 7 o'clock. Sr. Superior then said: "The milkman gave us a cake today, please go to the Motherhouse again and take it to Rev. Mother." "Yes, I will go straight away." There, the postulants were performing their little play once again and it was almost 9 o'clock. I was allowed to stay the night. Everything was done on foot, even Rev. Mother walked.

On another occasion, we had a patient, a young woman from Germany, who died in the clinic. She was embalmed and lay in state. Three weeks went by and we received 200 lire. I was allowed to take the money to the Motherhouse straight away. En route, I met dear Rev. Mother. She said that if the children didn't visit their mother, the mother had to go to her children. Such an event always brought joy.

She always bore deprivation calmly and was thankful for every small thing.

Sister Alexia

S. Alfonsa (Anna) Franke⁷



*14.04.1880 in Sundern, Diocese Paderborn, Germany
Entered: 02.06.1900 in Rome
Investment: 02.11.1900 in Rome
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 03.11.1901 in Tivoli
Renewals in Rome
from June 1903 in the USA
+ 02.10.1969 at Milwaukee, Wis.
USA

Milwaukee, Wis ., March 24, 1941

Memories regarding our Rev. Mother, Mother Mary of the Apostles, first Superior General

I was only a short time in Rome and as we were under the direction of other Sisters, I had very little contact with Rev. Mother. I had great respect for her and looked on her actions as correct although they often went against me.

When I entered the Order she was very motherly and loving.⁸ I wasn't able to understand her way of speaking very well and therefore kept my distance from her. This distancing gave me sorrow in the depths of my heart as I respected and loved Rev. Mother. She sometimes took me out walking with her and on these occasions she usually visited a church or a holy place. On the way, she talked and asked all sorts of questions. If I didn't understand her or showed lack of interest, I received a humiliation. I soon got over it, however, as it was the same for the other young sisters.⁹ She gladly humiliated us as it was surely her intention to make

⁷ ASDS, E-05

⁸ This sentence was inserted from Report 2

⁹ Idem

strong, humble sisters out of us. How much patience this noble woman needed to have with us simple country girls.¹⁰

She loved it when we were really cheerful. She took delight in our happy games in the garden at Tivoli where we made our novitiate. When we went back to Rome, she immediately asked us to demonstrate our games in the workroom. One day, our youthful recklessness went too far. We were on a walk outside the city of Rome and we passed by the Salvatorian Fathers' playground. There was no-one about and we got the idea in our heads to give free rein to our playfulness there. Sister Elisabeth and several older sisters went past and reverently bowed to greet us without saying a word. When we went to the refectory in the evening however, we discovered that we had been rightfully accused. We accused ourselves but didn't take it so seriously and one sister started to giggle. Rev. Mother could not hide a smile. We received a good reprimand and a penance: We were not allowed to go out walking for eight days.¹¹

Rev. Mother loved holy poverty and wanted to instil this love into her spiritual daughters as well. On one occasion, I asked for a pen. She gave me one but it was really rusty. It didn't write and I didn't have the courage to say anything. Following the example of other Sisters, I went into the kitchen and scoured it and eventually, to my joy, it wrote.

One day, I met Rev. Mother in the entrance hall. She told me I should go with her to the Salvatorian Fathers' house. I looked myself over because my habit was not nice and my shoes were splitting and were not a pair. I then looked at Rev. Mother but she said I should go as I was. Thus she used every opportunity to humble us and instruct us.

She sought to awaken an interest in the Society in us. She told us many things during recreation and wanted us to ask about everything. She never tired of answering our questions.

¹⁰ Sentence inserted from Report 2

¹¹ Paragraph inserted from Report 2 with the exception of the 1st sentence.

I confirm under oath to the truth of the facts written down by me.

Sr. Alphonsa Franke Sor.D.S.

The undersigned witnesses state under oath that the facts written above by S. Alphonsa Franke were confirmed by her under oath.

Milwaukee, Wis., April 14, 1941

Rev. Edwin Buers, S.D.S.

Mother Ottilia Haeckel, Sor.D.S.¹²



The first Convent in Milwaukee

¹² Subsequently, similar statements will be noted as the footnote: "confirmed under oath before witnesses".

S. Augusta (Katharina) Benz ¹³



*18.09.1882 in Bräunlingen, Diocese
Freiburg, Germany
Entered: 05.10.1900 in Rome
Investment: 07.02.1901 in Rome
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 08.02.1902 in Tivoli
Renewals in Rome
from end of December 1904
in Vienna, Austria
+ 25.12.1947 at Stockern, Austria

Notes regarding the life and activity of our deceased Superior
General Mother Mary of the Apostles

(Conduct toward the very unworthy S. Augusta)

When I arrived at the Motherhouse in Rome, Rev. Mother received me with great love and led me to the altar. My own sister Clementina, who was still suffering from typhus, was called immediately. On that same day, S. Clementina was appointed as second postulant mistress so that I wouldn't get homesick and she could initiate me into religious life. What a joy Rev. Mother gave me and with what tender love she told me that we could address each other with 'Du'¹⁴ for a few days. From the first days onward, she gained my complete trust and such a love that I was never homesick for my former home.

When I showed her a writing-case during the postulancy and there was a family photo in it, she showed her great wisdom and great love for holy poverty. With moving words she explained detachment from all unnecessary things, but she immediately added: "You may have the photo now and also the two rosaries but later, before your investment, give them up." I gladly followed her instructions and I brought them to her later on. She showed great

¹³ ASDS, E-06

¹⁴ In convents at that time, it was customary to address one another with the formal "Sie", when speaking German.

happiness about that. This made such a lasting impression on me that I never kept a photo in the writing-case and gladly freed myself from every superfluous thing.

Rev. Mother also gave me opportunity to exercise myself in the virtue of humility practically. For that reason, I was allowed to accompany her on a walk. She reprimanded me for my way of walking and talking and humiliated me with strong words. When she noticed my good humour afterward, she praised me. I often had to go and ask for an exercise book three days in a row. Then, however, she gave one very readily and with great kindness.

She received me with great joy when I once went to her during the holy retreat to show her my resolutions. She read everything and placed very much value on one in particular. She encouraged me to follow the dear Saviour generously, something which gave me interior joy. Later on, after a long time, when I was in the study room, Rev. Mother came and asked me about the outcome of my resolution. In spite of all her work and the long interval, she had never forgotten this striving for perfection and my resolution. Oh, how I rejoiced interiorly and what courage this attention gave me. During the novitiate, she wrote a nice letter to the group of novices. Unfortunately, I cannot bring it here as it has been lost.

When I became ill later on, she was very concerned and called the doctor. Since he thought that studying was not good for me, she directed in a loving way that I should not take any book in my hand from then on although I had already been studying for a period of 2 ½ years. She made such sacrifices with complete tranquillity and resignation to God's will.¹⁵ She sent me out for a walk twice a day and used other means to improve my weak health and within half a year I was completely better.

As a test, she once sent me to do nursing in the clinic in Rome. She told me some days later, with obvious joy, that the superior there had said I had a talent for nursing but she herself still did not know what she should assign me to, I should pray. She took a lively interest in making the sisters happy and took care of everything.

¹⁵ Last sentence inserted from Report 2

On another occasion, Rev. Mother showed great concern for my health. Vienna-Kaisermühlen was being founded and two sisters were needed. Dear Rev. Mother had no one since many sisters had been sent to America a short while before. So she asked me if I would go to Vienna-Kaisermühlen with Sister Bernarda, but only for the children and not to the sick. I replied: "Yes, whatever dear Rev. Mother wants."¹⁶

What touching words she spoke to me when I left the Motherhouse and added: "You are not going to the Maria Theresia Hospital for women, no, you are going to Kaisermühlen." And, later on, when she visited us in Vienna and wanted to transfer me to the Feldgasse, she called Rev. Fr. [Theophilus] Muth and asked me in a kindly way if I would like to go to the hospital and the transfer was mentioned little by little and at the same time she spoke of the rewards of sacrifice. Yes, her motherly heart could not hurt anyone. I agreed immediately, of course.

"You may not do night duty" said Rev. Mother when she transferred me from Kaisermühlen to the Feldgasse during a Visitation and how she was concerned to ask me if I could nurse the sick and whether I would go gladly since eight Sisters were needed there now.¹⁷

[...] ¹⁸ Her departure from this world made itself known to me as well. In the holy night of 1907, I was with a little child in the sickroom. Like a flash I saw it with the burning lamp in the room and the thought struck me immediately that dear Reverend was dying now in Rome and that was actually the case. I venerate her as a great, courageous woman who bore the weaknesses of others with such great love and fortitude!

(While I was staying in the dear Motherhouse, I wrote down some thoughts from her instructions and chapters*. I think that other sisters will have written about these already and so I am not writing anything.)

¹⁶ Paragraph inserted from Report 2

¹⁷ Paragraph inserted from Report 2

¹⁸ Paragraph taken from Report 2

Addition

from Report 3

[...] She loved good conversation at recreation but never permitted loud laughter. Once, when we postulants were at recreation with the professed sisters, one of the group let out such a shriek of laughter, and Rev. Mother lovingly made her stop. Such a thing never happened again and this stayed with me as a lifelong memory. Rev. Mother gave us complete freedom, there were mostly a few sisters who came together and these told us religious, encouraging truths. These recreations were really the nicest in my whole life.

She tested my vocation in a prudent way. After being in the convent for three weeks, I was called into the parlour. The Rev. confessor, Fr. Thomas [Weigang], dear Rev. Mother and Rev. S. Clara [Krauer] the 1st Consultor, were there. Rev. Mother told me then that I might go home again with my mother and aunt. Mother



Pilgrims in St. Peter's Square

wanted it because she had only let me go to Rome in order to gain the Jubilee indulgence. They had come to Rome with a pilgrimage group eight days pre-viously. I was very disappointed and responded quickly and seriously: "If that is what they want, they could have stayed at home!" Rev. Mother was satisfied with that reply and I could leave the parlour again! [...]

S. Bibiana (Maria Agatha) Hall¹⁹

(No photo available)

* 18.07.1875 in Donaueschingen,
Diocese Freiburg, Germany
Entered: 23.01.1903 in Rome
Invested: 02.07.1903 in Rome
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 03.07.1904 in Tivoli
from December 1904 in Vienna
+ 10.05.1943 at Vienna, Austria

Report regarding our late Rev. Mother

When I entered on January 23, 1903, my first impression was not particularly favourable. To me, as Baroness von Wüllenweber, superior general and Rev. Mother, she seemed somewhat rough and her outward behaviour not completely appropriate.

When, after the novitiate, I knew religious life better and had personal contact with Rev. Mother herself, I was put right. I came to know her as a deeply religious, self-sacrificing, vigorous woman, united with the Saviour, whom one could only regard with respect and awe. I often watched her in the chapel and saw how she looked to the tabernacle and brought her concerns to the Saviour. These are my observations in this regard.

Going for a walk with Rev. Mother was no pleasure for me. I found her Rhineland dialect difficult to understand, and, added to that, there came questions regarding origin, school, the area, etc. It never finished without humiliations and, occasionally, a light push. However, I soon found out that Rev. Mother did this only to get to know us better and to strengthen us for the religious life. It wasn't an easy school for us.

Dear Rev. Mother showed great reverence and respect toward priests. Once she asked me: "Whom would you greet first if you

¹⁹ ASDS, E-07

met a priest and an angel?" I replied very confidently, "The angel." Then I got my lecture and an instruction on the dignity of priests. Newly ordained priests were her special favourites. She took in religious unknown to her with the greatest hospitality.

Everything she wore conformed to holy poverty. Once, when Rev. Mother was due to go on visitation, I was just ironing her handkerchiefs when she came through the door. The ironing-room mistress hurriedly threw a cloth over them because she wouldn't want this to be done.

When in the year 1905, most²⁰ of the sisters in the Motherhouse worked against Rev. Mother, she showed herself to be really heroic. She took me out walking with her and happened to mention the sister who was influencing the other sisters, drawing them to herself. Rev. Mother told me, among other things: "Yes, the sister was for ten years the superior in a house and everyone in the area views her as a saint." However, I thought otherwise.

Rev. Mother valued the sisters who did domestic work very highly. Not seldom did she send a sister who was studying to the penance table, instead of such a sister.

S. M. Bibiana

²⁰ The word "most" was enclosed in brackets and – in another handwriting – the words "only three" were written above; cf. Mother Liboria Hansknecht, p. 199

Sister Blanche (Elisabeth) Kinzer²¹



* 28.02.1886 in Coldspring, Diocese
St. Cloud, USA
Entered: 27.06.1903 in Milwaukee
Invested: 02.11.1903 in Rome
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 03.11.1904 in Tivoli
then in Rome,
06.07.1905 she returned to the USA;
was Provincial Superior of the North
American Province for 3 years
* 30.03.1970 at Columbus, Wis., USA

Wausau, Wisc., March 10, 1941

Memories of our dear Reverend Mother and Co-Foundress

Members of a religious congregation may happily treasure the fact that they knew the Rev. Foundress personally and received the spirit of the order from her. Sadly, I had the happiness of being under the immediate direction of our dear Reverend Mother only for one year, but I can never forget that time.

During recreation, Rev. Mother liked to talk about the activity of the sisters in the various houses of the Congregation. It was a great joy for her when the sisters evidenced great interest in the progress of the Congregation by asking many questions. The sisters had really a lot of work to do when there were pilgrims in the house, but they looked forward to the evening because dear Rev. Mother then went up with them to the fourth floor where she played the harmonium and sang the nicest songs with them.

When making corrections, she often said, "I cannot allow it to happen that you blame me in heaven for not giving you the opportunity to humble yourself."

²¹ ASDS, E-08

I and two other candidates owe Rev. Mother particular gratitude and respect because, when we arrived in Rome from America, she went so far in her affability as to come personally to the station with two assistants to meet us.

May the dear God grant, that her great life of virtue may soon be known to all the members of her Congregation and to the whole world.

Sister M. Blanche²²



Candidate Elisabeth Kinzer

²² Confirmed under oath before witnesses

S. Bonaventura (Anna) Zenker

Report 1²³



* 28.07.1863 in Nieder-Hermsdorf,
Diocese of Breslau, Germany
Entered: 06.12.1893 in Tivoli
Invested: 23.01.1894,
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 29.01.1895 in Tivoli
Renewals in Rome
from 1897-1900 Superior at the
Marocco Clinic in Rome
February 1901, novice mistress in Tivoli
from 1904 in Rome, later also in Meran
from February 1905 General Consultor
for thirty years
+ 30.03.1949 at the Motherhouse, Rome

Notes regarding our late Reverend Mother

In the year 1893, we six postulants entered the convent in Tivoli on December 6. We were not expected because we had been accepted by the Ven. Founder and we didn't know that our convent was in Tivoli. First, we got out in Rome in order to present ourselves to Ven. Father but he was not at home; only there did we find out that our convent was outside Rome and that we had to go to Tivoli. We had a cup of coffee and arranged our affairs with the Rev. Procurator and then went to St. Peter's. Ven. Father returned in the meantime and was at home when we came back from St. Peter's. We greeted him, and although he did not give us his hand to kiss he was very friendly, gave us a little advice and his fatherly blessing. Two carriages were then obtained for us and a manservant accompanied us to the station and bought the tickets. It was only when we had these in our hands and read Tivoli on them that we knew where we were to go. We arrived in Tivoli between 1 – 2 o'clock in the afternoon. One of us had thrown the ticket back into our compartment and when we reached the exit

²³ ASDS, E-09-1

barrier the official asked for it. She replied very simply: "I haven't got it, it is back there in the compartment". There was nothing to be done other than to go back and fetch it.

When we left the station, we were immediately surrounded by a swarm of coachmen. We took a two-horse carriage, which had just enough room for the six of us; one sat on the strut and another stood in the middle. The Italians asked us where we wanted to go so we showed them the address. They shouted immediately: "Sì sì, Piazza San Francesco!" Then one of us said: "They are taking us to the Franciscan Fathers!" To that I replied: "Good, they will surely help us further!" When we drove past the Franciscans, the man laughed at us.

We finally arrived at our convent and waited anxiously to see who would come out. When two friendly, smiling, red-cheeked Sisters did so, we were very pleased. Reverend Mother was not at home, only a few sisters were there, all the others were out on the daily walk. They were all in retreat because investment and profession ceremonies were to be held on December 10. Meanwhile, our dear Ven. Sisters served us as best they could; there was no food left over from the midday meal. They had to make a soup for us and it tasted delicious to us; they gave us some wine, bread and honey as well.



1st House of the Sisters in
Tivoli, Piazza S. Francesco
1888-1896

Along the road, Rev. Mother had heard from the women of Tivoli that six postulants had arrived. She then came to us in the parlour with great joy, greeted us in a very motherly way and said: You are six little Nicolases you will surely be faithful. That statement, thank God, proved to be true. – Rev. Mother was very tall and made a reverential impression. In spite of the retreat, all the dear Sisters had to greet us very warmly; so we received a hearty kiss from each one. After the evening meal, she took us two Westphalians by the hand and said: “You are tired because it was such a long journey, pray three Hail Mary’s and go to bed.”

When postulants arrived, she was always very motherly and saw to it that they could have a wash and something to eat and then go to rest. We then had to take turns in going out walking with her. On one occasion, she went with us to Hadrian’s Villa near Tivoli. There, each of us had to eat a fallen, already ripe olive, which tasted bitter; we swallowed them down. At this, Rev. Mother said: “These will be good Sisters.”

The Congregation was in its initial stages and Lady Poverty was very much at home in it. It was December and it was cold. She provided us with knitting needles, yarn and little pieces of material so that we could knit ourselves a mat for the refectory and workroom as there was nothing but a stone floor there. If we didn’t have wristlets, scarves, etc., she asked our dear faithful S. Barbara [Kass] to give them to us.

Rev. Mother also loved and practised holy poverty very much herself. She always wore a mended habit. At mealtimes, she ate what the sisters ate and wanted no exception even though she was already older and had a weak stomach. Once, the sister who was serving brought a lovely apple to her on a plate. Rev. Mother sent the dear sister back and didn’t take it; she said she had to give a good example. It was the same when she came to Tivoli, we couldn’t offer her anything different. We would have been happy to honour her as our guest. She couldn’t bite the hard beef very well and one sometimes had to trick her by putting softer meat already on the carving fork on the serving plate so that she would not notice.

When she travelled, she took very little laundry with her: three coifs and collars in a striped handbag and some handkerchiefs. She put one of the latter over her headband and coif and one on her collar to protect these from the soot that was everywhere on the trains in those days.

She was very friendly to strangers. When she came to the clinic, she visited the patients as well. She talked to them and consoled them and they would say: "A pious, refined lady was here today." – The Mary Ward Sisters²⁴ in Budapest told our student sisters there: "Your Rev. Mother is a saint." The high dignitaries of the Church respected her also.

Rev. Mother had a strong, energetic spirit; she was lenient in her judgments. If someone complained to her about another person, she always took the side of the accused although, after-wards, she always did her duty. I often noticed this.

I never heard her complain about anyone who made her suffer. I often noticed that she always showed love toward Sisters who treated her rudely. She took them out walking with her or to churches, gifted them a holy picture. She also corrected me very severely on one occasion and I felt it very much. I let her notice this for some days and then I asked her to forgive me. She smiled gently, gave me her hand and said: "That was [the] pride." She said: When differences occur between superiors and subjects and the subject doesn't want to be the first to begin, the superior must then, as the mother, make the first move.

She could not bear fussy, affected ways and these were thoroughly "smoothed" and "scrubbed". Rev. Mother always knew where to find one's weak and touchy point at any given moment. She could also thoroughly humble us in public, especially if someone had spoilt something and not said anything to her about it. However, if one had the misfortune to damage something special and went to her to report this immediately, she was very calm and never mentioned it again.

²⁴ Mary Ward's community of Sisters; today Congregatio Jesu.

Whenever Rev. Mother came to Tivoli, she had a good humiliation ready for me, but I am still grateful to her for that. She also was a mother when she realised she had been somewhat sharp and tried to make up for this in her next letter by writing that she had been happy and edified by the good spirit that prevailed in the novitiate. She treated the sisters in the same way. When she saw tears coming, she said: "No, Sister, I didn't mean it like that."

She sometimes asked new postulants: "Are you also seeking the Cross? Perhaps some had vexations and crosses in the world and thought to avoid them by entering the convent; but these are making a mistake because religious life is a life of sacrifice."

She also tried to give joy to us novices. She took us to churches with her and when processions for the Way of the Cross were [held] on Holy Thursday and Good Friday she called the novices to go to the window or down to the open area where one could see the procession pass at a distance. On feast days, she took us out walking somewhat further. Then, each one had to sing a song or we played "Blind Man's Bluff" or "All fall down" with her. Rev. Mother liked it so much when we were really merry. If she had to correct us at times because things were getting out of hand and one then accused oneself of having failed against religious gravity, she would say: "You are far too serious!"

Rev. Mother placed much importance on religious behaviour. The sisters were never allowed to sit too close together or to stay in the dark. When the lamps took too long to arrive at recreation, she immediately showed her disapproval. Holding hands was not permitted. Two postulants once came downstairs hand in hand at a mealtime. Rev. Mother saw this and gave a serious reprimand at table and made the mistresses concerned (S. Bonav.)²⁵ aware of what had happened. Rev. Mother went out walking with individual sisters or postulants, a different one each day, in order to get to know their spirit really well or to test someone; this sometimes resulted in a ridiculous situation or a serious humiliation. The walks had an educative purpose.

²⁵ So in the handwritten original

Rev. Mother herself practised obedience very much and wanted us also to practise it well. She said that being able to obey was her greatest joy; although she, the Baroness who had been able to dictate everything, must sometimes have found it really difficult now to conform to circumstances that were often very petty. The word foundress or superior general was repugnant to her. – Therefore she had placed herself under obedience, she said.

Once, the municipal authorities ordered something to be done that would incur a lot of expense. The then procurator wanted to make a protest but Rev. Mother said: “Be quiet! The authorities have spoken and we must obey.” She also once said: If something was black and the superior thought it was white, the subject should let it be and think that she herself looked on the affair as black but, as the superior said it was white, it could be that she was mistaken and her eyes couldn’t see the difference.²⁶ She also said that an obedient sister could not sin, but disobedience is a sin.

She was remarkably humble. As a dignified, elderly lady, she humbly kissed the hands of young priests and asked for a priestly blessing out of respect for the priesthood. She always knelt to present her concerns and reports to our Ven. Father and Founder and remained kneeling until he left. When Ven. Father reprimanded her, she remained calm and also told us sisters about it. Out on the road, she sometimes asked people a question and walked on without waiting for an answer; the people then looked confused.

She corrected us again at home. “I can’t leave you without correction, you would one day accuse me before God that I was not concerned about your salvation.”

She once told me to look out for a shop and when I looked around she immediately reacted: “You aren’t just gawking around, are you?” Rev. Mother and S. Bonaventura went to S. Gioacchino together to enrol in the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament there, Rev. Mother registered S. Bonaventura as Polish and the latter was not pleased.(...)

²⁶ Already as a child (cf. p.32) Mother Mary read the spiritual writer A. Rodriguez SJ, “Practice of Christian Perfection and Virtue”, which had an influence on religious formation up into the 20th century and is here noticeable in Mother Mary.

According to the statement of S. Klara S.D.S., Rev. Fr. Lüthen, the Co-Founder and General Vicar, to whom she often went with questions and for advice, said of her: Rev. Mother is a humble woman, she has heroic virtue. He had often humbled her and put her to the test but she never gave a sign of touchiness. – She loved and practised humility. However, she did this not so much through humble words and behaviour but more through self-depreciation. She often did something that must have made her seem uneducated in the eyes of others. In the church of Santa Francesca Romana, she knelt on the table, on the altar that is, before the reliquary of the saint, probably to be heard the more easily. At this, the vergier told her off with strong words and ordered her to get down. She could not bear affected, sanctimonious ways; she preferred candid behaviour. Rev. Mother was a great discerner of persons, she summed up a person at first glance. (Rev. Fr. Bonaventura)²⁷

She was a very interior person although one didn't see this immediately from her exterior.²⁸ At meditation, she was often so deeply absorbed in prayer that if one spoke to her she got up in total shock. She also spoke the name of Jesus with such reverence that it went straight to one's heart.

It was prior to the canonisation of St. Anthony Mary Zaccharia. St. Peter's was closed for some days before this occasion for the decorations to be put in place. Rev. Mother wanted to give me joy since I couldn't be there on the feastday itself so she went there with S. Johanna [Mai] and myself some days beforehand. We were not admitted as we didn't have entrance tickets. Rev. Mother asked the custodian to let us in nevertheless but he didn't want to do this. S. Johanna pleaded, "Let's go home." "No," said Rev. Mother, "we'll wait." Then came someone we knew, S. Theresia from St. Martha; Rev. Mother asked her to help us enter. However, she didn't listen to us and went on her way. Someone else we knew, Mons. De Waal, came out with some friends and asked "Rev. Mother, what do you want?" "Oh", she replied, the custodians don't let us enter, please help us." At this, he took her by the hand and

²⁷ So in the original

²⁸ This sentence is inserted from Report 3

led her in through the sacristy. Then he went away and we could admire the beautiful decorations.

On another occasion, the Holy Father was due to come to St. Peter's. Rev. Mother had one ticket: "S. Bonaventura can have this ticket if she wants to go there with her eight postulants." I took it and said to the postulants: "Now pray hard so that we get inside." We first tried the left-hand door but were turned away immediately and we stood there, waiting and discussing what we could do. Then a man came from the other door and asked how many tickets we had. "One", I said. "Come along", he replied and took us in without any more ado!

Rev. Mother and I went to St. Peter's on another day and when the doors opened there was such a great crush that Rev. Mother called out: "I'm dying, I'm dying!" In spite of that, she pushed to get to the front as quickly as possible.

Holy Communion. A sick sister asked if she could get up and go to Mass in order to receive Holy Communion. The local superior did not give her permission to do so. But Rev. Mother said: "I would not dare refuse holy communion to a sister."

During her illness, I once told Rev. Mother I was sorry that she could not receive Holy Communion. She then replied: "But I can receive Him at every moment, as often as I want."

At that time [...] frequent communion was not a common practice. [...]

S. Perpetua [Flumeri] had a lovely Christmas Crib. S. Engelberta [Weinmann] was like a child with this, it gave her great joy. But it was Rev. Mother, in particular, who loved the little Crib. She was just like a child in front of the dear little Jesus, she knelt down, kissed him tenderly and told him many things. We usually sang Christmas songs on our knees in the refectory after supper. Every day during the Christmas Octave, Rev. Mother held prayers. There was a moveable figure on the little crib: a sexton pulled on a rope and it rang until the mechanism was exhausted. The sisters had great fun with this and turned it on again and again until, finally, it broke. Rev. Mother was not sparing in regard to the little crib, she bought a new figure for it every year.

Veneration of Saints: Rev. Mother had a small calendar, which listed all the saints for each day, sometimes there were 15 on one day; she venerated them all on the given day.

Humility: When Rev. Mother was still a girl living at the castle, a feast was given at which there was dancing. A relative invited her to dance; she accepted but she did not dance well and her partner brought her back to her seat. Other ladies noticed this and laughed ironically, however she herself made fun and laughed as if nothing had happened. – For use at a ball, she and her mother each had a fan, which had flowers on the outside and a picture of the suffering Jesus on the reverse.

At Christmas, Rev. Mother offered one sister a little picture. This sister was sulky and didn't want to take it. She offered it to her two to three times through other sisters, but she remained obstinate, and Rev. Mother remained friendly and good towards her.

Communion. If sisters more seriously failed in love, etc., they didn't go to Holy Communion but first went to confession if they could on this day. They were somewhat anxious since the Decree on daily communion had not yet been issued.

Humiliations. There was a lodging house in Rome.²⁹ A family lived above the cloakroom and there was danger that the floor would give way. S. Bonaventura was responsible for the supervision of the house. Rev. Mother came one day to view the damage and reprimanded her sharply for not taking enough care. She called S. Bonaventura a murderer and humiliated her so much that her tears just rolled down. – S. Bonaventura had asked to make a general confession and Rev. Mother referred to this, saying "You always think about confession instead of thinking of your duty."

She never bore a grudge against a sister who complained to the Visitor³⁰ about her. Rev. Mother often went to confession to Ven. Father, etc., even several times a week. He often came over to inquire into the truth of a complaint.

²⁹ Dormitorio San Giuseppe, a sleeping accommodation for homeless men where some sisters were working.

³⁰ Fr. Esser OP from July 1905; Fr. Antonio Intreccialagli, OCD from May 1906

Silence: The sisters were sometimes thirsty in the evening, they were not, however, allowed to say this aloud but had to make themselves understood through signs, e.g. by laying a finger on their lips. At this, she would nod her head to indicate permission to drink.

Constitutions: The Decree regarding manifestation of conscience was issued. The sisters were not required to reveal themselves to the superiors. Rev. Mother was very conscientious about this and answered very briefly.

Rev. Mother was not scrupulous. Once, when there were celebrations with fireworks and gondolas on the river Tiber, she sent the sisters out onto the loggia to watch these. On the following day, she went to Ven. Father and told him. He, however, thought it had not been a good thing to do and that, through it, one could give bad example. Then Rev. Mother went to Mons. De Waal who said: "Mother, that was nothing, you can do it without worrying." That same evening, she sent the sisters up there again; some already had scruples and had gone to bed. They had to get up and go upstairs.³¹

Rev. Mother was remarkably grateful. She was always very grateful for graces and favours received and if the sisters were not, she corrected them severely.

A carriage drawn by two horses came into the Piazza Venezia. Rev. Mother paid no attention and simply wanted to pass by, so I called out: "Rev. Mother! Rev. Mother!" She responded: "You are yelling just like a country girl; he may not run me over! He would be penalized." I answered: "What good is that if he is penalized and you have broken limbs."

On another occasion, as Rev. Mother told me herself, she was going to St. Andrea della Valle and crossed the Florentine bridge. Two carriages came along and she found herself standing midway between the two double-harnessed carriages. Rev. Mother had

³¹ See also p. 63

sufficient presence of mind to throw herself to the ground – but in doing so she broke her wrist – then the police came wanting to penalize one of the coachmen. But Rev. Mother called out: “No, he is not to be punished.”

Although Rev. Mother was very conscious of holy poverty, she was not sparing in regard to lighting in order to avoid sins. She could not bear it if sisters stood together in the dark, stood too close together or held hands. She always censured such things publicly in the refectory. She also totally disliked it if sleeves were pushed up very high. If Rev. Mother saw naked or half-dressed children in the street, she always rebuked the mothers.

Simplicity. She always saw to something entertaining for recreation and would sometimes laugh heartily until tears came. However, she did not like if anyone burst out into loud laughter and showed all her teeth.

The Mother of God. On the feast of the Immaculate Conception, a candle had to be kept burning throughout the day in front of the statue of the Blessed Virgin.

Rev. Mother liked birds very much when she was still in the world. She often took her Office Book and prayed among the birds.

When Rev. Mother was seven years old, she was already reading Rodriguez.³² She read the section on humiliations with her governess. Then the teacher told her student to scold her severely and say unpleasant things to her in order to humiliate her a great deal. Through this, she wanted to give the student an example.

Poverty: It was my duty to give out the laundry and to note down when something was brought in by the postulants and what went out. I needed paper for this. I had to collect all the little bits of paper for this purpose. Rev. Mother objected to the small scrappy pieces and so I asked her to give me something better but she gave me only a used envelope nevertheless.

³² See. p. 27, footnote 26

The students³³ and also the other sisters, held pen-nibs briefly in the fire in order to bend them and be able to use them again for a while.

Rev. Mother didn't want things ironed, even during her illness. It was her opinion that the sisters had enough to do without doing this and that it was unnecessary.

She always had a sea-grass mattress on boards and only in her final weeks, when she had bedsores, did she have a mattress stuffed with wool.

Charity. Every Saturday, 12 pieces of bread, rather thick ones, were distributed to the poor of Tivoli in honour of the 12 Apostles.

There was a lovely flowering bush on the Gianicolo. "Look at all this beauty, Rev. Mother." To that she replied: "All creation praises the Lord God, it is only people who say: I will not obey."

One man, the father of an oculist, was at St. Peter's and received holy communion. Rev. Mother knew that he had the gift of interior union with God. She went up to him and said; "Holy man, pray for me."

One day, I was kneeling in the chapel when I was grabbed by the arm and, in no time at all, I was standing outside the door. I was very startled and, feeling aggrieved, said: "I have already done the packing, Rev. Mother," – She was, of course, used to packing 14 days in advance so that nothing would be missed.

When sick, she took no special care, she entrusted herself totally to the dear God.

Temptation. Once, when I was out walking with Rev. Mother, she twice said to me: "I think I have done nothing good with the foundation of the Congregation; I let them study and now they turn against me. If I had not accepted them they would have remained simple and not so arrogant."

³³ Sisters who studied in the Teacher Training Institute belonging to the convent

Addition

from Report 2³⁴

[...] She was very exact in carrying out her duties and never rested until everything was in order. That meant that the sisters working with her also had no rest until everything was finished. One might ask her, for example during her final illness, to eat something and to rest a little, but she did not stop, nor did she take a refreshment. She seemed to know that the end would come soon.

Rev. Mother was very attached to the Church, the Holy Father and his priestly helpers. It was Rome and the Pope, which drew her to Italy. When there were audiences or canonisations, etc. in St. Peter's or the Holy Father was present, no trouble, fatigue or humiliation could then stop her from seeing the Holy Father and receiving his blessing although she was already old and one was often pushed and shoved on entering St. Peter's. She knew how to make us sisters appreciate the directives of the Holy Father.

She also had no rest until the Congregation was established in Rome. This occurred when she was able to buy a property for it from her inheritance. This in turn enabled the novitiate to transfer to Rome from Tivoli, something which had caused Ven.. Father and Rev. Mother no little trouble in the past. When I was with her on a visit to Cardinal Ferrata, the Prefect of the Congregation for Religious, he greeted her as the Fondatrice³⁵ of the Congregation. She, however, threw herself at his feet and said: "No, no, your Eminence, I am only the spiritual daughter of Rev. Father Jordan." This pleased His Reverence, he tried to take her by the hand to bring her to her feet, but she remained kneeling until she had presented her request, which was to be allowed to transfer the novitiate to Rome, and this permission was granted to her.

She sympathised with each sister when their [...] father or mother passed away. When I received news of my dear father's death, the letter was brought to her while we were just having a meal. She looked up but said nothing. I already sensed what it was since I knew my father was very ill. She waited until the sisters, praying

³⁴ E-09-2

³⁵ Foundress

the Miserere, went to the chapel. She then took me aside and, with tears in her eyes, gave me the letter and tried to console me. In the afternoon, she took me to the church of Santa Francesca Romana at the Forum Romanum where the saint's feast was being celebrated just then. Outside the church, she met Cardinal Caserta [and asked him to remember] my father's soul in his prayers. She also took an interest in the relatives of a sister, she had a very good memory. [...]

She once said to me, it was during her final illness, if I don't correct or humiliate you, I don't do you [...] anything good, for I want you to become perfect.

When the Apostolic Visitor³⁶ came to see her during her illness, someone, for sure, had again said something about her. Then she told him: "It is true I can take the sisters somewhat to task; I want to make them holy, but I can also treat them gently if I see they cannot bear it." She knew how to be very mild towards older Sisters or those of other nationalities when she corrected them so that they looked back on her with pleasure as well as with mourning. Even persons in the world looked upon her as a holy woman.[...] What she did for us, we probably didn't understand, she wanted our good and we did not know how to accept it.

During her final illness, which she bore with great patience, she dedicated herself to the government of the Congregation whenever she could, even at the cost of her health.[...]

When the Apostolic Visitor came to see her in these difficult hours, she could hardly speak. She then said to him: "Rev. Father Visitor, do not leave my poor sisters," and this he promised her. She once wrote to me at Tivoli, saying that she again wanted to send sisters out to a new apostolate. In addition she wrote, I always worry about this and sit up in bed half the night thinking about whom I shall send, whether they will do well and get on well together, whether they will be a credit to the Congregation.

She was happy to see it when we showed interest in the Congregation. She was very communicative. When she returned

³⁶ Fr. Antonio Intreccialagli OCD

from a Visitation trip, she began to tell about it right away, and, in doing so, forgot to eat. She recounted what the individual sisters in the various houses were doing. She spoke of whatever was edifying and kept the rest to herself. Also, she wrote something from wherever she stopped during a trip and wanted the neighbouring houses to be informed of it and that we, in our turn, should keep her informed about everything.

During her illness, her profession cross fell from a table. She felt for it with her hand because she couldn't see well. I gave it back to her and said: "Here is your friend." Then she smiled and said: "Yes, He was my friend always, I was always on good terms with Him."

When she groaned once during her final days, I said "Rev. Mother, have trust." Then she replied: "Yes, that I have, I am not afraid but dying is difficult." On one occasion she called out: Oh, my poor sisters! [...] sisters, sisters, come! Jesus, Jesus!" Once, she had various pains in her body and toothache as well, so S. Johanna asked "Rev. Mother, are you in much pain?" She then replied: "Yes, God be thanked, that I am in pain." It is true she said patience was not one of her virtues, but I think she often acted in such a way that she would not be seen as virtuous.

She had already practised this at the Benedictine Sisters' boarding school in Liège where the boarding students, when they had done their essays etc. well, wrote the last line crooked or with mistakes in order not to get a good mark. They also did the same with needlework, unravelling or undoing it.

S. Eustachia [Bauer] asked Rev. Mother to send her to the missions at a time when sister had a badly swollen knee which wouldn't go down in spite of all the treatments, Rev. Mother had indicated to her: "S. Eustachia, I can't send you now. However, if your knee heals, I will view that as a sign from God that you are destined for the missions." And the good sister was healed in an almost miraculous way: There were several canonisations in the year 1905, among them that of three Hungarian girls who were murdered for their faith. The dear sister was given a picture of them; she laid the prayer card on the knee and made a novena to the saints with one of her fellow sisters. The swelling disappeared without any other treatment in spite of the fact that sister had to

stand a lot at that period of time since we had 80 female pilgrims to look after, all of whom ate at our house and some of them were lodging as well.

The final year of our Rev. Mother's life

The holy feast of Christmas 1906 passed fairly well, but in the night of January 1st, 1907 to January 2nd, toward 5.30 a.m., dear Rev. Mother had such a terrible long and severe attack of asthma which lasted until 9.30 in the evening. She had already had an attack, which was also on January 2nd, in the previous year of 1906, but not such a bad one. She had been worrying a lot about something; the General Chapter of 1905 had already badly affected her health. During the last attack, nothing seemed able to help, the doctor prescribed ...³⁷, but this did not help much either. The patient always wanted "Air, air!" It was difficult to see this. She was bathed in sweat. Soon she had to try one remedy after another, all to no effect until finally, in the evening, an enema alleviated the suffering. As the attack didn't lessen but became stronger, we asked for a priest to come to give her the holy sacrament of the dying. It was Fr. Vincenz [Linsner] who came, he is also now in eternity. It seems that she was not very aware of it since, some days after this attack, she asked me what the sisters had said and done while she lay there in such distress. I replied "What should we have done other than cry and pray." Then she said with a happy face: "Yes, at the foundation of the Congregation I wished for nothing other than to make my sisters, each individual sister, happy. I didn't want to use them in order to gain much."

Following this attack, she had to stay in bed for at least two weeks. From time to time, these attacks recurred, even during walks. Once, we had to take a carriage in order to drive her home. She didn't want to accept but the police said they would take her to Santo Spirito³⁸ in order to end the concourse of people since more and more were coming. Rev. Mother said I should send the people away, but so much the more they came. The police then called a coachman and we drove to the convent where she arrived completely wet from sweating. Then, there was the difficulty of

³⁷ A space was left free here but the name of the medicine was not inserted.

³⁸ The hospital nearby.

getting her out of the carriage but, finally, we got her onto a chair and carried her to her room. Little by little, this attack passed off. When the attacks came, the veins on her head and throat swelled to finger thickness.

Rev. Mother was very patient in her suffering. When she had less suffering, she occupied herself with her official duties and was very energetic.

If we consultants said: "Rev. Mother don't be so hard on yourself", it didn't help at all; whatever she was doing simply had to be finished. She seemed to know she hadn't long to live. She did not always stay in bed, she got up, came to the chapel and also came to meals as long as she could. She prayed in the chapel and made her meditation. However, her eyesight became weaker and weaker. S. Elisabeth [Albertzki] always had to indicate with her finger so that Rev. Mother was able to put her signature on the last admittance forms with which she accepted a couple of girls.

Whenever possible, she went for a walk every day, either to the Gianicolo, or at times to the Rev. Fathers or to St. Peter's. We then took a folding stool along so that she could sit down from time to time. On one occasion, I pointed out to her a lovely bush with beautiful flowers on it. She responded: "Yes, creation fulfils the will of God, only a human being says I will not obey."

She still made her Visitation trips to Hungary, etc. in the year 1906, but by 1907 that was no longer possible. In spring and summer she could still take short walks, but not as she did previously when, if she felt unwell, she took a longer walk. She didn't take to her bed quickly, but now she had to lie down at times.

[...] So spring and summer went by with ups and downs and an attack occurring again now and then. She still came to the refectory occasionally. On the feast of the name of Mary, her name day, she still celebrated among the sisters but in a rather subdued manner. We had also prepared some gifts for her, including a mantle, we hadn't worn mantels here up to then, and a black

antependium³⁹ for the chapel which didn't make a good impression on her at that moment. We used it for the first time when Rev. Mother died. The sisters presented a short, edifying play, 'The Death of St. Joseph', which must have made her think of her approaching death as well. Ven. Father also came to watch the play but he didn't stay long. She was also invited to the Novitiate and she came gladly. We presented lively little pieces. She enjoyed [...] them very much, but she couldn't hold out for long, it was too much of a strain for her.

For a time, until another attack came, she was quite brisk. She was very afraid of having one so that, sometimes, she didn't have the courage to lie down. One evening, I stayed back out of sight during night duty, she had let herself be put to bed in her workroom. I then looked in from time to time without her noticing this. She was sitting in bed. I went in to her and asked: "Can't you sleep, Rev. Mother?" She was happy at that and said: "Are you there? If I had known, I would have called you earlier." She said: "No, there is nothing wrong with me, but I am afraid it could come again." She also had often, it seems, to fight severe temptations.

In this way, her strength diminished slowly. She could no longer come to the community but, in spite of this, she continued to fulfil her official duties. She was very determined and did not eat or drink until she had finished everything. In this case we could say "Rev. Mother, take something now, it is getting late, it is almost midday." [She would reply] "Yes, this must be finished first." Autumn came and the situation slowly changed from bad to worse. Little Sister Crescenzia [Bebel], who had been with Rev. Mother a lot, died at the end of November. It was also a sorrow for Rev. Mother that she could not see her any more. Sister lay in her coffin with a very roguish smile as if she wanted to say: "Just wait, I will take Rev. Mother away from you", and so it happened. Not quite a month afterwards, Rev. Mother followed.

About two weeks before her death, Rev. Mother fell into a death agony. I was on night duty with her and she was so restless. She

³⁹ Antependium (antipendium) = front-hanging altar cloth in the appropriate liturgical colour.

wanted to get out of bed, onto a chair, onto the sofa after a little while and soon after that onto the footrest. So it went on for a while, up and down. I thought, if she falls down, I fall with her, because she was very heavy – until finally I had her back in bed again! Then I wanted to warm some milk for her. She tried to get out again. We let her receive the Last Sacraments once more on the following day, she was still out of bed. After that, she gradually lost her memory and her speech was confused. It was the onset of encephalitis. Consequently, she was unconscious at times but then had clear moments. In delirium, she mentioned only numbers, either 17, 19, 25, etc. or 70, 75, 80 – 100 and she counted these out loud. The initial numbers possibly referred to years of religious life – the latter to her years of age.

With the knowledge of our house doctor and mindful of Rev. Mother's family, we had previously called in another doctor for a consultation. Their diagnosis was hardening of the arteries.

⁴⁰I was once standing at the foot of her bed, when she shrank back saying: "Go away, I don't want anything to do with you." I was shocked, went to her bedside, knelt down and, in tears, said: "Rev. Mother will surely forgive us sisters." Then she came to herself, looked at me and said: "You were always good." She let a holy water stoup be placed on the wall beside her bed so that she could use it more frequently. She sometimes dipped into it during the night and said: "In order to keep the midnight devil away."

The holy feast of Christmas drew ever nearer and Rev. Mother's suffering became more severe. Now and then, she received a visit from priests such as Mons. Leva who was the Bishop's delegate for us and knew Rev. Mother well, and the elderly, worthy and saintly parish priest of Santo Spirito who had so rejoiced when we came to his parish and who helped Rev. Mother very much in the beginning by gifting a chalice, church equipment and carpets, even though they were not new. He was very sad afterwards that we forgot to tell him Rev. Mother had died. His Eminence, Cardinal Fischer from Cologne, who esteemed her highly because of her holy simplicity and who visited us almost every time he came to Rome, sent her his blessing.

⁴⁰ This paragraph was inserted from the end of this report.

We had exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the days immediately preceding Christmas in order to pray for our dear patient. They were sad, difficult days for us. She, who was looking forward so much to the birthday of the Divine Child, lay there quietly and often totally absent mentally. A few times, when she was a little more aware, she could still receive holy communion. Rev. Fr. Pancratius [Pfeiffer], the procurator general at that time, who came every evening and stayed in our convent throughout the night for the last two weeks, in order to be ready to assist her in her passing, brought her holy communion once more two days before her death.

Thus the vigil of Christmas arrived. The crib was erected in the refectory and the Christmas tree decorated as we thought she would have wished. Upstairs in her room, Rev. Mother became calmer and did not move her head back and forth any more as happens with encephalitis. Some sisters were always with Rev. Mother and also Rev. Fr. Odo [Distel] in place of Fr. Pancratius who, just on this final night was not there, as he had been invited elsewhere. Rev. Fr. Odo quietly prayed the prayers for the dying. We also prayed ejaculations and renewed the holy vows with her and, at this, she gave a sign showing that she was pleased.

After 11 o'clock at night, while laying my hand on her face, I said "Rev. Mother, now the Christ Child is coming soon, we are going to the chapel now and we will pray for you and offer holy communion for you there." At that, she gave a sign to show she understood. I then went to the first Mass at midnight, receiving holy communion already before Mass so that I would be able to leave quickly and let the other nurse go to the second holy Mass. Christmas songs were sung during the holy Mass. I went out at the last gospel. As I wanted to enter the sick room, Sister Filomena [S. Philomena Raich] was already coming out in order to call me and she said: "Our Rev. Mother is dying now." I hurried to the bedside and kissed her dear hand. We prayed ejaculations all the time. Meanwhile, other sisters came. She departed so quietly and peacefully; her features were so gentle and beautiful as if she slept. Rev. Mother was already with Jesus and we were orphans.

We hurried to the chapel to let the Rev. Father know that Rev. Mother had died so that he could offer the holy Mass for her, but he had already begun. After they had prayed for a while, the sisters took care of changing Rev. Mother's clothing while S. Elisabeth and I hurried to the Borgo Vecchio to inform Ven. Father and the other priests about dear Rev. Mother's death. It was on December 25 in the year 1907, between 12 and 1 o'clock in the night.

As it was a feastday, we thought no photographer would be available to take a photograph of the dear deceased. Therefore, Rev. Brother Lambert took a photograph. The photograph did not turn out well and also the weather was bad. On the second day of Christmas, St. Stephen, Rev. Mother's body was taken to the German cemetery next to St. Peter's but could not be buried as the grave had not yet been dug. She was therefore taken to the mortuary until the following day. Ven. Father, Fr. Bonaventura [Lüthen] and the choir were all present. It was really sad. At midday on the feast of St. John, Mons. De Waal gave a funeral oration and also an eulogy over Rev. Mother+. As the Angelus rang out from St. Peter's the coffin was suspended over the grave and, at that moment, the cannon shots were fired. Ven. Father, Fr. Bonaventura [Lüthen] and other Salvatorians were present as well as non-Salvatorian Sisters, singing was not permitted. So we then went home without Rev. Mother, not to see her again, except, maybe – as blessed.

S. Bonaventura



Novitiate House in Tivoli
1st floor, Piazza Colonna
1899-1904

Addition

from Report 3⁴¹

[...] In the novitiate house, we had embellished the altar a little. When Rev. Mother arrived, I drew her attention to this and said: "Rev. Mother, didn't you notice that?" "Oh", she replied, I don't see that, I see only Jesus." And she nodded toward the tabernacle. Once she remarked to us: "I wonder you see all that, I see only Jesus."

One Sunday afternoon she came to the novitiate and said: "Don't the novices want to be always in the chapel?" I replied, "On the contrary, I sometimes have to send them in." Rev. Mother then said: "That, surely, cannot not be, for a bride of Christ should look for nothing other than Jesus, and when obedience requires her to

⁴¹ ASDS, E-09-3

do something else, then in that case she must be ready to leave Jesus for Jesus' sake and serve Him in her neighbour."

Cardinal Vicar Respighi once asked her: "Rev. Madre sa Lei pregare bene?"⁴² She answered: "Your Eminence, this I don't know, if I pray well." She said to me afterwards: "If my prayer is pleasing to God is something I really cannot know." She liked to attend sermons, but she also said: "What a responsibility, [...] to have so many good things."

In the novitiate, we sang as we walked along the way; we were alone. We were accused of this to Rev. Mother by a professed sister. Then there was a big Chapter; we all had to accuse ourselves* and received a suitable penance. I was sent to the penance table* first because I was already older.

I consoled a novice of my own age who was often sad because she thought she was too old to study, by saying that sisters were also needed to do the work. Then she became somewhat happier. She also sang along with us and everything went well without the need of a conductor. Then Rev. Mother said to her, full of amazement: "You were singing as well?" Rev. Mother was inwardly very happy but she had to take the opportunity to test us. She once wrote to me, after she had again sent a little group of young people: "Polish them up thoroughly. It is always a joy for me when I can do that." She also said to us: "Postulants and novices are like rough tree-trunks full of defects, etc. They must be cut, the bad parts taken out, then whittled and smoothed until a beautiful surface is achieved, a good religious sister. This takes place through humiliations."

On one occasion, a fellow sister and I had to hurry down to the Rev. Fathers to call our male helper. A Rev. Bishop from the missions had arrived. We had old house shoes on and our toes popped out of them at the front. My companion, who had been in the kitchen, was wearing a dirty collar that looked like a used table napkin on which every stain was showing. We wanted to tidy ourselves up a bit first but we had to go just as we were. Because it was open at the rear, at the Borgo Santo Spirito, we wanted to go

⁴² "Rev. Mother, can you pray well?"

in there. There came a long procession of clerics, two by two, and we drew back. We went quickly over the yard and ran right into the hands of Ven. Father and the novice master. We were naturally ashamed and I would have liked to cover my shoes. Ven. Father asked what we wanted. I curtsied several times in my confusion, I really didn't know since I only went along as a companion and I said in a very small voice: "I don't know, she does." Ven. Father was very kind and said he would send the man and we could go away again.

If a sister was sick or dying, she sat or knelt at the bedside and encouraged the sick one, consoling her. Also when sisters lay on the bier, she knelt on the floor, sitting on her feet. It made her very sad. It was also a great sorrow to her if a sister had to be dismissed. She said she had still more failings. And also, although it made her very sad to lose a sister through death, she would rather see this than send someone back into the world, for one does not know how she would live there – maybe she would be lost. If someone made the decision to leave herself, she made sure that she left the house without delay so that others would not be influenced.

If a sister accused herself in an affected manner, she was sure to say: "Get up, you are not worthy to accuse yourself." She paid attention that the sisters accused themselves and probably knew when someone hadn't done so for a long time, especially the younger ones. When this was the case, she sometimes summoned them, let them come to the accusation one day, morning and evening, without calling them out. If one then stayed away, she summoned her immediately.

She had a good memory and knew the names of all the young priests. She only had to hear names once, including those of relatives.

Addition

from a further testimony⁴³

Something else about Mother Mary's childhood:

She [Rev. Mother] told me that her father had a wagonload of sand brought into the castle courtyard so that the children could play with it and he said this was healthy for children. Also, already at the age of three, she had to bend her tiny fingers back and forth to make them supple for playing the piano. Her father once bought her a pair of cloth boots, which were elegant, but somewhat tight. She said one was supposed to have dainty feet. While wearing them, she climbed onto a pile of planks at the carpenter's and jumped off. The boots split and were totally ruined. She also scribbled various things in her reading book, including a drawing of Fanny, with a head of curls and a little basket on her arm, and wrote underneath: this is Fanny; and still more other little things.



The Family Home, Castle Myllendonk

⁴³ E-09-6

When she was 12 years old, her parents held a social gathering. On this occasion, she should have played the piano and sung because she was good at both. "At that moment", Rev. Mother told me, "I really could not do it, my face contorted to break into tears. My parents were not pleased." But, she said: "It just was not possible."

Rev. Mother recounted that until they started at boarding school – 15 years old – they had never been given coffee, only milk soup or porridge. The children were also not given wine or other alcoholic drinks. Rev. Mother said she used to be rather untidy, leaving a thimble here, scissors there and knitting elsewhere, etc. There were punishments given at the boarding school for that. They had to pay a cent for each fault. Her sister Fanny used to hide the money in stockings. Things were often not in order in the bedroom as either, the combs were not cleaned properly, the folds of the curtains in front of the bed were not orderly, etc., and chairs and pictures were not straight, because the young ladies had to take care of that themselves in order to get used to keeping things tidy. In the boarding school, they had lessons in conversation and good manners regarding how to act when high society socialised together. For this, while one spoke about some matter, another had to listen attentively and nod with her head: yes, or no, etc. Recreation was very distasteful to them at first, the noise also to her sister.

Once, she had a very severe toothache. The Abbess told her the Child Jesus was stroking her. However, the tooth had to be extracted and she screamed while this was being done since, at that time, no injections were given as yet. The dentist showed her the tooth, it was healthy and he said: "Young lady, I will not take a tooth out for you again."

Addition

From a further testimony⁴⁴

In something, we were too stiff for her and Rev. Mother said: "You are stiff Westphalians."

⁴⁴ ASDS. E-09-8

Another time, we were again at S. Maria in Trastevere; [...] there were four of us. Rev. Mother walked with another sister along the pavement which, in this street Via Lungara, was very narrow. My companion and I were not to walk behind, and not in front, so we walked on the road. Then she called us and said: "You are going along, gossiping like washerwomen. Peasants walk on the road." We then wanted to walk on the pavement again but she wouldn't let us. When we arrived home, she said to us: "Accuse yourselves at midday of having behaved like washerwomen." It was Easter and accusations were never made on such feasts. These humiliations had an educative value. We didn't understand that then as we do now. She wanted to make heroic, self-forgetful sisters out of us.

In the [...] Dormitory one day, the roof of the laundry caved in and the kitchen of a family was above this. One could see up into the room. As we went there only in the morning, the caretaker came to tell us about it. Rev. Mother went along with us to see for herself what had happened. Then she blamed me saying I should have seen the situation for myself and I had not done my duty. I said: "It was already like that." When I came, another sister had been working there before me; it was by far not a new house. I was called a murderer, etc. and so it went all along the long road until finally I dissolved into tears. Another sister who saw me said: "But you are crying!" This dormitory was actually our first little activity in holy Rome and Rev. Mother took great joy [in it]. I didn't understand very much Italian yet as I had just left the novitiate. Sometimes, the men who were there in the evenings left a remark in the book and I either let the doorkeeper tell me what it was or I took the book home and let Rev. Mother herself read it. [...]

Addition

from a further testimony⁴⁵

During the severe illness⁴⁶, Rev. Mother received news from home that her dear father had died unexpectedly. It was a great sorrow for her. Rev. Father Bonaventura was the one who had to prepare Rev. Mother every time for each individual sacrifice.

Some days before she was called to Rome, she had to take a sister who was very sick with a bone disease to one of the largest hospitals in Rome because of the danger of infection. She took the opportunity to pass by the church of S. Giacomo S. Augustine [*sic*] where a well-known, wonder-working, statue of Our Lady of the Nativity was venerated, in order to ask the dear Mother of God to help so that they [*the Sisters*] could come to Rome soon. A Rev. Father had said to her: "Rev. Mother, if you want something, go to the dear Mother at S. Augustine, she is powerful." She said: "I went inside and left the sister in the carriage. It was like this, the Mother of God was sitting there like a sovereign, large, with her little child standing on her knee, not like the other sweet, almost childlike statues of the Mother of God. I said to her: "Dear Mother, you look as if you can do something. Help us come to Rome soon." – and she was in Rome a few days later, due to the sickness [in Tivoli]. The dear God asked heavy sacrifices from her in regard to the new foundation in Rome.

It was the same sister, who was in the hospital of St. James and gave a good example to the doctors and nurses there through her cheerfulness and gratitude even when they inserted probes deep into the deceased bones, who had Rev. Mother called to her one night. The sisters, etc. thought that, as she was near to death, she wanted to speak to her. The hospital was about half an hour distant from the convent, but Rev. Mother went to the hospital that same night. And what did the sister want? Just to give Rev. Mother a kiss and nothing else. She died soon afterwards.

⁴⁵ E-09-9

⁴⁶ Typhus in Tivoli, 1894

When she was sick, she was given the Last Sacraments. After some days, when she was a little better, she asked if she had received the holy sacraments. Due to her great difficulty in breathing, she knew nothing about it except for one thing: the confessor had asked if she was angry with anyone, etc. then she should forgive and that she had replied she couldn't think of anyone, the sisters are only children still, they cannot offend – although she had experienced quite some ingratitude. [...]

Addition

from a further testimony⁴⁷

Sayings of Rev. Mother+ around the time 1902

Once she told me that a superior must be like a sack on a donkey. It says nothing if one takes it off or puts it on. If she is given an official position or has it taken away from her, it should be all the same to her.

The higher a person's standing through birth or rank, the humbler she should be in order to give good example. – She once wrote to me: "To God alone be honour, to me contempt, for the past 20 years this has been my motto." "It is sacrifice alone which should be pleasing to a religious, only the Cross should make her rejoice." – We must not always want to receive from the dear God, we must also give him something. – We shouldn't always think of God as someone with a stick who always wants to punish, but as a dear father who wants our good (from a Chapter⁴⁸).

She was once really tired out due to her health, and her eyesight was bad as well. She wrote only that she was really exhausted. When she came to Tivoli, I said: Rev. Mother, you should also rest a little more. To this she replied: "Rest, I can rest enough in the grave, now I must work for the interests of Jesus."

From a Chapter: A sister may be holy interiorly, but outwardly have a failing or defect through which she gives offence so that one

⁴⁷ E-09-11

⁴⁸ This means: from a Chapter talk

cannot use her for external works. Therefore, we also should control our exterior.

A Chapter about trust: The dear Saviour told a faithful servant: "Pious souls confess all the little faults, but what grieves me most is that they have no trust and this they do not confess."

Saying of Baron von Wüllenweber, her noble father:



Think of God with reverence, with seriousness of your work, with love of your neighbour.

He was also good to the poor and to his tenants. When they came to pay rent, he did not keep them waiting, even if he was having breakfast. His sons-in-law were irritated by this; but he said: "I cannot let the poor people wait so long when they have come up here", and he then drank his coffee, a little less warm later."

We should be sisters, true brides of Christ, because "I can hire cooks, seamstresses and nurses, there are enough of them in the world."

When another offer of a new activity was made during her last illness, she didn't want to accept it. She told the Rev. Visitor⁴⁹: a religious sister is actually meant not so much for exterior works but more for the interior life, and he agreed with her. When we occasionally asked to visit one of the holy places in Rome, such as the holy stairs or the scourging pillar of our dear Saviour, she used to say: "Your tongue is the holy stairs or the scourging pillar, etc., because the dear Saviour himself is on it at holy communion."

⁴⁹ Fr. Antonio Intreccialagli, OCD

She said one judges others as one is oneself. A noble person cannot imagine that others are being dishonourable but thieves, liars, etc. think of others as being like themselves.

A spiritual person once told her that unworthy characters also enter the convent. She said that she hadn't been able to believe him, "however I have to believe it now."

She had a great love for holy poverty and practised it, even when she was sick. One of the sisters who were nursing her brought sheets, which had been ironed. Rev. Mother said: "Sister, why do you do that? How much work it is! Have you ironed that? The poor sisters have quite enough work", also with their collars and coifs. Her habit [was] mended all over, but she did not want to give it up.

Once, a Hungarian prelate whom she knew came to visit when she was ill. Therefore, we naturally wanted to put the bed and bed-linen in order. But she made everything topsy-turvy so that we were ashamed and she said to us: "You are always afraid of what others might think and only want others to think well of you." The Rev. prelate was shocked at her appearance as well. Also, when she took us out somewhere with her, which was something that could be viewed as an honour, she soon had a humiliation ready to balance this. [...]

During the *Kulturkampf*, she provided a hiding place⁵⁰ for the Jesuits without letting the other residents know anything about it.

We looked after a Dormitory for poor beggars, which had been established by an association of distinguished gentlemen. The [beggars] had to be present when the Angelus rang in the evening. Each one paid 10 cent and was then given a number. A member of this Circolo⁵¹ also had to be there. He then prayed with these old men. A policeman was also present in order to take suspicious characters into custody when necessary.

Before New Year and Easter, they were given talks in a nearby hall to prepare them for holy confession and communion, which they

⁵⁰ In the Barbara Institute, Neuwerk

⁵¹ The "Circolo San Pietro", i.e. the above mentioned association

received the following day on both feast-days in a chapel where the Sisters of Charity also cared for a similar Dormitory. The chapel was beautifully decorated, a Rev. Bishop celebrated the holy Mass and the Children of Mary sang lovely hymns during it. When it was nearly time for holy communion, the Rev. Bishop gave the poor a nice talk and the gentlemen of the Circolo went first, together with their president, a Count, and led the weak and crippled ones by the arm to the altar and themselves took this opportunity to receive the dear Saviour as well. It was very edifying and touching to see how kindly these distinguished gentlemen treated the poor who were wearing torn clothing. After holy Mass, the poor were given a meal in the Sister's garden. They received Italian traditional food – macaroni with pomidori⁵² sauce and grated cheese, together with sausages at New Year and eggs at Easter. The gentlemen put on white aprons and served the people who numbered about 250. Rev. Mother also put on a white apron and put noodles on the plates, which we held out for her. She was very quick. Back home, she then said: "S. Bonaventura couldn't even give the plates so quick." [...]

While she was still in the world, she had to go to Bad Ems with her youngest sister who was anaemic. A Hungarian Prince and Cardinal was also there and he would have liked to have her in order to reform the Ursuline order. When she refused, he told her: "You will come to Hungary one day" and this did actually happen. Various other Congregations would have taken her and she tried them but their customs and rules were not what she wanted.

After Rev. Mother had already been to Rome on several occasions⁵³, there finally came the time when Ven. Father wanted to make a second attempt at founding a sisters' congregation. The first sisters had separated from Ven. Founder and this had been a great sorrow and disappointment for him. However, he didn't give up; he trusted in God, and began again for the 2nd time. He called for Rev. Mother, together with some postulants, in order to found the new branch. Rev. Mother came straight away after she had more or less regulated everything in Neuwerk and also come to an

⁵² Correct Italian: pomodori (tomatoes)

⁵³ Before the second foundation, she was in Rome only once and that was in summer 1884

understanding with her family, which was no easy task. She also still had a few⁵⁴ living in Neuwerk as sisters for whom she found a place in America since convents were suppressed in Germany. They didn't want to go with Rev. Mother and pointed to their forehead as if to say: is she still in her right mind, leaving that good work in order to enter into such unaccustomed poverty, but she did not let herself be put off anymore. [...]

Addition

from a further testimony⁵⁵

[...] Poverty: I once went into her room and the window was open. I said: "Rev. Mother, aren't you cold?" Then she replied: "If I had wanted to be comfortable, I could have stayed at the castle near a warm oven with a servant behind me. I didn't come to the convent for that." [...]

Institute for Ladies: In the meantime, Ven. Father had founded his Society and also a sisters' Congregation, and had already published the *Missionär* through which Rev. Mother came to know the Rev. Fathers.⁵⁶ She read the articles, and that was the beginning for our Congregation. She wrote to Rev. Fr. Bonaventura, the editor of the *Missionär* and also met Ven. Father. Her spiritual director⁵⁷ encouraged her in this as well, since he knew both these saintly men personally. He said, Ven. Father was esteemed and Rev. Fr. Bonaventura was academically trained, she should join up with them. For the beginning, the Prelate said: "You have a strong spirit but a soft heart." – "You must grasp the thorns immediately, then they don't hurt so much as they do when one grasps them fearfully."

Finally, investment day arrived and, during it, dear Sister Scholastika [Hopfenmüller] collapsed into unconsciousness when she was given the veil. She had to be taken to the hospital of the

⁵⁴ There was only Antonia Block who had decided to return to her former convent in the USA

⁵⁵ ASDS, E-09-13

⁵⁶ She became aware of the *Missionär* and the Apostolic Teaching Society through an advertisement in a Cologne newspaper; cf. SHS 1.2, Letter Dialogue, p. 1ff

⁵⁷ Prelate Dr. von Essen, parish priest of Neuwerk

Brothers of Charity since she could not stay with the sisters due to the risk of infection. Only Rev. Mother was permitted to accompany her. She was conveyed there in a coffin-like box. She developed smallpox and none of the sisters was permitted to visit her except Rev. Mother, and even she could only stand in the doorway. Once, Rev. Mother was called and told that sister was seriously ill but she didn't want to go to confession. But sister explained that the nurse had said something like 'more'⁵⁸, she thought that meant dying (she didn't understand Italian). And she always shook her head: "No". She did get better again then.

A message came from the hospital saying that sister could be taken home. At that, Rev. Mother said the house was too cold, it wouldn't be good. Ven. Father then said: "Sit sister in the sun at a window, wrap her up in blankets and she will get well again," and so it was. When the dear sister was taken from the house, the rooms were cordoned off by the authorities, including Rev. Mother's room, in order for disinfection to be carried out. Everyone had to sleep on the floor. When Rev. Mother was returning once again from the hospital, a policeman came up to her and gave her 50 cents to get a good cup of coffee. She said: "That was the first alms I received."

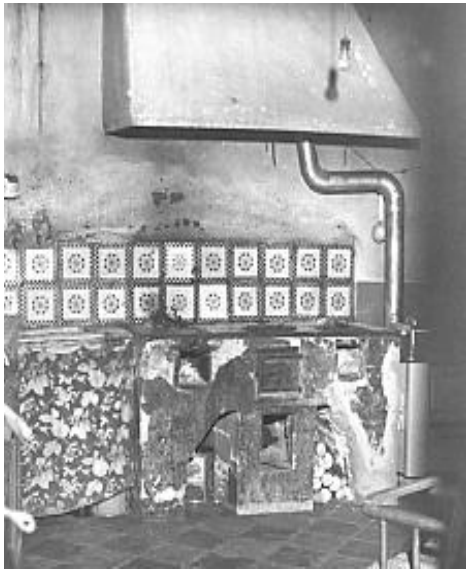
Rev. Mother recounted that the first sisters kept such strict silence that they didn't even want to answer her when she spoke to them on the stairs. She had to complain to Rev. Fr. Bonaventura. When they went out for walks, these same ones, out of love for holy poverty, collected sticks of wood and rough grass in order to make brooms and picked certain greens which they brought home as vegetable.

A lot of care was paid to lighting. [...] For this, we [24 novices] had one oil-lamp which was placed on a landing leading to several rooms. We sat there on the floor to re-pin our veils. We had only one black [veil], novices received white veils only when the novitiate was transferred to Rome. Also shoes were repaired in the house. It could happen that a nail pierced through to one's feet and caused bleeding. For mending stockings, only old thread drawn from pieces of old stockings was used.

⁵⁸ The Italian word "muore" means "s/he dies"

All kinds of things were fabricated, we even tried to repair locks on the travelling trunks. The sisters also built a bake-oven which was used for baking quantities of bread etc., for the large community. In the novitiate, we had a kettle to boil the laundry, which already had holes in it. We pulled a piece of material through, knotted it on the inside and outside and the boiler was soldered. The soldering held because it was tempered [?] again, and so we could use it for almost four years until the novitiate was transferred to Rome. Our soup kettles (that had a hole) were also sometimes treated in the same way. We also constructed a folding screen so that Rev. Mother had something around her bed when she came from Rome since she had to sleep in the parlour.

The oven in the 1st house at Tivoli (photo 1952)



We also used leaking basins in order to make an oven to put on the hearth; the bottoms were knocked out for use as a cover. A tripod was placed over the fire, for we used open charcoal fire, a metal container with some earth and pebbles in it was put inside, and the plate on which the dough was placed for baking was put on this. However, the first time it was used, everything went wrong because it was too warm for the poor sol-

dered bake oven. To our shock, it exploded. We knew how to help ourselves all the same: the soldered seams were held together with iron wire and everything went fine; we had good cakes made with sourdough.

I went out with her once and she reproached me for some things which I had not done. I accused myself at midday, but not about the things Rev. Mother had mentioned. She called me to the table and said: "You don't want to accuse yourself about that, do you?" I replied: "No, Rev. Mother, I haven't the least intention." She laughed at that. Sometimes she called on someone to stand up and said: "You have done nothing for her." That hurt me more than if I had received a heavy penance, for I was not so humble as to acknowledge mistakes that I had not committed.

Addition

from a further testimony⁵⁹

In the afternoon of Pentecost Tuesday 1894, we went to the sulphur baths in three columns, singing and praying. We did our spiritual reading there, ate a piece of bread and drank water mixed with wine which we had brought with us in a (*a word almost unreadable*)⁶⁰. We had a little recreation and went home again.

Some days later, the holy Cross came to us in the form of a severe feverish illness, typhus, brought in by a candidate from a district in Bavaria where this sickness was raging.⁶¹ Our Rev. Superiors were not aware of this, otherwise they would not have let this person come. The doctors did not recognise the illness immediately. Seven sisters died within a period of three weeks, including four novices.

This illness was the cause of our coming to Rome; the young sisters were sent there; Rev. Mother also had to go to Rome because we were afraid for her too.

⁵⁹ E-09-14 Typescript; copied from notes of S. Bonaventura Zenker

⁶⁰ It could be an Italian word for a container something like a water bottle.

⁶¹ The cause of the infection is still not known. In those times, cases of typhus were frequent in Tivoli.

Addition

from a further testimony⁶²

[...] During her illness, Rev. Mother once spoke about this: When she was in contact with our late Ven. Father regarding the founding of the feminine branch of the Society, he arrived in Neuwerk and at that time questioned her three times: "Do you love the Cross and suffering?" She [replied] "Yes" Rev. Father, "Yes!"⁶³ To the third "Do you really love the Cross and suffering?" she [answered] "Yes, indeed, your reverence." Then he said: "Do you want to place yourself under me? She [said]: "Yes, certainly!"⁶⁴

I once went to her and complained that I could not pray, etc. She said: What is this, S. Bonaventura, are you looking for consolation? I hadn't expected this from you." But I became quiet.

In one occasion, I had to go with her to Mass at the Pantheon on the feast of All Saints. I was in low spirits for various reasons and was therefore uncommunicative. Then she asked: "How are things going in the Clinic?" "Oh", I said, "it is a real cross." "That's what you were looking for." She's right, I thought. She didn't speak many words but they could cheer a person up again. When you went to her room, you had to be brief and say in a few words what you wanted to bring up and say. She said also that some came and talked a lot, but what they really wanted to and should say took a long time to come out.

On walks, [we took] nothing with us other than a piece of dry bread, a bottle of water with a little wine, and Rodriguez. So were [...] our walks generally, even later on in Rome. In Tivoli up to the First World War [we had during walks] some bread and, in good times, a piece of fruit.

⁶² E-09-15

⁶³ In the original it says "8x", which surely is an error. The word "year" [*Jahr*] instead of the second "Yes" [*Ja*] also seems to be an error.

⁶⁴ cf. SHS 2. 16/1, Mother Mary's letter to Fr. Jordan, 24.6.1902

Addition

from a further testimony⁶⁵

Gaining indulgences. “You only want to have one, [we] must also give to God. I pray, offer my work, [my] sorrows to God. I don’t know if [my] prayers are pleasing.” Yet, she prayed all the Hours⁶⁶ which took a lot of time. At her confirmation, [she said,] she chose Joan of Arc although she had not yet been beatified [or] canonised then. When asked for the reason, she replied it was because she had been so courageous.

She was not afraid, [...] for us to see her in a bad light. She had no fear of persons, spoke her mind openly and freely, though in a noble manner. Her spiritual director⁶⁷ when she was still in the world – sometimes ordered something odd and then she asked him: “Monsignor, do you do that too?” He: “I wouldn’t ask anyone to do something that I didn’t do myself.” [...]

She always tried to make travel arrangements in such a way that she could receive communion daily. [If it] was sometimes already near midday, [she] had to go around begging the sacristan until he called the priest for her. During her final illness, she could not receive the Saviour because she could not keep the fast.⁶⁸ I once sympathised with her about this, and she then replied: “But I can receive him with every breath.” At the boarding school⁶⁹, they sometimes looked for her and then found her behind the curtains near the tabernacle. In Tivoli, she had a room with a view towards the nearby church. She was happy about this because there she was face to face with the Saviour. We still didn’t have the Blessed Sacrament in the convent. It was her wish to lie also in death in such a way that she would see the church, and that really did happen. [...] She liked to visit the churches where public devotions and sermons were held and was also happy to let us sisters go, but we had to be home before the Angelus bell⁷⁰ rang. If it happened

⁶⁵ E-09-16

⁶⁶ The official prayer of the Church said at various times during the day.

⁶⁷ Msgr. von Essen, parish priest of Neuwerk

⁶⁸ The fasting law was then in effect from midnight until the reception of communion

⁶⁹ in Liège, 1848-50

⁷⁰ The former custom of ringing church bells for the prayer “The angel of the Lord” at 6 o’clock in the evening.

that we were late several times, she did let us stand outside for a while as a punishment. [...]

She also did much good while still in the world, helping the Fathers at Steyl by distributing publications. In Liège, she also helped the Sisters of the Most Blessed Sacrament⁷¹ very much at the start of their foundation. The sisters there were also poor, almost everything was lacking. She [accompanied the singing] on the harmonium in the convent church, since she played the harmonium well – and was, in general, good in music. She also helped them with catechism lessons. These were for neglected boys up to 20 years of age in order to prepare them for first confession and communion. The catechist once went out and the boys became very unruly. She then put on a pair of spectacles and looked adamant, she was tall and thin. She grabbed the worst of them, a 20 year old boy, by the back of his collar, pushed him up to the teacher's desk and let him stand there. On his return, the priest was completely amazed and said that he would not have dared to do that. They could have done something to her, but the boys became quieter.

Her mother had never let them [the children] remain idle. They had either to study, read or do handwork, sewing for the church or for the poor. Rev. Mother said she read St. Teresa in the morning and Münchhausen in the afternoon. Once, her cousin came to visit and after the meal said to her: "Dear Therese, now we are going to have a nice forty winks." Her mother heard that and said in a strict tone: "If I hear you say such a thing again, you may not come here any more." [...]

Then she was a boarder at the Benedictine Sisters' boarding school in Liège together with her younger sister and also there received a strict religious upbringing. When they returned home after finishing boarding school, they had to learn housekeeping and also [...] cooking, laundry work, etc. She said she hadn't had much enthusiasm for that. She gladly left that to her younger sister who took more joy in it. She preferred to help her father with administrative work.

⁷¹ Mother Mary was with the "Sisters of the Eucharist" from 1868 – 1870.

Her spiritual director told her that she might enrol in the 3rd Order of St. Francis. She felt no inclination to do this and said so, but not in public. To that he said: "After holy Mass." She thought it would be in the sacristy but he called her to the altar while people were still in the church. He told her she had to give good example – to use more items of clothing made of wool rather than silk, the aprons as well and to go more on foot. The people spoke about that: "The young lady goes around on foot in a woollen dress and a cotton apron." [...]

She observed how we made the sign of the cross when we took holy water. Then she came and guided our hands in making the sign of the cross. She couldn't stand it if sisters dipped into every holy water stoup. She would say: "Why don't you hang the holy water stoup around your neck, then you can always dip in, you don't think what you are doing anyhow." [...]

Addition

from a further testimony⁷²

Notes regarding our Rev. Mother Mary of the holy Apostles, born Baroness von Wüllenweber, of blessed memory

1) Her prayer life was one of continual union with God. She had much external work to do in the administration of her Congregation. We once had a consultants' meeting and one of the Rev. consultants noticed we hadn't yet prayed the Veni Sancte Spiritus and made us aware of it. At that, Rev. Mother said: "If we are not always prayerful and recollected, this alone will not help." In this way, she prayed a lot.

She liked to visit the holy places in Rome and did so often, especially St. Peter's, and went on foot the long distances to the Lateran, the Holy Stairs, Santa Croce, San Lorenzo, etc. She took us along as well and was pleased when her spiritual daughters and the novices also visited these holy places. [...]

⁷² E-09-17

Rev. Mother was a great adorer of the Blessed Sacrament. It was a sorrow for her in the beginning that we weren't allowed to reserve the Blessed Sacrament but she then had great joy when we received the permission to do so.

She greatly venerated the dear Mother of God and visited her shrines. She also had the feasts of Our Lady celebrated in community as well as those of the dear saints, especially the holy Patrons of our Congregation. Mary, Queen of Apostles, was our principal patron in the beginning and Rev. Mother asked for this title at her investment (Mary of the holy Apostles). Rev. Mother had great reverence for and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. If she had had the time, she would have spent many hours before it, deeply absorbed in prayer. When we had exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, she was almost permanently in the chapel, led the prayer aloud and sang the lovely German hymns to the Blessed Sacrament with us. We sisters also sang in other languages: Latin, Italian, Polish, Hungarian and English. When we were quiet again, she repeated her favourite hymn "Rejoice, dear hearts". She herself also composed a lovely hymn to the Blessed Sacrament which we often sang. [...]

Rev. Mother was a deeply humble person, she never revealed what great things were going on in her but only that which could bring humiliation on herself. [...]

2) She was a great lover of holy obedience. She tried to observe the directives of holy church in a perfect way as well as that which the Holy Father decreed. We sisters were not allowed to criticise this. Rome, Holy Church and the Holy Father meant everything to her. When there were celebrations in St. Peter's, and the Holy Father was to be seen at audiences, Beatifications or Canonisations, she tried to be present if possible, even at the cost of great humiliation and trouble. She was already older and not used to such exertion, pushing, shoving, standing, etc. The Holy Father and his blessing were everything to her!

She was as humble as a child toward to our Ven. Father and Founder. In the early years of our foundation, when Rev. Father Jordan still had the overall management, she had to give a daily report regarding our conduct etc., and about everything that had

happened. She knelt humbly in front of Ven. Father to do this and reported everything, including whatever concerned herself and listened very calmly to the corrections and reproaches he gave her and did not stand up [...] until Ven. Father had left. Yet, she was more than 15 years older [than he] and delicately brought up.

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the capture of Rome by the Garibaldians, great celebrations were planned, such as magnificent fireworks in the evening and Bengalese lighting of the boats and gondolas with music on the Tiber. Rev. Mother told us to go to the upper terrace so that we could see everything. Afterwards, she informed Ven. Father who was not exactly edified by this. His opinion was that it could have given bad example because we are religious. Rev. Mother repeated this to us. Then she went to Mons. Duval⁷³ and told him what had been done as well since he had a certain authority over German religious women. However, Monsignor found nothing wrong with the above-mentioned behaviour. On Monday evening, the same illuminations were repeated. Rev. Mother sent us up to the loggia again, including those sisters who were already in bed but had not been up on the terrace the day before.⁷⁴

She also tried to honour the Rev. Bishops. When they visited us, she had the chapel and entrance decorated. The sisters had to assemble and Rev. Mother introduced us to these high dignitaries of the Church. When she heard that a Rev. Bishop had arrived in Rome, maybe one in whose diocese our sisters were working, or a bishop from the missions in whom she took a great interest, she tried to greet the same right away. She also treated priests with great respect; she knelt and humbly asked for their blessing, even in the case of young, only just ordained priests.

3) She had a great love for holy poverty and liked to wear simple mended clothing. Her laundry items were simple, without ornamentation, much mended, and all the other things she used were simple. – Her room was as poor as it could be. Usually, her bedroom was her workroom as well. There she had a plain bedstead, two blocks and three boards with a mattress stuffed with

⁷³ Correct: De Waal

⁷⁴ cf. also p. 31

sea-grass on them, one or two not so soft pillows, the necessary linen and a few simple blankets. As occasion demanded, she had one simple table coated with water paint, two chairs, a crucifix, a picture of our Lady of Good Counsel, a crucifix reliquary and a little picture of St. Jude Thaddeus to whom she often turned in difficult situations. A writing desk stood in a corner of the room, an ordinary old one at first and a simple one later on. If there were bed-curtains, they were simple washable ones made of furnishing cotton.

Yes, she was a great lover of holy poverty. When she travelled, she took along only a simple striated hemp bag containing just enough for a change of underwear when necessary, three coifs and collars and some handkerchiefs⁷⁵ [...] A simple cotton umbrella, shoes, everything simple as was fitting. – She also tried to impress a love for holy poverty on us sisters, but we had to be neat, clean and tidy ourselves and there had to be no dirt or disorder in the house either. – I never heard her complain if something was lacking.

4) She kept her eyes in check when she was not observing us sisters to see how we behaved and how was our clothing and posture etc. She was also simple in regard to food, ate our beans and *polenta* and wanted nothing special. [...] In her final year, she did have to make some exceptions but I saw that this was repugnant to her. She was very mortified, never leaning back while she was sitting even during her final illness. When she was able to get up, she never complained of the cold but even opened the window.

In such things, Rev. Mother was heroic. She practised her spirit of penance everywhere but not in such a way that our attention was drawn to it too much. She didn't want to be seen as exceptional. – She had penance girdles, a knotted discipline and a hand sized little board full of upstanding nails which she probably laid on her chest.⁷⁶ She said she had practised such penances when she was younger. Now, she could no longer do so. She suffered from her frail nerves, had a weak stomach, and in her final years she was

⁷⁵ cf. p. 25

⁷⁶ cf. Glossary, p. 377f: "Practices of Penance"

almost blind. However, she didn't use any extraordinary means to cure either the one or the other problem. [...]

Although Rev. Mother did not pamper us, she was not hard. If a sister was not well or needed to sleep longer, she gladly gave permission. She said that younger persons had more need of sleep. She also allowed exceptions regarding food, but she was very wise in this matter and saw to it that the sisters ate enough, especially the young ones, also when they were eating at the penance table. Once, at all events, a young sister had not eaten enough so Rev. Mother had some slices of bread brought to her which she had to eat right then. The whole community had to remain sitting until the sister had finished eating the bread.

She was very strict regarding holy obedience. When she had once given an order and one didn't do it right away, she would take one by the sleeve and one was standing outside the door before one realised what had happened. I had already done what she had ordered but she didn't know that. She often said: "Obedience is my greatest joy", although also for her it must have been hard to obey at times, for, as the family heiress she was used to giving orders, but she simply obeyed and did not let anything stop her from doing so. Ven. Father was sometimes very strict with her but she remained humbly kneeling and did not say a word. She was accused quite often and then reprimanded by the higher superiors but, in spite of this, she was not afraid to correct the sisters. She said: "If I humiliate you, etc. am I not doing something good to you? I want you to become holy, you would accuse me before the dear God that I had done nothing for your salvation." She could, however, be very gentle with those who could not bear it.

Addition

from a further testimony⁷⁷

Some more notes regarding Rev. Mother of blessed memory. During her final illness her doctor, Dr. Wild, ordered digitalis for her heart, which was much affected by the severe attacks of asthma. However, she didn't want to take it. I asked her for the reason and

⁷⁷ E-09-18

she replied, because it is poison. She didn't take it either. Otherwise, she accepted everything that was offered her, even the food which, I noticed, was sometimes repugnant to her but she ate it nevertheless.

When greater failings occurred in regard to love of neighbour, she let the sisters eat at the penance table at noon and in the evening for several days or ask for a prayer or a virtue at the door. [...]

Her nerves were very strained. When something joyful or unpleasant [occurred], she could give one a not too gentle push at times, but she was not aware of it. Someone must have again accused her of this. She asked me if it was true that she pushed like that. I tried to agree with this in clear manner and answered in the affirmative. Then she thanked me for my sincerity saying that, at home, they had called her the even-tempered one.

Addition

from the responses to a questionnaire (1-178)⁷⁸

[...]

3) Up to 15 years of age, she was brought up at home by very pious, serious and devout parents. The father and mother tried to guide the children toward humility and the fear of God from their earliest years. If someone wanted to give the children joy through a gift or in some other way, the father then said: "Children, first one must humble oneself, if one wants to receive a favour, therefore: first bow your heads under the table."

4-5) She had a lively temperament and was somewhat playful. In the garden she jumped with a big dog over a recently planted flower-bed to the shock of the gardener who then said all kinds of badly pronounced Latin names. She still laughed about this later on. In contrast, however, she already wanted to do all kinds of good works of charity, such as visiting sick persons, etc. [...]⁷⁹

⁷⁸ E-09-19-3

⁷⁹ In E-9.16 she wrote: "Visiting the sick without Papa knowing about it"

11) [...] She also had great devotion to the Three Kings and held a novena before their feast. When she sent sisters out to foundations far away, she prayed and entrusted them to the protection of the Three Kings because also they had, for the sake of the child Jesus, made long and difficult journeys.

12) Rev. Mother loved the Holy Virgin very much. She often visited her miraculous images such as in St. Mary Major, Our Lady of Perpetual Help in S. Alfonso and in St. Peter's, the Madonna of the Pillar and others. She made sure that our statue was beautifully decorated as well: we held novenas in front of it. Also when in the world, she had often made pilgrimages to Kevelaer and places in Holland. [...]

17-18) She saw to it that the children were taught catechism in the Salita and also in the churches. [...]

76) She often asked the advice of prudent, honest and saintly men. She also often consulted older experienced sisters who were not members of the Generalate. [...]

82) Yes, Rev. Mother showed the honour due to the saints through novenas and frequent invocation of the dear Mother of God as well as visits to her shrines and showed this also to the holy Guardian Angels and the chosen patrons by invoking them every hour; she had quite a few saints she called upon like this. – She also greatly venerated the relics of the saints.

85-86) She prayed the Hours of the dear Mother of God⁸⁰ fervently every day and saw to it that we sisters also prayed them properly. [...]

106) As a rule, she didn't fall asleep before midnight and often later, but she got up again before 6 o'clock. [...]

127) Rev. Mother [...] often said: "Obedience is my greatest joy", that is why she had placed herself under a founder, she said, in order to be able to practice obedience, in spite of the fact that she was a resolute woman. [...]

⁸⁰ cf Glossary: "Prayer practices", p. 377f

158) Our Rev. Mother was known to only a few persons outside the convent apart from some prelates and cardinals who had authority over us; unfortunately, these also have already gone to the land of everlasting bliss as well. They looked on her as a great and virtuous woman. Mons. Deval⁸¹ gave a lovely sermon at her funeral in which he praised her virtues. Some superiors from other convents also liked her and said that she was a saintly woman. [...]

Sr. Bonaventura S.D.S.

Addition

from the responses to another questionnaire (171-253)⁸²

[...]

179) Above all, Rev. Mother venerated the Patrons of our Congregation, the dear Mother of God under the title "Queen of the Apostles", St. Michael, St. Joseph, the holy Apostles – and she had a special devotion to the holy Apostle Judas Thaddeus whom she often invoked nine times in succession in difficult situations. A candle had to be burning before the shrine of the Immaculata on her feast-day and when she prayed the Hours she often invoked a whole series of saints.

180) Rev. Mother was taken up with enthusiasm for the spread of the Catholic faith; she would have liked to go to the missions. Already at home, she tried to distribute the publications of the Rev. Salvatorian Fathers and the "Messenger of the Sacred Heart of Jesus" for the Rev. Fathers of Steyl. It also made her happy when she could do something somewhere for such works. [...]

182) Rev. Mother esteemed and read with ecclesiastical approval the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the holy *[Church-]* Fathers.

198) Mother Mary's spirit was always directed toward God and her heart was deeply united with God and she tried to do everything in His spirit. She often spoke about God and was happy when she could do something for the salvation of souls.

⁸¹ Correct: De Waal

⁸² ASDS, E-09-21

199) Rev. Mother took part daily in Holy Mass, and her prayer was continual and fervent; she also spent much time before the Blessed Sacrament. [...]

201) Our Rev. Mother made much effort to inflame a greater love of God in our hearts.

202) Rev. Mother tried to mortify herself in many ways, in regard to food: I often noticed how she overcame herself to eat the food that was brought to her. She often had no appetite but she never asked for any other food.

She always sat up straight and never leaned back, not even during her final illness. [...] Once, when a sister brought ironed bed-linen, she asked her: "Did you iron that? The poor sisters have enough work without this." She did all this out of love for the poor Saviour. [...]

207) Mother Mary prayed a lot for sinners. She once said that the poor souls are already saved but sinners can be lost at any moment and so one must pray much for sinners. [...]

215) Mother Mary always prayed before acting, in order to be sure of doing the holy will of God. [...]

232) Mother Mary liked the bedroom to be simple. [...] She had no heating or, at the most, a small pot containing embers to keep her feet a little bit warm. After all, she was already 70 years old. [...]

238) Rev. Mother was steadfast in the practice of the virtues. She overcame human respect and showed her great courage during her last illness. A Hungarian priest she knew said he was coming to visit Rev. Mother [...]⁸³

246) A Hungarian Cardinal-Prince Primate von Gran was at Bad Ems where Mother Mary was staying as a young woman with her youngest sister⁸⁴ since she had to accompany the latter who was not well. They also had an uncle with them who booked them into a hotel in order to entertain his young niece properly.

⁸³ Continuation: cf. p. 52

⁸⁴ in E-9-11 it says: "who was anaemic"

The Cardinal was also staying at the same hotel. There, Mother Mary's modest behaviour must have made an impression on him as he asked if she would be willing to reform the Ursulines in his diocese. Rev. Mother said she had felt no inclination to that and did not accept. Then his Eminence said: "You will come to Hungary one day", something that did actually happen. We now have a large Province there. (her own personal comment) [...]⁸⁵

249) Mother Mary was humble and good-natured in her actions and also gladly asked the advice of us simple Sisters, as well as our opinion regarding herself. However, she also looked to see whether the Sisters gave her the marks of respect due to her, for example, if we had prepared a friendly "Welcome" sign when she returned from a Visitation trip. She surprised us once in Tivoli. She arrived sooner than we expected. We quickly broke off some vine branches and arranged them on the banisters. Rev. Mother felt around for them because she could no longer see well. Little family celebrations such as the Crib at Christmas, coloured eggs at Easter and the Holy Spirit at Pentecost meant a lot to Rev. Mother. She could be so childlike regarding them, out of reverence kissing the beak of the artificial or living dove. [...] On Good Friday she also knelt at the penance table at dinner.

When Rev. Mother came to the Clinic, she liked to visit the sick, she talked with them and consoled them. They were very edified by her and were of the opinion that she was a pious and important woman. When I then told them that she was a baroness, our first Superior General and the Co-Foundress, they said they had been aware that she was someone special.

250) [...] When Rev. Mother looked someone in the face and in the eyes, she knew when all was not quite right interiorly even though she could not see well. She also always found the sore point about which one was touchy at that moment. I often wondered about this.

⁸⁵ in E-9-11 is added: "Various other Congregations were offered to her, she made trials, but their customs and rules were not suited to her." Rather than saying that other Congregations were offered to her, it would be more correct to state that she tried various other Congregations but left again because they did not correspond to her vocation – until she came to know Fr. Jordan.

251) [...] She bore this [her final illness] patiently and with resignation for almost an entire year, and toothache set in as well. A nursing sister tried to sympathize with her about it but Rev. Mother said: "God be thanked that I may suffer". She said she no longer wanted to go back into the world. Some days before her death she received Holy Communion before Holy Mass, Rev. S. Filomena was with her, and then all of a sudden Rev. Mother called out: "Sisters, Sisters, Jesus, Jesus". [...]

253) [...] As Mother Mary [during her final illness] was often delirious, she couldn't receive holy communion frequently but it was brought to her whenever she had a clear moment again. The Last Sacraments were given to her already before the brain fever set in. Rev. Mother lay there looking very peaceful and lovely as if she slept. Her great heart that beat and worked only for the dear Saviour and the salvation of souls had ceased to suffer.

The Rev. Sisters of St. Dorothy⁸⁶ came the following day to express their sympathy. They said: "Come è bella!"⁸⁷ and kissed her on the forehead. Her features had not changed, she remained quite normal and I did not notice any smell from the dead body.

I can confirm by oath the truth of all that I have written.

Signature: S. Bonaventura Zenker, Sor.D.S.
who was present at her saintly death.

⁸⁶ Convent nearby on the Salita Sant'Onofrio

⁸⁷ "How beautiful she is!"

S. Brigitta (Barbara Maria) Roos ⁸⁸



* 13.12.1873 in Greußenheim,
Diocese of Würzburg, Germany
Entered: 21.06.1905 in Rome
Investment: 03.07.1906 and
Novitiate in Rome.
Vows: 04.07.1907 in Rome
+ 15.11.1961 in Vienna, Austria

Stockern, 11.7.40

Copy for dear Reverend Mother

1. Rev. Mother had a good interior spirit, which showed itself, always according to the inspiration of grace, and enabled her to come to the right decisions.
2. During the two years that I was in Rome, Rev. Mother often called for me. I went in to her with a fearful heart, but she was always kind and I came away with a joyful heart.
3. Once, as I was cleaning, the scrubbing brush fell into something and I couldn't get it out any more. My heart was banging when I accused myself of this, but Rev. Mother was very kind and helped me and I went away happy.
4. When a letter came from home to say that I should return home, Rev. Mother called me later on to ask if I wanted to go or not. I said: "I am not going to go." 'Good', she said, 'the sisters shall offer holy communion for you tomorrow so that everything turns out right', and the decision was made well.

When one went out with Rev. Mother, one occasionally received an unwelcome push from her, but that was not so bad. Through it, one was more easily spurred on to the virtue of humility.

S. Brigitta Roos, S.D.S.

⁸⁸ ASDS, E-10

Sister Carolina (Clara) Dingler⁸⁹

(no photo available)

* 12.08.1873 in Leupolz, Diocese of Rottenburg, Germany
Entered: 22.03.1895 in Rome
Investment: 28.05.1895 and Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 09.06.1896 in Tivoli
In Rome from Sept.1896
In Hungary from August 1899
In the USA from 1902
+ 18.5.1943 in St. Nazianz, Wis., USA

Memories of Mother Mary of the Apostles, first Superior General!

The first thing I had to do with Rev. Mother when I was a candidate was to show her all the things I had brought with me. Among these was a photograph of my parents, the girdle and scapular of St. Francis since I belonged to the 3rd Order, and a collection of pictures showing the entire life of the great St. Teresa. After she had seen everything, she said to me: "So, go and burn these 3 items and I will keep these pictures with me." I obeyed with a sad heart. My heart was really attached to them, something that I have come to realize only now, after so many years.

During the time I stayed in the Motherhouse as a Sister, Mother Mary repeatedly took me with her on her walks. She was always so quick and sprightly that one always had to run to keep up with her. And she often spoke in broken sentences and one was expected to understand her. That brought many a humiliation. I was also occasionally given the task of sending up-to-date news about happenings in the Motherhouse to the other houses.

What good Chapter conferences she often gave to us! With motherly love, she gave me everything that I had to ask her for. In 1902, for my final profession, she sent us three sisters, S. Hedwig, S. Josefa and myself, a little note, very rich in content, empha-

⁸⁹ ASDS, E-11

sisting faithful attachment to the Motherhouse in Rome, which in later years showed me the right way.

S. Carolina Dingler, Sor.D.S.⁹⁰

Milwaukee, Wis., April 14, 1941



2nd House in Tivoli from 1896 to 1899
Entrance to the Chapel of Sant'Antonio l'Abbate
in which Fr. Jordan received the vows of many Sisters

⁹⁰ Confirmed under oath before witnesses

S. Cecilia (Margherita) Angelosanto⁹¹



* 08.11.1875 in St. Elia sul Rapido,
Diocese Monte Cassino, Italy
Entered 24.07.1893
Novitiate: 10.12.1893 in Tivoli
Vows: 26.12.1894 in Tivoli
Renewals in Rome
March 1897 Rome, Marocco Clinic
from 1898 in Torri
+ 08.04.1958 in Meran, South Tyrol

Memories of our Rev. Mother and Co-Foundress, Mother Mary of the Apostles.⁹²

I had the grace of being under the direction of Rev. Mother Mary of the Apostles from September 1, 1893 to April 26, 1899, and once again later on from December 1, 1903 until the middle of June 1904. I was 15 years old when I entered; I was inexperienced, there were many things I didn't understand and I didn't know what I should think about them nor what was required of a postulant. In spite of this, Rev. Mother was good to me and because I was the youngest she helped me to overcome the difficulties and showed me some attention, e.g. at table, she sent a nice peach over to me.

I was invested on December 10, and began the novitiate. In her instructions, she placed great emphasis on the simplicity of God's children. Thoughts, words, conduct were to be simple. Speech was to be: "Yes, no."

Also in prayer she wanted us to get used to punctual observance of this duty. When she noticed that some knelt before the statue of the Mother of God after evening prayer, she came up to us, lifted us up and said firmly: "This is for the devil as it is now the time to

⁹¹ ASDS, E-12

⁹² S. Maria Theresia Rainer translated the original Italian into German from which the English translation was made.

go to bed.” None of us had the courage to practise once again a particular devotion without permission.

In her weekly conferences, she repeatedly admonished us to value our vocation and to acquire solid virtue. She mentioned holy poverty and obedience time and time again, as well as attachment to the Ven. Founder and subjection to him to whom she was totally subject. It happened that the superior at Tivoli invited the Bishop of the area for the investment and renewal of vows, even though Ven. Father was in Rome. During a walk, she asked me if I would have acted in the same way. I replied: “As long as our Founder is living and we can invite him, I would invite no-one else for the investment and renewal of vows.” She was happy about this response.

She often openly said to me: “Everything must be done as Ven. Father wishes it. I want nothing other than what he wants and what seems good to him.”

In her exhortations, she liked to use the words of St. Theresa: “To pick up a straw in obedience is of more worth than to fast on bread and water for three years when this is done from self-will.”

Once, she took the opportunity to tell me: “At the present time, you notice only a few failings in yourself, but ten years on you will see many more. She also often admonished: “In confession, one must not confess all such things that often, in reality, are no sins, but be sorry for three greater sins and try to mend one’s ways. She often repeated this at the chapter of faults in the refectory.

This strict upbringing did not conceal her motherly goodness. She informed herself how the studies were progressing and what weighed on the heart of a young Sister. Mother Mary educated and used her strictness from supernatural motives.

Her letters were always motherly and full of love. If we sent her a gift of any kind, she knew how to thank in a loving way as, for example, in the case of the saved up coffee on her name day or at Christmas.

Rev. Mother was calm and composed, she never used a word of accusation and joyfully joined in recreation. The one thing that she

said to me was: "If they had not re-elected me, I would have come to you for care in my old age." I wondered at this great virtue and this great self-control.

Rev. Mother came to Budapest for the last time in 1906. Our convent and school were already in the Huba-utca. On September 1, the elementary school was to be opened. Rev. Mother was happy about our progress. She liked the entire complex. The days went by quickly and the final evening came closer on which Rev. Mother wanted to take the night train to Muraszombat. Then the Rev. Superior, Sister Ambrosia, came to tell me: "Rev. Mother was excited and calling for me. I went to her room. Rev. Mother stood up and spoke in a tone which was energetic and shaking at the same time: 'In that area, where now our school is standing – and she showed me the place out of the window – our sisters will do much work, and also in another place, but may you always retain a good spirit.' After saying this, she became calm again and prepared herself for the journey."

The First School in Budapest



I was shocked. How could we at that point in time think about the place where our school is now standing, the cost was 100,000 Kronen and we had still a debt of 60.000 Kronen for the school. But the Lord arranged it in exactly that way. To Him be honour and praise forever!

Addition

from a further statement

I knew our beloved Rev. Mother, the first superior general, as someone who was very humble and loved holy poverty.

She was very simple, her thoughts were ever directed to the glory of God, the good of our dear Congregation and the salvation of souls. She was very close and loving to the Sisters.

Torri, 6.7.1940 ⁹³

[...] I am trying to communicate to you what I remember and what I know. I was still young, only 16 years of age, and did not know the German language; the Sisters spoke little Italian.

Our good Rev. Mother was always subordinate to the Ven. Founder and Rev. Fr. Bonaventura. She loved holy poverty very much and was simple in everything, whether in food, clothing or in dealing with others. She knew no partiality. She was very honest and open-hearted in her dealings with the sisters. She could adapt to every situation. I don't remember anything more. [...]

Montalto, 9.2.1951 ⁹⁴

⁹³ Letter to Mother Liboria

⁹⁴ Letter to Mother Benedikta

S. Christina (Maria) Altmann⁹⁵



* 12.04.1874 in Unterbuch bei
Pleinting, Diocese of Passau,
Germany
Entered: 13.11.1893
Novitiate 10.12.1893 in Tivoli
Vows: 26.12.1894 in Tivoli
From January 1895 in Rome
January 1896 to Akyab, Burma
Feb. 1898 back in Rome
In August 1902 to the USA
+ 01 05 1949 in Portage, Wis. USA

Milwaukee, Wis., March 25, 1941

Mother Mary of the Apostles – First Superior General

From my entry onward, Rev. Mother stood in my mind as a strong, valiant soul, full of apostolic zeal for the service of God, the salvation of souls and the honour and spread of the Society. In her apostolic zeal, she was so full of trust and submission to God's Providence that one was reminded of the faith of the first Christians: the faith that can move mountains, that can do everything with God's help. How she loved and appreciated the city of Rome because of the heroic martyrs and saints! How often she went on pilgrimage to the holy places and encouraged us also to that same zeal and to magnanimous devotion.

What should one say first regarding her respect and submission to the Holy Father and the dignitaries of holy Church? She was a worthy example to follow in this. She was childlike and humble toward the Ven. Founder and his delegate and rendered exemplary obedience. She did nothing in matters affecting the Order without his advice.

Mother Mary's love of holy poverty was remarkable and she had a special preference for St. Francis of Assisi. She often gladly played

⁹⁵ ASDS, E-13

– or had others play – and sang the lovely hymn: “O Francis, you father of the poor”, etc.

She, a noble lady, shared the poor food and simplicity with us. Her room was both a bed and living room and there were only a few poor items of furniture in it. Her love of simplicity and poverty was to be admired. Mother Mary had left much, yes, even everything, for her Lord and Bridegroom and she served Him in true freedom of heart.

Her family spirit – how gladly she spent time with us and when she returned from a journey she would tell us about her experiences, encouraging us to ask questions and sharing joys and sorrows with us. If it sometimes happened that she had no time, a small picture on which she wrote “A little encouragement” had to replace her well-intentioned appreciation and sympathy. –

As she herself gave the Ven. Founder complete obedience, so she required quick and alert obedience also from us. There was to be no “if and when” and on occasion one could sometimes see her a little less than gentle and sweet. Herself generous, energetic and full of zeal, she could and would not accept anything half from us either. She permitted no oversensitivity, neither hesitation nor letting go of self-control. “We can rest in the grave”, she said.

When she had singled out a sister for a position of trust, she subjected her to many humiliations; she wanted to test her. If the test was passed, then she sometimes expressed herself like this: “One can put this sister in the job, she is humble” or “This Sister can be used for a new foundation, she not only has the ability but she is also humble”. Mother Mary placed much importance on the virtue of humility. She humiliated us only in order to make us humble. This treatment caused offence to some; but I am totally convinced that Mother Mary only wanted to educate us to humility.

How she rejoiced when a sister made great resolutions and wanted to begin the real road of virtue. She then anticipated the one concerned and arranged a meeting with a spiritual director. “Rev. N. is now in the confessional, take N.N. with you and go there”, she said in such circumstances. Rev. N. remarked to a sister who was very depressed: “Don’t weigh every little word of Rev. Mother; she

is a noble, great-hearted soul and wants only to give you practice in humility. A short while ago she spoke very highly of you to me and mentioned how greatly you can be trusted". Outwardly sometimes severe, she fostered interiorly real motherly love and care for each individual Sister.

If a Sister returned to the world, this caused her acute sorrow. I still remember very well that when I suffered a lot from homesickness and was already thinking of going home, she anticipated my decision, took me out walking and spoke to me of the edifying letters I had written when I asked to enter the convent. I had said I was ready even to be a martyr. In order to be such, she said, one had to learn to carry small crosses. This had its effect and helped me weather the storm.

When misunderstandings occurred, Mother Mary was very patient and tried to calm tempers through silence.

When a new foundation was made in a foreign land, she immediately learned the Catholic greeting in the local language and, for a long time, began recreation with the greeting in that language. We had to learn the response and use it when she gave the greeting. That encouraged great enthusiasm and an apostolic spirit. She loved languages and therefore we always used many languages for nameday celebrations.

Mother Mary wanted to be everything to everyone: no nation was neglected. The more I think about her life with us, the more I wonder at her self-sacrificing, stout-hearted, humble ways which were aimed only at pleasing God our Lord and no other.

Sister Christine Altman, Sr.D.S.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ Confirmed under oath before witnesses

S. Chrysostoma (Elisabeth) Svoboda⁹⁷



* 16.11.1888 in Witkowitz,
Diocese Olmütz, Austria-Hungary
Entered: 28.11.1905 in Rome
Investment: 03.07.1906
Novitiate in Rome
Vows: 04.07.1907 in Rome
From Dec. 10.12.1907 in Vienna
+ 05.02.1974 in Vienna, Austria

Memories of the life of our dear Rev. Mother and Foundress Mary of the Apostles, Rome 1905–1907

1905 – 1906

It was shortly after the Visitation in Belgium. As a companion on the journey to Rome, dear Rev. Mother had a very lively Belgian girl who was to begin her postulancy in Rome. One day, the whole community was present in the refectory and Rev. Mother spoke of her various experiences during the trip. Among other things she said in a severe tone of voice and pointing to the Belgian candidate, this Postulant here has given me much trouble during the journey due to her unruly character. The postulant N.⁹⁸ interrupted dear Rev. Mother and said: "Dear Reverend Mother, the truth is the other way round because I had to look after you", and Rev. Mother, who just had been so serious, laughed with her whole heart and patted the postulant on the shoulder.

One day, from the postulants' veranda, we saw dear Rev. Mother sitting on a rubbish bin in the yard. Some of the onlookers wondered at her humility, others disapproved of this conduct as being unworthy of a Superior General. I had the habit of laughing uncontrollably and some small thing or the other in community

⁹⁷ ASDS, E-14

⁹⁸ Postulant Catho Gijbels, later on known as S. Alexandra

often brought this on. One day, when my fellow novice, the Belgian, pulled a little piece of paper out of her soup and in her surprise the hot soup fell in her lap, I laughed loudly in the silent refectory. And what did Rev. Mother do? She did not correct me; she had so much patience, love and consideration for those at the beginning of their religious life.

She was also a lover of joyfulness founded in God and detested any kind of low spirits.

She was always completely refined and dignified and through her words gave us a deep insight into her close union with God and her love. Everything to the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls, especially those entrusted to her.

It was before first vows. I developed a bad cough. My Rev. Superior thought, as I did myself, that I was consumptive, so I was in danger of being sent away. I had no pain connected with this illness, so I thought to myself: my Saviour, may your holy will be done, you know everything. The doctor came and the analysis was negative. My dear Rev. Novice Mistress sent me personally to dear Rev. Mother to bring her the test result. Dear Rev. Mother was already waiting near the chapel for the result and came to meet me when she saw me coming. I knelt down, gave her the report and she blessed me. She said nothing else but out of her deep motherly and zealous soul came a heartfelt "Deo gratias" and she let me go with a look full of kindness.

Our dear Rev. Superior at the Motherhouse in Rome sent a postulant and myself to post a card, which had various nice things for the feast of dear Rev. Mother's nameday mentioned on it. She gave us strict instructions to avoid dear Rev. Mother who was out on her usual walk right then. But all at once we were near Rev. Mother. Since she had no spectacles on she could not recognise us at a distance. My companion urged that we should run away but I looked forward to meeting Rev. Mother and successfully persuaded my older companion. All at once we were standing in front of dear Rev. Mother, keeping the card hidden. We greeted her and when she asked where we were going we had to tell her. The card was taken away from us and we were sent home. My first concern, apart from the many reproaches of my companion

regarding my disobedience, was the fate of the card. So I told her that she should go home and I would follow Rev. Mother in order to see what would happen to the card. Rev. Mother took the road to the post-box and stopped here and there in order to read what the card said, something that was not easy for her as she had no spectacles. When the card was in the post-box, I ran back to the dear Motherhouse. When I arrived with beating heart, I expected a well-deserved reprimand, but I didn't get one.

Rev. Mother required strict holy obedience from her spiritual daughters and therefore we shouldn't have hidden the affair of the card from her.

She spoke only of the dear God and of referring everything toward God and of everything leading to God. She abhorred all worldly and idle gossip. A correction given by Rev. Mother was often publicly humiliating and severe. At the same time, her intention was noble and aimed at progress in the spiritual life.

After the 1st General Chapter⁹⁹ when the sisters from Assam were about to return and the whole community was assembled in the refectory, she spoke openly at the end of the celebration about the fault of the sisters in the mission which was that they accepted invitations to tea from the English saying that was not in the spirit of Jesus Christ or of the Congregation and she hoped this would not happen again in the future.

A superior in one of the houses wrote the following letter to Rev. Mother, which was read aloud in the refectory. Among other things, it said: "If we had seven healthy Sisters instead of eleven sick Sisters, then we could manage with this number." Dear Rev. Mother faulted the writer for a failure in love, saying "Sick persons are a blessing for the house."

She told with obvious joy anything virtuous or edifying about the sisters' work.

⁹⁹ 1905, cf. also Glossary, p. 377f

Rev. Mother did not like it very much if the Sisters searched in printed prayer books for their meditation and she tried to express this. She recommended again and again a natural relationship of the heart with the dear Saviour. She said: "Our devotion to the Saviour and his mother should be like that of a child speaking affectionately with its father and mother".

At the front door, she embraced a postulant who was leaving and said: "We remain united in the Blessed Sacrament".

During her last illness a newly ordained priest gave her holy communion. He had a speech defect and, in spite of the holy occasion, Rev. Mother could not hide a smile when it came to the Agnus Dei. I also saw, however, that she showed great respect to that same young priest, kissing his hand and asking for his priestly blessing. I noticed repeatedly, also in the case of other priests, that she always spoke of the priests of God with the greatest respect.

Once, I went to St. Peter's with Rev. Mother. It was raining and she took me under her umbrella. In order to test my obedience, I had to hold the umbrella up high, then lower down, then a little to the left, and then again to the right. She gave opportunity everywhere for the practice of self-control and the attainment of virtue.

Addition

from Report 2 ¹⁰⁰

On another occasion, it was again during a walk with dear Rev. Mother. In the Borgo Santo Spirito, she felt unwell. A woman who had noticed this brought a chair. Dear Rev. Mother ordered me to put it in the middle of the street and so a crowd of onlookers were soon standing around. I didn't know what to do. Rev. Mother did not agree with my advice to go closer to nearer to the wall of the house or into the nearest house entrance and I received a loud correction because of it. As we stood there in the middle of the

¹⁰⁰ On the margin, "*Is exaggerated*" is added in another handwriting "S. Bonaventura told this more accurately as she spoke clearly, without fantasy and knew M. Mary better than S. Chrys."

crowd, one of the Rev. Consultors appeared and wanted to take Rev. Mother home. She also had to undergo a test and after that, Rev. Mother went home. She was humble and so she took every opportunity to humble herself.



Borgo Santo Spirito (Franz Roesler, circa 1870)

S. Clara (Mathilde) Krauer¹⁰¹

Report 1



* 08.12.1871 in Lucerne, Diocese
Basel, Switzerland
Entered: 23.08.1892 in Tivoli
Investment: 30.11.1892 and Novitiate
in Tivoli
Vows: 10.12.1893 in Tivoli.
then involved in directing the Teacher
Training Institute in Tivoli and Rome
From 1894 Vicaress for Mother Mary,
at times also house superior.
Nov. 1900 onward on Visitation in
the USA on behalf of Mother Mary
Dec.1901 returned to Rome
09.03.1904 in North America again
+ 02.08.1946 in Milwaukee, Wis., USA

Memories of our dear Reverend Mother Mary of the Apostles von
Wüllenweber

Our Rev. Mother and Foundress was a woman of exceptional energy and strength of will. Her piety was nothing sentimental or peculiar, but was full of deep faith and vigour. She had no patience with over-pious ways and hysteria. In educating her quite inexperienced spiritual daughters, she looked for a true spirit of faith, strength of character and self-denial. In every sense, she went ahead of all with a generous spirit of sacrifice in everything. Her strong soul breathed through all her admonitions and reprimands which, due to our petty ideas and lack of experience, were sadly often not sufficiently understood. The worthy mother's strong, valiant character and zeal to form true religious sisters was not understood by all.

In the early years of our foundation, as poverty pressed heavily on us, the strict observance of the vows may have required the most sacrifice and the strong discipline of the foundress may have been

¹⁰¹ ASDS, E-15

difficult for some. The worthy Mother was then asked by the Ven. Founder to temper her zeal a little. With moving humility she submitted to all corrections and followed all the prescriptions of her ecclesiastical superiors. This wonderful humility, with which Rev. Mother accepted all corrections, humiliations, affronts, even insults of a serious nature coming from any side and bore them with amazing calm and magnanimity, was the clearest sign of her true virtue and of her noble magnanimity.

Mother Mary was always ready to forgive and forget and with true motherly love clasp to her heart whoever came to ask forgiveness. Her faithful soul, although so often misunderstood in many ways, was above resentment and animosities and that appeared to many to be a main characteristic of her interior holiness.

Many Sisters who saw Mother Mary at prayer believed in her deep piety. Even more were they all amazed and touched by the truly childlike docility and submissiveness with which she accepted even public abuse and unjust reproach and gave thanks for it on her knees. Her deep faith and her patience in suffering were always expressed in the words: "God be thanked that I may suffer."

Our Rev. Foundress¹⁰² was a child of the period of change from aristocracy to democracy and that made it difficult for her to rightly enter into the character and work of her sisters. Misunderstandings of every kind were inevitable. But, as the saintly Fr. Bonaventura Lüthen said to a superior, that did not take anything away from the true interior sanctity of the Mother Foundress.

She did not know much about nursing but, in spite of that, she had a much greater sympathy with the sick and suffering than many thought and this was also made evident in a moving way on many occasions. She could not bear it when Sisters were over-worked. She was always ready to give them a period of rest and refreshment. The mistaken ideal of exaggerated penance was foreign to her just as she was no friend of over-indulgence. The strong, choleric temperament of her vigorous nature hid some of

¹⁰² Fr. Francis Jordan was the Founder of the community of Sisters; Mother Mary was already at that time often referred to as Co-Foundress.

the noblest traits of heroic love of neighbour and of the moving kindness of heart [present] in her noble soul. Thus it happened, that some did not value her true sanctity and magnanimity sufficiently.

There was nothing inconstant, superficial or sensual in her entire being, but everything gave the impression of the deepest piety and a direct, open character full of a sincere love of God and neighbour.

Written by Sister Clara Krauer

Milwaukee, Wis., U.S.A., July 1940

Addition
Report 2¹⁰³

Mother Mary of the Apostles
Foundress of the Salvatorian Sisters

by a member of the Society¹⁰⁴

The author of this humble tribute to the greatness of the saintly foundress, Baroness Maria Theresia de Wuellenweber, hopes to dispel some erroneous ideas formed here and there about the real virtues of this rare example of heroic womanhood.

Some people say they are not attracted by her features which they find rather homely. They forget that the pictures of some of our greatest saints are not inspiring love and admiration; nor is this the case with many other celebrities.

Those who have known Mother Mary of the Apostles will remember that her radiant smiles used to kindle her large blue eyes with an almost heavenly serenity that relaxed all natural

¹⁰³ The original of this text is in English; it is transcribed without changes.

¹⁰⁴ Read: Congregation

sternness of these noble, virile features expressive of great moral and intellectual strength.

Yes, manliness and sharpness of intellect were the outstanding qualities Mother Mary inherited from her parent, the illustrious Baron de Wuellenweber, a man of inflexible will and principles, very conservative and straight-forward of character.

Mother Mary inherited his sterling qualities of character combining with them the indefinable elegance of a high French culture. They made her well fit for the mission God intended to entrust her with in these days of modern effeminacy and craze for change. I might compare Mother Mary's personality with a velvet scabbard that held a sharp gleaming shaft of steel. Her refined French education wonderfully softened that keen blade.

She was still a child of the old regime and yet already imbued with much of the progressive enlightenment of a scientific age. Her appreciation for art and music went hand in hand with her keen interest in philosophy, literature, science and its inventions.

Her nature was a strange compound or mixture of all temperaments. To think her devoid of feeling would be a cruel wrong to her. She was averse to all sentimentality, it is true, but not to womanly love and sympathy.

I have witnessed many a touching scene revealing her noble tenderness of heart in a new light. Thus one evening I had to tell her that a certain delicate sister had a great horror to sleep in the same room with a sister supposed to be consumptive and refused to go there as she was ordered to do by the house mistress. Mother Mary immediately cancelled that order, permitting the excited sister to remain in her own room as before. Then with tears streaming down her face she turned to me saying "I have a mother's heart for all my children, and I wish them to know that. Comfort that poor sister immediately." Reverend Mother Mary had never before looked so truly maternal and kind.

Though some weaker souls became discouraged by the Reverend mother's somewhat blunt and severe ways of correcting or humiliating us for faulty behavior, yet the majority of the sisters would realize her upright intentions and hang on to the Venerable foundress with undying affection. The wonderful sincerity and loyalty of her motherly love for her spiritual daughters was felt more or less by all, cementing our hearts together in spite of all privations. I might say it was the chivalrous age of our young society when all glowed with the earnest desire to achieve great things for the glory of God and our society.

Reverend Mother, though rebuking and mortifying us unsparingly in her heart of heart embraced us all with loving pride, readily condoning our faults if only we were humble enough to make up for them. She received us with genuine motherly kindness whenever we humbly came to be reconciled to her after misunderstandings. This generous love of Mother Mary greatly helped to bridge the gap which difference of class would have created.

Some accused the Venerable Mother of pride in her birth and social rank, because from an inborn adherence to her class she was perhaps showing too much appreciation of the privileges attached to such distinction. Even saints had their weaknesses and carried them along to their life's end.

If she, in spite of her former titles and wealth sat down with her low-born sisters at the same table, ate the same coarse food, wore the same poor clothing, had the same rough bed and small allowances of comfort in every regard her pride of rank could not be very great.

It is true her nervous temper made her at times treat her sisters rather gruffly, but that fault did not arise from rank-pride at all, far less from contempt for religious of low-birth, but from sheer overtaxation of physical strength and consequent irritation of her overstrung nerves. How she was constantly interrupted, annoyed, molested, importuned in her shabby little office-room because her inborn goodness of heart allowed every sister at any time free access to her. I have been witness to all this incessant strain on her nerves.

In my opinion the wonder was how she could endure that pestering disturbance at any time, often without sufficient reason, and not break out into worse fits of temper than the ones she was blamed for.

She was often counselled to restrict the hours of audience and take more help. But she absolutely refused to keep the sisters from coming to her at any time they were in need of her help, and as far as possible she wrote the letters to her sisters with her own hand.

Her letters were a marvel of good style, always refreshingly cheerful, frankly conversing all news, or giving counsel. She was always most delicate in asking for help, and though in spoken admonitions she could be blunt and almost harsh at times, in her letters she was always most gentle, motherly, encouraging, not sparing approval and praise!

It could not be denied, either, that our Reverend Mother foundress was very strict in the observance of poverty and insisted on the utmost economy. Our straitened circumstances and the times of general depression necessitated such economical measures. Then, there was almost no income in the beginning, the members being mostly girls from comparably [*sic*] poor families. Italy was ruined after the war and so were other European countries. Before the war already there were great financial straits all around. If Reverend Mother Mary could have begun her work in her own abbey¹⁰⁵ in her home country things would have gone on much easier. But in her heroic zeal she left that in obedience to her spiritual director, saintly Father Jordan.

Who can tell whether it was not a special kind providence of God who led her to Italy? She had, of course, expected to begin her work in Rome, but instead she had to make her start in a far less attractive and convenient place. Yet, it was the characteristic spirit of Mother Mary ever to live and act in joyful obedience to her superiors, making the best out of every disagreeable order.

¹⁰⁵ "Abbey" refers to her Barbara Institute – in the East Wing of the former Benedictine Abbey at Neuwerk

There was a set of sisters among us rather overzealous in observing what they called holy poverty but what was in reality unwise economy, hurtful to the health and growth of the young people. That this was not intended or approved of by Mother Mary the following incident did show.

One day the Reverend foundress heard of an Italian novice helping herself from the pantry where the bread for the meals was kept and prepared. Cautiously she visited the pantry at the hour when that novice had to cut the bread and surprised her in the act of swiping two pieces. "Child, two pieces is not enough for you" the mother said with a mischievous twinkle around her merry eyes. "Come on, eat these." And quickly spreading two larger pieces with honey she ordered the hungry child to eat all the four pieces and to help her herself for the future, more abundantly at meals. The weeping novice explained that their mistress would not allow them to eat more than what was allotted to each one of them.

Next day sufficient bread was prepared for all tables and the scanty food-supply was improved by the strict order of Mother Mary. We novices also rejoiced in receiving a new and more liberal novice mistress.

But this overstrict food economy had not caused the breaking out of a severe typhoid epidemic which followed some time later and caused much unjust criticism of poor Mother Mary. We did not look out carefully enough for the purity of drinking water in a town often infested by typhoid fever, and our house was too crowded already for being typhoid-proof. This calamity led to our partly removal to Rome, the long looked for goal of our wishes. It also caused Mother Mary to improve considerably our food-supply and sanitary conditions.

The happy novice confessed that only acute hunger had made her do that, because they were not permitted to eat more pieces at table than allotted to each. Mother Foundress was annoyed. That day yet she made careful investigations. The next day already our novice mistress was removed and to our great satisfaction our bread supply was doubled, and our meals made more plentiful.

This incident served to convince us all that our Reverend Mother was a woman of good sense and motherly feeling.

She showed her interest for our health also in that kind measure which permitted us to take a walk every day around the hills of Tivoli, especially around the famous waterfalls, to get enough fresh air into our lungs.

Our quarters were packed and this daily exercise in the precious air of the Sabine hills, and later in Rome, outside the city walls over the ancient Janiculum meant a great benefit to us.

To give us occasion to visit the holy shrines in Rome she often let the one or other group visit the most celebrated places of pilgrimage so that we all might carry away some glorious memory of the splendors of Rome. We enjoyed many a feast in the grand old basilicas that no other place on earth could have offered to us. Such celestial days more than made up for the privations our poverty laid upon our young shoulders.

Our good Mother foundress was always happiest when she could share her joys with her children, that proved her good heart, her unselfish character. While still at Tivoli she would also take us out, now and then, for a good long hike into the country of Horace. What delightful little adventures we used to have on such occasions! Then our Reverend Mother let us run up and down the hill, pick the large blackberries or accept here and there an invitation to taste fruit in a large vineyard. On such occasions Mother Mary's cheerful disposition manifested itself to advantage.

When great difficulties oppressed her she would go out to the clinic of our sisters in Rome, call the nurses together to a good lunch and have a merry chat with them. Or she would take some sisters along to a good long tramp over the Janiculum hill or around the walls of the Vatican Gardens or to some other very interesting pilgrimage.

She could enjoy herself most heartily over the mirth producing odd things that often used to happen in the sunlit streets of Rome. She

even used to laugh heartily if some of the rabble offered us some sort of rather insulting compliments, as poking fun at our ugliness or fatness or throwing mud at us. In the first year the spirit of the 'Garibaldi' was still evident in the holy city especially at times of riots. Mother Mary seemed even to enjoy such humiliations or annoyances.

She always liked the little entertainments we gave her on feast-days, especially the merry comedies and songs, and she used to entertain us in turn with her wonderful music.

She was not much in favor of austere works of penance but emphasized strongly a strong sense of duty and responsibility and generous self-sacrifice for others. Yet she was against overburdening the sisters with prayers and work. "Be always ready to serve", she would say, but never seek to command."

Her piety bore the stamp of child-like simplicity. She never made any show of it. She had a great enthusiasm for the interests of Christ and His Church. She admonished us not to be narrow and selfish in our works of piety, but to cherish the spirit of the holy apostles especially of St. Paul.

Her filial devotion to the Holy Father was edifying. She greatly venerated Popes [*sic*] Leo the XIII and Pope Pius X. Whenever there was a chance to see and receive the blessing of either of them she would spare no trouble to take us there.

How great was her veneration for our Reverend Father founder! She was submissive to him with the humility of a child and the obedience of a saint.

You could see in all this how deeply she was penetrated by the spirit of faith. Her piety had absolutely nothing superficial, pharisaical or sentimental. It was simple, filial, sincere. She hated from the bottom of her soul all that had the tinge of self-seeking in the works or exercises of piety. "If ever women are prone to seek self-satisfaction in their devotion it is either pride or laziness that lies at

the bottom of their apparent piety” she used to say. If she came upon some members sitting lazily in the chapel to escape their work she helped them out in a speedy manner. She believed not in heaping up devotions but in saying those prescribed with fervor and dignity. She wanted nothing childish, nothing sentimental in our devotions.

Some misunderstood Reverend Mother's spirit of piety saying that she was not much given to prayer. If that were so how could she have persevered with the work begun? How could she endure all the privations, vexations, disappointments, contradictions the foundation of the order brought along?

I am not afraid to say, that her piety far surpassed our little comprehension. It bore the mark of humility in a special degree, though it did not seem to have been accompanied by extra practices of corporal austerities. When St. Ignatius by the command of God, lessened his austerities people also began to diminish their high esteem of him because they had a narrow vision of what real prayer means.

Reverend Father Lüthen S.D.S. once said to one of our superiors: “Her inexperience or unfitness for leadership in certain lines of general administration take nothing away from Reverend Mother's great inner holiness!”

If suffering and contradiction are the stamp of divine approbation of our works undertaken for God's glory then Mother Mary of the Apostles certainly could rejoice in her manifold trials. And she did so. In all her bodily and mental anguishes she used to praise God for it saying: “It is good that we suffer!”

Once, at a time of special tribulation, she went on a little pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Brigid where our Reverend Father Founder had made the humble beginning of his work. The young sister who accompanied her and watched her pray in the still solitude of that chapel, said to us on their return from St. Brigid: “Today I have become fully convinced that our Reverend Mother is a saint,

because I have seen her pray as only a saint can pray. Her face appeared so venerable as she knelt there, all wrapt in tearful prayers that I could hardly restrain from weeping myself over the little appreciation we show for our saintly Mother. Yes, as with other saints, our lord [*sic*] pleased to conceal her inner holiness by a rough...¹⁰⁶



Rome, Via Giulia (Ettore Roesler, +1907)

¹⁰⁶ The continuation or conclusion is unfortunately missing.

S. Claveria (Maria) Stadler¹⁰⁷

Report 1



* 24.03.1868 in Gollingkreut,
Diocese of Augsburg, Germany
Entered: 21.03.1896 in Rome
Investment: 24.04.1896 and
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 25.04.1897 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome
From January 1906 in the USA
+ 02.07.1951 in Portage, Wis. USA

Impressions that I, the undersigned, gained from the virtuous life of our deceased Superior General, the Rev. Mother Mary of the Holy Apostles.

The deep piety and reverent posture with which she knelt on her small, poor prie-dieu in the chapel made a great impression on me. I often watched her and the thought, yes, if only I too could pray like that, rose up in me from time to time. She seemed to be, as it were, penetrated by the presence of the dear Saviour, as one could deduce from her reverent attitude. She didn't want us to use prayer books, but she wanted us to have an intimate conversation with the dear Saviour in the tabernacle. "I tell the dear God in my own words everything that is on my heart and I don't use the mostly gushing words of another", she informed me once when I asked for a prayer book that I had brought from home.

She liked to visit the churches in Rome, especially on the feast days of the saints to whom the churches were dedicated, and she prayed with the deepest devotion though these visits were generally short. On the way to these churches, she taught her young companions, mostly candidates, about the life of the saint to whom the church was dedicated.

¹⁰⁷ ASDS, E-16

She always treated priests with the greatest reverence, it was all the same to her whether she knew them or not, and she also spoke of them only in words of deepest respect.

She could not be surpassed in her obedience toward the Church. Whatever the church authorities required was for her an absolute law. Equally exemplary was the obedience she gave to our Ven. Founder and to his representative, Rev. Fr. Bonaventura.

Her observance of holy poverty was particularly worthy of admiration. She had only one room, which served as both workroom and bedroom. On one side of the same was a bed, and oh what a poor bed that was: a straw sack laid on two wooden supports and some boards and a couple of rough blankets was all that she used for her night's rest, just like all the other Sisters,. The workroom, i.e. that section of the room which served as a workroom, was furnished only with a writing desk and a couple of simple chairs. There was absolutely nothing in it that could be called comfortable.

She was just as simple in regard to the food. She shared the same frugal meals that we Sisters had and never allowed the slightest exception, even though her age and the onset of illness would have made that advisable. This made an even deeper impression on us as we all knew in what circumstances she had been born and brought up. We had a detailed list of the laundry to be distributed every Saturday. I was directress of the wardrobe for nine months and, immediately on taking over this office, I was told that I should not give Rev. Mother more changes of clothing than the other sisters, even though a more frequent change of clothing in the heat of summer would have been really refreshing for her.

She was zealous for the maintenance of simplicity and candour. When I was still a novice in Tivoli, some disorder in this respect crept in. Our mistress, who was at the same time the superior, let trusted Sisters bring food to her room and ate it in a small adjacent room. On the day of my profession, I was with our Mistress in order to thank her when Rev. Mother came in. She went directly to the adjacent room and, when she saw the food, asked for whom and why these things were there. She gave her a sharp telling off about it and also said that, if she had to make an exception, she should

do this at table and not hide away. The first was a practice of humility, the latter a bad example.

She was humble, and never let us feel that she herself had been born and brought up in better circumstances and a higher social class. She was extremely simple in her dealings with us and never condescending, which in certain circumstances can be hurtful, but she was simple and natural adapting to the level of our formation.

In the degree of self-humiliation, she went very far. For example, she did things in order to direct the scorn of others onto herself. Her conduct and actions in this regard always reminded me of the self-humiliations we read about in the lives of some saints.

She was very happy when peace and harmony reigned in the foundations. She liked to visit the houses within reach when the difficulties connected with her duties weighed her down, in order to cheer herself up through the experience of this harmony. She looked after the sisters with a motherly love. I once had the opportunity to see what love she had for the sisters. It was at the time when the mission station of Assam was destroyed by an earthquake. She received the first news of the disaster from the Rev. Fathers. She was quite beside herself for sorrow, ran several times a day to the Rev. Fathers trying to obtain more news, she gave herself no rest, didn't want to eat, and when the sisters tried to console her she only said: "O, just let me, you cannot imagine how my poor motherly heart feels, my poor children". One could see how she was suffering for and with the poor Sisters.

She was averse to everything spiritless, she wanted to see in her sisters the strength she possessed herself, the strength of self-conquest and the spirit of sacrifice.

Sister M. Claveria Stadler¹⁰⁸

Portage, Wis., March 19, 1941

¹⁰⁸ Confirmed under oath before witnesses

S. Clementine (Anna) Benz¹⁰⁹



* 11.07.1877 in Bräunlingen, Arch-Diocese of Freiburg, Germany
Entered: 11.01.1899 in Rome
Invested: 03.07.1899 and
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 03.07.1900 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome
from 1910 in Hungary and Austria
+ 07.07.1962 in Vienna, Austria

Short remarks about the life of Rev. Mother Mary of the Apostles, during my stay in Rome

Above all, she was a good, loving mother. Rev. Mother was very concerned for the sick, all the directives of the doctor had to be observed exactly in spite of the poverty which we experienced in Rome at that time. She prayed much for the sick however, the angel of death snatched away a number of sisters. Our Rev. Mother once said: "The sisters who have passed away will pray much for us before the throne of God."

If postulants or young sisters went out with Rev. Mother, she often asked the sisters: "What were you thinking about just now?" When necessary, Rev. Mother would give a good lecture in regard to the reply. In the presence of Rev. Mother, I once took holy water from the holy water stoup. Then Rev. Mother asked me, "What were you thinking of while you were doing that?" My answer to that was: "O Lord, wash me clean from my sins, etc." Rev. Mother was content with that.

Rev. Mother liked to ask about our thoughts and desires so that she could get to know our minds. All our work had to have a purpose. Every Sister had to learn something useful in order to

¹⁰⁹ ASDS, E-17

save souls or help with the decoration of church and vestments. Whosoever had a talent for music or singing could practice it right away. Rev. Mother herself obtained the necessary material. Once I did not have a book to teach needlework. Rev. Mother went into town straight away, even though it was raining, and brought one for me.

Rev. Mother did not avoid any effort or expense in order to provide us with knowledge and religious virtues.

Sor.D.S. Clementina Benz¹¹⁰

Vienna XXI, February 4, 1941



Hospital in Obesce, Hungary

¹¹⁰ Confirmed under oath before witnesses

S. Cleofa (Anna) Rupp¹¹¹



* 20.03.1868 in Fraulautern,
Diocese of Trier, Germany
Entered: 23.10.1895 in Rome
Investment: 05.02.1896 and
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 08.02.1897 in Tivoli
From 26.12.1899 in Vienna, Austria
+ 14.10.1946 in Vienna

Memories of our Rev. Mother and Co-Foundress

Regarding the religious practices, I recall that she was seldom missing at them or at recreation.

On feastdays of Our Lady, she did all in her power that they were celebrated with the greatest possible solemnity. On special feasts of many saints, she honoured them by going on foot to the holy places, even though the way to St. Paul's, to the Holy Stairs, etc. was difficult. She was much concerned to bring the Sisters to the same reverence.

She was very devoted to the Holy Father. Whenever possible, she took Sisters with her to an audience.

She had great respect and love for our Ven. Father and Founder. When he came to the Motherhouse for investment or profession ceremonies, the entrance and steps were decorated. When he left, she called all the Sisters to come together to hear his fatherly words and to receive his blessing.

She practiced holy poverty in a very strict way. Everything regarding her room and furniture was simple. I never saw anything that I thought was unsuitable for a religious. I never saw her make

¹¹¹ ASDS, E-18

an exception at table. God be thanked, I never saw or heard that she was sick. At table, e.g. for coffee, we only had glasses. In the bedrooms, we had small oil lamps. One of these had to be sufficient for two large rooms.

She accepted the Cross and heavy blows with resignation. Some Sisters had to come back from the mission in Akyab¹¹², and this was a great sorrow for her, but she accepted it calmly and with submission to God's holy will.

S. Cleopha



The Chapel at
Vienna, Feldgasse

¹¹² cf. M. Mary's Diary, SHS 2.13, Book 3, p. 46

S. Columba (Barbara) Kohlmann¹¹³



* 25.12.1876 at Großbuchfeld,
Diocese of Bamberg, Germany
Entered: 06.12.1893 in Tivoli
Invested: 23.01.1894 and
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 29.01.1895 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome
from Feb. 1899 in the USA
+ 01.07.1951 in St. Nazianz, Wis.
USA

St. Peter's School
Sisseton, South Dakota

Events under our first Superior General "Mother Mary of the Apostles"

Family spirit

She received new entrants with great love. At recreation, it was mostly the new ones who grouped themselves around Rev. Mother. She then talked with great patience and affability with the mostly simple country girls who had great difficulty in conversing in anything other than their own dialect. Mother Mary of the Apostles, with her first class upbringing, sat in the middle in order to listen with great interest, and also sometimes with amusement, to our childlike chatter. What that meant for her, we now understand better than we did then. Rev. Mother repeated over and over again, you must be "childlike", not "childish".

She loved to have simple, straightforward souls around her, especially when she was worried. And worry weighed down on her, even if it was only concern regarding the provision of daily bread. We were 74 Sisters, all young and healthy, who sat down at table with good appetites. Every bite had to be well bought and paid. We had no arable land and no real income from any source. On the contrary, the mission in Assam still needed help.

¹¹³ ASDS, E-19

In spite of the short commons, Rev. Mother never omitted to supervise the meals. Now and then, it happened that a Sister who was too modest or too mortified had to eat more afterwards in holy obedience. Mother Mary of the Apostles wanted healthy, not sick, Sisters. Through referring to the wise saying of the Greeks: 'A healthy soul lives in a healthy body', she tried to teach us common sense and to use it. The same held true for recreation. Woe to the Sister who tried to substitute the time for recreation with pious day-dreaming or study. At the first opportunity, she received a strong reprimand and even a salutary penance.

Rev. Mother thought much of the golden mean and everything "extraordinary" seemed suspect to her. We all knew this and were careful not to do anything for "show".

Regretfully, the following happened to me: One day, on the way to chapel, I decided to pray the Office better than usual (that was an exception on that memorable day as I usually ran when the bell rang without thinking too much.) We had hardly begun the Office when the trouble began. And the worst of it was that I was close to Rev. Mother who didn't miss anything. The Office had only just begun when someone from behind pulled on my sleeve above the elbow as if wanting to attract my attention. Without any doubt, I turned round but then saw to my great alarm that there was no-one behind me. Rather nervously, I continued praying the Office but the same disturbance repeated itself, only this time more strongly. By now my devotion had disappeared and I reflected on ways to keep myself calm in order not to be observed. I think it was only fear of Rev. Mother that held me back from shouting out loud. I continued to pray with my arms pressed close to my side as if I were in a straight jacket. All went well for a while, then I felt as if someone had [touched] my bare skin with the hand. I got up! And with one bound I was out of the door. But Rev. Mother was just as quick as I and was at my heels.

I wanted to investigate. It seemed to me that my dress was moving as if something was beneath it, but the investigation was swiftly brought to an end. At the double! Inside! She brought me back to

my place as quickly as I had left it. Used to obedience, I forgot what had happened and prayed on without fear in the knowledge that nothing could harm me.

But when we were almost finished, a horrible animal shot out of my sleeve. Now I realised that the trouble had still been with me but had done nothing more than make its departure known toward the end of the Office. Rev. Mother tried to make me believe that it had been nothing more than a mouse but I said "No! No! It wasn't a mouse, it was a very horrible animal." That was too much "imagination". In order to cure me, I had to bring many a sacrifice from then on.

Prudence

I was hardly out of the novitiate when my parents sent a request to Ven. Father through the parish priest, in order to get permission for a home visit for me. Such a thing was a great exception at that time. In addition, I was only just 19 years old. Ven. Father left the decision to Rev. Mother. I myself was not aware of the whole thing. Rev. Mother called me to her to find out how strong my vocation was. She greeted me with the words: "S. Columba, would you like to go home?" I felt as if the sky had fallen in and was full of fear that one wanted to send me away. I fell at the feet of Rev. Mother, clung to her and asked that I could stay. My fate was decided straight away. As a 19 year-old, I received the unasked privilege of going home without a companion for three weeks to be present at the first communion of one of my sisters. This was an incredible fact for which I was much envied.

As we slowly began to accept missions and sisters were chosen for the missions, Rev. Mother used a praiseworthy trick. Everyone knows that not all sisters have equal talents or virtues and it is only human to hope for companions with the same aptitudes and, if possible, with excellent virtues. Rev. Mother knew how to discover virtues in sisters who had limited talents and to attribute virtues to them, so that she even put them forward as an example to the others. So it came about that the sisters began the enterprise in good spirits.

Rev. Mother knew no human respect and avoided no humiliation. She used every opportunity to teach the sisters. One good opportunity was the daily walk. Since we had no garden, the daily walk became a necessary evil in order to remain healthy. During this, there was much to be learned, not only regarding behaviour but also in regard to historical events. Rev. Mother wanted us to ask many questions and she herself tried to learn from everyone as far as possible. It was all the same to her who gave the information; it could be a professor or a beggar.

For my part, I was very interested in everything concerning the Freemasons. When we encountered Roman soldiers and I thought the crest on the headgear was a sign of the Freemasons, I asked for information. Rev. Mother said: "If one comes again, tell me." It wasn't long before we encountered another. Rev. Mother stood before him to look at the crest and I, for my part, would have liked to sink into the ground, but that meant nothing to her. She knew what she wanted and let nothing interfere with that.

Rev. Mother submitted to all the directives of our Founder in humble obedience. It was always a happy occasion to have Ven. Father with us for vows or investment, which happened several times a year. I can still today vividly see Rev. Mother before me triumphantly kissing his habit, a ceremony that he himself had not asked for. On such occasions he remarked: "We must all become saints, even if not canonised, that costs too much money."

Piety

Rev. Mother hated piety done for show. Her motto was: "Duty first and foremost." She gave permission for a prayer book, a rosary and the scapular of Mount Carmel; all other objects of piety were regarded as being unnecessary and were put aside. We should pray from the heart as much as possible. Novenas were always short and to the point. However, it was her wish that sisters who were destined for the missions had a good knowledge of the holy places in Rome. We should take the spirit of Rome to the missions with us. We should tell others about things we had seen ourselves, and not just what we had read in books.

Poverty

“One habit and one God.” We didn’t have two items of clothing. Permission for each stitch had to be obtained beforehand. If much mending was required, the sister concerned wasn’t allowed to do it herself but this had to be done by another in order to give the sister no opportunity to think more about herself than about others. Work for others should be done as if done for God.

S. M. Columba Kohlmann¹¹⁴

Sisseton, South Dakota, March 30, 1941



Sisseton, South Dakota, USA, Indian Mission

¹¹⁴ Confirmed under oath before witnesses

S. Dominica (Maria) Viereg ¹¹⁵



* 27.10.1870 in Berglern,
Archdiocese of Munich, Germany
Entered: 26.11.1891 in Tivoli
Investment: 21.12.1891 and
novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 04.01.1893 in Tivoli
On 11.08.1893 to Ecuador,
returning to Rome two years later
due to the outbreak of revolution
Aug. 1896–1904 in Drognens, CH
From 1904 General Assistant and for
some time superior in the Motherhouse
From January 1906 in the USA
+ 03.01.1946 in Portage, Wis., USA

Portage, Wis., March 17, 1941

Memories of our dear Rev. Mother, First Superior General

In my view, Mother Mary of the Apostles was a strong, manly woman. I have often been edified by the great patience she showed toward us young Sisters. For the most part, we were simple country girls. I never saw her upset no matter how awkwardly we behaved. She made continual efforts to teach us.

Although she humiliated us often, she was never hurtful and I was always glad about the humiliation. She often said: "I want strong, self-sacrificing Sisters who can suffer something. Those who are over-sensitive, and those who think only of themselves, are not suitable for the apostolic activity to which we are called".

She was also very loving and affable. At recreation, we formed a circle. She then sat in our midst and liked to tell us about the missions, the activity of the Congregation, the work and sacrifices of the Sisters, and of how we ourselves should be happy to bring sacrifices in order to do good, to promote the glory of God, to help our neighbour and to become holy. When we occasionally played like children, she was sincerely happy about it but she never laughed out loud.

¹¹⁵ ASDS, E-20

She was exact in the observance of the holy Rule. She loved holy poverty and practised it a lot. If one wanted to give her something nicer, she simply said: "If I had wanted that, I would have stayed at home where I had everything". She would have no exceptions made for herself. In her poor, small room, there was a poor writing desk, two plain chairs and a miserable bed.

She adhered strictly to holy obedience and obeyed Ven. Father and Founder like a child. She had a deep love for Holy Church and submitted to it in humble obedience. In general, she spoke about all priests only with the greatest reverence.

In her advanced years, her humility, obedience and fortitude were severely tested. I was myself a witness to this and will mention just one of her more difficult sacrifices. One day, Ven. Founder came and asked to call her to the parlour. As local superior, I had to go as well. In my presence, Ven. Father then forbade her to hold the customary chapter of faults and gave that task to me. The motherly heart of this strong woman, who was accustomed to heroic obedience and renunciation, seemed to break at this sacrifice and she sighed out loud: "And I should no longer educate my children but let them be taught by a child!" (It has to be said that I was still very young at that time.) However, the first sorrow overcome, she again showed the humility of a strong woman. After I had carried out this so very difficult task for the first time, she took me lovingly by the arm and asked in a motherly way: "Did it go well?"

At times, especially when they came from her own spiritual daughters, the tests were so difficult that she suffered with the Savior in the Garden of Olives and doubted that she could continue to drink from the chalice. She then no doubt wished that she was back again in the quiet Benedictine convent at Liège where she had enjoyed so much consolation and joy when she was young. However, Mother Mary of the Apostles bore it and drained the chalice the Father had given her right to the dregs.

Sister Maria Dominika Vieregg ¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ Confirmed under oath before witnesses

S. Eleonora (Elisabeth) Wetzel¹¹⁷



*27.09.1869 in Bräunlingen,
Diocese of Freiburg, Germany
Entered: 26.11.1901 in Rome
Investment: 02.07.1902 in Rome
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 03.07.1903 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome
from March 1904 in the USA
+ 11.6.1943 in St. Nazianz, Wis., USA

I once went on a long walk with Rev. Mother. During this it happened that dear Rev. Mother stood still and said: "I cannot go any further. I don't know what I have in my shoes." – That day, Rev. Mother took the opportunity to visit a saint in a chapel. – We sat on the steps and Rev. Mother took her shoes off. Her entire foot was covered with blood due to the nails in the shoes. I looked for a stone, knocked the nails back and then we went on again. She even was happy on this occasion.

Written by Sister Eleonora

¹¹⁷ ASDS. E-21

S. Emilia (Elisabeth) Hoffmann¹¹⁸



* 27.10.1882 in Flamke,
Diocese of Paderborn, Germany
Entered: 20.03.1907 in Romel
Investment: 03.11.1907 and
Novitiate in Rome
Vows: 03.11.1908 in Rome
afterwards first in Rome and
then in Belgium
+ 10.07.1954 in Hasselt, Belgium

Hasselt, October 15, 1940

[...] Now, in order to fulfil the wish of dear Rev. Mother, something about our dear late Rev. Mother Mary,

I am only sorry that I can remember only very little and didn't pay enough attention. We entered in March and death took dear Rev. Mother away from us in December. I only know that she often called for us new entrants in order to see how we were getting on. Then, I could observe her great love of truth. Right on the first morning, Rev. Mother asked if we had slept well. I, ill at ease as I was, didn't trust myself to say the whole truth and said right away: "Well". But then S. Rafaela said that she hadn't slept so well as the bed was somewhat hard. Rev. Mother was very pleased that she was open about it and praised her for that.

Rev. Mother was already often ill at the time but in spite of that we had to go to her repeatedly and she asked us about everything. Perhaps she felt that we would be the last children she herself would admit. I also remember that the investment was to be put off until January but the good Mother had no peace, we had to be invested earlier on November 3, 1907 and so we really were the last postulants who were invested during the lifetime of Rev. Mother.

I'm sorry that I cannot give any more information. [...]

S. Emilia

¹¹⁸ ASDS, E-22

S. Fabiana (Emilie) Kerzel¹¹⁹



*28.09.1877 in Katowice, Diocese of
Breslau, Germany [now Poland]
Entered: 25.05.1905 in Rome
Investment: 12.02.1906 and
novitiate in Rome
Vows: 12.02.1907 in Rome
afterwards in Rome
from August 1908 in the USA
+ 07.03.1963 in St. Nazianz, Wis.,
USA

Some facts regarding the life of Mother Mary of the Apostles - first Superior General

Our dear Rev. Mother Mary of the Apostles had such great respect for each servant of God, the priests of Holy Church. For a while, we went to weekly confession in the church of "Santo Spirito". Once, as we postulants left the church, Mother Mary and a companion Sister met us. She stopped us and enquired: "Who is sitting in the confessional?" – We thought she wanted to know the name of the priest who was hearing confessions. We replied: "Rev. Father Thomas". Then Rev. Mother said with fervour: "No, it's not Father Thomas but Jesus Christ who is sitting in the confessional." – We understood what she wanted to say, thanked her and went on our way.

Rev. Mother seemed to me to be full of religious zeal and humility in everything. – When I was permitted to accompany her to St. Peter's, we first went to the altar of the Blessed Sacrament; she prayed there with such recollection and fervour that one could learn from her how to pray with devotion and recollection. Then we went around in St. Peter's: to the sitting statue of St. Peter. There, in order to gain the indulgence, she kissed the feet of St. Peter with such grace and humility as if St. Peter was really sitting there. – After that, we went to the Confessio (grave of St. Peter) and there

¹¹⁹ ASDS, E-23

[Rev.] Mother always reminded us that we should pray much for Holy Church. One was always aware that she was totally filled with holy faith.

After that, we received the penitential touch from the confessional rod in St. Peter's. There Rev. Mother advised me to make an act of perfect contrition in order to receive the indulgence. Rev. Mother did everything with zeal, faith and humility. – She knelt for a long time at the altar of Our Lady; she had a lot to pray for there. When we then came out of St. Peter's, it seemed as if we came out from another world.

Concerning holy poverty and mortification, one can say with certainty that she practised everything conscientiously and perfectly. She was so unconcerned for herself. She didn't allow anyone to give her different food as an exception although, when I knew her, this would not have been remarkable as she had much stomach trouble at that time and could no longer eat all of the food provided for the community. For example: "One feastday, Sister Johanna placed a piece of chicken on a small dish for her at the midday meal. Rev. Mother couldn't see well any more by then. She touched it with her fingertips and felt that it wasn't the usual meat. She sat up and asked: "What is that?" The sister on her left said: "Rev. Mother, it is from a young chicken, please eat it." But Rev. Mother pushed the meat aside and said angrily: "What, chicken especially for me? Has Sister Amalia [Minges], the dear sick Sister Amalia, got chicken as well? Then take it away right now and bring it to dear good sick Sister Amalia." Sister Johanna had to carry out the order immediately. – Rev. Mother took only that which was prepared for all the Sisters.

In the months just before she had to take to her bed, she took only a little soup at the evening meal. – Once, Sister Johanna, who was the procurator and cared for all Rev. Mother's needs, went out in the afternoon and returned quite late. Rev. Mother spent a long time on the loggia in the afternoon, where she sometimes sat or walked up and down while praying and meditating. She suffered very much on some days at that time. Just then, I was working on the loggia. Rev. Mother appeared to be very recollected and I didn't like to disturb her by talking to her. After the sun had gone down and it was dark, I had to go downstairs for a while and when I

returned to put everything in order Rev. Mother asked me: "Where is Sister Johanna? I would like a little supper." (Rev. Mother was so weak and pale that I felt very sorry for her.) I said: "I will call Sister Johanna" and I ran down to tell her. Sister began to cry and said: "I forgot all about Rev. Mother". I ran quickly back to Rev. Mother so that she would not be alone. Sister Johanna came up soon afterwards and brought Rev. Mother her evening meal: there was some barley soup in a little bowl, a very simple, everyday soup. I asked Sister if she didn't have anything different for Rev. Mother. Then she cried and said that Rev. Mother could no longer take anything else, it was the only thing she could enjoy. I said I thought there were many other things that were good for the stomach. However, Sister Johanna said that Rev. Mother didn't want anything else. Rev. Mother was so humble in her conduct as if she had asked for too much. She was so patient and didn't reprove Sister. She was not annoyed at being kept waiting so long and being forgotten.

At that moment, Rev. Mother struck me as being so noble, so deserving of respect. I clearly recognized her great generosity, humility and mortification. Whoever was aware of her social class and knew of her sacrifice and saw her venerable appearance was deeply moved by her self-sacrifice and self-control.



Mother Mary, S. Crescentia and a pilgrim in the Holy Year 1900

During her final months, Reverend Mother was richly endowed with bodily suffering but, in spite of her suffering and pain, she always thought about the Sisters. It happened that the little Sister Creszentia died. She died very peacefully during the night without any death agony. A few minutes earlier, this Sister said: "Now I shall sleep well." She turned her head on one side and, after a little while, she was dead. Rev. Mother loved this Sister very much and, because she was very ill, no-one wanted to tell her right away that Sister Creszentia had died. The next morning, Mother Mary asked the other Sisters: "Why don't you want to tell me that Sister Creszentia is dead? I know very well that she died during the night!"

I was looking after Sister's body when Sister Elisabeth came into the room and spoke about this. There were still other Sisters in the room and they said: "No-one could have told Rev. Mother because no-one was allowed to go in to her this morning." I still see before me the amazed faces of the Sisters. No-one could give an explanation for what had happened.

During the days immediately before her death, one or two of the younger Sisters took turns at staying with Rev. Mother. We could then see and learn from her patience. She had such large bed-sores; they were as large as two palms of the hand placed next to each other. There were large areas of raw skin and how painful such wounds are when the skin is missing. I was shocked when I saw it and asked how it was that Rev. Mother came to have such wounds. Sister Elisabeth said: "That is just it. Rev. Mother didn't let anyone do things for her. It was only when she became so helpless that the Sisters could see to it." One could notice how embarrassing it was for Rev. Mother that she had to be treated by others; but she humbly submitted to everything.

She held the cross in her hands all the time, clasped it and kissed it so often and prayed: "Everything for you, O Jesus. Everything out of love for you." I also saw how she shook with pain and nevertheless bore everything with great patience. She didn't complain or groan. She remained still and let everything that was necessary be done. If the dear God had not so ordered it that other persons had to act, no-one would have known prior to her death that Rev. Mother suffered from such wounds. I think it was a sharing in our dear Saviour's 10th Station of the Cross.

Appendix

When Rev. Mother was still active and able to get around, she was always concerned, it seems to me, to destroy self-will in us Sisters. One year, it was a very hot summer in Rome. I found the heat unbearable. Everything I could take off, I did. I took off my stockings as well and, because I worked in the kitchen, I thought: "Oh, no-one will see it". In the course of the morning, I had to go upstairs and as I was about to go, Ven. Father, our Founder, and Rev. Mother came in at the door and were soon at the stairs. I wanted to go back and wait until Ven. Father and Rev. Mother had passed. But Rev. Mother said: "Sister, you go on up". I was embarrassed and said: "Oh, Rev. Mother, I can wait, I can go after you". She said right away: "No, No, just go on ahead". Then I said in my perplexity: "Rev. Mother, I haven't got any stockings on." Ven. Father laughed and Rev. Mother said: "That doesn't matter, the dear Saviour didn't wear any stockings either!"

On another occasion, the feast of the Portiuncula, I stood at the open cooking stove preparing milk rice. That was always a job one had to stay at until all was finished. One hand was occupied with fanning using a fan made of turkey feathers, and the other with holding down the cover over the rice – so that it would not get covered with black dust – or with stirring it continually with one hand so that it wouldn't burn. It often splattered out of the large pan and then black charcoal dust often fell on the spots that reached our collars. For this reason, I always wore a very old collar on these occasions. I wasn't quite finished with the cooking when Rev. Mother came into the kitchen in the late afternoon and asked: "Sister, have you already prayed the Portiuncula indulgence?" I said "No, Reverend Mother. I will finish this and then go to the church." At that, she said: "No, go right away." I pushed the pan to one side with the intention of going, but I wanted to put a clean collar and other shoes on first. Reverend Mother noticed this and didn't allow me to change but said: I should go as I was.

It was no small sacrifice for me to go in that condition to the assigned church, which could only be reached by going through very crowded streets. However, I quickly accepted the situation and went, but in what a condition! I thought that no one could miss seeing the dirt and so I held both hands across my chest in order

to cover the dirty collar. I walked very quickly. I wanted to prevent others seeing my condition but then I became aware that no-one was taking any notice. I was so happy about this, and then: a well-built country woman passed by with a boy about twelve years old. He made a remark about me to this woman and she said: "Il sante"¹²⁰. I had to laugh to myself thinking if only she knew what kind of a one! During the evening recreation, I told about this little happening. All the Sisters laughed and Rev. Mother said it is better that the people speak in this way than otherwise.

In some other situations, Rev. Mother was totally different. At that time, I was a candidate. On a fast day in the summer, we went to visit one of the main churches with our mistress. It was terribly hot that afternoon and I had such a great thirst. A water-sprinkler cart came along the road and, where the road dipped a little, it filled up with water. Right away, a lot of sparrows flew down to quench their thirst. Jokingly, I said to the other candidates: "I envy the sparrows. I am so very thirsty that I could also drink out of the potholes here". Our mistress heard this but said nothing. When we reached home, Rev. Mother was just about to go out. She asked us where we had been. We told her and our mistress added that it was so hot outside and we were so thirsty. Rev. Mother was very sorry and said: "Oh, no. That shouldn't be. We newcomers are not used to the climate and that could do us harm. They should give us something to drink". She turned to us and said: "Come!" She took us into the refectory and told the sister refectorian to give all of us a good refreshing drink. We young Sisters were not allowed to keep the fast so very strictly. We were told this was because of the malaria. From time to time, there were young Sisters who suffered from malaria, but not for long.

During the time of my novitiate, it was rather cold on some days during the winter; there was even snow. We novices took care of doing the laundry. In the Italian way, we banged the wash in the cold water of the spring and were looking forward to the snow. Through signs, the message was conveyed from one to another that there would be a snowball fight during recreation. However,

¹²⁰ Italian. Correct: "la santa" meaning "the saint"

what a disappointment!, at about 9 o'clock the sun shone with such warmth that all the snow disappeared before our eyes. – But we noticed that along the wall of the novitiate, wherever the shadow of the roof fell, there was a little snow left. As soon as the bell gave the sign for recreation, we ran into the courtyard and enjoyed ourselves as we wanted, so that we did not hear the chapel bell calling us to pray the Office. All at once, we remembered that it was long past the time to be in chapel. We ran quickly and, in our hurry, we did not notice that we were making a lot of noise. Rev. Mother was sitting near a window and asked S. Elisabeth, who was sitting nearby: "What is going on? What is happening?" Sister Elisabeth said in a whisper: "The novices have been throwing snowballs in the courtyard and are coming in like a couple of horses, laughing at the same time." I heard this clearly and looked over because I wanted to see what kind of reaction Rev. Mother would have. Then I saw that Rev. Mother was smiling and I was happy. Understandably, our novice mistress corrected us later and gave a small penance as well. On the following day, Rev. Mother visited the novitiate. We asked pardon for our behaviour once again. But Rev. Mother said: "That doesn't matter". She was happy that we were cheerful and gay, and she was of the opinion that so long as the novices were happy and joyful all was well with them. However, if they begin to hang their heads, one would have to be afraid for them.

S. Fabiana Kerzel Sor.D.S.¹²¹

Milwaukee, Wis., April 14, 1941

¹²¹ Confirmed under oath before witnesses

S. Fabiola (Anna) Kerzel¹²²



* 10.8.1873 in Friedland, Diocese of Breslau, Germany
Entered: 22.10.1900 in Rome
Investment: 07.02.1901 in Rome
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 08.02.1902 in Tivoli afterwards in Rome
from 28.12.1904 in Belgium
from Sept. 1908 in the USA
+ 01.01.1961 in St. Nazianz, Wis., USA

Facts from the life of our dear Rev. Mother Mary of the Apostles, our first Superior General – the Sisters of the Divine. Saviour.

When I entered our dear Congregation in the Jubilee year 1900, our dear Rev. Mother often seemed very strange and remarkable to me, although I viewed her with the greatest respect. I could not understand her style of behaviour. Rev. Mother really took me to task. She often shook me when I didn't understand her. She frequently took me with her when she went out and when I couldn't understand her conversation and questions (one had, so to say, to think with her) she then often shook me on the street and treated me roughly so that I was afraid to go out with her. I often thought if only she would send me home again, but to the Saviour I said I won't go on my own account, only if you send me away. Actually, I didn't like Rev. Mother so very much and she didn't send me away either.

When the time came to go out with Rev. Mother, one had to leave work immediately and at times could not change clothing and shoes. Rev. Mother took us with her just as we were. We were a little ashamed at that, but our good Rev. Mother was not ashamed to go out with us like this.

¹²² ASDS, E-24

I was once with her at a big celebration in St. Peter's. Naturally, I wanted to have a good view of everything so I pushed forward a little. She was wearing spectacles at the time; she took them off and put them on me. But I could see even less with them on. Afterwards, she laughingly asked me if I had had a good view of everything. I was already a professed Sister by then.

Once, Rev. Mother sent me to Rev. Father Bonaventura. I was often accused and so it was also this time, but I could not think of a reason. Rev. Father said: "So, now you have already had your penance." He gave me a nice little picture of St. Francis de Sales and sent me home again with the remark: be calm and quiet.

I was a postulant for only three months and went to Tivoli very soon after the retreat and investment. Our dear Rev. Mother herself brought her new problem children there. She gave us the best lessons and admonitions. There, she was quite different, such a good, loving mother. She often came to Tivoli and we could hardly wait until she came again. After first profession, Rev. Mother took us to the Motherhouse in Rome – Via Lungara.

When we moved into the new Motherhouse, "St. Onofrio", and Rev. Mother arrived – that I will never forget – she threw herself to the floor, repeatedly kissed the stone floor, prayed for a long time and thanked God aloud for the great grace that we now had a Motherhouse that belonged to us.

I often saw that when Rev. Mother received the visit of a priest, she knelt down immediately and asked for a blessing.

Overpelt Factory (Belgium)



Some of our Sisters were assigned to go to Belgium and I was one of them. Rev. Mother herself taught us French because we would need that language there. She gave us these lessons with joy and with great love and patience.

When I returned to Rome from Belgium, I found Rev. Mother very ill in bed. I hurried to her and she hugged and welcomed me with great love, even though I had sometimes caused her sorrow through my conduct. I had the opportunity to visit her often during her final illness and because I was nursing little Sister Creszentia [Bebel], who was also very ill, I picked up the little Sister and we went to dear sick Rev. Mother. She was very happy when she could see the little sick Creszentel¹²³ and have her with her. She then gave her some biscuits and let us go again. She herself could no longer leave her sickroom.

In the novitiate and later in Rome, Rev. Mother told us a lot about the Congregation, the houses, the missions, the Sisters and their work, and she knew how to enthuse us in order to be able to send us out very soon as Sisters of the Divine Saviour to work for Him and to save souls.

On occasion, she said also that America would once be the refuge for us Sisters.¹²⁴

At Chapters, Rev. Mother also spoke with such calm, love and patience that one already began to look forward to the subsequent Chapter. In the final days of her illness, Rev. Mother seemed to suffer much. In her delirium, she continually prayed and counted. The then Rev. Father Pancratius said: "She is counting the Sisters." At Christmas, Fr. Odo [Distel] was in the Motherhouse, praying with and for Rev. Mother. Sisters changed off in staying with Rev. Mother and I had the happiness of being with her after the 1st Mass of Christmas with another Sister. As Rev. Father Odo began the second holy Mass and I was praying with Rev. Mother, I said to her: "Rev. Mother, the child Jesus is coming." She then became so joyfully excited, looked upwards and said: "Jesus" and, without any particular death agony, died so quickly. I was still holding her and she went so quickly to the child Jesus to whom she had had a special devotion. She lay there greatly changed from how she had been in her pain.

¹²³ Sister uses an affectionate form of the name.

¹²⁴ During the "Kulturkampf", after being deprived of their work, many German religious communities found refuge in the USA.

During the rest of the night, the sisters cried and prayed and I did as well – but then I fell asleep. I dreamed that Rev. Mother came, so noble and yet so full of love and kindness, and brought me a small dish full of sweet, white food. At first, I did not want to eat it but she said I must and so I ate it all. It was so sweet that I almost could not eat it. It seems to me that I can taste it even now. - Then, in the morning at about 4 o'clock, I received a telegram from my home in Silesia – my dear good mother had died. - So I lost my dear spiritual mother and my good mother at home. But our dear Rev. Mother had strengthened me with that special nourishment that I could pray more easily than cry.

Many prayers were said prior to the funeral of our beloved Rev. Mother. The Rev. Fathers S.D.S. also came, especially our dear Ven. Father with Fr. Bonaventura. They prayed beside the body for a long time. Yes, dear Rev. Mother has done much, suffered much and prayed much for us. Oh, may she soon receive the honour of the altar.

S. Fabiola Kerzel Sor.D.S.¹²⁵

[Milwaukee, Wis., April 14, 1941]

¹²⁵ Confirmed under oath before witnesses

S. Florentina (Anna) Dengler¹²⁶

Report 1



* 23.09.1882 in Robersdorf near Schlüsselau, Diocese of Bamberg, Germany
Entered: 19.02.1903 in Rome
Investment: 02.07.1903 and Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 03.07.1904 in Tivoli
Renewals of vows in the USA
Final Profession: 03.07.1910 in Wausau, Wis., USA
+ 27.09.1969 in Milwaukee, Wis., USA

Mother Mary of the Apostles always made a good impression on me. The first deep impression that I received was the loving admission and motherly reception at my entrance. Still on that same day, she went with us to the Motherhouse of the Rev. Salvatorian Fathers. On the way, she said to the candidate who was with me: "You must do much for the Congregation."

When I was a candidate, my mother came to Rome. When Rev. Mother heard this, she let me go to the station with a Sister to meet her. I was allowed to go out with my mother several times and Rev. Mother was very affable towards her. She possessed the virtue of gratitude to a high degree and wanted us to be thankful also. She saw to it that we wrote a letter of thanks straight away when we received something from home.

Mother Mary liked to go out with the candidates. On the way, she once told me how she prayed the rosary and meditated. If she could not hold a rosary in her hand while praying, she then counted the Aves by naming the nine choirs of angels and praying the 10th

¹²⁶ ASDS, E-25

with all the angels and saints. She also told me what she meditated by the individual mysteries.¹²⁷

[...] ¹²⁸ On one occasion, she went into a church with me. It was rather dark and Rev. Mother could no longer see well. She held onto my arm, otherwise she would have fallen. She was very grateful for that. Sometimes I asked her a question, but it was difficult to understand her. She sometimes asked me: "Did you understand me?" I replied: "Yes", to avoid hurting her although I had not understood much. When she took me with her to Fr. Bonaventura, I had to stand in a corner so that I could not hear what was said.

When one went out with her, one could see much evidence of her deep humility and her desire to be looked down on¹²⁹. The respect of persons meant nothing to her. She took no account of the judgement of others and wanted her spiritual daughters to be the same. Whoever observed Rev. Mother exactly and with pure intention had to admit that contempt on the part of others was always welcome to her and gave her great joy.

On one occasion, Rev. Mother came to Tivoli and I told her that she should rest a little. Then she answered: "I shall rest in the grave." I was very edified by her when she wore such a faded habit and lived such a poor and simple life.

She used to say that one could know a good Sister by the fact that she ate well, slept well and was happy at recreation. We took that as evidence of her genuine piety.

She had great joy when she received letters from Sisters in the missions. Whenever she could again send Sisters to the missions, she was full of enthusiasm. Letters from the missions had to be read at mealtimes so that all could hear them. She often said to us:

¹²⁷ Last sentence inserted from Report 2

¹²⁸ Paragraph omitted and a corresponding one inserted from Report 2

¹²⁹ cf. Glossary "Self contempt"

"Ask about the missions". We did, in fact, not yet know a great deal about the Congregation.¹³⁰

I greatly admired her devotion to the Infant Jesus and how simply and devoutly she prayed before the Child Jesus. I can also recall how she recommended devotion to the holy Apostle Jude Thaddeus to the Sisters.

I never saw her sleep at prayer. With childlike joy she played and sang hymns she had composed herself. She was utterly devoted to the most holy Sacrament of the altar.

Mother Mary of the Apostles had a great respect for priests. She greeted each one, whether young or old. Whenever she spoke to the Founder, she generally did so while kneeling. She showed amazing respect toward ecclesiastics of higher rank. She looked on it as a great grace when a Most Rev. Bishop came into the convent. The entire community was then called together as all her dear Sisters should receive the Bishop's blessing. When she wanted to give the sisters a very special joy, she took care to obtain an audience with the Holy Father or attendance at a Papal Mass for them on special occasions. Her adherence to Holy Church was very striking. With her entire soul, she was a child of Holy Church.

In my opinion and understanding, Mother Mary of the Apostles must be a great saint.

Sister Florentina Dengler

Wausau, Wis., March 16, 1941

Addition

from Report 2¹³¹

The second impression when Sister Galla and I arrived at the Motherhouse was that we had to have a midday meal straight

¹³⁰ Last sentence inserted from Report 2

¹³¹ ASDS, E-25a

away and dear Rev. Mother served both of us with large platefuls of chestnuts and was happy that we ate so well. Then she went with us to introduce us to Fr. Bonaventura. On the way there she said: "But dear candidate Maria (Sister Galla), you have to do a lot for the Congregation yet". Fr. Bonaventura gave us his blessing and was pleased. [...]

Our Rev. Mother had a grateful heart and she wanted others to be grateful as well. As soon as I received my inheritance, she said straightaway: "Candidate Anna, thank your brother".

Once, as was our custom, I took holy water when I entered the chapel and then sprinkled a little on the floor for the poor souls. Rev. Mother saw it and gave me a good push so that I staggered almost halfway down the corridor. I had to laugh about it and didn't take offence.

When I was selected to go to America, I went to Rev. Mother, showed her what I had in my folder and asked what I might take along. She said that I should take the photographs of my sisters along and when I would be on the ocean throw them into the sea. In obedience, I followed her instructions exactly and did so, but it was quite a sacrifice for me.

That is the most of what I can remember. I was always edified by Rev. Mother and had great respect for her. I hope that this redounds to the glory of God and the honour of our dear Rev. Mother and Foundress.

Written by Sister Florentina

S. Fridolina (Barbara) Mayer¹³²



* 25.12.1867 in Herxheim,
Diocese of Würzburg, Germany
Entered: 25.09.1897 in Rome
Investment: 20.02.1898 and
novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 20.02.1899 in Tivoli
April 1899 to Rome
from June 1900 in Hungary
+ 25.01.1951 in Gyon, Hungary

I will now share some remembrances regarding dear Rev. Mother Mary.

I didn't have the good fortune of staying long in the dear Mother-house and having contact with Rev. Mother. However, in the short time [I was there] I came to admire her virtues. Her humility in particular. In spite of her noble ancestry, she was like a simple Sister among the Sisters, although she possessed so many talents.

Her obedience toward Holy Church and our Ven. Founder to whom she submitted with childlike trust.

I never noticed anything petty about her. She always went ahead with courage and full of trust.

Her spirit of prayer was more an interior life of prayer. Her love of God and the Sisters. She dealt in such a motherly way with the Sisters. She readily excused the Sisters' mistakes and she didn't refer to them again. She was glad when the Sisters were cheerful.

She loved holy poverty and practised it very much. Her self-sacrifice in this was so great that, in spite of the deprivation she must have felt at times, she was joyful and resigned to God's will.

Dear Rev. Mother stands in my mind as a great soul, blessed by God.

S. Fridolina

¹³² ASDS, E-26

S. Gabriela (Apollonia) Bonheim¹³³



* 15.10.1868 in Soyen, Diocese of Munich, Germany
Entered 29.04.1891 in Tivoli
Investment: 24.05.1891 and Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 24.05.1892 in Tivoli
From Nov. 1894 in Rome
In Jan. 1896 to Assam
Returned at start of World War I
+ 30.12.1952 in Börwang, Germany
Her brothers were Fr. Corbinian and Fr. Ephrem Bonheim SDS.

Extract from the life of our late Rev. Mother.

My humble self was with Rev. Mother for five years, so I could be personally convinced of her life of virtue. In the first place, I make mention of her love of poverty. She held to this even in the smallest details. If there was still room to write a word on a small piece of paper we were not allowed to throw it away.

She was so simple and poor in all things. Her room in Tivoli was the former kitchen and it was a small room with only a desk, a bed and a chair. We had no income and we were 50 Sisters in all so one had to be sparing with everything. In Tivoli, we froze and were hungry as nowhere before.

As the second virtue, her wonderful humility shines out. Although as the daughter of a Baron she was rich and well-to-do, she renounced everything. When we went into the churches of Rome, she knelt in a corner on the ground. She also gave us Sisters a lot of practice in humility. She said: "If a Sister is truly humble, I can send her to every new foundation and every country. She will do great things everywhere."

¹³³ ASDS, E-27

She liked foreign languages and music very much and also had the Sisters educated in these subjects.

She was as obedient as a child toward Ven. Father and devoted to our Congregation.

Dear Rev. Mother was motherly toward all the Sisters and cared for them faithfully in days of sickness and of health.

S. M. Gabriela

Vienna XXI, February 4, 1941

Addition¹³⁴
from Report 2

Excerpt from the life of our Rev. Mother

My humble self was permitted to be with Rev. Mother and live under her direction for five years.

The main virtue that I admired in her was a great respect for holy poverty.

Our Congregation had been in existence for just three years when I entered. It must have been a great sacrifice for Rev. Mother, as the daughter of a Baron, to accept such a contrast in food, clothing and housing as there was in Tivoli at that time. Rev. Mother used just the same things as we Sisters did. There was no exception made for her. She was careful with and saved everything, even the smallest things, such as thread, pens, soap, etc.

Rev. Mother led the way for us by good example. Rev. Mother was all and everything to us. At my time, she was Superior General, local superior and novice mistress. We were only 25 Sisters but there were soon 50. Postulants entered every month. That was a great worry for Rev. Mother as we had no work and no income.

¹³⁴ ASDS, E-27a

Rev. Mother had a strong heart full of heroic spirit and trust in God. She also loved the Congregation so very much and she was devoted to dear Ven. Father with childlike submission and obedience.

Her humility was great and to be admired. If Rev. Mother went alone to a church in Rome, she knelt in a corner on the ground. She also loved to see humility in us Sisters. She humiliated us always and at all times and wanted to impress a deep humility on us. She also had a great love for all the Sisters. In the night, she herself got up and brought medicine to a Sister's bedside. Whether it was toothache or sore throat, Rev. Mother was called.

She also had a great spirit of prayer and greatly loved the dear little Jesus. Because of that, she was allowed to die during Christmas night.

Dear Rev. Mother was very sharing. She told us everything. If she heard of a new foundation or something else while she was with the Rev. Fathers, she told us about it immediately. It was like a real family. We felt like children with their mother.

Sometimes, before we went to chapel after evening recreation, Rev. Mother made a small cross on the foreheads of some Sisters. We liked that and it made us very happy.

Rev. Mother liked it when Sisters were alert and when we understood her look and desires right away. She couldn't stand quiet Sisters and called them sleepyheads.

When Sisters were sent to a new foundation, there was always a solemn farewell and we all cried. There was a great love among us, we were one heart and soul.

Rev. Mother also saw to it that the Sisters had a good knowledge of foreign languages, singing, music and teaching. Each Sister had to study German as well, so that letters were always correctly written.

Rev. Mother had letters, which came from Sisters elsewhere read in the refectory so that our interest in the Congregation would

grow, together with zeal and collaboration. She also had a good knowledge of human nature.

When I went to Assam, I always cried for Rev. Mother and looked from the ship in the direction of Rome. While I was in Assam, I received a letter every few months from Rev. Mother and she never forgot a nameday.



Laitkynsew in Assam – S. Gabriela, S. Evangelista and Fr. Dominikus Daunderer with orphan children

During her last illness, she told Rev. Fr. General she did not want a sermon preached at her funeral and that she wanted to have a very simple burial.

It happened that way as well. By chance, I was there myself as I was in Rome for the General Chapter of 1907.

I hope she will soon be beatified. I have not received any answer to prayers yet, but already five from our deceased Ven. Father

Her former spiritual daughter,
S. Gabriela

S. Galla (Maria) Linz¹³⁵



* 06.09.1884 in Pettstadt, Diocese of Bamberg, Germany
Entered: 19.02.1903 in Rome
Investment: 02.07.1903 and
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 03.07.1904 in Tivoli afterwards in Rome
Departure to the USA , 04.10.1904
+ 17.02.1965 in St. Nazianz, Wis., USA

Remembrances regarding Mutter Mary of the holy Apostles First Superior General

When I entered our Congregation on Feb. 19, 1903, our Rev. Mother's 70th birthday was being celebrated.

She received all new candidates with great motherly love. She had a noble character of great interior piety, great humility and obedience to an outstanding degree.

She loved and practised holy poverty most conscientiously. She often said that all was going well with the Congregation so long as we loved, practised and felt holy poverty. However, she wanted the Sisters to be neat and tidy in regard to their clothing. Disorderly or torn clothing was not an expression of holy poverty nor was the kind of saving which leads to a certain stinginess.

Our worthy Mother loved all her Sisters and rejoiced in their progress though she always knew how to master self-will and this was sometimes not so agreeable to one's own ego.

Our dear Mother had a deep devotion to the divine child Jesus, most especially in the holy time of Christmas. I was young in years and inexperienced in the spiritual life at that time, but I liked her

¹³⁵ ASDS, E-28

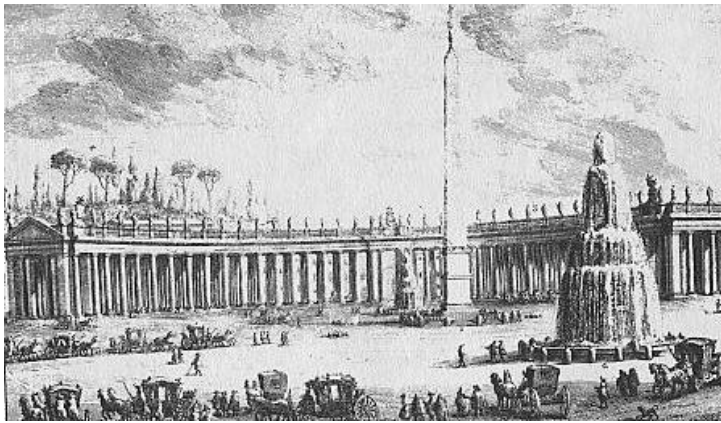
devout method of prayer; the way of praying from the heart. "You, dear little Jesus, admit all souls into heaven for you cannot be a strict judge today." That is also the reason for her holy death on the feast of Christmas. She admonished us always to remain childlike, that is, to be open, obedient and teachable.

I can still remember well how she spoke of silence at one Chapter [of faults]. It leads to holiness. Where Sisters observe silence, one feels in their presence that the angels are close by. Silence can be broken not only in speech and action but also in thought and in the heart.

Dear worthy Mother was a strong soul when confronted with sorrow and sacrifice. She didn't like outward sanctimony and said: "A religious Sister should pray always and everywhere. Work is also prayer when firmly united with the good intention." In recreation, she often asked how and what we were speaking about and whether it was edifying and useful.

S. Galla Linz Sor.D.S.¹³⁶

Milwaukee, Wis., April 14, 1941



Rome, St. Peter's Square, View towards the Gianicolo

¹³⁶ Confirmed under oath before witnesses

S. Genovefa (Theresia) Stienen¹³⁷

Letter



* 21.02.1885 In Exel, Belgium
Entered: 20.03.1907 in Rome
Investment: 03.11.1907 and
Novitiate in Rome
Vows: 03.11.1908 in Rome
then returned to Belgium
* 26.11.1957 in Hasselt, Belgium

Hasselt, October 16, 1940

[...] I will also carry out with joy Rev. Mother's request to write as much as I can remember regarding our late Rev. Mother Mary. As a postulant, I was permitted to accompany dear Rev. Mother to the Janiculum where she usually made her meditation before the 6.30 Mass. I must admit, this was a penance for me in the beginning. I then received some pushes when, for example, I wanted to let Rev. Mother have the better path or when I did not pay attention in other matters. But Rev. Mother had a noble heart and a moment afterwards she tried to make up for it and give me renewed courage. She observed me well on these occasions, surely in order to see if I could bear something. Sometimes she asked: "Aren't you angry?" To the reply: "Why should I be angry?", she said: "You know well enough why." Once, however, I could not hold it in and when she asked me once again, I replied straight out: "I don't know why Rev. Mother always pushes me." Then she could have hugged me and was full of praise that I had been so direct and honest.

Rev. Mother was so concerned about the newly arrived postulants. In the mornings, she got up from table in order to see if we had taken enough. Once, I had not drunk all my coffee. She asked why

¹³⁷ ASDS, E-29

not. I said that it was difficult for me to drink coffee with sugar. She then praised me for my sincerity. Milk had to be brought right away and, to my shame, we had milk with our coffee during the remainder of Lent as well.

I had the impression that Rev. Mother prayed constantly. I often saw her with a rosary in her hand or on her arm. In the mornings, when we sat on a bench on the Janiculum, I had to sit close to her. She did not like it if one acted affectedly or showed oneself to be fearful.

Then Rev. Mother asked me what I was doing with the book. When I said that it was my meditation book, she showed me the cross on her rosary and said: "This is the best meditation book, there isn't a better one, you must meditate on this."

Once I spoke with Rev. Mother about what was, to me, an unmerited correction but Rev. Mother wanted me to be obedient even when I thought I couldn't do a work. "Obedience above all", she said. "When you are working elsewhere later on, accept all that you have to bear in a spirit of faith. It is God who sends it to you."

Rev. Mother had a special reverence toward priests. How humbly she knelt to kiss the hand and to ask for a blessing. When ecclesiastics of higher rank came into the house, she called for us postulants. It was always a joy for her to present us to the clerical gentlemen.

On Holy Thursday, Rev. Mother sent us into the town in order to visit the "holy tomb" in the churches. On our return, we had to go to her immediately and [she] heard our accounts with obvious joy.

I never heard Rev. Mother complain nor observed something that she suffered but nevertheless, I watched Rev. Mother closely and also heard and saw things in the house that gave me the impression that her own sisters must have caused dear Rev. Mother to suffer without these knowing that they added to her sorrows.

Now, dear Rev. Mother, I do not know anything more. I have had this translated with the assistance of Rev. S. Emilia. [...]

S. Genoveva M. Sor.D.S.



Handwork class, Lommel in Belgium (1913)

S. Gonzaga (Colomba) Foglietti¹³⁸

Report 1



* 21.11.1874 in Santa Croce,
Diocese of Rieti, Italy
Entered: 08.12.1902 in Rome
Investment: 02.07.1903 and
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 03.07.1904 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome
+ 23.02.1953 in Meran, South Tyrol

Sister Gonzaga Foglietti, an eye-witness, confirms what she saw, heard and noticed regarding our Rev. Mother and Co-Foundress.

One day, Rev. Mother came to Torri in Sabina on Visitation. She loved to be with the sisters and while she sat in the kitchen, which was also the refectory, she looked around and said: "I am so happy to be in this poor kitchen for it represents the little house in Nazareth."

One day, she wrote a letter to me saying she would send us an Italian Sister, S. Norberta [Bufardecij]. She asked us to do much good and to sanctify the population, mainly through the spirit of poverty and good example but also, and in the first place, through doing all that Holy Church demands from religious.

I once asked her: "Rev. Mother, how can I nurse the sick as I have absolutely no preparation for this work?" And she answered with an expression of great love: "Give them much love, give them much love."

Altogether I noticed that she had a great spirit of faith, of humility, of love and much more of poverty. The others and I listened gladly to her good words, full of motherly love. Her simplicity was more than great, a model of virtue.

¹³⁸ ASDS. E-30

Once, Pope Pius X gave a present of a 5 litre cask of wine to the sisters at the Motherhouse in Rome and our Mother, wanting to share the joy with the other sisters nearby, filled a bottle and went to Tivoli, called all the sisters and novices together and poured out some wine for each one with great joy.

Suor Gonzaga Foglietti

Addition

From Report 2

I am writing the little that I know about our Rev. Mother, the first Superior General.

She was very humble and loved holy poverty very much. [...]

I recall what S. Nazarena, whom she once took along on a visit to a Baroness, remembered well. There they were offered pastry with cake tongues, but the good Rev. Mother took it like a farmer's wife [with her hand] so that, through doing this, she would be humbled.

Addition

From Report 3

When she held a Chapter for the sisters one evening, she said: "I met a Monsignor from France today and I asked him: 'Monsignor, when will the persecution of religious in France stop?' and he answered: 'Mother, when the religious stop offending God through luxury in their convents.'" In this way, she exhorted us to have a special love for holy poverty.

Then she changed the subject and spoke about humility: "We sisters must not place value on honour and respect, but must always think that we are nothing. For example, S. Anastasia made petrol soup for us this evening for it smelled of petrol." She said that for this reason. Nevertheless, she did not leave the soup standing but ate it. Through this she showed a great spirit of mortification and humility.

Addition
Report 4

When S. Gonzaga brought her paper with so few words on it, I¹³⁹ asked if that was all. Then she remembered that on her acceptance she had the consoling thought that she would now have a good mother since the letter she received was so full of love and devotion.. [She said] I rejoiced at finding a mother since I lost mine as a child. And she really was always a very loving and dedicated mother to me so that I wasn't an orphan any more. Already on the 2nd day, she went for a walk with me and showed me whatever could interest me with such childlike simplicity.

When she visited Torri, she often came to me in the kitchen and was happy about the little black, sooty walls as they were just like the little house of Nazareth.

Once she came at the end of May and the next day there were the final devotions. During these, there was such a bad storm and a shockingly heavy clap of thunder. I left before the devotions were finished as I had no peace. When I entered the house, I smelt a strong smell of sulphur and I called our water woman who was nearby because I was afraid. As we went into the kitchen, we found great disorder. Everything was out of place, there was a big hole in the oven and the wall from it to the window had lost its plaster as if the lightning had hit the oven and gone out of the window. What luck that no-one had been in there. I then returned to the church immediately and, on the way home, I asked Rev. Mother if the loud thunderclap hadn't made her afraid. Almost like a reproach, she told me that we must be ready when the Lord calls, always and everywhere and that she had dreamt during the night that lightning had struck our house. Therefore there was no need for me to be afraid of telling her about it as she was already prepared. And how she thanked the dear Lord that He had protected her Sisters so well.

¹³⁹ It is not known who wrote down this seemingly oral account of S. Gonzaga.

The next visit was still more dangerous as she found a pin in her food. Thanks be to God, she noticed it in time, otherwise she would have swallowed it. How she warned us then to be always prepared for death as one never knew when the last hour would strike. She gave us a nice long lecture about living and dying well.



Painting for the centenary celebrations of the Salvatorian Sisters in Torri in Sabina, 1988

S. Hieronyma (Barbara) Schmerbeck¹⁴⁰

Report 1



* 29.09.1869 in Haunersdorf,
Diocese of Regensburg, Germany
Entered: 13.11.1893 in Tivoli
Investment: 10.12.1893 and
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 26.12.1894 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome
from December 1895 in the USA
+ 15.02.1954 in St. Nazianz, Wis., USA

Remembrances regarding our dear Rev. Mother Mary of the holy Apostles, 1st Superior General.

It gives me joy to write about our good, zealous “Reverendissima Madre”¹⁴¹. Also it can truly be said of her: “God is wonderful in his saints!”.

The story of her childhood days already tells us: the lovely little Baroness, Therese, Baroness von Wüllenweber, was noted for her great talents and that her noble traits, gifts and qualities showed she was destined for higher things. When she grew older, the noble young Baroness evidenced in all that she did, and also through her great spiritual strength and ability, that she was striving after a higher ideal.

The strong-willed, zealous Mother Mary of the Apostles, Co-Foundress of the Sisters of the Divine Saviour, left everything in order to follow the Divine Saviour wherever He led, in poverty and contempt.

Another heroic virtue is this: She joyfully renounced riches, honour and comfort, out of love for the poor “little Jesus”, for the greater honour and glory of God and for the salvation of souls. “Zeal for your house consumes me.”

¹⁴⁰ ASDS, E-31

¹⁴¹ Italian = Most Reverend Mother

When I and my companion, also a young candidate, arrived in the Motherhouse in the beautiful cathedral town of Tivoli on November 13 [1893] at 7 o'clock in the evening, we were warmly welcomed. At the time, individual candidates were admitted by Ven. Father and Founder. Dear Rev. Mother came at the same time also and my heart beat when I saw her. Her noble, gentle, earnest facial expression and her friendly motherly smile made me happy and I loved and respected her like a child. She asked my name and I replied "Barbara." "Oh", she said: "St. Stanislaus has brought you to us". (Note: It was the feast of St. Stanislaus.) Dear Rev. Mother we had come with an express train from Munich and the journey to Rome had taken 24 hours. We also told her: it was exactly 12 o'clock midday when we got out of the train. Oh how happy we were because the church bells in the holy city of Rome were just ringing the Angelus. Soon after, we were able to greet our saintly Ven. Father and Founder; we also visited the beautiful Basilica of St. Peter and took a joyful look at the Vatican. Rev. Mother was happy to listen to our childlike accounts. Her noble, motherly tactfulness did us a lot of good. She practised great heroic patience with all the new candidates, girls from all countries, nations and character.



Our Lady of Quintiliolo

Her heroic affability and humility had a comforting effect on us; her noble feelings directed that we candidates should begin to learn Italian very soon and also the Latin prayers. Oh, how happy we were about everything. Her motherly care for us was something to be admired. She also directed that we should go out every day in the mild Italian air. We liked to go to the dear little church of Our Lady, "Quintiglione"¹⁴², a mile outside the town. Rev. Mother herself went with us several times; she then showed us the famous waterfalls and other things.

¹⁴² Correct: Quintiliolo

In the convent, there was a true religious spirit, love and childlike obedience. With dear Rev. Mother, we gladly experienced the sweet bread of mortification and practised to obtain self-control. Rev. Mother herself practised mortification to the highest degree. Obedience to Ven. Father, self-control and self-sacrifice were second nature to her.

Fervent love of God and neighbour was her guiding motive. In her deep humility, she took the directives of Ven. Father to be law. One could only wonder at her childlike obedience to the Ven. Father – Founder. Only a heroic, self-less soul would be capable of it. These heroic virtues, which were before our eyes everyday, made the convent into a harbour of salvation and sanctification for us Sisters.

Then a time of testing arrived: When an infectious disease (Typhus) broke out among us Sisters during the tremendous heat of summer in June 1894, seven Sisters died in the course of one week. Rev. Mother, that tried soul, sighed: “Sit nomen Domini benedictum”¹⁴³, or: “God’s will is our salvation.” Our dear Rev. Mother, that heroic soul, bowed in humility under the guiding hand of God and adored “the most holy will of God in love!” – “May the name of the Lord be praised.”

It was found necessary to transfer Rev. Mother and some young Sisters to Rome; this was a great sacrifice for her. She submitted like a child. There, in the Eternal City, she continued her self-sacrifice. She, who as a Baroness was accustomed to wear dainty silk shoes, now wore old shoes and, in order to mortify herself still more, she put a little stone in them. She slept in a wretched old bed like the most recent novice. Yes, such heroic examples are an incentive. In every sense of the word, our Rev. Mother was like a saint and brought many of her spiritual daughters to imitate her. Driven by the love of Christ, she knelt in humility and ate at the penance table like the least of the Sisters. Yes, “God is wonderful in his saints.”

¹⁴³ “May the name of the Lord be praised.”

We could often go with her to see the holy places in Rome. Her devotion to the most holy Sacrament was great. We often met higher ecclesiastics and they showed much respect toward her. She knelt down in reverence to receive their blessing. Her saying was: *"To love Jesus brings joy."* At the hour of her death it was evident that she was a blessed soul. *"Little Jesus"* was always her soul's joy. Yes, after receiving holy communion with love and devotion Rev. Mother often seemed to be in ecstasy: Yes, her sweet *little Jesus* took her with Him home into heaven in the holy Christmas night after 12 midnight, to taste the sweetness of His eternal love for ever and ever!

Strengthened and consoled by the holy blessing of the Holy Father Pius X, her heroic life on earth ended.

With love and gratitude

S. Hieronyma Sor.D.S.

July 29, 1940, Milwaukee, Wis.



Rome, Via del Campanile
with the bell tower
of Maria in Traspontina
(Franz Roesler about 1870)

S. Hilaria (Maria) Poetsch¹⁴⁴

Report 1



* 17.07.1878 in Guttstadt,
Diocese of Ermland, Germany
Entered: 03.09.1893 in Tivoli
Investment: 10.12.1893 and
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 26.12.1894 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome
from the end of April 1899 in Hungary
from 1908 commissary in Hungary
later, almost continuously Provincial
Superior, playing a decisive role in the
development of the Hungarian Province.
+ 21.5.1948 Mariabesnyő, Hungary

Response to questionnaire¹⁴⁵

1. Rev. Mother prayed a lot. All her thoughts were directed toward God and his honour. She remained before the Blessed Sacrament for a long time. Especially in times of trial and sorrow, she prayed long before the tabernacle. She liked to visit the holy places and I was edified then by her long and recollected prayer. Regarding meditation, she said: "In the beginning, one needs points for reflection and a meditation book in the hand. Later, a sentence, a saying of the Divine Saviour, is enough material for meditation, a thought and the heart is with God."

In Tivoli during May, she attended the May devotions every day. In Rome, the May devotions followed after holy Mass in the morning but, whenever possible, she still went to a church in the afternoon for the May devotions. Before feasts of Our Lady, she based her chapter talks on the significance of the feast and encouraged us to a childlike devotion to the Mother of God. On feasts of the saints, particularly the holy Apostles, she liked to visit the churches dedicated to them. Certainly, she meditated a lot on the suffering

¹⁴⁴ ASDS, E-32

¹⁴⁵ From the introductory letter

Saviour, otherwise she would not have indicated to us so frequently the suffering and love of the Divine Saviour. She held devotions to the Heart of Jesus with us Sisters during the whole of the month of June. She translated the meditations from French into German with ease. One hardly noticed that her reading aloud was a translation. Her love and devotion to the divine child is known to all. In Tivoli, she brought the children of the neighbourhood to the crib and prayed with them. After the midnight Mass, she knelt before the Crib and prayed aloud. It was a familiar conversation with the newborn Christ child.

2. Whenever she spoke of Holy Church [and] the Holy Father, she did so only with the deepest reverence. We never heard a disrespectful comment regarding the decrees of the Sacred Congregation. Several times she said: "The Freemasons want to destroy Catholic Austria so that they can more easily destroy the Church as well." – She always emphasised in her talks that whatever Ven. Father wanted, she wanted as well. She held him in the deepest respect. We never spoke about the confessor. She esteemed priests very much. She even kissed the hands of young priests. She received the first blessing from new priests with joy and reverence and quickly had all of us called together for this. I do not know whether or not she said extra prayers for Bishops and Priests, but she prayed with us for the needs of Holy Church and the missions.

3. Her love for poverty showed itself in her clothing, she had nothing more than we did. Her room and its furnishings were poor and very simple. One saw nothing, which did not bear the mark of holy poverty. One saw no pencil with a little white top there, no elegant pen-holder or nicely-bound notebook. In harmony with Ven. Father, she viewed holy poverty as the foundation of the Congregation. She always urged us to simplicity and she herself was a powerful example for us in the observance of holy poverty.

4. Rev. Mother gave the impression of being a recollected religious, intimately united with God. We never saw her do anything, which would indicate a less mortified exterior. She came to community meals in the refectory. I do not know what special penances she practised as she never spoke to me about this. In

my notes, I wrote about her patience and magnanimity in the trials and sorrows, which the dear God sent her.¹⁴⁶

Addition

Report 2

Remembrances

Regarding our Reverend Mother and Co-Foundress Mother Mary of the holy Apostles

I had the grace of living under the personal direction of Rev. Mother of the holy Apostles from September 1, 1893 to April 26, 1899, and later from December 1, 1903 to the middle of July 1904. I was 15 years old when I entered and therefore inexperienced and I could not understand or evaluate many things as would have been fitting for a postulant. But Rev. Mother was extremely good to me and tried to help me, as "our youngest child", to overcome difficulties and so she paid me attention, by sending me a nice peach at table, for example. I was invested on December 10 and began my novitiate. Rev. Mother still surrounded me with considerable kindness. Then came the month of May. A Sister gave me something to copy and wanted it very soon. I sat down right away to begin writing and informed the Sister responsible for the cleaning that I could not come that day to sweep, etc. Rev. Mother heard this and from that time on she was strict with me. I received frequent and stern reprimands, deserved and sometimes undeserved. She often said, "You must learn to bear something and not always look for sweetness." To bear that was sometimes difficult, but an older Sister encouraged me saying that it was best to accept everything in silence and not make excuses.

During the typhus epidemic of 1894, Rev. Mother gave the most beautiful example of patience and trust. She shared with us magnanimously the great poverty, which prevailed in Rome in the beginning; there was a lack of clothing and other necessary things. When she saw that also we all bore the privation with joy, she was really pleased.

¹⁴⁶ This account was again confirmed under oath by S. Liboria Hansknecht on March 7, 1941 as a 2nd Report with the same content.

It happened that S. Juliana [Elgas] and I were then on the second floor. We still didn't have a chapel in the house and so a room on the 1st floor was used for prayer, also for the examination of conscience at midday. Down on the 1st floor, Rev. Mother said: "General examination of conscience". Up on the second floor, we did not hear the bell for the spiritual exercise and at that moment we were happily singing: "Do not be afraid, my soul, God is your light and consolation." Naturally, we were quickly brought down and had to examine our conscience. But this time, even Rev. Mother had an indulgent smile for us when we asked pardon.

In her instructions, she laid much emphasis on the simplicity of a child of God. Be simple in thought, word and deed. "Let your speech be: Yes, No."

I still like to remember how Rev. Mother questioned us postulants and novices about the catechism and explained the Holy Rule. She also looked at the written translations into Italian herself. If there were many mistakes, especially if they showed a lack of application, she wrote a reproving remark underneath.

However, when there were no mistakes: "Brava, bene"¹⁴⁷ was written under the translation and we were very happy about it.

When we returned to the novitiate in Tivoli on September 13, 1894, she wrote for me the words: "Be happy always, God continues to help if only we have good will."

I was again in Rome from January 1895 onward. Rev. Mother continued to educate us young Sisters. Her example, her punctuality and piety swept us along. Her devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was striking. She read aloud meditations on the virtues of the divine heart in the chapel every day during the month of June and added on litanies and prayers. She knelt in deep recollection before the Blessed Sacrament and also held with us the then customary adoration in common. Her devotion to and heartfelt love for the child Jesus is known to everyone.

But also in prayer, she wanted us to get used to punctuality and duty. When she noticed that some of us went to kneel before the

¹⁴⁷ Italian = Well done, good

statue of Our Lady after night prayer, she would come up, lift us up and say energetically: "That is for the devil, for it is now time to go to bed." And none of us dared to hold a special devotion outside the time allowed for this.

In her weekly conferences, she repeatedly admonished us to esteem our vocation highly and to develop solid virtues. In particular, it was holy poverty and obedience of which she spoke so urgently and which she recommended to us. After that, it was attachment and submission to Ven. Father and Founder to whom she was so totally loyal. It happened that the superior of the novitiate in Tivoli invited the local bishop to hold the investment and vow ceremonies, even though Ven. Father was in Rome. When we were out walking, she asked me if I would have acted like that. I answered: "As long as our Founder lives and we can ask him, I would not invite anyone else to hold the investment and vow ceremonies." She was obviously pleased with this answer. She often said to me, also before others: "All should be done as our Ven. Father desires, I want nothing other than what he wants and finds good."

Her love for holy poverty showed itself in everything she used. Her room in the Via Lungara had no window and in it was a poor bed such as we had, two chairs and a simple cupboard. The workroom was adjacent to the bedroom. Also this contained only a shabby writing desk, a cupboard and two chairs. On the wall were 1-2 paper pictures in the simplest, self-made frames. "Holy poverty is the foundation of religious life," she often said. And she herself had left so much. Once, during recreation, she asked me which part of the Office I liked best. I replied: "Voluntarie sacrificabo tibi, et confitebor nomini tuo Domine: quoniam bonum est. - I will freely sacrifice and praise the name of the Lord for He is good." - She responded: "and my favourite place is: Laqueus contritus est, et nos liberati sumus. - The snare is broken and we are freed." - Yes, she had given all, her heart was free, free from all attachment to earthly things. It belonged only to God and to her spiritual daughters to whom she gave such a powerful example of detachment and whom she trained to love this beautiful virtue.

We always had to go to her to ask for pens and exercise books. If we asked for two books, we received one. If we asked for three

exercise books, she smilingly said: "For sure, you need only two but because I give less, you ask for one extra." And then, nevertheless, she sometimes kindly gave all three books when she saw the petitioner become red and lower her head with a guilty conscience. She was happy when we asked for one of her old used pens as well as for a new one. When she asked what we would do with it as it was quite unusable, we said: "We will hold it over a little piece of live coal and the end will become soft. We can then press it together and the pen can be used for writing again."

In her instructions regarding holy obedience she liked to quote the words of St. Theresa: "It is of more value to pick up a straw in obedience than to fast on bread and water for three years if the latter is according to one's own will."

One year, Rev. Father Gregorius Gasser gave instructions to us Sisters. I received the task of writing these down and she then sent them to the individual houses.

On occasion she would say to me: "At the moment, you notice just a few failings in yourself, but in ten years you will recognise many more." – She also warned often: "At confession, one should not mention each and every little thing as these are often not sinful, but mention three greater failings and then be really sorry for them and try to be better." She also emphasised the same regarding the customary accusations in the refectory.

Her humility also showed itself in a special way at the following occasion: I think it was in the year 1897 that a Rev. Salvatorian Father, Father Pachomius [Eisele] conducted a visitation in our Motherhouse. Fr. Pachomius was an energetic priest who had returned from the mission in Ecuador. He acted severely. He found a tiny hand mirror in Rev. Mother's room. He held this up before Rev. Mother's eyes and reprimanded her with rough words. He also made other disrespectful remarks. He demanded that the Sisters tell him orally or in writing whatever they found fault with in regard to the administration or anything else in the house. And one then saw older Sisters writing letters pages long and they also came to me with their considerations. And Rev. Mother saw all this and kept silent. At recreation, there were only very few Sisters.

Then she came to me and asked: "What impression does all this make on you?" – "Rev. Mother, I replied, "this cannot be what Ven. Father intended. And this writing and speaking is repugnant, it is ingratitude." – "The dear God allows it, dear Sister, we must accept it." – However, Ven. Father must have got news of what was happening and the Visitation was stopped. But I still have a vivid memory of it even today.

Rev. Mother suffered a lot under the untactful behaviour of the Sisters. She was used to a completely different environment. And once she said so: "The poverty in food, clothing, housing and the everyday worries don't affect me but the manners are hard to bear."

A few examples of her energetic method of education from the school years 1895-99. On the Jubilee feast of St. Philip Neri, Rev. Mother allowed the Sisters to go to the church dedicated to him. Many took advantage of this opportunity. But I went into the chapel. After a while, Rev. Mother came into the chapel, saw me there and called me out. "What! you are not going to the church? You are dreaming the time away here? Who else is still here? So, take S. Salesia (Staudinger!) and go right away!"

I once went upstairs after lunch and met Rev. Mother there. She stopped me right away and said sharply: "Take your religious habit off. You don't deserve to be among us" – and she walked away. I examined my conscience to see where I had failed again, but I couldn't find anything special.

At the customary self-accusation, I asked permission to eat at the penance table. It was a hot summer's day when I knelt there during the midday meal. The bread that was brought to me was completely dry and I had no more water. I broke the bread in two and left one half. Rev. Mother noticed this, waited until all had finished eating, stopped the table reading and said in a loud voice: "So now, Sister Hilaria, eat the piece of bread you have left! Do you think that you can be choosy in the convent and ask for whatever delicacy you want?" – The dry bread went down the dried up throat with difficulty and tears didn't make it any easier. And everyone had to stay sitting at table until I had eaten the bread.

When I asked pardon and thanked later on, Rev. Mother said in a kindly voice: "And even when you are seventy years old, you will not forget the penance with the dry bread."

One of the Sisters had a father who was a shoemaker and she had also learnt from him how to make new shoes. Rev. Mother asked her to show her talent at this and, sure enough, she made a pair of new shoes. Then Rev. Mother came out to recreation on the loggia with the shoes in her hand, showed them and said who had made them. Suddenly, she lifted one shoe on high, came toward me and said loudly: "Sister has made beautiful shoes, but you have brought nothing useful to the Society as yet. Go away!" I stood up and went out. My spirit was full of grief and sorrow. To be sent away like that in front of everyone. I went sorrowfully into the chapel. But before the tabernacle, I became calm and afterwards went quietly about my usual tasks.

In 1898, I got sores on my back and chest. My shoulder and upper arm became swollen as well. I mentioned this to S. Ambrosia who was our nurse at that time, but I didn't tell Rev. Mother. When S. Ambrosia told her about my condition, Rev. Mother called me out for correction before the midday meal. I didn't know for what reason but I soon heard: "You are not sincere. You hid your illness from me, ask three times at the door for the virtue of sincerity."

It was also at this time that there was much talk about the picture of the suffering Saviour in the church of "Gesù Nazareno". According to a credible source, the eyes in the picture had miraculously opened in 1854, and now there was talk that this had happened again. One Sunday after lunch, Rev. Mother brought a little packet of these pictures and began to distribute them in the refectory. The Sisters crowded around her asking: "Rev. Mother, a picture for me, me also, and me as well." – I stood a little way away, folded a table cloth and thought: "No, I will not push just for a picture." But in that same moment, Rev. Mother lifted up her eyes, looked at me and called out: "You, proud Prussian, come here, kneel down and ask for a picture." I did so, took the picture, and I keep it still in grateful veneration.

Still another memory is connected with a picture. On the feast of St. Roche, I was permitted to accompany Rev. Mother to the church dedicated to him. There was exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. There were many people in the church and I had trouble in finding a seat for Rev. Mother. When I had found one and we were kneeling almost right in front of the altar, Rev. Mother said to me: "Go into the sacristy and ask for a picture of St. Roche." – I stood up, made my way through the crowd, went into the sacristy and received the desired picture. I happily gave it to Rev. Mother. But immediately afterwards I heard the question: "And where is yours?" – "I only asked for one, Rev. Mother." – "Go back straightaway and ask for one for yourself." With a beating heart, I did. In the sacristy, my reception was a little less friendly but I nevertheless received the picture. When I returned to Rev. Mother and showed it to her, she was content and I could pray in peace.

Sisters were saying goodbye before leaving for America. "Among those leaving was the young Sister Columba [Kohlmann] and I said to her: "How happy you are that you can already go out into action. I must still wait for it." In the same moment, I felt a hand on my shoulder. I turned around and saw Rev. Mother. – "So! S. Columba is happy and you are not. You are not happy that we kept you, educated you and trained you here in the Motherhouse. Tomorrow, you can accuse yourself of ingratitude." – And the following day, I was given the penance to ask three times at the door for the virtue of gratitude and to eat three times at the penance table.

However, Rev. Mother was not always so strict, there were also other times. When she took me out walking as her companion, she spoke in confidence about the state and purpose of the Congregation and used to say: "Yes, the first Sisters will not have it easy because they have to establish themselves in the places where they are sent and make a start. If they have not learnt to bear something by then, they will lose courage and the work will not prosper." She also bought me a little notebook occasionally or gave me a glass of lemonade. She also remarked: "You are such a little plant. If you thrive you will be able to do much but if you don't, you will do much evil."

These breaks were, however, just episodes. She was much stricter with me and nothing escaped the scrutiny of her eyes. She also sometimes said: "One needs great courage to correct others, to make them aware of their failings or to put their virtue to the test and strengthen them. Be strong and have courage when it is necessary and beneficial."

Her strict method of educating did not, however, exclude motherly kindness. She enquired how the studies were going and about the other concerns of a young Sister. The following event was quite entertaining. If, at recreation, she met a Sister who liked to talk about her knowledge, Rev. Mother would say to her very kindly: Now, Sister, say the "ABC" for me once. And almost always, the surprised Sister could not get through it. – "Just look at that, the 'ABC' is the foundation on which all knowledge is based, you should at least know that." – And we Sisters understood very well what Rev. Mother wanted to say.

All was done to form the sisters and also in her strictness, Rev. Mother acted with a supernatural intention. For example, S. Othmara [Gähwyler] suffered from tuberculosis and could only walk slowly. Rev. Mother took me with her into the sickroom. At first, she spoke very kindly with Sister, but then she said: "Now, S. Othmara, walk quickly from one end of the room to the other" – Sister did that. Her feet got mixed up. It was painful to see it. – "Right, now twice more." – "So, now, you can sit down again." And with that, she reached out her hand to the sick one and went out. When we were outside, she said: "How Sister will thank me in heaven for giving her this opportunity to be obedient." – And when Sister was on her death bed, Rev. Mother called the young Sisters to come and spoke some touching words to each one. To me she said: "Learn from Sister how to be content," for S. Othmara was always content with everything.

However, this apart, her energetic severity gave us something to bear, and the statement of my dear Sister Hedwig [Poetsch] during the General Chapter of 1914 bore this out when she said to me: "It was grace which kept us going, otherwise we could not have borne it."

However, Rev. Mother also showed strength and magnanimity toward herself. In the octave of the Three Kings, she took care to attend the solemn Masses held in the various rites.



The Tiber Bridge

Then it happened that she was crossing the Tiber bridge when she was almost run over by a wagon. She fell down and broke her hand. However, her first concern was to go to the police with the coachman and give witness that the accident had not been his fault. And only after this was done did she go to the nearby hospital of "Santo Spirito" to have the hand and arm attended to and a bandage put on. A few hours later, she came to the midday meal with the community where I was kneeling right in front of her at the penance table again. No complaints or distress were heard.

On April 26, Rev. Superior Ambrosia and I travelled to Budapest to take over a needlework school and patronage in one of the most neglected areas of the Hungarian capital. In October that same year, we had the joy of a visit from Rev. Mother. She saw the poverty and simplicity, visited the children and encouraged us to continue our efforts. One morning after holy Mass, she said: "S. Hilaria, now let us go around in the neighbourhood a little." – On the way, almost no word was spoken. – When we came back home, she said: "Now we have preached. We can say that along with St. Francis."

Her letters were always motherly and full of love. How very kindly she would thank when, for example, we sent as a little gift for her nameday the proceeds from not taking sugar in our coffee, or at Christmas when we sent her 60 florins, the gift from the Rev. Auxiliary Bishop, Dr. Kohl. Then she always wished us the blessing of the fourth commandment. It is a pity that the letters were not kept.

When she visited in 1901, Rev. Mother found the same poverty and need as before, although the kindergarten had already been opened. In discussion, I said: "A convent school would be very necessary here." – Animatedly she replied: "Yes, a school, then a secondary school, then this and that, you will never be satisfied but always continue striving. But just do it, my experience is the same."

In 1903, as a reward for a good pass in the Hungarian teachers' examination, I was given permission to go to the Motherhouse for retreat. Afterwards, as there was a lack of teachers to train the Sisters, I stayed in Rome until the middle of July. As well as teaching, I assisted Rev. Mother with secretarial work. Her eyes were already very weak and so she dictated most of the letters for the individual Sisters and houses to me. While doing this, I had a good opportunity to wonder at the all-embracing prudence, love and care, which she expressed in her letters. To one very zealous sister she recommended study of the holy rule and dictated at the end: "I faithfully follow its way, and don't always overstep the line." – I remember another entertaining occurrence: She dictated at the close of a letter: "With warmest greetings" etc. In my haste, I wrote: "With greetings" etc. When I read it out to her she noticed the missing word immediately, made me add it and said in fun: "Yes, yes, you Prussians have your hearts in the back."

I cannot hide the fact that, at this period, Rev. Mother showed not only strictness but also a certain irritation, which in view of her ill health was easily understandable. But this gradually caused discontent in individual Sisters who even complained to the Church authorities. As a result of this¹⁴⁸, Rev. Fr. Esser was entrusted with

¹⁴⁸ Added here later: "Not 'because of this' but because by papal order a visitation was held in every convent in Rome!"

the Visitation and in December 1905 the first General Chapter was convened.

Rev. Superior Ambrosia and I travelled to Rome for this. Rev. Mother greeted us very warmly. But we had hardly entered our room and were about to take some rest after the journey when already one of the leading¹⁴⁹ Sisters came in, clarified the situation for us in her own way, described the¹⁵⁰ discontent of the Sisters, suggested that a change could be made now in the General Chapter and not have Rev. Mother re-elected. She even went so far as to say: "The work begun by Rev. Mother in Neuwerk did not go well, the diocesan authorities wanted to take it away from her and only because of this did she go to Ven. Father and joined up with him. But also here in Rome things don't go well, she does not understand administration." – We were indignant and astonished but said only: "We will act according to our consciences." Naturally, we informed ourselves in various places regarding the facts and noticed that Rev. Father Esser also believed the complaints that were made.

The voting day came. Rev. Father Esser presided at the voting. At his request, Rev. Mother resigned from office. Then he addressed the Sisters and said that Rev. Mother had worked for years and sacrificed her strength for the Work. Now we should gladly grant her rest and relaxation as well. So it happened that when the vote was taken, a significant number of votes were given to Rev. Superior Ambrosia. In response to the question as to whether or not she would accept the election, she said that she could not in conscience do so and then addressed the Sisters: "Rev. Mother has sacrificed years of her life and all her strength for the Congregation and for us and do we now want to have it said that we were ungrateful by not electing her and having her as our Rev. Mother for the rest of her life?" – When the next vote was taken, all the votes were given to Rev. Mother. Fr. Esser closed the session with the words: "If you want her, then you shall have her. I am going to the Congregation now." And Rev. Mother was so calm. She said no word of complaint or accusation and happily took part

¹⁴⁹ Also added later at this point: (*S. Raphaela Bohnheim and S. Dominica Vieregg – superior*)

¹⁵⁰ Also added later in the same handwriting: (*alleged!!*)

in recreation. The only thing she said to me was this: "If they had not elected me, then I would have come to you. You surely would have cared for me in my old age". – I wondered at this great virtue and self-control. And how tactful was her observation when we elected as her first consultor a Sister, unknown to us but of reputed great virtue, and I said to Rev. Mother: "You are glad about it, Rev. Mother, aren't you?" Then she replied simply: "Yes, if only I was able to be glad." – Circumstances then developed in such a way that the Sister concerned remained in her former official position.

Rev. Mother came to Budapest for the last time in summer 1906. Our new convent and school on the Huba-utca were already completed. On September 1, the elementary school was to be opened. Rev. Mother rejoiced with us at this progress. She was pleased with the building and location. The days passed quickly and the evening on which Rev. Mother wanted to take the night train to Múraszombat came nearer. Then Rev. Superior Ambrosia [Vetter] came to me and said: Rev. Mother was so agitated and was calling me. I went into the room. Then Rev. Mother stood up and said in an energetic yet shaking voice: "S. Hilaria, over there," she looked through the window to the site opposite, where our school is located now – "the Sisters will do much good, but also in other places as well, here, there, do work, but preserve the good spirit."

After saying this, she became very calm again and got ready for the journey. I was quite shaken. How could we think about the building site she had indicated, which was valued at over 100.000 florins, while we still had a debt of over 60.000 florins on the present building. But God brought it about. Praise and thanks be to Him forever!

Budapest, March 7, 1941

Mother Hilaria Poetsch
Prov. Sup. Sor.D.S.¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ This report was confirmed under oath before witnesses. There exists another report by S. Hilaria (Report 5) of Sept. 19, 1940, in which she answers a questionnaire, probably that of the Postulator. It has not been included here.

S Hildegard (Fanny) Dombrowski ¹⁵²



* 09.03.1863 in Ratibor,
Diocese of Breslau, Silesia
Entered: 21.10.1893 in Tivoli
Investment: 10.12.1893 and
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 26.12.1894 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome
from Jan.1895 in Assam; badly
injured in earthquake of 1897
returned from Assam with the
other sisters in 1915.
+ 26.06.1941 in Vienna, Austria
Fr. Marcus SDS was her brother.

From the life of our dear Reverend Mother at the time of my stay with her in Tivoli and Rome.

When I entered the convent of the Sisters of the Divine Saviour in the year 1893, there was still great poverty. As I arrived after the evening meal, bread and a plate of soup were placed in front of me. Expecting another course to follow, I took only a couple of spoonfuls while thinking at the same time that I would never have given such a soup even to a beggar. After a short while, the table was cleared and, with that, the meal was finished. The same holy poverty existed in the cells, in rooms, in the furnishings of the house and in everything. The bed consisted of two iron stands with two boards laid on them and a thin mattress. The pillows and the two horse-blankets, if I may call them that, were just as hard. After 2-3 days, I went to Rev. Mother to say: "I cannot sleep in this bed." She sent me into her room to look at her bed and there I saw that she, the baroness, had only wood shavings in her pillow. With the comment, "I could sleep even less in this bed", I got used to the hardness of the bed. In order to feel less cold at night, we tucked the ends of the blankets in and slipped inside.

¹⁵² ASDS, E-33

In the room, there was a washbasin, one glass and, if I am not mistaken, one hand towel for several Sisters. When I sometimes went to her regarding an indisposition, she always told me she had the same. Because it annoyed me that she always seemed to have the same problems as myself, I subsequently stopped going to complain because it was of no use.

As dear Rev. Mother had the spirit of St. Francis in regard to holy poverty and humility, she did not neglect to teach her spiritual daughters the same and therefore used every opportunity to humiliate us, inside or outside the house. How often one or another of the sisters received a push from her with a humiliation; she tried to humiliate the sisters also during the recreational walks. Therefore she would say to a sister, for example: "Go and ask that soldier what time it is" or "Pick up that paper and look at it" etc.¹⁵³

[...] Although the greatest poverty and simplicity reigned, we were all very happy and content and loved Rev. Mother. When making new foundations, she was concerned to begin in a really poor, small way so that, as she said, the blessing of God would be on them. The dear Lord loved her and spared her no cross, as happens to all founders.

S. Hildegard Dombrowski,
Sor.D.S.¹⁵⁴

[Vienna XXI, February 4, 1941]

Addition

from Report 2

[...] The greatest poverty reigned at Christmas time as well! So we sang a lot and Rev. Mother played along with great enthusiasm. Because most of the new Sisters did not really understand the pronunciation, I was once asked to tell something to a Sister. When I saw the Sister, I said to her: "Sister, I should tell you something, but I didn't understand it." When I returned, I was asked what I had said and then I had to admit that I hadn't

¹⁵³ The last two sentences are inserted from Report 2.

¹⁵⁴ Confirmed under oath before witnesses

understood her. Without annoyance or reproof, she went to the Sister herself.

When dear Rev. Mother returned from her travels late in the evening, the house bell was rung to let us know and we quickly dressed in order to go to greet dear Rev. Mother. She then told us everything in a kindly way with the invitation: "Children, just ask if you want to know something."

She liked a lively manner and could not stand it if a Sister walked about with her eyes cast down. She would then call out: "Open your eyes!" At recreation, she loved a lot of gaiety. We Sisters were allowed to go out in the fresh air every day and she joined us on various excursions. She also allowed us to attend the beautiful feasts of the Church. [...]

We were once invited to see the papal state coaches and Rev. Mother said: "Sit on it yourselves" and we did. After a while, the priest came and said: "That really is a bit presumptuous." Such opportunities for humiliation were frequently offered to us. In spite of all these humiliations and privations, we were all so happy and satisfied because everything sprang from the heart of a mother toward her children. [...]

Dear Rev. Mother once told me that before she entered the convent, a rabbit was given to her during a visit. She tied it with its back feet around her waist and pulled her coat over it. Then, as she was going home, all the dogs ran after her.

S. Hildegard

Addition

from Report 3

Days later, early on Sunday morning, we went to breakfast after holy Mass. The second disappointment. There was black coffee and dry bread. Then, when we were alone in the room, we ate everything we had left over from the journey with the remark: "Here, there is nothing else." But privation teaches one how to pray and how to eat.

One Sister struggled for a long time because she couldn't take the food and thought she would have to leave. But, with God's help, she overcame this and is still with us today. At Christmastime, holy poverty was very noticeable because there was neither a Christmas tree nor cake and biscuits to bring us joy. But dear little Jesus helped us over it all.

Sister Hildegard



First Mission Church in Raliang, North East India (in former Assam), 1898

S. Huberta (Elisabeth) Reichmann¹⁵⁵



* 08.08.1874 in Waldhiltersheim,
Diocese of Trier Germany
Entered: 04.07.1902 in Rome
Investment: 02.11.1902 in Rome
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 03.11.1903 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome
from Sept. 1908 in the USA
+ 22.12.1965 in Wausau, Wis., USA

Remembrances of Rev. Mary of the Apostles

When I entered the Congregation of the Sisters of the Divine Saviour on July 4, 1902, our dear Rev. Mother was in Tivoli. As soon as she returned, the first thing she wanted was to see the new candidate. She welcomed me with true motherly love. Then I had to pass my first test in holy Poverty. She wanted to see everything I had brought with me. On one piece of clothing, I had put a small piece of crocheted lace, which I had made myself. That did not please her at all. I shouldn't have brought that with me. The handle of my umbrella was white and it had to be covered with black material. She was very happy with the simple homemade things. Then, in place of a new pencil, I was given a very small stump. I was wearing a small gold cross on my chest. "That is gold and such things a Sister may not have." Whatever items I had such as sewing needles, knitting needles, sewing cotton, wool, etc. were all to be taken to the sewing room. Then I felt so poor that I sighed aloud: "Oh, how poor I am now!" Mother Mary looked at me with a loving smile, made a cross on my forehead and handed me over to the candidate mistress.

Mother Mary took every opportunity to train her spiritual daughters in humility and holy poverty. Virtues in which she herself surpassed everyone. At the same time, she was highly delighted when she

¹⁵⁵ ASDS, E-34

could give them pleasure. She was eager to let the Sisters take every opportunity that offered itself to see the Holy Father.

How happy she was when a new foundation was established. All letters from the missions were read aloud at mealtimes. Mother Mary also loved her young Congregation with all her heart. She often encouraged the Sisters to have the same love and attachment. She reminded them that no religious was declared a saint by the Church if she did not show true love for the Congregation to which she had been called by God. She knew the Constitutions by heart and followed everything with the greatest exactitude. She continually encouraged the Sisters to the same exactitude.

Silence was observed so carefully that I wrote home when I was a candidate: "Although there are more than 30 Sisters here in the convent, one would think there was no-one in the house." One should not even knock a nail into the wall without permission. With reverence she met the poor who came to the convent door.

Rev. Mother also took care of the health of her Sisters. As there was no garden at the convent, each Sister had to go out for a whole hour several times a week. She herself named the Sisters who should go out together and we were mostly sent out in threes. She also decided where each group should go.

Once, I was allowed to go out with Rev. Mother. We wanted to bring elder flowers home. We saw nice trees in full bloom but they stood in gardens. These gardens belonged to rich people. We were turned away everywhere. We were not permitted to pick any blooms. The berries were to be sold when they were ripe. Ink was made from them. So we went on and on. Rev. Mother was still quite healthy then but already over 70 years old. It was in the year 1904. Finally, we saw again a tree in bloom. It stood in front of a poor hut. A young woman with a little child in her arms came out and greeted us in a friendly way. A young boy, who would be able to climb a tree, came out as well and two smaller ones hid under their mother's apron. The round faces peeked out. It was a darling picture. And Mother Mary, once a lady of high society, asked the poor woman for some blossoms in order to make tea for her sick

Sisters. “Sì, sì, signora”¹⁵⁶, said the poor woman and the young boy was up the tree in a moment, picked the blooms and our dear good mother spread her apron out and caught the falling blooms to the joyful shouts of the happy group of children. I could not understand what she said in thanks as I didn’t know the Italian language yet, but the joyful, happy face of the young mother told me everything. “Oh, the good, kind-hearted poor people” Rev. Mother said often on the way home.

She adhered to Holy Church and its head with all her soul, just as she loved Jesus in the most holy sacrament with her whole heart. Her obedience to Ven. Founder Father Francis of the Cross Jordan was absolute. Although he was considerably younger in years, she always showed him the greatest reverence. She always knelt to receive him. In general, she showed the greatest respect to every priest and was delighted to receive the priestly blessing.

I often saw how our dear Rev. Mother suffered later on with her severe asthma, especially at night, but I never heard a word of complaint or impatience. Our Ven. Father and Founder also came to visit her. On seeing her suffering, he was so moved that he remained standing at the door, lifted both arms to heaven and prayed aloud for her.

Our Rev. Mother died gently and quietly on Christmas night 1907. “Oh, you dear little Jesus, you cannot be a strict judge”, she had said with childlike pious devotion at Christmas time in previous years. His Holiness Pope Pius X sent her his special blessing.

Sister Huberta Reichmann¹⁵⁷

[Wausau, Wisc., March 16, 1941]

¹⁵⁶ Italian. “Yes, yes, *madam*” meaning “Of course, *madam*”

¹⁵⁷ Confirmed under oath before witnesses

Addition

From Report 2

[...] On another occasion I saw how she brought a chair for a poor person and spoke so respectfully to the poor one that one could see she did it for the dear Saviour.

I often saw Rev. Mother in her severe asthma attacks but I never heard a word of complaint or impatience. "The surest way to heaven is suffering, faithfully borne." She wrote these words on the back of a holy card showing the suffering Saviour on the Mount of Olives, which she gave me on my name day. It was the last gift from our dear late Rev. Mother.

I still have a lively memory of the arrival of the good Sisters from Assam for the first General Chapter. It was at night and all had gone to bed. All at once, I became aware of quick footsteps and then I heard the then portress, Rev. Sister Johanna, say: "Rev. Mother, the Sisters from Assam have just arrived." I heard dear Rev. Mother's response: "Really, are they here? God be thanked!" She dressed quickly and hurried down to greet them. How dear Rev. Mother rejoiced on that occasion.

Rev. S. Scholastica [Hopfenmüller] had brought fruit and also a violin along from Assam and she played on it and sang as she did with the Christians in Assam. She had to play again and again. All of us, Rev. Mother and we Sisters could not see or hear enough. Dear Rev. Mother and Sister Scholastica went upstairs arm in arm, once again to the dear Saviour and then to rest. How happy Rev. Mother was that night. How they both will have rejoiced on December 8, 1938.¹⁵⁸

At the request of Rev. Fr. Winfrid Herbst, I wrote something for the Savior's Call in 1937. Perhaps you can make use of that. When I look back, I see all the good noble souls who stood by her with loving fidelity. Dear Rev. Sister Elisabeth [Albertzky], Rev. Sister

¹⁵⁸ Golden Jubilee of the Sisters' Congregation

Bonaventura [Zenker], Rev. Sister Johanna [Mai], how good they were to Rev. Mother at that time. May God bless them all.

Written by Sister Huberta



Tiber bank not far from Via Lungara
(View of St. Peter's and Castel Sant'Angelo)

S. Hyacintha (Justina) Leuner¹⁵⁹



* 09.12.1874 in Kerbfeld,
Diocese of Würzburg, Germany
Entered: 22.03.1901 in Rome
Investment 02.11.1901 in Rome
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows 03.11.1902 in Tivoli,
afterwards in Rome
from April 1903 in Sicily
Sept. 1905 returned to Rome
in poor health
From July 1906 in the USA
+ 30.06.1955 in St. Nazianz, Wis., USA

I was happy to hear that the virtuous life of our dear deceased first Rev. Mother, is to be brought more to light and completed.

I am only an ignorant kitchen Sister! But nevertheless, I feel urged and see it as a holy duty to write some words about how I looked on her with admiration when I met her for the first time: her greatness of spirit, her strong character and will - - this showed in her whole conduct along with her kindness and affability*, I could only rejoice that I could now call her my mother.

And then, only when I came to know her better: Like St. Teresa, her holy baptismal patroness, she valued more than anything the fact that she was a child of Holy Church. She was an example in the observance of all the commandments and directives, in respect and humility, also in speech and conduct toward priests! She was always a most obedient child to Ven. Father and Founder.

Her love for holy poverty and mortification sometimes seemed a bit overdone to me as well as the way in which she tried to educate us to heroic virtue. We were often tested, within and outside the house, alone or with others. But she knew how to be severe and

¹⁵⁹ ASDS, E-35

then gentle again and one could always feel her good intentions and so it gave less pain; one thought, if that's how God wants it....

Once, I was walking in front of her and I heard her speaking with another, telling how she had, with the best of intentions, taken a third to task and how happy she was with the good result.

I noticed on various occasions that the driving force in all her dealings with herself and others was: "only the honour of God, the salvation of souls out of pure love of God." She wanted to forget herself entirely; she never even thought of the motive of "heaven and hell" [...] in order to gain indulgences for herself and she didn't like to hear that from us.

I hope and pray that the dear God, who knows her the best, will let his Holy Spirit work and then all will be done according to his holy will.

I am glad that I knew Rev. Mother Co-Foundress personally; that I am a child of our dear Congregation. [...]

S. M. Hyacintha

S. Ignatia (Rosa) Greiner¹⁶⁰



* 02.09.1867 in Eger, Austria-Hungary
grew up in Altglashütten, Amberg,
Diocese of Regensburg, Germany
Entered: 22.08.1890 in Tivoli
Investment: 23.10.1890 and
Novitiate in Tivoli
Perpetual Vows: 29.11.1891 in Tivoli was
then in Assam until the expulsion of the
Sisters in 1914, sometimes acting as
Commissary
+28.11.1942 in Börwang, Germany

Praised be Jesus Christ

Börwang, July 24, 1940
Kempten, Bavaria, Allgäu

1. In response to the request of our dear Rev. Mother, I want to reply here to the questionnaire regarding our dear late Rev. Mother, as far as I am able. (Regretfully, I was together with dear Rev. Mother for only 16 months because I went to the mission "Assam".)

She fostered the life of prayer carefully. If there were devotions with a sermon and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the Cathedral or in another church, she went there with us. If she was hindered from going, she sent us.

She had a special devotion to the Blessed Sacrament; she went with us to "Quintillione"¹⁶¹, where the Blessed Sacrament was exposed. (We didn't have the Blessed Sacrament in our humble dwelling.)

We went to the church of San Francesco nearby. We held our meditation, adoration, rosary there, attended Holy Mass and received holy communion. On Sunday and feast-days, dear Rev. Mother went with us sisters to High Mass in the Cathedral. If there

¹⁶⁰ ASDS, E-36

¹⁶¹ Correct: Maria SS. di Quintiliolo

was a bad thunderstorm, she prayed a fervent prayer. - Dear Rev. Mother had great devotion to the Mother of God and the saints, recommending to us their virtues, purity, humility and great love of God.

Above all, she had great devotion to the blessed Child Jesus. She liked to pray: "O little child of Bethlehem, we love you very much" etc. Before the Blessed Sacrament, she was always deeply absorbed in prayer. She liked to visit churches, especially if relics of the saints were exposed.

She liked to meditate on the sufferings of Christ and went with us to the Lenten sermons and devotions held in honour of the suffering Saviour. If she was unable to go for some reason, she sent us.

2. Dear Rev. Mother had great respect for Holy Church and the Holy Father. She was very enthused for the missions, for the spread of our holy faith. She liked to read to us from the mission publications about China, about all the suffering there of missionaries such as Rev. Fr. Anzer¹⁶², etc.

She showed, as it were, perfect obedience towards Ven. Father and Founder. She did nothing without his permission.

She showed the greatest reverence and respect to bishops and priests. (At any rate, she also liked to pray for them). She made it plain to us how one should respect priests and gave us as an example St. Catherine of Siena who ran into the street and kissed the priest's footsteps.

3. Her observance of holy poverty was excellent. She had one habit; if it needed mending she had to stay in bed while this was done. Her habit and ours looked something like sacks. They were made of one front and one back piece. (We received the rosary only after some years.)

¹⁶² Missionary of Steyl (SVD) in China, cf. also p. 176

She was a great lover of holy poverty and urged this on us very much. Her small room, her furniture, the things she used, everything corresponded to the greatest poverty. (The beds consisted of two iron stands on which were placed two boards, a hard sea-grass mattress and cushion, some rough blankets.) She bore the privations with great generosity. Knowing her background, one could hardly believe it possible that she could get used to the extremely simple food. There wasn't much meat. [We ate] soup, baked chestnuts, onion and chestnut vegetable, polenta dumplings, a ½ glass of wine, vegetables and a little fruit according to the seasons. In the evening: soup, three pieces of bread and sheep's cheese. During the morning, there was nothing. At 4 p.m., bread and water mixed with wine. On feast-days, [we had] flat cakes baked in oil. During Lent: in the mornings black coffee. Dear Rev. Mother had stomach trouble and, later on, Ven. Father said she had to take something at 10 a.m.

She loved and encouraged cheerfulness; recreation was almost always a very happy time.

She could not bear an affected way of acting. Above all, she liked to go out with us into God's beautiful nature. (We didn't have a garden, only a loggia. It was also hot up there.)

She placed great value on the religious habit and said that one didn't need to wear other religious signs with it.

This changed later on; the sisters were enrolled in the Scapular fraternity of Mount Carmel.

She bore the various blows of fate with great resignation to God's will.

Dear late Rev. Mother, was a great, strong, humble religious. When she met up with the young women from the Bamberg area in Munich on Nov. 21, 1888, these had wrapped up their "provisions" in a little cloth. They spread it out on the table and invited her to eat. (What a condescension) The sisters were not to be attached to anything, also not to religious objects and so she once threw a scapular a long way away.

She rejoiced with those who rejoiced and sympathised with those who mourned.

When once a sister (I) had lice the latter went in tears to Rev. Mother and told about her trouble. She consoled her with "Just be calm, I have already had [them] as well." - - (about 30 of them in the waistcoat)

When Assam asked for a teacher, she said one should first take on the poor local people and the Europeans later on.

In her zeal for the missions, dear Rev. Mother, forgot to give some money for the journey. (We didn't think of it either and left for Assam without money. The train and voyage had been paid for) The mission superior then had to borrow money in Calcutta to buy us blankets for sleeping in.

Dear Rev. Mother, was very devoted to us, her spiritual daughters, and loved us with a motherly love.

If a visitor came to the parlour or she heard something else, she told us about it during recreation.

She wanted to tell us about everything, everything. When a postulant arrived, she was welcomed with open arms.

S. M. Ignatia

Addition

Letter¹⁶³

I include some remembrances from the life of our Rev. Mother Mary of the holy Apostles: (Unfortunately, the undersigned was with Rev. Mother only from 23.8.1890 to 25.12.1891; because she was sent to Assam. Therefore the time was short.)

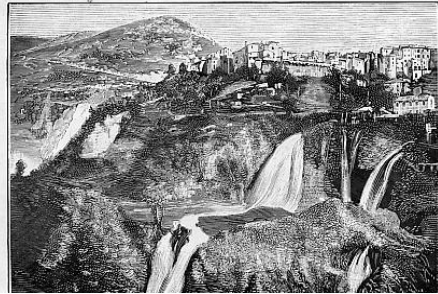
To say it in one word, our mother was a capable, magnanimous and high-minded noble soul; a mother truly concerned for her spiritual Sister-daughters. Although she belonged to the nobility, she was very kind and loving. [...]

¹⁶³ Letter to Fr. Willibrord Menke, SDS, dated 11.06.1935

She was very humble. No matter if a postulant was a simple country girl or an educated one, she was welcomed with open arms and motherly love when she arrived.

Although she was already of an advanced age, she observed the Holy Rule exactly. She also had stomach trouble but in spite of this, she wanted no exception to be made. She was content with the poor food (in comparison with what she was formerly used to). She also did not want to eat anything at 10 o'clock until Ven. Father told her to do so, and then she did. She was an example to all of us in punctuality, kindness and sisterly love.

All of us were her dear Sisters and she always encouraged us to be really cheerful at recreation. She was no lover of dejection. She also loved God's open countryside and almost every day, weather permitting, she went for a walk with the Sisters.



The waterfalls at Tivoli

She liked to take us down to the waterfalls because one could wonder at the works of God there. She also liked to tell the Sisters the news when she had received visitors in the parlour; whether it had been a monsignor, a priest or anyone else. She had great reverence and

respect for ecclesiastical dignitaries and priests. She once told me that St. Magdalen dei Pazzi (was it she?) kissed footsteps of priests. Rev. Mother was a true daughter of Holy Church. The weal and woe of the foreign missions was close to her heart. With great interest and enthusiasm she had one of us read aloud from the *Catholic Missions* (periodical) which reported on the suffering and sacrifice of the missionaries in China, especially the future Bishop Anzar and Freinademetz of the Congregation of Steyl. (The Most Rev. Bishop Anzar was hanged as a missionary and his attackers thought he was dead and went away. Afterwards a catholic woman came, cut the rope and he regained consciousness. He returned to Europe after this, became a Bishop and went back to China again.)

When they wrote from Assam in the year 1891 asking for sisters to take over the English Anglican school, she wrote back saying that one should first convert the local people. The poor pagans lay very close to her heart.

Although she had much to do as Superior General, she nevertheless supervised our study of the Italian language herself. Each one had to go to her room, repeat our lesson and she looked at our work and corrected it.[...]

If she saw a building, which had formerly been a convent, she used to say: "As long as we observe holy poverty, everything will go well with us." In the Chapters, she often emphasised the observance of holy poverty; she also did this regarding holy obedience and the conscientious observance of the Holy Rule.

She also had great devotion to the Holy Spirit. She used to say: You must close the door quietly, because if you don't the Holy Spirit will fly away.

During the many years that I was in the missions, she was always attentive and kind. She thanked for every letter and answered it: She liked to be brief but for that the letters were more efficacious. She also sent a greeting for religious feast-days, even if it was only a good wish on a little picture such as "courage, strength, blessings for a holy name-day". Her letters always encouraged to strive for perfection, to observe the Holy Rule faithfully, to show sisterly love. She was a great lover of the dear Infant Jesus. She liked to pray the little prayer: "Little Child of Bethlehem, we love you dearly" and "Wondrous little Jesus, grant our prayers."

Surely that was the reason the Christ child took her home in the Holy Christmas night to the eternal, never-ending celebration of Christmas in heaven!

S. M. Ignatia, Sor D.S.

S. Jakoba (Sophie) Stumfall¹⁶⁴

Report 1



* 21.02.1874 in Penzing,
Diocese of Munich, Germany
Entered: 25.02.1898 in Rome
Investment: 02.07.1898 and
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 03.07.1899 in Tivoli and
afterwards in Tivoli, from
Feb. 1900 onward in Rome
From June 1901 in the USA
+ 12.11.1951 in Portage, Wis., USA

Memories of Mother Mary of the Apostles

What I admired in dear Rev. Mother was her great self-control. On one occasion, she took three candidates with her to St. Ignatius on the feast of St. Aloysius in order to attend solemn Mass there at the altar and tomb of the saint and also to receive Holy Communion. Dear Rev. Mother became very ill; I still seem to see how a cold sweat came over her face and how, with great effort and self-control, she managed to stay to the end of the very beautiful and solemn ceremonies.

Her mortification and love of holy poverty were such that she never allowed herself to take the tram. She always walked, no matter how long the way. She was always concerned to instil a great love for holy poverty in us. "People in the world" she said, "scrimp and save in order to give us an alms."

She also was very careful to see to it that sisterly love was observed.

S. M. Jacoba Stumfall¹⁶⁵

[Portage, Wis., March 19, 1941]

¹⁶⁴ ASDS, E-37

¹⁶⁵ Confirmed under oath before witnesses

S. Juliana (Margaretha) Scheller¹⁶⁶



* 08.02.1879 in Stappenbach,
Diocese of Bamberg, Germany
Entered: 15.11.1900 in Rome
Investment: 02.07.1901 in Rome
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 03.07.1902 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome
From May 1903 in the USA
+ 08.01.1945 in St. Nazianz, Wisc.,
USA

St. Nazianz, Wis., March 31, 1941

Remembrances of Mother Mary of the Apostles First Superior General

I was in Rome from 1900 to 1903. Mother Mary made a deep impression on me, both as regards her tall figure and her behaviour in general. She presented me to our Ven. Father on the first day already, and when he came into the parlour she knelt down and spoke to him while kneeling, so great was her humility.

She also came to us postulants at recreation and liked us to be always cheerful. She also came into the novitiate. When she arrived, everyone ran to the door and surrounded her. Then she sat down with us and told about the various foundations and the progress of the Congregation. She liked it when the young sisters asked many questions and showed interest in the Congregation and its works.

Rev. Mother was so good and spoke so kindly to us simple sisters. Naturally, we only spoke with the greatest respect to her. She also took care that the young sisters were offered the opportunity to visit the holy places in Rome, as she was of the opinion that they could do much good later on by telling those in their care about these.

¹⁶⁶ ASDS, E-38

She hated exaggerated piety. A sister once had to kneel under the holy water stoup as a penance because she had intentionally let holy water fall to the ground.¹⁶⁷

Her observance of holy obedience was very exact. It was of the greatest importance to her and she expected the same obedience from her sisters as well.

It was the same with holy poverty. She once called me out for accusation¹⁶⁸ because I had let the milk boil over while I was cooking. In spite of her noble origin and advanced age, she was so poor and simple and let nothing special be prepared for her. We did have enough but, without exception, the food served at table was poor.

Yes, she wanted the good sisters to be obedient, ready to serve and forgetful of self. She also gave a sharp rebuke when she was, for example, told by the Rev. Brothers that some sisters had not behaved in a modest way when out for a walk. She also said that a religious may never let herself be intimidated by the weather. I was present twice when she walked a long way on foot in spite of her advanced age. Once it was raining and once the weather was hot.

She was very concerned about the sick sisters, as I myself experienced. Her love accompanied me to America as, on special occasions, I received notes written on holy cards in her faithful, motherly hand. She remembered each sister with motherly love and care and forgot no one, in spite of her advanced age.

I confirm by oath the truth of the facts written down by me.

S. Juliana Scheller, Sor.D.S.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Meaning: "sprinkled on the floor"

¹⁶⁸ cf. Glossary, p. 377f

¹⁶⁹ Confirmed under oath before witnesses

S. Leokadia (Elisabeth) Kolb¹⁷⁰



* 05.08.1863 in Grosslangheim,
Diocese of Würzburg, Germany
Entered: 10.01.1896 in Rome
Investment: 05.02.1896 and
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 08.02.1897 in Tivoli,
afterwards in Rome
from July 1900 in the USA
Returned to Rome, March 1906
To the USA again in July 1906
+ 06.03.1941 in Wausau, Wis., USA

I am happy to give some information regarding Rev. Mother.

I came to Rome from Germany. It was evening when I arrived. I was given something to eat immediately – puréed soup and, I think, fish. Rev. Mother sat down with me. I should eat. She served the soup onto my plate and said that she would now see how obedient I could be. The soup went down.

Rev. Mother was always good to me. When I was transferred to the Clinic, the first foundation in Rome¹⁷¹, she often came to visit us. We had happy times, especially in the afternoons. She liked to have coffee with us. She often said it was like it used to be at her castle. The noble lady felt so at home.

I often went out for a walk with her. She was always talking. I often had difficulty understanding her and always answered with “yes” or “no”. We had an afternoon visitor in Rome. Before that, there was questioning on the Catechism. I was called upon. Candidate Lisetta didn’t know how to answer. “Did you study?” – “Yes, Rev. Mother.” Then she said: “Then read it to me.” After that, it didn’t matter. She only wanted obedience.

¹⁷⁰ ASDS. E-39

¹⁷¹ Marocco Clinic

On one occasion, I received a photograph from my sister. I showed it. Then she said: "But she is more beautiful than you." I have to laugh about that even today.

Things were difficult for me sometimes. I told her and she gave me a holy picture and wrote on it. After that, things went better again. I have forgotten much since it was a long time ago.

Written by Sister Leocadia



Prayer card from Mother Mary to Sister Leokadia, 15.11.1900

S. Leonia (Maria) Gabriel¹⁷²



* 03.02.1876 in Bärddorf,
Diocese of Breslau, Germany
Entered: 26.10.1901 in Rome
Investment: 07.02.1902 in Rome
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 09.02.1903 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome
from November 1904 in the USA
+ 05.09.1950 in Wausau, Wis., USA

Our Rev. Mother Mary of the Apostles was a woman of exceptional talent, clear understanding and an exceptional gift of comprehension. It was often difficult to follow her conversation and instruction, especially if one was out for a walk with her. Before one could follow her words, her thoughts had gone on ahead and were already occupied with another subject. It happened to me one day that I could hardly understand anything she was saying and when I asked her a question after a while, she told me that she had been speaking about that all along the way.

Training the Sisters to humility lay close to her heart and I received quite some proof of this. Once, when I accompanied Mother Mary of the Apostles to the Marocco Clinic, we had to pass a group of soldiers. "How bent over you walk" she said, and held me by my veil in such a way that I had to look up to the sky until we had passed by the entire detachment of soldiers. On another occasion, I went with her to the Borgo Vecchio. When we came close to the church of Santo Spirito, I commented that it was good we were on our side of the road since a number of Garibaldians were sitting on the opposite side in front of the barracks. We were across the road immediately and, much to my sorrow, I had to pass very close to the soldiers.

¹⁷² ASDS, E-40

Once again I had scrubbed the floor and went round the corner to change my clothing. Reverend Mother was standing there and said: "You must go to the Borgo [Vecchio], right away, quickly and without delay, just as you are." I had to obey, but I was able to undo my work apron and throw it behind the house door.

I often think that it would be good if our younger generation of Sisters could go to her school. All petty and affected ways were despised by Mother Mary of the Apostles, exaggerated speech likewise. She used to say: "That can't be taken seriously."

She was very concerned about the sick Sisters and had an especially sympathetic heart for them.

It was touching to see what love and devotion she had for the dear child Jesus. She had a special love and submission to Holy Church and also to Ven. Father and Founder in particular.

She was also very exact in the practice of holy poverty and she made it a point to train the Sisters in this spirit.

Regretfully, I was not long at the Motherhouse and so I didn't get to know her character so well. However, her letters show how she followed the Sisters in the far off missions and demonstrated a lively interest in their welfare and sorrows.

Sister Leonia Gabriel¹⁷³

[Wausau, Wis., March 16, 1941]

¹⁷³ Confirmed under oath before witnesses

Mother Liboria (Elisabeth) Hansknecht¹⁷⁴

Questionnaire

1. The Servant of God, Mother Mary of the Apostles, Therese, Baroness von Wüllenweber, was born at Castle Myllendonk in the District of Mönchengladbach, Rhineland on February 19, 1833. She was baptised in the Castle chapel on the following day, Feb. 20, 1833 and was given the names: Maria, Theresia, Constanzia, Elisabeth, Josepha. She received her first holy communion in the same chapel on May 10, 1844 and was confirmed on June 2, 1849 in Liège where she was attending boarding school at the time.

2. Her parents were Joseph, Theodor Baron von Wüllenweber and Constanzia Elisabeth, née Lefort, both of whom were known and esteemed throughout the whole locality for their piety, kindness and charity.

3. Therese received her first lessons from her well-educated mother. Able governesses and the priests from the neighbouring town continued the programme of education for the gifted heiress until she was sixteen. Religion was central to all her studies. Therese was so open to everything religious that her nursery governess could read some chapters of Rodriguez' "The Practice of Christian Perfection" to her in French when she was only seven years old.

In order to complete her education, her parents sent her to the boarding school of the Benedictine Sisters at Liège for two years. She was held in esteem everywhere due to her piety and diligence. On her return home, her practical training began. In the mornings, she had to help her mother with whatever she had to do in the house. In the afternoons, her father initiated her into the administration of the large estate. In her free time, she studied Holy Scripture with keen interest, visited the sick or continued practising the music that she loved so much.

¹⁷⁴ ASDS, E-41. Photo and biographical data cf. p. xiii. Text according to a typed version, which conforms to the Italian text in the appendix of the Summarium, Volume II; without name, date or signature but with handwritten additions in the 1st person; a copy of the questionnaire itself is in APS, under N 3.1.2.1B.

4. Therese was a happy, very conscientious child who liked to do little mortifications even when she was small and gladly went with her mother to visit the poor and sick.

6. Her parents' good example, the devout and thorough education and the study of holy scripture left Therese, early on, with the desire to forgo marriage in order to work more for the glory of God in this way. Attendance at sermons during parish missions awoke in her the desire to dedicate her entire life to the missions. She therefore entered the Sacred Heart Convent at Blumenthal¹⁷⁵. Her hope that she would be able to work for the missions there was not fulfilled since the work of the sisters lay in another sphere. So, with permission from the higher superiors of the Society, she left and returned home. However, her longing to consecrate herself to God for the missions grew stronger and stronger. Her confessor and spiritual director¹⁷⁶ advised her to begin on her own account since she had not been able to find a suitable convent in Germany. For this purpose then, she left the family home once again to rent and later to purchase with her own money, the former Abbey of the Benedictine Sisters at Neuwerk, near Mönchen-Gladbach. There, in a religious spirit, she started an orphanage. Since a foundation in Germany was not possible due to the Kulturkampf, and Therese wanted to place herself under obedience to a religious superior, she entered the Catholic Teaching Society on September 5, 1882. The objective of this Society was to put all its strength into helping Holy Church in its determination to work for the conversion of peoples and the salvation of souls.

7. Therese was pious and God-fearing already as a young girl. As Baroness, she gladly visited the sick in the locality and helped them with small gifts and acts of charity as much as she could. The orphans at the convent in Neuwerk found in her a good directress who tried to be a good mother to them in the fullest sense of the word. As the first superior general of the Sisters of the Divine Saviour, she set an example for the sisters of a life conformed in every way to the Holy Rule and the wishes of the Venerable Founder.

¹⁷⁵ the Netherlands

¹⁷⁶ Prelate Dr. von Essen, parish priest of Neuwerk

8. Mother Mary of the Apostles, Therese, Baroness von Wüllenweber, was always a zealous, striving, observant religious. She only looked for the greater glory of God and practised the theological and cardinal virtues to such a heroic degree that she was often misunderstood and was rejected by some.

Faith

9. In her conferences, Rev. Mother often exhorted [us] to give heartfelt thanks to God for the great grace of having been born and brought up in the Catholic faith. She desired and aimed to obtain this for everyone and repeatedly asked the sisters to renew their baptismal promises and willingly make sacrifices so that many souls would find their way to Holy Church. Already as a young woman, she showed herself to be grateful for the gift of faith through the distribution of missionary magazines. However, she felt this activity was not enough for her. For this reason, she wanted to put her entire being and talents¹⁷⁷ at the service of the mission in order to repay God a little bit for the great grace. But her prayer effort and concern was not only for the heathens. Her heart was deeply touched by the division caused by the schism in Europe, which had turned many Christians away from the true faith. She therefore joined the Association of Prayer for the Conversion of England and, later on, had the sisters enrol and pray zealously for this intention as well. The work of the Freemasons was a cause of great sorrow to Rev. Mother; she often said: "They want to destroy Catholic Austria so that they can destroy Holy Church more easily." But with the firm conviction that no enemy could do anything against the Church without God's permission and that, on the contrary, God wanted to extend his Kingdom even in such times, she always urged the sisters to pray with zeal and devotion. In particular, she sincerely thanked the dear God for the grace of vocation to religious life. In her notes, she wrote: "What a joy it is that I can now give myself totally to Him! I now have everything that I have desired my whole life long and I will rather die than leave the Congregation and the Founder. God, I thank you

¹⁷⁷ The text has many corrections and additions. A 1) has been added here and a 2) added before the following sentence for neither of which can an explanation be given.

unceasingly for ever.”¹⁷⁸ Her fondest wish, to be buried in the shadow of St. Peter’s was carried out.

11. Rev. Mother liked to make the sign of the cross often. She could be quite indignant when she saw that a sister was careless about this holy practice. She also saw to it that heads were bowed correctly at the “Gloria Patri”. She said: “At the Gloria Patri, we are permitted to bow our head in union with the angelic choirs and we must, therefore, do so very devoutly.”

Her favourite prayer was the devotion to the Incarnation and Birth of the Saviour. During the Advent and Christmas seasons, she prayed to the divine child so fervently and with such childlike trust that it made a deep impression on everyone. Despite the dire poverty, she obtained a small crib for Tivoli, even though it was a very simple one, and kept an oil lamp burning in front of it all the time. She placed a prayer and meditation book before the Christ-child, which the sisters could freely use whenever they wished. However, it was not enough for her to lead the sisters to the Christ-child and speak to them about his love; she gathered together the children who lived near the convent, brought them to the crib and prayed there with them. These devotions of Rev. Mother, as well as her piety in general, were solid and of deep faith and there was nothing sentimental or peculiar about them. She hated pietistic and sanctimonious attitudes with all her heart. Her holy death during Christmas night was viewed by everyone as being a reward for her childlike love of the Infant Jesus. Everyone had the same thought: the Child Jesus had come to get her.

Rev. Mother prayed much, and her entire life was indeed a prayer. All her thoughts and aspirations were directed toward God and his glory. Therefore, the goal of all the daily walks was almost always a visit to a church where there was exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. She usually knelt bolt upright then on the stone floor in fervent prayer, her eyes fixed on the sacred Host, and made her adoration in deep recollection. She also liked to send the sisters to these churches and to the processions in order to make atonement for public sacrileges.

¹⁷⁸ An unreadable section of the text, substituted from the Italian translation in the Summarium, Vol. II.

Although, as Baroness von Wüllenweber, Rev. Mother had grown up in wealth and luxury, it was not the dire poverty, which was her greatest sacrifice in Tivoli but the absence of the Blessed Sacrament in the house. Her deepest desire was to have perpetual adoration¹⁷⁹ introduced into her Congregation. This great love of the Saviour in the Blessed Sacrament was already evident in her childhood days. When she was in Liège as a young boarding student, they looked everywhere for her for a long time without success and then found her behind a curtain near the altar with her eyes fixed on the tabernacle. Even then, she received Holy Communion every day. She also tried to arrange her journeys in such a way that she could break a journey at a particular place in order to receive the Saviour in Holy Communion.

12. Besides the most holy Sacrament of the Altar, she dearly venerated the most Blessed Virgin Mary. She had a childlike joy in regard to the graces, which God had given to his holy mother and, most of all, she thanked God for the fact that Mary had remained totally pure and sinless. She liked to talk with the sisters about this sublime privilege during recreation. The first little altar, before which she made her vows (in the presence of the Founder), was a 30cm high statue of the Immaculate Conception, which stood on a little table. All the common prayers of the community were said in front of this statue.

She placed special emphasis on the Marian feasts and she and the sisters tried to prepare well for them. In little talks, she brought out the meaning of the respective feasts and encouraged the sisters to honour the dear Mother of God zealously and to imitate her virtues. The novenas which she and the sisters made together, and their visits to churches where the image of Mary was displayed for veneration, were intended to strengthen and consolidate the sisters' devotion to the Mother of God.

Reverend Mother's great love for the most holy Virgin made her feel deeply the insults that many persons directed against her. She tried to make atonement for this with her sisters and prayed a

¹⁷⁹ Perpetual exposition of the Blessed Sacrament during which the sisters changed off hourly throughout the day and night as was common practice at that time.

special prayer to the Mother of God every Saturday. This is still prayed now, every Saturday, in all the houses of the Congregation.

She kept the month of May as a month of prayer. Prayer with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was not enough for her great eagerness to honour the Blessed Mother. She added a special devotion to this. Since in the beginning the Blessed Mother was the principal patron of the Congregation under the title "Queen of the Apostles", Mother Mary highly venerated her under this title and herself took the name "Mother Mary of the holy Apostles". For the day of her perpetual vows in 1889, she found none more beautiful than the feast of the Annunciation, the day on which the Virgin Mary was the first to give her life to God.

13. She could kneel before the Blessed Sacrament for long periods, completely absorbed in the presence of God. She then forgot everything else, nothing disturbed or distracted her any more. She saw only the Saviour in the tabernacle. So she could truthfully say to a sister who drew her attention to something changed on the altar: "I wonder that you see all that, I see only Jesus." She made her meditation almost always in the chapel, completely immersed in the presence of God. She wanted to praise and adore God in the sacrament of his love on behalf of all peoples and nations. She therefore let the sisters hold hours of adoration in their own mother tongue when the Blessed Sacrament was exposed so that praise of the Saviour would be heard in various languages. It was incomprehensible to her great love that someone could be refused the time to receive Holy Communion. She expressed her displeasure and said: "Such a thing I could not do."

14. Rev. Mother liked to meditate on the passion of Christ. For her, this was a source from which she obtained her great love for the Cross and her strength in suffering and it was something to which she repeatedly drew the sisters' attention. Her conferences during Lent on the Passion of our Lord were so deep and showed such compassion that they made an unforgettable impression on the Sisters.

She often prayed the Way of the Cross adding on five Our Fathers in honour of the five holy wounds and she usually did this with outstretched arms. This devotion was so close to her heart that she herself composed meditations on the Way of the Cross and copied

them for the sisters. Convinced of the fact that the deepest thoughts are of no value unless they translate into action, she linked a brief and fitting examination of conscience regarding religious life and the holy vows to the meditation on each Station. Rev. Mother's sensible, practical piety and her simple, solid spirit of prayer were evidenced in these practices and prayers. In order to give the sisters the opportunity to hear good conferences on the sufferings of Christ so that the Passion of the Saviour was made present to them time and again, she sent the sisters to the Lenten sermons, went with them to St. Peter's when the important relics were exposed and to the Pillar of Scourging and the Holy Stairs. She always found practical connections to life. She compared, for instance, the Holy Stairs with the tongue on which the Saviour rests at Holy Communion and linked appropriate instructions and admonitions on mortification of the senses to the meditation on the instruments of martyrdom and the sufferings of Christ.

15. Besides that to the Mother of God, Rev. Mother had a special devotion to St. Joseph. She prayed fervently to him before his feasts and in the month of March, and celebrated nice devotions in his honour with the sisters.

Her great love for the Infant Christ and her desire to lead all peoples to the true faith was surely the source of her deep veneration of the Three Kings whose resting place was in her home Diocese of Cologne. She also had a great devotion to the holy Apostles (especially St. Peter, St. Paul and St. Jude Thaddeus), the Archangel Michael and St. Benedict Labre. On their feast-days, she liked to visit churches dedicated to these saints; she spoke about their lives, called attention to their humility and encouraged zealous imitation.

She spoke with great love about her baptismal patroness, St. Teresa of Avila, whom she warmly venerated and also about Joan of Arc. Rev. Mother chose this courageous defender of her country as her confirmation patroness because she herself wanted to be completely strong in mind and body since she hated any effeminate, sentimental ways in herself or in others.

16. Rev. Mother desired nothing more fervently than to see the Kingdom of Christ extend over the whole world. For this reason, she was already afire from her youth with holy zeal for the spread

of the faith and dearly wanted to be allowed to go to the missions. Since this happiness was denied her, she later found consolation in the thought of preparing sisters who would spread the faith in various mission locations. In urgent admonitions, she impressed the need to pray often and gladly for the spread of the faith and the conversion of infidels and heretics on the hearts of the sisters who remained behind in Europe.

18. On Sundays and feastdays, she had factory girls come to Neuwerk for pleasant conversation, singing, games or the reading of good books in order to keep them away from the streets; "because", she said, "while the girls are with us they are doing nothing wrong".

She taught catechism to the orphan children and was careful to see that they learned it well since she knew that religious ignorance is the source of many sins and the beginning of religious apathy. Therefore she felt a deep need to explain the catechism to the sisters and hear what they had learned so that, having been well instructed, they could explain the truths of faith to the children of Rome in the church of Santo Spirito and encourage them to live as good Catholics.

For years, following her instructions, the sisters prayed the rosary together with the people during the 6 o'clock Mass in the parish church and she herself brought the children who lived near the convent to the Crib in order to pray to the Christ child there with them.

20. Rev. Mother loved to read Sacred Scripture, especially the New Testament, and often quoted appropriate words of the Saviour.

21. Her obedience to the Holy Father and Holy Church was perfect; every papal instruction, every word of the Pope was sacred to her. When Holy Church had spoken, she obeyed without the slightest objection. She wanted to educate the sisters to this same spirit and took every opportunity to do so whenever it came. Once, on returning from a walk, she admonished [the sisters] to always value the instructions of the Holy Father highly, to follow them exactly and never to do anything against his wishes. Mother

Mary had, in fact, met two sisters of another Congregation who were out collecting. In her zeal to see that everyone observed the instructions of the Holy Father, she made those sisters aware that collecting was forbidden and then used this event to instruct the members of her own religious family. She showed deep respect not only to members of the hierarchy but also to every simple priest. She revered all because of their office and rank and readily asked for their blessing. On meeting a newly ordained priest in the street, she would even kneel down there to obtain his first blessing. She naturally expected her companion to do the same. She almost always knelt to speak with our Ven. Father and Founder. His wishes and instructions were such commandments to her that to the sisters it seemed not only admirable but often also incomprehensible. It seemingly never occurred to her to bring her own ideas to bear, she wanted only to be a most humble servant and to obey always and everywhere. Therefore the Constitutions of the Congregation were especially holy to her: "If I distance myself from the Holy Rule" so she wrote in her notebook, "I distance myself from my heavenly Father as did the prodigal son". Every thing that God's representatives wanted from her was therefore God's will for her, what they required she viewed as his command.

22. In the Via Lungara, Rev. Mother let a protestant girl be instructed in the truths of faith by one of the sisters and it was a great joy to her when she was ready to become a Catholic. – The schism in Europe was something very painful to her even before her entrance to the convent. She therefore joined the Association of Prayer for the Conversion of England and saw to it that the sisters were enrolled as well later on and prayed much for the conversion of infidels and heretics.

23. In spite of the greatest poverty, Rev. Mother liked to have the liturgy celebrated solemnly in the chapel. Nothing was too good for the Saviour. She herself often enriched the Mass and devotions with songs and through her beautiful playing of the organ.

24. The commandments of God and the Church were sacrosanct to Rev. Mother. One never saw her wilfully transgress any of them.

25. She was happy about the indulgences granted by the Church and gladly prayed the prescribed prayers, although she guarded against exaggeration. If she noticed that a sister tried to gain indulgences always and everywhere, one would hear her say when there was an opportunity: "Be diligent in practising acts of virtue, acts of humility, of obedience, of self-denial and make sacrifices, then you will have the most and the greatest indulgences." For this reason, she did not like it if a sister took holy water every time she went in or out of the room because it was not done with devotion.

She hoped that the holy habit, worn with real conviction, would be a key sufficient to open the door of heaven for her. In the early years, therefore, she did not gladly give permission for a scapular to be worn and sometimes said: "Through the holy habit we are completely dedicated to God so why add a scapular?"

Hope

Rev. Mother had great faith but her hope was not less great. She had the firm expectation that with God's grace she would become not only blessed but also saintly. She hoped and trusted that sisters who had only a basic preparation could certainly do great things if only they remained at the posts and did their duty in holy obedience. No failure was able to weaken this trust in Divine Providence. Undismayed and steadfast, she carried on with her duties immediately.

26. Although Rev. Mother grew up among riches and luxury, she was not only indifferent to life's comforts but flatly despised them. She gave up her beautiful patrimony, Castle Myllendonk, freely and without fuss, just as one would give up something of no value. Never, not even in the days of the direst poverty, did she long after what she had once had. She did not set store on riches, education, honour or glory. To accept contempt and scorn or even to seek them out was her joy and endeavour. She gladly took every opportunity for this so that the young sisters accompanying her often drew back from the actions of Rev. Mother and moved away because they did not understand such greatness and heroism. There are countless examples of the ways in which she totally denied her aristocratic formation and noble upbringing and placed herself on the level of uneducated persons out of love for the poor,

despised Saviour. Accordingly, she once had a stool brought and placed in the middle of the road when she had an attack of asthma. The crowd that gathered and the grumbling about such an action seemed to give her pleasure. On another occasion, she jumped over a chain, which closed off a street near the Vatican since the officer did not open the chain when she asked him to do so. Even among those of her social standing, at the home of a noble Contessa¹⁸⁰, she gave expression to her longing for contempt. When sweetmeats were brought to her, she took a piece with her hand like an uneducated person instead of using the *molletta*¹⁸¹ which was provided.

Sometimes, clothing also had to serve to arouse people's scorn. "Am I the collar then?" she once said to a sister who drew her attention to the fact that her collar was not clean when she was about to go out. Worldly vanity was nothing to her and so the sisters were not surprised in the slightest when she intentionally made her clothing disorderly before having her photograph taken. She always acted in accordance with her motto: "To God be the honour, to me contempt." She used the things of this world only insofar as this was absolutely necessary and liked to give preference to inferior things rather than the better ones. Her unpretentiousness could almost not have been greater. She made no exceptions in food, clothing or accommodation and one could see how unwelcome it was to her if an exception was prescribed for her.

30. Rev. Mother possessed an unlimited trust in God. She hoped that she and her sisters, with His help, could fulfil even the most difficult assignments and be equal to every work. She was convinced of the working of Divine Providence in all things and never complained or became discouraged in the face of any misfortune or difficulty. The Lord was her help and consolation and she relied totally on His goodness and love.

31. All her thoughts, intentions, desires and endeavours were directed toward God as her final goal. Her love was great and strong and she found inward satisfaction only in pleasing God. Working for mere externals or for appearances was hateful to her.

¹⁸⁰ Italian: Baroness

¹⁸¹ Tongs for picking up pastries, etc.

32. She bore great and small reverses not only with perfect magnanimity, amazing patience and self-control but also with words of gratitude. She taught the sisters like this: "A Deo Gratias in suffering is worth more than prayers of praise in times of honour and success."¹⁸²

33. In the early days, the contemplative-active life of the Congregation lived in accord with the holy Rule was doubly difficult due to the dire poverty. However, that didn't seem to trouble Rev. Mother personally, she fulfilled the difficult tasks of her office as first superior general just as gladly.

35. She joyfully welcomed opportunities to encourage steadfast confidence in Divine Providence especially if she found that someone was discouraged or despondent. The simple but deep words she spoke or wrote on these occasions brought renewed hope and courage to the most downhearted, since each one recognised and felt that these simple words were the result of lived experience.

37. Rev. Mother possessed a healthy and robust constitution, which preserved her from a lot of serious illness right up into her old age. She accepted the suffering of her later years with patience and resignation as coming from the hand of God. Without complaint or lamenting and even with a joyful heart, she accepted the suffering when she was bedridden until the Christ child brought her richly blessed life to an end on Christmas night.

Charity

41 Rev. Mother was an inspiring example to all in regard to the observance of the commandments of God, the dictates of the Church and the holy Rule.

42. She hated every transgression of a commandment or the holy Rule, no matter how small. One never saw her voluntarily offend against a commandment of God. Already as a child, she had a very pronounced delicacy of conscience. She didn't want to offend the Saviour in any way. When she once made clothing for a doll on a Sunday, she became very sad. Her mother tried to reassure her,

¹⁸² A handwritten comment is inserted here: "and in her notes".

saying that it wasn't a sin since she hadn't remembered it was Sunday. However, Rev. Mother only became happy and content again when the parish priest assured her: "Child, the dear God loves you now just as much as ever!"

45. Rev. Mother gave the impression of a soul totally recollected in God and one interiorly united with Him. All her intentions and thoughts were concentrated on Him and His interests. In this way her life became a constant prayer, a lasting union with God. Therefore she could say to a sister: "Praying only when you fold your hands, that has no value."

46. During walks and at recreation, Rev. Mother liked to speak often about God, the interests of Holy Church and progress in the missions.

49. She lived always in the presence of God and made her life into one great prayer.

50. She knelt before the Blessed Sacrament for long periods, upright, with her eyes directed either toward the tabernacle or lightly closed, totally absorbed in adoration and prayer.

52. By means of thorough catechetical instruction and detailed explanation of the holy Rule, Rev. Mother tried to educate all the sisters to develop a delicate conscience. Justified reprimands for actual transgressions repeatedly showed that even the smallest offences against God were very painful to her.

53. It was not enough for Rev. Mother to be consumed with love of God herself, she aimed for the same in others. Her exhortations always served to animate the sisters in the service of God and to encourage them to live a life of humility, of self-sacrifice and to carry the Cross for love of Him. One could see the joy she felt when she noticed how a sister conquered self and practised virtue humbly and cheerfully.

54. Rev. Mother observed the Lenten fast conscientiously which, at that time, was severe. In the morning, she took a piece of bread, which had been weighed, and in the evening, soup and a little bread. In her earlier years, she had used a penance girdle and a discipline. However, she usually performed less remarkable

penances because, in her humility, she tried to avoid anything conspicuous. Without complaint, and even joyfully, she accepted asthma, heat and cold from the hand of God and bore even the difficult times of privation and want with the cheerfulness of the saints. In this way, religious life became, as lived by Rev. Mother, a perfect life of penance.

55. However, events that just happened were not enough for her. She sought out opportunities to earn contempt and scorn and how happy she was when her desire was fulfilled. She was not disturbed therefore when, on that account, strangers and relatives looked on her as being a fool. She rejoiced even more because of it.

56. She liked to meditate on the Passion of Christ. Her great soul found in this an example and a spur to silent suffering and endurance. How she loved to pray the Way of the Cross and the five Our Fathers in honour of the five holy wounds throughout the whole year and not just during Lent. She wanted to instil the same love for these sublime mysteries in the sisters. These instructions were unforgettable for the sisters since they sensed that the devotion of their Rev. Mother came from the heart.

Love of neighbour

59. Rev. Mother prayed much for the conversion of sinners herself and had others pray for this intention.

60. She gladly taught the truths of faith to the sisters. Afterwards, she was happy when she could send the sisters to the church so that they would teach the children to learn the catechism well and live according to it.

61. Her zeal for souls was particularly evident in her training of the sisters. She took great pains and shunned no effort to develop the spirit of humility, poverty, simplicity and mortification in them. She had only the salvation of each soul in view and did not let herself be turned away from this intention by misjudgement of the purity of her motive.

62. If sacrileges had been committed, Rev. Mother sent sisters to the church or to participate in the procession in order to atone and make reparation for the outrage. The thought of atonement also

caused her to say a special prayer to the Mother of God on Saturdays and in this way make good for the offence that so many Christians inflicted on her.

64. Mother Mary was always ready to forgive and forget and to embrace with real motherly love anyone who came to ask pardon of her. Her great soul, although so often misunderstood, was above resentment and enmity. She excluded no one from her love. She treated even those who had done her injustice through prejudice or misunderstanding with the same kindness. She never bore a grudge and when something was finished it was also forgotten. Many rightly viewed this greatness of soul as being the principal indication of her inner sanctity. How noble she showed herself to be in the year 1904/05, when three sisters who owed their education and training to her did not want to acknowledge her as superior general any more. They tried to win sisters and the Visitator¹⁸³ over to their side. At a session of the General Chapter of 1905 therefore, the Visitator who was also presiding at the Chapter asked Rev. Mother to resign. Rev. Mother complied with his wishes without showing any emotion. The sisters then, following the request of the one presiding and elected another Superior General. She, however, did not accept the election since she knew the sisters had only acted in such a way because they were under the impression that it was obedience to Holy Church. The following ballot confirmed this. Everyone voted for Rev. Mother's re-election. She remained completely calm throughout and no complaint or accusation was heard from her. She herself participated happily in the recreation and strongly reprimanded a sister who expressed her disapproval at what had occurred.

66. One never heard her speak about the failings of others. She was saintly in her love of neighbour and never permitted the good reputation of another to be harmed in her presence.

67. Rev. Mother had a special love for the poor. In spite of the great poverty, she saw to it that the needy received something to eat at the entrance each day.

¹⁸³ Father Esser, OP

68. Rev. Mother did everything she could to instruct the sisters well in the truths of faith. She was ready to help each one who came to ask her advice through her extensive knowledge, long years of experience and her motherly counsel. Those who were distressed or in mourning experienced her sympathetic heart through her words or through a letter. All were to form one family and as such they should also bear difficult times and reverses together. No one could exclude herself from this without receiving a reprimand or even a penance. She repeatedly admonished the sisters to this life of togetherness and asked them never to transgress the holy Rule voluntarily.

69. "Sick persons are a blessing for the house" was one of Rev. Mother's sayings. It was her wish that all should try to lighten their situation and at least greet them in a friendly manner. She herself often visited the sick and cared so touchingly for their needs that there arose in some the desire to become sick in order to receive such devoted care from Rev. Mother.

Prudence

71. All the thoughts, intentions and actions of Rev. Mother, in regard to herself or the sisters entrusted to her, were directed toward the final goal, eternity. As the first spiritual daughter of Ven. Father, the formation of the members was her special duty. In a wise and tactful manner, she chose appropriate ways for training the sisters according to the plans of the Founder. With fine pedagogical skill, she knew how to combine mildness and firmness, kindness and severity, praise and correction in such a delicate manner that, with few exceptions, all highly honoured and loved her as their spiritual mother. She did not anticipate grace, but waited with discerning patience until the time was ripe. Although she attached great importance to training the sisters in humility, patience, mortification and detachment from family ties, she did not want to achieve this in an unsympathetic manner. She rightly realised that the newcomers, after being introduced to religious life and impressed by the good example of the others, would voluntarily renounce superfluous and unnecessary things and put them in front of her door.

As a special means of advancement on the way to God, she always recommended close union with Christ. She did not want a

sister to pray a lot from books or use many words but she should talk with God as a child does with its father and mother and should try to think of God always and live in his presence. She also instilled in the sisters a great reverence for the religious habit, which should be a constant reminder to follow the way of perfection and take the place of all other blessed items.

72. Rev. Mother was very exact in the observance of the commandments of God, the Church and the holy Rule. She not only avoided every voluntary venial sin but even sought to avoid every imperfection.

73. She made immense sacrifices for God and also required forgetfulness of self and a great spirit of sacrifice from the sisters. One of her well-known sayings was: "The more the heart is free from self-love, the more receptive it is of the grace of God!"

74. Simplicity seemed so important to Rev. Mother that she repeatedly emphasised the simplicity of the children of God in her conferences. "Be simple in thought, action and speech. You should say: Yes, no!" These words were an echo of her own behaviour as she herself was upright in thought and word, hated dissimulation and lying and was an example for simplicity. She rejoiced like a child, for example, over a bunch of flowers, which the sisters placed on the table on March 25, the anniversary of her perpetual profession.

75. Rev. Mother strove to do all her tasks well, even perfectly. She was always united to God. [...]

76. Although Rev. Mother possessed an independent character and great wisdom as well as a lot of experience, she often asked the advice of saintly priests such as Ven. Father, Rev. Fr. Bonaventura [Lüthen] and Rev. Fr. Thomas [Weigang]. She presented her decision regarding important matters to them and acted according to their judgement. Sometimes, she also asked the opinion of older, experienced sisters who were not members of the Generalate.

77. When the sisters turned to Rev. Mother for whatever reason, she spoke simply and gave motherly advice. All her words were directed toward an unaffected, childlike service of God.

78. She knew that idleness is the source of all evil. Therefore she urged the sisters not to waste or dream time away. As no outside apostolate was undertaken in the early years of foundation, the sisters had to occupy themselves with studies or needlework. Even walks were used as opportunities to extend vocabulary and to learn the Italian language.

79. Rev. Mother loved cheerfulness and fun but she seemed to be happiest in the hours of meditation and solitude.

80. Her prudence was particularly evident the execution of her duties as superior general, which she performed with great zeal, and in the formation of her sisters. She often quoted the words of the Saviour to them: "Be as wise as serpents and as simple as doves."

Justice

81. Rev. Mother was an obedient child of God from her childhood into her old age. She tried not to withdraw this obedience from Him through any form of voluntary sin. She was always zealous for His glory and gave Him due honour and adoration at all times.

82. She honoured the saints as special favourites of God through the novenas, triduums and prayers, which she prepared for their feasts. How often she visited the churches in Rome dedicated to the saints to pray there and honour the relics. She had a childlike devotion to the Mother of God whom she imitated zealously and asked for her intercession. She also had great devotion to the infancy of Jesus, to the Saviour's bitter Passion and to St. Joseph, the holy Apostles and the holy Guardian Angel.

84. She had deep respect for the ordinances and decrees of the Holy Father. Each edict was God's word to her and was therefore holy. She insistently admonished the sisters never to act against the instructions of the representatives of God. Her zeal in this went so far that she herself made sisters of another Congregation aware, when she saw them out collecting, that the Holy Father had forbidden this.

86. It was something of a great exception if Rev. Mother did not join the community for the Divine Office¹⁸⁴. She prayed with devotion

¹⁸⁴ Correct: "The Little Office of Our Lady"

and recollection and paid attention to correct pronunciation, devout recitation and reverential bowing of the head at the Glory be to the Father.

87. Festive celebrations of the liturgy brought her much joy and she liked to speak with the sisters about the celebrations, which were held on certain days in the churches of Rome. Likewise, in the sisters' own chapel, everything had to be worthily and beautifully arranged for the divine service.

88. Triduums or novenas in community, often special devotions conducted by a priest, usually formed the remote preparation for a more important feast-day. Rev. Mother herself gave the more immediate preparation through short conferences, which indicated the significance of the day. In these, she laid particular emphasis on the sisters' active participation.

At New Year, she wrote the name of a saint on a small piece of paper for each sister. With much joy, the sisters picked out these little papers in order to imitate the saint during the coming year. She prepared similar surprises for the feasts of Ascension and Pentecost, always keeping in mind the intention of encouraging the sisters in their striving toward sanctity.

89. Her obedience toward the Founder of the Congregation was touchingly childlike. She never did anything against the will or wishes of Ven. Father. She gave an exact account of all her transactions and activities, accepted accusations, admonitions, reprimands and censure while kneeling and remained on her knees until Ven. Father went away.

90. Severe as Rev. Mother was with herself, she was friendly and sociable with others. She, a well-educated noble lady, did not find it beneath her to train and be continually surrounded by sisters who were not only much younger, but who also came from lowly and in some cases the lowliest of backgrounds and had only an ordinary and often a very deficient education. She never let the sisters feel this great gap however. In her humility and love, she tried to be a true mother to all of them.

92. She was always very grateful for benefits and alms. She spoke touchingly of gifts received and reminded all of the obligation to be grateful. If a sister received a gift and did not respond with warm thanks immediately, she was strongly reprimanded. "No vice," she used to say repeatedly, "is so bad as ingratitude, that is why one speaks of black ingratitude."

93. Rev. Mother was an example to all in fulfilling the duties of her vocation, which she undertook wholeheartedly. "I have received so many gifts of all kinds from God in order to make use of them and become holy. So I must love my official position and make others happy. Therefore, zeal, zeal, zeal!"

94. She acted with no regard to the standing of persons for she knew no human respect. If she was asked for her opinion, she gave it freely and without regard to the low or high rank of the person. In her dealings with others, she was particularly sociable and motherly to the ordinary sisters while she often so humiliated the more talented ones that they felt rejected.

95. Rev. Mother love the truth more than anything. She hated equivocation and hypocrisy from the depths of her soul.

Temperance

98. Rev. Mother could exercise perfect self-control, overcome her own will and subordinate it to others in holy obedience. Through interior mortification, she shaped and formed her character in such a way that personal insults no longer irritated her exteriorly. When a sister once reproached her unjustly and disrespectfully just before recreation, she used no word of correction or disapproval. She only remarked kindly to a sister who wanted to distract her attention through a serious discussion: "Sister N., right now I need something cheerful."

She observed a strict discipline, over her tongue above all. During the times of silence, she spoke only what was necessary and expected the sisters to do the same. She wanted absolutely no speaking on the stairways and in the corridors and she sharply reprimanded any sister who forgot this.

100. Like so many great persons, Rev. Mother also had to suffer misunderstanding and injustice. However, her noble soul did not allow any grievance or anger to appear but she always repaid bad with good and injustice and rebellion with love. How forbearing and kind she was to the sisters who wanted to remove her from her official position and how humble, obedient and patient toward the Visitor¹⁸⁵ who opposed her quite disrespectfully, humbling and degrading her and making many hurtful remarks quite openly before the community which, almost without exception, was composed of young sisters. Rev. Mother kept silent throughout. She said to a sister: "The dear God lets it happen, we must accept it joyfully."

102. As an independent, mature person, Rev. Mother naturally formed her own opinion but she was immediately ready to subordinate her opinion and will unquestioningly to that of the superiors

104. She kept the fasts prescribed by the Church as strictly as did the community. In the morning, she took black coffee with a small piece of bread which had been weighed and, in the evening, soup with a little bread.

105. She was very moderate in regard to food and drink. She ate together with the sisters in the refectory. The food was poor and simple, especially in the early years. In the morning, there was coffee with milk and dry bread; soup, vegetables and a tiny little piece of meat were served at midday. Water coloured with wine stood on the table together with dry bread in the afternoon and bread and soup were served again in the evening. Later on, also some vegetables could be taken at the evening meal. When Rev. Mother had to take other food in her later years, one could see how disagreeable these exceptions were to her.

106/07 She didn't sleep for much longer than six hours in a hard, uncomfortable bed. Only during the final weeks of her life did she rest on a horsehair mattress because she was suffering from bedsores.

¹⁸⁵ 1st General Chapter 1905, Fr. Esser, OP

108/9 Just as surely as Rev. Mother practised holy poverty in food and drink, she was particularly sparing in regard to clothing. She didn't want to have more than the sisters and had her underwear and habit mended time and again. Simplicity and holy poverty marked her room and furniture as well, one could look in vain to find unnecessary or expensive items.

110. All of life's comforts were available to Rev. Mother before she entered the convent. She rejected these, entered the Congregation and lived a life that was made up of innumerable big sacrifices and no end of many little sacrifices. She bore every privation gladly and cheerfully; she never leaned back while she was sitting and she never complained about the summer heat or protected herself against the cold of winter. Only rarely did she warm her hands over some burning coals. When she was once working on a winter's day by an open window and a sister asked her if it wasn't too cold, she replied: "If I had wanted to have everything nice and comfortable, I would have stayed at home and would now be sitting a warm room." One sensed her great spirit of penance everywhere, in her walking, standing and sitting.

111. In her earlier years, Rev. Mother used a penance girdle, a discipline and a hand-sized piece of wood with nails in it for bodily mortification. Nothing of this is known from later years. Her humility did not permit that one saw extraordinary ways in her and the mistaken ideal of exaggerated penance was foreign to her. She was, however, no friend of soft living, and the religious life as led by Rev. Mother was a witness to her heroic spirit of penance.

112. Therefore it is not surprising that Rev. Mother had her senses perfectly under control. One could find nothing unstable, fickle or sensual in her whole being but everything about her gave the impression of the deepest piety and of a straightforward, open character full of sincere love of God and neighbour.

113. She conscientiously observed the rule of silence and required its observance from the sisters as well. She could be very serious if there was speaking on the stairs or in the corridors. She corrected this severely and tolerated no exception.

Fortitude

115. Rev. Mother loved her home, her father and her four sisters wholeheartedly. In spite of this, she found the courage and spirit of sacrifice to break all these bonds for love of God and she heroically left the beautiful castle she was to inherit, and the permanent comfort it offered, in exchange for great poverty.

117. Rev. Mother carried out her duties as first superior general and formator of the sisters with strength of character, determination, serenity and confidence. No matter if misunderstandings arose and accusations were made against her, she remained courageous, steadfast, undismayed and continued doing what she recognised to be her duty. She bore the sufferings and infirmities and the almost total blindness of her final years without complaint. No word of complaint ever passed her lips, not even in her final illness. She accepted deprivations, misfortunes and whatever else God permitted with a strong, all-embracing heart. When one of the sisters became ill after the first investment ceremony, Rev. Mother remained firm although she felt not only the suffering of the sister but was concerned, at the same time, about the survival of the Congregation for which she had sacrificed everything. Instead of faint-hearted words or anxious questioning, she said only: "All crosses are beneficial." Not even the great sorrow of being misunderstood and rejected by three members of the Congregation could draw a word of complaint from her. She wanted to love suffering always and viewed being allowed to suffer as good fortune. As she really put this into practice, she remained till the end the great woman who endured everything with courage right to the end.

118. Those around her had the opportunity, time and again, to wonder at Rev. Mother's trust, courage, patience and humility. She accepted persecution, illness and bodily suffering with a joyful disposition, which edified all the sisters.

119. Rev. Mother's outward conduct was always the same in the face of both trials and joyful events. She did not withdraw from misunderstandings nor did she show herself hot-tempered or excited in times of difficulty.

120. Honours, riches and the allurements of the world held no attraction for her. She renounced them for love of the Saviour and led a mortified life. However, this one-time act did not seem enough for her. Also in the convent, she showed how indifferent she was toward honour and reputation and how she despised the world and its ideals. With holy zeal, she tried to awaken these great ideals in the sisters and to arouse their enthusiasm for them.

121. Since Rev. Mother had a firm, resolute character, she was never negligent in the practice of the virtues. She carried out with constancy whatever she had begun for love of God and gave only good example to the sisters.

123. Rev. Mother walked the path marked out for her by the holy Rule and the wishes of the Founder confidently and straightforwardly. Human respect was foreign to her and she overcame every consideration and difficulty if it served to promote the greater honour of God.

Obedience

125. Rev. Mother looked upon the regulations and Constitutions of the Congregation as being holy. She observed every rule with painstaking attention and expected the sisters to do the same.

126. Her relationship to the Founder of the Congregation was one of childlike, deferential obedience. She was convinced of the greatness of vowed obedience and always knelt to receive his requests and directives, and the punctual and conscientious carrying out of his wishes was a duty she loved. Every statement of our Ven. Father was an expression of the will of God to her. (Letter Jan. 9, 1884)

127. Rev. Mother knew of nothing more beautiful than to obey. Therefore she often said: "Obedience is my greatest joy. I have placed myself under a founder in order to be able to obey. It is not the habit that makes us religious but rather the sincere and steadfast will to do that which God ordains through the superiors. Obedience comes before everything else. Angels have fallen, pillars have fallen, and all because they did not want to obey and humble themselves." Her model was always the Saviour who was

obedient until his death on the Cross. She did not want the Rule and directives to be followed unthinkingly but she expected rational obedience and did not want just blind observance.

130. With this in mind, she completely renounced her own will and submitted to the wishes of the Founder in everything.

Poverty

131. Although the necessities of life were sometimes lacking in the early years of the foundation of the Congregation, Rev. Mother was happy and content. She had truly renounced everything in order to follow the poor Saviour in poverty.

132/133. She did not want to have more than the sisters. Like the others, she wore simple, mended clothing. Her room was poor and the furniture scanty. In it, there was only a cheap desk, a little cupboard containing necessary papers and two chairs. In her bedroom, there stood a hard bed, an iron washstand, a small cupboard and one chair.

134. Holy poverty was to be observed in everything and she therefore refused to accept or keep anything that infringed on the vow.

136. Rev. Mother insisted that holy poverty remain the foundation of the Congregation. For this reason, she formed the sisters totally in accord with the mind of the Founder. She wanted this virtue to be practiced even in the smallest and least things. – Before receiving a new pen, for example, the old one must have been made useable time and again with the help of hot coals, and used grey wrapping paper had to serve for writing notes and accounts. Following the example of Rev. Mother, going out for walks in Tivoli was utilised for collecting edible greens, berries and mushrooms, as she had done formerly in Neuwerk.

Chastity

137. Rev. Mother observed the prescribed fasts very exactly. She led a mortified life in every way and possessed nothing more than the sisters did. In her earlier years, she wore a penance girdle and used a hand-sized board with sharp nails in it for bodily morti-

fication. She also disciplined herself with a knotted discipline and slept on a hard grass-weed mattress.

138. Anyone more closely acquainted with Rev. Mother marvelled at her lack of pretension. It was something she practised day after day and she was so far advanced in this that some could not understand her actions. At first, newcomers looked up to her and wondered at her heroic humility but they soon believed, without a second thought, that things had to be that way since they found that everything about Rev. Mother was so normal.

139. In accordance with the Holy Rule, Rev. Mother kept a strict guard over her senses. She knew that the senses are often a door to sin and imperfection if wrongly used. Therefore she admonished the sisters to use these gifts of God only for good, and to occasionally forgo things that are permitted in order to become strong and to make atonement for the frequent misuse of the senses on the part of sinners.

141. One never saw Rev. Mother idle. If she was not busy with her official duties, she was to be found at prayer or out on the prescribed walk.

Humility

143. In her great humility, Rev. Mother did not think herself worthy of attention. She therefore instantly rejected marks of honour. All she wanted was to be looked upon as a spiritual daughter of Ven. Father. Once, when she had an audience with the Cardinal Prefect, His Eminence Cardinal Ferrara, and he remarked: "Oh, here comes the foundress of the sisters," Rev. Mother fell on her knees in front of him and replied, "No, No, your Eminence, I am only the spiritual daughter of Rev. Father Jordan." That was enough for her; she didn't want to be anything more than that.

144. On many, even on insignificant occasions, it was evident how Rev. Mother thought of herself as unimportant. She was simple and modest in her appearance, behaviour and dealings with others. When she led the evening prayer and came to the point:

“For our Rev. Mother,” she simply said: “Per la povera madre”¹⁸⁶ and then prayed the Our Father. She liked to sit among the young sisters at recreation and spoke so simply and cheerfully to them that no-one gave a thought to the fact that she was speaking to the Rev. Mother and Co-Foundress of the Congregation.

145/46. Rev. Mother, who attributed nothing to herself, was happy when others made fun of her and ridiculed her. Such occasions were often not sufficient for her. She directly looked for opportunities to make a fool of herself and attract the scorn of others. For twenty years, her motto was: “To God alone be honour, to me contempt.”

147. Rev. Mother never spoke about her practice of virtue. She accepted all the commands, corrections and rebukes of Ven. Father, Rev. Fr. Bonaventura and Fr. Thomas, kneeling and without making any excuses for herself. Yes, she even accused herself sometimes, asked for forgiveness, thanked and asked for a priestly blessing. She often sought the scorn of others in a way that was very embarrassing for those present.

She was always afraid that the sisters would become proud and so she repeatedly humbled individuals at every step and turn with the result that the frequent correction became burdensome to some who did not understand Rev. Mother; they became bitter and turned away from her. But in spite of this, she found renewed courage to correct, rebuke and punish. Those who really knew her understood that it was only her desire to see her sisters firmly grounded in humility that drove her to act in this way. After giving a correction, she often remarked: “I cannot allow you to reproach me in heaven for having given you no opportunity to humble yourself.” Whatever she sought to bring about in the sisters, she herself practised in an outstanding manner. For this reason, a priest could write to a sister who had been formerly one of his parishioners: “I am happy that you are under the direction of Therese von Wüllenweber and I hope you will acquire her humility and submissiveness.”

¹⁸⁶ Italian for: “for the poor mother”

Mother Mary was so simple and humble in her dealings with the sisters that all were edified. Apart from a few, no-one would have suspected that community life demanded a heroic effort from her each day if she had not herself remarked: "The poverty in food, clothing and the problems of each day don't bother me, but it's the interaction that gives me something to bear." However, the sisters never noticed this; her humility, poverty and spirit of sacrifice were a shining example to the community. Before her death, she urgently requested that no eulogy should be preached at her funeral and that the burial arrangements should be really simple. But Mons. De Waal officiated and would not accept this; he spoke briefly about her perfect obedience, her great fidelity to the Founder, her wise handling of characters, her firm direction of her sisters and her humble, self-sacrificing activity.

148. Rev. Mother went straight along the path laid out for her by the holy Rule and the directives of Ven. Father without looking for praise or recognition.

149. In spite of that, her actions showed extraordinary humility. She was friendly with everyone but her special love was given to the simple people, those less gifted by nature. In a kindly manner, she once brought a chair to a poor man and spoke so respectfully to him that one had to believe in her great humility.

150. Although Rev. Mother made up her own mind regarding the affairs and events in life, she was immediately ready to give up her opinion if that was the wish of the Founder or another superior.

158. Rev. Mother was known to only a few persons outside the convent as she led a secluded life and hated and avoided anything conspicuous or unusual. However, all those who came into contact with her esteemed her as a great and virtuous woman.

166. The cause of Rev. Mother's death was hardening of the arteries and brain-fever.

167/8. She accepted her illness as coming from the hand of God, quietly and even joyfully, and with total resignation to His will. Her patience, given the most basic nursing care she received, was

heroic. A wicker chair in which she sat for a couple of hours was the only means of alleviating her suffering.

170/172. Like everything else, Rev. Mother's suffering was also a source of edification to the sisters. She did not ask for anything special in regard to food or nursing care. She kissed her profession cross repeatedly and received Holy Communion as often as possible. She prepared with great longing for the reception of the last sacraments which she received, at her request, a few weeks before her death.



Via della Lungara, 1897

S. Lidwina (Josepha) Diegmann¹⁸⁷



* 23.08.1867 in Zella,
Diocese Paderborn, Germany
Entered: 05.01.1895 in Rome
Investment: 29.01.1895 and
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 05.02.1896 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome
from July 1902 in the USA
* 26.02.1948 in Columbus, Wis., USA

Some short notes about the life of our Reverend Mother Mary of the Apostles

She had a very good religious spirit and held strictly to the instructions of Ven. Father to whom she showed great respect and submission. In general, she had great respect for ecclesiastical authority.

She was for holy poverty in every respect and observed it conscientiously herself. She was very humble and accepted humiliations with resignation. She did not neglect to give the Sisters practice in humility.

I was an eyewitness to the facts given by me and testify to their truth under oath in the presence of the two named witnesses.

S. Lidwina Diegmann¹⁸⁸

[Columbus, Wis. March 19, 1941]

¹⁸⁷ ASDS, E-42

¹⁸⁸ Confirmed under oath before witnesses

S. Lucia (Anastasia) Siegmund¹⁸⁹



* 01.12.1875 in Altendorf,
Diocese of Breslau, Germany
Entered: 15.10.1892 in Tivoli
Investment: 30.11.1892, and
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 10.12.1893 in Tivoli
afterwards in Tivoli and Rome
+ 27.08.1963 in Vienna, Austria

A few points from the life of Rev. Mother Theresia von Wüllenweber

I was together with Rev. Mother in Tivoli for several years. She was our superior general, local superior and novice mistress at the same time.¹⁹⁰

Rev. Mother was a great, strong soul. She was always a good example for us. She was the living rule. She never taught us anything that she didn't do herself. In particular, she distinguished herself through her great love for holy poverty. Although of noble descent, she was content with the worst of things, was always modest in her actions and lived as poor as the least Sister.

[...] In the spirit of the h. Founder, she particularly loved and valued holy poverty. She never made an exception, whether in food, clothing or in the house. Her bedroom, which was at the same time her living room, was so small that if two Sisters entered, it was impossible to move. And there was only a bed, an old cupboard, a writing desk, two chairs and an old stool with a wash-basin. The bed consisted of two iron stands, three boards and a straw sack, and two blankets. She had no oven in spite of the fact

¹⁸⁹ ADSD, E-43

¹⁹⁰ Inserted from Report 2

that Tivoli was rather cold in winter. In order to warm herself she, like the Sisters, had a earthenware pot filled with glowing coals for warming her hands.¹⁹¹

How often we went through the meadows to find chicory¹⁹² for lunch and to pick blackberries in autumn. Rev. Mother was always with us and helped a lot. When we needed something, we often had to ask many times before we received it. I can remember that I sometimes asked three or four times for a pen and then Rev. Mother said: "Bind the ends together with thread and come again in a few days if it really doesn't work." We had many hours of lessons and had to write a lot. If a Sister broke something, she had to take the pieces, go to the door and ask for a virtue.

Dear Rev. Mother gave us practice in penance and the life of sacrifice. Rev. Mother was concerned that the Sisters freely accused themselves very often regarding their faults and often ate at the penance table. Her saying was: "What costs nothing is worth nothing." Dear Rev. Mother permitted no affected, oversensitive manners. We were not allowed to complain about small indispositions. Dear Rev. Mother always emphasised: "Bring sacrifices, practice self-denial. Always seek to do whatever is disagreeable and unpleasant. Always take the last place."

She was very strict in seeing to it that silence was observed very exactly and conscientiously by all the Sisters. Dear Rev. Mother was always the first in giving good example. She always spoke only what was necessary and that in a low tone of voice. She was also very brief with outside persons. She paid special attention to quietness in the actions, noiseless standing up and sitting down, quiet walking, gentle closing of doors, etc. which were always to be put in practice. No Sister was allowed to speak to another in the corridor or on the stairs. If it happened that a Sister did speak in those places, Rev. Mother gave no answer or the answer was: "Eat at the penance table" or "Kiss the floor right now". Rev. Mother was very strict about this and said, how one can behave in such a way that is totally against the religious spirit. Therefore there was great

¹⁹¹ Paragraph replaced by a paragraph from Report 2

¹⁹² The first young leaves are prepared as a salad in Italian kitchens.

silence and order in the house, one never heard a loud word.¹⁹³ So every Sister made an effort and did not speak in those places. There was a holy peace in the convent.

Rev. Mother also distinguished herself through her special love and attachment to the Society. She spoke of Ven. Father only with great respect and reverence. She followed all his instructions exactly. She spoke to Ven. Father on her knees until he told her to get up.

Rev. Mother also had a special veneration for the childhood of Jesus and therefore also had the grace of dying on the feast of Christmas during the holy night.

These lines have been gladly and honestly written down by one of her spiritual daughters. She was strict with us, but in spite of this she was one of the best mothers that I had in the Order. If she once gave pain through a severe correction, then one knew that, for sure, in the next hours the wound would be healed through a motherly look, a friendly smile or a kind word.

S. Lucia Siegmund S.D.S.¹⁹⁴

[Vienna XXI, February 4, 1941]

Addition

from Report 2

She fasted as strictly as all the Sisters during Lent: in the morning, one glass of black coffee and a piece of bread, which had to be weighed with exactitude every day; soup and vegetables at midday and in the evening, a plate of soup again and a little piece of bread. Dear Rev. Mother went to the fields with us to find vegetables, we dug up, for example, chicory and similar roots. In autumn, we collected blackberries in the hills for the midday meal – dear Rev. Mother was always the first. Because we were poor, only olive oil

¹⁹³ The two previous sentences were inserted from Report 2

¹⁹⁴ Confirmed under oath before witnesses

could be used for cooking. We new entrants couldn't stand it and at almost every mealtime had to leave the table to be sick. But dear Rev. Mother didn't give in, we had to continue eating after that and received no other food. She simply said that we had to get used to it.

Dear Rev. Mother had no patience with soft, affected ways. She surpassed all of us in poverty, self-denial and sacrifice. The maxim she wanted to impress on us was: "What costs nothing, is worth nothing." Like our dearest Ven. Father, she was eager to learn to highly esteem and love holy poverty and its spirit. Everything had to be used very sparingly and good care taken of all items. Since we were all to learn a foreign language, we needed exercise books, pencils and pens, etc. We did not get the items straight away at the first request and often had to ask 3-4 times for something we urgently needed. For example, if we wanted a pen, we had to say when we had received the one we had. Then Rev. Mother took it and tried it out to see if it worked. She usually gave the old pen back with the instruction to use it for a further eight days.

When one returned after a few days, Rev. Mother said: "Take some thread and bind the ends together, then you will be able to write with it again." Like this, she tested us in every way. I remember that I was sent away with such an old pen four times before I was given a new one. She gave us practice in virtue in many similar ways.

We didn't need much telling to keep silence since we had learned from Rev. Mother to say only what was necessary and speak under breath. [...]

Dear Rev. Mother was always very brief, friendly and consistent in her contact with outside persons. She herself said which Sisters were to eat at the penance table and it was never to be left unused.

Whenever a priest came, Rev. Mother knelt and kissed his hand. She always spoke with dear Ven. Father on her knees until he told her to get up. She spoke about Ven. Father with the greatest respect and submissiveness and she looked on him as a saint.

In the year 1894, a severe trial came upon the Congregation. A typhus epidemic broke out. With faith and resignation, Rev. Mother accepted this difficult test as coming from God's hand. She had to go to Rome with the Sisters who were still healthy without being allowed to say goodbye to those who were remaining. Also, because of contagion, they could not take any clothing along. In Rome, they had to bear great privations. There was no change of clothing. Rev. Mother had to stay in her room until her coif and collar were washed and ironed. God's providence is wonderful. Just because of this cross, and the loss of life of many young Sisters, God gave us the grace of having a house in Rome. Rev. Mother had always wanted to have a house in Rome but new obstacles always continued to arrive. Then, at once, all the chains were broken: Rev. Mother prayed the Magnificat.

Rev. Mother was a strong, self-sacrificing woman, the very best mother I have had in 48 years. She was strict with us but soon after a sharp correction, a motherly word and a loving smile followed. One felt she was a dear mother.

So much can I still remember after 48 years.

S. Lucia

S. Ludgeria (Wilhelmine) Mertens¹⁹⁵



* 24.07.1878 in Alstätte,
Diocese of Münster, Germany
Entered: 08.10.1901 in Rome
Investment: 07.02.1902 in Rome
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 09.02.1903 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome
from June 1903 in the USA
+ 07.02.1953 in St. Nazianz, Wis., USA

As I was only a short time in Rome, I cannot say much about Mother Mary of the Apostles.

From the very beginning, I admired Mother Mary of the Apostles' humility and love of holy poverty. She, who was born and brought up in prosperity, wore such worn clothing and ate the same dry bread and poor food as we did. She was an object of edification for all who observed her.

She knelt before the tabernacle and the dear little Jesus with great devotion. Her intimate and childlike love for the child Jesus was especially evident during the Christmas season. She sent for all the Sisters to come to her in order to kiss the feet of the little Jesus.

When she came to us in the novitiate, we had to prepare many questions, as she made every effort to awaken a great interest in us for the missions and the work and houses of the Congregation. She used to say: "Strive to be holy so that you are fit to be sent to the missions" It was for this that she tried to educate us to a spirit of sacrifice and humility.

Mother Mary had such lofty aspirations, ideals and a resolute spirit that she tried to remove everything petty and over-sensitive from us. If one did not yet realise that true virtue must be acquired

¹⁹⁵ ASDS, E-44

through trials, one could view many things as too hard or unfeeling. What I then understood only dimly, I grasped more and more as I grew in the true spiritual life.

Because she was educated more than we from childhood on, she could probably not imagine that others who were less talented did not understand her ways of thinking or even disapproved of them sometimes. I myself experienced that fact that she was not unfeeling in her ways of acting. Shortly after my first profession, she deeply humiliated me before a number of persons. I knew that she could not think that way in her heart, she only wanted to give me practice in humility. I don't recall that I ever felt resentful when I was humiliated, I realised that she acted in such a way only out of love. When she noticed that I cried a little after this public humiliation, she wanted, in her motherly concern, to give me joy. As my good novice mistress was visiting us just then, she sent me out walking with her.

Mother Mary once took me out with her. When we came to a dirty place, she gave me a little push so that I dirtied my shoes. Then she looked to see how I was taking it. Only now do I really understand how much I have to thank her for bringing me up this way in the practice of virtue.

S. Ludgeria Mertens¹⁹⁶

[Wausau, Wis., March 16, 1941]

Addition

from Report 2

I think so often of what she wrote to me in the novitiate: "You will still have to suffer much. As the first one from Münster, you must be a good example." I cannot think other than it was dear Rev. Mother who obtained the grace of being able to speak again for dear S. Apollonia [Brehm]. Before that, she couldn't speak a word. On the ninth day of our Novena, she repeated what I had said.

¹⁹⁶ Confirmed under oath before witnesses

She often prays the rosary aloud herself now, one only has to help her with the mysteries which she forgets.

I also have to think of Rev. Mother every time when praying the Preface. I do not remember exactly how it came about that we believed and said that it was Rev. Mother who sang the first part of the preface, "Vere dignum" etc., together with the priest during a high Mass as far as "Lord, all-powerful Father." No Sister had been singing and the voice came from where the Infant of Prague stood. Maybe she wanted to invite us to praise and glorify God with her. I feel myself so encouraged to do this. I will pray to her more than I did before, so that the dear God, through prayers that are answered, will make known how pleasing her life of sacrifice, her holy desires, her holy striving to bring us up to a life of sacrifice were to him.

Written by Sister Ludgeria



Bishop Celestino del Frate of Tivoli
who gave Fr. Jordan permission for the Foundation in Tivoli
in 1888, and approved the first Rule for the Sisters in 1889.

S. Ludmilla (Barbara) Sendner¹⁹⁷

Report 1



* 12.11.1874 in Eisenhof,
Diocese of Bamberg, Germany
Entered: 24.01.1895 in Rome
Investment: 05.04.1895 in Rome and
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 24.04.1896
afterwards in Rome
from March 1897 in the USA
+29.12.1950 in St. Nazianz, Wis., USA

Remembrances of our Rev. Mother Mary of the Apostles

I was often edified by her great humility when she, a well-educated lady, took us simple country girls out with her wherever she went, whether to churches, priests or bishops, and always asked : "Please, would you like to go with me?"

I often admired her love of poverty as, for example, when I went with her to the feast of St. Teresa. She was wearing such a bad pair of shoes and, all at once, it began to rain heavily. When she felt water entering the shoes, she called out: "Oh, St. Teresa help, I have no shoes." I often saw how she used an old well-used notebook. On one occasion, on a train, she wanted to look in it for something and the pages fell out and went everywhere. She quietly picked them all up in front of all the onlookers.

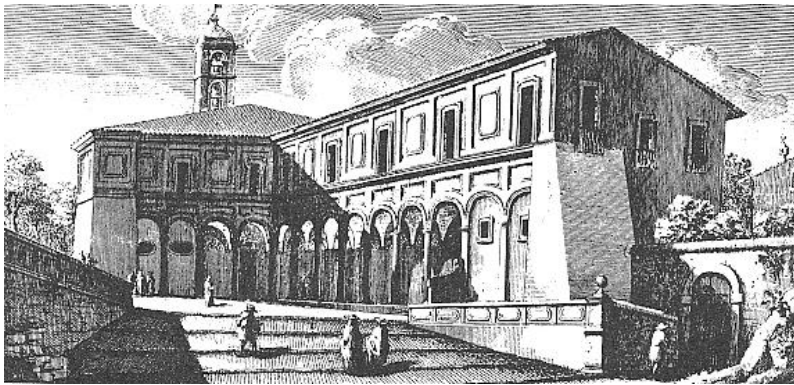
She showed great respect to priests, whether young or old, but especially to Ven. Father. I often had to read aloud during mealtimes and when she came home late on one occasion and we sat down to eat together, I noticed how worried she was and asked what was the matter. Then she heaved a deep sigh and said: "Our Ven. Father has many worries, pray for him."

¹⁹⁷ ASDS, E-45

She was always very cheerful at recreation and liked it when the Sisters told little stories or recited poems from their younger or childhood days. I noticed her motherly concern all the more when I was in Milwaukee. A few times each year she wrote nice, encouraging letters and told us about the events in Assam and in the Motherhouse. Then she added some words of encouragement to renewed zeal. Once, to my great joy, she wrote: she would come to America the following year but, to our sorrow, that was not according to God's will.

Sister M. Ludmilla Sendner¹⁹⁸

[Portage, Wis., March 19, 1941]



The Church of Sant'Onofrio, on the Janiculum, Rome

¹⁹⁸ Confirmed under oath before witnesses

S. Magdalena (Auguste) Franke¹⁹⁹



*22.12.1879 in Oberkirchen,
Diocese of Paderborn, Germany
Entered: 07.05.1901 in Rome
Investment: 02.11.1901,
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 03.11.1902 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome
From June 1903 in the USA
+27.09.1962 in St. Nazianz, Wis., USA

Remembrances of our first Reverend Mother

Mother Mary was indeed a dear Mother who had her heart in the right place. When I entered in May of the year 1901, I felt that dear Reverend Mother was a really special person. She met me with true motherly love and made a very good impression on me.

One day in the beginning, the new postulant was allowed to go out for a walk with dear Rev. Mother. During this, she told us a lot about the city of Rome and explained the holy places of this city when we passed by them. The first walk was, of course, to St. Peter's. This great Cathedral with its many altars was visited first and everything was explained. She often interrupted herself to ask: "What have I just said?" Through this, she also came to know the candidate's character. She loved it when we were interested in the Order, the new foundations and the Sisters whom one knew.

The virtues, which characterised her were the great respect and reverence she showed towards priests and it made no difference to her whether they were young or old. She showed this respect and submission to our Ven. Father and Founder above all.

¹⁹⁹ ASDS, E-46

She suffered humiliations of all kinds with heroic patience. As everyone knows, these are always the portion of great, holy souls. Her love for mortification was great. She did not permit exceptions at table to be made for her, not even when she was ill.

Above all, she also distinguished herself through her great love of poverty. She, who had left so much, was an example for the sisters in every way. She was not only simple in regard to food but also in her clothing; she wore mended and worn out clothing and shoes just like the last and youngest sister.

Her great piety and love for the Blessed Sacrament was shown through the hymns which she wrote herself and among them there was this one: "O hidden God, for love of us in loneliness" etc., which many of the German-speaking sisters liked to sing.

The dear little Jesus was also an object of her tender love and because of this she was permitted to go home during holy Christmas night to her dear "Bambino"²⁰⁰ to be happy there for ever.

When I was sent to America in the year 1903, I found the separation from holy Rome and the dear Motherhouse very difficult as I had a feeling that I would not see our dear Rev. Mother and Foundress again in this life. My first letter from America received a reply in which she really showed her loving, motherly heart in order to help me over the pain and the separation from the dear Motherhouse.

Sister Magdalena Franke, Sor.D.S

[Milwaukee, Wis., May 8, 1941]

²⁰⁰ Italian for "child", here it means "Baby Jesus"

S. Martha (Barbara) Storchenegger²⁰¹

Report 1



* 25.06.1871 in Jonschwil,
Diocese of St. Gallen, Switzerland
Entered: 16.11.1894 in Rome
Investment: 29.01.1895 and
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 05.02.1896 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome
from Oct. 1897 in Capolago, Ticino
and then in Campobello, Sicily
+ 06.03.1953 in Droognens, Switzerland

Memories of our late Reverend Mother and Co-Foundress

In God's providence, two Swiss girls arrived in the Holy City of Rome on a beautiful November day in 1894. They were following a call to the religious life. The Founder was Rev. Father Francis of the Cross living in the Borgo Vecchio, the Co-Foundress was our Rev. Mother Therese von Wüllenweber. The Congregation hadn't yet spread out and was more in its initial stages. It was known under the name of Catholic Teaching Society which was to include in particular the work of the foreign missions. The Sisters did not own a house but had only a rented dwelling with the most necessary rooms on the Via Lungara.

We therefore didn't find a convent as one usually imagines it. By the way, some courageous Swiss girls had already come before us and God had called them in the bloom of youth to their final reward. So the seed began to grow in the cool earth of the cemetery in the venerable little town of Tivoli as the first fruit of our Congregation.

Cross-laden beginnings very often bring rich fruits. The first doubtful impressions were somewhat brushed away by the loving

²⁰¹ ASDS, E-47

reception on the part of Rev. Mother. It was around midday and the community was gathered in the prayer room. The portress didn't hear our 1st and 2nd knock on the door but, after that, she opened the door and immediately closed it behind us with a chain, something that was strange to us. Rev. Mother came to meet us and with a loving hug greeted us by the name "Sister". In the chapel, she gave her kneeler to the new arrivals right away and she herself knelt on the stone floor. Such impressions often have a lasting effect.

Her quiet, modest and motherly conduct was a mark of her nobility of soul rather than of her aristocratic origin. Through her modesty and contentment, she also made the new entrants feel satisfied. One followed her shining example without hesitation and thought that everything had to be like it was. Even in the direst poverty, we were happy and content.

She had no patience with dejection or with affected piety. "Head high, look upward, below is evil", through this she wanted to say that one should serve God joyfully and happily and that one had no reason to indulge in dismal thoughts which do not please God.

If there was an argument, it had to be made up before going to bed. One must keep a pure tongue for the dear Saviour. It gave her much consolation and joy if a postulant was permitted to go to communion several times during the week.

In the beginning, there was no proper chapel and the most important thing, the presence of the dear Saviour, was missing so that one was obliged to go to the nearby church of Santo Spirito. However, little by little donations arrived, the necessary items could be obtained and ecclesiastical permission for holy Mass was given. One then felt richly compensated for all the sacrifices.

Many and various crosses precede every new foundation and our Rev. Superiors received them in abundance. Only with God's help could such heroic sacrifices be made. We shouldn't ask for crosses, said our Rev. Mother, but accept and patiently bear the sorrows, which the dear God sends and never complain; we have no reason to do this - we deserved worse - we had it far too good.

At that time, usually there was already an eight day retreat before investment and profession. Ven. Father and Founder blessed the articles of clothing; Rev. Mother knelt to receive the same from his hand and gave them to each Sister. At the conclusion, one was eager to know the religious name and the saint who should lead us through our life in the future.

A short and to the point address followed from our Ven. Father and Founder such as, for example: We have completed a holy act. The Saviour has gone before us – and we should follow him on the way of the cross. – the servant is not greater than the Master – they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you. – the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, devotion to the Passion of Christ and to the Sorrowful Mother, are therefore the pivots to which we should hold fast - obedience according to the Saviour's example – the holy Rule – but no sin! His words were usually similar to these. –

Of Rev. Mother, one might say: "She kept all these words and instilled respect for the words and actions of our Ven. Father and Founder into us all" She knelt to ask Ven. Father or his representative for their advice in this and other matters. Again and again, she urged us to conform to the wishes of our Ven. Father joyfully and not wait for a command.

The Chapter [*of Faults*] should be regarded as a really holy matter – what has not been done correctly will be put right there. Also in regard to the accusation, she got to the bottom of things. It had to be true, not a formality – not for appearances in order to seem humble. At times, she could help a Sister who seemed too zealous in this point to a public examination of conscience.

"It isn't the religious habit that makes us into religious, but the good and steadfast will to do whatever God wills, through the superiors. Obedience above everything. - The angels fell, pillars fell. All of them did so because they didn't want to obey and didn't want to humble themselves." In this, she could be inflexible. Our example is always the Saviour who was obedient until death on the cross. But, we shouldn't obey the letter, but wisely according to the teaching of Holy Church.

Maybe an example can be given here, two Sisters were recalled to the Motherhouse. The journey took them through Capolago where three Sisters were already stationed. "Did you visit the dear Sisters when you passed through?" Rev. Mother asked. "No, because we didn't have permission" was the answer. Rev. Mother didn't praise this conduct and said: "Just that would have been what I wanted. One should always ask oneself what would my superiors do in this situation if I could ask them and then act accordingly. God wants sensible obedience and not adherence to the letter."

In regard to holy poverty, Rev. Mother couldn't emphasize enough that fact that: "Our Society rests on the foundation of holy poverty. - As long as we have the spirit of holy poverty and foster it, all will go well with us and we will not suffer a lack of necessities. If the vow of holy poverty is not observed, the house will collapse. Mind you, one can have possessions but the spirit of poverty we have to have, that is the main thing.

It belonged to her judicious method of education to praise the Sisters a little now and then. She herself trod softly without making a noise in recollection and seclusion and tried to have those under her do the same. Of strong character, she acted firmly, without hurtful severity.

During Mass, as also during the usual spiritual exercises, Rev. Mother wanted us to follow her example and be totally present to what we were doing – through an upright stance, a deep genuflection, a devout sign of the Cross and no sprinkling of holy water on the floor. At the given sign, get up right away. – The bell should indicate the will of God and because of this, in order to give oneself practice in mortification, there should be no lingering around.

One nice day, Rev. Mother called a whole dozen postulants and their mistress to come to her – what was the reason for this? – The mistress should now give her thoughts on the bad behaviour, which had occurred. The *Silentium*²⁰² had not been kept so strictly after night prayer although we had been told about it. Instead of tears of homesickness, there were tears of laughter especially as

²⁰² Time of silence

we wanted to demonstrate our ability to speak Italian a little.. The result was: Rev. Mother thought maternally and said aloud: “The children all look so innocent, they have good will.” We were as happy as kings and improved in earnest precisely because we knew that we were not completely innocent. The kind forbearance bore more fruit than extreme severity on that occasion.

Great effort was made to learn the Italian and English languages. Also in these subjects, Rev. Mother took the trouble to correct the mistakes in every assignment. She was happy about the smallest progress. A happy recreation often resulted from this; one also tried to profit a little during walks. Rev. Mother understood very well how to test us in holy obedience unobserved by sending us into a shop to ask about this or that or to ask the road sweeper the location of a certain church. One already knew what the answer would be “sempre diritto”²⁰³.

The Italian catechism was also joined to spiritual reading and when we answered well she showed evident joy. In connection with this, a question was asked about the most necessary virtue – one responded love – another, humility. Rev. Mother herself gave the answer: “Surrender to God’s will; discern God’s will, do God’s will!”

It is almost unbelievable how great her sorrow and concern was when the distressing news of the severe earthquake in Assam reached her, and yet the only complaint which came from her anxious heart was: “Lord, Thy will be done”. So it was in every seeming misfortune. Faith and trust in God strengthened her.

Once, her motherly concern also drove her to Sicily – Campobello, where three Sisters lived in the direst poverty and where, in addition, the superior was sick. During her visit, in order to encourage us, she said,: “You really do have the house of Nazareth.”

²⁰³ Italian: “Always straight ahead”



Campobello,
Italy

She always tried to give encouragement in her letters as well; to one Sister she wrote this: "You are on the right path – obedience, obedience, obedience!" To another Sister, she wrote: "You are doing well – continue – humility, humility, humility."

The poorest, dirtiest street children were like God's favourites to her and she always had motherly compassion for them – she also often looked into the poorest huts and had a loving word for them. She would have sacrificed everything for the poor and the orphans. On account of the poor who were waiting outside, the food portions given to us were such that one didn't have to have a very great appetite. In spite of the simplicity, care was taken that the food was good and tasty.

Before Sisters were sent from the Motherhouse to the missions or another house, they usually received the special privilege of attending an audience with the Holy Father. – It was a hot Sunday afternoon in June when, without prior warning, Rev. Mother asked my humble self to go with her for a walk. – We went behind St. Peter's past the hidden sentries. Rev. Mother spoke to a Swiss guard in French and asked to go in without a ticket, something that was not usually permitted. The Guard was, as chance would have it, a citizen of Romont where the Sister was to go. So, by good luck, we passed the second guard as well and at last entered the Damasus courtyard where the Holy Father Pius X was preaching on the gospel about the large catch of fish just then. Our joy was great. One would wish this for everyone.

Rev. Mother preferred to spend 2-3 weeks in Switzerland during the hot summer months and took the opportunity to visit the other houses. She always looked for the greatest saving when travelling. When she once wanted to sit down in a restaurant during a long wait in Milan, the seat broke and to her regret she had to leave two lire in compensation. On returning home, she was very communicative and was happy when one showed interest in the progress of the Congregation.

Rev. Mother had a special liking for music and singing and for different languages as well. Use was made of this on special occasions and feast-days. The little that could be done was an expression of the greatest joy in view of the honour of God. For one visit, the following psalm verse was placed in the entrance:

"Dominus custodiat introitum tuum et exitum: ex hoc nunc in saeculum."
²⁰⁴ That gave her obvious joy since she referred everything to the sublime and spiritual.

So may these few thoughts be written down for the greater honour of God!

S. Martha Storchenegger²⁰⁵

[Drognens, Canton Freiburg, Switzerland, February 28, 1941]

Addition

from Report 2

1. In addition to the existing booklet regarding Mother Mary von Wüllenweber²⁰⁶, some character traits that could be considered.

In this aristocratic woman, one did not notice so much the nobility of her family but rather the loftiness of her magnanimity and strength. After just a few years, when the Congregation was trying

²⁰⁴ "The Lord protect your coming and going, from now on until eternity"

²⁰⁵ Confirmed under oath before witnesses

²⁰⁶ This probably refers to the booklet: "Mother Mary of the Holy Apostles – Baroness von Wüllenweber" by Fr. J. B. Berg, Steinfeld 1931 (*in German*)

to establish itself, many young persons were mown down due to a lingering typhus epidemic. Death plundered its prize without mercy – young victims died at that time – even two in one day, another the next day and two more the day after that, etc.

It was in the very poor house in Tivoli where the essentials really were missing. In this way, in the ancient little town of Tivoli, the seed for the Sisters' Congregation was laid. – Now we ask if that didn't require extraordinary magnanimity and unlimited trust in God on the part of our Rev. Mother?

She had left the comfort of her family in exchange for this unforeseen Cross. She was even accused of having let the Sisters die of starvation typhus.

Due to a revolution, Sisters who had recently begun their work in South America had to undertake the return journey in circumstances of terrible deprivation. – Sisters in Assam were badly affected by an earthquake, etc. Mustn't all this have almost broken a motherly heart? – But our Rev. Mother did not waver under all these Crosses but, on the contrary, she was made firm by them.

And when we ask where and how did she get this strength and valour? We say boldly that it was from the Saviour in the Blessed Sacrament – from Mary the Sorrowful Mother. There we touch the root of her piety. [...] However, her simple, dignified outward appearance often betrayed a childlike relationship with the dear Saviour. Beginning with the mystery of the Incarnation, combined with a deep devotion to Mary, up to the following of Jesus on Golgotha. She liked to choose a feast of the Mother of God for special occasions and she also liked to have illuminated decorations in her honour.

She taught us more through her dignified, steadfast conduct than through many words. She was very communicative among the Sisters, especially in order to awaken interest in the Congregation. Usually a friendly smile on her lips marked her modesty – never loud laughter. She did everything quietly, her demeanour and speech indicated interior recollection. She laid great worth on religious silence outside of recreation and on prompt response to

the call-bell. With full justification, we can say that in Rev. Mother we had the personified Holy Rule in front of us.

Regarding obedience she could be unbending – to wear the holy habit as a Sister of the Divine Saviour and at the same time dishonour Holy Church through disobedience, was to be a religious only in appearance.

In regard to the vow of chastity she said: “Pillars have fallen, let us be watchful, assisted by the dear Mother of God. Practice continual mortification and self-conquest in the fight against self love, not self chosen but that which is embodied in the commandments of God and our Constitutions. Bear with one another, respect the guardian angel who accompanies the other person. Look to yourself, be silent, don’t complain. There is no religious life without silence! God’s will – which is made known to me through the Holy Rule at every moment.”

2. It still remains to be said that Rev. Mother would never have turned away in the slightest from what our Ven. Father and Founder required. She often recommended this to us with real urgency. Consequently, nothing was to be changed on the habit, etc. As everyone knows, one had light, inferior material, skimpy clothes and no coat in former days – which was however seen as a need later on. At a certain occasion, Rev. Mother said: “Whoever tries to carry out her duties faithfully will meet with all sorts of difficulty in face of the world.”

She was almost blamed that the Sisters were given too little training. Others, they said, made more progress than we – some Sisters received lessons in various subjects in the convent from a few teachers – but Sisters were mostly needed in the apostolate before they had sufficient knowledge of teaching or nursing. Rev. Mother wanted, above all, Sisters who were tested in virtue as she was aware that it was not primarily knowledge but virtue with a spirit of sacrifice, which has to characterise a religious Sister so that she would be able to fulfil what was demanded.– God be thanked!

Experience has taught that Rev. Mother had foresight and was not mistaken. At that time, almost all were young, inexperienced

Sisters who were full of zeal and enthusiasm for the missions. She also thought that a simple, humble Sister could do more for the honour of God than one who was more talented but was selfish. Mindful of this, we were kept fairly small and the little horns were cut short over and over again. In this way we were shown, in a few strokes, that self-sanctification according to the example of our Divine Saviour takes the first place and cooperation in the salvation of eternal souls to which obedience called us takes the 2nd place.

Addition

from Report 3

Memories from an old Sister

Today, on the feast of the holy name of Mary, September 12, 1933, my thoughts fly back almost 40 years and take me to the holy city of Rome where the Congregation of the Sisters of the Divine Saviour made a start.

On a lovely autumn day in 1894, we drove from the Station Roma in a two horse carriage – for at that time there were no trams – and went clippity-clop to the Borgo Vecchio, 165 which is very close to St. Peter's. We thanked God for a safe journey and were extremely happy to meet and greet our Ven. Father and Founder personally. In our joy and naivety, we thought that we could stay there right away especially since, after a quarter of an hour, a third postulant entered – it was around midday. A cannon shot from the historic Castel Sant'Angelo and the pitiable cries of the mules marked our arrival!

Then we went to the convent of the Sisters on the Via Lungara, ten minutes away. We were more than a little disappointed when, instead of a convent, we found only a very simple apartment. Everything was strange to our eyes. But the welcome was a very warm one. Rev. Mother addressed each postulant as "Sister" and hugged and kissed us – almost reverentially. After a little refreshment, we were taken into a prayer room in which there was only a little table with a crucifix. This was all there was! We had come to a very, very poor little convent and even the Saviour was missing. What were we to think of it all! But still, we soon found

something out: In this poor little convent, there was an active love, animated zeal and the most beautiful harmony. In all the poverty, we were rich! - Letters were written to relatives and soon gifts and donations arrived so that, gradually, everything necessary for a chapel in the house could be provided.

And when the dear Saviour himself first entered our modest home, what rejoicing there was and what happiness! We were richly repaid for the sacrifices, which had gone before. Rev. Mother herself was overjoyed and couldn't find enough words to express her great joy. One often heard her say: "We haven't deserved such graces. We have it far too good."

But very hard testing had gone before this privilege: sudden cases of illness, typhus in Tivoli, many deaths one after another, wrongful accusations and misfortunes of all kinds. Reverend Mother suffered a lot under this but her unshakeable trust in God, together with an heroic love of the Cross, gained the victory. Instead of complaining about all the sorrows and testing, all she had to say was a magnanimous "*Deo gratias*" – "May God's will be done." And from where did Mother Mary of the Apostles get such heroism and the strength to carry the Cross joyfully? Where other than from Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and in the school of our Ven. Father and Founder to whom she submitted with childlike love, fidelity and respect.

She couldn't emphasise enough: "Be thankful that we may belong to a totally new Congregation in holy Rome, in the centre of Christianity, where so much blood of the martyrs has flowed. The first zeal must be furthered! Let us always be true members of Holy Church. Our activity must be apostolic. Our one purpose must be the honour of God and the salvation of our neighbour."

When we come to look at the person of our Rev. Mother, do we find anything unusual about her? - Oh no, only dignity, high principles and for the rest simplicity. She appeared to all of us as the living holy Rule whose spirit she tried to instil into all her spiritual daughters.

Little by little, we were allowed to say the *Officium parvum*²⁰⁷. Understandably, it was again our dearest Rev. Mother who initiated us into this. Great importance was laid on saying each word

²⁰⁷ the Little Office (of Our Lady), which was prayed in Latin at that time

clearly, pausing at the asterisk²⁰⁸ and observing the customary ceremonies. “To pray the Office means nothing other than to proclaim the praise of God; something which the angels in heaven do without ceasing.” We were often reminded that it was a great favour to be allowed to pray the Office in the language of the Church. A somewhat superficial sign of the Cross was severely reprimanded.

Our Reverend Mother was a really wise educator. We, however, were too young at that time to value this sufficiently. What can one expect in the way of many solid virtues from young girls who have just come from the world? One usually brings an eager good will but that is just about all. There is still a lot missing with regard to a perfect religious life.

Reverend Mother expected true, deep humility in all her spiritual daughters. “Only not a false humility” she said frequently. She also provided abundant opportunities for each one to have practice in humility. The student Sisters in particular were challenged as there was real danger that the more talented ones would look down on the others.

Some examples will shed a little light on how Rev. Mother set about the work of educating at times: We were ten lively postulants and strict silence was not always kept so exactly in the bedroom even though we were already instructed in the rules of the house. One laughter caused another and so it happened that we and our mistress were summoned to Reverend Mother one day. We came with heavy hearts as we were well aware of what we had done. However, the mistress had to tell about it as she was also the accuser. And what happened? Rev. Mother looked on us all as dear, good children. “All of them look so innocent”, she said. Naturally, we went to work happy and sure of victory and bettered ourselves diligently. The sensitive, pedagogic style of Reverend Mother worked better than a sharp rebuke.

If a Sister was too zealous at the accusation, e.g., if she came too often, she could be passed over with the remark: “Do you only

²⁰⁸ Sign indicating a pause during the praying of a psalm

want to appear humble? The accusation should be an act of penance and must be viewed as something holy." A Sister who was too quiet and accused herself of breaking silence was told to say as a penance: "I am a sleepyhead", and that meant she should be more outgoing.

On our walks, we were quite often given the task of asking a road-sweeper where this or that church was located.. The answer was usually: "sempre diritto" – "always straight ahead!" If one was in a beautiful church where there was Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, it was not a rare occurrence that the sign to leave was given before the Blessing. Many more similar examples could be added that might appear petty to some. And still, at the basis of it all was an educative purpose supported by a great love of the Saviour: to make newcomers ready for a life of renunciation and to test them and give them practice in virtue.

As soon as one knew a few sentences in Italian, these had to be used frequently. The catechism had to be learnt in Italian as well. The work of translation was checked by Rev. Mother herself. That resulted in many red marks!

Rev. Mother was pitiless regarding deliberate disobedience or a significant lack of charity. The fault had to be atoned for and made good. Antipathies were not tolerated either. Everything had to be put right before going to bed in order to be able to receive the dear Saviour with a pure heart the following day. If two had a difference of opinion, Rev. Mother wisely remarked: "Very well! Both must still rub up against each other." The dear ego had to be placed totally in the background. Neither did she permit a brooding "Why?" or an excuse. She could not endure low spirits or dejection; she much preferred lively, wide-awake characters. Her motto was: "Always look upward, toward God!"

In conformity with the rules concerning modesty, everything noisy had to be avoided, such as noisy footsteps, careless closing of doors, etc. Fast walking and laughing too loud was also followed by a reprimand. This was because "the modesty of an interior soul shows itself outwardly without being conspicuous." Silence was also well-observed. It was said that "Where silence and speech

occur at the right place and the right time, there exists a good spirit.” – When Rev. Mother once wanted to ask a Sister something before Mass, the latter put her finger to her mouth in misguided zeal. Understandably, that was corrected. One must guard oneself in everything against too little or too much – and especially in the spiritual life. – On walks, which were very necessary for us Germans in the hot Italian weather, one could talk within reason. But talking about food or one’s background was never allowed.

The urgent, sometimes gripping Chapter talks with which Rev. Mother tried so hard to initiate us into religious life were especially sacred to us. Above all, faithful observance of the holy vows was impressed on us.

Rev. Mother urged observance of holy poverty with unshakeable firmness. “One gives God either everything or nothing – only never half,” was one of her maxims. At that time, outward poverty had reached its peak. The clearest example we had was Rev. Mother herself who, although she was a noble lady, had everything in common with us: extremely poor accommodation, simple, mended clothing and meagre food. It was just this heroic example, which attracted us. We felt so happy to become like the dear Saviour in a small way at least and thought it had to be like that. – A little respite was offered by the fruit, which grows in the South.

In spite of the very great poverty, the refectory table was always covered with a white tablecloth in remembrance of the Last Supper where the dear Saviour and his Apostles also sat at a laid table. However, the exterior was, so to say, only the shell. “We must go deeper”, Rev. Mother instructed. “We must strive after interior poverty, the poverty of spirit, love holy poverty like a mother.” Who can totally grasp such deep thoughts when one is young? For sure, at the time, we were still too young to understand. For it does take much time, meditation and grace to arrive at such maturity.

Rev. Mother often said with great emphasis: “Our Congregation is founded on holy poverty and may not deviate from it in any way. As long as we highly value and love holy poverty according to the mind and spirit of Holy Church and the will of our Ven. Father and Founder, we may count on the special protection of God. However,

as soon as we would want to leave it, this would be our downfall. Why have so many convents been ruined? Because they did not observe the poverty they had vowed! We can possess and receive and still be poor in spirit since everything that I use does not belong to me but to the Church." For this reason, we also were very often warned to be careful with furniture and clothing and not to damage anything.

On another occasion, Rev. Mother in her angelic virginity stood before us with lowered eyes and spoke about the vow of chastity. "Persons stronger than we, pillars have fallen, but no-one shall throw a stone at them." She could not recommend highly enough vigilance, control of the senses and in particular, veneration of the dear Mother of God.

But Rev. Mother could speak the most eloquently and urgently on the subject of holy obedience. "We actually would only need to make the vow of obedience because both the other vows are already contained in this one. – Jesus was obedient unto death, even to death on the Cross and can we still be disobedient? - An obedient religious will speak of victories," these were some of her favourite sayings. With full justification, we can indeed presume that also our Ven. Father and our Rev. Mother as Co-Foundress were obedient souls who could also speak of victories. Their obedience possibly reached the summit of the Cross.

Rev. Mother did not only leave us heroic words but also heroic deeds. Although she added hard physical practices of penance for herself in spite of the many privations, those intended for the Sisters were only those, which are still customary at the present time. Instead, an abundance of interior mortification should become second nature. Opportunities for that offer themselves always. – "Not for nothing do the Constitutions speak of continual mortification and every little word of the holy Rule is of importance. There is nothing one can call negligible. Everything is great in the eyes of God." Rev. Mother often spoke to us in a similar fashion and, shortly before her death, she still repeated the request that we should faithfully observe the holy Rule. Let us hold this legacy sacred!

When, by degrees, the first houses could be founded, Rev. Mother had quite a few worries because she had no trained personnel. However, she prayed fervently and trusted so much the more, and her expectations were not disappointed.

Rev. Mother then liked to visit her spiritual daughters. She travelled to Switzerland, which was her preferred place to stay, to Belgium, Hungary, Vienna and even to Sicily – Campobello, where three Sisters lived in the greatest poverty in an unfinished building. Once, on such a visit, Rev. Mother said jokingly: “How could you write that you don’t have everything! You have the little house of Nazareth here.” She spoke about everyone with praise and - on returning home - told Ven. Father and the Sisters about her experience with obvious joy. She really had an excellent understanding of how to awaken in the latter love and interest in the dear Congregation.

Every Sister who lived away from the Motherhouse received a really encouraging letter from her from time to time, e.g. Sr.N.: “You have good will. Continue on in your zeal.” Or: “Remain humble. You have it far too good!” Or: “I am happy to hear only good things about you; but don’t become proud.”, etc.

During celebrations such as Christmas or a nameday, Rev. Mother became a child among children. She showed an understanding, motherly love toward every nation and had a childlike joy when poems were recited in various languages such as German, Swiss dialect, Italian, French, Hungarian, Polish and Khasi²⁰⁹.

Rev. Mother also liked music and singing and had great joy in edifying performances on festive occasions. She thought to give the Sisters a special joy by obtaining access to an audience with the Holy Father.

A lot more could still be added. However, these few lines must be sufficient to give a little glimpse into the deep faith-life of our dearest Rev. Mother and of her interior union with God. [...]

²⁰⁹ Language of a prominent tribe in Meghalaya and Assam (India)

S. Mathilda (Josepha) Maas²¹⁰



* 21.01.1874 in Sundern,
Diocese of Paderborn, Germany
Entered: 08.10.1901 in Rome
Investment: 07.02.1902 in Rome
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 09.02.1903 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome
from June 1903 in the USA
+ 27.09.1949 in Portage, Wis., USA

Rev. Mother was a humble, mortified soul. She also gladly lowered herself to the poor and little ones. I remember, when I once had to go out with her in Rome, that a poor man came and held out needle and thread to be threaded. She remained standing there until I had finished doing this. Before we left for America, she went with us to St. Peter's once again. It was raining hard; she went with us although she was nearly seventy years old.

When we novices left Tivoli, some cried a lot. Rev. Mother then said: "Now show what you have learned." I didn't say anything and I didn't cry either. When she gave us her motherly blessing at that time, she said: "Go with God's blessing. You will make it." We were happy when we went to Tivoli. We should have asked many questions then and we didn't know anything.

Written by Sister Mathilda

²¹⁰ ASDS, E-48

S. Melania (Agnes) Bauernschmitt ²¹¹



* 04.02.1886 in Vorra,
Diocese of Bamberg, Germany
Entered: 31.10.1902 in Rome
Investment: 07.02.1903 in Rome
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 09.02.1904 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome
from October 1904 in the USA
+ 14.02.1967 in Milwaukee, Wis.,
USA

Wausau, Wis., March 11, 1941

Memories of our Reverend Mother Mary of the Apostles.

When we arrived at the Motherhouse in Rome on the evening of October 31, 1902, Sister Johanna called out to Rev. Mother: "The three new postulants are here." Rev. Mother welcomed us affectionately. She was so simple, humble and kind. After we had greeted the dear Saviour in the little chapel, we ate a simple supper, which tasted really so very good. Mother Mary sat with us and asked various questions about our journey which we answered timidly. When we had finished she said: "They eat well, they will be good sisters in time."

Next day, we went to Ven. Father and to St. Peter's. That didn't go so well since we couldn't understand Mother Mary of the Apostles very well and had to ask her to repeat some things twice. However, she was patient with us.

Mother Mary of the Apostles liked it when the sisters were really cheerful, but not when they were boisterous. She could not bear loud laughter.

²¹¹ ASDS, E-49

Rev. Mother knew how to give us practice in obedience and humility. One day, she had me called to go out with her. On the way, she said: We are going to buy doves, look in all the houses and see if you can see any. That wasn't so difficult, one could easily see all these birds. I frequently called on Rev. Mother to look, but she only said: "Not here," and so it went the whole way there and back and we didn't buy anything. When all the sisters were a table for the midday meal, she said: "Just think how forward Sister Melania was; she looked in every house to see if the people had doves. I thought I had to be obedient and then was given a humiliation before the entire community.

Mother Mary of the Apostles was as humble as a child. She also had great respect for every priest; most of the time she spoke to Ven. [Father] only while kneeling. I will never forget the love she showed to all, even when one came from a poor family. She was also so grateful for every small gift that we received from home. We had to thank for it straight away.

I will never forget the impression Mother Mary of the Apostles made on me. I was at the Motherhouse only for a little while, but it was a holy time.

S. Melania Bauernschmitt²¹²

²¹² Confirmed under oath before witnesses, on March 16, 1941

S. Nicoletta (Katharina Kunigunda) Baus²¹³



* 12.02.1884 in Grosslangheim,
Diocese of Würzburg, Germany
Entered: 18.12.1904 in Rome
Investment: 03.07.1905 and
Novitiate in Rome
Vows: 03.07.1906 in Rome
from Jan. 1907 in the USA
+ 20.01.1962 in West Bend, Wis.,
USA

Columbus, Wis., March 19, 1941

A few notes and memories regarding our dear Reverend Mother Mary of the Apostles.

When I entered our Congregation, our dear Rev. Mother was already well on in years and several infirmities of old age were noticeable. In spite of this, her mind was still fresh and clear and very active. She was devoted to our Congregation with all her heart and was the best example in everything for her sisters. She was a religious sister through and through and, when she was at home, she was never missing at the spiritual exercises. Not even in the early morning did she make an exception. She had a great spirit of prayer and was filled with a strong trust in God. Her obedience to Ven. Father and to Holy Church was, according to my opinion and knowledge, astounding.

She recommended holy poverty to her sisters and she also led the way with her good example. If something was needed one had to go and ask her for it and out of humility [...] one brought the used object along, e.g. a pen. We often bound a thread around the tip in order to be able to use it for a short time longer. She had to smile

²¹³ ASDS, E-50

when she saw that we, as candidates, were resourceful in the use of things.

She showed great respect and reverence towards priests and church dignitaries. When Ven. Father came, she met him and greeted him on her knees. She also knelt when she asked Rev. Father Bonaventura for his advice. I saw this myself as a candidate. I found it strange to kneel to ask something of a priest as it wasn't our custom at home and later, when we were alone, I received a reprimand because I hadn't knelt as dear Rev. Mother did.

When out walking, it repeatedly happened that we met Cardinals. As soon as Rev. Mother noticed this she went towards him, even if he was on the opposite side, and kissed his hand or his ring to show her respect and reverence.

She loved humility and also practised it and consequently she also trained her sisters to it in many ways. A little example: I had to go out with her on one occasion and, according to the rules of etiquette, Rev. Mother should walk on the right-hand side. It was not long before she changed sides and I had to go on the right. I thought she wanted to get out of someone's way and had therefore made the change so I went back to my place as the rule of etiquette prescribed and put Rev. Mother on the right-hand side again. She stood still, looked at me and said: "Stay on this side, do you think that people will think you are the superior general when I put you on this side?" Whether she just wanted to test me, I can't say; she called for such acts of humility now and then. And she was happy if one didn't show sensitivity after such acts of humility, or tests as one could also call them.

She was very communicative and gladly told anything that was edifying, a real family life. When news came from the missions, she shared them with great joy. She also liked it very much if one showed interest and asked how the one or other sister was getting on, how it was in this or that place, or she herself told about things and then she asked afterwards if one had understood everything. She was as happy as a child if one could give her an answer. She often remarked: "Sisters who eat well, sleep well and are really cheerful and happy will be the best sisters."

Today I am still happy to have known Rev. Mother Mary of the Holy Apostles and to have been with her in Rome. Though I was not so much with her as some other sisters were. At that time, 1905, she bore the great storms that threatened the Congregation, with great humility, patience and trust. She endured and remained faithful in all the tumult with great confidence in God. It was edifying. She was a great person who sought God and God was her helper.

S. Nicoletta Baus²¹⁴



Prayer card given to S. Nicoletta by Mother Mary

²¹⁴ Confirmed under oath before witnesses

S. Othmara (Josephine) Scheffer²¹⁵



* 09.11.1873 in Sundern,
Diocese of Paderborn, Germany
Entered: 02.06.1900 in Rome
Investment: 02.11.1900 in Rome
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 03.11.1901 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome
May 1902 to the USA
+ 21.11.1965 in St. Nazianz, Wis.,
USA

Portage, Wis., March 18, 1941

My memories and impressions of our Rev. Mother Mary of the Apostles, 1st Superior General.

Our dear Rev. Mother was a model of all virtue for us. In her love and deep humility above all; she accepted all of us with true motherly love. She, this noble lady, associated with us like a good mother with her children. I wasn't a bit homesick although I was very attached to my parents.

Then I admired her great love of holy poverty; she wanted to have only what was absolutely necessary in everything. She had great respect and reverence for our Ven. Father and Founder and was noticeably very obedient to him as also to his representative, the Rev. Father Bonaventura. Likewise, she had great love for Holy Church and showed the greatest respect to bishops and priests.

Again and again, she urged us sisters to make sacrifices; she said: "We have entered in order to sacrifice ourselves for the Congregation," and she showed us the way by giving the most beautiful example.

I remember our dear Rev. Mother and Co-Foundress with gratitude and I will try to follow her life of virtue.

S. Othmara Scheffer²¹⁶

²¹⁵ ASDS, E-51

S. Pia (Auguste) Bochenek²¹⁷



* 17.03.1880 in Roy,
Diocese of Breslau, Germany
Entered: 20.03.1896 in Rome
Investment: 24.04.1896 and
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 25.04.1897 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome
from 1902 in Hungary and Austria
+ 07.12.1961 in Börwang, Germany

I saw Rev. Mother praying and meditating a lot. She knelt to pray and at meditation she also sat down. Rev. Mother was given more to meditative prayer and she also tried to introduce the sisters more toward meditative prayer. She preferred the sisters to follow the Mass without using a prayer book. She adhered to the prescribed vocal prayers. She remarked someday that she would not dare to omit the Miserere after the meal if she had been prevented from being there.

She liked to visit the holy places very much and did so in a great spirit of faith. She gave the sisters just as gladly permission to do so and the latter made great use of this. She was happy when many sisters visited those churches where the Blessed Sacrament was perpetually or temporarily exposed for adoration. She herself made this sacrifice very gladly. Rev. Mother made no exception at mealtimes and it was seldom that she was not present at table.

She showed great respect toward priests and other ecclesiastics and instilled in the sisters a great reverence and respect toward the confessors and priests as well. I cannot recall a word against these persons ever being said in the house.

²¹⁶ Confirmed under oath before witnesses March 19, 1941

²¹⁷ ASDS, E-52

In order to humble the sisters, they also had to kneel out on the open street before higher ecclesiastics or newly ordained priests and kiss their hands. This act gave sisters from German countries something difficult to overcome since they were not used to this custom.

She loved and valued that which was insignificant and exteriorly less likely to attract attention. She took the less talented sisters under her wing in the presence of their teachers. She tried to humiliate the talented sisters. She always protected the poor and sometimes despised Polish people, not already because of their Catholic religion as well as their many saints and their fidelity to the Church.

She practised holy poverty to a high degree and always reminded us that a spiritual house can only stand and prosper when holy poverty is loved and practised. Could it be possible that one overdid it in the matter of holy poverty under Rev. Mother's direction? – I myself have once worn shoes with my toes poking out of them. On my transfer to Budapest, I received clothes and underwear wrapped up in a petticoat. On asking for writing material, one had to say exactly when one had previously received some. If one couldn't answer straight away, the punishment would be that one had to go away and think about it.

Rev. Mother's obedience toward Holy Church as well as to her superiors was like that of a good child, blind and quick with no answering back. She tried to impart this spirit of obedience to the sisters and teach them to be really obedient. I never heard her complain or make a remark about things that were not her business. She was always reserved, friendly, kind-hearted and affable.

Rev. Mother gave me much love, consideration and patience for which I owe her many thanks. The reason would no doubt spring from the fact that I entered when I was so young. Be that as it may, I honour and look up to our Rev. Mother and Foundress with my whole heart. She was so simple and yet so noble, she had a childlike piety and was full of zeal. May God give her the crown she has earned!

S. M. Pia

S. Priska (Katharina) Vaassen²¹⁸



* 24.02.1865 in Lövenich,
Diocese of Cologne, Germany
She grew up in Rheydt,
Diocese of Cologne
Entered: 13.02.1903 in Rome
Investment: 02.07.1903 and
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 03.07.1904 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome
from Nov. 1907 in Belgium
+ 28.07.1948 in Börwang, Germany

Berlin-Waidmannslust, July 1940

Our deceased Rev. Mother was a noble, good-natured and just woman who showed the same love and care to young and old. One could go to her at any time of the day and if it happened there was someone in the room just then, she said in a most loving way: "Wait outside a moment."

Rev. Mother visited churches and relics every day if it was not raining and she always took a sister with her. I also was allowed to accompany Rev. Mother on several occasions. When Rev. Mother came home again, she told about her experiences during recreation or occasionally at table.

Rev. Mother could rejoice like a child when she received good news from the sisters in other houses. – We were all happy when Rev. Mother joined us for recreation. – Rev. Mother liked quiet, calm activity and work, and unrestrained laughter was not permitted to disturb the recreation either.

²¹⁸ ASDS, E-53

When Rev. Mother visited us in Tivoli where we made our novitiate, she went with us into the hills and played round-dance with us. She really was a good mother.

She also loved holy poverty, in clothing and articles for use, very much. Even in the parlour, the greatest simplicity reigned. Rev. Mother recommended it to the sisters very frequently. Everything that was used at table had to be very simple.

I do not remember Rev. Mother dismissing a sister and if a sister left on her own account, this caused Rev. Mother great sorrow because she had such a good heart.

She had great respect and reverence for our Rev. Father as well as for all the priests who visited us. How happy she was when the Lord Cardinal of Cologne visited us. All the sisters had to come then and greet the important Lord.

Two or three sisters, I don't remember the exact number any more, tried to put Rev. Mother out of office at the first General Chapter, especially one sister who had formerly been a superior in America. What a sorrow that was for Rev. Mother. From that time on, she was always ailing. But she bore everything with great patience.

Rev. Mother had a great devotion to the dear Child Jesus and Christmas and during the holy night the dear Child Jesus called her into eternity.

S. Priska, Sor.D.S.

S. Pudentiana (Anna) Maiss²¹⁹

Report 1



* 23.10.1883 in Kranowitz,
Diocese of Olmütz, Austria-Hungary
Entered 22.09.1904 in Rome
Investment: 03.07.1905 and
Novitiate in Rome
Vows: 03.07.1906 in Rome
From 10.07.1906 in Hungary
+ 31.08.1957 in Vac, Hungary

I first saw Rev. Mother in Budapest in 1904. She was making a Visitation to the houses and I was travelling through to Rome in order to enter at the Motherhouse. Her tall, dignified appearance made a great impression on me – she was so awe-inspiring.

As a postulant, I was often appointed to accompany Rev. Mother on walks. There we were warned to keep a good look out in order avoid being run over by traffic. Once, a car came rushing out sideways from the Gianicolo. Fearfully I said: “Rev. Mother, a car is coming.” She put her hand on my arm and said: “Child, it isn’t a wild animal.” I accompanied her to St. Ignazio on one occasion. When we came out of the church, she turned in the opposite direction so I asked: “Excuse me, Rev. Mother, are we going to another church still?” “No”, she said, “we are going home.” “But we are not going in the direction of home, we are going away.” She didn’t want to believe this and asked a woman where St. Peter’s was. When this person indicated the other direction, we turned to go home. She praised me for having paid attention to the route.

²¹⁹ ASDS, E-54



She once took all the postulants to a Corpus Christi procession at the convent of the Sisters of St. Dorothy. The Mother Superior spoke to us in a friendly manner but we all stood there dumb and didn't reply. That didn't please her at all. When we returned home she said to me: "Anna knows enough Italian to be able to chatter away but when she should talk, she stands there as stiff as a rod." She wanted to see us more polite and wide-

awake. I often heard how she exhorted the sisters to be courteous and to cultivate pleasing manners. She was a real lady.

When I was invested – a hot day in July – she came into the novitiate after the investment ceremony and entertained us little novices in a motherly way. We wiped the sweat from our faces; she noticed this and said: "Oh dear, the children are still wearing their worldly clothes under the habit," and she sent us away to take them off immediately. She often asked our Mistress: "Are the novices lively, can they still laugh and eat" If they can do that, then they can also be good!" I often heard her say: "Have a good appetite, work hard, pray well!"

She didn't like sentimental, outward piety. I remember that I and another postulant made a long genuflection when we passed by the chapel; she came out of her room just then and saw us squatting down there. "What are you doing here?" "Genuflecting." "But don't go on forever" and she showed us how to make a beautiful genuflection.

When Rev. Mother was elected Superior General in 1905, I prayed so fervently and sincerely that God might let her still live for a long time – I thought that it's out of the question to do without Rev. Mother.

I also went out with her several times as a novice. She was very interested in all our affairs and our families. She was very careful to see that we learned good manners and religious conduct.

When a new convent and school were being built in Budapest, Rev. Mother had already destined me for this house. She thought I had a talent for languages and so I would soon learn the Hungarian language

There was an ecclesiastical Visitation at the Motherhouse in May 1906. A Carmelite Monsignor²²⁰ was the Visitor and, of course, he spoke Italian. He brought along a translator for the foreigners. We novices came last in the line. Once, in the late afternoon, came the call: Novice Pudentiana should come to Father Visitor. I was very dismayed: "I don't know so much Italian," I tried to object. On that day, Father Visitor didn't have a translator with him – However, my strict Novice Mistress said shortly: "Go." She thought that Rev. Mother herself had called for me. I found Rev. Mother with Father Visitor. When she saw me she said in such a peculiar tone: "Of course, Novice Pudentiana," that it was immediately clear to me that she hadn't sent for me. She went out of the room – with great effort I spoke Italian with Monsignor – sometimes he laughed really heartily – I was dismissed after a few minutes. I felt as if I had been released from the lion's den. However, the first storm came after the evening meal. I was summoned to Rev. Mother. Then I really got told off. "Child, what were you thinking of to go to Father Visitor without a translator?" My excuse that I hadn't come forward of myself she did not accept at all. She then thoroughly humiliated me, calling me proud, arrogant, presumptuous and a show-off – oh, that was really too much for the weak little novice who now cried very copious tears. However, it was good nevertheless. I remember how "small" I thought of myself afterwards. Later, things were clarified – a misunderstanding – I hadn't taken the least part but I had to experience the consequences. I was convinced that

²²⁰ Fr. Antonio Intreccialagli OCD

I must be a very proud person since the dear God had to turn to such a humiliation in order to cure me. My novice mistress told me not to speak to my fellow novices about it.

I was sent to Budapest soon after my 1st profession (3.VII. 1906). How kind Rev. Mother asked me what I needed! "Have you got enough clothing, shoes?" She gave me the "Spiritual Combat" and herself wrote a dedication on the 1st page. Parting from her and leaving the Motherhouse was very difficult for me. She consoled me in such a motherly and dear way: "I will be coming soon to Budapest."

She did come soon, she was already there in August. I remember how happy we all were. One day while she was there, she told my Superior S. Ambrosia about that Visitation and how the little Novice Pudentiana had presumed to appear before Father Visitor by herself. She looked at me calmly and said: "Everything is all right, it was not her fault." How grateful I was for these words.

I always thought: Rev. Mother is so good and pious, a great, holy religious; at that time I also thought: no-one else could be "Rev. Mother".

S. Pudentiana

This, now, was my personal experience. Older sisters will be able to tell much that is good and edifying.

Still something about answered prayers.

When I was still novice mistress, I often encouraged my novices to turn to Rev. Mother with their concerns. I can witness to the fact that those who did so experienced her help.

Here I have a no longer young sister (almost 40) who is so childishly sensitive, inconstant, moody etc. that one is amazed. She sulks five days a week, and is resentful, makes a sour face, even cries, talks nonsense, complains about the superior, her fellow sisters, the doctor, her charge – everything stands in her way – no-one likes her (naturally, with such pleasing qualities). All exhortations, reprimands help her only a little or not at all; in this

situation I resolved to say a prayer to Rev. Mother for this sister every day – I am also doing this – and for five days already from that moment she has been cheerful – bearable – two days gloomy and sad. – She is now in the new hospital, but I continue to pray for her so that Rev. Mother continues to help her there as well.

When I am worried about my sisters, I always turn to Rev. Mother. She is with the dear God and knows how one of her sisters and daughters should be – she first of all should help us and pray that we conform to God's intentions. Yes, Rev. Mother always helped me! I pray a really fervent P.n. and A.M. with a Gloria P. [Our Father and Hail Mary with a Glory be] and "our Mother Mary of the holy Apostles, pray for N." The one concerned is corrected the following day. Then, according to the situation, I wait for a suitable moment in which I can admonish to good effect. I have great trust in her help, which I have experienced abundantly, especially in the past months. I would like to recommend, especially to the superiors, that they turn to Rev. Mother in affairs regarding the sisters. Wherever I can, I speak about these answered prayers and encourage trust in her intercession. But one must pray with trust – I often think that I am presumptuous, but then again: no, the dear God wants us to pray with faith, trust and perseverance. Pray much and then do what is humanly possible. Of course one cannot (as some mistakenly think) lay one's hands in one's lap and expect wonders.

I now humbly beg for prayers to Rev. Mother for our two hospitals, we need this very much. In the "new one" there are not enough sisters, the young superior is nervous and full of worry, very disheartened and despondent. May Rev. Mother help us over these initial difficulties.

S. Pudentiana

S. Rosa (Kunigunde) Schwarzmann²²¹

Report 1



* 10.06.1874 in Stibarlimbach
Diocese of Bamberg, Germany
Entered: 05.12.1894 in Rome
Investment: 29.01.1895 and
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 05.02.1896 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome or Torri
from Jan. 1906 in the USA
+ 06.10.1951 in St. Nazianz, Wis.,
USA

I will gladly write what I still remember regarding our dear deceased Rev. Mother, Mother Mary of the Apostles. I think back with joy to the beautiful time that we spent with our dear Mother Foundress.

When I entered together with S. Apollonia, we went to Ven. Father first. He said: "Oh, how good is the dear God. He has taken one S. Kunigunda from us and given us another in her place," this was because my name was then Kunigunda. Then we went to the Sisters. What a warm welcome, especially from dear Rev. Mother. Soon afterwards, she took us to the room of the deceased Sister. She prayed so fervently. I will never forget the impression this made on me. It was the same when she prayed in chapel. It seemed really heavenly to me and I felt happy. Although I loved my parents very much, I never felt homesick. Rev. Mother was now my dearest mother.

Once I went to her to ask why she never called me out at the accusation of faults. To that she replied: "There are always so many other sisters there." So I didn't kneel down any more. However, Rev. Mother called on me at the next accusation. Then she sent for me and said: "The accusation is a serious, holy action." I have never forgotten that.

²²¹ ASDS, E-55

Once I went to dear Rev. Mother and asked if I might go into the kitchen to learn cooking. Then she said that the moment would still come. Fairly soon afterwards, she took me with her to Tivoli. When we arrived there, she told the superior and the sisters who were with her: "Here, I am bringing you a sheep. Teach her to cook well."²²²

After I had learned cooking in Tivoli, I was sent to Torri to work in the kitchen. There we spent many happy hours when Rev. Mother came to visit us. She sat down with us and asked what we wanted to know about the Congregation. She also asked us what we had read in the Missionär; she impressed on us that we should have a great interest in and love for the Congregation and also pray for Torri in particular.²²³ [...]

[...] She also played "The smaller I, the greater Thou, O Jesus make me small" on the harmonium. Those were happy times.²²⁴

She liked to have letters from the sisters in the mission read aloud in the Motherhouse. Oh, she was always a dear, good mother to me and I feel so fortunate.

S. Rosa Schwarzmann²²⁵

[Wausau, Wis., March 16, 1941]

Addition
from Report 2

[...] Yes, may the dear God soon give us the joy and grace of being able to venerate her as a saint. I look forward to meeting her again soon in the beautiful heaven above.

When I was chosen for a mission²²⁶ she sent me there for work in the kitchen. Also there we spent some happy hours when Rev. Mother came to visit us. She sat down with us and asked what we

²²² This paragraph is inserted from Report 2

²²³ The last sentence is inserted from Report 2

²²⁴ Idem.

²²⁵ Confirmed under oath before witnesses

²²⁶ At that time all houses outside Rome were called "missions" .

now wanted to know about the Congregation. Then she started to tell and to ask questions. [...]

I also still remember that letters from sisters in the missions were read aloud in the Motherhouse. If there was something [private] in these, she indicated it. "Sister may not read this aloud, it is for me only," said the good mother. I had already heard some things from the other sisters that were not so nice. Yes, she was always a dear, good mother to me. I felt myself to be so fortunate. I still remember several things, which show how good dear Rev. Mother was.

Written by Sister Rosa



Chapel in the Motherhouse, Salita Sant'Onofrio,11 (1913)

S. Rosalia (Anna) Gutschera²²⁷



* 18.08.1882 in Tigerfeld
Diocese of Rottenburg, Germany
Entered: 04.05.1901 in Rome
Investment: 29.11.1901 in Rome
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 29.11.1902 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome
from Dec. 1905 in Belgium
+ 15.11.1965 in Börwang, Germany

Memories of our late Reverend Mother,
Mary Theresa of the Apostles.

Her prayer life – Did she pray much?

She followed the practices of prayer prescribed in our Constitutions faithfully and conscientiously. I did not have the opportunity to observe whether or not she prayed many prayers or long ones apart from these community practices of prayer.

Already as a candidate, I accompanied her from time to time on her daily walks. The purpose was, to 90%, the visit of a church where there was exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. She then knelt in fervent prayer, many times on the stone floor, her face directed toward the one point: Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. After this, she made a short visit to the image of Our Lady whom she venerated with great confidence.

When I became very ill with typhus shortly before my investment and a change for the better was long in coming, the faithful worried mother came one afternoon with a picture of the “Madonna della Salute”²²⁸. She sat down near my sickbed and told that she had been at this shrine that day and had prayed fervently there for my

²²⁷ ASDS, E-56

²²⁸ Italian, “Our Lady of Good Health”

return to health. She fixed the picture on the wall by my bed so that I could look at it often without difficulty. When she went away she urged: "Now have great trust in the Madonna della Salute yourself as well, she will obtain complete good health for you."

Did she like to meditate often on the Passion of Christ?

I take that for granted. From where else should she have obtained her high degree of love for the Cross and fortitude in suffering? She compiled practical meditations on the Way of the Cross for us. We received these in writing in the novitiate. I had a special liking for them and used them for several years. They expressed her sensible, practical piety and simple, solid spirit of prayer. I enjoyed the good fortune and grace of being directly under the direction of our Rev. Mother for only two years.

She put much effort into our practical education. We should become true, authentic Sisters of the Divine Saviour, capable Salvatorian Sisters who would be of use anywhere in the world.

The regular lessons given by the educational staff were not enough for her. She herself wanted to exercise a personal influence on us, often as individuals. She used any occasion to put us right with short, bracing but always kind words. She related this to the spiritual and to the material world. In regard to the latter, she wanted to extend our knowledge and, in regard to the former, to encourage us on the way of perfection. I have never met either a novice mistress or a superior who had such a fine understanding of how to humiliate me. Oh, how painful that often was. After a short reflection, I understood the necessity and utility of this treatment for my soul. I soon began to give silent thanks for it.

Today, I want to express my gratitude openly to this good, noble mother for the many tokens of motherly goodness and kindness. Yes, she wanted to make something out of us, a Salvatorian Sister – a personality who should be similar to the Saviour in his earthly life and who should carry his spirit out into the whole world and into the souls of our fellowmen.

Her obedience to the Holy Father, Holy Church and to Ven. Father and Founder was worthy of admiration but at times difficult to

understand. It seemed that it did not enter her mind to bring her own ideas to bear. She wanted only to be a most humble servant and to be obedient in everything. Everything that God's representatives wanted of her was God's will to her, what was asked of her she took as being God's command. Only in this sense can I comprehend how she did not break down under the many sacrifices and difficulties. She treated not only every Prince of the Church but also every simple priest with deep respect. She respected their dignity and the power of their office in all of them. "Do you know why priests have more divine power than the angels?" she used to question [us] when opportunity arose.

Such questions to test us were frequently put during walks, a meeting, or one would be suddenly called away from work. She could laugh heartily when various clumsy answers were given. She then gave the correct answer herself. She was so clear and understandable when she did this that one never needed to ask anything more.

During recreation, she never tired of encouraging us young sisters to: "Ask questions so that you do not remain ignorant and without interest regarding the history of the Congregation's beginnings, its development and the working of Divine Providence." – Interest in the Eternal City and its holy places was aroused and furthered very much. We could gain strength and courage for our missionary life at home and abroad at the graves of the Princes of Apostles and the first Christian martyrs. In the same way, we were prepared to learn foreign languages. When walking through the city, we progressed in a modest manner but were nevertheless totally aware of our surroundings as our good Mother wished us to come home enriched with at least a few more Italian words.

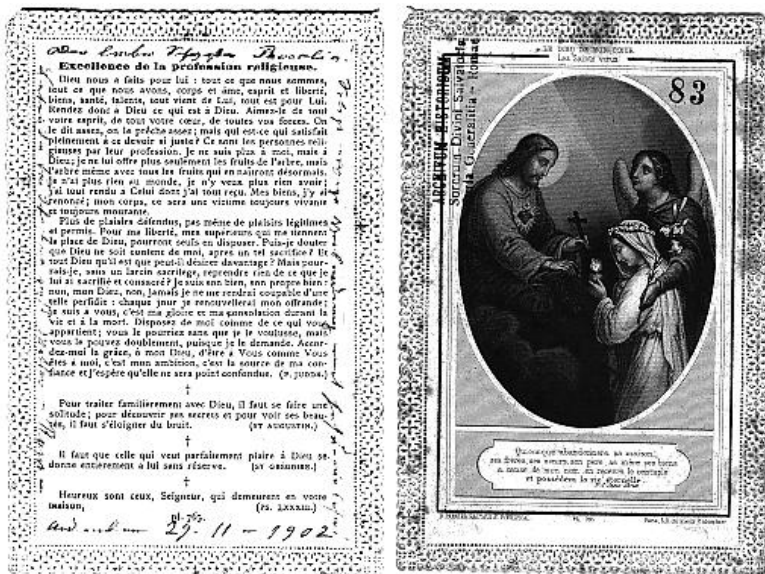
She loved and practiced holy poverty a lot, to an heroic degree I may say. The education I received in the spirit of vowed poverty according to the Constitutions was fundamental for my entire religious life. Her method of education brought it about that already before investment we freely gave up everything that we possibly could out of love for the poor Saviour. In front of her room there was a side table. We could place the beloved keepsakes from our dear homeland there quietly and unseen. This often meant a difficult struggle with the right of ownership even when the things

were worthless in themselves. Spurred on by the example of dear Rev. Mother, I sought strength and courage in prayer and then all went well. A reward from the dear Saviour was never missing. – She bore privations with submissive contentment.

I would like to add to this character-sketch, her total independence from the judgements of her surroundings. The so-called human respect: “What would the sisters think? – What would people say?” seemed not to affect her. I hardly took offence at her peculiar ways. I looked behind all these things for a practical, useful significance for my spiritual progress – and this was to my advantage. I could observe in her, everywhere, an ardent relationship with God and a striving to lead all the sisters to lasting sanctity, always in the spirit of our Venerable Father and Founder.

S. M. Rosalia

Cologne on the Rhine, July 30, 1940



Prayer card given to S. Rosalia by Mother Mary,

November 29, 1902

S. Simforosa (Nicoletta) Garofali²²⁹



* 23.06.1876 in San Martino,
Diocese of Larino, Italy
Entered: 01.07.1892 in Tivoli
Investment: 30.12.1892
and Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 10.12.1893 in Tivoli
afterwards in Tivoli
from June 1894 in Rome
from June 1896 in the USA
* 09.01.1946 in St. Nazianz, Wis.,
USA

Memories of Mother Mary of the Apostles, first Superior General

I should also write something about our dear and unforgettable late Rev. Mother.

Even until now, I cannot forget my arrival in Tivoli in the morning of June 30.²³⁰ Dear Rev. Mother came out of the chapel to greet me so lovingly. Yes, she gave me such an affectionate kiss and treated me like a mother treats her child. It made a great impression on me.

Later on, I still had the opportunity to experience this genuine motherly love more often. As, for example, when I went to her and told her everything when I was disheartened and oppressed by temptations. In this situation, I could experience her truly tender motherliness. She put her arms around me and hugged me so kindly and with that all temptations went away. Having been consoled, I was able to go on. Perhaps my inexperience and youthfulness gave rise to such a high degree of motherly feeling and compassion in her – I was little more than a child. Long ago,

²²⁹ ASDS, E-57

²³⁰ Entered according to the Sisters' register: July 1, 1892

she said to me: "Child, when you have been ten years in the Congregation, you will then be [...] a good Sister!" I couldn't understand that since I had already been a Sister for two years and I still could not see much progress.

She had a great mind and good judgement. What edified me the most was her great respect, reverence and love for priests and ministers. She desired to fill us more and more with the spirit of a good religious woman. She was a strong woman. She bore disappointment, joy, sorrow and everything hurtful with submission to the will of God.

When sickness broke out in Tivoli in the year 1894 and had already taken away several promising young sisters, Rev. Mother called us into the refectory one day and told us we were already making many sacrifices but the dear God wanted even more. She was going to have to leave us. Obedience summoned her to go to Rome immediately. She had to obey Ven. Father. She also told us how much it hurt her to leave us alone in this time of trouble. We should be brave, etc. – She gave us her blessing but she was almost not able to speak. Naturally, we all cried bitterly like orphans.

There were again two sisters lying in their coffins in the house entrance when I also had to go to Rome shortly afterwards, but we were not to let Mother Mary know anything about this. I will never forget what we had to go through. The dear Saviour knows all about it.

Once I was alone with Rev. Mother on the loggia when we were still living in the Via Lungara, poor Mother was suffering greatly because of the lack of finances and bread. We were forty or more sisters and had absolutely no income. This saddened Mother Mary and turned her thoughts to her family castle where they knew nothing about shortages. She then told me a lot about her homeland and that she had given up everything. In her distress, she started to cry bitterly. I was still ignorant and understood almost nothing but it made me cry as well. I also tried to console the good Mother by saying that God loved her so very much and that He would surely help her. The following day, she received 300 Mark from her dear father and could buy bread for us.

Yes, the dear Rev. Mother had much to suffer. She was very mindful of the spirit of sacrifice. She said repeatedly: "Children, you should be apostolic." She could not bear to see sadness among us. She hated it if we were dejected. If I only hear about our deceased Rev. Mother it causes tears to come into my eyes. I cannot think about her without being moved because she was so motherly and good. I most certainly hope and pray that she will soon be raised to the altar.

Sister Sinforosa Garofalo S.D.S.²³¹

[St. Nazianz, Wis., April 2, 1941]



Sisters' meeting in St. Nazianz, 1905

²³¹ Confirmed under oath before witnesses

S. Sofia (Anna) Wurm²³²



* 22.10.1886 in Stappenbach
Diocese of Bamberg, Germany
Entered: 31.10.1902 in Rome
Investment: 07.02.1903 in Rome
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 09.02.1904 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome
from July 1905 in the USA
+ 24.12.1961 in St. Nazianz, Wis.,
USA

St. Nazianz, Wis., April 1, 1941

Memories of Mother Mary of the Apostles, first Superior General

Dear Rev. Mother was already 69 years old when I entered in 1902 but in spite of this, she insisted on going twice to the station to fetch us three candidates from Bavaria. Unfortunately, our arrival in Rome was delayed by two days. How happy Rev. Mother was to receive lively candidates!

Dear Rev. Mother liked to give us a little joy. I have never seen dear Rev. Mother impatient or agitated. She had the patience of a saint with us. But she could be serious when it was a question of having high esteem for the Constitutions.

Dear Rev. Mother loved holy poverty very much. She also wanted the sisters' conversation to be useful and edifying in times of relaxation. She once sent a Sister around in recreation to ask what we had been talking about.

When Rev. Mother came home from her travels, she told us about them in such a motherly way and then said: "Children, do ask if you want to know more." Rev. Mother was a woman of strong faith and it makes one happy that something is being done regarding her veneration.

S. M. Sophia Wurm, Sor.D.S.²³³

²³² ASDS, E-58

S. Stanislaus (Antonia) Raczkowska²³⁴

Report 1



* 24.05.1857 in Tuchel
Diocese of Kulm, West Prussia
Entered: 28.02.1890 in Tivoli
(already with M. Mary at Neuwerk in
1878, then from 1879 in Ilanz)
Investment: 24.05.1890 and
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 24.05.1891 in Tivoli
afterwards in Tivoli
August 1893 in Ecuador
To Rome in Nov. 1895, as a
revolution broke out in Ecuador;
from June 1900 in the USA,
from time to time as Commissary
+ 08.07.1944 in Meran, South Tyrol

Memories of Therese, Baroness von Wüllenweber
later: Mother Mary of the Apostles, First Superior General of the
Sisters of the Divine Saviour (Salvatorian Sisters)

(It is true that I wrote the manuscript for almost half of the short life
of Rev. Mother Mary of the Apostles von Wüllenweber which Fr.
Joh.Bapt.Berg composed. This was printed word for word and one
can take some characteristics from it. However, I will try to put
down some more that I remember from the life of Mother Mary in
the St. Barbara Institute, Neuwerk as well as in the Congregation.)

Mother Mary was totally devoted to her father, the elderly Baron,
and to her four sisters but she nevertheless had the courage and
spirit of sacrifice to buy Neuwerk in order to give herself entirely to
the love of neighbour. In order to do good, she let factory girls
come there on Sundays and feast days and entertained them by
singing religious songs, reading good books and by profitable
conversation since, as she said. "When the girls are with us, it

²³³ Confirmed under oath before witnesses April 2, 1941

²³⁴ ASDS, E-59

prevents them running about with the boys and many a sin will be avoided.”

She went from Neuwerk to Castle Myllendonk regularly every eight days and I often accompanied her. We had to pass through a little wood where we once found lovely Champignons (mushrooms) and, given Therese’s practical mind for housekeeping as well as for economy, we picked as many as possible thinking that this would please our cook. But, oh dear! She didn’t want to prepare the mushrooms. She said, almost indignantly: “Oh, Baroness, where I come from in Westphalia we give such things to the pigs.” But Baroness v. Wüllenweber stood by her request and the cook had to prepare them according to the cookbook. When she had finished, they tasted quite good to us.

There were six orphans at Neuwerk while I was there and Miss von Wüllenweber was a real mother to them. She made the children happy, especially on the feast of St. Nicolas. We had a lady guest – a friend of Therese, an architect, who had come from Düsseldorf to enjoy the hospitality of the St. Barbara Institute. I had to play the holy man and the children and ladies waited in the children’s room for me. When I entered the room, both ladies knelt with folded hands and the children fearfully followed their example. All of them were invited to pray and the children in particular had to pass a long examination. As well as this, the housemother was asked if those in her care had been good and with a few qualifications this was confirmed. In general, the “holy man” seemed pleased and, after giving a short admonition, he left the house. Soon afterwards, the cook took the children up to bed. Before she did so, the children had to put their wooden shoes out on the windowsill ready for the servant Ruprecht to fill them with all sorts of sweet things. – So the years passed in continuous activity for Miss von Wüllenweber. However, neither the Ladies Institute nor the orphanage undertaking prospered, both had to be discontinued.

Things were different for Therese after she joined Fr. Jordan’s foundations. After that, everything she had done previously appeared to be only a preparation. The good God had chosen her to complete greater things for his honour and glory and the salvation of souls. Although a long time passed before the Sisters’ Congregation could be founded in Tivoli, which was partly due to

conditions which Fr. Jordan had to observe, and after that to Miss von Wüllenweber herself. But then everything made good progress.

However, shortly after the investment of the first Sisters, S. Maria of the Apostles von Wüllenweber, S. Scholastika Hofenmüller, S. Benedikta Ruderich and S. Clara Rheinwald, a cross came to the young community. S. Scholastika became ill with smallpox and – in the absence of a hospital for female patients, she had to be taken to the Hospital of the Brothers of Mercy. Sister Mary, who had been appointed superior by the Founder, did not lose courage. – “All crosses are salutary,” she said and soon God did help as the patient got well relatively quickly and could return to the Sisters after a short time.

In the early years, March 25 was always a day of special remembrance for Mother Mary because she had made her perpetual vows on that date in 1889 in the newly founded Congregation (known then as Catholic Teaching Society). A bunch of flowers was placed on the breakfast table on March 25, 1890 in her honour. What joy this small, innocent mark of attention on the part of the sisters gave her. She thanked time and again for the sisterly love. Later, however, she expected more on such feasts.

Mother Mary could also be audacious. When she went out, her companion sisters often had to be afraid when a vehicle came towards them, because Mother was not used to giving way. She held to her opinion that the driver had to stop when passers-by crossed the road. But on one occasion, this opinion was her undoing. A vehicle drawn by two fiery horses rushed out; Mother Mary's companions stood still but she hurried on, fell to the ground and broke her arm. The onlookers and the sisters helped her to stand up and no-one blamed the coach driver for this accident.

In spite of some singular opinions and her weak points, Mother Mary von Wüllenweber had a manly character, full of courage and trust in God, magnanimous in difficulties, sacrifices and sorrows. A religious according to the heart of God, because she had a strong and noble soul.

S. Stanislaus, Sor.D.S.

Addition

From Report 2

Responses to questions regarding our Reverend Mother Mary of the Apostles.

1) It is difficult to say whether Mother Mary prayed much because she may have prayed without being observed by anyone.

She visited holy places often and gladly without, according to my knowledge, staying long. – She greatly venerated the most holy Sacrament of the Altar, for before it, she prayed longer and, as it seemed, fervently.

2) She was certainly obedient to Holy Church, to the Holy Father, to Ven. Father and Founder. She always showed the greatest honour and respect to priests and bishops as well.

3) She observed holy poverty in her clothing, utensils, accommodation, furniture, to put it briefly, always and everywhere. She also educated the Sisters in holy poverty. She bore privations gladly and joyfully.

4) Mother Mary was mortified in every respect. The most humble and ordinary food was good enough for her. If one wanted to offer her something better occasionally, she didn't want to accept it although she would have greatly needed it at times because of her health. Otherwise, I do not know what practices of penance she undertook. – She bore the various heavy blows of fate patiently and with complete resignation.

S. Stanislaus, Sor.D.S.

S. Stefania (Luzia) Barthelmes ²³⁵

Letter ²³⁶



* 22.04.1872 in Lülsfeld,
Diocese of Würzburg, Germany
Entered: 22.03.1895 in Rome
Investment: 28.05.1895
and novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 09.06.1896 in Tivoli
She at first remained in Tivoli
from Feb. 1897 in Rome
from July 1899 in Hungary
+ 16.06.1942 in Meran. South Tyrol

Meran, November 28, 1930
Via Planta 2

[...] I will gladly tell of what I saw as a candidate, novice and young professed Sister with Mother Mary.

Our first Rev. Mother had a strong manly character and often edified us through her deep spirit of faith and her obedience toward Ven. Father and Rev. Father Bonaventura. She had a high opinion of priests in general. She had a deep interior piety, which she showed less outwardly. She was very humble, had a great love for holy poverty and mortification and required this from the sisters as well. She loved the sisters but she also liked to humble them, especially those who seemed to be more advanced and those who were studying.

Rev. Mother placed great hopes on the young novices and postulants. She was blessed with a good memory and when she came to Tivoli on her monthly visit to us novices she told us many nice things about the progress of the Congregation; she read letters from the missions or other things to us. When she had finished telling her news, she usually asked the novices to put

²³⁵ ASDS, E-60

²³⁶ Letter to "Your Reverence"

questions about one thing or another that they really wanted to know. When the one or the other then asked something she was very happy about it. She wanted sisters who were wide-awake, not moody or scrupulous. Her indefatigable patience is and was something to be admired as well.

This is my experience of dear Rev. Mother.
[...]

S. Stefania, Sor.D.S.



View from St. Peter's over the City of Rome
at the time of Mother Mary

S. Theresia (Bertha) Becker²³⁷



* 20.11.1880 in Sundern
Diocese of Paderborn, Germany
Entered: 07.04.1904 in Rome
Investment: 21.11.1904
and Novitiate in Rome
remained at first in Rome
later, for a long time, novice mistress
in Meran
+ 11.02.1945 in Rome

The servant of God, Mother Mary of the holy Apostles

Therese, Baroness von Wüllenweber, was born on February 19, 1833 at Castle Myllendonk in the district of Mönchen-Gladbach, Rhineland. She was baptised in the castle chapel the following day, February 20, 1833, and received the names: Maria Theresia, Constantia, Elisabeth, Josepha. She made her first communion on May 10, 1844, also in the castle chapel and was confirmed on June 2, 1849 in Liège where she was in boarding school at the time. Her parents, whose piety, charity and good nature were known and praised in the entire area, were Joseph, Baron von Wüllenweber and Constantia, Elisabeth, née Lefort.

Therese received her first lessons from her well-educated mother. Qualified governesses and the parish priest of the neighbouring town continued the well-planned upbringing of the richly talented heiress until she reached 16 years of age. Religion formed the centre of all her studies. Therese was so open for everything religious that her nursemaid could read some chapters from Rodriguez "The Practice of Christian Perfection" to her in French when she was only seven years old. In order to complete her education, her parents brought her to Liège where she attended

²³⁷ ASDS, E-61

the boarding school of the Benedictine Sisters for two years. She was much respected everywhere for her piety and diligence. In the mornings, she had to help her mother in the household and in the afternoons her father introduced her to the work of administering the large estate. In her free time, she diligently studied Holy Scripture, visited the sick and did further practice in music, which she loved very much. Therese was a happy, very conscientious child who loved small mortifications from her youth and liked to go to see the poor and sick with her mother.

Her parents' good example, the religious and solid education and the study of Holy Scripture had the result of awaking in the young Therese the desire to remain unmarried in order to be able to do more for the glory of God. The attendance of missionary sermons awakened in her the desire to give her life totally to the missions.



Sacred Heart Convent at Blumenthal, Vaals in the Netherlands
(around 1990)

She entered the convent of the Sacred Heart at Blumenthal because she thought these ladies would help her find the right path. Her hope that here she might be able to work for the missions was dashed because the sisters' sphere of activity was different. So, with permission from the higher Superiors she left the Congregation and returned home.

The urge to dedicate herself to God for the missions grew stronger however. Her confessor and spiritual director²³⁸ advised her to begin herself since she found no suitable convent in Germany. She therefore left the paternal home once again, rented and later bought the former Benedictine Abbey at Neuwerk near Mönchengladbach and started an orphanage in a religious spirit. As the Kulturkampf was not favourable for a missionary foundation in Germany and Therese von Wüllenweber wanted to place herself under obedience to a priestly superior, she joined the Catholic Teaching Society on September 5, 1882. This Society had set as its objective to help with all its might Holy Church in its intention to convert peoples and save souls.

Already as a young person, Therese was good and pious. As a baroness, she liked to visit the sick in the area and she helped them with small gifts and acts of kindness as much as she could. The orphans at the convent in Neuwerk found in her a good superior who tried to be a mother to them in the fullest sense of the word.

As the first Superior General of the Sisters of the Divine Saviour, she set the sisters an example of a life which conformed in every aspect to the holy Rule and the wishes of the Ven. Founder. When she was young, she was already showing her gratitude for the gift of faith through the circulation and distribution of missionary publications. But this effort seemed to her to be too little. For this reason, she wanted to put herself, her being and talents, her money and property at the service of the mission in order to reciprocate to God in a small way for that great gift. "I have promised God to devote myself totally to the missions as far as this is in my power. I would be happy if the Lord would finally accept this promise and I hope, or rather, I am sure that he will give me the grace of donating this convent home" (Here is meant the former Benedictine Abbey at Neuwerk which she had bought and maintained from her personal fortune.) "and everything to the missions with the proviso, as one calls it, of being able to live for them with all my strength" (Letter to Dr. von Essen, 25.4.1882)

²³⁸ Prelate v. Essen, parish priest of Neuwerk



The St. Barbara Institute near Mönchengladbach

But her prayers and concerns were not directed only to the heathen. Her heart was deeply touched by the split brought about by the schism in Europe, which was now turning many Christians away from the true faith. She therefore joined the Association of Prayer for the Conversion of England and afterwards had the Sisters inscribed as well. Rev. Mother felt great sorrow at the words of the Freemasons. She used to say: "They want to destroy Catholic Austria so that they can more easily destroy the Church." But in the firm belief that no enemies could touch the Church unless God allowed it and that, on the contrary, God wanted to extend His Kingdom even in such times, she spurred the sisters on again and again to pray zealously and devoutly. In particular, she thanked the Saviour for the grace of being called to the religious life. In her notes we find: "God, I thank you unceasingly, for ever! What good fortune that I can give myself wholly and entirely to Him! Now I have everything that I have desired during my whole life and I would rather die than leave the Society and the Founder."

*Sister Theresia Becker wrote this and then suffered a stroke during the night. Although she recovered somewhat she was no longer able to continue writing the report for Rev. Mother.*²³⁹

²³⁹ This paragraph was added to the text in this way.

Additions
from Report 2 ²⁴⁰

[...]

9. [...] Once, when I was a postulant and Rev. Mother told me that the Rev. Confessor would be coming that day, I asked her: "Who is coming then, Rev. Mother?" To that she replied: "The dear God sits in the confessional. Do you still not know that every priest represents God there?" Then I understood in what spirit of faith one should go to confession. If Rev. Mother herself had not done this in a spirit of faith, she would not have given me such a prompt answer.

11. [...] Rev. Mother gladly gave permission [...] for going to the Basilica of St. Mary Major to venerate the true Crib of the Child Jesus there. The dear God obviously rewarded Rev. Mother as well, because it was just on Christmas night during the second Mass that she was allowed to render her soul into the arms of the Divine Child who took her to the everlasting Christmas. [...]

Rev. Mother was endowed with a deep veneration for the Blessed Sacrament. One could not watch her absorption in prayer before the tabernacle without being greatly moved, especially when she was before the Blessed Sacrament exposed. She often made a visit to the hidden Saviour in the holy Sacrament during the day and this often lasted a long time. She herself liked to go with processions and often sent us sisters also. She often sent us to hours of adoration in reparation for sins as well, especially in those churches where sacrileges had occurred.

[...]

13. The sacristan at that time, S. Crescentia Bebel, once told me that Rev. Mother often prayed at night in the sacristy from where one could just see the Tabernacle.

²⁴⁰ There is a very great similarity to the report of M. Liboria Hansknecht. In the following, only the content, which S. Theresia Becker brings independently is given. The replies are numbered and surely correspond to questions whose text is unknown to us up till now.

14. Rev. Mother had great devotion to the Passion of Christ. She often prayed the Way of the Cross and liked to see us praying it as well. She sent the sisters to the Lenten sermons in order to give them the opportunity to hear good sermons about the Passion of Christ which would make the Passion of the dear Saviour present to them time and again. She herself liked to go to the French sermons also. – She went with the sisters to St. Peter's when the important relics were shown, as well as to the Pillar of Scourging and the Holy Stairs. She always found there a practical link to everyday life.

15. Rev. Mother zealously fostered veneration of the saints: in particular, to the dear Mother of God under the title "Immaculate Conception", besides "Queen of the Apostles" and "Mother of Good Counsel", and Saint Joseph. Then also the holy Apostles, especially St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Jude Thaddeus and, in addition to these, the Archangel Michael, St. Benedict Labre and St. Joan of Arc whom she had chosen as her confirmation patron. In the month of March she especially venerated St. Joseph and held nice devotions in his honour with the sisters.

In general, she liked to visit the churches dedicated to the above-named saints before their feasts. She told something about their lives, laid particular emphasis on their humility and the spirit of sacrifice and admonished us to follow them zealously. On the feast of St. Peter, she required all the sisters to visit the tomb of the Prince of Apostles and who had not been there by the late afternoon received a serious reprimand and still had to make the visit. She also liked to visit the grave of St. Jude Thaddeus and the altar of the Archangel Michael.

When I was once permitted to go with her to St. Peter's to pray, Rev. Mother became very ill and totally unconscious. As it was just after midday, I couldn't find anyone there to help and Rev. Mother was a big person. So I made a handkerchief wet with holy water, I laid it on her and then hurried to the Piazza of St. Peter's to look for help there. Just then our Ven. Father and Founder came by on his daily walk to pray in St. Peter's. I went up to him and said: "Rev. Mother is so totally unconscious." He only said: "Have trust, we will pray." He then went along to the dear patient, who was still totally unconscious. Ven. Father prayed and stretched his hands

over Rev. Mother, blessed her and then went straight away to the grave of St. Peter. Hardly was he kneeling there when Rev. Mother opened her eyes and said to me: "Sister, it would have been a great grace to be allowed to die in St. Peter's." I, on the other hand, was very glad that dear Rev. Mother had come to herself and that I could accompany her home again. [...] She also often said that she would like to be buried near St. Peter's. Later on, her wish was fulfilled.

Rev. Mother gladly gave permission to visit the Catacombs and the Colosseum in order to venerate the martyrs there. She spoke with great love about her name-patron, St. Teresa of Avila. She often received Holy Communion at the altar of the great St. Teresa in the church of Traspontina and prayed there for a long time, totally absorbed in God. For a special intention, she sometimes lit candles in front of a picture of St. Teresa in our chapel.

18. Rev. Mother let us sisters learn, recite and explain the catechism. In former times, she had done this herself. On her instructions, we had to lead – for a longer period – the rosary in the parish church during the 6 o'clock Mass.

Rev. Mother let poor children come to our convent on Sunday mornings and then had our sisters take them to holy Mass at Santo Spirito or in another church.

21. Rev. Mother had the greatest respect for the highest representative of Christ, the Holy Father, and warmly urged us to pray for the intentions of the Holy Father. She was also happy to send us to an audience when an opportunity arose or when the Holy Father came to St. Peter's. – She also did nothing against the directives of Holy Church. Her obedience to the Holy Father and to Holy Church was absolute. Every word the Pope said, every papal instruction was holy to her. If Holy Church had spoken, she obeyed without the slightest opposition.

(An example) When I had been in the convent for about four weeks and the other postulants went to Rev. Mother to request their investment, I asked my Rev. Mistress if I might go to Rev. Mother in order to ask her if I might perhaps receive the habit as well. When I knocked at the parlour door and was given the greeting to

enter, I saw that the Rev. Monsignor De Waal was with her and I wanted to go away again. However, the Reverend Monsignor said: "Just come in, Rev. Mother is here". When I then made my request, Rev. Mother said: "That cannot be, you are not quite four weeks here." I, however, repeated my request and pleaded: "I tested my vocation already in the world and understand what I am doing." But Rev. Mother responded: "Holy Church doesn't permit this, it makes other rules regarding us." Rev. Monsignor then said consolingly: "Don't be sorry on this account and be aware: the haircut and the habit don't make the difference, love Jesus more and more and out of love for Him increase the practices of virtue and then you won't remain behind the others in any way."

Rev. Mother revered not only every Prince of the Church but also every simple priest. She esteemed all in view of their office and dignity and liked to request their blessing. – The Constitutions of the Congregation were particularly holy to her. In her little notebook she wrote: "If I depart from the Holy Rule, I depart from my heavenly Father like the prodigal son."

[...]

25. She was happy about indulgences and liked to pray the prayers prescribed by Holy Church in order to gain them. On the feast of the Portiuncula, she liked to go together with us sisters to churches where this indulgence could be gained. – When we visited St. Peter's, she reminded us of the prayers to be said in order to gain a plenary indulgence. Nevertheless, she guarded against exaggerations. [...]

[...]

32. She bore great and small blows of fate not only with complete magnanimity, remarkable patience and self-control but also with words of gratitude. She taught the Sisters like this: "*A Deo Gratias* in suffering is worth more than the prayers of praise in times of success and honour." She wrote in her notes: "Suffering is the greatest grace and the greatest happiness – to be permitted to suffer."

37. [...] Rev. Mother never became agitated in a hot-tempered way so that her voice would have become loud when she corrected but, when correcting, she was always serious, firm and resolute and paired this with love and kindness.

[...]

43. I repeatedly saw Rev. Mother receive the Holy Sacraments with great devotion.

[...]

64. Mother Mary gladly forgave those who offended her and pre-empted them. She always showed kindness and love to the three sisters who were very much against her. – If a sister was no longer on the right path, she liked to lead her to the bedside of someone who was dying or to an open coffin in which a body was lying. Although she was often misunderstood, she was above animosity or resentment. She excluded no one from her love. [...]

[...]

80. She tried to carry out the duties of her office wisely and with discretion. She was sociable and friendly with everyone; even the last novice could go to her at any time and always received a warm welcome.

When I was a novice, I was inwardly stirred at the time of Holy Communion to ask that I might receive permission to visit a very sick professed sister from my homeland.²⁴¹ I would be able to console and reassure her. The novice mistress refused my request so I asked permission to go to Rev. Mother. Rev. Mother gladly agreed to my request and allowed me to stay with the dear patient for one whole hour. The dear patient was very happy and immediately told me that the reason she had been so anxious for some days was her fear she had given offence in one matter. So I could reassure her completely since I knew her and her family well and she had always lived an exemplary life. Two nights later Sister died very peacefully.

When, as a postulant, I went to Rev. Mother to ask for a second rosary which was more richly blessed than the one I had been given to use – for I thought it a pity that I could not obtain as high an indulgence with my rosary as I would be able to gain with the second one – Rev. Mother said: “My child, the best indulgences for us religious are the practice of religious virtues, go and make diligent acts of obedience, holy poverty, humility, love, self-sacrifice

²⁴¹ Contact between professed sisters and novices was not permitted at that time.

and silence; you will then obtain the highest indulgence." So I had to forgo the rosary I wanted. I followed her advice and was happy with the rosary I was using.

81. Rev. Mother made the effort to practice the virtue of justice in the most perfect way possible and to give each one their due: God and the saints, fellow-men, superiors, subjects, friends, benefactors, enemies and opponents. Above all, she rendered obedience and gave thanks to God. God's commandments were holy to her so that she would rather have died than transgress one of them. God's will, God's guidance, and God's providence were the only guiding principles of her life even when the most difficult sacrifices were connected with them. She gave God due adoration through a life of prayer, her conduct in His presence and her untiring work in word and deed for God's honour.

[...]

83. She venerated relics of the saints very much and always had some hanging in her bedroom.

84. She observed the rules and regulations of Holy Church to the smallest detail.

[...]

90. She was always sociable and friendly towards everyone; even the newest novice could go to her at any time and she would receive a friendly welcome. She heeded and safeguarded the rights of her neighbour, no matter who that might be, with meticulous care.

[...]

111. When she was taken from her bed after her death, I found used penance girdles and other such things under her mattress. So she must also have used them. [...]

113. Rev. Mother kept the rule of silence conscientiously and she required the sisters to observe it as well. I had to look after the kitchen during the first months after my profession together with another sister. One day another sister came in and spoke with the dear kitchen-sister for some minutes. Suddenly, Rev. Mother was standing at the kitchen door with a very earnest expression on her face and she said to me straight away: "Is that working for the

missions? You can see that the others are breaking silence and you aren't saying anything? Wouldn't it have been your duty to remind them that it is now the time of silence?" After that, the other sisters also received a reproof.

In general, Rev. Mother added that we should joyfully be active for the missions everywhere and that, if a sister had particular experience in something or had any other knowledge, she should be happy to demonstrate this and impart it to others; the Congregation was still young and so one must help in every way to train the members. – If something was spoken on the stairs or in the corridors, she solemnly laid her finger to her lips and corrected the persons concerned later on, sometimes sharply.

118. All were edified by her strong courage, tirelessness, patience and humility in persecution, humiliation, affronts, and sorrows of the heart and her heroic, silent suffering during her illness.

125. She carefully observed the directives and Constitutions of the Congregation.

126. It was obvious that she was submitted to the Ven. Father and Founder of the Congregation in faithful, reverential obedience. In her Testament we find the words: "I hope in all humility, that my good Sisters will pray much for me and that they will continue to work zealously toward their own sanctification. May they always strive to do real good to their neighbor, adhering to the spirit of the Founder of the Society of the Divine Savior."

132. Rev. Mother loved holy poverty. She wore mended clothing and didn't use a mantel before 1904 or 1905. I was happy and deeply touched when I saw how, wearing a mantel for the first time, she first knelt before the Tabernacle and prayed for a longer period. Afterwards, when I then told the other sisters that I had been so edified at Rev. Mother, the sewing-room mistress told me that this was her first mantel as religious. The missionaries, however, had always received a mantel.

133. Her workroom was very poor and the furniture was sparse with only a simple writing desk, a very simple little cupboard containing the necessary papers, and two chairs. Her bedroom

was also very poor with a hard bed, a night table, a chair and a simple iron washstand and a small clothes rack.

Humility

[not numbered] I sometimes had the opportunity to be edified at the great humility of our dear Rev. Mother. A few times she was deeply humiliated by Rev. Father Bonaventura Lüthen; I was not intended to hear it, as Father Bonaventura showed me to a place in a distant corner of the large room (visiting parlour). He and Rev. Mother remained at the entrance to the room and they conversed very seriously, sometimes loudly, and Rev. Mother humiliated herself very much. I prayed my Office attentively and certainly didn't want to listen, but the dear God allowed me to hear and understand. Afterwards, Rev. Father Bonaventura came and called me over and asked if I had heard anything, I replied "Yes, unfortunately." But he responded: "That doesn't matter, then you have a lasting example of the great humility of your Reverend Mother."

Rev. Mother also met insults with humility and then treated the person with much kindness and even consoled her. – (A dream) In a dream, I once saw Rev. Mother walking through a large flower garden. She stopped at every flowerbed where violets or pansies were growing to look at them and then she looked up to heaven and prayed, wringing her hands while praying and crying out to heaven for humility for her sisters. - When I had the opportunity to tell her this the following day, she said: "Yes, that was really something true. How much heart-ache I suffer when I know that some sisters whom I permitted to study are not humble and I am afraid that it is perhaps my fault that they have become proud."

147. I never heard Rev. Mother speak about her practices of virtue.

Gratitude

[without number] She was always grateful to God and to benefactors and required others to be the same. We had to reply immediately for every donation we received – be it money or a parcel or something similar, otherwise we were given a serious reprimand.

154. After the death of Rev. Mother, I dreamt that S. Philomena [Raich] and I were sitting in the visitors' parlour and speaking about the great loss of Rev. Mother. Then all at once Rev. Mother came to us as if she had come down the stairs, which led to the parlour. Her face was very bright and shining and she said: "What, are you sad?" and came nearer to us. We knelt down in reverence, she blessed S. Philomena, then went the side door opened, and a long line of postulants entered and knelt behind me. Then, when Rev. Mother came to me, I said: "O please, Rev. Mother, bless us as well". She replied: "Yes, yes, you and these postulants here" and she blessed us. She then gave me her hand, which I kissed reverently and she vanished with a joyful, radiant look.

Later, I dreamt again: Two sealed letters had arrived, one for S. Gregoria Sauer, now deceased, and one for me from the successor [to Mother Mary], Rev. Mother Ambrosia Vetter. Then I went into the institute's chapel where, to my amazement, Rev. Mother was waiting for me and said: "S. Gregoria is now the superior in Drognens and you must come back to Rome immediately." A solemn Requiem had just begun and I asked: "Might I perhaps still attend the Requiem?" Rev. Mother replied: "No, it is God's will for you that you travel back to Rome again now." She gave me a key and a clock, blessed me and I woke up.

One of the letters, and they really did arrive, contained my recall to Rome where I was to take charge of the postulants and the other letter notified S. Gregoria of her appointment as superior.

In the novitiate, Novice Eustachia Bauer suffered from a bad foot complaint, which no methods of healing could cure. She struggled with the thought of making this known to Rev. Mother as she was afraid she would not be sent to the missions because of it. Her conscientiousness overcame this thought and she trustfully told Rev. Mother about her trouble when she came to the novitiate. Rev. Mother consoled her and told her: "Dear Sister, you may make holy vows but I cannot send you to the missions as long as your foot complaint continues. Have trust in God and pray diligently, God is so good."

S. Eustachia followed her advice. I was one of her fellow novices and she came to me and asked me to make three nine day novenas with her. At the canonisation of the holy Capuchin martyrs Agatangelo and Cassian, we had received small pictures of the saints and so we took them and bound them to the suffering foot. Then, one after another, we made three nine-day novenas to these saints. When the bandages were taken off on the final day of the third novena, the foot was found to be completely healed. The swelling had gone. In her great joy, S. Eustachia ran to tell Rev. Mother immediately and received the welcome response from her: "That is a sign to me from the dear Lord that you are called to the missions, you may go to Assam on mission to the heathens."

168. Her patience during her illness was heroic in which she received an extremely simple care. Her only relief was a straw seat which she used during her illness when she could not lie or when the bed was being made. Her food was a little milk, tea and, occasionally, a few drops of wine. I remember that she received medicine only 1-2 times. Neither did she ask for more, or for any exceptional means.

172. With longing and great devotion she received, at her request, the holy sacraments of the dying, which Father Clemens [Sonntag] S.D.S. administered. Some hours later, all of us sisters were allowed into her sickroom. She had a friendly look and a kind word for each one and she blessed each one. In her illness, one truly learned to esteem Rev. Mother. Her cheerful, resigned, heroic suffering contributed to the greatest edification of us all. She lay there so peacefully after her death and I still thank the dear God that I could watch by the dear deceased with S. Fabiana [Kerzel] on the first night of wake. No smell was noticeable from the body and also not on the following night.

At the funeral oration, her obedience and fidelity to our Ven. Father and Founder, her wisdom and knowledge of different characters, her firm and yet so kind and loving direction of the sisters and her humble, self-sacrificing activity were praised by Msgr. De Waal who gave the funeral oration. Mention was also made of how the sisters sincerely loved her and also how she loved her sisters as her spiritual daughters and that Mother Mary of the holy Apostles would continue her work from heaven as well. When her dear body

was lowered into the grave, the bells of St. Peter's rang for the Angelus. Now her desire to be allowed to rest in the shadow of St. Peter's, which she had often expressed in life, was fulfilled.

After the first General Chapter of 1905, Rev. Mother was no longer simultaneously the local superior and, as a consequence, letters to and from the sisters were handed in to the superior. Once I received a letter and gave it to Rev. Mother so that she might read it as well. Then she said "Really, may I still do this?" I was touched by her humility.

It was very difficult for me to write or do needlework after my serious illness. If I wrote only a few words my fingers contracted with cramps. But then, our present Rev. Mother, the Superior General, gave me the task of writing something about the dear deceased. I asked our late Rev. Mother to help me, as I wouldn't be able to write otherwise and, after that, I am writing for hours without difficulty. And also the pen, which was almost of no use to me any more, wrote very well again.

S. M. Theresia Becker, Sor.D.S.

S. Valentina (Elise) Wirth²⁴²

Report 1



* 08.08.1874 in Fraulautern,
Diocese of Trier, Germany
Entered: 12.05.1895 in Rome
Investment: 04.09.1895 and
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 02.10.1896 in Tivoli
subsequently in Rome,
at times in Tivoli
from Oct. 1900 in Torri
from May 1905 superior in Torri
+ 16.09.1950 in Meran, South Tyrol

Memories of our dear, deceased Rev. Mother

I don't need to add anything more about her great humility and submissiveness as most of the older sisters can and will say something about this. I am sorry I cannot no longer express word for word the humble sayings that she often explained when she took me with her to confer with dear Ven. Father or Rev. Fr. Bonaventura [Lüthen]. They are impressed upon me but I cannot repeat them as I do not want to add any syllable of my own to them. I remember the purchasing of the house, her submission to the present Rev. Fr. General [Pancratius Pfeiffer], her concern about the fact that he had so much to do for us and how we could repay him for this. How often she urged me to offer Holy Communion for him for his efforts and I also had to paint a little picture of the house for him. When going to the Rev. Fathers she said: "Let us pray so that the Holy Spirit rightly inspires them and the glory of God will be promoted."

There is also her great love for her spiritual daughters, it is seldom one finds a devotedness like that. Even the most ignorant and simple ones were not excluded from it, not even those who were unworthy of it. She could not believe, e.g., that one of her sisters was against her – she was so pure and holy in her love of

²⁴² ASDS, E-62

neighbour and thought others were like her. Many misunderstood her innate nobility and thought she was too severe when she reprimanded, but it was only a real, holy love, which wanted the best for her spiritual daughters. Just to mention one example.

Prior to the General Chapter [1905], some capitulars arrived from America and wanted to instruct all the others, in accord with their opinion, as to what they had to do at the election of the Superior General. They came to me as well. I asked someone whom I knew to be on the side of Rev. Mother to go to her and make her aware of all this. No-one had the courage and so I went to tell her. With a strong reprimand for my diabolical wickedness (as she called it) she declared that all her sisters were good and kind and entertained no such thoughts. However, perhaps after Rev. Father [Esser OP] who presided at the Chapter (he did not know us) had, unfortunately, put various questions, she called me to her in the morning and calmly said these words to me: "Dear Sister V., I was already on the ship to America last night," but with no word did she show indignation or anything like that (as I would have done). I reassured her with the words: "No, Rev. Mother, it won't go as far as that, the majority are on our side," and, with a gentle smile, she let me go.

When she visited Torri on one occasion and an extraordinary confessor had not been to us for a long time, she said that we should order a carriage and at 3 o'clock next morning she made the arduous 3–4 hour journey with us in an open carriage (more like a cart) to the Rev. Fathers at Narni and the return journey that evening. Such dedication did us good as, especially in the early years, we had more to do without here than happens in the heathen missions.

Our great poverty pleased her very much. Now this time is over and we have a decent house but our Rev. Mother liked to come often to the little house of Nazareth, as she called it. Altogether, we had four small rooms (when I enter the house nowadays, I can't imagine how we lived like that then, it seems so small to me now). A nursery with 50–60 children in the entrance, the kitchen served as the refectory, laundry, etc., the parlour served as a workroom and school, a curtain separated the chapel, which was divided by a curtain for visits by Rev. Mother, then there was the bedroom

which also served as wardrobe. There was only one window in each room, a total of four windows.

Once a year up until she died, she sent Rev. Fr. Thomas to us for confession and instructions. Two days before I was still with her and, in spite of her severe asthma, she often advised me to cultivate holy poverty in the little house at Nazareth faithfully and always. Unfortunately, I could not stay longer as there was much to do around Christmastime. Sadly, I went away without saying goodbye. I went back for the funeral but I cannot tell you what this last journey with her was like for me.

Memories of her instructions when we went out walking: that one should edify the people through modest and quiet conduct (I was always too loud and pert for her). She often threatened not to take me out with her any more if I didn't better myself. How often she said to me: "Sister V., close your eyes, don't look around so much, you must be more modest and give the people a good example." Her modesty was also so great that I once had a really severe shock and screamed loudly as she would have been under a carriage for sure if I had not pulled her back. She was always recollected in prayer, even along the road, and she wanted me to be like that.

When she called me back from Tivoli and sent me to Torri, she said to me: "You will not be the superior because you are still too pert and irresponsible. You must better yourself very, very much, give good example and become more courageous in carrying the Cross. Do you still remember how faint-heartedly you threw off the Cross during the time I was staying with your dear parents as a guest. I proudly told your parents that you were my support in the house and when I came back here, you were the opposite and cast away the Cross instead of holding it closer. With the grace of God, one can do everything that obedience requires one to do or to leave. Think about that."

With these strong words and still stronger expressions, she let me go. However, I liked her great severity. It reminded me every time of my good and holy mother who had the same kind, at the same time very severe expressions, and she acted in the same way, for

severity in the mouth of the just is in conformity with the words of Holy Scripture: "Who spares his child the rod, hates his soul." Just because she had such a motherly love for us all, she did not spare the rod of severe correction but rather did her holy duty and perhaps, inwardly, it hurt her when she had to do it. I well remember that she told me this when she corrected a sister in this way. Unfortunately, I cannot remember her exact words any more and therefore I omit them.

The respect and reverence she had for each servant of God was also very edifying and moving. She stood before them like a small, simple child and responded or greeted with the greatest humility and submission. She was as happy as a child when she could receive a priestly blessing, especially from a newly ordained priest. She even knelt down on the open road in Rome in order to receive a blessing. I sometimes felt uncomfortable about kneeling down in the sight of people, but there was nothing to be done about it. One had to submit and show humility, even if one didn't feel like it. But to humble herself before a priest seemed quite normal to her.

[May others write down everything so that her greatness and nobility may deservedly come to light.]

Addition

From Report 2

[...] Yet another aspect of her great love for the sisters. When she brought us three postulants to Tivoli for investment, she entrusted us to the novice-mistress with the words: "Take care that they become good sisters in order to be useful to the Congregation. This one is not so strong (physically), but correct her well as she still has a lot of pride in her." When she went away, she said to me: "I want to hear a lot of good things about you so that you will be a useful member."

When she entrusted the postulants to me, she said: "It isn't because you are worthy to teach these young children, but because you will be even more under my eye and you, like the others, will become useful and do something for the Congregation."

You are still too sensitive, too proud and still don't know enough about religious life to be sent to another place. Others have made a lot more progress at your age." Like this and in many ways she knew how to humiliate and to steel but one could feel the motherly love in her words and her concern to form useful members.

When Rev. Mother stayed at our home, she made a strong impression of greatness and holiness to all those who came to know her. My mother wrote to me: "Now my mind is at rest because your Mother is so good and concerned about you [all] and gives you good lessons, but you, be good and obedient. Our parish priest, a capable Westphalian, wrote to me: "I am glad that you come under her direction and I hope you will also learn this humility and submission, etc." I do not remember everything exactly any more.

In the Jubilee Year of 1900, my father and my aunt came to Rome and she had me come here immediately from Tivoli. After a few days, he wanted to take me to Naples with them. She opposed this very energetically: "No, that is not for young religious²⁴³, they should learn humility and simplicity and mortify themselves in everything to become better and holier." Even today, I think I can still hear the energy with which she said this. My aunt, my father's sister, wanted to make an objection to this but then she had to hear all about my bad habits and be content to leave her godchild in the convent without making things worse for her.

I truthfully have to say that she had no bad habits, only natural faults of character. These caused some a little annoyance but all the saints had and have them here on earth and the dear God permits them for the good of those who are striving toward holiness.

Torri, May 18, 1940²⁴⁴

I would answer these questions to my best knowledge and belief with a joyful yes. Her childlike hymns to the little Baby Jesus and the Blessed Sacrament, which she sang and played with the most tender devotion, witness to her childlike devotion. Her going home to the Infant Jesus on the Holy Night of Christmas witnesses to the

²⁴³ The first part of this paragraph is taken from Report 5

²⁴⁴ Like this in the original

fact that she was pleasing to Him. When I was her substitute in the house, I wasn't allowed to disturb her in the chapel. I had to settle affairs before or after.

Her childlike obedience to the Holy Father and Ven. Father was, according to my understanding then, a little overdone. Now I recognise it as being her great virtue and submissiveness. Along the road, she once drew the attention of two sisters whom she did not know to the fact that the Holy Father had forbidden house to house collecting and that one should obey the directives of the Holy Father. When she returned home, she drew our attention to the fact that one should never act against the will of the Holy Father.

I and the other two sisters [here] agree with what the members of the General Administration note down regarding the practice of holy poverty for she was exact, poor and lowly in everything so that no one can write anything different. Once, as a very young sister, I picked up a little piece of paper in the corridor. I did not know that Rev. Mother was behind me. "So, that is right, one may not waste anything, not even the smallest thing and so one takes care of tidiness as well. What one is outwardly, so one is interiorly," she told me.

Oh dear, it's a pity but I have forgotten all her lovely words about carrying the Cross, but her love of the Cross was great and edifying and I hope that many sisters will write about it for the edification of the young sisters.

Written by Sister Valentina

Addition

from Report 3

Our Rev. Mother spared no money or effort when it was for the good of souls and so, every time she came to Torri, she took us to the Rev. Salvatorian Fathers at Narni so that we could go to confession in German there. It was a arduous journey on an open carriage at 3 o'clock in the morning and it was just as bad on the return journey. When the weather was bad, I asked her to

postpone it to another time but she replied: "The soul is worth more than the body and the dear God wants me to help you whenever and however I can and so I cannot look to my own comfort."

In May 1902, a Rev. Salvatorian Father, a neighbour of ours who had also accompanied me to Rome, was to celebrate his first Mass in our home town and my parents wrote to ask Rev. Mother to allow me to attend. She, as well as our Ven. Father and Founder, replied with a firm "No". She said to me: "You may not go home until you have made final vows." I thank the dear God that my Rev. Superiors had refused permission so firmly as, when I returned from a visit home in October that year, I thought I would have to run away as I felt I could not go on because of homesickness. Only my final vows held me back from doing so and for that refusal I am eternally grateful. It seems that both of them had had a premonition about this and through their wisdom and love had protected me from such a great disaster.

She also once told me beforehand about our present Rev. Mother while she was still a student: "S. Liboria will be a very capable support and help to the Congregation in the future." She said the same about the present Rev. Father General of the Salvatorian Fathers [Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer] when he worked for the purchase of the house in the Salita Sant'Onofrio.

Still something about how highly our dear Rev. Mother recommended the Sunday observance. She did not permit the smallest amount of work to be done on a feast-day such as e.g. sweeping, dusting, etc. "We mustn't lag behind the German Jews who employ Christian women to do their work on the Sabbath."

Addition

from Report 4

There would be much to say and write about our dear Rev. Mother – however, much has been forgotten with the passing of time and I was too young and foolish then to take her wise words and instructions to heart. There is also the fact that I was not with her for very long.

1. Regarding her love for Mary – St. Joseph – the holy Apostles
She never tired of producing nice prayers and songs on such feasts and occasions and to perform them with great devotion. Her prayers came from a truly childlike, simple heart and went deep in the heart. (She was once forbidden to lead the prayer herself and she submitted so quietly and submissively that it was as if Ven. Father or the Holy Father had forbidden her to do this – but it was unspeakably difficult for us to hear another voice, this sounded cold and sluggish while hers was harmonious and edifying.)

2. Her remarks at Chapters, etc., touched one's heart and she never tired of awakening trust in God. "We must have courage and perseverance in every situation in order to be able, more and more, to glorify the dear God who shows His goodness and almighty power to all persons of good will." "Look only at the dear God and trust Him. He will help, He must help since we are His servants."

"Don't be sad and lacking in courage when there is something to suffer because the dear Infant Jesus has suffered more cold and privation for us and one day we will be richly repaid for everything. We shall gain the beautiful heaven if we endure to the end. Don't be afraid because the whole thing is from the dear God who has given our Ven. Father the grace of beginning this work to His honour and glory – our Ven. Father is a saintly, great, humble man of God."

Holy poverty lay close to her heart. She once spoke and lamented like this: "The persecution in France will not stop unless religious turn to holy poverty again and give up superabundance. I am afraid that it may also come to this with us because one will no longer be satisfied with the simple and necessary things." [...] Our house here pleased her very much. "This is the little house of Nazareth. I love it, I am pleased with it, may it always stay that way." (I am sorry to say that we now have a somewhat larger house however simplicity and poverty still reign in it.)

"Take care to make the meditation well and completely and do not just sit bodily in the chapel but be there with your heart and thoughts so that you draw profit from it. No one can be a true

religious without good meditation. But no sentimentality as this does not please the dear God and is of no real use in regard to betterment and sanctification.

When going with her through the town: “Where are your thoughts? You are looking so inquisitively at worldly things that cannot satisfy you. The contact with the dear God is the only thing that is beneficial and profitable for us.” “We could stain our souls and offend the dear Saviour by looking at these useless things.”

Her obedience and submission to Ven. Father and the Holy See were extraordinary. When I was her substitute in the house I might not do the smallest thing unless we went to Ven. Father right away to ask his advice. [...] She did nothing, not even the simplest thing, without kneeling down to submit it to Ven. Father or his representative and awaiting the decision while still kneeling. I have seen this many times as I often went with her when she had something to put forward.²⁴⁵

Her love and trust toward her sisters was simply unbelievable. I once said to her: “Rev. Mother, don’t trust too much in individual sisters, they aren’t completely sincere with you.” Then she pushed me away from her and said: “You are the devil, you want to make me believe that my sisters don’t love me. That is not true; all of them are good and all of them love the dear God and strive for holiness, then one cannot deceive the legitimate superior.”

Right now, I cannot remember any more sayings. – “All our Rev. Fathers are holy.” (When one wanted to say something to her about the Fathers).

Her continual mortification and [her] walking in the presence of God were known to only a few sisters. Those who knew her only from the outside were not as they should have been towards her. They even made false statements about her; she, however, was good to everyone and the same to all.

²⁴⁵ The last two sentences are added from Report 5 (there under 255-258)

In regard to the request for photographs, I am sorry to say that I have none apart from that from the first General Chapter. If a copy can be made or is needed, I will send it but I ask you to return it. There is nothing from the grave. It was also so poor unfortunately. The little cross was totally overloaded with the ivy which covered the little mound and there was only a nice palm at the foot. We hope that the resting place will soon be treated better.

Addition

from Report 5 ²⁴⁶

[...]

173) As a result of her deep, firm faith, she wanted to draw all souls to God through word and action.

174) Everyone who spoke with her recognised and admired her great faith, so the Rector of the Vatican Seminary and the spiritual director once affirmed.

175) Because of her spirit of faith, she had a burning love and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Divine Child Jesus. To this she gave witness always and everywhere through prayers, songs and words such as e.g. the songs: "O hidden God out of love" – "The smaller I, the greater Thou", which she had herself written and composed.

176) The Mass always had to be celebrated in a festive manner and beautifully decorated as far as this was possible.

177) When one heard from outsiders about denial of God etc., one then saw her even more ardently absorbed in prayer and reparation before her hidden God.

178) As a consequence of her great spirit of faith, she subjected herself to the most holy will of God with submission and joy, even in what went most against nature. – She was with us in Torri on the last day of May in the year 1905 and there was a violent

²⁴⁶ The answers begin with n. 171

thunderstorm during the May sermon. I could hardly wait for the end and, without her noticing, I ran back to the house. When I opened up, I was met by a bad smell of sulphur. I called the woman who lived next door and asked if she had been in the church. When she said no, I asked if she had seen where the lightning had struck. She replied: "We saw it strike behind your house." I asked her to come with me into the house and we found the kitchen was in a very great disorder. The lightning had gone through the wall onto the stove, along the wall and out of the window, throwing down and breaking everything that was in its way and knocking off the plaster all along its entire path. When the other sisters came home with Rev. Mother, we didn't want to say anything about this. However, she herself began by asking if the storm had done any damage because she, at all events, had dreamt that it had. Then she reprimanded me because I said I hadn't wanted to upset her, and she asked if I didn't know that one had to accept everything from the hand of God, etc., and now we all had to thank the dear God that he had preserved us from greater misfortune.

There was nearly a bad accident once, during another visit. By accident, a pin fell precisely into the food, which Rev. Mother was given to eat and she swallowed it. Fortunately, she was able to extract it herself after a great deal of effort. She again taught us through her loving admonitions to submit ourselves to the most holy will of God, to accept events as admonitions from God, and to thank Him always as things are always for our good. I no longer remember every small detail but if one had been a little more reasonable and attentive, one would have understood her life of grace better.

179) She was full of the greatest devotion to the dear Mother of God especially, and to all the angels and saints (all the others can witness to this better and more exactly).

180) The reverence and submission towards all ecclesiastics seemed almost overdone to me. How often I had to kneel on the ground with her in the centre of Rome or elsewhere to receive a blessing and ask for priestly prayers. (I often felt ashamed but to no avail.) "They are God's representatives, what one does is never too much," was her reply.

181-189) Her unshakable hope was like her great faith! (I wouldn't know where to start or stop.)

Just as the two previous events showed her spirit of faith, so one can also recognize her unlimited hope in God's assistance and providence in every other event. Thus, e.g. in the year 1898 shortly before holy Mass (I don't remember the day or month), a fire broke out in a paper factory near us (Via Lungara). As I was in charge of the house at the time, she told me very calmly: "Let us bring the necessary papers of the archive to a safe place, but let's do it quickly because it is time for holy Mass." As I shook with fear, she said to me: "Where is your trust in God? Nothing happens unless it is His most holy will," and that calmed me down as well. When everything was retrieved, the call came "pericolo scongiurato"²⁴⁷ and she said to me: "You see, how Divine Providence has taken care so that we can attend Mass peacefully. Let us give thanks and entrust ourselves to it in everything."

As this little responsibility was too great a burden for me at my young age, I always wanted to be released from it. She was very displeased about this and she urged me to trust in God's help by saying: "What about me then? If I didn't trust the dear God, I would have thrown off this burden a long time ago already. However for the sake of His love and in obedience toward our Ven. Father and Founder I will quietly and joyfully accept everything with God's help, whether it is pleasing to me or not."

190-191) Once on the road in Rome, she was in danger of being run down by a vehicle. I cried out in horror but she, very calmly, said: "I will not die before God wills it, He already knows when and how that will be." Two days before she died, I was called to Rome. When she saw me, she said slowly and with difficulty: "It won't be long now before I go to my Heavenly Father and Mother. Pray much for me with the children and the sisters, remain faithful and courageous, have much faith in God and love God, always try to do much good. Stay until tomorrow." (Unfortunately, I could not stay as we had to play and sing for the midnight Mass and I left without saying goodbye to her. It was also a sacrifice for me, but I went back again to be present at the funeral.) How beautiful it was that all the bells of St. Peter's rang out in celebration just as she

²⁴⁷ Italian: "Danger over"

was being laid in the earth, and she was buried, as she had wished, in the shadow of St. Peter's.

192-204) [...] Her great love of God showed itself most when she knelt like a saint before His Cross or in front of the altar. One might not disturb her then, nor could one presume to do so without having to reproach oneself for having disturbed her in her intimate union with God. I had to hear from her often, very often, especially when we went through the streets of Rome: "S. Valentina, don't be so distracted. Let us preach like St. Francis and his Brother so that people will be edified and give praise and glory to God." and many other things as well which I have forgotten.

205) It is self-understood that her great love of God gifted her with a sincere love of neighbour. Wherever and however she could, she wanted to do good in order to unite souls to the dear God. [...]

[no number] All who knew her and came under her direction can confirm that she acted very prudently and wisely in all matters. [...]

233) One could also say about her: "Her shadow alone did more than any other superior."

[no number] I think that she practised justice throughout her life since she looked for nothing other than the greater glory of God and a life of perfection. One recognised her interior life and ardent union with the dear God not only when she prayed before the Blessed Sacrament, but even more when one had to speak with her about affairs in the house, etc. I am sorry that I do not clearly remember her words from the time when I was in charge of the house, but when I think of her conduct, I can tell myself nothing other than that she was a saint already then and one had too little regard for this.

Her sense of justice showed itself also in her most loving gratitude to God for everything, even the smallest gift. – She also looked on herself as being a useless instrument in the hand of God. – Her faithful observance of discipline, even during her illness, gives witness to her justice.

239) She was full of a childlike love and respect for the Holy Father and all ecclesiastics, as well as for her parents; when she spoke about them, one could sense this. She wrote to me once in 1906: "I am obliged to close Rosolini (Sicily); it really causes me distress. Yesterday, a delegate of His Eminence was here. We shall not close another house in Italy so soon, as Holy Church is against it. However, as this was a decision of the General Chapter, I need not worry. Things will go better in the future, experience makes one wiser." [...]

240) As soon as possible, with the greatest gratitude and love, all benefactors had to receive a response in writing or in person.

241) One may never damage the rights of others or the good name of another.

[...]

255/258) In every moment and situation, our Rev. Mother showed herself obedient to God and his representatives on earth. [...] She held strictly to the observance of the Constitutions and of religious discipline. [...]

260-262) As Superior General, she manifested in clothing, food and accommodation the spirit of truly great, edifying poverty.

It was always a joy for her to come to the little village of Torri in Sabina where we had the greatest poverty in the little house, which she called "the little house of Nazareth." In 1906, she wrote: "I am glad I will soon be in the little house of Nazareth once more. I am well now, eight days ago I again had a severe, troublesome attack of asthma. I now know a simple remedy for it. Everything for the love of Jesus, courage and self-sacrifice always!"

[...]

[no number] As previously mentioned, I have to leave the other articles and points totally aside. I would like to say, however, that she always heard the requests and prayers I made regarding the physical or spiritual sufferings and needs of myself or of others. It so happened the other week. A young sister had suffered from physical weakness and dizziness for a long time already. She, her blood-sister and myself held a novena to our dear Rev. Mother and when it was finished she was, and up to now still is, healthy and

free from dizziness and bodily ailments. Our dear Rev. Mother had heard us, praise be to God, and we hope to live to see Him raise His faithful servant to the honours of the altar. Then we, whom she always called her dear good sisters who, according to her, were all without exception good, can rejoice over her reputation for holiness and righteousness.

The truth of what has been written is declared before God and His most holy Mother

S. Maria Valentina



Torri in Sabina with S. Norberta, S. Valentina and S. Rita

S. Valeria (Berta) Behr²⁴⁸

Report 1



* 30.10.75 in Gröbing,
Diocese Olmütz, Austria-Hungary
Entered: 18.10.1899 in Rome
Investment: 07.02.1900 in Rome
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 08.02.1901 in Tivoli,
then in Rome
July 1903 to St. Ninfa near Palermo,
Sicily
from April 1904 Assistant
Novice Mistress
in Tivoli and Rome
Jan. 1907 to Vienna, Austria
Summer 1907 in the USA
+15.12.1966 in Meran, South Tyrol

To the glory of the Divine Saviour and our good First Rev. Mother

Stockern near Eggenburg, Ostmark, 12.VII.1940

It is a joy for me to respond to the request from Rome to contribute something towards a detailed character sketch of our 1st.good Rev. Mother. Notes from years gone by, which I made at that time, will help me write down quickly a modest account in narrative form (the brief time available doesn't permit more). I also enclose an original letter, which is one of the things particularly dear to me.

My first meeting with Rev. Mother dates back to Oct. 1899 in Vienna X. None of our sisters were there yet but the Salvatorian Fathers had a little house in District 10, Heldengasse.²⁴⁹ Rev. Mother was in the Federal capital on account of the proposed foundation of a 1st house for the sisters at the Maria-Theresia Hospital in the Feldgasse.

²⁴⁸ ASDS, E-63

²⁴⁹ Correct: Weldengasse [13]

I had already been accepted into the Congregation by dear Ven. Father some time previously but I was still staying at my parents' house in my home area of Silesia. There I received the first dear lines from the hand of Rev. Mother. In her simple but determined manner, she informed me I could travel to Rome with her if I was ready to do so; she would be waiting for me at Vienna X up to October 20. She turned to my parents, and to my mother in particular, consoling and encouraging them to bring the sacrifice joyfully in view of the heavenly reward, etc. This letter made a deep impression on my parents and I left it with them as they wished. My first meeting with the great noble lady in person made an even deeper impression on me. She came to meet me with an affectionate kiss and greeting in a motherly, kind way, and immediately noticed my complete, childlike trust.

As the business regarding the hospital took rather a long time, I had the good fortune of being with dear Rev. Mother a great deal for almost a week and also during the journey and, I say it frankly, to observe her like a child just come from the world. As we couldn't stay in the Fathers' little house they had arranged for us to stay in a suitable guesthouse. This was near the church of St. John the Evangelist, which was convenient for attending Holy Mass. When it was nearing my first evening in Vienna and we were walking back to our lodging from Mass, Rev. Mother began: "So, candidate Bertha, you are going to sleep with me in the same room, everything has already been taken care of." "Oh, no, Rev. Mother," I replied, "I have enough money to pay for a single room for me." she took me by the arm rather roughly, shook me and said: "So, like this you want to become a poor, obedient religious sister and don't you know either that one is obliged to cut down expenses when one vows poverty? In silence and shame, I walked beside Rev. Mother in admiration. When we arrived at the guesthouse: "Where have you got your ducats that you want so much to use?" "I have them here", and I indicated my chest where I had carefully hidden part of my dowry. "And with that you want to go to sleep now?", she asked in a severe tone. Only too well, however, I had noticed a small smile on her lips and, laughing happily, I turned around, pulled out my purse and laid it on the table in front of Rev. Mother with the words: "You will take care of me now." "Yes, child, I will always look after you." she replied, so very simply, modestly and kindly that I shall never forget it.

Rev. Mother also did not permit that food be served for her to eat alone in Vienna. I had to eat with her, sometimes at the S.D.S. Fathers' house and sometimes at the guesthouse. There, how closely she looked to see that one took good helpings (in Tivoli and Rome as well). "We are not penitents in strict enclosure. We must try to keep our health and strength in order to serve God and our neighbour." These and similar words she used when she noticed that some mistake was being made in regard to this.

In the days following, and indeed always and especially when travelling, I repeatedly had the opportunity to observe her great love for poverty and humility. This was not only in regard to the necessary expenses for travel and accommodation but also extended to her clothing, books and whatever she used. For example, I myself noticed that she lifted her habit every time she sat down on the train. In response to my questioning look, she remarked: "Of course, poor people must take care of their clothing and by doing this I spare the sisters the work of getting rid of the unsightly shine and the creases again."

We travelled 3rd class from Vienna and also on the subsequent journey to Tivoli. When I told her that I had travelled 2nd class from home, I received a telling off with a reference to the poor Holy Family in Bethlehem and to their journey to Egypt, which showed me how highly she valued poverty.

Still another simple happening from the year 1899 in Vienna which illustrates her humility. One day, we went to the adoration in a church. A fairly large group of school children (with adults in between) surrounded the few closed confessionals in which the confessors were already hearing confession. One of the latter however, seemingly there to help out, was sitting out in the open near the communion rail on a normal chair (for lack of another) waiting for penitents but no one was going to him. Suddenly, Rev. Mother got up from our bench at the back, walked unconcernedly past the curious onlookers through the church to the lonely confessor and knelt down humbly on the stone floor next to the chair. She came back to me after some time in the same way, in recollection and with hands folded. This example had its effect. Very quickly, the priest sitting on the chair in the open was no longer lonely and alone.

Continuing our journey to Rome, we stayed overnight in Padua and had a stop in Bologna. In both places we venerated and admired the holy places and artwork and also visited a strictly enclosed convent of nuns. "Now pay attention," whispered dear Rev. Mother, "the Abbess of these sisters is the blood sister of the Bishop of Ferrara and a holy person, I have asked to see her." Through a small window with a double grill it was explained that we should sit in front of it and soon an Italian greeting sounded through it. The conversation was naturally carried on in Italian, which I didn't understand and I would so gladly have known what these two holy religious women had to say to each other. I was introduced, however, and dear Rev. Mother explained to me that they would pray for me.

As our journey recommenced, Rev. Mother suddenly began: "We are not travelling toward Rome but to Torri. And I leave it up to you whether you will come with me to Torri or go to Rome alone." I quickly decided and replied: "Please Rev. Mother, don't be angry, I will go to Rome alone. I would so much like to get there and quickly and I will find my way to St. Peter's and the Motherhouse on the Via Lungara alone as well." "Good, good," Rev. Mother responded, "You shall have your will for a while longer but you are not to go to the Via Lungara but to Via Gioberti 10 and leave your luggage at the Station. You will find our Sisters at Via Gioberti 10.²⁵⁰ It is very close to the Station. They will take care of everything and bring you to the Motherhouse." So I arrived there safe and sound.

Trusting in the dear God, I began my religious life happily and cheerfully under the wise and often immediate direction of dear Rev. Mother. For a few months, everything went well, nothing was or seemed difficult, no sacrifice too great. But the many letters, which arrived from home at Christmastime, gave me severe homesickness. Temptations against my vocation came interiorly and outwardly, etc., and it was thanks to dear Rev. Mother that I survived.

I joyfully received the habit from the hands of Ven. Father and Rev. Mother brought me, interiorly happy and contented, to the novitiate at Tivoli. After some time, trouble began again. I was rather serious

²⁵⁰ Marocco Clinic

and reserved, with a character which does not easily follow or open up to someone if trust is missing or if it is once rejected, and I was very often misunderstood. Rev. Mother did have my complete and unreserved trust and if she had not intervened, I would today no longer be a Salvatorian sister. After the space of one year, once again totally under her wise direction in my beloved Rome, I had the grace and good fortune of enjoying it during the years of study and beyond.

What I could still say about this direction and her virtuous example is very well expressed on the photo-card we received recently, on page 3 in the 2nd paragraph, and all I can do is to confirm it. Rev. Mother knew from which side to take us, in order to bring us nearer to God and the objectives of the Congregation. In doing this she certainly didn't spoil me, thanks be to God.

During Rev. Mother's final years, I also often had the opportunity of admiring the heroic courage and great trust in God with which she quietly bore her bodily and spiritual sufferings in resignation to His will. She sometimes heaved deep sighs, even when making necessary trips out, visits to churches, etc., which told me more than words how she suffered from all the difficulties, misunderstandings, disloyalty of her own people, etc., especially when Rev. Fr. Esser was our Visitor.

How difficult her eye trouble was for her as well since she was so active, and this problem made her very dependent on the help of others. It was at this time that our novices, with whom I was working as the second professed sister, came back to Rome from Tivoli and I now had the grace of assisting the almost blind Rev. Mother as her secretary. In this capacity, I often saw and heard (working in the next room with the door open) how, in her original manner, she quickly understood the individual ways of the sisters who were coming and going and astutely sent them away. The flatterers were dealt with the most swiftly and sharply. On one of these occasions, she expressed herself: "How I detest fawning and flattery from the bottom of my heart." She said this to herself. However, when she became conscious of the fact that I had noticed, she came towards me with the words: "Even though you do not have this failing, you are nevertheless full of bad habits."

How well dear Rev. Mother understood how to give us practice in every virtue and especially in that of humility. Her words were often harsh but most of her children were convinced that they came from a really kind, benevolent heart.

In a family spirit, she was not only a truly caring mother to each one but she also tried to promote this spirit however and wherever she could. As is normal in a good family, everyone knew from Rev. Mother what was going on in the other houses and how it was progressing. We all knew about requests for new houses etc., about applications for entry and from where they came, about the candidates' journeys, etc. and about a thousand small and great events she told us about. And how happy she was when we were interested and encouraged us to ask questions during recreation, etc. How she prayed with us so fervently, and detailed the particular intentions for all requests. She was particularly happy when we were very lively and happy during recreation. She even allowed us to dance merrily on various occasions, particularly on Shrove Tuesday.

How much there would still be to write about Rev. Mother's other great virtues, especially her great love of the Cross. However, other more qualified pens will take care of that.

With gratitude towards our good Rev. Mother, I will stop and I have only the one wish that the book will be published soon and that the honour due to our dear departed will be attributed to her after her death.

S. M. Valeria
Behr²⁵¹

Stockern, July 12, 1940

²⁵¹ Confirmed under oath before witnesses: 24.1.1941

Addition

from Report 2

Now I may quickly write a little more, however.

On our journey to Rome, I repeatedly wondered at her humility and simplicity (Today, I say: "Her great love for holy poverty"). We travelled 3rd Class and Rev. Mother chose a carriage that was almost full with poor people. We shared the food we had prepared for the journey with them and this was accompanied by her kind, instructive words. We had a long stop in Venice where we visited St. Mark's and the Rev. Patriarch. We stayed overnight in Padua where we attended holy Mass and received Holy Communion at St. Anthony's. After that, we could visit and admire all the small and great holy places in the beautiful church and in Padua itself. We stopped again in Bologna. We made our way to the convent and church of St. Catherine who, already deceased, still gave such a splendid example of religious obedience and who, during her lifetime, was so greatly blessed by the Saviour, etc. However, soon we were on the train taking us to Stimigliano. Before already, in her kind informative way, Rev. Mother had spoken about her good but poor sisters. The little house was so very poor that it was almost impossible for several to stay there overnight but she nevertheless so much wanted to give the sisters the joy of her visit right away. Making a quick decision, I responded: "Then I will travel to Rome alone. I will surely find the way to Via Gioberti number ten and to our dear sisters whom you have told me so much about."

I arrived there safely. I encountered Professor Marocco first and soon afterwards the dear sisters as well. They took me to Via Lungara on the following day. I was invested by Ven. Father in Rome and subsequently, in the long period of novitiate and years of study, I again had the opportunity of observing the humility and poverty of Rev. Mother and also her wise and serious education of the young sisters. However, others will say enough about that.

Yours truly was then transferred to Tivoli and to dear M. Bonaventura as 2nd Maestra delle Novizie.²⁵² We worked well together there, with God's help, until dear Rev. Mother personally brought us the good news: We could, God be thanked, come to Rome with the novices. – We have purchased in St. Onofrio,²⁵³ etc. A Te Deum was sung immediately and little by little, in just a few months, we had sent all our bits and pieces to Rome by oxen²⁵⁴ and we and the novices then received a joyful welcome in Rome.

As instructive for our times, I will still mention a small episode regarding dear Rev. Mother's method of education. During the time I was working in our Roman novitiate, Rev. Mother became almost blind in one eye. I was often able to help her with written work and dictation, etc. Among other things, the news came regarding the death of the almost 80-year-old father of one of our sisters who was stationed in Vienna. Soon afterwards, Sister N. from the same place came into dear Rev. Mother's room and she was immediately told about the death. This sister responded: "It was time, he was old enough." I will never forget the severe correction that was given then. The sister concerned had to kiss the floor right away three times and pray the way of the cross for the deceased, express her condolences to [the Sisters in] Vienna and neither she nor any of her sisters were to forget what they owed their elders in respect, word and deed, etc.

Perhaps this will give the impression I am speaking about myself in this connection therefore I will stop though I would still have a few things to add.

With many greetings, and please excuse the hurried, bad handwriting.

Your faithful S. Valeria

²⁵² Italian: Assistant Novice Directress
²⁵³ the Motherhouse in Salita Sant'Onofrio
²⁵⁴ ox-cart

Addition

from Report 3²⁵⁵

In the years 1898 and 1899, I got to know our Rev. Dean H. Hanel, unfortunately, as a strong opponent of our Congregation, especially of our dear deceased Rev. Mother. – However, the impression that some letters of dear Rev. Mother made shortly before my entry in Oct. 1899 gave his judgement a very positive direction. I found the following note regarding this period: The Dean came to us today and, among other things, he told the parents: “You may entrust your only child to such a humble, motherly woman even in another country, she will be in good hands. After all, God’s blessing is on her Congregation.”

Seizing the favourable time and opportunity, I left for Vienna a few days later. Dear Rev. Mother was staying there to deal with business regarding the first house in Vienna at the Feldgasse.

The first impression that dear Rev. Mother made on me will remain with me forever. She welcomed me kindly and in a motherly way, knelt down with me and then got up to give me her blessing and make the sign of the cross on my forehead. The simple, devout and deeply moving manner with which she did this, let me know even then that dear Rev. Mother stood high above many women, and especially above biased critics. – This first impression deepened during the time that Rev. Mother and I were together in Vienna and during the journey to Rome so that, from the first moment on, I gave her my complete and childlike trust.

After long negotiations and solving all the difficulties, the takeover of the hospital was finally completed. How Rev. Mother tried in every way to provide already in advance not only for the spiritual but also for the physical well being of the sisters. The rather

²⁵⁵ E-63-3 This is very similar to the foregoing but is, nevertheless, told in a different way.

unsuitable basement apartment that was to be made available to the sisters was a real concern to her – as well as the fact that the sisters were not well prepared for this kind of work. But with her characteristic unlimited trust in God I often heard her say at that time: “I have placed everything in God’s hands. He will help us to get everything right; He surely wants us to be in Vienna.”



The Maria-Theresia Hospital, Vienna, Austria

In Vienna, due to dear Rev. Mother, I began to know the religious poverty, which she so loved and practised. What kind of life would a superior general, a former wise baroness, lead on her journeys? This thought often came to me at that time when I was travelling to Vienna and I closely observed everything that Rev. Mother said and did.

I came to know the good Rev. Mother in the poor little house in the Weldengasse, Vienna X, where the Rev. Fathers S.D.S. were living. We took our simple meals there as well. Close by there was a simple guest house where she was staying. Shortly after my arrival, she suddenly asked: “Would you mind sleeping in the same room with me?” “Yes, I would” I answered honestly. “I expected that,” she replied laughingly, “but now you will begin convent life with me and learn to practice holy poverty. Don’t you think that we,

as poor people, can be content with one room?" How ashamed I immediately felt about the beautiful carriage in which I had arrived at the Weldengasse.

The following day was the first ride on a tram with Rev. Mother. We got into an empty carriage. Whoosh – Rev. Mother had lifted up her habit before she sat down. I looked at her with amazement. She seemed not to notice, but soon she saw me during a seating control and asked: “Why did I do that?” “Well, there must be dust or dirt or something else because you lifted up your habit so carefully.” “You will often see that,” she responded. “That is how poor nuns protect and save their habits when they are travelling and they also do it at home. What do you think about it?” A little sheepishly I answered that I didn’t really understand it.

“Tomorrow,” dear Rev. Mother said one afternoon, “a decision will be made regarding the Feldgasse. – Let us go once more to St. John (the Church of St. John in Vienna X) and pray so that everything goes according to God’s most holy will.” When we arrived there, we were met with a crowd of school children going to confession. As there were not enough confessionals, some priests only had simple chairs. The children knelt humbly at their feet and received the sacrament of penance there.

After Rev. Mother had knelt for a long time in recollection and one of the priests sitting out in the open had absolved his last small penitent, our dear, humble Rev. Mother got up and knelt down purely and simply in front of the priest in the open church in order to make her own confession. I do not know who was edified the most, the young priest or my humble self.

How humble this blessed one was in her dealings with others as well. How she made absolutely nothing of herself. How often I heard her put childlike questions to priests in order to accept their explanations and instructions in just such childlike and humble way. As I often observed the same in later years, during the weekly instructions at the Motherhouse as well, I became convinced that the so well educated mother did this only because of us sisters.

As has been said previously, Rev. Mother was a special lover of holy poverty, totally in the spirit of our holy rule. It may be that she went too far at times in her zeal for this virtue and was viewed as stingy by some who did not know her sufficiently or did not look deeper or toward higher things. How she avoided even the

smallest expense that could have contributed to her personal comfort or well-being, e.g., on the journey from Vienna to Rome. On the other hand, she did not avoid the extra expense and prolongation of the journey to give me joy and spiritual profit. Thus, we stayed overnight in Padua in order to hear holy Mass and receive communion the following morning at the tomb of St. Anthony. The prayer intentions she gave me at the various holy places were original as well. When we were shown the undecayed tongue of St. Anthony, Rev. Mother whispered to me, e.g.: "Now pray that my tongue and yours and those of all the sisters die for every unnecessary word."

We also stopped in Bologna and Florence. "You must ask St. Catherine of Bologna that she maintain the spirit of obedience in our sisters and give very, very much of her humility to our teachers and students in particular." She encouraged me in this way when we visited the Saint there.

When we came nearer to Rome, she left it up to me whether I would go with her to Torri or go alone directly to Rome. I preferred the latter because I had heard that the Sisters there had very little accommodation. "Now, you will learn Italian in five minutes," Rev. Mother said when she heard this, "so that they can't fool you at the station." When she saw that I wasn't intimidated in the least and I had soon put into my head "Via Gioberti numero dieci" for the Clinic, she shoved me out of the carriage door at the next stop together with my bag and baggage and a friendly "See that you get there."

How often I remembered this pushing out, as it happened very often to us young sisters when we came with our requests to the door of Rev. Mother's room in the Via Lungara.

S. Veronica (Katharina) Schleicher ²⁵⁶

Report 1



* 22.11.1865 in Stibarlimbach
Diocese of Bamberg, Germany
Entered: 06.12.1893 in Tivoli
Investment: 23.01.1894
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 29.01.1895 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome
in January 1896 to Akyab, Burma
returned to Rome in Feb. 1898
from August 1898 in the USA
+ 08.02.1955 in St. Nazianz, Wis.,
USA

Memories of Mother Mary of the Apostles – first Superior General

I will gladly write something about our late Mother and Foundress. Although I was under her care for only a short period, I still have fond memories of many things. I'll begin with the arrival in Tivoli. The first thing was the inspection of the bags. For I gave dear Rev. Mother the impression that I belonged to those who hang their heads. However, I did not belong to that category of persons. She didn't like churchy types. For a long time, I wasn't given a prayer book and when I once asked for the Following of Christ which I had brought with me, she showed me the cross on a rosary and said: "That is your book. Contemplate in it; become an interior person and cultivate a spirit of sacrifice."

Although Rev. Mother was a great and devout person, she placed much emphasis on the punctual carrying out of one's duties, even in small things. If someone e.g. made her adoration privately and she came by now and then, she would tap her on the back and say: "How long have you been here?" Then she sent the sister off to her place of work. She was filled with the spirit of mortification.

²⁵⁶ ASDS, E-64

The last thing I wanted to do was to learn English. I often asked Rev. Mother saying it is time lost, I am already too old, etc. Her reply was always the same: "That doesn't matter. Keep up your lessons and learn the material. You will need it one day." How happy I am about it now in this country.

S. Veronica Schleicher Sor.D.S. ²⁵⁷

[St. Nazianz, Wis., April 2, 1941]

Addition

From Report 2

... She was faithful in the small things. Thus, e.g., only six or seven pins could be used to fix the veil. She required that attention was given to making the sign of the Cross correctly. I can well remember how she knelt at the back near the holy water stoup in Rome in order to observe us and she sent a sister back up the stairs three times until she made the sign of the Cross in the right way.

It was like this with detachment as well. I had brought a nice pair of embroidered shoes with me from home. Rev. Mother saw me when we were out walking, called me back and explained that I had to make the shoes black. When I came back, I went upstairs to the Loggia, in order to make them black. One couldn't feel badly about it, things just had to be that way. Making a sacrifice, I voluntarily took the beautiful umbrella to her and Rev. Mother was very happy about this spirit of generosity.

And finally, I have to say that she also heard my request when I once had such stomach trouble and prayed to her. Now, I will close with my deepest gratitude to our good Foundress for having accepted me into our dear Congregation.

Written by Sister Veronica

²⁵⁷ Confirmed under oath before witnesses

S. Viktoria (Theresia) Steuer ²⁵⁸

Report 1



* 30.06.1879 in Stappenbach,
Diocese of Bamberg, Germany
Entered: 13.11.1895 in Rome
Investment: 05.02.1896 and
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 08.02.1897 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome
from March 1899 in the USA
+ 05.12.1961 in Columbus, Wis.,
USA

Remembrances of Mother Mary of the Apostles, 1st Superior General

Dear Rev. Mother was a strong woman according to the words of the Gospel. She practised all virtues to an heroic degree. She loved us all with a motherly love. She suffered when someone was ill. One never saw on her an expression, which betrayed passion. She was never excited when she reproached or reprimanded someone. She had a very good understanding of how to correct or humble someone; something that we did not realize at the time. She could not bear to see any sad or depressed face and would say "What is this?" and tried to cheer the sister up.

When she met an important person e.g. a cardinal or bishop, she viewed this as a grace and asked for the blessing. In general, she had a great respect for priests.

She humbled herself wherever her position permitted this. It was a pleasure to her to be despised. She was cheerful during recreation. If we sometimes played a game, she joined in, laughing and enjoying herself with us. She was averse to petty or over-pious ways. She was happy to be poor. Whatever she said, she meant as well. She often said we should admit that we are poor.

²⁵⁸ ASDS, E-65

She saw to it that we spoke in a pure standard language. If it happened otherwise, one had to repeat the word until it was correct. She was so very exact in regard to letter writing that no mistake was overlooked. She used to say: "A hole is better than a mistake!" The mistake had to be rubbed out. If one received a letter containing a donation, one had to thank for it immediately. She often used an expression of Madame Barat²⁵⁹: "My child, God alone!"

When I heard her pray at the deathbed of one of our dear fellow-sisters: "I am a child of the Catholic Church!", I didn't think it was necessary to pray like that. But now I realise that this is a really beneficial prayer for putting the devil to flight. This also shows her spirit of faith and her joy at being a child of the Catholic Church. That one can also have difficulties in this regard, I was not yet aware at the time.

She could almost not bring herself to dismiss a candidate or a novice. If there was even a little bit of good will there or the one concerned knew how to humiliate herself, her motherly heart was conquered and she kept her. Quite a few have, given time and by diligently cooperating with the grace of God, worked their way up to be really useful members.

She had a clear understanding, good judgement and a mature, solid piety, not sanctimoniousness. She did not like to see a book being used at adoration or holy Mass. She wanted us to pray from the heart, which caused some sacrifice in the beginning. I had a certain attachment to one of the sisters, which worried me. When I told her about this, she said: "The Saviour also loved St. John more than the others!"

There would still be a lot to tell, but these few words say it all: "She was a strong woman and practised the virtues to an heroic degree!"

Sister Victoria Steuer, Sor.D.S.²⁶⁰

[St. Nazianz, Wis., April 2, 1941]

²⁵⁹ Foundress of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart. Mother Mary received her religious formation from them in Blumenthal near Aachen (1857-1863), and left them again before final profession.

²⁶⁰ Confirmed under oath before witnesses

S. Walburga (Barbara) Sieghart ²⁶¹



* 12.12.1872 in Thüngfeld,
Diocese of Bamberg, Germany
Entered: 02.11.1890 in Tivoli
Investment: 26.12.1890 and
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 25.01.1892 in Tivoli
afterwards in Tivoli
Oct. 1894 to Rome
From June 1895 in the USA
+ 10.11.1970 in Milwaukee, Wis.,
USA

At the request of our present Rev. Mother I am writing the following regarding our late first Rev. Mother.

As I was then a very young and simple country girl, I had a great respect for her, or perhaps it is better to say fear, and I kept out of her way whenever I could. I looked on her as being a very devout and very learned woman. What I particularly admired in her was her great love of poverty, her simplicity, her great attachment to our Ven. Father and her love and obedience towards him. Her obedience to him was wonderful. She took me with her to the Rev. Brothers on several occasions but I no longer know what she said or did because I was too young and ignorant to pay more attention to everything.

The other day, when the older sisters were talking together about dear Rev. Mother during free table²⁶² I found out that they all knew more than I do and that they have written everything down and I was very happy because I know very little more. Therefore, what the dear Rev. Sisters have written and will still write goes for me too. I will pray for a good result.

Written by Sister Walburga

²⁶¹ ASDS, E-66

²⁶² A mealtime when speaking was allowed at table

S. Xaveria (Margaretha) Amrhein ²⁶³

Report 1



* 12.07.1882 in Rottenburg near
Aschaffenburg
Diocese of Würzburg, Germany
Entered: 03.07.1900 in Rome
Investment: 02.11.1900 in Rome
Novitiate in Tivoli
Vows: 03.11.1901 in Tivoli
afterwards in Rome
from June 1903 in the USA
+ 27.05.1966 in Milwaukee, Wis.,
USA

Milwaukee, Wis., March 25, 1941

Experiences and observations that clearly remain in my memory regarding our Rev. Mother and First Superior General, Mother Mary of the Apostles. – From July 1900 until May 1903

What is most alive in my memory regarding this happy time and what made the deepest impression on me then, was the childlike humility and humble submission of Rev. Mother. Her noble birth and upbringing gave her humility its own character. She strived for this virtue through continuous practice and in so doing gave us an unforgettable example. As she herself said, she looked on it as being her duty to give us the opportunity to practice this virtue as well. Since the humiliations coming from her were so well meant and were given so much as a matter of course, they were well accepted by most of us, although we didn't really understand Rev. Mother. I myself thought that all this had to be in the convent and rose above it, without being offended at her, even when it did cause pain.

Mother Mary loved and practised holy poverty in an extraordinary manner. I am happy to have seen her example and to have witnessed how she, who was of noble descent and upper class

²⁶³ ASDS, E-67

upbringing and who possessed and could enjoy worldly wealth and honour, spurned everything for love of God. She lived quite as poorly as we all did. Her clothing was poor, worn and mended; her food was poor and identical to ours, her room was simple and modest. I never noticed any exception made by her.

Rev. Mother had a noble, strong character linked to a very childlike heart. Her favourite devotion seemed to be that to the Child Jesus, and Christmas was so very much her feast. We were also to be childlike and she liked nothing more and was never so happy as when we were in a circle surrounding her at recreation asking her questions. "Ask me something then," she often said. It mattered a lot to her that we took an interest in what was happening in the other houses. She wanted to see us be like a family where each member asks how the others are getting on.

Rev. Mother could not stand childish behaviour, petty ways, exuberance and intentional sanctimoniousness. We should be simple, happy and lively and have a really great trust in God. When I was no longer at the Motherhouse, she sent a letter asking if I had retained my cheerful spirit and on another occasion she wrote: "A cheerful spirit is always beneficial but it must first prove itself in Cross and suffering."

Her trust in God knew no limits. What she did, she did really. Half measures were contrary to her noble, worthy and firm character. Her words were short but full of content. Her apostolic intention showed itself always and everywhere and nothing pleased her more than when she could send sisters to the missions.

Mother Mary of the Apostles was great in her obedience. She could make difficult sacrifices and obey right up to the smallest detail. The memory of it now seems almost unbelievable to me. As soon as she knew that something was required of her, she reacted immediately and did it. She required the same punctual obedience from us. She was a faithful, obedient, humble daughter of Holy Church. The extraordinary respect and submission she showed to its regulations, and the reverence she showed to all priests was unusually great. She used the greatest respect when talking about others without making any exception. I never heard her say an unfavourable word about priests and she did not tolerate a disparaging remark from us about them. She loved Holy Church

and the Holy Father like a child and considered that everything was right and good when rules were laid down. She never criticized. Her childlike obedience and her great respect towards our Ven. Father and Founder was something to be wondered at.

“To God be honour, to me contempt, that has been my motto for 20 years already.” Rev. Mother said that to a sister who told it to me. It seems to me that she acted in accord with this saying when, in her dealings with others, she sometimes left all human respect aside. Unfortunately, we did not understand her too well at that time and therefore missed precious opportunities to sanctify ourselves.

Mother Mary of the Apostles dearly loved her sisters. One felt protected and at home in her presence. She excused the sisters and defended them before others. Regarding uneducated and difficult characters she even expressed the hope that: “One can still make something out of her,” – or – “She can still become good.” With her aristocratic upbringing and her strong, noble character, she surely had to bring huge sacrifices during her contact with us. I am of the opinion that what seemed to be odd in her behaviour was only the product and the natural “personal expression” of her character but not a real fault. Some misunderstandings occurred due to the differences between her noble ideals and her fine upbringing and our deficient education.

Rev. Mother knew no indolence and leisureliness. “In the grave I shall rest,” was her answer when she was asked to take a rest. She stood, knelt or sat there bolt upright. She always knew how to be master of herself.

Mother Mary of the Apostles sometimes spoke to us of the “vocational path”²⁶⁴ as being the most secure way for a sister. Even in this, I only half understood what she meant by it. We usually laughed about this expression. I think Rev. Mother’s experience with us was like that of the Saviour with His Apostles.

She herself was tremendously faithful in small, everyday things. I have never noticed that she violated a rule or regulation. She quickly noticed our mistakes and corrected them with much

²⁶⁴ Literally translated, Mother Mary said “call-way”.

patience and forbearance. She also gave a penance when she saw it was necessary.

In her conversations, she often mentioned the example of the great St. Teresa of Avila, her name patron, – “Go on fearlessly and courageously” was the road she followed and so she taught us. – She often said: “We must be apostolic and seek to do very much for the honour of God.”

I believe Rev. Mother was very childlike in her prayer. She said to us: “Don’t use many words, but have great trust.” As well as devotion to the Divine Child, she fostered and greatly loved devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and the Passion. She did not like it if we prayed from prayer books. She said: “One should pray from the heart.”

Rev. Mother was as happy as a child when one gave her small innocent pleasures on her nameday or on important feast-days. Her childlike heart was so obvious and it made all of us happy when she accepted the small gifts so gratefully and prized them so highly.

In the early years of our Congregation’s foundation, necessity demanded that Rev. Mother send many sisters out to the mission without being able to give them the necessary preparation beforehand. When Rev. Mother told the sisters what work they were going to have to do, it happened at times that one or the other sister said: “But Rev. Mother, I don’t know anything”. An answer from Rev. Mother then came quickly: “I can do everything in Him who strengthens me.”²⁶⁵, – or: “Everything in obedience. The dear God helps those who are obedient.” “For those who love God, everything works together unto good.” – And isn’t it wonderful how the dear God did help the sisters who were sent out to work in this way?

S. M. Xaveria Amrhein, Sor.D.S.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁵ Phil. 4:13

²⁶⁶ Confirmed under oath before witnesses. March 27, 1941

Addition

Report 2

Memories

Sister N. went to Rev. Mother and asked for a pen. The latter had just received a letter bringing the news that Sister V. in T. was seriously ill. She told the sister, who was from the same area as the sick one: "Sister V. is very ill." – Sister N. paid very little attention and said: "Rev. Mother, may I have a pen?" Rev. Mother repeated: "Sister V. is seriously ill, we must pray for her." The sister asked for a third time: "Rev. Mother, I need a pen, will you give me one?" At this, Rev. Mother said: "Sister, didn't you hear me say that Sister V. is so very ill?" She received the reply "Yes, Rev. Mother" "So, if you heard it, why didn't you say that you are very sorry sister is ill, or something like that?" Sister N. answered: "How can I say I am sorry when I am not?" "How dreadful," said Rev. Mother, "so go in there until you are sorry," and with that she pushed Sister N. into the next room and shut the door. A fairly long time went by until Rev. Mother finally called out: "Are you sorry about Sister N. now?" "Not yet," the Sister replied. Some time went by again and at last, Sister N. opened the door a little and said: "Rev. Mother, I think I am a little sorry about Sister V. now." – She then received a pen and could go.

A group of sisters had left for America. Each time sisters travelled, Rev. Mother was very concerned until she received the first news from them. Also at that time, when she came to recreation, she joyfully brought along the news that the sisters had arrived safely. When the letters were read out, she showed around the sketches which one sister, who is now no longer with us, had made on the ship to pass the time. They were caricatures of the sisters in the Motherhouse and showed them in some ridiculous position, Rev. Mother not excepted. Rev. Mother watched us as we looked at the pictures. When some sisters then laughed at the comical idea, Rev. Mother said very calmly: "I am sorry that you can laugh at such a thing. I call it ill-mannered and ungrateful and the one who did it should be ashamed."

"The dear God is so good," Rev. Mother so often said. "Let us serve Him with joyful hearts." When she occasionally received from the missions – as she liked to call the new foundations –

unpleasant news which depressed her, she went to the organ which she played so well and began to play one of her favourite hymns, e.g. "The smaller I, the greater Thou..." etc. – "For me there is, one only joy on earth, but God alone" etc., or "O hidden God of love.."

When the sisters went to the missions, she didn't know what she could all do to encourage them for their duties. Then she wrote such motherly letters and encouraged and consoled them. She wanted to know everything which occurred in the new field of apostolate and nothing was so small that it was beneath her interest.

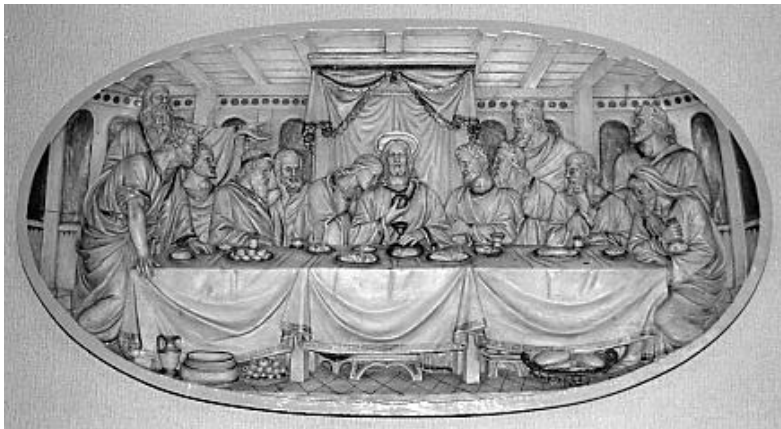
"Just remain really happy and courageous. I am glad that you are more serious, firm and understanding and therefore can do much." (Copied from a letter dated 1904) Then she wrote on another occasion: "How is your health, dear sister? Please write and tell me everything. I was very worried about you." In August 1903, she wrote from Switzerland: "Always thank God that you have arrived safely at your first assignment and that they are content to have you. A happy spirit helps in everything; try to keep this treasure, dear sister, but it must first be made firm in the Cross and unpleasant happenings, for it will be of no help without this. On another occasion she said: "Well now, Sister X, may St. Francis Xaver always encourage and console you."

Anything that a sister did was great in Rev. Mother's eyes. She wanted us to do the lowliest of work and view it as a privilege. – Not that I must do it – but rather, I am allowed to do it.

She was a model in the practise of holy poverty at all times. She wore mended clothing like each one of her sisters, she took great care of things and didn't want to have anything special. – When she became unwell, a special food was prepared for her at times. Then we heard her say at table: "What is this?" And when S. Johanna [Mai] then explained: "It is for you, Rev. Mother. You need it and should eat it up," she pushed the plate toward S. Johanna and said: "Eat it yourself, I told you not to prepare anything extra." Alternatively, she said: "Give that to Sister N., she isn't feeling well."

Rev. Mother was very fond of the pious customs connected with church feasts. She really enjoyed them always and stroked the white doves (because she loved animals) which one presented to her in a basket at Pentecost as a remembrance of the Holy Spirit. "Be very quiet today," she said, "the Holy Spirit comes in the whisper of the wind." And the best were the feasts of Christmas and the Three Kings – she was like a small child then. The "Three Kings' Cake" containing beans could never be missing. The fact that she was permitted to die during the holy Christmas night was seen by many as a reward for her great devotion to the Divine Child.

I had the happiness of being with Rev. Mother only for about three years. The time was short but long enough to observe Rev. Mother in the usual events of daily life. The sign of the Cross had to be made just right and one could see how she guided the hand of a sister to make it well. One had to take and use holy water in the correct manner and many of us first learned how to do that at the chapel door in Rome.



Front of the altar in the chapel at the Motherhouse, Salita Sant'Onofrio

Rev. Mother wanted us to take some of everything that was placed before us at table. Once, a sister thought she would be ill if she took a certain type of food. Rev. Mother observed the sister for a while, then she herself served it out and asked sister to eat all of it. The sister did so and Rev. Mother asked her afterwards: "Sister, do you feel very sick now?" – "No, Rev. Mother," she replied. "Good," said Rev. Mother, "From now on you eat this food as often as it is served." The sister did this and never felt ill as she had done previously.

Rev. Mother so hated particular friendships between sisters that she repeatedly spoke very sharply about this in her chapter conferences. She once said: "In the same measure that a sister gives preference to a person, she takes love away from the other sisters". She herself loved all the sisters with a motherly love.

"Obedience is the best – and it's actions are the greatest. God's Son also was obedient – who reigns on the throne of heaven." We had only just entered when Rev. Mother quoted this saying for us to learn. Her outstanding humble, obedient spirit made it easy for us to be obedient. She was a great example for us in this virtue.

I can still beautifully visualize Rev. Mother kneeling as straight as an arrow during prayer in the chapel. She never leaned back when she was sitting, she was always dignified and reverential. She never needed to say anything about her great devotion to the most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. We had seen and sensed this for ourselves.

Rev. Mother was very careful to regulate our outward behaviour. She never gave up hoping for success in this regard. She hated it if anyone walked along with a stoop. "That is humpbacked humility," she said. How often she pulled our shoulders back and arranged the veil at the back. The sisters were to behave in a dignified manner and dignified they should look.

One must often imagine how Rev. Mother must have felt at times. She, at her age and with her education, saw herself surrounded by inexperienced children who had nothing to offer other than their good will.

Rev. Mother tried to help each one overcome the initial difficulties. She never scolded but, speaking very calmly, she fulfilled whatever was her duty. I never heard an inappropriate word from her.

She often took work out of our hands during recreation and said: "That is not important now, talk and relax."

She didn't like it and gave a sharp correction if we read or did fine needlework in a bad light. She said: "Your eyes belong to the Congregation, you may not ruin them."

One might never tell Rev. Mother that she should take care of herself or that she should rest. She could then become serious and respond: "We are here to be active and to work, there is time enough to rest in the grave."

It is only now that we begin to understand how Rev. Mother must often have felt with her upright spirit and good will. All the misunderstandings, disappointments and ingratitude on the part of her friends and her own children. There was a resemblance to the Divine Master.

What we call mistakes in Rev. Mother's behaviour were, in reality, only personality traits. She was very humble, conscientious, deeply devout and acted just as she was. May the dear God deign to place her virtues on a candlestick and gain satisfaction for her before the world.

S. M. Xaveria Sor.D.S.

Addition
Report 3

Memories

Rev. Mother told us that she read Rodriguez with her nanny when she was seven years old. She had liked the chapter on humility. – Yes, she practised humility and wanted to be despised. We saw for ourselves that she never received Ven. Father other than when she was kneeling and that she took on herself any rebuke from

Rev. Fr. Thomas [Weigang] which were intended for the sisters and accepted these with great humility.

Now, one example from many: All the sisters had to be home from the daily walks before the Angelus bells rang out. One day, Rev. Mother had been to a celebration with several sisters and the time passed by, due to the unusually long sermon. She herself, together with the sisters, therefore came too late home. Rev. Fr. Thomas heard about it and came to confront Rev. Mother. She knelt down to accept his severe reprimand, said she was sorry, asked for forgiveness and then said "May God reward you", and asked for a blessing – (as she always did on similar occasions). Rev. Fr. Thomas refused to give her a blessing. When he left, and so that Rev. Mother could not hear, he told the sisters: "She should bless me."

Rev. Fr. Thomas was a saintly priest who knew Rev. Mother well. He once said to some sisters who were on the point of going to America: "It is difficult to understand Rev. Mother, but she is very close to the Divine Heart."

When once, shortly after the death of Rev. Mother, some sisters went to America, one of the S.D.S. Fathers said: "It will be a long time before Rev. Mother is beatified as there are still too many sisters living who knew her." (I heard this remark by hearsay) He could have added: "who didn't understand her." – It is a fact that very few understood Rev. Mother. She had a great spirit, greater than her surroundings, in her character as well as in her culture. She was marked by humility, which she practised day in and day out and she was so advanced in this that some in her vicinity could not understand her actions. We little ones looked up to her and finally came to the conclusion that everything had to be like that. Like children, without giving it another thought, we felt safe and secure in her presence.

Many were confused regarding Rev. Mother, but she was not confused by this in her turn. She continued on her humble path with great determination and took not the slightest notice of what others said. She often told us: "You have too much human respect." – Today, we think very differently about Rev. Mother than

we did 40 years ago. Many of her actions and words are clear and understandable to us today.

As we have just spoken about human respect, we will give an example here. – Rev. Mother once had to pass through a street that was full of people. (It must have been an important, secular celebration). Rev. Mother marched along and the poor sister with her held onto her habit in order to keep up. All at once Rev. Mother stopped and asked in a very loud voice: “Sister, are you afraid?” Sister replied: “Yes, Rev. Mother.” “A sister should never be afraid,” said Rev. Mother and pressed on through the crowd. The sister could almost not keep up. Then she stood still again and asked: Sister, are you afraid?” The sister replied once more: “Yes, Rev. Mother.” At this, the latter said very loudly: “One should not even fear the devil.” She then took the sister by the arm and went straight through the middle of the packed crowd of people.

Rev. Mother liked lively, courageous characters very much. On the other hand, she did not like oversensitive, fussy characters or those inclined to sanctimoniousness. About the former, she thought: “One can make something out of them,” the latter were a worry to her. If she had tested a sister with good results, she used to say: “Sister N. will be good.” Short words but usually quite to the point.

From a Sister, name unknown (1)²⁶⁷

Memories from an old sister

/.../ We may say with good reason: our Rev. Mother Mary von Wüllenweber was not only a devout, aristocratic lady but she was a strong woman who wouldn't waver even though storm clouds of all kinds broke over her. With a three-fold oath, she had promised the Saviour to carry the Cross and follow Him. This is surely evidence that she understood how to relate to the dear Saviour and that she led an intense, well-developed interior life. When she knelt before the Blessed Sacrament, her bearing was straight. Her pure, chaste look was directed towards the tabernacle. She used a book only for prayer in common and remarked: "The dear God knows all its contents, one doesn't need to read out anything to Him." We young ones were naturally not used to this because, at that time – as was the custom – one never went to church without a prayer book and a rosary.

It goes without saying, that we new ones would have liked to know right away what had to be done in order to become useful Sisters of the Divine Saviour as soon as possible. Today, we recognize the truth of the words of our Ven. Father and Founder: "Our entire life should be a novitiate." That means to say: It is our duty to work towards greater perfection always and throughout our entire life. We may never grow weary of striving after virtue.

It was emphasised that the holy rule was not only highly recommended but that it was handed on to us as a guide. On the occasion of a visit of our Ven. Father and Founder to the Motherhouse on the Via Sant'Onofrio in Rome, we were waiting with great anticipation and joy for a talk. He then said, word for word: "Children, love one another! Observe the holy rule and you will become saints! That is God's will!"

[...] Our Rev. Mother could not have impressed on us more urgently the importance of observing faithfully [the rule approved by Holy Church]. She repeatedly urged us "Don't be petty but be faithful in small things." One could often hear her say: "Holy Church

²⁶⁷ ASDS, E-68 The omissions are thoughts which have nothing to do with memories of Mother Mary

acts sensibly. It doesn't ask anything unreasonable. Just study the Catechism!" "Live your vocation worthily! Be worthy members of Holy Church. With respect and pride, take and wear your religious name and religious habit, which you may never put aside for any reason. But above all, do not be false religious who want to keep the Cross out of their lives." From these few examples, one can see that our deceased Rev. Mother knew how to give appropriate, substantial spiritual food to her spiritual daughters. She knew nothing of sweet piety.

Generally, one viewed religious life as the highest ideal and grasped it seriously. In the greatest privation, one found spiritual joy. Perhaps it may be added at this point how well Rev. Mother understood how to preserve the dignity of others, especially that of priests. In the priest she saw the representative of God. In the dirty urchins and the poor, half-naked people, of whom there were so many on the street corners at that time, she beheld the guardian angel and in the poor and sick ones, the beloved of God. She obviously cultivated also a sincere reverence for her own guardian angel. During one of her visits the sisters had a lot of work to do. Therefore, one of the sisters said: "Please excuse us, Rev. Mother, for leaving you alone for such a long time." Her instructive response was: "What, alone? I am never alone. God is with me and so is my guardian angel." If one made a less than complementary remark about a fellow-sister, she was told: "Pray to her guardian angel!"

[...] Separation of the following of the Divine Saviour from love of the Mother of God was unthinkable. Our Rev. Mother was also a great lover of Mary. Whatever was exterior or sanctimonious was certainly way in the background with her. For special events, she preferred to choose a feast of the Mother of God. Thus, she chose e.g. the feast of the Presentation²⁶⁸ for her entry into the convent. Certainly, this mortified soul well understood how to leave the world and everything it stood for, and to offer herself, with and through Mary, as a sacrifice to God. She always looked on herself as being an unworthy servant of God. She was totally inspired by the thought of fulfilling the will of God at every moment. – truly a noble product of the school of Mary! We can also refer to March 25, feast of the Annunciation of Mary, the date on which Mother

²⁶⁸ November 21.

Mary of the Apostles celebrated her perpetual espousal to the Divine Saviour.

Most people will be aware that Rev. Mother had a very special devotion to the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Divine Saviour. However, this devotion cannot be separated from devotion to Mary. At a certain moment, she stated that one did not need to read a lot about behaviour in a book if one kept one's gaze fixed on Mary. At that time, the fast days and preparations for the Marian feasts were conscientiously observed according to the practice in Rome.

The feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, the day of foundation of our dear Congregation, was kept as a solemnity and celebrated accordingly, as was also the feast of the Holy Name of Mary. Everything was visibly joyful especially as Rev. Mother gave expression to the spiritual joy in short, encouraging words: "What unmerited grace!" – "Let us be grateful and faithful members of Holy Church!" Like this she often made known her attitude. Rev. Mother liked to end a celebration with a suitable hymn or the Magnificat. [...]

From a Sister, name unknown (2) ²⁶⁹

Something about the life of our Reverend Mother, born Baroness Theresia von Wüllenweber

Our Rev. Mother was a true religious sister, a true Sister of the Divine Saviour. She strove for perfection through the practice of the Christian virtues. She participated in the life of the community right up to the days of her final, serious illness.

She was firm in her faith and nothing in the world could have made her waver in it. Certainly she often gave thanks for the gift of the Catholic faith and was full of enthusiasm for the spread of the same.

²⁶⁹ ASDS, E-69

Rev. Mother had a deep devotion to the Holy Trinity as well as to the Blessed Sacrament. She revered the Child Jesus at Christmas time with a heartfelt love. She also encouraged the sisters in this devotion through word and deed. The Divine Child then took her to heaven in the Holy Night of 1907 at the beginning of the 2nd Mass.

She also had an intimate love to the Blessed Virgin and Mother of God, and was happy that she could bear her name. She likewise loved and honoured the holy Foster Father Joseph, as well as all the patrons of our Congregation.

Full of a living faith in the presence of the Saviour in the most holy Sacrament of the Altar, she liked to pray often and with great devotion in front of the tabernacle. She also revered the Passion of Christ with love and devotion. She always prayed with the deepest emotion the Mount of Olives devotion which was held in all houses of the Congregation on Thursday evenings. She held Sacred Scripture in great honour and would never have misused a word of the same in jest nor would she have condoned this.

She never transgressed any law of the Church knowingly or willingly. She also had great respect and a childlike love for the Holy Father. She valued and honoured priests and to her it was almost all the same whether it was a priest already advanced in years or one who was still young. In a member of the clergy, she saw only the priest.

Her great simplicity demonstrated how detached she was from all earthly things and it could almost not have been greater. She prized contempt highly, and she often acted in a naïve and clumsy manner. It gave her great joy to be despised because of this. Her motto was: "To God be honour, to me contempt." It was evident in some things that occurred, how much Rev. Mother loved humility and contempt.

From a Sister, name unknown (3)²⁷⁰

Memoirs

It was in the year 1900 when I first met our beloved Rev. Mother Mary of the Holy Apostles. From the beginning I believed her to be an extraordinary woman. I was not really afraid of her, but she made the impression of being high above everyone else. After becoming a little more acquainted, one learned, however, that she was very humble. Some incidents from my stay in Rome may throw a better light on her person and character.

Rev. Mother wanted to get acquainted with the Candidates on the very first days. She used to take a walk with the newcomer or visit with her one of Rome's churches. On returning home from such a walk Mother knew what the girl was like, and what she intended to do with her.

The day after my arrival in Rome Rev. Mother sent for me after breakfast for confession and I marched at her side over to Santo Spirito where a group of at least twenty-five Sisters knelt around the confessional. Rev. Mother made me kneel beside her – and then the trouble began.

She whispered to me: "You go into the confessional right after me." Why – how ashamed I felt to go ahead of all those Sisters, who had waited, who knows how long! Well, I did what I was told. Returning, Rev. Mother said: "Now let us go to Holy Communion." (Masses were going on at several altars.) "But, Mother," I said, "I have already taken my breakfast." – "Oh," she said, "that doesn't matter. – Go again into the confessional and ask Rev. Fr. Thomas for permission to go anyhow."

Isn't this the limit, I started to think – but remembering that I wished to be a Sister and as such I had to obey, I did not show my feelings. Into the confessional I went and oh – never will I forget the splendid instruction on Holy Communion which I received that day.

²⁷⁰ ASDS E-69a – The Savior's Call, Year 1937, Vol. 15, No. 1 (p. 27)

Returned to Rev. Mother's side I whispered: "No, Mother, I may not receive today." – But she answered: "You did not tell him right; go back and ask him once more." O dear! O dear! I wonder what will be next, thought I.

With the sweat pouring from me and a face burning hot, I squeezed for the third time through the rows of Sisters and told good Father Thomas: "Rev. Mother sent me to ask you once more for permission to receive Holy Communion, although I have taken my breakfast." – This time the confessor told me in a very kind way: "Go and tell Rev. Mother that you may not receive today." This I did with a regular chill, not knowing what was coming next. This time, however, Rev. Mother looked at me most kindly and I received one of her rare smiles with the words: "You have done it well."

She received Holy Communion and – maybe – prayed for her youngest daughter, asking for her humility and perseverance.

"God is so good, serve Him with a cheerful heart," Mother would tell us over and over. If she received sad news or had disagreeable experiences which naturally depressed her she tried to overcome all by playing for us and singing one of her favorite little hymns we all loved so much: "For me there is one only joy on earth, but God alone," etc. Or "The smaller I, the greater Thou . . ." Or "O hidden God of love," etc. At other times she would stand before the Infant Jesus and smile and talk to Him – usually about His poverty and sufferings. It seemed to console her greatly.

ADDITIONAL

MEMORIES

Fr. Bonaventura (Bernhard) Lüthen S.D.S.



* 05.03.1846 in Paderborn
Diocese of Paderborn, Germany
Priestly Ordination: 15.03.1872
in Paderborn
Meeting with Fr. Jordan: 1880
Founding member of the Apostolic
Teaching Society: 08.12.1881
Initial contact with Therese von
Wüllenweber: April 1882
From 1882 in Rome
Profession: 17.10.1884 in Rome
+ 10.12.1911 in Rome

Obituary for Mother Mary of the Apostles²⁷¹

The Congregation of the Sisters of the Divine Saviour suffered a heavy blow at the death of their first Superior General, the Co-Foundress as it were, of this Congregation of Sisters founded by the Rev. Fr. Francis of the Cross Jordan on December 8, 1888.

Rev. Mother Mary of the Apostles was a descendant of the ancient baronial house of the von Wüllenweber family. She was born at Castle Myllendonk in the District of Mönchen-Gladbach and the Archbishopric of Cologne, on February 19, 1833 as the eldest daughter of Joseph Theodor Baron von Wüllenweber and Constantia Elisabeth née Le Fort and received the name Therese at her baptism. She received a careful upbringing and education; initially at Castle Myllendonk and subsequently at the Boarding School of the Benedictine Sisters at Liège. Her exceptional spiritual gifts developed quickly and with the best of consequences so that she became the pride and joy of her family and of her very devout parents in particular. She received her first holy communion when she was 13 years old and was confirmed soon afterwards taking, to the wonderment of all her relatives, the name "Joan of Arc"

²⁷¹ Salvatorianische Mitteilungen, 1908, n.2, pp.24-26. Unfortunately, some dates and information are inaccurate but these have not been corrected here.

whom she already then revered as a saint. That courageous young woman was for her an example of the carrying out of extraordinary deeds and sacrifices to which she also felt attracted even then.

Back at Castle Myllendonk on leaving school, Therese received the necessary practical formation in housekeeping, which was a requisite for a noblewoman and otherwise occupied herself with pious reading, music and fine needlework, that is, with embroidering and finishing church vestments for poor churches and religious houses.

At 24 years of age, she lost her mother, a woman possessed of rich gifts of mind and heart and filled with true piety. She, the future heiress of the castle, remained alone with her father and sisters at the castle until the year 1856²⁷² On November 13 of that year, to the great sorrow of her deeply loved father, she left the family home and occupied the former Benedictine Abbey of Neuwerk near M.–Gladbach which was not far from her parents' home, called St. Barbara Institute. She had bought it with her own money in order to realize to some extent her desire for the religious life to which she had felt called for many years and which she had experienced in various convents. Under the direction of Dr. Anton Ludwig von Essen, the local parish priest who died already in 1886, she devoted herself as a "canoness", to the practice of charitable works with great enthusiastic zeal, especially to the upbringing of orphans and the direction of an association for young girls in particular. In the 70's, the work faced problems owing to the Kulturkampf but her undaunted courage and her wisdom helped her to overcome these without any harm being done.

She had already been working in a selfless and self-sacrificing manner at Neuwerk for 15 years when she received news that the founder of the Society of the Divine Saviour in Rome, the Rev. Fr. Francis of the Cross Jordan, was thinking of calling into being a community of sisters which was to occupy itself with all branches of Christian charity. That was what she herself had always wanted and striven after and, following serious self-examination, consultation with her zealous confessor, Msgr. Dr. von Essen, and mature

²⁷² Therese v. Wüllenweber lost her mother when she was 24 and this occurred after her entry at Blumenthal in June 1857. She went to Neuwerk only in 1876.

negotiations, she placed herself under obedience to him on May 20, 1882 as the first member of the to-be-founded Congregation of women. She had to stay at the St. Barbara Institute for a further 5½ years using the time, on the one hand, for arranging her temporal affairs and bringing them as sacrifice to God, and on the other hand, to gradually accustoming her dear relatives at Myllendonk to the prospect of a complete and mutual separation, especially her dear father who was extremely distressed at her final decision. She also prepared herself more and more for her new activity and the sacrifices involved. The time finally came when she could give herself completely and without reserve to the service of the Lord in the quiet of a convent and, joyfully leaving everything, she followed the call of her superior to Rome.

With the approval of the most Reverend Bishop of Tivoli, the sisters' Congregation was founded in Tivoli, not far from Rome, on December 8, 1888. On that same day, Therese, Baroness von Wüllenweber, received the holy religious habit from the hands of the Founder and was known from then on as Sister Mary of the Holy Apostles. On March 25, 1889, with a dispensation from the Church, she made her final holy vows. For Sister Mary of the Apostles, the first two years passed by fairly free from worry, even though there were many sacrifices and deprivations. When membership multiplied in the young community, and other houses were opened, this increased her cares and sorrows in her position as Superior General as well. However, she always retained her joyful courage and her great trust in God. Her spirit of sacrifice and her love for the Cross always sustained her and she continued to work tirelessly for the perfection and spread of the Congregation.²⁷³

It was a great consolation and a truly heartfelt joy for her when, in the year 1894, she finally received the permission that she and a few sisters could live in Rome. Once there, her cares and work were directed toward giving the Sisters' Congregation a firm foundation in Rome, and in the year 1903, after overcoming many problems, she was able to buy a Motherhouse for the Congregation in Rome.

²⁷³ Fr. Lüthen's footnote to the Obituary: 'At her death, there were already 23 houses in Europe, Asia and America.'

Following a request from the Founder, Rev. Fr. Jordan, Pope Pius X and the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars gave their consent for the ecclesiastical approval in the capital of Christendom. And when in 1904 the Cardinal Vicar of Rome granted ecclesiastical approbation for the Congregation to remain in Rome and at the same time for the erection of the novitiate in Rome, Rev. Mother saw the realisation of her main aims.

At the 1st General Chapter in 1905 in the Motherhouse of the sisters, Rev. Mother Mary of the Apostles was re-elected as Superior General. However, she was not to stay with her spiritual daughters for much longer. Although she had possessed good health up to then in spite of her weak nerves, her health now slowly deteriorated. On the morning of January 2, 1907, she suffered a severe attack of asthma and, fearing the worst, the sisters arranged for her to receive the Last Sacraments. Thanks to God's assistance, she once more recovered slowly but her health was destroyed. And since she made great efforts to continue carrying out the duties of her office, she could not recover her health again in spite of all the efforts and care she received from the sisters. The formerly very active woman slowly became weaker but she always hoped to get well again and to do still more for the good of the young Congregation. At the end of November, she still sent three sisters to a new foundation in Belgium and on December 5, she signed acceptance forms for the last time in order to accept two Hungarian candidates.

From then on, her health rapidly deteriorated but her strong, always extremely active mind continued to work, something that one could infer from the remarks the dear patient made from time to time. During her illness, during which she gained strength from the frequent reception of Holy Communion, she was a model of patience and complete resignation to the will of God; her illness finally degenerated into insidious bronchitis and inflammation of the brain. She often kissed the crucifix with great devotion, saying: "That is my best friend," or "whatever God wills – everything is good." The special blessing of the Holy Father Pius X which she received eight days before her death, was a great consolation to her, as was also the blessing sent to her two days before her death by the most Reverend Cardinal Fischer, Archbishop of Cologne. In the Holy Night of Christmas at 12½, when Midnight Mass had just

ended in the house chapel, she quietly and peacefully passed away in the Lord. The Holy Child Jesus, whom she had always adored in a childlike manner at Christmas time, gave her the grace of dying in the Holy Night, and so we hope that God, who has promised the kingdom of heaven especially to little ones, has already bestowed the same on the good Mother as a reward for her noble striving which was so totally inspired by apostolic spirit.

The funeral was simple. Just as the Angelus bell was ringing at 12 midday on the feast of St. John, to whom the deceased had been greatly devoted, the earthly remains of the unforgettable first Superior General of the Sisters of the Divine Saviour were placed in a simple grave in the German Cemetery near St. Peter's. A simple wooden cross marks her resting place and so she, who sacrificed splendour, honour and riches to God, continues even after death to preach to her spiritual daughters about the poverty and simplicity she has loved. R.I.P



Grave
at the
Campo
Santo
Teutonico
1907-1952

Fr. Alfons Federspiel S.D.S. ²⁷⁴

Letter

Hamont, Belgium, November 6, 1946

Dear Rev. Mother Superior General,

[...] Some days ago I visited the Ursuline boarding school at Overpelt. The Mother Superior there told me that Mother Clara died in her convent at Maaseik three years ago and Mother Margarite Maria Coenen died in Overpelt last year. Both came from M. Gladbach and as lay persons were themselves good friends of Rev. Mother Mary of the Apostles when she was still living in the world as Baroness von Wüllenweber. Later on, when they both entered the Ursulines at Maaseik, they always remembered this Baroness and praised her highly. They liked to hold her up to the boarders as a model for the prayer-life of upper-class girls who lived in the world and regularly told them how deeply pious this young woman had always been. The thing she most liked to do was to visit a church, and she always encouraged her friends to do this and took them along with her. They often had opportunity then to observe the Baroness von Wüllenweber and to admire her total absorption in prayer before the tabernacle which was evidence that girls of the upper class could be pious and holy in the world. In great part, it was thanks to her example that they recognized the call to religious life. Mother Margarite Maria Coenen was novice mistress in Overpelt from October 1910 to December 1945 and she always referred to her friend as a saint when speaking to her novices. [...]

signed Fr. Alfons Federspiel S.D.S.
Vice Postulator

²⁷⁴ *19.07.1899; Prof. 11.10.1921; Ord. 11.04.1926; +01.05.1963. - ASDS, E-70-1

Fr. Alfons Federspiel S.D.S. ²⁷⁵

Report of a conversation with
S. Aemilia Hoffmann ²⁷⁶ and **S. Genoveva Stienen** ²⁷⁷

Hamont, September 16, 1946
(Belgium)

At the request of the General Administration of the Sisters of the Divine Saviour, Salvatorian Sisters, (in the Motherhouse at Rome), and of Rev. Sister Ludovica [Gilkens] Sor.D.S., Commissary at the Salvatoriklinik in Hasselt (Belgium) and with special permission from the most Rev. Bishop of Liège, Ludovicus Josefus Kerkhofs, Fr. Alfons Federspiel S.D.S. put together this document as a preparatory contribution to the Beatification Process of Rev. Mother Mary von Wüllenweber. It is taken from a special talk with this objective with two Sisters: S. Aemilia and Genoveva who knew Rev. Mother personally and are presently at the Salvatoriklinik in Hasselt.

S. Aemilia Hoffman, novice mistress in the Belgian Commissariat, was born on October 27, 1883 in Flamke near Sundern; S. Genoveva Stienen was born on February 22, 1886 in Exel (Belgium). Both entered in Rome on the same day, March 22, 1907 and were invested on November 3, 1907 together with S. Raphaela Kaiser. This was the last investment to take place at the Motherhouse in the presence of Rev. Mother. Rev. Mother was already ill and S. Bonaventura [Zenker] and Mother Johanna [Mai] led her to the chapel. It was then the usual custom that an investment took place in the month of January but, in this year, Rev. Mother insisted that it should take place on November 3. It was as if she had a premonition of her imminent death. She actually died in the following Christmas night, 1907.

²⁷⁵ ASDS, E-70-2 (The Sisters' names are spelled as in Fr. Alfons' original report)

²⁷⁶ S. Emilia, cf. p. 113

²⁷⁷ S. Genovefa, cf. p. 136

S. Aemilia and S. Genoveva particularly admired Rev. Mother's deep life of prayer, her spirit of faith and trust in Divine Providence, her integrity and great love of the truth, her motherly goodness and care for subordinates, her respect for ecclesiastical authority and for priests.

Almost every morning during her candidature, S. Genoveva accompanied Rev. Mother to the Janiculum where she attended the ½ 6 Mass. On the way, she usually took the arm of S. Genoveva to get support as it was already very difficult for her to go alone. However, this was not a sign of exaggerated affection which could lead to thoughts of favouritism. In order to test the sister, she often pushed her away. She liked to ask questions in order to check on the sincerity and truthfulness of her companion from her replies. She was happy about every frank admission even when it must have been unpleasant for her.

Rev. Mother was a countess²⁷⁸, it is true, but in her manners and conduct she was very simple and ordinary. She wanted nothing to do with compliments. As S. Genoveva was, and is, quite inclined to this and in order to stop it, she liked to call this sister to the parlour when there were important visitors and she had to curtsy to the amused guests there. If the conversation turned to younger days of Rev. Mother and one spoke about "Miss" von Wüllenweber, she would correct this and say: Maria von Wüllenweber.

Rev. Mother did not permit anyone to interfere in the duty or matters of another unless one was ordered or given permission to do so. S. Genoveva once watered the flowers and, at the same time, plucked off the dead leaves. Rev. Mother saw this and asked: "Is it your job to look after the flowers?" "No", was the reply, "I only have to water the flowers now." "But why are you picking off the leaves then. That is not your job."

S. Aemilia and S. Genoveva were told by the superior at the time, Mother Germana Steidel, to clean the front entrance. A little Italian boy came by, took the broom and ran away. S. Genoveva ran after him, took the broom away from him and hit him. By coincidence,

²⁷⁸ correct: Baroness

Rev. Fr. Paulus and the students came by just then and saw it. He told Rev. Mother what had happened. She called the sister and corrected her severely with the words: "It was right to take the broom away but you didn't have the right to hit him."

S. Fabiola [Kerzel] was the superior in Overpelt. She brought S. Genoveva to Cologne where she met S. Aemilia at the station. S. Fabiola wanted S. Genoveva to receive the name Virgilia at her investment. Rev. Mother told the latter about it but the sister refused to take that name and asked Rev. Mother for the name S. Genoveva. Rev. Mother asked why. The sister answered that it was because she did not look on Father Virgilius [Koelman] as being an exemplary priest. At this, Rev. Mother became severe and strongly rebuked the sister saying that it was inappropriate to make a judgement about a Father and priest. One must always show respect to a priest. As often as Rev. Mother came to Ven. Father, she knelt down before him to ask for a blessing and stayed like that while they were talking together.

A correction or penance from Rev. Mother was not taken so hard as we always felt and were conscious that she meant it well. She didn't want to be hurtful but to help us to be better. She was just in her judgement and ready to forgive when one had made up for a mistake. And if Rev. Mother herself was once misled or mistaken, she then corrected her own opinion and asked to be forgiven. One could also be sure that Rev. Mother did not let herself be taken in or influenced by favourites or pet children. Everyone could approach her freely.

Fr. Alfons Federspiel S.D.S.
Vice Postulator

Fr. Clemens Hofbauer Sonntag, S.D.S.²⁷⁹

Report

My memories of the Co-Foundress and first Superior General of the Sisters of the Divine Saviour, Mother Mary von Wüllenweber.

I frequently encountered the "Reverend Mother", as she was always unceremoniously known to her Sisters and us Salvatorian Fathers, already during my years of study at the Motherhouse in Rome. Having once seen her, one could not forget her appearance very easily, nor was it easily possible to confuse her with other religious in the same position. She was much too much her own type in spite of being simple and modest.

Whether she came for a feast-day to which she was occasionally invited or to a consultation with our Venerable Father and Founder, she was always accompanied by her secretary and procurator, S. Elisabeth [Albertzki] or by another Assistant. She never showed shyness or insecurity in her speech or conduct. She always knew what she wanted and what was correct to do. In her self-confidence and determination, which was united to modesty and correctness, one could detect a synthesis between her noble descent and her subsequent vocation. Add to that clear judgement and a noble character with an exceptional steadfastness and loyalty. Her keen mind thought much, while in speech she was brief and decisive. She took care to avoid using the superlative, which women in particular like to use. In the face of mistakes and misfortunes, she would not tolerate any exaggeration and got over them easily.

She was neither unfeeling nor indifferent and even less was she petty. She could talk about childish things where others would make a great fuss. In all this, however, she saw to a good religious spirit, order and discipline and had no patience with any vain, lax, or egoistical behaviour. In regard to herself, everything personal was set aside and only what was to the point had value. She wanted it to be like that for her sisters as well.

²⁷⁹ *24.02.1865; Prof. 13.11.1898; Ord. 06.06.1903; +11.01.1951. - ASDS, E-71

I was her confessor during the last two years of her life and was also the confessor for the sisters at the Motherhouse. There I came to know more and more her wise and motherly relationship to the sisters, which was always united to prudent moderation and firmness. I never saw her being rough or agitated or even discouraged. She knew her way and followed it calmly and steadily, totally unconcerned about the opinion of people who, in her view, had nothing to say in the matter.

She was also open and sincere in her dealings with our Ven. Founder and with ecclesiastical superiors and authorities. She showed respect toward them and was not argumentative. She had a clear understanding of when she had to submit and when she could be firm. Upwards, she knew no obstinacy, downwards, she was neither severe nor hot-tempered.

To these general recollections, I can add a few details:

There is no doubt that she was very zealous in her life of prayer and I believe she missed out almost nothing in regard to visits to the holy places. Beautiful prayer services and a worthy celebration of the Mass were things, which lay very close to her heart.

She was faultless in her love, obedience and respect toward Holy Church and its offices as well as toward our Ven. Founder. Also towards the confessors, she was not only open and candid but she was also very respectful and grateful. The sisters who lived with her are obviously the best source of information in regard to her spirit of poverty. She enjoyed no privileges of any kind and bore the privations, which were required of her Congregation, particularly at the start, with great self-sacrifice and as a matter of course.

Self-control seemed to be natural to her without lacking the religious foundation and the spirit of penance. Her robust health permitted her to support a fair amount of mortification and, with her clear and level-headed understanding, she needed neither an incentive nor a restraint in this matter.

In her old age, when she felt that her strength was failing and she could no longer leave her bed, she straight away asked for the Sacrament of the Sick. On Dec. 2, 1907, I gave her the holy

Viaticum and the anointment of the sick. Following a patiently born confinement to bed and daily reception of Holy Communion, she passed away during Christmas night 1907.

Heinzendorf, August 20, 1940

Fr. Clemens Sonntag, S.D.S.
Chaplain



Chapel in the Campo Santo
where Mother Mary lay in state from December 26 to 27, 1907

Steinfeld, October 7, 1950

Report concerning the Reverend Servant of God and first Superior General of our Rev. Sisters, Mother Mary of the Apostles.

While I was a student in Tivoli and Rome during the years 1894 to 1902, I had the opportunity to come to know the Reverend Mother and Co-Foundress of the "Congregation of the Sisters of the Divine Saviour". I went in and out of the first Motherhouse of the Sisters in Tivoli. I looked after the chapel of our College in Tivoli from 1894 to 96. Since our Rev. Sisters cared for the church linens which I had to take to them and collect later, a meeting with Reverend Mother happened without being planned, as the house they occupied at that time was small.

Already at our first meeting, her exceptional appearance made a deep impression on me. I had a certain and clear sensation that I was standing before a great and saintly woman. At first glance, her outward appearance did not strike one as being very personable. She had serious, stern, almost manly features. But from her eyes shone, apart from a great spirit, an unmistakable goodness of heart and motherliness of which I had repeated proof again later on and which was also confirmed by others. Although Rev. Mother was a woman of "social standing": born into the von Wüllenweber family, her simple, modest bearing, her unpretentiousness and humility were admirable.

In the early years, it may have been 1894 or 95, a typhus epidemic broke out in the Sisters' Motherhouse and some sisters died from it. A certain excitement arose among the people of Tivoli in view of the danger of infection. People cast suspicion on Rev. Mother as if she, through too much severity in the matter of fasting, had prepared the foundation for the sickness. The servant of God

²⁸⁰ *15.01.1876; Ord. 24.05.1902; Prof. 21.01.1948; +02.02.1954 - ASDS, E-72

suffered extremely under this trial but she carried the Cross with heroic patience and invincible trust in God nevertheless.

When the Motherhouse of the Rev. Sisters was transferred from Tivoli to Rome, I looked on it as a special grace to be able to resume contact there with Reverend Mother during my time as a theology student. Various missions took me to the Motherhouse of the Rev. Sisters and to meetings with Rev. Mother. The latter also came often to our Motherhouse on the Borgo Vecchio for important consultations with our Venerable Father and Founder, Francis of the Cross Jordan, where I also came into contact with her.

Every meeting with Reverend Mother strengthened my firm conviction regarding her magnanimity. She was, without doubt, heroic in her faith and trust; heroic in suffering and enduring adversity; heroic in love for the holy purpose which she served. Otherwise, she could not have made the enormous sacrifices or been able to overcome the many difficulties which characterise every great work of God in the way that she actually did.

It was generally known that Reverend Mother, who otherwise had a firm resolute will, submitted her own judgment to that of Venerable Father with heroic humility and self-abnegation when the high purpose of the Society required it.

We, however, want to continue praying and hoping that the honours of the altar will very soon be bestowed on the Rev. Servant of God.

Steinfeld, October 7, 1950

Fr. Thomas Breitkopf,
S.D.S.

Giuseppina Flumeri ²⁸¹

a former Salvatorian Sister

No photo available

* 04.01.1875 in Naples, Italy
Entered in Rome, 01.03.1895
Due to questions of health, she left
before 1st vows, re-entering six months
later. She left a 2nd time in 1900 while
in temporary profession, and was re-
accepted a year later, making perpetual
vows in 1908. She finally left the
Congregation on Aug. 1, 1920. Her
religious name was S. Marcella, at her
last investment S. Perpetua.

The undersigned Giuseppina Flumeri, known as S. Perpetua when she was still in the Institute of the Salvatorian Sisters, left to her great regret due to the European War. She, who had the good fortune of living together for some years with Rev. Mother Mary von Wüllenweber, Foundress of the Institute of the Salvatorian Sisters, remembers with pleasure some events, which give prominence to the great virtues that adorned the soul of the noble Baroness who gave up her high rank to humbly follow our Divine Saviour.

S. Mary von Wüllenweber had a tender devotion to the Child Jesus. She had great joy at the yearly return of Christmas and was never tired of praying for hours before the Crib, which was a reminder of that great mystery. So that one could imitate the sound of the shepherds who went to the Crib in order to adore the newborn Saviour in the cradle, she gave the undersigned the task of buying a pipe which would be played from a hidden place during the liturgical celebration and when the sisters were singing in the chapel. As this unusual sound caused merriment among the sisters and made them laugh, they accused themselves in the refectory at

²⁸¹ ASDS, E-73

the conclusion of the celebration. She let the sisters stand up without giving them a penance and said: "The Child Jesus also was laughing together with you."

The Divine Child wanted to reward her for this devotion by calling her to Himself in the Holy Night.

She also had great devotion to the Holy Spirit. On the feast of Pentecost, the undersigned made a dove and fixed it so that it moved as soon as one touched the elastic band to which it was attached. She took the dove into the refectory. When Rev. Mother noticed it, she was amazed and happy when she heard who had had this idea. In her joy, she wanted to kiss the one who had made it. She took this symbol of the Holy Spirit, drew it to herself and kissed it several times with deep emotion.

Her wisdom and love were also exemplary. The undersigned was very concerned when she became ill with a bad eye one day, not only because of her illness but also in regard to the trouble this would cause for the Community. However, Rev. Mother consoled her saying that she should not be sad because illness would bring down abounding grace from heaven upon the Institute.

In confidence,

Flumeri Giuseppina

M. Maria Catherina Möhring OSF ²⁸²
Report from the convent of the Franciscan Sisters
Obersasbach, Station Achern (Baden)²⁸³

Erlenbad-Obersasbach, February 19, 1952

Dear Sister Superior,

[...] In fulfilment of my promise, I want to describe the impression your revered Foundress made on me in the year 1906. Through the firm, calm, unassuming behaviour of your holy Foundress in those days of the first beginnings, when work and needs were pressing everywhere, this noble Sister greatly impressed and commanded the respect of us young missionaries, as did the good spirit of the sisters with whom we had the happiness of staying for eight days. And as I now hear, 46 years later, that the Beatification Process of the Foundress has been introduced in Rome I can, for the first time, clearly understand why we sisters were so taken up by the personality of the Foundress and looked up to her with reverence. [...]

Mother M. Catherina OSF

²⁸² ASDS, E-74

²⁸³ Addressed to Salvator Mundi Hospital, Viale Mura Gianicolensi 77, Rome, Italy

Gretchen Dammers ²⁸⁴

Neuwerk, Bendhütterstr.

Remembrances of Mother Mary requested by Fr. Willibrord Menke,
SDS

S. Therese von Wüllenweber looked after the three Vierschgen children.²⁸⁵ I and my sister Therese went to her for the singing practice on Sunday, as well as on weekdays. Many girls came together there and so they were well protected. S. Th.v.W. was musical, she had a piano. She was also a member of the Children of Mary and was always present at the monthly meeting in the church.

Her father was probably not quite in agreement with the purchase of the Neuwerk convent. He always came to the church in Neuwerk (about a ¾ hour drive away from Castle Myllendonk) on his wedding anniversary and went to confession and communion. The sisters of S. Therese von Wüllenweber were somewhat eccentric. I often saw one of her sisters suddenly stand still on the road and stare fixedly at the ground.²⁸⁶

S. Therese v. Wüllenweber wore a long veil and a mantle with a collar and was dressed in the same way on both Sundays and workdays. She looked very thin. She rented the convent barn. She had, in fact, no income.

Communicated by Miss G. Dammers,
President of the 3rd Order, to Fr. Menke on
May 15, 1941

Father Menke

²⁸⁴ ASDS, E-75

²⁸⁵ cf. SHS 6, Neuwerk, p.59

²⁸⁶ No doubt this refers to Constance von Wüllenweber, cf. SHS 4.1/1, p. 99

Daughter of the former Sacristan in Neuwerk²⁸⁷

Remembrance of Mother Mary

Requested by Fr. W. Menke, SDS

The reporter was one of the girls who learned knitting from Baroness Therese von Wüllenweber; however, she was still very young.

Therese von Wüllenweber always wore a very simple black dress and a dark veil.

She was strict with the children. She was very decisive and stood out especially because of her energetic movements. The children saw her frequently praying in the garden – either from a book or the rosary.

She was the only one who decorated a Christmas tree in Neuwerk.

She did not have much contact with the villagers; she lived quietly and withdrawn.

Near the *Benedict Square*, she had an arbour, where she used to sit with the young girls and teach them. She also sang with them often, and each time you could hear the hymn “I love you, o Mary”. She also taught the children short prayers. Bad habits, as e.g. whistling by girls, she strongly corrected. She used to do so with the well-known *[German]* saying: “A whistling woman and a crowing hen – you have to twist their neck in time!”

²⁸⁷ ASDS, E-75a

Clara Holl ²⁸⁸

Neuwerk, near M. Gladbach, Dammerstr. 95

Remembrances regarding Mother Mary requested by Fr. W. Menke

Sister Theresia von Wüllenweber was living in Neuwerk when I was about 15–17 years old. She made a deeply religious impression, had an ascetic appearance and her dress was extremely simple. One always saw her wearing a little coif as a head-covering to which a long veil was attached. This was, together with a plain black mantle, her only outer clothing when she left the house whether on Sundays or on weekdays.

She cared for 3–4 orphan children in the former Benedictine convent, which she had bought. She had a helper with the work, Sister Ursula, who was a lay sister without vows.

My mother, Ernestine Holl²⁸⁹ often met with Sister Theresia von Wüllenweber.

Th. W.'s place in the church was up in the 1st pew. She went to Holy Communion several times a week, which at that time was unusual, together with some other pious villagers.

The orphans were actually children in need of care belonging to the family Vierschgen.

Sister Th. W. was very thrifty. She herself was easily satisfied. She once said: "A plate of water gruel is enough for me."

In the house itself, S. Therese Wüllenweber also gave needlework lessons. She herself always lent a hand.

We looked on her as being extremely religious.

Miss Holl to Fr. Menke on May 15, [1941]
Authenticated

Fr. W. Menke

²⁸⁸ ASDS, E-76; written down by Fr. Willibrord Menke

²⁸⁹ Wife of Wilhelm Holl, Mayor of Neuwerk from 1858-1883
cf. SHS 2.13 Diary, "Holl Wilhelm".

Frau Rector Raab ²⁹⁰

Neuwerk, Dammerstr, 19

Remembrances regarding Mother Mary
requested by Fr. W. Menke SDS

Therese v. Wüllenweber bought the old, 11th century, Benedictine convent with money left to her by her godmother. Her father was against this purchase. She had nothing on which to live. There was great poverty in her house. In addition to a few orphan children she had handwork and singing classes. I myself learned to play the piano from her. In this way, she made a living.

She was very good at teaching. She prayed before and after a lesson. For a short period, she also had a young lady to run the handwork classes.

She led a poor life. She often went to Castle Myllendonk in order to have enough to eat. Her father gave her nothing for her undertaking because he was against it. Pastor von Essen was alive at that time (till January 1889).²⁹¹ Fr. Koch then arrived as parish priest and worked very zealously with her. She went away during his time. It was said that she made an act of donation to Rome.

She also had a garden at the house. It was easy to deal with her. Evangelical children also attended the classes.

Her father wanted her to get married. But in the end she told him, "I am going to enter a convent." One of her sisters was insane.²⁹² Another ran the family home after the death of their mother. Two sisters were married. Her father occasionally came to the lessons, also the married sister came with her children.

S. Th. v. W. was very poorly equipped. A sewing machine, a piano, a prie-dieu. She wore a sort of black cape. She placed no impor-

²⁹⁰ ASDS, E-78

²⁹¹ Fr. von Essen died on January 6, 1886

²⁹² Correct: she suffered under depression

tance on being “baroness”, always went on foot and fasted every day.

The orphans came from Neuwerk. The circumstances were very poor.

Statement made by Mrs. Raab
to Fr. Menke on May 15, 1941

Fr. W. Menke



St. Peter's, Rome, during the Easter celebrations

S. Hilaria ²⁹³

Franciscan Sisters of Nonnenwerth, Neuwerk
Questioned by S. Avellina Tietz SDS

Sister Hilaria, a religious of the Franciscan Sisters of Nonnenwerth in Neuwerk knows the people said, that Therese von Wüllenweber was very strict with herself and that she always wore a penance girdle.

August 24, 1942

M. Avellina

²⁹³ ASDS, E 76a

Caspar Thiweßen²⁹⁴

Neuwerk, Krefelder Strasse (opposite the petrol station)

Remembrances regarding Mother Mary requested by S. Avellina

August 25, 1942

Baroness Therese von Wüllenweber, known to the people of Neuwerk as the "Myllendonker Therese", rented part of the Barbara-stift. She was tall and slim with a thin face and lived alone with a 14-year-old girl. She cared for the large living quarters and garden herself. There was also an orchard on the grounds, which produced a lot of very good fruit. This attracted the young people of the village to which belonged also the person giving this account. According to him, all the children had a garden at home but, so said this person, we repeatedly tried to get some of the fruit which belonged to the Myllendonker Therese. When she caught us doing this, she gave us a thorough scolding and threatened to tell our teacher who was very strict. But we knew that she would never let this threat come true.

She liked children very much and also gave them everything that she could. She decorated a lovely tree at Christmastime and provided the most delicious sweets and fruit for all the young people of Neuwerk on a long table in one of the rooms. The more children there were, the more she enjoyed it. It was the first Christmas tree ever to be put up here in the neighbourhood. In other families at this time, this custom was not known. In particular, this reporter with two of his closest friends took this opportunity to carry out their youthful pranks. The moment the Myllendonker Therese was not paying attention, one of the boys immediately got under the table on which the Christmas tree was standing and lifted it up so that the tree began to wobble and caught fire. Therese became very angry at that, sent the boys away and forbade them ever to come again. But at the next Christmas celebration they were able to slip in again unnoticed and before Therese was aware of it, they were under the table again and the Christmas tree was burning in full blaze. She then said: "Are the naughty boys here again after all?"

²⁹⁴ ASDS, E-79

The Myllendonker Therese also sometimes called on the village youth to help with the fruit picking. One day, the father of this reporter raised his finger and told him: "Today, you are going to go to the Myllendonker Therese to pick apples" (The raised finger meant: "But you are not to steal any". His father was very strict and would have given him a sound thrashing if he did.). However, when the reporter went to Therese, she said: "So, are you here already," to which he answered: "Yes, I should pick fruit;" and she responded: "That is good of you, you may also eat an apple." Then, when the reporter had finished his work, she said: "You can take the windfalls to your mother" and she gave him a whole bucketful of apples.

Likewise, a lot of fruit made its way to the poor and sick of the village. As the Myllendonker Therese was in general very charitable towards them, she gladly shared her fruit with her charges. She preferred to do this very quietly, secretly and unnoticed. In the evening, she went out when she would not be seen or she occasionally sent it to them with someone else.

As her charity did not catch the eye and she herself lived very modestly, some thought she was tight-fisted. However, the reporter was of the opinion that she was in no way like this since a needy woman who asked her for help never went away without getting what she wanted. If men whom she did not know came, or those who were alcoholics, or those where one had doubts that the gift was used for the benefit of the family, only then did she give nothing but said: "If you need something, send your wife". Of course, that did not always please the men and therefore they spread the rumour that she was miserly.

Therese's clothing was very simple, mostly black and did not differ from the bourgeois women. In church, she preferred to sit among the people and not in the privileged place reserved for her.

The furnishings in her house were extremely poor, in the kitchen there was, e.g. a very simple iron stove, a broken chair and the rest of the things were also almost as miserable. When the household was closed later on and the items were put up for auction there were no buyers for them since they were too poor for even the simple people.

In her household, she brought up three to six and sometimes six to ten orphan girls. She was very strict with them. They were not

allowed to play before they had finished their homework. Therese corrected the homework herself. When she found too many mistakes in it, she erased everything and the child had to do the whole task again from the beginning. The children had to be in the house again by 6 o'clock but, in spite of all, she was also very concerned about her charges. If one of them had a special liking for something or the other, she saw to it that training was given in that subject. Therefore, for example, a girl who had a special liking for sewing was educated as a seamstress.

Therese was very musical. She herself played the harmonium in church and she also took a great interest in hymn singing.

The members of the von Wüllenweber family always showed themselves very friendly with the people. Once, on the Sunday after Easter, Dr. von Essen (the parish priest of Neuwerk) went to Castle Myllendonk with the first communion children. There, Therese took care of the girls while Baron von Wüllenweber entertained the boys. While they were talking, the Baron asked each one of the boys what he wanted to be. As there was a lot of cottage industry in the area at that time, the boys answered that one wanted to be a silk weaver, another a stocking weaver and another a linen-weaver. At this, Dr. von Essen remarked: "You have named all kinds of weavers but none of you wants to be a wool weaver (Wüllenweber)." One of the boys, who was not particularly intelligent in the religion lessons, responded to this: "Rev. Father, one of us can never become a Wüllenweber!" The Baron and also the Rev. Father were surprised at this answer and the latter asked the boy where he had come across this idea. - -

The reporter also still remembers very well that the children of the Myllendonker Therese, when she went over the drawbridge²⁹⁵ to Castle Myllendonk and was half-way across, took part in letting go the drawbridge so that it shot up into the air. But she did not get angry about it.

According to the report of Mr. Thiwessen
written down by S. Avellina Sor.D.S.

²⁹⁵ *Note by S. Avellina Tietz:*
according to J. Bremer, a solid concrete bridge had taken the place of the
drawbridge already around the year 1772.

Matthias Weuthen²⁹⁶



* 04.06.1884 in Neuwerk, Germany
married with Magdalena Güttes, six
children. Profound knowledge of the
History of Neuwerk and the Lower
Rhine, 1938 founding member of
Gladbach Home Association.
+ 07.11.1972

M. Gladbach, Neuwerk, August 22, 1957

Greetings!

Reverend Sister Avellina!

Rev. Mager, the parish priest, will have already told you about my unsuccessful research. The document in question dated 30.11.1878 cannot be found in the parish archive. Regarding the given period, there exists material dated 24.3.1876, 10.11.1877, 6.9.1882 and 23.12.1888 which is perhaps already known to you.

In fulfilment of my promise, I will write these lines for you; the deceased heiress of the Castle was well-known to our parents as well as to the people of Neuwerk. In particular, the mother of my wife could tell something about those who lived at the castle. Also the name of the deceased was often mentioned after she remained in Rome. My wife's mother said that the Baroness walked the long distance from the castle to the parish church in Neuwerk in order to attend Mass almost every day. The parish priest at that time was the Rev. Dr. Ludwig von Essen, a much respected pastor, confessor and director of the dear deceased.

Even on the dark and dreary days of winter, Therese von Wüllenweber used to go along the long, often snow-covered and badly kept track to the church. While doing so, she carried a lighted lantern. Along the way, the noblewoman took with her the children of the Uedding area who were going to the school Mass or to

²⁹⁶ E-80-1a

lessons. My wife's mother was often one of them as she lived in Uedding.

If Rev. Sister would wish to know more regarding the ancestry and family history of the dear deceased, I am ready to give you a copy of the materials to which I have access.

The paternal grandfather of the dear deceased was raised to the rank of baron on 2.5.1871 by Joseph II, the German Emperor of that period.

Thus the left-hand division of the coat of arms bears three clover leaves, the ancient coat of arms of the von Wüllenweber family, and the right hand division shows half an imperial eagle.

N.B. The Emperor Joseph was the son of the great Empress, Maria Theresia (Q.of Au.)

remembering the dear deceased
yours sincerely
Matthias Weuthen

How it was 90 years ago at the old Castle Myllendonk²⁹⁷

As I have already mentioned in the past, the parental home of my wife's mother is not so very far from Castle Myllendonk. A family by the name of Kopp lived near this old farmstead. A sister of Mrs. Kopp was employed at the castle and was generally known as "Mamsell Cordula". When she came to visit her sister, she usually called on the neighbours as well for a little chat.

This Mamsell Cordula often took my wife's mother, then still a child at school, to the castle. There, the Mamsell showed her how to do light tasks. These occasions gave her childish eyes the opportunity to view the relationship between the owners and the servants who lived at the castle and also to see how things were done in every area. All this made a deep impression on the mind of the child. However, she really enjoyed doing the new and varied tasks that were entrusted to her.

²⁹⁷ ASDS E-80-1b

In later years, as a mother of children, she often told them about her experiences at the castle. She liked to speak about the following: "The male and female servants took their meals together in the large servants' hall. They all arrived there in good time for these. After the first course was served up, the head servant took the bread knife in his hand and banged its handle on the board of the long oak table as a sign for the table prayer to follow. All those present were expected to participate and to pray out loud. In those days, the bread was baked in loaves weighing 12 pounds each. Slices of bread were given out by another servant who put on a leather apron to protect his clothing. At the end of the meal, the head servant gave the same sign once more and they said a prayer of thanksgiving together. This was the custom day by day at the morning meal, at the midday meal and at the evening meal as well.

The food was always good and abundant. One of the young baronesses was entrusted with the food preparation and supervision in the kitchen. They changed off on a weekly basis and each baroness had to take her turn at helping in the kitchen and with the preparation of all the food. The Baron and his family took their meals together separately.

On several occasions, my wife's mother stayed at the castle when it became too late in the evening to walk home alone. She slept in one of the tower rooms above the chapel with Mamsell Cordula to look after her.

According to what she said, the Baron was a just man with a strong sense of order who was also a very affable person. Also, even when she was already married, he addressed her only by her Christian name. He expected his employees to work hard and to conform to the Christian spirit of his family. He wanted all those in his employ to give honour to God just as he himself did.

He himself determined the work to be done on the farm each day and he also checked to see what work his people were doing and how they were doing it. Day labourers were usually employed in addition to the servants.

Most of the people living around the castle were known to the Baron personally. He rode out to the fields to see the work for himself and if he met someone he knew he usually stopped to talk

to them. His loud, strong voice could then be heard way over field and grove. Up into his old age, he was the caring and friendly "Lord Baron from and at Myllendonk".

N.B. I will be able to tell you something about the cult of St. Benedict at Castle Myllendonk in the near future, Rev. Mother Avellina. And there is a history attached to that.²⁹⁸

Matthias Weuthen

Matthias Weuthen²⁹⁹

Mönchengladbach-Neuwerk, Dünnerstr. 203

New Year 1958

As you liked my accounts regarding the life of the deceased, I will add a little episode that came into my mind during Christmastide.

It is the custom in this area, as a remembrance of the birth of the Saviour, to construct a reproduction of the Crib. The present-day custom of the Christmas tree was not known to us children. It is true, it was normal in the families of a different faith (Protestants).

At the start of the 1880's, when Baroness von Wüllenweber directed the work at Neuwerk as you know, she put a Christmas tree in the former convent rooms in order to give joy to the orphans who lived in the home. The family Ritters, who were living in the same wing of the building and whose son was an altar server, were also invited. The latter told this to the other altar servers. As they had never experienced such a feast they urged him to get permission from the Baroness for them to take part. The Baroness gave the permission with the request that they should behave themselves properly and all of them agreed to this, of course. Shortly before the end of the feast, which took place with Christmas songs and little prayers, branches of the tree began to burn. The feast day celebration was unpleasantly disturbed as

²⁹⁸ ASDS, E-80-1c

²⁹⁹ ASDS, E-80-2 an account that was included in a letter to S. Avellina Tietz

everyone was trying to put out the growing flames. The Baroness spoke her mind regarding this damage in a clear, articulate way that could not be misunderstood. She blamed the little rascals for deliberately starting the fire.

When the Baroness put up a Christmas tree again the following year, the altar servers did not dare to ask if they could join the celebration. Mrs Ritters kept the room under lock and key and this time they persuaded her to allow them to go in, they wouldn't do anything silly. Mrs R. let herself be convinced on condition that the boys hid under the table where the Christmas was standing and caused no trouble and they promised to do this.

The celebration had hardly reached its high point when, all at once, branches of the tree began to burn. "The little rascals are not here and the tree is burning nevertheless," one heard the Baroness call out in shock. Mrs Ritters was worried but the wrongdoers, the same group of little rascals again, were able to escape during the ensuing confusion without being seen by the Baroness. So it was that this celebration ended before time as well. The little rascals found no opportunity to repeat their tricks once more. Even Mrs Ritters lost the inclination to continue taking on herself the not too gentle reprimands given by the Baroness.

Years ago, one of the boys involved in this incident told me about it himself. He is no longer living.

[...]

Matthias Weuthen

Baroness Adolfine von Böselager³⁰⁰

Verbal account written down in a letter from S. Leonarda Merkel



Unmarried daughter of
Mother Mary's sister Fanny
and Max von Böselager
Born 1868 - Died 1941

Berlin, October 26, 1940

Dear Reverend Mother Provincial Superior!

[...] All the people of 70 years and over know and remember Therese – as she was generally known.

There now follows what the niece of Rev. Mother, Baroness von Böselager told me: (In the account, I call our deceased Rev. Mother – Therese)

After her mother died, Therese went to church at Neuwerk every morning at 5 o'clock, walking $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour along the field-path. Her father was not supposed to know this. Therese was 25 years old when her mother died. She always held herself extremely upright when sitting, walking or standing. She never complained or talked about it if there were problems or annoyances – only her nose wrinkled, and others could know from this that something displeased her.

One saw nothing of make-up or finery. She was very reserved and her clothing almost conspicuously simple. One remembers that one of her cousins invited her to dance on one occasion but,

³⁰⁰ ASDS, E - 81

because she could not [dance], it seems that he swung her around a couple of times and then took her back to her place again.

I have marked Therese's residence on the newspaper cutting. She mostly kept herself to herself there and was also said to have prayed a lot there. – She didn't involve herself much in the housekeeping; she helped her father with the written work. She kept several canaries, loved art, had high ideals, played the piano.

Adolfine von Böselager openly said that she had never seen Therese agitated – she was always quiet and calm; therefore her father got on so well with her. On the other hand, Therese was not so friendly. Baroness Adolfine doesn't remember that Aunt Therese ever brought her something or gave her a present.

When another little daughter arrived at Castle Myllendonk, the father said: "A female once again."

Lord von Wüllenweber once shot a hare and told Therese to tell the servant to fetch it. Therese then said that she could do that herself, but she hid the hare under her skirt, then all the dogs ran after her because they smelt it. – Another time, when her sister had boiled 10 eggs and put them on one side, they quickly disappeared and she then went in search of them and also asked Therese: "Have you taken my eggs?" "Did I take the eggs away?" said Therese in surprise. "Oh, they were already boiled," said her sister. At that Therese said: "They are boiled?" and pulled the 10 eggs out of her pocket; she had intended to put them under the broody hen.

Another tale from her childhood, which is not so nice, it is true, but as it was told to me I will also write everything to you, dear Rev. Mother Provincial. They had a teacher at the castle, one who did not live there. He went home after the lessons. Little Therese, she was 7 or 8 years old, put a silver spoon in the teacher's coat pocket. Quite innocently, the teacher left for home and not more than ten minutes later Therese ran after him to say: "A silver spoon is missing from our house." No one ever found out it was Therese and only her sister Fanny knew about it (she was the mother of the story teller who had told her children and so Baroness von Böselager came to know it.)

It is said that when Therese was already Superior General and was once staying at Castle Myllendonk, the Rev. Mother at times also put her nieces to the test. Once, Adolfine was to go to church with Rev. Mother, a $\frac{3}{4}$ hour walk and it was summer. Adolfine had to put an umbrella up and hold it high above Rev. Mother. This tickled Adolfine immensely and she had such an urge to laugh that she almost bit her tongue, for she knew she had to stifle the laughter.

Baroness Adolfine also had to take letters from Rev. Mother to the post-box during her visit to Castle Myllendonk – it was a $\frac{3}{4}$ of a hour walk and sometimes she was to do this two or three times a day. At this, her sister Fanny said: “Now, listen, Adolfine cannot go this long way so often.” Rev. Mother is reported as saying: “I am used to doing that.” – However, Adolfine was only allowed to go once.

I do not know whether all of this account is of importance, at all events everything helps one understand our Rev. Mother better. She had a strong, manly character; sentimentality and emotionality were foreign to her.

It is said that an artist seriously courted her once – she did not want to get married – and there the matter stopped.

Some nieces of Rev. Mother are still living in Münster. Maybe you can send someone there. Here is the address: Baroness von Ascheberg, Münster in Westphalia, Schützenstrasse 10.

One should still find out something from her time as a boarder. Is it known that she was in another convent? – Baroness Adolfine no longer remembers how long. When she was asked why she had left, she responded: “I expected something different.” One could find out something there, at least the testimonials are available.

That concludes the report of Baroness Adolfine von Böselager. [...] I hope that dear Rev. Mother is content with these modest results. Please would you let me know if everything has arrived safely.

With many sincere wishes, dear Rev. M. Prov. Superior,
in the love of the Queen of the Rosary

your obedient
S. Leonarda

Additional Information from S. Leonarda:

This niece knew our dear Rev. Mother the most. She is 72 years old and lives in House Menters in Korschenbroich. (I sent a view to the Rev. Novice Mistress.) Everything contained in the letter was told by her. The Baroness lives in simple, almost poor, circumstances.

Rev. Mother wrote in the diary of this niece:

“The heart of Christianity is in Rome –
in the Divine Saviour is the best centre for us.
Dear Adolfine, pray for your aunt.”

Baroness Elisabeth von Wüllenweber³⁰¹

Daughter of Fanny and Max von Böselager
married to Hugo von Wüllenweber

Myllendonk, November 13, 1933

Ven. Sister Superior,

Today, Sister Hedwig is visiting us, and since we have just received new postcards of Myllendonk, published by the Kunstanstalt Kühlen, we would like to send you three different photographs. My aunt Therese lived in the 2nd floor of the large tower, in which is, downstairs, the chapel, and in the 3rd floor, where the small windows are, she had for years a breeding place for canaries. In the first floor there are even today rooms for visitors. I think that the pictures bring you some little joy.

With devoted greetings,

Your
Baroness von Wüllenweber

³⁰¹ ASDS, E-82; Elisabeth 1865-1940, Hugo v.Ww. 1865-1910

Antonius Nemes ³⁰²
Titular Bishop, Papal Prelate

Testimony

The undersigned hereby testifies that I knew Rev. Mother Mary of the holy Apostles, the Baroness von Wüllenweber, personally. In the years 1904, 1905, 1906, in the company of the now deceased Rev. Auxiliary Bishop of Esztergom, Dr. Kohl Medárd, I repeatedly visited the Motherhouse of the Salvatorian Sisters in Rome which was then in the Salita Sant'Onofrio. On these occasions I found her to be a pious religious sister and Superior General, her modest behaviour and union with God was touching and edifying.

I visited her in December 1907 when she was sick in bed where, through her resigned, patient suffering, she showed amazing strength of courage and great love of God.

She always gave the impression of a mother superior who was close to God, one graced with higher talents and an unusually saintly personality.

I am pleased to give this testimony at the request of the Rev. Provincial Superior, Mother Hilaria Poetsch.

Mariabesnyö, September 7, 1940

Antonius Nemes
Titular Bishop, Papal Prelate

³⁰² ASDS, E-77

Glossary

Accusation

This was a public confession made in the refectory or at a chapter of faults, of failures against convent discipline. It was practiced either as a voluntary act of penance or, at times, imposed as a penance / punishment.

Affable

At that time, this term was used to indicate that a person of higher rank had a sympathetic understanding of other persons and put him/herself on the same level when speaking to them.

Atonement

The idea of wanting to make up to God for the offensive and evil doings of other people. The reasoning behind this lay in the old theological idea that God had to be appeased and prevented from giving punishment through special efforts of mankind. This is not compatible with the theology of the “unconditional love of God” and the compassion God bestows on mankind.

Candidature / Candidate

The first stage of religious formation which follows immediately after entrance to the Congregation. A person in this stage of formation is called a candidate.

Chapter (General, Provincial Chapter)

Prescribed by church law, this is a special and important meeting of the sisters which belongs to religious life and is obligatory for the members elected to participate.

Chapter Address

At that time, a weekly address given by the superior at a chapter of faults in order to encourage and strengthen the sisters in the spiritual life and also, on occasion, to reprimand and lead the way back to the Rule and the Gospel.

Chapter of Faults

A regular meeting of the sisters at which the superior gave a spiritual exhortation (cf. chapter address) after which the individual sisters accused themselves of failures against religious discipline. (cf. accusation).

Commissary

At that time, this was a sister, who was given definite powers of inspection and direction in a certain area of the Congregation. She was authorised by the General Superior and acted on behalf of her.

Constitutions cf. Rule

Council meeting

Regular meeting of a superior and her elected councillors to discuss and decide regarding matters of administration.

Cross

Under this term is understood the suffering, sickness and difficulties which come through no fault of one's own, as well as need and persecution which may occur in life. They should be accepted and borne without complaint or grumbling, keeping in mind the suffering and cross carried by Jesus Christ who "through His Cross redeemed the world."

Even though, in our eyes, the 19th century was inclined to exaggerate in this regard, and sometimes even to "search out suffering", the Sisters, in their statements speak of that *saying-yes* to the events of everyday life which believes in a loving God even in difficulties and goes with Him through suffering.

Enduring hunger and thirst

cf. mortification; in convents at that time, it was not permitted to eat or drink outside the normal mealtimes in order to practice the spirit of penance.

Fasting

Abstinence or restrictions in regard to food, drink, dancing and other pleasures. The rules regarding fasting were very strict up to the second Vatican Council and were scrupulously observed by Catholics.

Founder

The person, or persons, who stand at the beginning of a religious Order or Congregation. They seek to win persons for the charism gifted to them by God in order to share this divine vocation with them and, in correspondence with it, to work in the Church for the kingdom of God.

In the accounts of this book, the term "Founder" always means Fr. Francis Jordan; Mother Mary is sometimes referred to as "Co-Foundress".

General Chapter

A meeting of Religious delegated by the various Units of the Congregation for the purpose of electing the Superior General and his/her council and of setting the direction for the Congregation for the following years, and thereby also for the new General Administration.

Humility

An attitude in which one's own self with its gifts and limitations is gratefully accepted with trust in God. This implies standing before God in this reality and in love and - on the same level as all other persons and with them - to be of service to the will of God and the coming of His kingdom.

Unsound type: the so-called "humpbacked humility" when seemingly humble outward actions do not correspond with the interior disposition and then take on exaggerated or even unhealthy aspects.

Investment

The giving of the religious habit, which normally took place at the start of the novitiate.

“Kulturkampf”

A period in Germany when the Church in Catholic areas opposed the discrimination and even oppression by the State which sought to unify the Catholic Church with that of the Protestants and, above all, to separate it from Rome. The so-called “Kulturkampf” actually continued throughout the entire nineteenth century but reached its climax from 1870 onward (Dogma of Papal Infallibility), e.g. it resulted in many laws against the Church and also led to the suppression or emigration of religious orders during these years. It gradually subsided after 1880 when the State abandoned the polarization of Catholics and Protestants at the start of the struggle against the Socialists and sought agreement with the new Pope Leo XIII who was ready to talk with them.

Love of the Cross

The readiness to accept and carry without complaint the daily “Cross” in union with Jesus Christ who, for the human race, took suffering and the cross upon himself.

Mistress

The sister responsible for religious formation in its various stages: candidate mistress, postulant mistress, novice mistress.

Mortification/Self-conquest

The practice of abandoning pleasure, gratification, convenience, satisfaction, etc., in order to free self from subjection to the ego, pride, sensuality, and human respect and to give absolute priority to the deepest aims of Christian life: God and the coming of His Kingdom.

Novitiate/Novice

A period of intensive introduction into religious life, which precedes the profession of vows. During this time, a sister is known as a novice (lat. “the new one”)

Particular friendship

An overdone attachment to an individual sister is forbidden in convents as this goes against love of all the others and gives room to, and cultivates, antipathy and sympathy in community. The value of real friendship was not sufficiently recognised at that time.

Penance

In a specifically Christian sense, the word penance designates the gift God has given to humanity of a correct relationship in attitude and action against sin. It contains two "movements" which are different in character: the renunciation of sin (one's own sin and sin in general) and the active correspondence to that which God desires. [...]

(according to: Vorgrimmler, Neues Theologisches Wörterbuch, 2000, p. 106)

Penitential tap

A form of gaining an indulgence in St. Peter's and the other principal churches of Rome: A person knelt outside a confessional and the priest sitting in it touched the head of that person with a long rod; this was connected with the gaining of an indulgence.

Postulancy/Postulant

The stage in religious formation which precedes acceptance into the novitiate. A person in this stage of formation is called a postulant.

Poverty

According to the religious vow of poverty, the following of Christ in a simple and unpretentious life in order to free oneself from attachment to material goods and to share these with everyone, especially the poor and disadvantaged. "Being content with what is given" was seen and practiced as being an important virtue.

Practices of penance

In the religious tradition of Christianity, various usages developed out of which an attitude of penance concretised: reconciliation through listening to the Word of God; works of reparation; works of charity; acknowledgement of one's own mistakes; "mortification",

“renunciation”, “works of penance”; reconciliation through the sacraments of the Church: baptism, Eucharist, confession, anointing of the sick. (according to: Vorgrimmler cf. penance)

In the concrete lived spirituality of the Orders, practices of penance arose over the course of time which were intended to free persons from centering on self, e.g. concern about one’s own ego, and lead toward trust in God and union with Him:

- **Hair shirt**
A rough shirt worn to irritate the skin for the purpose of counteracting softness of any kind.
- **Nail board**
A small board used to give oneself pain.
- **Penance girdle**
A practice, originating in the Middle Ages, of wearing around the body a girdle which caused pain in order to bear this out of love for God and in union with the Crucified.
- **Penance table**
A convent practice of eating a meal in the refectory while kneeling at a small, low table in order to humiliate oneself - either as a self-chosen penance or as an imposed one.
- **Scourge**
A bundle of cords bearing hard knots used to beat oneself for the purpose of bodily mortification.

Prayer practices

Obligatory for Salvatorian Sisters at that time:

Morning prayer, the *Hours of the Mother of God* (i.e. Marian Office, also called *Officium Parvum*: Matins, Lauds, Sext, Vespers, Compline), meditation, Holy Mass, examination of conscience, the Angelus, rosary, meditation on death; also devotions, above all Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the Way of the Cross and weekly confession.

Profession

The making of religious vows of poverty, chastity and obedience according to the Rule of a particular Congregation which leads to membership of the same; "temporary profession" is made for a set length of time and is renewable, the so-called "final profession" [or perpetual vows] is made for ever.

Provincial superior

In 1929, the Congregation of the Sisters of the Divine Saviour was divided into provinces. The superior of a province is known as a Provincial Superior and according to Canon Law she, as well as the Superior General, belongs to the "Higher Superiors" who possess defined authority in regard to persons and the administration of a province.

Punishment

Arising from the practice in general, it was also customary in convents to impose a penalty for wrong behaviour in order to make amends and to aim at improvement. Punishments included the penance table and accusations, eating while standing, but also withdrawal of advantages and amenities, the carrying out of particular works, etc.

Recreation

A time of relaxation together for the sisters for which the rule of silence was lifted.

Refectory

Convent diningroom.

Rule

The Founder/Foundress of a religious order institutes a way of life for it which is laid down in the Rule and a member accepts this as an obligation at profession.

Scapular

A piece of material thrown over the shoulders extending over the front and back of a religious habit. (lat. scapulare, shoulder cloth).

A smaller version of this, worn by oblates, members of the various

third orders, etc., consists of two small squares of woollen material which are attached to a piece of tape and hang down to chest level.

Self-contempt/Contempt

of mortification. This does not mean the despising of one's own "self", but withdrawal from the ego which pushes into the foreground in unsuitable manner before God and others. So that this would be averted from the beginning, practices came about in the 19th century which seem strange to us; one disparaged oneself, made oneself a laughing stock in front of others etc., in order to prevent pride, egoism or human respect placing an obstacle to the working of God's Spirit in oneself.

Self-sacrifice

The readiness to put aside one's own will and one's own convenience for the sake of others and the kingdom of God.

Self-sanctification/Sanctification

The striving for an ever greater sanctity, e.g. conformity to Christ, in which a person becomes ever more open to the Holy Spirit and, for the sake of the gospel, seeks to overcome and let go the ego, pride, self-will and inclination to dominate. The objective is to become holy/whole in order to be an instrument available to carry out God's purpose for the individual; to be ready for the Salvatorian mission.

Silence

A spiritual practice which is known to all religions. This silence is an inward listening, a being aware of the presence of God and wanting to remain in His presence in order to let oneself be led by his voice and be formed by Him.

During the day, the Salvatorian Sisters kept the "religious silence" during which necessary things might be spoken and the "great/strict silence" which was observed from Compline in the evening until after breakfast the following morning.

Normally, silence was observed in convents at mealtimes except when, on feastsdays and for special events, the superior would give the so-called "greeting" (Praised be Jesus Christ...) which lifted the silence.

Spirit of sacrifice

The readiness to accept difficulties and inconveniences out of love for God.

Spiritual director

The name for a priest who, during or outside confession, accompanied a person along her spiritual path in a way similar to that of the spiritual directors of today.

Suffering cf. Cross

General Superior

The highest superior in the Congregation.

Visitor

A person officially empowered by the Church to make an arranged inspection of an institution.

STUDIA DE HISTORIA SALVATORIANA

A Series of Studies and Documentation
on Salvatorian History

1 BIOGRAPHIES

1.0 Short Biographies

1.1 Detailed Biographies (Monographs)

1.2 Studies on several life-periods

2 PERSONAL WRITINGS

3 WITNESSES AND VENERATION

4 PERSONS IN SALVATORIAN HISTORY

5 RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN SALVATORIAN HISTORY

6 PLACES IN SALVATORIAN HISTORY

7 STUDIES REGARDING THE SPIRIT OF THE SDS

8 INDIVIDUAL STUDIES

9 FOUNDATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SDS

10 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND