From Mary Ward (1585-1645) to Michael (Frances) Corcoran (1846-1927): The Educational Legacy of the Loreto Order

Elaine Mc Donald

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From Mary Ward (1585-1645) to Michael (Frances) Corcoran (1846-1927): The Educational Legacy of the Loreto Order

Elaine Mc Donald
M. Rel. Sc.

Supervisor: Kevin Williams Ph.D.
School of Education

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DECLARATION

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Ph.D. is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed: Elaine Mc Donald

ID No: 5418 0091

Date: 3rd October 2008

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Finally this dissertation is dedicated to the students and staff of the Mary Ward School in Rumbek, South Sudan. A new beginning in the history of Mary Ward's Institute.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

From Mary Ward (1585-1645) to Michael (Frances) Corcoran (1846-1927): The Educational Legacy of the Loreto Order

Elaine Mc Donald

This research firstly focuses on a Yorkshire woman, Mary Ward (1585-1645), who founded the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Loreto Sisters) in 1609. Ward believed that she was mandated by God to adopt the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus for women. Such a move openly challenged the constraints placed on women and proved too novel for the ecclesiastical authorities; in 1631 she was arrested and imprisoned on a charge of heresy and her Institute was suppressed.

Despite the suppression the Institute survived. An anomaly existed whereby schools and convents of the Institute were being founded yet, because of the Papal decree, *Quamvis iusto* (1749), the members of Mary Ward's Institute, were prohibited from recognising Ward as foundress. Secondly, the dissertation seeks: to explore the anomaly whereby Loreto schools were founded in Ireland (1821) yet the memory of the foundress was suppressed; to investigate the extent to which the foundation of Loreto schools in Ireland was prompted by a distinctive vision for women's education; to examine how the memory of Mary Ward survived in Ireland, through the educational enterprise of the Loreto Sisters, with particular reference to Michael Frances Corcoran (1846-1927).

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIR	Archives of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Rathfarnham
AIY	Archives of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, York
ASRI	Archivum Romanum Societatis Jesu
CJ	Congregation of Jesus
DDA	Dublin Diocesan Archives

A NOTE ON TERMS USED

Female Religious
The term "nun" and "sister" have distinct meanings: nuns take solemn vows and are enclosed while sisters take simple vows and are not enclosed. This dissertation will not apply a strict distinction given that a number of sources use these terms interchangeably. The term "female religious" or "women religious" will also be used in the course of this dissertation.

Foundress
This will be used with the upper case "F" to distinguish Mary Ward from subsequent Institute foundresses such as Teresa Ball.

Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary/Loreto Sisters
The term "Loreto Sisters" is used to describe the members of the Irish foundation of Mary Ward's Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Congregation of Jesus (CJ)/IBVM
In 2004 the Roman Branch of Mary Ward's Institute adopted the name *Congregation of Jesus* in accordance with their conviction that it was Ward's original intention to include the name of Jesus in the original title for the Institute. The abbreviated form "CJ" appears in occasional footnotes.

INTRODUCTION

The research question - its origin and development

The question which initiated this research was rooted in the contemporary experience of Loreto education. It was concerned with the examination of the influence of Ward's charism in the eighteen voluntary; five community (second level) and seven primary schools for which Loreto Sisters exercise trustee responsibility in Ireland today. The mission statement that expresses the particular task of Loreto trusteeship states: "Holding in trust the gift of Mary Ward's distinctive vision, we undertake trusteeship of the Loreto enterprise of education now and into the future".[1] This statement prompted a further question and this concerned the nature of Ward's "distinctive vision".

The term implies that there is something unique in the Loreto educational enterprise and that furthermore, this uniqueness is inspired by the vision of Ward herself. In order to test these claims an important task had to be undertaken and this would mean returning to the source of the vision: Ward herself. Since the research is concerned with investigating the point of origin of the Loreto ethos it became a historical, rather than a contemporary inquiry.

In this historical inquiry a problematic development in the evolution of Ward's vision came to the fore. The Yorkshire woman's innovations proved to be so novel that in 1631, her Institute was suppressed by the Catholic Church and Ward was imprisoned as a heretic. Although her Institute would survive, those who joined her enterprise were, by papal decree, prohibited from acknowledging Ward as Foundress. This prohibition lasted until 1909.

The effects of this prohibition were particularly evident in a statement made by Teresa Ball, the foundress of the Irish branch of Ward's Institute, when she stated in a letter to another member: "I never was informed of the merits of Mary Ward".[2] This statement reflects the strange anomaly that existed for Loreto schools in Ireland

[1] Loreto Education Trust, 'Supporting Loreto Education ' (Dublin: Loreto Education Office), 2007.

[2] Letter from Teresa Ball to Angela Browne (superior at the Bar Convent York) 9th January 1849 AIY2/C1/13.

whereby schools of Ward's Institute were founded yet the members had no knowledge of Ward herself. In the light of this extraordinary circumstance the research undertaken in this dissertation seeks to examine the impact of the imposed amnesia that prevented the Loreto Sisters from claiming the inheritance of their Foundress.

The question underlying this research concerns the manner in which the intervention made by the Catholic hierarchy in the history of Ward's Institute prevented subsequent generations from implementing the more innovative plans of the Foundress particularly with regard to women's education.

In order to explore this question the dissertation will focus on three key areas. Firstly, it will outline the distinctive character of Ward's enterprise which was particularly concerned with the education of women. Secondly, it will investigate the reasons which gave rise to the Church's prohibition on the recognition of Ward as Foundress. Thirdly, it will investigate the impact of the troubled history of Ward's legacy on the Irish Loreto educational enterprise in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. By attending to these three levels of inquiry a number of conclusions can be made which will respond to the question outlined above.

An overview of the chapters

The task of the first chapter is to identify the ecclesiastical and historical context which gave rise to Ward's innovative ideas on women's education. It will focus in particular on Ward's Yorkshire background. The chapter will posit the view that Ward's first hand experience of the activity of recusant women made a significant impact on her appreciation of the need for well educated women in society and the Church.

Allied to this, the chapter will begin to identify the obstacles that would eventually become insurmountable for Ward's plans. In looking to a rule on which to base her religious foundation and its educational enterprise Ward chose one of the most successful religious orders of the sixteenth century: the Society of Jesus. In her efforts to adopt the rules and manner of life of the Jesuits, she was rejecting a fundamental condition of religious life for women: enclosure. In pursuing her efforts

to establish a role for women beyond the confines of the cloister or the home, Ward would come into direct conflict with the Church. By investigating the point of origin of Ward's plans, the chapter will provide an important background from which to consider the developments which led to the problematical legacy of her innovative vision.

Having established the founding spirit that gave rise to Ward's enterprise, the second chapter will seek to establish the extent to which this enterprise can be described as original or innovative. In order to achieve this task the chapter will attempt to situate Ward's enterprise in the context of the provision made for women's education in the seventeenth century. This contextual analysis will suggest that the hallmarks of a well educated seventeenth century woman were measured in terms of her ability to apply herself to pious devotions and needle work. An examination of Ward's plans for her Institute reflect many of the key elements of the curriculum thought appropriate for a women's education. There is however, one significant departure in Ward's plans and this was the inclusion of Latin in her curriculum. The inclusion of this subject emerged from her conviction in the need for a more rigorous intellectual training that would, in turn, enable women to take a more active role in the society and church of her time.

As well as considering Ward's efforts in the broader social and historical context, her efforts must also be considered within the ecclesiastical context. Ward was not alone in her efforts to pursue an educational apostolate that was not confined to the cloister. The congregation of the Ursulines Sisters for example, whose foundation preceded Ward's, bore a striking resemblance to her enterprise. This chapter will argue however that, unlike Ward, the Ursulines understood that if their enterprise was to survive they would have to accept some form of compromise. For the Ursulines the compromise came in the form of cloister. Ward's refusal to accept the imposition of cloister thus distinguished her educational enterprise. On the other hand, the chapter will conclude by suggesting that Ward's inability to negotiate the ecclesiastical boundaries within which she operated would cost her the success of her enterprise.

The third chapter examines the nature of the opposition that was levelled against Ward's enterprise. Chief among the opponents were the Jesuits themselves. They

believed that the efforts made by a woman to adopt their rule and manner of life were undermining the status and credibility that consolidated their powerful position in the social and ecclesiastical world of the seventeenth century. Most vehement of all, however, was the opposition of the English clergy. They were motivated by the animosity that they felt towards the Jesuits whose success on the English mission field was a thorn in the side for the English clergy. The clergy viewed Ward's Institute as providing the means through which they could carry out a most damning attack on the Jesuits' enterprise and reputation. As a result Ward became caught between two powerful adversaries.

In examining the evidence which was levelled against the Institute the study will illustrate the fact that the attacks were directed as much at Ward herself as they were at her enterprise. In other words, questions were raised about the Foundress' moral reputation. Although the evidence points to the fact that these allegations were spurious it is also the case that no defence was offered on Ward's behalf. Her apparent silence is explained by the fact that she herself was unaware of the extent of the allegations that were finding a receptive audience in the ecclesiastical circles of the Roman Church. As well as investigating the evidence that was presented against Ward this chapter will seek to establish the veracity of the accusations made by her opponents that had such a devastating effect on her legacy.

The fourth chapter will reconstruct the events which led to the suppression of Ward's Institute in 1631. In her efforts to acquire the requisite papal approval for her enterprise Ward had to negotiate with the powerful Congregatio de Propaganda Fide. The evidence points to the fact that the Cardinals who were deciding on the merits of her case were in receipt of the accusations that were being made against her, particularly by the English clergy. In the light of this situation, it would appear as though Ward's petitions stood little chance of success. In order to support this claim this chapter will draw on the work of the Jesuit historian Josef Grisar. His research presents a comprehensive picture of the levels of ecclesiastical intrigue and subterfuge that were at work against Ward's enterprise.

Up to now the research has focused on the damage that was done to Ward by those outside her Institute who were motivated by the desire to undermine her enterprise.

Thanks to the work of the Institute historian, Immolata Wetter, a more balanced picture is available that presents another angle on the events leading up to the suppression of the Institute. Her research on the Inquisition files, which was published in 2006, suggests that actions taken by Ward herself may have been responsible for hastening the suppression of the Institute. Wetter's investigation provides a significant contribution to contemporary scholarly research on Ward. Its inclusion in this chapter is intended to present a more balanced picture of the events preceding the suppression of the Institute and the imprisonment of Ward as a heretic.

The task of the fifth chapter is to begin to examine the implications of the prohibition on the recognition of Ward as foundress. This prohibition was issued by Papal decree (*Quamvis iusto*) in 1749. In examining the implications of this prohibition two key figures come to the fore: Elizabeth Coyney (1759-1826) and Teresa Ball (1794-1861). Coyney was superior at the Bar Convent when Teresa Ball, foundress of Loreto in Ireland, completed her education and novitiate there. Alarmed by the news of the papal prohibition, and fearing for the fate of her community, Coyney did everything in her power to destroy anything which would connect the Bar Convent to Mary Ward. As a consequence, Teresa Ball would never hear of Ward or of the innovative plans that inspired the foundation of the Institute of which Ball herself was a member.

In 1821, Ball returned to Ireland to establish a foundation of the Institute in Dublin. This foundation became known as "Loreto" and was used in all subsequent foundations. As well as a new name, the Irish foundation had a "new" history. As this chapter will illustrate, an erroneous version of the Institute's origins arrived on Irish shores. Ward was quite simply written out of the picture. This chapter will argue that, because the Loreto Sisters were separated from the original founding vision, the education that they provided for Irish women was marked by conservatism rather than innovation. Where Ward's enterprise challenged the status quo, the argument this chapter will make is that Ball's enterprise consolidated it.

By the early years of the twentieth century new opportunities were emerging for women in the educational landscape. The sixth chapter examines the response of the Loreto Sisters to these opportunities. In an effort to investigate this response the third successor to Teresa Ball, Frances Michael Corcoran (1846-1927), comes to centre

stage. Unlike Ball, Corcoran recognised Ward as the true Foundress of the Institute. Corcoran proved herself to be one of the most progressive and innovative leaders the Institute has known. This chapter considers the way in which she equipped the Sisters under her leadership to respond to the changing educational environment of women's education. It will pay particular attention to second level/intermediate education but it will also highlight the significant efforts made by the Loreto Sisters to establish a role for themselves in women's higher education. Allied to this, the chapter will present the narrow ecclesiastical boundaries within which the Loreto Sisters had to operate. The argument will be made that these boundaries inhibited their more progressive initiatives.

The research undertaken for this chapter has uncovered fresh archival evidence. This evidence, found in the archive of the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin and dating from the early 1900s, consists of a large volume of letters written by the Loreto Sisters to Archbishop William Walsh. The letters were written in opposition to Corcoran's plans to return to Ward's original founding vision by uniting the Irish branch with other Institute branches. They are significant for this study because they give a clear indication of Corcoran's allegiance to Mary Ward. They also reflect the fact that for key figures in the Irish branch Teresa Ball, and not Mary Ward, was considered to be the true foundress of the Institute. The concluding stages of this chapter considers the impact of Corcoran's efforts to return to the Ward's founding vision which had enormous implications not just for her own leadership but also for her ongoing engagement in the issues facing the Loreto educational enterprise.

Primary sources used in this research

This research undertaken in this dissertation is rooted in archival inquiry. Three archives in particular were of fundamental importance to the research: the archives of the Loreto Sisters, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin; the archives of the Dublin (Catholic) Archdiocese in Drumcondra and the archives of the Bar Convent (Congregation of Jesus), Blossom Street, York. Since a great deal of attention is given to these primary sources in the individual chapters of this dissertation, this overview will focus on key issues relating to primary sources rather than offering a detailed summary of individual sources.

In general terms the documentary evidence available in the archives can be categorised into two areas: the official and the unofficial record of the Institute's history. The official record includes the plans for the Institute, records and annals. The unofficial record can be found in the correspondence that remains in the custody of the archives. As part of the official record, the annals recall the various events that occurred within the life of the community. It is interesting to note that in the early years of Loreto Abbey Rathfarnham, Teresa Ball recorded the annals herself and so, in effect Ball had control over the early record of the foundation.[3] This meant that in order to gain a more balanced picture of the events that shaped the educational enterprise a survey of the *unofficial record* had to be undertaken.

The unofficial record is generally found in the letters written by the Sisters to each other, to family members or to members of the clergy or hierarchy. This dissertation makes extensive use of such correspondence since it provides a unique insight into the human story behind the official version of events. The correspondence found in the archive of the Dublin archdiocese is a case in point. These letters indicate the tensions and divisions that existed within religious communities and which, in turn, had significant consequences for the official record.

It is unfortunate however that the Loreto archives retain little by way of documentary evidence from the people at the heart of their educational enterprise: the pupils themselves. No first hand record is available from teachers or pupils of the day to day life of the classroom. This must be regarded as an inherent limitation of the study. On the other hand, the study draws on an interesting source *The Loreto Magazine* (first published in 1895). This was a twice yearly publication written by the pupils and the past pupils of the schools. The magazine offers an interesting perspective on the attitudes and opinions held by the authors. These views are expressed in the articles they submitted for inclusion in the magazine. A selection of the content of the magazine is included in the examination of Loreto education in the late nineteenth and

[3] The biographies written by members of the Institute fall into the same category. Most notable among these are the biographies of Teresa Ball and Michael Corcoran. These biographies were written by Sisters who knew the women and give a very favourable account of their subject. This is understandable given that the intention of the biographers was to emphasise the exemplary lives of their subjects rather than an effort to produce a historical record. Nevertheless this dissertation makes use of these biographies since they give the earliest testimony of the lives of Ball and Corcoran in particular.

early twentieth century. The primary sources were supported by a significant number of secondary sources and a survey of the most significant publications is given below.

Key secondary sources used in this research

As the overview of the chapters indicates the research undertaken in this dissertation can be categorised within two fields: the history of female religious and the history of women's education. In this dissertation these areas are intrinsically connected and this is reflected in the secondary sources used.

One of the most innovative aspects of Ward's plan was her absolute refusal to confine her apostolic enterprise to the confines of the cloister. Two key secondary sources which highlighted the significance of this decision are: Elizabeth Rapley's *The Dévotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France* published in 1990[4] and Laurence Lux-Sterritt's, *Redefining Female Religious Life: French Ursulines and English Ladies in Seventeenth-Century Catholicism* published in 2005.[5] Both authors examine the evolution and development of a religious congregation that bore a striking resemblance to Ward's Institute: the Ursuline Sisters. In general terms Rapley's work considers the impact of the Catholic Church's insistence on cloister as a condition of female religious life. Her study of the Ursuline Sisters in particular provided a very useful example of the consequences of cloister for seventeenth century female religious. In her research Lux-Sterritt compares the educational enterprise of Ward's Institute and that of the Ursuline Sisters. This comparison highlights the reasons for the success of the Ursuline Sisters. The argument is made that the Ursulines' ability to negotiate the ecclesiastical boundaries within which they were forced to operate ensured the survival of their enterprise. Ward, on the other hand, refused to accept any form of compromise and the consequences of this refusal provide the subject matter for much of this dissertation.

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[4] E. Rapley, *The Dévotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France* (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990).

[5] L. Lux-Sterritt, *Redefining Female Religious Life: French Ursulines and English Ladies in Seventeenth-Century Catholicism* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2005).

From an Irish perspective, this study has benefited from the challenge issued to researchers by Margaret MacCurtain in 1995 when she states: "We need to hear the voices of women religious, the self which is no longer annalist but the *subject* of the testimony".[6] One scholar in particular had already begun this task. Caitriona Clear's seminal work *Nuns in Nineteenth Century Ireland* published in 1987 ploughed a new furrow of rich academic scholarship.[7] Clear applied rigorous academic scholarship to her analysis of the contribution of female religious to the Church and society of the nineteenth century. Her investigation pays particular attention to the control exercised by the local hierarchy over the enterprise of female religious. This theme is taken up at a number of stages in this dissertation and the investigation into the enterprise of the Loreto Sisters in Ireland appears to support Clear's thesis.

Just over ten years later in a work entitled *The Transforming Power of the Nuns* Magray questions the extent to which religious women were controlled by the hierarchy, emphasising instead the attempts made by female religious to exercise autonomy and control over their own enterprise.[8] Magray argues that the ability of female religious to effect change on the social and religious landscape of nineteenth century Ireland had been underestimated in previous scholarly research. The evidence available through the primary sources used in this study shows that, although women religious made notable attempts to circumvent the control and authority of local bishops, it was difficult to do anything of significance without their approval. The final chapter of this dissertation gives a different perspective from the emphasis Magray places on the autonomy of female religious.

In more recent years Maria Luddy has made a significant contribution to the field of women's history. Her research on female philanthropy in particular provides a fresh perspective from which to consider the contribution of female religious in the

[6] M. MacCurtain, '"Late in the Field": Catholic Sisters in Twentieth Century Ireland and the New Religious History', M. O'Dowd and S. Wichert (eds.) *Chattel, Servant or Citizen: Women's Status in Church, State and Society* (Belfast, Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University Press, 1995), p. 43.

[7] C. Clear, *Nuns in Nineteenth Century Ireland* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1987).

[8] M.P. Magray, *The Transforming Power of the Nuns: Women, Religion and Cultural Change in Ireland, 1750-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

nineteenth century.[9] Luddy considers the development and evolution of convents to be a turning point in female philanthropy in Ireland. The argument made by Luddy is that the enterprise of female religious institutionalised philanthropy and removed it from the enterprise of Catholic lay women. This study extends that argument by suggesting that the Loreto Sisters acceptance of cloister worked not just against the society they sought to serve but against the Sisters themselves. By confining their work to the cloister, female religious were removed from the public domain and their engagement with the world was less critical than it otherwise might have been. This is a theme that is given more detailed treatment in the concluding stages of this study.

In her research on the educational enterprise of the Irish Dominican Sisters, Maire M. Kealy makes extensive use of convent and diocesan archives.[10] In the course of her investigation she brings to the fore the somewhat ambivalent relationship between the Loreto and Dominican Sisters. When it came to education this relationship was defined by competition rather than collaboration. The competition that existed between the two orders was particularly evident in their efforts to establish a role for themselves in the higher education of women. The consequences of this competitive relationship are investigated in this dissertation.

This dissertation has also benefited from the timely publication of two volumes on the history of women's education in Ireland. Published in 2007, *Female Education in Ireland 1700-1900,* edited by Deirdre Raftery and Susan M. Parkes, makes an important contribution to the canon of knowledge on the history of female education in Ireland. As Aine Hyland points out in her foreword to the publication, of particular significance for scholars working in the field is the extensive list, provided by the authors, of relevant primary sources.[11] The authors' treatment of girls' intermediate education and women's higher education were particularly useful for this study and this is reflected in the final chapters of this dissertation.

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[9] M. Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[10] M.M. Kealy, *Dominican Education in Ireland 1820-1930* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007).

[11] D. Raftery and S.M. Parkes, *Female Education in Ireland 1700-1900: Minerva or Madonna* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007), p. xv.

In 2008 Judith Harford's publication, *The Opening of University Education to Women in Ireland*, deals with the controversial question of women's access to higher level education in the twentieth century.[12] Harford's thorough research extends the canon of knowledge on the history of women's education and her work has informed the inquiry undertaken in this dissertation on the contribution made by the Loreto Sisters to women's higher education.

Key secondary sources on the history of Ward's Institute and the Loreto Sisters in particular

Most of the published work on Mary Ward and her Institute has been undertaken by the members of the Institute itself. Such work falls into two categories: firstly narrative accounts of the life of Mary Ward and the foundations of her Institute and secondly more scholarly research on the same subject.

To refer briefly to the first category: the first biography appeared shortly after the death of Mary Ward in 1645. This was *The English Life* written by Mary Poyntz and Winifred Wigmore.[13] In the nineteenth century Mary Catherine Chambers's biography, *The Life of Mary Ward*, provides the first step into archival research and continues to be a seminal text on the life of Ward.[14] Chambers's research is extended in Peters's biography *Mary Ward: A World in Contemplation* published in 1991.[15] This dissertation has benefited greatly from the work of these scholars; their research has facilitated a greater understanding of the personality and character of Mary Ward.

In 1997 Jeanne Cover's doctoral work was published: her research examines the theology and anthropology underlying Ward's spirituality and considers its potential application today.[16] Cover's scholarly work provides a comprehensive analysis of the

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[12] J. Harford, *The Opening of University Education to Women in Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2008).

[13] M. Poyntz and W. Wigmore, 'A Briefe Relation: of the Holy Life and Happy Death of our Dearest Mother of Blessed Memory, Mrs. Mary Ward', Institute Archives, Nymphenburg, ms, [circa 1650].

[14] M.C.E. Chambers, *The Life of Mary Ward (1585-1645)*, H. Coleridge, (ed.) two volumes (London: Burns and Oates, 1882).

[15] H. Peters, *Mary Ward: A World in Contemplation* (1991), trans. H. Butterworth (Herefordshire: Gracewing Publications, 1994).

[16] J. Cover, *Love the Driving Force: Mary Ward's Spirituality Its Significance for Moral Theology* (1997), reprinted (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1998).

influence of Ignatian spirituality on Ward's theological and spiritual insights that are considered in the early stages of this study. In the same year, the fruits of another doctoral work came into the public domain through the publication of Mary Wright's *Mary Ward's Institute: The Struggle for Identity.*[17] Wright's work has been an invaluable source in the efforts made in this study to unravel the complex canonical issues surrounding the evolution and eventual suppression of Ward's Institute.

Before departing from the survey on the literature on Ward herself, three key texts must be referred to. These are Josef Grisar's work *Maria Wards Institut vor römischen Kongregationen (1616-1630)*[18] and Immolata Wetter's work *Mary Ward: Under the Shadow of the Inquisition.*[19] Both scholars investigated the files on Ward's Institute in the archive of the Inquisition. Since these are the only scholars to have had access to the Inquisition files their research occupies a unique position in the canon of knowledge on Ward's Institute. Their rigorous research has enabled this study to present a more comprehensive and accurate picture of the events leading up to the suppression of the Institute and Ward's arrest as a heretic.

In 2007 the mammoth task undertaken by Ursula Dirmeier to bring together all the primary sources pertaining to Ward's Institute resulted in the publication of a four volume work entitled *Mary Ward und ihre Gründung: Die Quellentexte bis 1645.*[20] The availability of the primary sources in their original languages has proved an invaluable resource for this study. The timing of the publication for this study could not have been more fortunate.

Turning specifically to the history of the Loreto Sisters in Ireland, there is little by way of post graduate research. There are two notable exceptions and these come in the form of masters dissertations: 'Founded for the Future: The Educational Legacy of

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[17] M. Wright, *Mary Ward's Institute: The Struggle for Identity* (Sydney: Crossing Press, 1997).

[18] J. Grisar, *Maria Wards Institut vor römischen Kongregationen (1616-1630)*, English translation, I. Corless and P. Griffith, two volumes, *Mary Ward's Institute Before Roman Congregations* Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 1966).

[19] I. Wetter, *Mary Ward: Under the Shadow of the Inquisition 1630-1637*, English translation B.Ganns and P. Harriss (Oxford: Way Books, 2006).

[20] U. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward und ihre Gründung: Die Die Quellentexts bis 1645*, four volumes (Münster: Aschendorff Velag GmbH & Co. KG, 2007).

Mary Ward', by Camilla Roche in 1980[21] and '"Half women are not for our times": A study of the contribution of the Loreto Order to Women's Education in Ireland From 1822-1922', by Breda Rice in 1990.[22] Both studies offer a comprehensive overview of the history of Loreto education in Ireland. In her research Roche refers to the troubled history of Ward's Institute but the research undertaken does not deal with the consequences of this troubled history from an Irish perspective. Rice's thesis provides extensive coverage of the history of Loreto education in Ireland. In common with Roche's earlier work Rice is concerned with describing rather than appraising the contribution of the Loreto Sisters to education in Ireland. In the light of this task, the research undertaken by Rice makes no comment on the effects of the prohibition on the recognition of Ward as Foundress in the Loreto educational enterprise. Both dissertations provide a crucial landmark in determining the shape of the research undertaken in this study. They highlight the task that had yet to be undertaken in examining the historical contribution of Loreto Sisters to women's education in Ireland. This is the examination of the effect on the prohibition on the recognition of Ward as Foundress in the educational enterprise of the Loreto Sisters.

Methodology

In identifying the events that shaped the contribution of the educational legacy of Ward this research has re-examined the autobiographical writings and the personal correspondence of Ward. The investigation pays particular attention to the recusant culture of Yorkshire in order to reconstruct the historical and cultural background that shaped Ward's views on the participation of women in society and in the Catholic Church.

The study has also investigated the contradictory accounts of the events leading up to the suppression of the Institute and the subsequent prohibition on the recognition of Ward as Foundress by comparing the alternative versions of the Institute's history available in the primary and secondary sources.

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[21] C. Roche, 'Founded For the Future: The Educational Legacy of Mary Ward' (M.Ed. Dissertation, Maynooth College, 1980).

[22] B. Rice, '"Half Women are Not for Our Times": A Study of the Contribution of the Loreto Order to Women's Education in Ireland from 1822-1922' (M.Ed. Dissertation, Trinity College Dublin, 1990).

In examining the consequences of the prohibition on the recognition of Ward as Foundress the research pursues the historical inquiry through the lens of two key figures: Teresa Ball and Michael Corcoran. The intention here is not to retell the story of their lives but to re-construct the events, mediated through the lives of these individuals, which shaped the educational enterprise of the Loreto Sisters. The primary sources form the substantive material for this historical inquiry.

Finally, in his foreword to Hyland's and Milne's edited volumes on the Irish educational documents, John Coolahan describes the documents as "emerging from widely varying circumstances, ideologies, endeavours and experiences". This he suggests "adds great variety to the collection but it also entails an effort of historical imagination from the reader to establish empathy with their context".[23] Coolahan's analysis can be aptly applied to the methodological issues that emerge in this dissertation. In order to facilitate the "empathy" described by Coolahan the primary sources are considered within the social, cultural and ecclesiastical context provided by the secondary sources. It is hoped that this method will lead to a lively and engaging conversation.

The place of the researcher within the research

In the article on the role of the storyteller of religious narrative, Terence Copley suggests that the storyteller is not simply the presenter but the "custodian" of the story.[24] I find this analogy most helpful in describing my own role as a researcher on the history of Loreto education. As Copley reminds his reader: "Like the dead for whom the historian speaks, texts are silent".[25] It is the editing, the contextualisation and the interpretation given to a text that brings it to life. By highlighting certain texts for the purposes of this study I have engaged in an editing process. As "custodian" of the story I am conscious of the fact that my research has involved an editing which resulted in the selection of some texts and not others; some biographies and not others, some letters and not others.

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[23] A. Hyland and K. Milne (eds.), *Irish Educational Documents* (two volumes) (Dublin: Church of Ireland College of Education, 1987), vol. 1 'A selection of extracts from documents relating to the history of Irish education from the earliest times to 1922', p. 1.

[24] T. Copley, 'The Power of the Story Teller in Religious Education', [unpublished article, 2008], p. 288.

[25] T. Copley, 'The Power of the Story Teller in Religious Education', p. 288.

This editing, of its nature, will portray the dead in a certain light. Teresa Ball for example was an outstanding leader whose personal charism and authority ensured the foundation and growth of the Loreto Sisters in Ireland as well as in India, Gibraltar, Mauritius and Canada. Yet, given the necessity of selecting a relatively small number of letters from her extant correspondence only certain aspects of her personality will emerge. In a similar fashion the evidence suggests that Elizabeth Coyney had a significant role in the removal of Ward's memory from the Institute; it is difficult to find documentary evidence that might provide another perspective on Coyney's legacy. Ward and Corcoran, on the other hand, emerge as innovative and engaging subjects, yet these women too were not without fault and every effort will be made to preserve them from the realm of hagiography. This is only a preliminary attempt to highlight the limitations of this study: the conclusion of this dissertation will attend to this task in more detail and in the light of these limitations will make recommendations with regard to further areas of research.

I first heard of Mary Ward (1585-1645) as a student in a Loreto second level school in Kilkenny. The year was 1985 and it was the four hundredth anniversary of her birth. Given the significance of this date, there was needless to say, a great deal of attention paid to her life. In the context of the education I received she was presented as a heroic figure whose belief in the contribution of women was mirrored in the ethos of the school I attended. In 1989 I became a member of the Institute she founded. This information is given because it begins to establish my relationship to the subject matter of the research undertaken in this dissertation. It is as, Copley describes it, my effort to make my "telling position" clear.[26] The work that follows seeks to retrieve the untold history of the Loreto Sisters in Ireland from the dominant ecclesiastical, political and cultural ideologies that shaped the official history by returning to the voices of those directly involved, namely the Loreto Sisters themselves.

[26] T. Copley, 'The Power of the Story Teller in Religious Education', p. 296.

Chapter I
THE BIOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF MARY WARD'S PLANS FOR HER INSTITUTE

Writing during the four hundredth anniversary of Mary Ward's birth, Margaret Ordway observes that Ward incurred the risks "inherent in the prophetic".[1] In the writer's view Ward's "prophetic ministry sought a different awareness of the role of women and religious life for women. Her personal longing for change flew in the face of public conviction that was supported by powerful church structures."[2] In Ordway's analysis Ward is presented as a pioneer who sought to oppose the strict parameters prescribed for women by the society and church of her time. A similar opinion is held by Claire Walker who refers to the "tumultuous history of Mary Ward's courageous attempts to carve out an active apostolate in the face of conservative Church reform."[3] Ordway's and Walker's comments indicate the attraction of Ward's life for the contemporary scholar; it not only recalls the case of an apparently revolutionary character, it is also holds an additional attraction in that it turns so heavily on issues of gender.

In the same vein Mary T. Malone claims "[w]hat never fails to intrigue is her courageous integrity in the face of intrigue, hostility and deliberate obfuscation on the part of the church authorities and ecclesiastical enemies."[4] From this perspective, Ward's experience is defined in terms of wrong versus right and the reader is left in no doubt as to which side Ward was on. Ruth Liebowitz, on the other hand, questions the nature of Ward's pioneering activity, or, at the very least qualifies it. Liebowitz maintains that Ward's efforts to ensure that her religious congregation be exempt from male jurisdiction "seem to have been practical rather than ideological".[5] These writers define Mary Ward's contribution in terms of women and the Catholic Church

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[1] M. Ordway, 'Prophecy and Institution', *The Way Supplement 53* (Summer 1985), p. 67.

[2] M. Ordway, 'Prophecy and Institution', p. 67.

[3] C. Walker, *Gender and Politics in Early Modern Europe: English Convents in France and the Low Countries* (Hampshire: Palgrave Mc Millan, 2003), p. 3.

[4] M.T. Malone, *Women and Christianity: [Volume Three] From the Reformation to the 21st Century* (Dublin: The Columba Press, 2003), p. 103.

[5] R.P. Liebowitz, 'Virgins in the Service of Christ: The Dispute over an Active Apostolate for Women During the Counter-Reformation', R. Ruether and Eleanor Mc Laughlin (eds.), *Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (New York: Simon and Schutser, 1979), p. 139.

or women *versus* the Catholic Church. Their critique has a particularly contemporary tone; it examines Ward's legacy from the point of view of gender and more specifically from the point of view of gender equality. There is no doubt that an examination from this perspective is necessary and worthwhile but there is a point of origin that is being neglected. This point of origin concerns Ward's biographical context which, as this investigation will show, had a profound influence on her understanding of the role of women in society and the Church.

Tempting as it might be to look at Ward's legacy from the present day, the real contribution of her endeavours must first of all be understood within the context she inhabited: the seventeenth century. The task of the researcher is to consider her experience *within* the context of the historical events which shaped her life and in so doing document the conditions that defined Ward's contribution to the education of women in the seventeenth century. In order to undertake this task this investigation will begin by paying particular attention to Ward's early life. By attending to Ward's early life the intrinsic relationship between her recusant Yorkshire background and her tenacious belief in the necessity of women's contribution to the Catholic Church in the seventeenth century can be established.[6]

Emerging from this recusant background Ward's vision found particular expression in her desire to promote the education of women. It was Ward's intention that in carrying out this educational enterprise the members of her Institute would not be confined to the cloister. In order to establish the extent to which this aspect of the enterprise can be described as original or novel some attention must be given to the situation of religious women in the seventeenth century. The specific examination of the boundaries imposed on religious women will highlight the innovative nature of Ward's plans. Allied to this, the examination will begin to identify the reasons for the vehement opposition levelled against Ward from the Catholic Church.

As well as prioritising the role of women, the early plans for Ward's Institute are a clear testimony to her desire to emulate the Society of Jesus. An overview of the

[6] The term "recusant" means one who refused to attend the services of the Church of England because of their loyalty to the Catholic faith.

Jesuits' contribution to education will account for the immense attraction of this religious order for Ward's apostolic enterprise and the reasons for her determination to adopt the rule and constitution of the Society of Jesus.

These are the parameters that mark the boundaries of this investigation. In adhering to the direction outlined above, the investigation will begin by looking at the early life of Mary Ward.

The emergence of recusant women within the English Catholic community

In Ward's lifetime the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity (1559) and the subsequent suppression of Catholicism meant that those who continued to practise their Catholic faith faced a precarious existence. Yet Catholics refused to merely exist; on the contrary, many of them did everything in their power to resist the imposition of the Protestant faith, and within this community a particular group was beginning to emerge, recusant women.[7] According to John Bossy many women rejected the Reformation since it placed them at a disadvantage on two levels. Firstly, the emphasis on the Bible as the necessary means for salvation marginalised women who were largely illiterate or who did not share the same educational benefits as their husbands. Secondly, the authority they enjoyed in the privacy of their own homes was eroded since, as Bossy reminds his reader, "a whole sequence of ritual functions had been removed from [women's] jurisdiction by the decline of fasting and abstinence and the desacrilisation of the holydays".[8]

In her work Sisters in Arms Joanne Mc Namara echoes Bossy's view when she describes the consequences of this limited understanding of the role of women within the Reformation: "Lutheran teachings comfortably matched an ongoing trend to privatise women and their labour in a husband headed household".[9] As Martine Sonnet puts it, Catholic women refused to accept the Reformation's notion of "a

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[7] J.C.H. Aveling, 'Catholic Households in Yorkshire 1580-1603' in *Northern History: A Review of the History of the North of England* XVI (1980), pp. 85-101.

[8] J. Bossy, *The English Catholic Community: 1570 -1850* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1975), p. 158.

[9] J.K. McNamara, *Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns Through Two Centuries* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 435.

patriarchal model of the family in which women were subservient to men". [10] In the analysis outlined above, Mc Namara and Bossy suggest that recusant women were motivated by their refusal to accept the limited roles prescribed for them by the Reformation. The allegiance of these recusant women to their Catholic faith was further strengthened by their desire to maintain their role within the ecclesiastical and social order.

Bossy highlights the particular contribution of recusant women when he observes that "to a considerable degree, the Catholic community owed its existence to gentlewomen's dissatisfaction at the Reformation settlement of religion".[11] These recusant women refused to attend Protestant services, harboured Catholic priests and continued to participate in the sacraments of the Catholic Church. Marie Rowlands describes these women as a "distinct group" who required special measures by the state to "control them".[12] In response to their resistance, the civil and ecclesiastical authorities imposed heavy fines, seized land and property and imprisoned recusants, male and female. Married recusant women in particular seemed difficult to defeat. Since women did not own property the only punishment available to the authorities was imprisonment and, though many women were indicted and imprisoned for their refusal to conform, the punishment appears to have had little effect.[13]

As a result of the failure by the state/church to deal effectively with recusant women, Rowlands notes that "the role of women assumed a particular importance in the transmission of culture and maintenance of facilities."[14] This female resistance to Protestantism created a culture whereby in a significant number of households "the ruling Catholic influence was feminine",[15] leading Bossy amongst others to refer to this period of recusant resistance as a "matriarchal era".[16] In accounting for the

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[10] M. Sonnet, 'A Daughter to Educate', N.Z. Davis and A. Farge (eds.) *A History of Women: Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes* (London: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 103.

[11] J. Bossy, *The English Catholic Community*, p. 158.

[12] M.B. Rowlands, 'Recusant Women: 1560-1640', M. Prior (ed.) *Women in English Society 1500 - 1800* (London: Methuen, 1985), p. 149.

[13] J. Bossy, *The English Catholic Community*, pp. 182-192.

[14] M.B. Rowlands, 'Recusant Women', p. 161.

[15] M.B. Rowlands, 'Recusant Women', p. 161.

[16] J. Bossy, *The English Catholic Community*, p. 158.

emergence of recusant women within the Catholic community Rowlands reminds her reader: "As with many other dissident groups [...] it was in the private domain of the home that [...] resistance could be carried on".[17] Since men occupied a public role they were obliged, in the public domain at least, to give the impression that they were complying with the legislation concerning religious practice. The role of women, on the other hand, was confined to the home and in this location they found a new role for themselves as defenders of the Catholic faith. In these new circumstances women were responsible for the religious formation of the inhabitants of their households. In this sense they were occupying new roles of leadership, albeit in the most private of settings, within the Catholic Community.

The influence of recusant women on Mary Ward

The influence of this feminine recusant community within the Catholic community is clearly evident in the life of Mary Ward. In her autobiographical writings Ward testifies to the influence of these recusant women. In her childhood recollections her grandmother, Ursula Wright, comes to the fore. Mary says of her: "so great a prayer was she that I do not remember [...] that I ever saw her sleep, nor did I ever awake when I perceived her not to be at prayers".[18] But underlying this rather ordinary childhood recollection of her grandmother's piety was an extraordinary fact; Ursula Wright had suffered imprisonment "for the space of fourteen years" because of her "exaltation of the Catholic religion and contempt of heresy".[19] The inclusion of this memory, in the generally fragmented autobiography, gives testimony to the impact of her grandmother's loyalty to the Catholic faith on the young Mary Ward. In the example of her grandmother Ward had seen the contribution of recusant women to the

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[17] M.B. Rowlands, 'Recusant Women', p. 162.

[18] M. Ward, 'Autobiographical Writings', typescript, AIR, p. 5. Ward introduces her autobiographical writings with the following statement: "I was commanded three or four years by my confessor, Father Roger Lee of the holy society of Jesus, unto whom I owe obedience, to set down in writing all that I could remember to call to mind of my past life; but through sloth and the difficulty of finding fit words, for what I would express I neglected to do it". Lee once gain insisted she undertake the task and so she turned to the task in 1617. It must have continued to prove a difficulty for her; the autobiography might aptly be referred to as "fragments" since they concern recollections from her early life, from her early childhood to her insight to emulate the Society of Jesus ("Take the Same") in 1611.
'Autobiographical Writings', [typescript] AIR, p. 2. The original document is preserved in the archives of the Institute at Nymphenburg, Nr. III.

[19] M. Ward, 'Autobiographical Writings', typescript, AIR, p. 4.

survival of the Catholic faith. Their recusant activity brought with it a new understanding of the role of women.

This idea is mirrored in Lux-Sterritt's analysis when she suggests that the resistance of the Catholic community to the imposition of the Protestant faith provided women "with the opportunities to transcend traditional role distributions".[20] In recusant households the role of women was inverted, no longer were they the *protected*, instead they became the *protectors*. By harbouring priests and employing tactics to avert the attentions of the authorities, recusant women showed ingenuity and courage. Moreover, they were creating a role for themselves that was indispensable for the needs of a Church under siege as well as sowing the seeds for a more active, apostolic role for women. Recusant women were to be found on the front line of Catholic resistance and in the course of that battle they were forging strong links with a besieged clergy.

This new understanding of the role of women is clearly evident in the first plan for Ward's Institute, *Scholae Beatae Maria* (c.1611), where she states that women had "something more than ordinary" to offer as defenders of the Catholic faith.[21] In the example of recusant women Ward saw the possibility of a shared apostolate between women and men directed towards the renewal of the Catholic Church. This relationship was not based on the superiority of either gender but focused instead on how one might assist the other. In other words it would be accurate to suggest that because of the influence of recusant women Ward's response to the needs of her time was a *gendered* response. Ward's plans were motivated by her experience and subsequent understanding of the unique and necessary contribution of women to the survival and propagation of the Catholic faith. As well as the example of recusant women it was clear that Ward was also inspired by another group within the recusant community; those who paid with their lives for their refusal to deny their faith.

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[20] L. Lux-Sterritt, *Redefining Female Religious Life: French Ursulines and English Ladies in Seventeenth-Century Catholicism*, p. 104.

[21] Taken from the first plan for Ward's Institute, *Schola Beatae Maria* (1612), typescript, AIR. The original is in, Archivium Romanum Societatis Jesu, Fondo Jesuitico N 1435, facsimile 1, document 3.

An 'intense and militant' faith:[22] martyrdom in the recusant community

The influence of those who were martyred because of their faith is evident in the following recollection from Ward's autobiographical writings: "I had [...] burning desires to be a martyr;[...] the sufferings of the martyrs appeared to me delightful for attaining so great a good, and my favourite thoughts were how? And when?" [23] The directness of this statement is disarming but considering the era Ward inhabited there is more than enough evidence to suggest that martyrdom was a real possibility for the recusant population. In 1586, for example, Margaret Clitherow was executed at York for harbouring priests. Clitherow was the first woman to be executed; this was followed by the execution of Margaret Ward (no relation of Mary's) in 1588, while Anne Line was executed in 1601. The execution of these women, and recusant men, left an indelible mark on the psyche of the Catholic population.[24] Ward's birth preceded Clitherow's martyrdom by one year; she was sixteen when Line was put to death.

The martyrdom of these women not only fuelled Catholic defiance it also showed the lengths to which women were willing to go to defend their faith. Women were now numbered among the heroic dead for their courage; the example of their lives and the manner of their death shaped the tenacious spirit of Ward. The intensity of Ward's desire for martyrdom provides an essential insight into the particular spirit that motivated Ward's contribution to the Counter-Reformation. As this dissertation proceeds it will become evident that Ward's enterprise was motivated by a spirit that was non-negotiable.

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[22] The phrase is used by Aveling to describe the "small Yorkshire circle of intensely devout recusants" in which Ward spent her early life. J.C.H. Aveling, *The Handle and the Axe: The Catholic Recusants in England from Reformation to Emancipation* (London: Blond and Briggs, 1976), p. 95.

[23] M. Ward, 'Autobiographical Writings', typescript, AIR, p. 19.

[24] M.B. Rowlands, 'Recusant Women: 1560-1640', *Women in English Society*, pp. 158-9.

An "unofficial seminary for future religious":[25] Mary Ward's Yorkshire background

Notwithstanding the influence of these martyrs Ward rejected the path of martyrdom itself since, according to her "it pleased God for the present to moderate the vehemence of these aspirations, in order, as I believe, that I might take breath and apply myself to the Religious Life".[26] The decision to choose the more moderate path of religious life is hardly surprising given her experience of recusant, Yorkshire households which Aveling describes as "unofficial seminaries for future religious".[27] In Aveling's description these households had an important function in providing religious formation but they also provided a safe haven for recusants. Thanks to these recusant households Catholic families were able to avoid the full rigour of the penalties imposed on those who refused to conform, but there was, nevertheless, a price to be paid for non-conformity.

The efforts of recusant families to avoid detection brought with it a disturbed family life; families frequently moved, and sometimes separated, to avoid detection. The Ward family was a case in point; they moved at least once in their lifetime, to Northumberland, placing their daughter in the care of the Babthorpes.[28] An earlier reference to Ursula Wright is a reminder that Ward spent five years in the care of her maternal grandparents. No reason is offered as to why the family did not take their eldest daughter with them; it may, as Peters suggests, have been for health reasons or for the opportunity of finding a suitable spouse.[29] The households Ward grew up in were situated in Yorkshire which had its own particular character.

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[25] Aveling uses the phrase to describe the households of the Wrights (Ward's maternal grandparents) and the Babthorpes, where Mary stayed for some time during her teenage years. J.C.H. Aveling, *The Handle and the Axe*, p. 99.

[26] M. Ward, 'Autobiographical Writings', typescript, AIR, p. 19.

[27] J.C.H. Aveling, *The Handle and the Axe*, p. 99.

[28] The Babthorpes were a well known recusant family; their adherence to the Catholic faith brought with it constant and persistent persecution and in 1617 the family were forced into exile. The historian highlights the extraordinary decision of the family to "separate into religious houses". The younger sons entered Jesuit and Benedictine novitiates as did nephews and cousins. The children of their married sisters also entered religion. Barbara Babthorpe (1592-1694) the daughter of Ralph and Grace Babthorpe, entered Mary Ward's Institute. Her mother Grace entered a Benedictine Convent in Louvain some years after her husband's death. J.C.H. Aveling, *The Handle and the Axe*, p. 99-100.

[29] H. Peters, *Mary Ward: A World in Contemplation*, p. 44.

Aveling describes Ward's Yorkshire background as "rather claustrophobic" in its "intensity and militancy".[30] In the recusant history Yorkshire emerges as a bastion of Catholic resistance to the imposition of the Protestant faith. In her survey on recusant women in York, for example, Rowlands maintains that by 1575 "there had emerged a hard core of about forty recusant families who were articulate, vigorous and determined".[31] In 1598, when Ward was thirteen, there were twenty-five recusant prisoners in Ousebridge gaol, York, eleven of whom were women.[32] What emerges from this picture is not so much the numerical strength of these Yorkshire recusants but the intensity with which they adhered to their Catholic faith. Since Catholics could not practice their faith in public their religious practice was confined to the private sphere of house and home thus creating a kind of domestic church where the soil was rich for the seeds of a religious vocation. The autobiographical writings of Ward, drawing on her recollection of her residency with the Babthorpes, testify to the influence of this domestic church.

Mary Ward's attraction to the religious life

Ward lived with the Babthorpe family, from the age of fifteen to twenty one at their estate in Osgodby. The Babthorpes were staunch Catholics and no strangers to persecution; Ralph Babthorpe suffered severe financial penalties, including the confiscation of large parts of his estate, while his wife Grace had been imprisoned for her faith. In this household Ward "liked to keep company most" with the inhabitants of the household that she thought to be "virtuous".[33] Among this company was "a maid of great virtue", Margaret Garret, whose "speeches" inspired Ward "to love a religious life".[34] Since the dissolution of the monasteries had begun about forty years before Ward's birth (1585) she would have known little if anything about conventual or monastic life.[35] While there can be little doubt that Jesuit priests numbered among

[30] J.C.H. Aveling, *The Handle and the Axe*, p. 94.

[31] M.B. Rowlands, 'Recusant Women: 1560-1640', *Women in English Society*, p. 150.

[32] M.B. Rowlands, 'Recusant Women: 1560-1640', p. 152.

[33] M. Ward, 'Autobiographical Writings', typescript, p. 10.

[34] M. Ward, 'Autobiographical Writings', typescript, p. 10.

[35] Aveling provides an interesting description of English Catholicism in the years before the Dissolution: "[I]n 1534 there were a good many different types of the devout in England. There were very simple illiterates who flourished on the ordinary devotion. There were deeply pious innocents who [...] spent their lives in incessant pilgrimages to shrines. There were, both inside and outside

the recusants who sought refuge in the Babthorpe household Ward does not mention them in her autobiography. It was the contemplative religious life, transmitted through Margaret Garret's account, which held most appeal for her.

The story Margaret Garret told concerned the transgression of a nun who broke her vow of celibacy which resulted in the birth of a child. Once the child was born the nun was re-admitted to the community but as punishment she was forced to lie on the threshold to the chapel door while the rest of the community stepped on her as they made their way into community services. This punishment was "interned daily for divers years together".[36] It is interesting to note Ward's reaction to the story:

> This so great a penance made the fault seem extreme
> and withal I reflected that the like was neither rare,
> very disgraceful nor much punished among worldlings;
> by which I conceived a singular love and esteem of religious,
> as a sanctuary where all might and must be holy.[37]

This recollection indicates the reason for Ward's attraction to the religious life; it offered a "sanctuary" of piety and perfection. Her words reflect the idea that religious life offered an opportunity to leave a sinful world behind. The fact that no monasteries or convents were known to Ward must have heightened the mysterious and romantic perception she had of religious life for women. Allied to this the idea of separation from a sinful world was made possible by the enclosure of women religious. Since the idea of separateness, made possible by enclosure, seemed so central in Mary Ward's attraction to the religious life some attention must be given to this dimension of convent life in the seventeenth century.

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monasteries, innocents who were given to dreams, portents and visions; such were the [...] the 'nun of Kent' [and] the Carthusian monk-visionaries of Mount Grace in Yorkshire". J.C.H. Aveling, *The Handle and the Axe* p. 30.

The author also makes the claim that the monasteries could "pretty certainly, never have been dissolved if their inmates had stood fast". Aveling suggests that the reason for their apparent surrender was the recognition that the Dissolution was an answer to growing problems that were attaching themselves to conventual and monastic life: reduced numbers and growing responsibilities meant that religious orders were no longer able to commit themselves to the reforms that were so necessary for their survival. It was as if the Dissolution of the monasteries was an answer to the predicament nuns and monks found themselves in and thus, according to Aveling they "[q]uietly acquiesced" to the suppression of their way of life. J.C.H. Aveling, *The Handle and The Axe*, pp. 34-35.

[36] M. Ward, 'Autobiographical Writings', p. 10.

[37] M. Ward, 'Autobiographical Writings', p.10.

Insiders becoming outsiders: the situation of women religious in the seventeenth century church

The kind of religious life characterised by the enclosure, which Ward found so attractive, had a long history in the Catholic Church. In 1298, Pope Boniface, keen to reform convent life, imposed perpetual enclosure on all convents with the result that nuns were absolutely prohibited from leaving their convents.[38] Elizabeth Makowski suggests that Boniface's decree, *Periculoso*, was intended to give nuns "a status separate not only from male religious and lay women, but also from a growing number of quasi–female communities competing for, and often winning the support of the pious".[39] Whatever Boniface's reasons for imposing cloister on women religious it had significant consequences. It seriously undermined the ability of nuns to be self sufficient since they were prohibited from seeking donations from outside benefactors or even offering tuition within convent walls. In short, enclosure meant that nuns could no longer generate an income.[40] Unable to support even their current occupants, many convents could no longer accept new entrants – thus *Periculoso* rather than reforming convent life created enormous obstacles for those who wished to pursue it.

There can be little doubt that individual bishops applied enclosure with varying degrees of rigidity and this ensured the survival of convents through the centuries. This more relaxed attitude was put to an end in the seventeenth century when Catholic reform brought convents under scrutiny once again. This era of reform was part of the Church's response to the Reformation and, as Rapley points out, it was characterised by an effort "to return to a more perfect past, to correct the faults which had caused its deformities".[41] In other words, for the Catholic Church reform meant looking back rather than looking forward and, in turn, resisting innovation.

In the light of this conservatism it was perhaps inevitable that when the members of the Council of Trent came to examine the reform of convents, the Council Fathers took a retrospective step backwards rather than a progressive step forward: it returned

[38] The only exception to this were those who were contagiously ill lest they put their co-inhabitants at risk.

[39] E. Makowski, *Canon Law and Cloistered Women: Periculoso and its Commentators 1298-1545* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1997), p. 4.

[40] E. Makowski, *Canon Law and Cloistered Women*, p. 3.

[41] E. Rapley, *The Dévotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France*, p. 23.

to Boniface's *Periculoso*.[42] Trent affirmed and enforced the decree of 1298 with even greater vehemence; it legislated that all religious women living in community were to be bound by strict enclosure. The stringent enforcement of this legislation prohibited any relaxation of enclosure for apostolic purposes. In order to avoid previous lapses Bishops were obliged to enforce enclosure "under the judgement of God" and "pain of eternal malediction".[43]

The Council Fathers were determined to obliterate the loose interpretations of enclosure that had been creeping into monastic/convent life. As Olwen Huften observes "the comings and goings" of nuns would be "terminated" and "the grille rendered less permeable".[44] In assigning to bishops the responsibility of imposing enclosure, the Council was also granting them permission to survey what happened in convents, leading McNamara to suggest that the real issue was not cloister but "clerical control".[45] There was little that women religious could do without submitting to the authority of the local bishop. As well as consolidating the authority of the hierarchy over female religious, the confinement of nuns to the stringent imposition of cloister confirmed their separation from the world.

In Walker's assessment enclosure "interrupted a convent's ability to connect with the very society it served spiritually and upon which it depended economically and politically".[46] Walker highlights the far reaching implications of this reinforced claustration not just for the women themselves, but for the Church and society they were excluded from, in her view it "limited their apostolate to prayer at the very moment the Church was embracing a missionary and social activist agenda".[47]

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[42] The first session of the Council of Trent took place in 1545; the final session took place in 1565. It is interesting to note that the sessions concerning "regulars and nuns" were among the last sessions held by the Council, reflecting perhaps, their place in the Church.

[43] Council of Trent, 'Twenty Fifth Session: Concerning Regulars and Nuns', trans. H.J. Schroeder *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* (Illinois: Books and Publishers, 1978), pp. 20-21.

[44] O. Huften, *The Prospect Before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe Volume One 1500-1800*, p. 368.

[45] J.K. McNamara, *Sisters in Arms*, p. 461.

[46] C. Walker, *Gender and Politics in Early Modern Europe*, p. 48.

[47] That is not to say that all women religious were unhappy with the strict enforcement of clausura, many welcomed it as Walker points out: "Numerous cloistered nuns exploited the barrier between them and the world to pursue intense spiritual regimes which occasionally led them into mysticism and other supernatural phenomena." C. Walker, *Gender and Politics in Early Modern Europe*, p. 49.

Women were needed in, and yet excluded from, the ecclesiastical and social communities which they had come from. This exclusion went beyond a grudging reluctance to include women in the apostolate of the Church. It reflected a deep mistrust of the daughters of Eve who, in the Church's sight, needed vigilant and firm control.

The decrees on the communities of religious women that emerged from Trent institutionalised an ideology that removed women from the public sphere. It enshrined a position that refused to contemplate a role for women which in turn reflected what Rapley refers to as an "aggressive, antifeminism".[48] The historian Margaret Mac Curtain echoes this theme; in describing the underlying ethos that pervaded the atmosphere of the 16th century for women religious, she states: "The dispute over an active apostolate for nuns in the decade following the Council of Trent demonstrates the grip that patriarchy had on Roman Catholicism". Mac Curtain maintains that underlying this situation "was an agenda that ignored women's intellectual formation".[49] Since their lives were to be confined to the pursuit of their own salvation it was presumed that they would have little use for any kind of academic training. Their spiritual and intellectual formation was defined by the Church's determination to confine the role of women religious to a life of prayer and pious devotion. The stringent imposition of cloister met with little resistance; given their increasing dependence on the hierarchy and on the public, who were their benefactors, women religious were in a vulnerable position. Their objections would find little sympathy outside convent walls.

Ecclesiastical control and the cloister

Cloister had significant implications for female communities as Rapley points out: "it restored and protected the honour of religious women; it saved them from exposure to the influence of the world [...] but it also rendered them ineffective for all practical purposes".[50] The imposition of enclosure on female religious was in sharp contrast to

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[48] E. Rapley, *The Dévotes*, p. 3.

[49] M. Mac Curtain, 'Women, education and Learning in Early Modern Ireland', M. MacCurtain and Mary O' Dowd (eds.) *Women in Early Modern Ireland* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1991), p. 168.

[50] E. Rapley, *The Dévotes*, p. 15.

the Church's treatment of male communities where, for example, because of the Papal bull *Ascendente domino* (1584) the Jesuits were exempt from the laws of enclosure or the obligations of solemn vows.[51] Although this relaxation was intended primarily for the Jesuits, varying degrees of this regulation were applied to other male congregations. As Rapley observes, the result of this more nuanced approach was that by 1630 "the existence of men's communities living under a rule, bound by simple vows, or by no vows at all, and pursuing an active vocation in the world, was generally accepted."[52] The Church was willing to tolerate, and even encourage, some degree of experimentation regarding male religious life but when it came to female religious life the Church returned to tradition.

The imposition of cloister was not the only reform which separated male and female religious; the Church also applied different regulations concerning the jurisdiction of male and female communities. On the one hand the Church was encouraging male orders to become more centralised with the purpose of assuming their own authority and on the other, it denied their female counterparts any possibility of self-government by placing them under the jurisdiction of the local bishop. [53]

Even within their own gender, nuns seemed to be singled out for tighter surveillance and control. Comparing the situation of cloistered nuns to their recusant counterparts, Walker makes the following point: "While the Church had applauded the recusant militancy [...] who defied husbands and the Protestant authorities to promote their faith, their daughters who had taken the veil were sequestered under strict clerical enclosure".[54] In other words, although the Church encouraged recusant women to "usurp the gender hierarchy", it insisted that nuns "submit to patriarchal governance".[55] Recusant women were encouraged to take enormous risks for their

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[51] The proclamation of *Ascendente domino* was an attempt to resolve the issue of the legitimacy of the Society of Jesus; in appearing to abandon the traditional monastic forms of male religious life the Jesuits came under persistent attack from their opponents. The Pope, recognising the work being done by the Jesuits legitimised their manner of life by freeing them from the strict bounds of enclosure. E. Rapley, *The Dévotes*, p. 26.

[52] E. Rapley, *The Dévotes*, p. 26.

[53] E. Rapley, *The Dévotes*, p. 28.

[54] C. Walker, *Gender and Politics*, p. 57.

[55] C. Walker, *Gender and Politics*, p. 57.

faith even when their actions defied the wishes of their husbands. Religious women on the other hand were deemed as unable to govern their own lives and required the assistance of male clerics to do so. Cloistered women seemed to require more stringent regulation than any other group within the Church.

It is hardly surprising that many of the English women, including Ward, who entered convents had come from the recusant community. As stated earlier, the households they came from nurtured and sustained the kind of idealism and self-sacrifice that would draw an individual to the religious life. It would appear that a fairly seamless transition would take place from a recusant household to a cloistered community. This was not entirely the case. A brief examination of recusant women and convent life will indicate the challenges they faced in order to devote themselves to the religious life.

An altered state: recusant women in the cloister

Underlying the previously cited account of Ward's attraction to the religious life is the view that this way of life was more perfect than a life lived in the world. This was a commonly held view: marriage was valued since it would help to bolster the Catholic population, but virginity was the ideal. The evidence from Ward's biographers indicate that there were at least two marriage proposals; despite pressure from her father in particular these were turned down in order to pursue her religious vocation.[56] There can be no doubt that the religious life was an attractive alternative to marriage for many young women. In choosing this way of life they could pursue the perfection of their own souls rather than concerning themselves with tedious domestic duties. Moreover they could avoid the risks of pregnancy and childbirth that were an endemic aspect of life for seventeenth century women. But religious life too would bring its own costs, not least financial.

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[56] The first suitor was proposed by the Earl of Northumberland (the Earl would later come to notoriety because of his involvement in the Gunpowder Plot) when Mary was ten years of age. The second suitor was Edmund Neville, whose proposal was made when Ward was thirteen. Neville was more than twenty years Ward's senior; given the prospect that the wealth and title of his family might be restored to him, he was considered by Marmaduke Ward (Ward's father) to be a good match but his proposal was ultimately rejected. According to Mary Poyntz and Winifred Wigmore, the companions and biographers, of Mary Ward, the dejected suitor "became a religious man and a priest". M. Poyntz and W. Wigmore, 'A Briefe Relation of the holy life and happy death of our dearest Mother, of blessed memory, Mrs. Mary Ward', typescript, AIR, p. 7. See also M.C.E. Chambers, *The Life of Mary Ward* (vol.1), pp. 29-30, pp. 66-73 and pp. 96-98.

The dissolution of the monasteries and convents in England meant that women who wished to pursue a religious life had to travel to the Continent. This necessitated sufficient financial means to do so. Allied to this, since the more stringent imposition of cloister made it difficult for religious women to generate an income, the dowries that candidates brought with them became increasingly important. These factors amounted to the fact that if a woman wished to pursue religious life she required significant resources. The result was that the vast majority of convents were populated by women from the gentry and aristocratic classes.

Women from other classes also entered religious communities; these came from the local area or, in some cases, they were servants to the women who entered. The social stratification of convent life will be examined in more detail in the course of this dissertation, suffice it to say here that the requirement of a dowry proved to be a significant feature in the creation of a two tier system of choir and lay sister. To all intents and purposes the lay sisters of the seventeenth century were servants to the choir sisters. They were expected to attend to the domestic needs of the house while the choir sisters attended to the 'higher' occupations of prayer and devotion. This stratified society reflected the kind of households that a vast majority of English recusant women had left behind them. As well as being united by their religious vocation, these women were also united by their social class and, in the particular era they inhabited, by their recusant background.

In her survey of the records of continental convents Rowlands observes that between 1597 and 1642 three hundred women left England to join Benedictine or Franciscan (Poor Clare) convents in Gravelines, Brussels and Ghent.[57] Many of these were recusant women whose family members had already entered religious life. The Bedingfield family, for example, is a case in point, Katherine and Francis Bedingfield had three sons and eleven daughters; ten became nuns, three of them in the Institute founded by Mary Ward.[58] As well as this family connection religious life might also

[57] M.B. Rowlands, 'Recusant Women: 1560-1640', p. 167. See also Rowlands footnote (n.) 92 p. 179.

[58] Mary and Winefride Bedingfield entered the Institute in Munich, no entrance date is available. A third daughter, Frances (1616-1704), entered in Rome and played a key role in Ward's Institute through the founding of the Bar Convent in York. Elizabeth was the only daughter not to enter, she married Sir Alexander Hamilton; both of her daughters entered convents, one of them, Catherine, entered Ward's

have provided a kind of refuge for an oppressed Catholic population; the convent in this sense, offered a sanctuary for recusant women. Furthermore, the convent provided a vehicle through which an individual could live out her vocation in the company of like minded women.

On the other hand convent life was not without its cost. The parameters of the convent were much narrower than those that recusant women had previously occupied. The lives they left behind may have been confined to the private sphere of family and home but, as the investigation of recusant women has shown, within this domain they occupied a significant role as defenders of the faith. Their lives as recusant women were defined in terms of ingenuity, defiance and courage; their lives as nuns were defined in terms of prayer, piety and purity. The restrictions of cloister brought a new kind of oppression for recusant women. Those who entered convents would return to the more traditional role prescribed for women. Nevertheless, a significant number of English women opted for the religious life and in making this decision they were often influenced by the clerics who sought refuge in recusant households.

Those clerics who acted as spiritual directors in recusant households had a key role in directing women to a convent on the Continent.[59] Since recusant women had no personal knowledge of the convents that were being recommended to them they were completely reliant on their director's recommendation. The result was not always satisfactory as is evident in the case of Ward herself.

Mary Ward and the Poor Clares

Ward arrived at the Jesuit College in St. Omer in 1606 with letters of recommendation from her Jesuit confessor, Fr. Holtby.[60] The letters were addressed to the Rector of the

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Institute and died in Augsburg in 1685. To add to this remarkable story when Elizabeth was widowed she entered a Poor Clare convent in Gravelines where her second daughter was Novice Mistress. See G. Kirkus, *An I.B.V.M./CJ Biographical Dictionary of the English Members and Major Benefactors (1667-2000)*, (York: The Bar Convent Trust, 2007), pp. 181-182.

[59] The role of the spiritual director in the lives of religious women was a significant one in the seventeenth century; subsequent chapters will deal with the influence of the Jesuits Roger Lee and John Gerard on Ward's enterprise.

[60] Richard Holtby is described by Bossy as being responsible for the "building of a resilient Catholic community in the North-east". He organised the English mission by using his knowledge of his local area (North Riding) to "constructing a system of passage and distribution for priests" as well as organising their work. J. Bossy, *The English Catholic Community*, p. 89.

College but his absence meant that she met instead with Fr. George Keynes. He directed her to the convent of the Poor Clares in the town where she entered as a lay sister since the convent, because of sufficient numbers, was no longer admitting choir sisters.[61]

Ward records Keynes direction to her in her autobiographical writings:

> [H]e did assure me lay Sisters and the Choir of that monastery were of one, and the same order, and equal merit in the sight of God, and verily quoth he I judge it the will of God you should be there and enter as lay sister.[62]

Ward seems to have been particularly impressed by Keynes assertion that it was "God's will" that she enter as a lay sister; his advice, however, was misleading. The assertion by Keynes that the choir sisters and lay sisters were part of the same order was untrue. The lay sisters followed a tertiary rule; this meant that they did not observe enclosure. The choir sisters were regulated by the Rule of St. Clare which bound them to strict enclosure. The life of an out-sister put Ward at a great remove from the life of prayer she had envisaged in a convent setting. The experience proved to be an unhappy one; as a lay sister Ward was expected to beg for food for the community in the local town, a task for which she was ill-equipped. Nevertheless, the needs of the convent appeared to supersede the discernment of a personal vocation and Ward remained there for almost twelve months.

In the space of three years (1606-1609) Ward herself had entered and left two convents of the Order of St. Clare, one of which she herself had founded.[63] Her writings reveal the spiritual disquiet that motivated these departures: "it was shown to

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[61] Peters notes that by the time Ward entered the Poor Clare convent, the community was tri-lingual; some Sisters spoke English, others French, some Dutch. This meant that, unless they understood Latin, there were great difficulties following convent instructions. Peters cites this as a possible reason as to why the Poor Clares were slow to accept another choir nun from England. The superiors feared, that like her compatriots, she would be unable to merge into an already difficult situation regarding the community's efforts to manage diverse nationalities and languages. H. Peters, *Mary Ward: A World in Contemplation*, p. 74.

[62] M. Ward, 'Autobiographical Writings', typescript, p. 15.

[63] In response to the difficult situation of diverse language and nationalities Ward experienced in the Walloon community she founded a Poor Clare convent for English women. The foundation was made in Gravelines in November 1609. Ward was among the first five English women, including her sister Frances to receive the habit. She left the convent she had founded in the autumn of 1609. For a more detailed account of these events see H. Peters, *Mary Ward: A World in Contemplation,* pp. 83-104.

me that I was not to be of the Order of St. Clare; some other thing I was to do. What or of what nature I did not see, nor could I guess, only that it was a good thing and what God willed".[64] The recollection of this incident provides a key insight into the nature of Ward's character and more importantly her absolute belief in the will of God. In the short term it would mean that she would be subject to the scandal and gossip that would surround her departure from two convents in the same region. In the long term it meant that she would find herself in such opposition to the Church that she would be condemned as a heretic.

A model Society: Mary Ward's plans to adopt the rule and manner of life of the Jesuits

Mary Ward never indicates the imposition of enclosure as her reason for leaving these convents; at the same time "some other thing" implied something other than enclosure yet even Ward herself did not understand the meaning of these words as she first articulated them. The clarity she waited for came in 1611. In her letter to Nuncio Albergati, Ward narrates an experience that was to change the course of her own life and pioneer a new way of life for women religious:

> Being alone, in some extraordinary repose of mind,
> I heard distinctly, not by sound of voice, but intellectually
> understood these words: Take the same of the Society".[65]
> So understood as that we were to take the same both in
> matter and manner that only excepted which God by
> diversity of sex has prohibited.[66]

Ward's directive to "take the same" would take her into territories and paths that had been prohibited to women. If she could fulfill this mandate, religious life for women

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[64] Letter from Mary Ward to Nuncio Antonio Albergati. Ward's letter to the Nuncio of lower Germany was sent in May/June 1621. Chambers writes that Ward probably became known to the Nuncio while she was making a foundation at Trier. The letter which gives an account of Ward's call to the religious life and the subsequent development of her vocation was written to defend herself against her detractors as well as an appeal for the support of the Nuncio as she prepared to present her plan of her Institute to Gregory XV. The letter is quoted in M.C.E. Chambers, *The Life of Mary Ward (1585-1645)* (vol. 1) p. 476. Copy: CJ Archives München-Nymphenburg, Parchment Book, pp. 123-141.

[65] By "Society" Ward understood the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) founded by St. Ignatius of Loyola in 1539, its *Formula*, which replaced the traditional monastic Rule was approved by Pope Paul III in 1540. M. Wright, *Mary Ward's Institute: The Struggle for Identity*, p.13.

[66] Letter from Mary Ward to Nuncio Antonio Albergati.

would never be the same again; it would enable them to pursue an apostolate that was not confined to the cloister. It would question the traditional assumptions that women's lives should be limited to prayer and private devotion. In the Society of Jesus Ward saw the model for her enterprise; here was a Society, not restricted by enclosure, free to respond to the needs of the Church wherever and when ever they were needed. The evidence indicates that Ward modelled her Institute and her educational enterprise so closely on the Society of Jesus that her members were referred to as "Jesuitesses" by their opponents. Much of the opposition Ward encountered throughout her life-time would be caused by her refusal to compromise on what she believed was her God-given mandate to adopt the manner and rule of the Society of Jesus.

This insight to "take the same of the Society" is the key founding stone for Ward's Institute and ultimately her greatest stumbling block. It dictated the course of events not just for her personal history but for the history of her Institute. In the light of this, any further analysis of her contribution to women's education or her understanding of the role of women in the Church cannot be undertaken without an examination of the Jesuits' enterprise. It is to this task the investigation now turns.

The contribution of the Society of Jesus to education

In his *Formula of the Institute* (1539) Ignatius of Loyola describes the ultimate aim of each member of the Society of Jesus: "He is a member of a Society founded chiefly for this purpose: to strive especially for the defense [*sic*] and propagation of the faith and for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine".[67] They were to achieve this aim by committing themselves "to public preaching, lectures and other ministries" as well as "the education of children and unlettered persons in Christianity".[68] By the time of Ignatius' death in 1556, the membership of the Society

[67] Ignatius of Loyola, *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, Translated with an Introduction and Commentary by G.E. Ganss (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970), p. 66.

[68] Ignatius, *Constitutions*, p. 66. Four hundred years after this Formula was written a member of the Society describes the origin and aim of the Society as well as qualifying a more familiar description of the original purpose of the Society: " [...] to correct a general historical error [...] in Ignatius' mind there is no conception of Counter Reformation, there is no malice to fight Protestantism there is simply his own spiritual conversion and the following of the light given him [...]. The Company of Jesus was conceived as a positive agency to win souls to Christ." E.A. Fitzpatrick, *St. Ignatius and the Ratio Studiorum* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1933), p. 10.

had increased from its ten founding members to over one thousand organised into several administrative provinces with responsibility for what Donohue describes as one hundred different "establishments", thirty-three of which were "with varying degrees of complexity, secondary or middle schools".[69] Ward was well aware of their enterprise, not just through her experience of Jesuits on the English mission, but through their college in St. Omer.[70]

For Ignatius the purpose of the Society's educational enterprise was the service of humanity and the glory of God. This motivation was not original; in writing his Constitutions on education Ignatius drew on many organisational features from non Jesuit schools of his day.[71] As Ganns points out: "His originality consisted not in inventing new pedagogical methods but in choosing from others the features which seemed best to him and adapting them to his far reaching objectives."[72] On the other hand as the Jesuit historian O'Malley points out, the Jesuits were distinctive from other teaching orders within the Catholic Church such as the Benedictine monasteries and the Franciscan teachers at the medieval universities. According to O'Malley the Jesuits differed from these and other orders in three ways:

> [T]hey formally and professedly designated the staffing and management of schools a true ministry of the order, indeed its primary ministry [...]. Second, they actually set about to create such institutions and assumed responsibility for their continuance. Third, these institutions were not intended primarily for the training of the clergy but for boys and young men who envisaged a worldly career.[73]

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[69] J.W. Donohue, *Jesuit Education: An Essay on the Foundations of its Idea* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1963), p. 4.

[70] Ward's brother George was professed as a Jesuit in 1618. J. Cover, *Love the Driving Force: Mary Ward's Spirituality Its Significance for Moral Theology* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1997) reprint ed. (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1998), p. 54.

[71] As Ganns says: "In organising his schools and writing constitutions or statutes for them, Ignatius appropriated many features from the practices and constitutions of the non-Jesuit schools of his day [...]in 1549 when he was thinking much about the composition of constitutions of his own colleges and universities, he tried to obtain the constitutions of the universities of Valencia, Salamanca, Alcalá, Coimbra, Paris, Louvain, Bologna, and Padua. His originality consisted not in inventing new pedagogical methods but in choosing from others the features which seemed best to him and adapting them to his far-reaching objectives". Ignatius of Loyola, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus,* Ganns edit. footnote 7 p. 173.

[72] *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, Ganns edit. footnote 7 p. 173.

[73] J. W. O Malley, 'How the First Jesuits Became Involved in Education', V.J. Duminuco (ed.) *The Jesuit Ratio Studiorum: 400th Anniversary Perspectives* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), p. 57.

This deliberate and direct engagement with education in terms of establishing, resourcing and maintaining schools distinguished the Jesuits' enterprise from the work of other religious orders whose apostolate *included* education. It should be noted that Ward's plans for educational enterprise can be described in exactly the same terms.[74] The Yorkshire woman founded and took responsibility for schools; the schools were staffed by the members of her Institute and the curriculum provided was intended to prepare girls so that: "they may be able thereafter to undertake more fruitfully *the secular* [emphasis added] and domestic life or the religious and monastic life according to the vocation of each".[75] In common with the Jesuits, Ward believed that education was not confined to the needs of religious life.

In their founder's view the Jesuit educational enterprise was undertaken for the good of society; they were open to students from every social class made possible by Ignatius' insistence that the tuition be given gratis since the colleges would rely on endowments.[76] At the same time, there was a perception that the schools catered for the rich. O'Malley makes the point that this was "far, far from the original intention, never actualised in the degree actually attributed to it, and insofar as it occurred was the result not so much of deliberate choices as of the special nature of the humanistic curriculum".[77] The humanistic curriculum, offered by the Jesuits with its emphasis on Latin and Greek, did not attract the parents of children who wanted a more 'practical' education for their children.[78]

It would appear that in terms of the pupils' profile Ward's schools also mirrored the Jesuits' experience. They were, for the most part, populated by pupils from the wealthier classes. As this dissertation progresses the reasons for this development will become clear. Suffice it to say here that O'Malley's suggestion that the curriculum offered by the Jesuits determined who attended their schools cannot be convincingly applied to Ward's schools. It seems more reasonable, at this stage in the investigation,

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[74] This important point will provide the substantial material for the next chapter in this dissertation.

[75] Taken for Ward's first plan for her Institute, *Schola Beatae Mariae* (1612).

[76] J.W. O Malley, 'How the First Jesuits Became Involved in Education', p. 67.

[77] J.W. O Malley, p. 67.

[78] J.W. O Malley, p. 67.

to suggest that the wealthier classes were in a position to afford the fees that were needed for their daughters' expenses while they were boarders at Institute schools.

The Jesuit educational enterprise, in particular, went from strength to strength: the growth in membership in the society allowed for increased investment of personnel in the schools. Allied to this, the growth in the number of schools allowed for the introduction of innovation in teaching and learning given the possibilities for communication and networking between the teaching personnel. The placement of Jesuits in newly discovered lands, for example, allowed for the attainment and sharing of new knowledge in the area of the natural sciences. This was possible because the Jesuits were not bound by enclosure.

In the light of the Jesuits' success there can be little wonder that Ward was so attracted to the principle of non-enclosure. The freedom of the Jesuits allowed them to establish schools wherever there was greatest need and to strengthen their educational network through the exchange of ideas and personnel. There was no reason, in her opinion, why religious women could not enjoy the same freedom. Unfortunately for Ward, her opinion was not shared by the authorities within the Catholic Church or even by the Jesuits themselves. The Church refused to recognise a female congregation that would not submit to enclosure. Such opposition did little to deter her efforts to emulate the Society of Jesus.

In basing her plan for women's education on the Society of Jesus, Ward recognised the necessity of women's education and the advantages of following the Jesuit model. This desire to follow the Jesuits' model is clearly evident in her *Brevis Declaratio* (1621) where she states:

> Now indeed while all those things which are conscientiously provided in the education of boys by the Society of Jesus are, as we see and bewail, lacking for girls, and the result is that the other half of the human race (which has no small influence for the good or ill of the Church), seems, if not utterly deserted, certainly to be without the help of proper remedies.[79]

[79] *'Brevis Decalaratio'* (1621) as the name suggests, was a brief summary of Mary Ward's plan for her Institute. In this document, Mary Ward emphasises the independence of her Institute as well as the need for women's education. The document, written in Latin and in Spanish, accompanied the petition

In outlining the motivation for her plans Ward highlights, and condemns, the educational deficit that was an integral part of women's lives in the seventeenth century. Given this deficit Ward proposed that the establishment of a parallel female foundation offering similar opportunities and education for women would be advantageous and even necessary for the Church. As Sonnet points out: "Every little girl was a future mother, hence a future teacher capable of amplifying the good work spread by the Counter Reformation preachers".[80] In providing intellectual and moral training for women Ward was convinced that women could take a more pro-active role as defenders of the faith. This was no doubt heavily influenced by her recusant background where women had an important catechetical role.

The extent to which she mirrored the Society's apostolate would prove to be a controversial issue. As this dissertation will illustrate her opponents would use it to consolidate their view that she was attempting to undertake work that was not suitable to the female sex. In the present day those who study her enterprise are eager to find parallels between her educational apostolate and that of the Jesuits. In attempting to find a connection one document in particular is frequently referred to: the Jesuits' *Ratio Studiorum.* There can be no doubt that was a seminal document for the Jesuits' educational enterprise but whether the same claim can be made regarding Ward's enterprise provides the subject matter for the next stage of this investigation.

Mary Ward and the Jesuits' *Ratio Studiorum*

In her analysis of Mary Ward's educational enterprise Rosemary DeJulio praises Ward's work as: "groundbreaking in its adoption of Ignatian spirituality, and insofar as possible, the teaching methods of the *Ratio Studiorum* [...]".[81] It would be tempting to deduce from DeJulio's statement that in the *Ratio Studiorum* Ward had a blueprint for her schools. This is not the case. First of all the purpose of the *Ratio* must be

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to King Philip IV of Spain urging him to intercede on behalf of Mary Ward with Pope Gregory XV and his nephew Cardinal Ludovico Ludovisi. H. Peters, *Mary Ward: A World in Contemplation,* p. 297.

[80] M. Sonnet, 'A Daughter to Educate', N.Z. Davis and A. Farge (eds.) *A History of Women: Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes,* p. 104.

[81] R.A. DeJulio, 'Women's ways of Knowing and Learning: The Reponse of Mary Ward and Madeline Sophie Barat to the *Ratio Studiorum*', V.J. Duminuco (ed.) *The Jesuit Ratio Studiorum: 400th Anniversary Perspectives,* p. 115.

understood; Fitzpatrick describes it as: "a practical handbook in educational method and school and classroom management."[82] The *Ratio* seeks to put order and form on the Jesuits' apostolic enterprise.

The document dealt with three areas: the responsibilities of those who held office in Jesuit education; the regulations common to all faculties and then specific regulations for individual faculties and finally the regulations that were to govern the lower schools (secondary schools) and it was to this section that the *Ratio* of 1599 gave most consideration.[83] Farrell gives a succinct overview of this edition:

> There are four principal areas contained in the *Ratio Studiorum,* namely administration, curriculum, method and discipline. It begins by defining the function, interrelation, and duties of such officials as the provincial, rector and prefect of studies. It outlines a curriculum by placing in their proper sequence and graduation courses of study in theology, philosophy and the humanities. It set forth in detail a method of conducting lessons and exercises in the classroom. It provides for discipline by fixing for the students norms of regularity and good order.[84]

There can be no doubt that the *Ratio* was a useful tool for the Jesuits particularly since it drew so much from their own experience but its significance for Ward's schools needs to be kept in perspective. There is no evidence to suggest that Ward ever saw a copy of the *Ratio*; in fact, DeJulio acknowledges that she has not obtained documentary evidence to suggest that Ward had actually seen a copy of the *Ratio*.[85] In citing her reasons for her assertion that Ward adopted the principles of the *Ratio* DeJulio highlights the "similarities in curriculum design and pedagogy".[86] This does not prove the case that Ward had seen the document. Furthermore no reference is made by Ward or by her companions to the document. Given the lack of documentary evidence to support the view that Ward based her enterprise on the *Ratio Studiorum* it seems inadvisable to continue to pursue this line of enquiry. There are other lines of

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[82] E.A. Fitzpatrick, *St. Ignatius and the Ratio Studiorum*, p. 23-24.

[83] The definitive document was published in 1599, and this, if DeJulio's assertion is correct, is the version Ward would have used in planning her own educational enterprise.

[84] R.A. Dejulio, 'Women's ways of Knowing and Learning', p. 99.

[85] R.A. DeJulio, 'Women's ways of Knowing and Learning', p. 125

[86] R.A. Dejulio, 'Women's ways of Knowing and Learning', p. 25.

enquiry that might prove to be more fruitful. These centre on the influence of the Spiritual Exercises and the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus. The former provided Ward with the spiritual foundation for her Institute while the latter would provide the structure through which she could sustain her vision. A brief examination of these cornerstones of the Society of Jesus will highlight their relevance for Ward's Institute.

Mary Ward's school of prayer: the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola[87]

The significance of the Spiritual exercises for the Society of Jesus cannot be overstated; the Exercises are *the* formative experience for Jesuits and have been throughout their history. In understanding the ethos that pervaded Jesuit schools it must be remembered that all Jesuits who taught in and administered these schools had themselves been formed through the Exercises. In the course of her life, Ward made the Exercises at least once a year. Following the Jesuit model the members of her community were formed in the Exercises and were directed by Jesuit priests.

The Spiritual Exercises enabled Ward to identify the direction in which God was leading her; her retreat notes of 1618 and 1619 reveal a growing awareness that the work of founding of her Institute was God's work:

> Coming to conclude and offering myself to God, I saw myself of little and less importance for this work. God's will and wisdom seemed great and his power such and of such force as strongly to effect in an instant or with a look whatsoever he would[...].[88]

These are many examples from Ward's retreat notes that could be used to illustrate her experience of the Exercises. The reason for selecting this particular extract is that it highlights her absolute trust in God. It is clear that she believed she was doing God's work. This belief offers a key insight into the reasons for her obstinate refusal to compromise her plans even when it appeared that the situation was hopeless.

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[87] The Spiritual Exercises began as Ignatius' record of his own experience of God; they represent not only a moral conversion but "an intellectual reorientation, a way of viewing God as inspiration and the world as a source of knowledge." H. Gray, 'The Experience of Ignatius of Loyola: Background to Jesuit Education', V.J. Duminuco (ed.) *The Jesuit Ratio Studiorum: 400th Anniversary Perspectives,* p. 3.

[88] M. Ward, *Retreat Notes*, typescript, "A Soul Wholly God's", AIR, p. 7.

As well as emulating the spiritual formation of the Jesuits, Ward was intent on adopting the Constitutions of the Society. These Constitutions enshrined the freedom, autonomy and flexibility that would enable the members of her Institute to undertake a more active role in the Church. Of particular interest for the purposes of this investigation are the Jesuit Constitutions on education.[89]

The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus with particular reference to education

The fourth part of the Constitutions has seventeen chapters which discuss the Jesuit scholastics' own education and the work of the schools conducted by the Society. In the Preamble to Part IV of the Constitutions Ignatius clearly states how the members of the Society are to help others:

> The aim to which the Society of Jesus directly seeks is to aid its own members and their fellow men to attain the goal for which they were created. To achieve this purpose, in addition to the example of one's life, learning and a method of expounding it are also necessary.[90]

In other words, a Jesuit was expected to devote his life to his "fellow men" and not simply the salvation of his own soul. Education would provide the vehicle through which he could achieve both. Furthermore, education is presented not as an incidental ministry but as a key dimension of Jesuit life. While Ward would go further than the Jesuits in identifying education as her *primary* apostolate there was one important difference: while a Jesuit was expected, and encouraged, to further his own education the same could not be said for a member of Ward's Institute. Because of their gender the Jesuits had access to education and learning; women, on the other hand, had to make the best of a bad situation. The opportunities available to men were not available to women. Their gender, not their ability, confined their learning to what society and the Church deemed appropriate for them. This is a theme that will form the basis for more detailed investigation in the course of this dissertation.

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[89] The Constitutions of the Society are divided into ten parts; Ignatius first deals with individual members, their admission, formation, definitive incorporation into the Society, and application to its work (Parts I-VII), Ignatius then proceeds to relations within the Society between the members themselves and the superior general (Part VIII) and finally, the founder deals with the Society itself including its preservation and development (Part X). Since many of these constitutions concern the Jesuit colleges and universities the investigation will be confined to the Preamble to the Constitutions on education as this captures the essence of the remaining Constitutions.

[90] Ignatius of Loyola, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, Ganns edit. [n.] 307, p. 171- 172.

As well as the intellectual training of the Jesuit educator great emphasis was placed on the "example of one's own life". There can be no doubt that the curriculum offered in Jesuit schools had an enormously formative influence on pupils but in his Preamble Ignatius also recognised the impact of the educators themselves. In a similar fashion, Ward also recognises the influence of those who would teach in her schools. In the second plan for her Institute, *Ratio Instituti* (1615), she reminds her Sisters that as well as instructing their pupils "in their duties towards God" they could also teach by example.[91] The example of these educators' lives provided a role model which not only furthered their students' education but encouraged a significant number to join religious life - a phenomenon which continued until the late 1900s.

The evidence suggests that Ward imbibed the spirit of Ignatius of Loyola. Her writings indicate no personal devotion to him; she is inspired not by the person but rather by the manner and structure of his Society. In it she saw the means through which she could pursue a more active apostolate for women. If her plans came to fruition she would initiate one of the most innovative departures for female religious life. Unfortunately a very grave obstacle was placed in her path: Ignatius prohibited his members from founding a female counterpart to the Society and, as subsequent chapters will reveal, the members of the Society strongly adhered to their founder's prohibition.[92]

Conclusion

This chapter began by presenting a selection of perspectives on Ward's enterprise from a number of scholars. These tend to claim that Ward's enterprise was characterised by a courageous and prophetic vision. It may be premature at this stage of the investigation to test the validity of these claims; that test remains the task of

[91] M. Ward, *Ratio Instituti* (1615), ms, Archivum Romanum Societatis Jesu, *Anglia Hist.*, 1590-1615. English Translation available in M.C.E. Chambers, *The Life of Mary Ward*, vol. 1, pp. 375-378.

[92] Ignatius states "still less ought they to take charge of religious women or any other women whatever to be their confessors regularly or to direct them." Cons. [588]. *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, Ganns edit. p. 262. Ganns defends Ignatius' position by explaining the reason for the founder's reluctance to assist women by claiming: "his (Ignatius') chief motive was avoidance of impediment to the mobility of his men." Ganns edit., p. 263.

subsequent chapters. But in the light of the investigation undertaken in this chapter a number of points can be made which will have significance for this task.

It is clear that Ward's understanding of the role of women in the Church was borne from her experience of the recusant women who helped to ensure the survival of the Catholic faith in England. In their example she saw the potential of an apostolic partnership between men and women. Her primary motivation was her desire to assist the Church in a time of need; she was not motivated by an agenda focused on gender equality. At the same time, the issue of gender cannot be ignored. The dissertation will show that the opposition Ward encountered was levelled at her on the basis of her gender. Her efforts were deemed unacceptable not because they were novel but rather because a woman was proposing them, and for women.

In examining the situation of religious women in the seventeenth century two issues in particular come to light. The first is that Ward, as her autobiography indicates, was initially attracted to the contemplative way of life. She *chose* to enter the more restricted world of the cloister. In leaving the Poor Clare convents there is no question of her rejection of the monastic, contemplative life; it was simply the case that her spiritual journey took her elsewhere.

A second issue that emerges is that the Church saw enclosure as an essential element of religious life for women. This issue is worth highlighting since it will emerge as a significant factor in the Church's opposition to Ward's plans. As the dissertation will illustrate, Ward, perhaps naively, believed that the Church would change its rule on cloister in the same way that it had done so for men. In its rejection of her enterprise her opponents pointed to the fact that Ward refused to accept enclosure as a condition of female religious life. Ward hoped the Church would recognise the contribution that women could make to the apostolic life; the hierarchy on the other hand could not contemplate a role for women that exceeded the parameters of cloister and home.

In looking to the Jesuits, Ward saw a model which would enable women in their service of the Church: here was her blue print for an apostolic religious life for women who would commit themselves to the education of women. Once again the evidence will suggest that in her plans to adopt the manner of life of the Society,

Ward displayed not just naivety, but defiance. She would go so far in her imitation of the Society that the Jesuits themselves would avail of every opportunity to distance themselves from her.

A survey of the history of women religious indicates that although Ward may have been unique, she was not a lone pioneer. The Ursuline Sisters, for example, preceded Ward's foundation and were engaged in a remarkably similar enterprise. In the next chapter the Ursulines provide an important lens through which to view and assess the degree of innovativeness in Ward's educational apostolate. Allied to this, Ward's plans for women's education must be viewed against the accepted educational provision made for women in the seventeenth century. In attending to this task the originality of her plans will emerge.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that a picture is emerging of an individual whose ideas would not be curtailed by the parameters prescribed by the Church and society of her time. It may be accurate to suggest that even in the planning of her enterprise Ward was a woman ahead of her time. But Ward was also a woman *of* her time and place; her recusant Yorkshire background had given shape to a tenacious spirit that would not be confined by the boundaries of cloister.

Chapter II
A CONSIDERATON OF MARY WARD'S PLANS IN THE LANDCAPE OF FEMALE EDUCATION IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The previous chapter identified the motivation and spirit that gave rise to Ward's enterprise. The investigation established the relationship between Ward's recusant background and her recognition of the unrealised potential of the role of women within the Catholic Church. The chapter also highlighted Ward's attraction to the spirit and constitutions of the Society of Jesus. In the example of the Jesuits, Ward saw the benefit that freedom from enclosure could bring. The Council of Trent, on the other hand, had enshrined the doctrine that enclosure was a fundamental dimension of female religious life. A considerable consequence of enclosure was that it confined the contribution of religious women to the cloister.

Ward identified the education of women, modelled on the Jesuits' enterprise, as one of the most effective means through which to assist a Church under siege. Well educated women could, Ward believed, expand the role of catechetical and religious instruction undertaken by recusant women. Freedom from enclosure would free the members of her Institute to engage in a more active and dynamic apostolate. Given the social and ecclesiastical context Ward inhabited, the ideas appeared to have some degree of originality. Establishing the extent of this originality is the particular task of this chapter.

In beginning to evaluate Ward's educational legacy and in an effort to determine the extent to which her enterprise can be described as innovative three inter-related investigations need to be undertaken. Firstly, since Ward's educational enterprise was focused on women it would seem reasonable, and necessary, to examine the educational provision that was available to women in the seventeenth century. The curriculum provided for women reflected the notion that women were intellectually inferior. Women were thought incapable of learning. Given their perceived inferiority, education was seen not as a benefit, but as a burden, for women. In order to alleviate this burden, the education women received was confined to preparing them for their role in life. In the seventeenth century this role rarely went beyond the parameters of the cloister or the home. Given the narrow parameters of their existence an aptitude for piety and needlework became the hallmarks of the well educated seventeenth

century woman. The extent to which Ward consolidated or challenged these limited ideologies will become evident in the light of this investigation.

Secondly, it was Ward's intention that the members of her own congregation would staff and manage her schools but the existence of the teaching nun was not new. Most notable among the example of nuns who devoted their apostolate to education were the Ursulines Sisters. This investigation will reveal the similarities and the differences in the apostolic enterprise of the Ursulines and the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Ursulines' decision to accept enclosure as the necessary means through which to achieve recognition marks a significant point of departure from their founding vision. Their careful negotiation with the social and ecclesiastical milieu they inhabited distinguished them from Ward's enterprise. As Ward's vision moved her away from the traditionally accepted roles prescribed for female religious, the Ursulines, in their efforts to survive, drew closer to it.

Thirdly, and finally, in the three plans for her Institute Ward presents the clearest and most direct articulation of the defining character of her Institute and its apostolic purpose. The progress of Ward's ambition becomes apparent from the first plan *Schola Beatae Mariae* (c.1611-1612) to her third plan *Institutum I* (1620-1621). Ward's first tentative steps towards adopting the Society of Jesus' rule and constitution give way to a more daring incorporation of the documents that guaranteed the Jesuits' independence and mobility. At the same time, a survey of the three plans, through the lens of education, suggests that Ward's enterprise appeared to mirror much of the curriculum that was already available to women. In other words, there appears, on one level, to be little by way of innovation. But when the plans are held to closer scrutiny progressive and original themes begin to emerge. Ward's insistence on the teaching of Latin, for example, departed from the prescriptive notions of what was deemed necessary for a woman's education. In order to appreciate the novelty of this departure it seems appropriate to begin with the first stage of this inquiry: a review of the educational provision for women in the seventeenth century.

"Pious notions and needlework": a review of women's education in the seventeenth century[1]

There was a strong vocational emphasis in education from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries: the role of education was to prepare the individual to take up her or his life's work. This had a significant impact for men and for women. Though men from the upper classes benefited from a rigorous intellectual training, a woman's education was curtailed to match the understanding of her ability and her potential. Given the belief that women would seldom if ever choose, or be able to sustain, a life of independence apart from some form of male guidance there appeared to be little need for their education. Anthony Fletcher highlights the particularly detrimental effects of this vocational approach for women's education. According to Fletcher's analysis "irrelevance" was "certainly part of the general case against female schooling" as there was a "strong and widely held belief that education should be suited to a person's lifestyle" and in turn a woman's education reflected the confinement of her role to the private domains of family and home.[2]

Within their domestic settings, upper class women were, as Pamela Sharpe reminds her reader, regarded as "central to the image of family status".[3] What was useful in a woman's education was seen from the perspective of her potential partner rather than from the perspective of a woman's aptitude or ability. In her study of women in early modern England, Lynda Pollock articulates the subordinate role women were expected to occupy in a husband headed household. The writer highlights the notion that women were "required as a subordinate to emphasize man's superior strength and

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[1] This overview focuses on the education of women from the upper classes since this is the class that Ward her came from (as did the members of her Institute and most of the students who came to her schools). This class profile of the pupils in Ward's schools has already been referred to in the previous chapter and was explained by reference to the fact that in order to have their children educated parents required sufficient funds to send them abroad. It should be noted however, that no matter what the prevailing social and historical context, the education of the middle classes continued to be a feature of the Institute's educational enterprise. The impact of this pattern has yet to be investigated by academic research.

For an overview of education across social classes, see R. O' Day, *Education and Society 1500-1800: the social foundations of education in early modern Britain* (London: Longmann, 1982), pp. 179-195. The phrase "pious notions and needle work" is coined by Sonnet to describe the restrictive notions of female education in the seventeenth century. M. Sonnet, 'A Daughter to Educate', N.Z. Davis and A. Farge (eds.) *A History of Women: Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes*, p. 122.

[2] A. Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500-1800*, p. 368.

[3] P. Sharpe, 'The Hidden Investment: Women and the Enterprise', P. Sharpe (ed.) *Women's Work: The English Experience 1650-1914*, p. 259.

deeds, as an agent of passive purity to illuminate his active virtue, and as a sexual partner".[4] This polarisation of the sexes, emphasising the strength of a man versus the weakness of a woman, reflected the underlying assumptions surrounding masculinity and femininity.

Defining the feminine: gender and education in the seventeenth century

A woman's femininity made her an attractive partner but her femininity was defined in terms of respectability, frailty and purity rather than her intellectual ability. Given his apparently superior physical and intellectual strength it was a man's duty to protect a woman, not least from her own weakness. These highly stylised gender roles had a significant impact on a woman's education. Instead of responding to her academic needs, a woman's education was directed towards the needs of her potential husband and household. The education a woman received aimed to develop her respectability by enabling her to acquire what were considered to be the appropriate female accomplishments. These rarely went beyond painting, piano playing and needlework. Such activities may have prepared women for the pleasantries of the parlour but this limited curriculum also had the effect of separating women from the acquisition of knowledge that would enable them to take up a more public role. As a result they became increasingly reliant on male family members as the bridge between their parlour and the world.

In their work, *That Gentle Strength*, Lynda Coon, Katherine Haldane and Elizabeth Sommer, identify the particular definition of the feminine in the Christian tradition. According to the authors the understanding of the feminine "arose from the fact that women were daughters of both Eve and Mary".[5] This dual descendency brought its own difficult inheritance as the authors point out: "Eve's nature represented lust and moral weakness but Eve's earthiness was redeemed by the purity of Mary".[6]

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[4] L. Pollock, "'Teach her to live under obedience': the making of women in the upper ranks of early modern England", *Continuity and Change* 4 (2), 1989, p. 232.

[5] L. Coon, K.J. Haldane, E.W. Sommer (eds.) *That Gentle Strength: Historical Perspectives on Women in Christianity* (Charlotesville and London: University Press, 1990), pp. 13-14.

[6] L. Coon, K.J. Haldane, E.W. Sommer (eds.) *That Gentle Strength*, p. 14.

There can be little doubt that society and the Church were eager to suppress the characteristics of Eve by presenting Mary as the role model for Christian femininity. Although this was not restricted to convent schools it became a particular feature of convent schools. As this investigation progresses, it will become increasingly evident that the pupils who attended the Institute's schools did not escape this kind of moral modelling. They were encouraged to emulate the example of Mary by choosing the path of celibacy and chastity in the religious life or that of virtuous and devoted mother in the domestic life. Given the highly idealised view of the feminine the education women received became increasingly concerned with their moral, rather than, their intellectual formation.

"Let not your girl learn Latin": the limitations of female education[7]

The Reformation placed further limitations on women's education since, as Sonnet points out, the vernacular translations of the bible "undermined one argument for teaching women Latin".[8] But the decline of the language had already begun for women in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. According to Alcuin Blamires, this was related to the Church's "derision" at the prospect of "female Bible training"; women "were expected to gain their salvation on a diet of extracts of scripture".[9] The direct result of this was of course what Blamires identifies as "a significant decline in female Latinity".[10] So, for example, while young men continued to learn Latin since it gave access to professions within the ecclesiastical and civil establishments, the language was thought unsuitable, unnecessary and even dangerous for girls. By learning Latin women would be able to interpret for themselves the documents of civil and religious authorities thus acquiring not simply a new skill but a new autonomy.[11]

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[7] A. Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500-1800* (London: Yale University Press, 1995) p. 369.

[8] M. Sonnet, *A History of Women*, p. 103.

[9] The phrase was used by Sir Ralph Verney in the advice he gave on female education and is considered in more detail at a later stage of this investigation.

[10] A. Blamires, *Women, The Book and the Godly*, p. 4.

[11] The decline of Latin had particular significance for religious women. In her seminal work on medieval convents, *Medieval English Nunneries*, Power gives a succinct, if rather bleak, overview of the educational attainment of the nuns themselves. While nuns were expected to be literate, such expectation did not exceed the most rudimentary participation in the Daily Office. Allied to this, their deficiency in the ecclesiastical mother tongue not only excluded nuns from meaningful participation in their daily services, the very cornerstone of convent life, but it also impeded their understanding of the Rule that governed them or the civil charters which governed their convents.

This was a danger much appreciated by those who understood the risks of women learning Latin; writing to his friend in 1651 on the subject of the education of his godchild, Nancy, Sir Ralph Verney advises:

> [...] let not your girl learn Latin, nor shorthand;
> the difficulty of the first may keep her from that vice
> for so I must esteem it in a women; but the easiness of
> the other may be a prejudice to her; for the pride of taking
> sermon notes hath made multitudes of women most
> unfortunate.[12]

Verney's advice gives some insight into reasons for the exclusion of women from the rigour of the intellectual and scholarly training that was available to their male counterparts. Women were inadequate and inept in Verney's eyes; even if they could apply themselves to the task of learning Latin, which Verney doubts, he is deeply suspicious of what women would do with such learning.

The argument outlined by Verney also highlights the notion that women were incapable of understanding religion for themselves. He strongly disparages the practice of women taking notes from sermons. Not only did women need the guidance of ordained male ministers to interpret the scriptures for them, Verney feared the consequences of women trying to further their own knowledge by taking notes in the first place. Although lay men were subject to the same restricted access to sacred texts, lay women, as Alison Weber puts it "were deemed to be mentally incapable of understanding the texts and inherently susceptible to diabolical influence".[13] In Verney's view women who sought to advance their own knowledge would come to no good.[14]

E. Power, *Medieval English Nunneries: C. 1275-1535* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 244-246.

[12] A. Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500-1800* (London: Yale University Press, 1995) p. 369.

[13] A. Weber, 'Little Women: Counter-Reformation Misogyny', D.E. Luebke (ed.) *The Counter-Reformation: Blackwell Essential Readings in History* (Oxford: Blackwell Press, 1999), p. 153.

[14] There were of course exceptionally well educated women in this era, including Queen Elizabeth, Lady Jane Grey and the daughters of Sir Thomas More, but these were *exceptions* rather than the rule. For an interesting comment on the mixed attitudes to women's educational achievement see N. Mc Mullen, 'The Education of English Gentlewomen 1540-1640', *History of Education,* vol.6 /2 (1977), pp. 87-101.

In common with men, a woman's education was intended to prepare her for her role in life. Unlike men however, a good education would not secure a woman's entrance to suitable and worthwhile employment. Furthermore, there was no place for independent women in seventeenth century society, so unless they chose to remain in their own homes under a male relative's protection, marriage became the only viable alternative to women. Within this very narrow range of opportunities women's education became even more restricted since a certain type of curriculum made them more attractive for the marriage market.

"Chaste, silent and obedient": education for the marriage market[15]

The definition of appropriate educational content for women was determined by whatever would make them more attractive in the marriage market and as a consequence of this development, there was a very clear emphasis on women's femininity rather than on their intellectual ability. In her analysis of the provision for women's education, Pollock suggests that parents did not encourage more advanced academic learning since they did not wish to "encourage the masculine facets present in women", nor did they wish their daughters to spend time on topics that they would have little use for in life at the expense of learning the "appropriate feminine virtues".[16] These feminine virtues were prescribed for women not just through the tuition they received in their homes but in the books they read.[17]

In her survey of books for women (1475-1640) Suzanne Hull notes

> Male authors gave women directions on how to dress, (with decorum befitting their rank), how to talk (as little as possible), how to behave towards their husbands (with subservience) how to walk (with eyes down) what to read (works by and about good and godly persons, not romances) and how to pray (frequently).[18]

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[15] The phrase "chaste, silent and obedient" is taken from the title of Hull's book, cited below.

[16] L. Pollock, " 'Teach her to live under obedience': the making of women in the upper ranks of early modern England", *Continuity and Change 4 (2)1989*, p. 241.

[17] Hull describes more than half the books written for women between 1475-1640 as "practical, how-to-do-it guides [...]. They gave counsel or instruction on how to educate young girls, how to live as a wife, as a widow, or as a nun, how to give birth, how to behave to servants, how to write letters [...] how to create fine needle work." S.W. Hull, *Chaste, Silent and Obedient: English Books for Women 1475-1640* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1982), p. 31.

[18] S.W. Hull, *Chaste, Silent and Obedient*, p. 135.

Models of femininity were being constructed on the basis of what could be seen and observed and this in turn focussed on conduct and decorum. Women were not valued for their intellect but for their virtue and given the dominance of male authors in the books that women read virtue, in this case, was defined by men. But, given the opportunity, women did not hesitate to offer advice on female virtue as the next stage in this investigation will show.

A woman's view on virtue

The books that are pertinent to this stage of the investigation emerge from a particular genre: a mother's advice to her children. The editor of the publication in which Dorothy Leigh's work, *The Mother's Blessing*, is reproduced describes such publications as "build[ing] on the sixteenth century Protestant reformers' promotion of household godliness, and in particular the godly mother's duty to instruct her children when they are young and impressionable - taking that instruction one step further into writing".[19]

In her *Mother's Blessing* (1616), Dorothy Leigh thanks God that her children were male, since their gender placed them "amongst the wise" where they could "learn the true written Word of God" and teach others by their "virtue" and "learning".[20] She advises women, on the other hand, not to be "[a]shamed to show their infirmities, but to give men the first and chief place; yet let us labour to come in the second".[21] Leigh goes so far in her advice to her sons that she informs them of the names they should call their children. Amongst the female names she selects is "Susanna"; since she was, according to Leigh, "favoured through the world for chastity".[22] In Leigh's opinion a woman that is not "truly chaste, hath no virtue in her"; the unchaste woman was "given to be idle"; all that she did was for "vain glory" and the "praise of men". [23] The

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[19] S. Brown (ed.) *Women's Writing in Stuart England: The Mothers' Legacies of Dorothy Leigh, Elizabeth Joscelin and Elizabeth Richardson* (Surrey: Sutton Publishing, 1999), p. v.

[20] D. Leigh, 'A Mother's Blessing', S. Brown (ed.) *Women's Writing in Stuart England,* p. 24. [Please note: for the sake of readability I have used modern English in quoting Leigh's work. The editor adheres to the original.]

[21] D. Leigh, 'A Mother's Blessing', S. Brown (ed.) *Women's Writing in Stuart England,* p. 24.

[22] D. Leigh, 'A Mother's Blessing', S. Brown (ed.) *Women's Writing,* p. 27.

[23] D. Leigh, 'A Mother's Blessing', S. Brown (ed.) *Women's Writing,* p. 27.

"chaste" woman, in contrast, was "free from idleness" and from "all vein delights full of humility, and all good Christian virtues".[24]

This emphasis on female humility re-emerges in Elizabeth Joscelin's advice to her husband in rearing their children.[25] The expectant mother is happy to leave the matter of her daughter's education to her husband: "I will leave it to thy will if thou desirest a learned daughter".[26] But she cautions her husband "howsoever thou disposest of her education I pray thee labour by all means to teach her true humility".[27] In *A Ladies Legacie to her Daughters*, published in the same year as Ward's death (1645), Elizabeth Richardson seeks to assist her children with the aid of the prayers and meditations which she has composed for them throughout her life.[28] Her "Legacie" is written to her four daughters and two daughters in law. According to Richardson she wrote the book for the use of "my selfe, and my children" but had "lately over persuaded by some that much desired to have them". [29] In the introduction to her work Richardson implores her children to take heed of her advice even though it comes from a woman:

> And howsoever this endeavour may be contemptible to many, (because a womans) [*sic*] which makes me not to joyne my sons with you, lest being men they misconstrue my meaning; yet I presume that you my daughters will not refuse your Mothers [*sic*] teaching [...] to bring you to virtue and piety. [30]

In the light of this brief survey of women's writing a number of points can be made. First and foremost, the volumes themselves testify to the fact that that these were literate, well educated women who were not afraid to use their education. Leigh and

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[24] D. Leigh, 'A Mother's Blessing', S. Brown (ed.) *Women's Writing*, p. 27.

[25] Elizabeth Joscelin (1596-1622) wrote her mother's legacy to her unborn child. It is an uncanny publication in that Joscelin's motivation for writing it was her fear of death in childbirth. She was buried on the 26th October 1622, fourteen days after giving birth to her daughter Theodora. Joscelin's manuscript was published under the title *The Mother's Legacie, to her Vnborne Childe* in 1624. Brown points out that this version "differs significantly" from Joscelin's own manuscript, available in the British Library and so the editor uses the original work. S. Brown (ed.) *Women's Writing*, p. 100.

[26] E. Joscelin, 'A Mother's Legacy', S. Brown (ed.) *Women's Writing*, p. 107.

[27] E. Joscelin, 'A Mother's Legacy', S. Brown (ed.) *Women's Writing*, p. 107.

[28] Elizabeth Richardson had six children, four daughters and two sons. S. Brown (ed.) *Women's Writing*, p. 145, p. 146.

[29] E. Richardson, 'A Ladies Legacie to her Daughters', S. Brown (ed.) *Women's Writing*, p. 163.

[30] E. Richardson, 'A Ladies Legacie to her Daughters', S. Brown (ed.) *Women's Writing*, p. 164.

Richardson's work, in particular, make ample use of scriptural references. Secondly, they were assertive women. All three authors are not afraid to give advice to men as well as to women. Moreover, two of the authors (Leigh and Richardson) were aware of the fact that their writing would not be confined to the private domain but were not deterred by this prospect. Thirdly, their advice did not deviate from the advice given by male authors to women. The three authors emphasise the fact that women should be virtuous, pious and chaste.

On the other hand, a strange paradox is created whereby these women writers are expounding the need for humility in women and yet at the same time appear to be defying the notion of female humility by dispatching their own thoughts to a potentially public domain. Whatever the paradox, the outcome was the same. These women writers, writing independently, were in agreement not just with themselves, but with men: the greatest virtue a women could have was humility. Whether or not Mary Ward espoused the same values will become apparent in the later stages of this chapter.

Female education and the cultivation of humility

It was essential for women, intent on marriage and social advancement, to present themselves with subservience and modesty; a point well borne out in the autobiographical recollections of Lady Grace Mildmay. In her recollection of her father's views on women, Mildmay states:

> My father could not abide to see a woman unstable or light in carriage, to hold her head one way and her hands another, her eyes tossing about in every place [...]. But he liked a woman well graced with a constant and settled countenance and good behaviour throughout her whole part, which presenteth unto all men a good hope of an established mind and virtuous disposition to be in her.[31]

In a similar vein, Mildmay's mother, Lady Sharington, advised her daughter that it was better to remain silent rather than to express an opinion. In her mother's view, all but the most necessary discourse, could lead a young woman astray. According to Mildmay, her mother advised her that:

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[31] L. Pollock (ed.), *With Faith and Physic: The Life of a Tudor Gentlewoman Lady Grace Mildmay, 1552-1620* (London: Collins and Brown, 1993), p. 27.

> [I]f I were provoked to utter a speech, that I should consider so long as the word remaineth with me it is mine own, but when I have spoken the same word it is no more mine own but every man's that heard it [...]. And also she warned me in fear of God, to shun the company of men and all superfluous talk or discourse with them whereby I might become imprudent and shameless and in the end be drawn to follow their lewd enticements.[32]

The emphasis is clear: if women wanted to present themselves as virtuous, then it was better for them to follow the advice of their parents who cautioned them to be chaste, silent and obedient. When it came to women, society was concerned with the cultivation of their behaviour rather than the cultivation of their intellect. Thus female modesty and virtue dictated the direction and purpose of women's education in the seventeenth century. As Sonnet argues "[n]o matter what school a girl went to, there was little danger that she would emerge a scholar. The average girl was not to be overburdened with academic curiosities. It was enough that her head be filled with pious notions and needlework".[33]

Rather than enabling them to participate in the public domain the education that women received firmly removed them from it, confining them to the cloister or the home. While their male siblings received the classical grounding that opened up to them the ecclesiastical, political and legal world, women received the ornamental accomplishments that would be useful, not even for their own sake, but rather in their role as wife and mother. Women's education, like men's education, was dictated by her place in society and in the end, as Kathleen Henderson and Barbara Mc Manus point out, "a society that continued to treat women as the property of their fathers and husbands found it difficult to think of them as intellectual equals".[34] This is the context in which Ward's Institute was founded. She inhabited the same era as Leigh, Joscelin and Richardson. Whether or not she shared their views on what they considered to be the essential characteristics of their own sex will become evident as this chapter progresses.

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[32] L. Pollock (ed.), *With Faith and Physic: The Life of a Tudor Gentlewoman Lady Grace Mildmay 1552-1620*, p. 29.

[33] M. Sonnet, *A History of Women*, p. 122.

[34] K. Usher Henderson and B.F. Mc Manus, *Half-Humankind: Contexts and Texts of the Controversy About Women in England: 1540-1640* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), p. 86.

The writers cited above came from the Protestant tradition but their views were shared by the Catholic tradition. Catholic women were held to the same scrutiny. But religious women in particular were expected to dedicate their lives to chastity, piety and humility. From this perspective they were perfectly placed to undertake the education of women. They modelled the virtuous lives that women, whatever their calling, were expected to lead. They, could in other words, teach by example. Limited as it was, the education of women brought with it a significant opportunity for female religious. Education could provide the vehicle through which the teaching nun could achieve not just her own salvation but the salvation of those who came under her care. Given this opportunity religious communities of women who dedicated their lives to education were beginning to make an appearance on the ecclesiastical and social scene. The emergence of female teaching congregations did not begin with Ward's enterprise; the Ursuline Sisters' enterprise spans the same era as Ward's.

The Ursulines dedicated themselves to teaching and, in common with Ward, refused to confine their apostolate to the cloister. Yet, unlike Ward's Institute the French Ursulines managed to escape the Institute's fate of condemnation and suppression to become one of the successful teaching orders of the seventeenth century. The Ursulines would succeed where Ward would fail. They received official approbation by the Church in the 1600s, the same time that Ward's Institute was being investigated by the Inquisition. The reason for the approbation of the Ursuline enterprise was relatively straightforward. The Ursulines read the ecclesiastical signs of their time and recognised that a compromise to their original founding impetus was the only way forward.

Mastering an ecclesiastical tight rope: the French Ursuline Sisters

At a first glance the Ursuline sisters appear to have been one of the most successful female teaching orders in the seventeenth century; their numbers alone, estimated to be between ten and twelve thousand within one hundred and fifty years of their foundation, are a testament to the effectiveness and appreciation of their apostolate.[35] Founded in Italy in 1544, by Angela Merici, the original character of the Ursulines

[35] E. Rapley, *The Dévotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France*, p. 48.

was entirely secular; the women did not join a congregation but lived in their own homes taking private vows and dedicating themselves to charitable works.[36] As this secular congregation grew it began to adhere to the structures of religious life but initially, at least, these women were not confined by such structures; they continued to engage in an active apostolate and remarkably, they were given the freedom to be governed by their own superior-general.[37]

In 1568 when the Ursuline Sisters began a new foundation, under the direction of Charles Borromeo, the original dynamism of the Ursulines was undermined. Borromeo invited the Ursulines to Milan but according to Rapley, in responding to his invitation they found themselves, "absorbed in a movement that did not entirely correspond with their own".[38] The bishop would not acquiesce to a self-governing congregation of women. Guided by the decrees of Trent, Borromeo insisted that the Ursulines would be placed under his jurisdiction, gathered into communities and prescribed to wear a distinctive habit.[39] In other words, Borromeo was removing all the characteristics of a secular institute from them and replacing them with the characteristics of a religious congregation. The Ursulines appeared to offer little, if any resistance to these reforms, and, as a consequence, this more institutionalised form of the Ursuline congregation began to replace Merici's original enterprise.

Despite the restrictions placed on the Ursulines, they continued to extend their enterprise. By the early 1600s the Ursulines had a found a most hospitable welcome among the French bishops. Rapley suggests two reasons for the arrival of the Ursulines in France; first, a series of Papal elections took the French hierarchy to Italy where they saw at first hand the work of the Ursulines and second, the canonization of Borromeo in 1604 brought renewed attention to the work of this reforming bishop and

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[36] This date indicates that Merici's enterprise pre-dates Ward's by about fifty years. Ward established her first foundation in St. Omer in 1609. But Lux-Sterritt describes the first Ursuline foundations in France as "unregulated affairs" and highlights the importance of the Toulouse foundation to "secure temporal recognition by gaining approval from Louis XIII in 1611 and from the Parlement in 1612 thereby leading the way towards the global legitimization of the Ursuline movement in the country". L. Lux-Sterritt, *Redefining Female Religious Life: French Ursulines and English Ladies in Seventeenth-Century Catholicism*, p. 21.

[37] E. Rapley, *The Dévotes*, p. 50.

[38] E. Rapley, *The Dévotes*, p. 50.

[39] E. Rapley, *The Dévotes*, p. 50.

perhaps presented him as a model to those who wished to follow in his footsteps.[40] The revival of religious devotion in France ensured large numbers of candidates for the Ursulines; but these women entered because they were inspired by the apostolic need of their native country rather than the founding vision of Angela Merici of whom they knew little.[41] As a result Merici's original founding vision became increasingly susceptible to the compromises that were necessary to secure the ecclesiastical and public support required by the Ursulines to consolidate their position in French society.

Despite their contextual differences there were strong similarities between the French Ursulines and Mary Ward's Institute. As Lux-Sterritt points out: "both movements began with an ideal which targeted a simple, common goal: the consolidation and the expansion of Catholicism through the medium of the education of girls".[42] In achieving this goal the success of the Ursulines, in establishing schools and communities, was unprecedented.

Initially the Ursuline foundations in France were populated by local women; daughters of bourgeois and artisans and, in common with many other religious congregations, many of the young women the Ursulines taught began to populate their convents. As the Ursulines became more successful, the upper classes sent their daughters to their schools to be educated by them and as a result it became the case that an aspiring Ursuline was increasingly likely to come from the upper classes. The families of upper class women were keen to ensure that the conventual life their daughters had entered was a respectable one. They demanded a more structured establishment that would be characterised by enclosure and the taking of solemn vows.[43] Underlying this was a more practical, financial motivation for the families' insistence on solemn profession and enclosure. As Rapley explains, "Without the

[40] E. Rapley, *The Dévotes*, p. 52.

[41] Though the Counter Reformation in England, characterised by resistance and rebellion, gave women a new profile within Catholicism, their French counterparts were experiencing a revival in devotion and reform. As might be expected such a revival led to an increased number of candidates for the religious life and within this context new innovations were taking place which aimed, as Rapley describes it as taking "the piety of the convent into the world". E. Rapley, *The Dévotes*, p. 9.

[42] L. Lux-Sterritt, *Redefining Female Religious Life*, p. 23.

[43] E. Rapley, *The Dévotes*, pp. 54-55.

guarantee secured by a solemn profession, there was no solid assurance that an individual might not return to the world at a later date, to the jeopardy of the family inheritance".[44]

In her survey of the Ursulines' history, Rapley identifies the vast changes the acceptance of solemn vows and enclosure brought: "A consequence of clausura was aristocratization. An enclosed monastery was expensive to build, since it had to be sufficient to all the needs of its perpetual inmates" and since this building had to be funded from donations and dowries a family's wealth became "a determining factor in the admission of aspirants".[45] This consolidated the aristocratic profile of Ursuline communities. The dowries that candidates from the upper classes brought with them ensured not just the survival, but the expansion of the Ursuline enterprise. If they went against the wishes of parents and returned to the original character of their foundation, that of a secular institute, they would, without question, lose the candidates that came from the upper classes. But there were also other considerations the Ursulines were forced to contend with.

As with Mary Ward's Institute, the Ursulines found themselves negotiating treacherous waters from the point of view of Canon Law. Spurred by the apostolic needs of the Church, Merici's original enterprise represented a new form of religious life for women that was not confined by cloister. The French Church was beginning to come to grips with the decrees of Trent and, although it supported the work of the Ursulines, it had no option but to oppose their uncloistered existence.[46] If the Ursulines were to survive, let alone prosper, they would have no choice but to accept enclosure. Moreover in order to extend their enterprise each community would have to secure the approval of the local bishop, and in most cases, this meant that they would, in turn, be subject to the jurisdiction of the local bishop thus abandoning any impulse towards self-government.

[44] E. Rapley, *The Dévotes*, p. 55.

[45] E. Rapley, *The Dévotes*, p. 59, p. 60.

[46] E. Rapley, *The Dévotes*, p. 42.

This acceptance of episcopal jurisdiction would have a detrimental effect on the Ursuline's educational enterprise. Every detail of pedagogy and curriculum would have to be approved by the local bishop. This development confined the congregation's enterprise to what was seen as acceptable from a male perspective. No innovation could be introduced without the bishop's permission. The approval of the hierarchy consolidated the development and success of their education apostolate but the Ursulines had paid a high price. Bound by enclosure and solemn vows their apostolate was confined to their cloister. In this development Ward's enterprise departs significantly from that of the Ursulines. Ward, as her plans will reveal, refused to accept cloister as a condition of female religious life.

This compromised position had a direct consequence for the pedagogy of the Ursulines' educational enterprise. As Lux-Sterritt explains: "After their transformation of their congregation into enclosed convents, Ursuline schools in France became more limited to the topics deemed appropriate for education in the cloister."[47] These topics had more to do with issues of piety and religious devotion than they had to do with academic or scholarly training and, given the fact that the Ursulines were now firmly placed behind the grille, the educational innovations available to others were unavailable to them.

According to Lux-Sterritt "teaching methods remained strictly standardized according to rules designed to avoid personal initiative".[48] While the standardisation may have been welcome at some level it remained untouched even by the insights and developments of other Ursuline foundations. A powerful educational network of personnel, experience and insight remained untapped. On the other hand, by accepting day pupils as well as boarders, the Ursulines continued to have a strong catechetical link to the outside world. As well as this initiative, the revenue from boarders facilitated the education of girls from less affluent backgrounds.

In almost every way it was the success of their own apostolate that dictated the remarkable changes which transformed the Ursulines from a secular organisation to a

[47] L. Lux-Sterritt, *Redefining Female Religious Life*, p. 89.

[48] L. Lux-Sterritt, *Redefining Female Religious Life*, p. 89.

religious congregation. The increased presence of the daughters of the upper classes in Ursuline schools and convents brought with it the interference of their families which was as intrusive as any ecclesiastical intervention, probably more so, since the Ursulines depended on them for financial investment and support.

This development highlights an important point: *society, as well as the Church,* prescribed the norms for women religious in the seventeenth century. Social standards of propriety and respectability in the seventeenth century demanded that a woman find a husband or a cloister and, if it was to be the latter, then her convent should be firmly under lock and key.

There can be no doubt that the contribution of the Ursulines to women's education in France was unprecedented but it would also be accurate to suggest that their original vision was seriously compromised. As Rapley says, "their energy was now confined within their monastery walls".[49] In the end, it was not simply a question of compromise for those women who sought to pursue an active apostolate; it was a question of survival. If their apostolate was to survive then it was becomingly increasingly clear that it could only do so within the walls of their cloister. Yet, despite the inherent limitations that Church and society imposed on them, women religious were beginning to negotiate a new pathway in the apostolic life of the Church: their classrooms became their pulpit, their schools their place of mission.

The survival of the apostolic congregations of women during one of the most vigorous drives of the Catholic hierarchy to re-establish the restrictions of clausura is a testament to the remarkable ingenuity and creative perseverance of female religious in the seventeenth century. The personal accounts of the women who survived these years have either not been recorded or not been preserved and, given the dearth of this individual testimony, the researcher must look to other sources to reconstruct the efforts of these women to pursue an active apostolate within the Catholic Church.

Most notable among these sources are the official plans of female religious congregations. The primary function of these plans was to attain papal approval as

[49] E. Rapley, *The Dévotes*, p. 60.

well as fulfilling the requirements of Canon Law. Besides this legislative function the plans reveal the resourcefulness of the writers in couching their innovation in a language that would be more palatable to the Church. Ward's three plans for her Institute reveal the evolution of an apostolic congregation whose Foundress would not rest until she had fulfilled what she believed to be her God given mandate to attain the same freedom and autonomy enjoyed by the Society of Jesus.

The first plan of the Institute: *Schola Beatae Mariae* (c. 1611-1612)[50]

The first foundation of the Institute was in St. Omer in 1609.[51] One of the early members of the Institute describes the educational apostolate of its first members:

> Amongst other goods to her neighbour a cheefe one
> was to employ themselves in education of youth, not only
> those of our owne nation (of which there were many) but also
> those of the places where they lived who were taught gratis,
> all that became good Christians and worthy women.[52]

In this general description there is little indication of the *particular* contribution of the Institute's apostolic enterprise. Indeed it might even be said that this enterprise maintained the ethos that pervaded women's education at that time in aiming to turn out "good Christians and worthy women". This rather reticent account is echoed in the tone of the first plan for the Institute. The tone errs on the side of caution rather than innovation and in the plan the moderating influence of Mary Ward's spiritual director Roger Lee is clearly evident.

Lee was a member of the Society of Jesus and was Ward's confessor for eight years. A tension in the relationship is apparent after the year 1611, when Ward received her mandate to model her Institute on the Society of Jesus. In her letter to Nuncio Albergati Ward tells the Nuncio that her confessor "resisted" her plans to adopt the

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[50] An original copy of the plan lies in the Jesuit Archives in Rome (Archivium Romanum Societatis Jesu (ASRI), Fondo Jesuitico 1435, Fasz. I Nr.3). English Translation AIR [typescript] [n.d.]

[51] As Chambers points out: "No place could have been better suited for the head-quarters of the English Ladies and the development of their plan than St. Omer. The affairs of England were well known there. The English Seminary was [...] full of young students smuggled over by their parents from across the water, in spite of the prohibitory laws and their penalties".

M.C.E. Chambers, *The Life of Mary Ward* (vol. 1), p. 285.

[52] M. Poyntz and W. Wigmore, 'A Briefe Relation of the Holy life and Happy Death of our Dearest Mother of Blessed Memory, Mrs. Mary Ward', p. 14.

Rule of St. Ignatius.[53] Lee was caught between his belief in Ward's plans and his duty as a Jesuit. The result was a moderating influence clearly visible in the first plan of the Institute which underplays any attempt to describe its Ignatian characteristics.[54] Ward did not, for example, exclude enclosure from her initial plan:

> And although this Institute of its nature does not allow of the strict cloister [...] still far from having the house open to all, we desire rather to have cloister so strictly observed that no access is to be allowed to any extern whatsoever in the Chapel and schools, with everyone present and that for legitimate reason and with the express permission of the Bishop.[55]

In her analysis of the plan, the Canon Lawyer Wright describes it as a "bridge between the cloistered life Mary experienced in the Poor Clares and the active apostolic life she was to develop".[56] In describing the model that the members of her Institute should look to Wards states:

> Among those orders they should specially look to those which most resemble the Institute amongst which not the last is the Society of Jesus [...] which amongst other works fruitfully labours throughout the world for the education of youth. And although from its Institute it cannot undertake the direction of women, it is however, lawful for all the faithful to be present at their sermon, to confess to them and to profit by their excellent advice.[57]

The Foundress was being careful to point out that her Institute merely *resembled* rather than emulated the Society of Jesus. In her analysis of Ward's plan, Lux-Sterritt describes it as a "masterpiece of placatory semiotics, displaying astute manipulation of the politics of gender".[58] The author accounts for the plan's "stereotypically

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[53] Letter from M. Ward to Nuncio Antonio Albergati sent in May/June 1621. The letter is quoted in M.C.E. Chambers, *The Life of Mary Ward (1585-1645)* (vol. 1), p. 476. Copy: CJ Archives München-Nymphenburg, Parchment Book, pp. 123-141.

[54] Despite his cautious approach, Lee was loyal to Mary Ward, in the end his loyalty came at a high price. It is speculated that he was removed from St. Omer in 1614 by his superiors because of his apparent refusal to dissuade Mary from her desire to adopt the manner and way of life of the Society. H. Peters, *Mary Ward: A World in Contemplation*, pp. 122-124.

[55] *Schola Beatae Mariae*, c.1611-1612. English translation, AIR [typescript] no.14.

[56] M. Wright, *Mary Ward's Institute: The Struggle for Identity*, p. 17.

[57] *Schola Beatae Mariae*, English translation, AIR [typescript] no. 38.

[58] L. Lux-Sterritt, *Redefining Female Religious Life*, p. 62.

gendered note" by suggesting that Lee was helping Ward to "speak the language of the Roman authorities".[59]

There can be little doubt that each line was written with the intention of securing approval and in order to do this the plan adhered to the acceptable gendered notions of humility and obedience rather than highlighting innovation and creativity. A closer reading of the plan, however, reveals more pioneering ideas. The plan emphasises the necessity of "the mixed life" for its members; in other words, the members would not be restricted by enclosure so that: [60]

> [I]n this way we may more easily educate maidens and girls of tender years in piety, in the Christian virtues and liberal arts so that they may be able thereafter to undertake more fruitfully the secular and domestic life or the religious and monastic life according to the vocation of each.[61]

In this statement of intent one point in particular is worth highlighting: in Ward's view the role of women was not confined to the domestic or religious life, she also sees education as preparing women for the "secular life". It was Ward's hope that "according to the capacity of our sex we may devote ourselves to the Christian education of maidens and girls whether outside or inside England (itself), that in this way we may devote ourselves to our own salvation and that of others".[62]

According to the plan education is seen not only in terms of benefiting the woman herself but its purpose and focus envisaged a role for women on the English mission field. This purpose was no doubt influenced by the close proximity of Ward's Institute to the Jesuit College in St. Omer. The remarkable success of the Jesuits attracted others to join their efforts to such an extent that, as Aveling points out, the English mission was "rapidly acquiring a surplus of missioners".[63] The evidence suggests that

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[59] L. Lux-Sterritt, *Redefining Female Religious* Life p. 62, p. 63.

[60] By the "mixed life" Ward understood a combination of prayer and apostolic activity. The full sentence reads: "[W]e have in mind the mixed life, such a life as we learn Christ our Lord taught his chosen ones, such a life as His Most Blessed Mother lived and handed down to those of later times". *Schola Beatae Mariae,* English translation, AIR [typescript] no. 3.

[61] *Schola Beatae Mariae,* English translation, AIR [typescript] no. 3.

[62] *Schola Beatae Mariae,* English translation, AIR [typescript] no. 5.

[63] J.C.H. Aveling, *The Handle and the Axe,* p. 78.

members of Ward's Institute were already active in England.[64] In her biography on Ward, Chambers points to the clandestine apostolate undertaken by the members of the Institute in England: "In the midst of the engrossing and laborious occupations [...] Mary Ward's thoughts still turned again to England. She had left her Sisters there in a more than usually anxious position [...]. Every action had to be weighed and carefully guarded, lest any false step should put a stop to their work for others". [65]

The first plan enabled her to establish the educational principles underlying her apostolic enterprise but Ward was clearly dissatisfied with the extent to which the plan reflected the Ignatian characteristics so crucial to her mandate. If Ward was intent on emulating the Society of Jesus then the plan for her Institute would need to be far more ambitious than the relatively modest proposal set forth in *Schola Beatae Mariae*.

The second plan of the Institute was the result of necessity. The need for Papal approval was paramount because few parents would consent to their daughters entering a religious order that had not received official approval. But, besides the need for candidates for the fledgling foundation there was another reason. The Institute was incurring the wrath of the Jesuits and the English secular clergy. The Jesuits opposed the Institute because they considered it too closely modelled on their own and the secular clergy opposed it because of its apparently close relationship to the Jesuits. [66] The lack of official approval made it impossible for Mary and her followers to defend themselves against the increasing opposition to the innovative Institute. In the light of these considerations, Ward turned her attention to drafting a second plan for her Institute.

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[64] The next chapter will give a more detailed account of an individual member's (Sr. Dorothea) apostolate in England.

[65] M.C.E. Chambers, *The Life of Mary Ward* (vol. 1), p. 416.

[66] The opposition to Ward's Institute from the secular clergy and the Jesuits is the particular focus of the next chapter. Suffice it to say here that the antipathy of the secular clergy was motivated by the clergy's resentment of Jesuit success on the English mission. Such antipathy was misplaced however since, as Wright reminds her reader the Jesuits did not encourage Ward's enterprise, in fact she was "kept at a distance by the Jesuits who were forbidden any formal connection with women's religious communities". M. Wright, *Mary Ward's Institute: The Struggle for Identity*, p. 11.

The Second Plan: *Ratio Instituti* (1616-1617)[67]

This second plan is centred on the government of the Institute, the activity of the members in England and the status of the Institute. This plan expands the scope of the *Schola Beatae Mariae*. It opens in a similar way to the first plan of the Institute citing the needs of "the sadly afflicted state of England".[68] Mirroring the previous plan, the *Ratio* emphasises the education of women but goes further in advocating "any other means congruous to the times, or in which it is judged that we can by our labours, promote the greater glory of God, and in any place further the propagation of our Holy Mother, the Catholic Church".[69] The plan drops the monastic elements that were included in *Schola Beatae Mariae* replacing them with a more innovative understanding of female religious life. With regard to enclosure for example the plan states that no member of Ward's Institute was required to observe "strict inclusre [*sic*]".[70]

Those who would present themselves as candidates for the Institute were advised "that they [were] not called to a life in which they can devote themselves only to themselves; but that [...] they [were] to prepare themselves to undertake any labour whatever in the instruction of virgins and young girls".[71] It is clear from this statement that those who hoped to join Ward's Institute were expected to undertake an educational apostolate. In meeting the requirements of this apostolate Ward recognised the need for the intellectual training of the young women who would become members of her Institute.

On the subject of the training of candidates she wrote to the novice mistress: "what time can be otherwise found besides their prayer let it be bestowed on their Latin".[72] In the light of the earlier stages of this investigation, it would be accurate to suggest

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[67] This plan is also found in the Jesuit archives in Rome. ASRI: *Ratio Instituti*1615, in 'Memorial of Mary Ward and the English Virgins to Paul V, 1616', *Anglia Hist.*, 1590-1615. English Translation available in M.C.E. Chambers, *The Life of Mary Ward* (vol. 1), pp. 375-378.

[68] *Ratio Instituti.* English translation AIR [typescript] p. 11.

[69] *Ratio Instituti.* English translation AIR [typescript] p. 11.

[70] *Ratio Instituti.* English translation AIR [typescript] p. 12.

[71] *Ratio Instituti.* English translation AIR [typescript] p. 12.

[72] Letter from M. Ward to Winefrid Wigmore in Naples, written from Vienna, 1st December 1627. Original: CJ Archives München-Nymphenburg, Brief Nr. 46. Autograph. Quoted in U. Dirmeier, *Mary Ward und ihre Gründung* (vol. 2), p. 253.

that the learning of Latin was a significant departure from what was deemed necessary for a woman's education at the time. This intellectual advancement was necessary not just for the members' teaching apostolate it was also necessary for their correspondence which, as Rowlands explains, included "memorializing [and petitioning] cardinals, princes, nuncios and town authorities".[73] In maintaining this kind of correspondence Rowlands quite rightly observes that Ward needed members who could write Latin "speedily and effectively"; as well as this requirement the Sisters were "forced by circumstances to learn several European languages".[74]

An example may help to illustrate the point. In 1628 the Institute in Munich encountered a great deal of opposition when Ward refused to accept three hundred Ursuline sisters at the request of the Bishop of Bayreuth, since they had not completed their novitiate. Mary therefore needed a mediator. In her correspondence to Winifred Wigmore, one of the most able linguists in the Institute, Mary asks: "My Mother, how much German have you? Oh that you could speak that language but indifferent well. What would I not give for that condition! Do your best with your usual diligence [...]".[75]

Thanks to the ability of women like Wigmore, Ward's schools met with great success. A testament to their success is the rapid expansion of her Institute: within ten years schools and convents were founded at Liège (1616), Cologne (1620), Trier (1620), Rome (1622), Naples (1623), Munich (1627) and Prague (1628). This rapid expansion also had its disadvantages: it was difficult to find able leaders to run the houses and schools of the fledgling Institute. Much of Ward's correspondence at this time reflects this difficulty. In a letter to one of her early followers, Barbara Babthorpe, she writes: "Would to God Mother Anne Gage could spare Mother Margaret [...] how much more there is to do in this short time, and how few to do it". [76] It is clear that the

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[73] M.B. Rowlands, 'Recusant Women: 1560-1640', M. Prior (ed.), *Women in English Society*, p. 171.

[74] M.B. Rowlands, *Women in English Society*, p. 171.

[75] Letter from M. Ward to Winefrid Wigmore written from Prague, 6th May 1628. Wigmore was one of Ward's closest friends and most loyal companions; the extent of this loyalty was to bring both women into direct opposition with the Curia as subsequent stages of this dissertation will show. Original: CJ Archives München-Nymphenburg, Brief Nr. 50. Autograph. Quoted in Dirmeier, *Mary Ward* (vol. 2), pp. 312-313.

[76] Letter from M. Ward to Barbara Babthorpe, 16th February 1627. Barbara Babthorpe was referred to in the previous chapter. She was a member of the Babthorpe family in whose Ward stayed and where

urgency of the apostolate was making increasing demands on the inexperienced membership of the Institute and there can be little doubt that without official recognition from the Church the members of the Institute suffered a precarious existence.

The plan was presented to Rome but Ward did not receive the approval that she requested. It appears that the Foundress did not fully appreciate the fact that Rome's refusal to recognise her Institute was, in all likelihood, linked to the novelty of her enterprise. Ward was undeterred: rather than modify her plans she consolidated their innovative character by adopting almost word for word the Jesuit Formula.[77] The result was the third plan for her Institute: Institutum I.

The Third Plan: *Institutum I* (1620-21)[78]

The death of Roger Lee resulted in the appointment of a new spiritual director, John Gerard. Gerard's enthusiasm and optimism replaced the cautious diplomacy of Lee and under this new direction Ward finally succeeded in drafting a plan that brought her very close to the Society of Jesus.[79] Wetter emphasises the importance of this plan. In her view, *Institutum I* "documents the final expression of what Mary Ward wanted for her Institute. All the regulations and the whole manner of life are in harmony with its apostolic end".[80] But Wetter also identifies the inherent obstacles for Ward in presenting this plan for approval: "In this Plan, a woman showed herself daring enough to take over the fundamental structure of the Society of Jesus for a female

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she was first drawn to the religious life. When Ward wrote this letter to Babthorpe the recipient was the Provincial of Liège. Original: CJ Archives München Nymphenburg, Brief Nr. 37. Autograph. Quoted in Dirmeier, *Mary Ward* (vol. 2), pp. 169-171.

[77] The Jesuit *Formula* replaced the traditional 'Rule' of the monastic orders. It was divided into five chapters including the aim of the Society, the vow of obedience to the Pope, the practice of poverty and so on. The non – traditional elements of the *Formula* included freedom from office in choir. As Wright points out, the more innovative aspects of the document caused great controversy when it was first presented to Pope Paul III in 1539. It was given full approval by Pope Julius III in 1550.

M. Wright, *The Struggle for Identity*, p. 14.

[78] *Institutum I* (1620-1621). *ms,* Vatican Library, Fondo Capponi 47, ff. 57v.-62r. English Translation in IBVM (Loreto) *Constitutions* (1985), pp. 9-16.

[79] As Wetter suggests, given the almost exact replication of the Jesuit *Formula* Ward must have received a copy of the document from Gerard. The only sections Ward omits from the original *Formula* are the references to the administration of the sacraments. I. Wetter, *Fourth Letter of Instruction* (Rome: CJ typescript, 1975), p. 3.

[80] I. Wetter, *Fourth Letter of Instruction*, p. 8.

foundation and to lay her plan before the Roman authorities, requesting them to approve it for her Institute". [81]

Although adopting, almost verbatim, the Jesuit Formula, Ward made important amendments from the point of view of education. She specifically mentions the education of girls "by teaching Catechism and the reverent use of sacred things and by giving that education to them in schools and communities which will seem most suitable for the common good of the Church and their own particular good whether they have chosen to spend their lives in the world or in religion".[82] Ward also extends this apostolate beyond schools to include "women of profligate life [...] preparing them to receive grace through the Sacraments".[83] This plan clearly envisages a catechetical apostolate among adults as well as the more formal school-based educational enterprise.

In her commentary on Ward's *Institutum I*, Wright draws attention to the inherent advantages contained in this plan: "This outline of apostolic activity was clear, precise, flexible and quite revolutionary for the time. Mary's early perception of the necessity of a sound Catholic education was here given prominence as the chief means towards the end 'the defence and propagation of the faith'".[84]

This third plan, presented for approval by the Pope, sought recognition for a female order that would be independent from the jurisdiction of the local bishop and placed instead under the direct authority of the Pope, ready to undertake any mission he would ask of its members, including the possibility of undertaking missions in new territories. The plan states:

> In addition to the that ordinary bond of three vows, we are to be obliged by a special vow to carry out whatever the present and future Roman pontiffs may order which pertains to the progress of

[81] I. Wetter, *Fourth Letter of Instruction*, p. 4.

[82] *Institutum I* (1620-1621).

[83] *Institutum I* (1620-1621). AIR [typescript] [n.1] p. 20.

[84] M. Wright, *Mary Ward's Institute*, p. 23.

> souls and the propagation of the faith [...] to whatever provinces they may choose to send us.[85]

Based on this evidence it seems reasonable to suggest that Ward was intent on adopting the "fourth vow" of the Jesuits. O'Malley describes this vow as the Jesuit making himself available to "being sent out [...] either physically or in some metaphorical sense" to "new and untried enterprises".[86] As O' Malley points out this gave the Jesuits a tremendous advantage; their success on the mission field was facilitated by their mobility, this success was the envy of the monastic orders who were bound by a vow of stability while the secular clergy were expected not to found new missions but to minister to those "already in the fold".[87] It is clear, that in her adoption of the Jesuit *Formula*, Ward saw no reason why women could not achieve the same success.

In adopting the *Formula*, almost in its entirety, Ward had gone far beyond the cautious reticence of her first plan. Her third plan was the most daring statement of intent: it was the clearest expression of her uncompromising determination to attain the freedom and autonomy of the Jesuits for the sake of the apostolate. For the most part this apostolate would unfold in the schools and classrooms of Ward's Institute and the extent to which this educational enterprise was characterised by innovation and originality forms the subject matter for the next stage of this inquiry.

A masterclass in Ignatian pedagogy: the educational enterprise of Mary Ward's Institute

In the light of the overview of the three plans for Ward's Institute two points might be made. The first is that Ward cannot be described as an educator in the sense of practical experience and, the second point is that she based her educational philosophy, in so far as it can be claimed she had one, on the Society of Jesus. Regarding the first point it would seem reasonable to suggest that given the demands made on Ward as Foundress she would have had little time for any kind of classroom

[85] *Institutum I.* AIR [typescript] [n.9] p. 21.

[86] J.W. O'Malley, 'Mission and the Early Jesuits', *The Way Supplement 79* (1994), p. 6.

[87] J.W. O'Malley, 'Mission and the Early Jesuits', *The Way Supplement 79* (1994), p. 7.

teaching. It is clear that she assigned this responsibility to those whom she considered sufficiently skilled in this area.

Secondly, in attempting to identify the influence of the Jesuits' on her educational enterprise one point in particular can be made. It is clear that the schools of Ward's Institute implemented the liberal syllabus of their Jesuit counterparts albeit with a more specific adaptation for women's education. The school at Pressburg is a case in point. Peters's investigation has brought to light the school curriculum which she considers to date from about 1628. As might be expected, the curriculum places great emphasis on religious instruction as well as the more general areas of reading, writing and arithmetic. But by offering Latin to the young women of the Pressburg school the curriculum goes beyond the vocational limitations of education.[88]

The members of the Society had very serious reservations regarding the apparent replication of their curriculum and they certainly had grounds for their unease. For example, the introduction of drama to Institute schools, a particular characteristic of the Society's schools, provoked reaction from the highest Jesuit authority when in 1619 the Jesuit General, Muzio Vitelleschi, ordered an examination into accusations that a Jesuit priest, John Falkner, in Liège was assisting the community in directing plays.[89] The suspicion was not confined to Jesuit circles. In his vehement opposition to Ward's enterprise the Archpriest of England, William Harrison, accuses Ward and her followers of publicly producing "immoral plays".[90]

Harrison's accusations are concerned with the effects of Ward's enterprise on the moral development of the pupils who populated their schools whereas the Jesuits were concerned with the damage such an enterprise could do to the Society. In his report to his Superior General on the Institute, the Jesuit Fr. Francis Young,[91] while praising the educational work of the Institute, hopes that the members of the Institute would "stay

[88] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 450-452.

[89] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 254.

[90] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 342.

[91] Peters maintains that Young knew Ward's Institute in England and "perhaps also in Belgium". At the time he wrote this letter he was working in Douai. Letter from Fr. Francis Young to Father General Muzio Vitelleschi 21st August, 1619. Original: ARSI, Anglia 32/II, ff. 1r-2v. Quoted in Dirmeier, *Mary Ward* (vol.1), pp. 454-458.

within their own bounds" and "not by imitation of our Society", introduce "a scholastic regime over-sophisticated and not necessary", lest they "engender public ridicule".[92]

It is interesting to note that the opposition Young articulates is clearly based on gender. The English missionary opposes the educational provision offered by the Institute because it transcends what he considers to be appropriate for the needs of women. Furthermore Young's concerns suggest that Ward and her followers were offering a form of education so close to the Jesuit model that the Jesuits themselves feared their academic sheen was being dulled by the educational efforts of a group of women. It is misguided to suggest that the Institute posed a threat to the Society's enterprise which in any case would have been impossible. On the other hand, it seems reasonable to suggest that Jesuit unease was caused by the notion that *women* were purporting to offer the liberal education which defined the members of the Society as the school masters of Europe.

The Foundress understood the demands of the apostolate her members were embarking on. Her insistence on the training of those members who were to be assigned to the teaching apostolate gave her a strong group of skilled women to draw from. In a letter to Winefrid Wigmore she encourages the Superior to accept a young woman into the community who "has the skill of painting". [93] Ward was intent on being able "among ourselves to teach such as we bring up [....] that we need not have other masters. To this end we wholly apply some of our own to gain perfection in these".[94] Allied to this, Ward's insistence on the mobility of the members of the Institute would ensure the interchange not just of personnel, but of pedagogical skills and insight. Moreover, the autonomy of the Institute ensured that the community, rather than the clergy, would dictate the curriculum and syllabus to be followed in their schools.

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[92] Letter from Fr. Francis Young to Father General Muzio Vitelleschi 21st August 1619.

[93] Letter from M. Ward to Winefrid Wigmore 1st December 1627. Original: CJ Archives München-Nymphenburg, Brief Nr. 46. Autograph. Quoted in Dirmeier, *Mary Ward* (vol. 2), pp. 253-254.

[94] Quoted in L. Lux-Sterritt, *Redefining Female Religious Life*, p. 93. Available in the Bar Convent Archives in York, B.9, *Various Papers*. This is a copy of the 1619 questionnaire kept in Brussels Archives, Générales du Royaume; Archives Jésuitiques, Province Gallo-belgique.

This gave the Institute enormous flexibility with regard to meeting the requirements of educational provision in a variety of contexts. The Institute school in Rome (1622), for example, deviated from the liberal curriculum by offering free tuition to children from the lower classes in order to train them for an occupation. This ability to adapt to the local circumstances enhanced the success of Ward's schools and, as this dissertation will illustrate, the success of the Institute's schools ensured its ultimate survival.

Conclusion

At this stage in the investigation some concluding points can be made regarding the extent to which Ward's enterprise can be described as innovative. Firstly, there is no doubt that Ward institutionalised the provision of education for women by placing it at the centre of her apostolic initiative. The curriculum offered far exceeded what was thought to be sufficient for a woman's education in the seventeenth century. On the other hand, Ward's plans also reflected the anthropology of their time. In the first plan of the Institute, *Schola Beatae Mariae*, the traditional elements of female education are highlighted, these include: "a sense of duty, household management, liberal arts, singing, playing musical instruments, embroidery, painting, sewing, spinning [...] in a word all those liberal exercises which are most suitable for every way of life".[95] The plan also identifies appropriate codes of female behaviour, girls were to be taught to: "conduct themselves peacefully in everything; observe virginal maturity; avoid unbecoming laughter and cackle; guard purity of soul, speak little and with prudence".[96] Although the three plans for her Institute demonstrate the evolution in Ward's thinking, it should also be remembered that Ward did not deviate in any significant way from the statements made on education in the first plan.

This apparent conservatism does not diminish the novelty of Ward's educational enterprise. On the contrary, it illustrates the fact that she was a woman of her time, limited, but not confined by, the anthropological conventions of her age. The limitations are seen in the cautious description of the Institute's educational provision

[95] *Schola Beatae Mariae* (1611-1612). AIR [typescript] p. 8.

[96] *Schola Beatae Mariae* (1611-1612). AIR [typescript] p. 8.

in her first plan. Her ability to break free from those limitations is seen, however, in the practical implementation of her plans which drew such vehement opposition from those who considered her enterprise to have gone far beyond what was generally accepted to be necessary, and even appropriate, in the education of women.

Those who look to Ward for innovation in educational pedagogy and methodology will be disappointed; the novelty of her enterprise is not to be found in theory but in the structures and ideology which supported and sustained it. In her analysis of Ward's educational enterprise Norman accurately articulates the Foundress' legacy when she states:

> The permanent importance of Mary Ward as educator lies, not [....] in large numbers, better equipment or innovatory teaching methods, [....] but rather in her struggle to liberate teaching nuns from the rules of enclosure and so make them resilient enough to educate girls not for the cloister but for the front line challenge of Christian family life in the midst of the world.[97]

The author stresses the innovative character of the *purpose* of the education enterprise as seen by Ward but, as this investigation has shown, the Yorkshire woman was not alone in advocating the necessity of women's education in renewing the Church of the Counter-Reformation era.

The Ursuline Sisters were clearly intent on achieving the same goal and given the evidence of their rapid expansion they were highly successful in their attempts. For both congregations the classrooms offered the apostolic opportunity that was otherwise denied to them and both groups committed themselves to this apostolate in the service of the Church. In the end it was not the art of teaching but the aptitude for survival which separated both congregations. The Ursulines secured their position by accepting a form of enclosure that would placate the civil and ecclesiastical authorities so intent on imposing the decrees of Trent. Their diplomacy came at a price: their acceptance of the authority of the hierarchy brought with it a loss of autonomy with regard to curriculum and pedagogy while enclosure diluted their potentially powerful network by preventing the interchange of ideas and personnel.

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[97] M. Norman, 'Mary Ward as Educator', AIY, B. 39.

Even the profile of the membership changed. Candidates for the congregation and for the schools were increasingly drawn from the upper classes since these could provide the requisite funds to support and sustain the self-sufficiency demanded by cloister. The cost of Ursuline diplomacy was high but perhaps it was a price worth paying. By the end of the seventeenth century, the Ursulines were to be found in almost every corner of France. In Rapley's opinion, their ability to negotiate within the ecclesiastical and social structures that sought to confine them consolidated their identity as the "feminine teaching congregation par excellence". [98]

Ward did not share the Ursulines' skills in diplomacy: she believed the value of her work was self-evident, her enterprise was characterised by resolve rather than compromise. Her insistence on the freedom and autonomy of her Institute was a response to what she perceived to be the needs of her time. Drawing on the insights of the best educational model available to her, Ward was preparing women for a more pro-active role, intellectually and morally, in the Church and society of her day. Her apparent defiance was not motivated by a spirit of rebellion but by the realisation that the traditional forms of religious life would not serve her apostolic enterprise. Her realisation that women could provide "something more than ordinary" in the face of "spiritual necessity" was leading her into uncharted waters which were becoming increasingly difficult to negotiate.[99] Where Ward was deficient in the language of the Curia her opponents were fluent and their words were finding an attentive audience in Rome. If Ward's Institute was to survive she would have to learn the art of conciliation – the extent to which she achieved this forms the subject matter of the next chapter.

[98] E. Rapley, *The Dévotes*, p. 48.

[99] *Ratio Instituti.* English translation AIR [typescript] p. 11.

Chapter III
THE OPPOSITION OF THE JESUITS AND THE ENGLISH CLERGY TO MARY WARD'S ENTERPRISE

In the evolution of the three plans for her Institute Ward was drawing closer to the pattern and way of life of the Society of Jesus. The plans were Ward's attempts to secure the recognition of her Institute but they would be used by her adversaries as evidence of her refusal to accept the traditional form of religious life that had been prescribed for women. The rejection of her plans culminated in the suppression of Ward's Institute in 1631. This chapter seeks to introduce the factors leading up to this event.

The evidence will show that amongst the most powerful forces who opposed Ward's enterprise were the English clergy and the Society of Jesus. The clergy were motivated by their animosity towards the Jesuits, and Ward, by association, became caught in their dispute. The Jesuits' opposition to Ward's endeavours was motivated by their desire to protect the integrity of their Society. As this chapter will show, the close parallels between their Society and Ward's Institute subjected the Jesuits to ridicule and scorn. Conscious of their standing in the Church and in society, the Jesuits were keen to distance themselves from the spectacle that was beginning to surround Ward and the members of her Institute.

The need to clarify the positions taken by the secular clergy and the Jesuits is paramount in accounting for Ward's ambivalent legacy which became so problematic in the Irish context. As the evidence in this chapter will indicate, Ward's reputation was tainted by the clergy who went so far as to question her morality. The silence of the Jesuits in the face of these accusations appeared to indicate that there was some truth in the rumour and innuendo that was being circulated about Ward and her companions. Ward was caught between two powerful adversaries whose vested interests far exceeded the efforts of a relatively small group of women. Peter Guilday aptly describes the consequences of this battle for Ward and the members of her Institute:

> Her Institute was sacrificed, her good name was lost, her reputation was blackened, she herself was jailed by the Inquisition as a heretic, schismatic and rebel to the Holy Church; her property was confiscated; and her sisters cast into the streets

> of Liège penniless [...] and all this by way of token of the animosity the English Secular Clergy had for the Society of Jesus.[1]

In Guilday's analysis Ward became the inevitable casualty of the distrust and territorialism that characterised the relationship between the Society of Jesus and the English secular clergy. As this chapter will demonstrate, the form and expression of the opposition posed by these two powerful adversaries would be different but the result would be the same: Ward's reputation would be almost irretrievably damaged.

Finally, in unravelling these strands of opposition, the evidence points to the fact that the opposition to Ward was not restricted to the external forces outlined above. In the course of this chapter it will become clear Ward also had to contend with invidious antagonism from *within* her Institute. The source of this antagonism can be attributed to a disgruntled individual thus, perhaps, modifying its impact, but it foreshadows a disconcerting movement against Ward's legacy from a small number of members of her Institute. This is a theme which will re-emerge in a significant way in the later stages of this dissertation.

The task of this chapter is to present the nature of the opposition, internal and external, that was operating against Ward and her Institute and to consider its impact on her enterprise. The opposition of the Society of Jesus was the first obstacle Ward would encounter and the reasons for its opposition form the subject matter for the preliminary investigation of this chapter.

Prodigal Fathers: The opposition of the Society of Jesus to Ward's Institute

By the end of 1611 Ward was clear on the path she had to take. She was, she believed, mandated by God to "take the same of the Society". Since Ward's understanding of "taking the same" of the Society of Jesus has been investigated in previous chapters the intention here is not to replicate that investigation but to examine in more detail the Jesuits' reaction to this initiative. From their foundation the Jesuits were prohibited from any attempt to found a female congregation, in writing his

[1] P. Guilday, *The English Catholic Refugees on the Continent 1558-1795 [vol.1] The English Colleges and Convents in the Catholic Low Countries, 1588-1795* (London: Longmans, Green, 1914), pp. 176-7.

Constitutions Ignatius insisted, "[...] still less ought they to take charge of religious women or any other women whatever to be their confessors regularly or to direct them".[2] There was a very practical concern underlying Ignatius' prohibition and this had to do with availability for mission.

The founder decreed that the members of his Society "ought to be ready at any hour to go to some or other parts of the world where they may be sent by the sovereign pontiff or their own superiors".[3] He feared that the availability and mobility of the Jesuits would be seriously compromised by having to assume responsibility for female foundations. The Jesuits were faithful to their founder's veto and although individuals may have lent their support to women's congregations in no sense could the Jesuits' be described as co–founders. In the case of Ward's Institute there was undoubted interest, even tacit support, from individual Jesuits, particularly Roger Lee and John Gerard, who saw the potential of a woman's congregation based on the Jesuit model.[4] Collectively however, the Jesuits made no secret of their hostility to the Institute.

In her account to Nuncio Albergati, Ward recalls that "all the Society" opposed her plans to adopt the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus.[5] Underlying this opposition was what Bernard Bassett describes as the "almost morbid preoccupation with the Society's good name".[6] Given their efforts to establish themselves in the English mission field, it was essential that the Jesuits distance themselves from anything which could cause scandal or derision. The idea of a group of women attempting to emulate the manner of life and the ministry of the Jesuits undermined their prestige.

An example may help to illustrate the inherent difficulties in the relationship between the Society and the Institute. A house was purchased in Liège for the impoverished

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[2] Ignatius of Loyola, *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, translated by G.E. Ganss, Cons. [588], p. 263.

[3] Ignatius of Loyola, *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, Cons [588], p. 262.

[4] Most notable among these individuals are Mary Ward's spiritual directors, Roger Lee (1568- 1615) and John Gerard (1564-1637).

[5] Letter from Mary Ward to Nuncio Antonio Albergati, Papal Nuncio of Cologne, written in 1620. The letter is given in full in Ward's 'Autobiographical Writings' AIR [typescript] pp. 45-50.

[6] B. Bassett, *The English Jesuits From Campion to Matindale* (London: Burns and Oates, 1967), p. 174.

members of Ward's Institute. Because of the inability of its benefactor, Thomas Sackville, to repay the mortgage a debt was incurred on behalf of the Institute which was further complicated by the fact that Sackville had mortgaged Jesuit property in his efforts to secure the accommodation.[7] As a result not only were the English Ladies heavily in debt but the Jesuits themselves had also been implicated in the ineptitude of Sackville's financial dealings.[8] The Jesuits at Liège were enraged not just by the incurrence of this debt but by the disgrace and ridicule that it attracted. Their previous distance must now have been replaced by an open hostility. Furthermore, the events at Liège would provide a trump card to those who opposed her plans in their evidence against her. The adversaries of the Institute would highlight the women's apparent ineptitude in handling their own affairs.

The efforts made by the Jesuits to distance themselves from Ward's Institute

Meanwhile the Jesuit General, Muzio Vitelleschi, was doing everything in his power to distance his Society from Ward's Institute. The Jesuits were cautioned that their dealings with the members of the Institute were to be circumspect and no more attention was to be given to them than to any other women. In a letter to the English Jesuit Provincial, Richard Blount, Vitelleschi begins by praising the priest for his "zeal and diligence" in reporting on the "manner of living and acting" of the "convents of Virgins who imitate the Institute of the Society".[9] Clearly concerned by Blount's reports Vitelleschi advises that "whether any one of our Society is mixed with their direction or government [...] forbid him to do so, whoever he be, and let me

[7] Thomas Sackville was the son of England's Lord Treasurer and a friend of the Jesuits in Belgium. He appears to have supported a number of religious foundations through monetary donations. Peters can find no explanation for his knowledge or support of Ward's Institute except to say "most probably family connections played a part [...] with the offices of friends playing a lesser or greater role". By the end of his life he was in serious financial difficulty and that is why, according to Peters, the Institute were "at the mercy of his debts". H. Peters, *Mary Ward: A World in Contemplation*, pp. 221-222.

[8] The events were initiated in 1618 when Sackville bought a house for the English women in Liège. The subsequent financial dealings are incredibly complex, Henriette Peters gives the most comprehensive account of the financial dealings. H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, pp. 231-236.

[9] Richard Blount was not only Provincial of the English Province his authority also extended to the Belgian houses. In 1619 Blount wrote at length to Vitelleschi expressing his concerns with regard to the English Ladies. This letter is Vitelleschi's response to Blount's communication. Chambers sources his letter as belonging to the Archives de l'Etat, Brussels. According to Chambers it is endorsed "What the General says about the Virgins," and is headed, "From the General's letter, Feb., 1619". M.C.E. Chambers, *The Life of Mary Ward* (vol. 2) pp. 12-14.

be at once informed".[10] Moreover the English Provincial is to "prudently and modestly [...] warn the bishops of those cities in which these Virgins have houses, that the Society does not pretend to have any authority at all over these convents of women [...]". Interestingly the General also prohibits "any of ours to teach Catechism in their schools".[11] Behind the rather proscriptive tone of this letter is the hint of Vitelleschi's fear of scandal and perhaps he had reason to be concerned since it had been reported to him that a Jesuit novice had accompanied Ward to England while another had been sent to the English women to give them singing lessons, and as if things weren't bad enough, the English Ladies, had even been invited to the Jesuits' garden to have lunch there.[12]

Peters points out that: "We do not know of any defence of those accused" moreover the "truth of the reports to Rome cannot be proved".[13] Whether or not these accusations were based on rumour or fact they had the same effect: they were a source of scandal not only for the English Ladies but for the Jesuits. Vitelleschi's caution was understandable, since he, as General, held a grave responsibility to protect the integrity and unity of the Society. Individual Jesuits might privately support Ward's enterprise but Vitelleschi was obliged to ensure that the collective body would not become entwined in the ignominy and disrepute that was attaching itself to the Institute.

Besieged by reports on the English Ladies from concerned Jesuits, Vitelleschi was keen to create a clear distance. Mandated by Vitelleschi Blount advises the members of the Society: "According to Scaevola's express order, all be admonished not to meddle with anything belonging to the temporals of Mrs. Mary Ward or any of her company [...]". [14] Furthermore the Jesuits were instructed to "make the world know

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[10] Letter from Muzio Vitelleschi to Richard Blount quoted in M.C.E. Chambers, *The Life of Mary Ward* (vol.2) pp. 13-14.

[11] Letter from Muzio Vitelleschi to Richard Blount quoted in M.C.E. Chambers (vol. 2) pp. 13-14.

[12] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 248.

[13] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 249.

[14] "Scaevola" was alias for the Jesuit General Muzio Villteschi (Father General 1615-1645). The letter is quoted in B. Bassett, *The English Jesuits*, p. 171.

that the Society had no more to do with them than with all other penitents who resort unto them."[15]

Vitelleschi had not always been so remote in his dealings with the Institute; in 1616, he wrote to a Jesuit in England asking him to pay the dowry "of a certain person, who lives among the English Virgins".[16] It is of course, interesting to note that this letter was written in Vitelleschi's second year in office, his benevolent attitude could not have foreseen the difficulties the Institute would pose for the Society. Whether or not the General believed all the reports that were sent to him one thing is clear; his response was consistent. The Jesuits were to refute anything that might connect Ward's Institute to them, a clear demarcation was to be drawn and observed between the Society and the Institute. But no matter what distance Vitelleschi attempted to apply, the perception remained. The members of Ward's Institute were to all intents and purposes a female version of the Society, to such an extent that they were referred to by their adversaries as "Jesuitesses".[17]

There is no doubt that Ward's schools were modelled on the Jesuit system and that her Sisters' freedom from cloister mirrored the Jesuits' mobility for mission. This has been illustrated in previous chapters, but in the evidence provided by her opponents Ward went further than this. According to Peters's research, reports were being sent to the Jesuit headquarters in Rome informing the authorities there that the members of the Institute were using the Jesuit emblem over the doors of their houses and schools; they also celebrated the feast days of Jesuit saints and even dressed like the Jesuits in so far as their sex allowed.[18]

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[15] The letter is quoted in B. Bassett, *The English Jesuits*, p. 171.

[16] Letter from Mutius Viltelleschi to England 11th. October, 1616. Quoted in M.C.E. Chambers, *Mary Ward* (vol.1), p. 400.

[17] See for example the letter from Thomas Rant, one of the most strident opponents of the Institute, to Matthew Kellison in which Rant refers to the members of the Institute as "Jesuitesses". The letter will be considered in more detail at a subsequent stage in this chapter. Letter from Thomas Rant to Matthew Kellison, written from Douai, 13 September, 1624. Original: Westminster Archives, London, B. XXVIII/9. Quoted in U. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward und ihre Grüdung: Die Quellentexte bis 1645* (vol.2) p. 77.

[18] Two Jesuits in particular are responsible for these reports: Fr. Francis Young who wrote to Muzio Vitelleschi in 1619 and Fr. Jacques Bonfrère who wrote to Vitelleschi from Dinant in 1620. H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, pp. 252-254.

There is no evidence to prove or disprove the reliability of these reports; Ward does not defend herself against these claims nor is there any reference to these claims in any of her extant correspondence. On the subject of dress for example in the second plan for the Institute, written in 1615, and still operative when the Jesuits' reports were sent to Rome, Ward writes:

> [...] our dress should be such as may represent to externs a model of Christian gravity and modesty [...] regard should always be had to poverty, cleanliness, and religious decency; the style of dress should for the most part, be conformed to that generally worn by virtuous ladies in those countries or provinces where ours happen to live or reside.[19]

It is clear that the members of the Institute were to emulate "virtuous women" of their place of mission rather than imitating the Jesuit habit. That is not to preclude the possibility that such imitation took place it is simply to highlight the fact that it was not Ward's intention. But far more serious concerns than the issue of the Institute's dress were beginning to emerge. The opponents of the Society and the Institute were eager to find evidence that would point to a far more scandalous relationship between the two groups. These more scurrilous accusations were part of the opponents' campaign against the Jesuits' successful English mission which was facilitated, in no small way, by the courage of recusant women who provided them with shelter.

"Disorderly women": the perception of Ward's association with the Jesuits

The Jesuits, in keeping with their founder's prohibition, may have been unwilling to accept the spiritual resources women could offer but they needed the shelter of their recusant households. Circumstances dictated this flexible approach. As Arthur Marotti points out, "[i]n the straitened circumstances of the English persecution various English Jesuits were forced to rely on the harbouring and hospitality of recusant women".[20] This necessity placed not just the Jesuits, but the women who provided them shelter, in a vulnerable situation and both parties were subject to slander and

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[19] *Ratio Instituti*1615, Original: 'Memorial of Mary Ward and the English Virgins to Paul V, 1616,' ms, Archivum Romanum Societatis Jesu, *Anglia Hist.*, 1590-1615; English Translation available in M.C.E. Chambers, *The Life of Mary Ward* (vol. 1) pp. 375-378. English translation AIR [typescript] p. 12.

[20] A.F. Marotti, 'Alienating Catholics in Early Modern England: Recusant Women, Jesuits and Ideological Fantasies', A.F. Marotti (ed.) *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts* (London: Macmillan Press, 1999), p. 17.

defamation. A remark from one anti-Jesuit commentator illustrates the animosity which was directed not just at the Jesuits but at the women who assisted them. He describes a situation where "silly women more devout than discreet [...] do mightily dote and run riote [*sic*] after them".[21]

As Frances Dolan suggests, this depiction of the susceptibility of women to the influence of the Jesuits consolidated the belief of those who viewed "disorderly women" as being easily lured by the "ritual paraphernalia" of Catholicism.[22] Moreover it portrayed the Jesuits as lecherous and deviant in their attempts to proselytise the English community in particular. The potential for scandal was tantalising to those who sought to undermine the Jesuits. The most effective way of doing this was to question the relationship between the members of the Society and the women who were associated with it and in this regard the Institute was an easy target. Ward, in particular, did not escape such undignified rumour and innuendo.

Marotti highlights the appearance of Ward in Thomas Middleton's play *A Game at Chesse* (first staged in 1624). In Marotti's analysis the playwright makes full use of the more scandalous beliefs concerning the relationship between the Jesuits and women. In the opening scenes of the play Ward is described as Ignatius of Loyola's "secular daughter" who assists in the "evil business" of attempting to seduce into Catholicism "the English people left vulnerable to Jesuit temptation". [23] The language of the play is described by Marotti as heavily "sexualised" in portraying the Jesuits as "habitual breakers of the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience".[24]

In her analysis of the play Margot Heinemann maintains that "some of the subtler allegorical meanings [...] seem to be too strained to be convincing" and thus she raises a question regarding the extent to which popular audiences would have understood the

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[21] Quoted in A.F. Marotti, *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts*, p. 17.

[22] F.E. Dolan, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender and Seventeenth Century Print Culture* (London: Cornell University Press, 1999), p. 8 and p. 27.

[23] A.F. Marotti, *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts*, p. 21.

[24] A.F. Marotti, *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts*, p. 22.

nuances of the allegories.[25] These "strained" allegories did not, however, escape the notice of Ward's adversaries. Writing to Matthew Kellison in 1624, Thomas Rant, referring to Middleton's play, states:[26]

> Of late there was a Comedie called "A game at chesses" acted 4 tymes of 5 tymes one day and thence forth a fortnight everie daye in contempt of Spanyards and the Catholic Religion. The personage represented were our King, our Prince, Buckhingham, Canterburie, Digbie, [...] the Jesuitesses and in particular Mistress Twittie, provincial of them.[27]

The allegorical portrayal of Ward, or "Mistress Twittie", as Rant refers to her, may only have been recognised by those with insider knowledge. There is no evidence to suggest that Ward herself was aware of the play. In the light of this it is difficult to establish the damage that was done by this theatrical portrayal. Nevertheless, Rant was clearly eager to cite the play as an example of what he considered to be Ward's questionable relationship to the Jesuits. The allegorical references in the play implicated Ward in a relationship with the Jesuits that appeared to be founded on deviant and improper behaviour. In this anti-Catholic polemic it was the Institute's reputation that was being damaged by their association with the Jesuits.

Whether or not the Jesuits were aware of the damage that was being done to Ward's Institute is difficult to establish. One thing that might be said with some certainty is that the Jesuits' primary concern was focused, understandably, on protecting their own reputation. Given their profile it would appear that the stakes were higher for the Society. By the time Ward was beginning her enterprise, the Jesuits were consolidating a very powerful role for themselves in the Church and in society. They predated the foundation of Ward's Institute by at least seventy years. While Ward was seeking approbation for her Institute in Rome their founder was canonised. Their society was populated by the brightest and most able men of the age and their schools enjoyed a unique and unrivalled position in the social and ecclesiastical domains. In

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[25] M. Heinemann, *Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 160.

[26] In 1624 Matthew Kellison was president of the English Seminary at Douai. Thomas Rant succeeded John Bennet as the English Agent for the secular clergy in 1623.

[27] Letter from Thomas Rant to Matthew Kellison, written from Douai, 13 September, 1624. Original: Westminster Archives, London, B. XXVIII/9. Quoted in U. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward und ihre Grüdung: Die Quellentexte bis 1645* (vol.2), p. 77.

the light of these achievements the Jesuits were keen to protect themselves against the damage a group of women might inflict on their growing reputation as one of the most powerful religious congregations within the Catholic world.

Allied to this the Jesuits could not afford to alienate those who supported their work of evangelisation for the sake of the endeavours of a group of women whose Institute had not even received approval. In a letter written from England to a Jesuit priest in St. Omer, the writer, a lay man and supporter of the Society, expressed his concern that "a Society of Virgins" appears to "have affected all the duties" of the Jesuits. According to the writer's report a Jesuit, in hiding with him, is "striving with all his might and main to promulgate this Institute".[28] The recusant household was, according to the writer, being put at risk by the "daily messengers" carrying documents and letters between the priest and the women. The writer claimed that his reason for writing the letter was not exclusively motivated by concerns for his own safety; he was troubled by the damage being done to the Society. In the conclusion of his letter the writer remarks that a "serious discord is noticed amongst your Fathers when they speak of or have anything to do with this new Institute of Virgins". Furthermore, the author of the letter was deeply troubled that this "difference of opinion" is "clearly discovered by the enemies of the faith".[29] For the Jesuits the situation was patently clear: damage limitation was imperative.

The vexed question of Jesuits support for Ward's enterprise

The situation was proving to be invidious both within and without the Society. Those Jesuits who continued to support Ward and her endeavours were viewed with suspicion and derision by the members of the Society. Even the spiritual directors of the Institute found themselves in a precarious position. Reference has already been made to the case of Roger Lee who was removed from St. Omer as Mary Ward's Spiritual director. The Jesuit historian, Bassett, cautions against any misreading of the

[28] The letter is quoted in Chambers, *Mary Ward* (vol. 1) pp. 444-446. According to Chambers sources this letter, written in Latin, is among the St. Omer papers in the Brussels Archives de l'Etât". Carton 29, Supplement. The letter is signed, "A.B." - as Chambers suggests the writer was probably well known to the recipient. M.C.E. Chambers, *Mary Ward* (vol.1), p. 445.

[29] M.C.E. Chambers, *Mary Ward* (vol.1), p. 446.

reasons for this move.[30] But he does highlight the case of another Jesuit director, John Gerard, who, according to Bassett "never lacked courage and defended Mary Ward against all and sundry [...]".[31]

John Gerard was summoned to Rome in 1621 by the Jesuit General and, as Bassett reports, "commanded under holy obedience to break all contacts with the English Ladies [...]."[32] In 1627, Gerard wrote to the Jesuit priest Henry Lee, Roger Lee's nephew that, although he had been forbidden to have any contact with the Institute, he had "pleaded their cause" with "Him who is best able to help them".[33] Since Gerard's hands are "tied" in the matter he has to concede: "Other healps [*sic*] I cannot afford, either in spirituall or corporall assistance [...]".[34] The letter concludes with a greeting to Ward, indicating the warmth of the relationship between the two: "I pray you tell your best friend and myne, I doe of purpose forbeare to write to her, but much desire to see her here".[35] The loss of Gerard was not just a personal loss for Ward, as Chambers points out: "living as he had then been for some years at Ghent, he was in sufficient nearness both to England and Liège to be even better acquainted with the troubled state of things regarding the Institute than Mary herself".[36] Ward, and her Institute, was now bereft of an invaluable advisor.

The Foundress valued the assistance of the Jesuits as spiritual directors but it was never her intention to garner the support of the Jesuits as co-founders of her Institute. Ward was unequivocal in her insistence that her Institute would never come under the jurisdiction of the Jesuits. It would, like the Society, be subject directly to the

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[30] In accounting for Lee's transfer Bassett explains: "The story was put about that Roger Lee had been moved from St. Omer because of his friendship with Mary Ward." Bassett rebuts this, claiming that "Roger Lee had tuberculosis and was dying; they thought for a while his health might rally in England, but, in 1615, while awaiting a boat, he died at Dunkirk." B. Bassett, *The English Jesuits*, p. 174.

[31] B. Bassett, *The English Jesuits*, p. 175.

[32] B. Bassett, *The English Jesuits*, p. 175.

[33] Letter from John Gerard to Fr. Henry Lee written from Ghent on the March 8th 1627. Original: CJ Archives München-Nymphenburg, Nr. 10. Autograph. Quoted in U. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward und ihre Grüdung: Die Quellentexte bis 1645* (vol.2), pp. 173-176.

[34] Letter from John Gerard to Fr. Henry Lee written from Ghent on the March 8th 1627. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward und ihre Grüdung: Die Quellentexte bis 1645* (vol.2), p. 174.

[35] Letter from John Gerard to Fr. Henry Lee written from Ghent on the March 8th 1627. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward und ihre Grüdung: Die Quellentexte bis 1645* (vol.2), p. 176.

[36] M.C.E. Chambers, *The Life of Mary Ward* (vol. 2), p. 232.

authority of the Pope. In *Brevis Declaratio*, the document composed in 1621 to explain the purpose and design of the Institute, the Foundress states:[37]

> [...] it suits neither them (the Society of Jesus) nor us (the Institute) that we belong to their body or be under their direction [...] still less does it suit our Society to depend on anyone else – person, Religious order or community, with the sole exception of the Vicar of Christ on earth [...].[38]

At the same time, Ward was not naïve; she knew well that if her Institute was to flourish it would at least need the tacit approval of the Jesuits. In the light of this necessity Ward was keen to find whatever support she could as her letter to John Gerard, written in 1619, illustrates:

> Once I thinke I saw a Generall of yours, who said nothing but his countenance promised all concurrance with us. This was, I thinke to comfort for some of yours at that very time would needs that the Generall of the Society both could, and would hinder such a thing as I did believe to be God's will in us. The first I could never beleeve to be in power of man; for the second this sight gave confidence.[39]

These words indicate Ward's awareness of the Jesuits' opposition to her plans but they also reveal her interpretation of the Jesuit General's "countenance"; she reads it as a sign of support which she says gave her "confidence". It seems as if Ward were grasping for any sign of hope on what was becoming an increasingly difficult path.

Despite her inner conviction that it was not to be in "the power of man" to hinder her mandate to "take the same of the Society", Ward knew that the support of the General was crucial. Ward met the Jesuit General, Vitelleschi, in Rome in 1621. Chambers describes her visit as "an act of courtesy, to give the General the solid reasons which induced her at all costs [...] to adopt the Rules of St. Ignatius as the foundation for the spiritual life and organisation of her Congregation".[40] Given the Jesuits' standing in

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[37] *"Brevis Declaratio earum rerum...."* (c.1620-1621). This was the document that accompanied a request to Isabella Clara Eugenia, asking her to write to her nephew, King Philip IV of Spain to urge him to intercede on the Institute's behalf to the Pope through his nephew, Cardinal Ludovico Ludovisi. According to Peters, this document is a "summary [...] in which the independence of the Institute is strongly emphasised". H. Peters, *Mary Ward: A World in Contemplation*, p. 297.

[38] *Brevis Declaratio.* AIR, English Translation [typescript], n.11, p. 18.

[39] Letter from Mary Ward to John Gerard, April, 1619. The original letter was not preserved, a copy is available in the CJ Archives Nypmphenburg, Parchment Book, pp. 39-45. Quoted in U. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward und ihre Grüdung: Die Quellentexte bis 1645* (vol.1), pp. 436-437. Dirmeier, p. 437.

[40] M.C.E. Chambers, *The Life of Mary Ward* (vol. 2), p. 15.

Rome there can be little doubt that Vitelleschi would have proved a powerful ally in promoting the case for the Institute. Yet, whatever his personal feelings towards Ward, there is no evidence to suggest that the outcome of the meeting was a positive one. As has been stated throughout this chapter; on the issue of the foundation of a female congregation the General's hands were tied. There was no way in which Vitelleschi could give his support to a female foundation. According to Grisar, "[i]n the carefully preserved register of the General's letters in the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus, there is not one singe letter that contains a recommendation of the new Institute to the Roman authorities".[41] Although Grisar concedes that "the possibility remains that Fr. Vitelleschi or his fellow-workers could have interceded for them orally", he also points to the dearth of such evidence in the minutes of the Curial congregations, or indeed in the biographies.[42]

Ward on the other hand, presented a positive account of the meeting. She writes to her supporter, Infanta Clara Eugenia, "I visited Fr. General [...]. He spoke very kindly and admitted that the fathers of that place (Liège) had made a mistake and promised his own help and that of the fathers".[43] It is clear from the reference that the debt incurred in Liège was high on the agenda and, no matter how Ward represents it in her letter, there can be little doubt that the General was unhappy with the outcome for the Jesuits there. At the same time Peters maintains that Vitelleschi was "personally, very kindly disposed to Mary Ward" and that he would help her Institute as long as it continued to be a 'Pium Institutum' limiting itself to the education of girls.[44] Under no circumstances however could the General encourage or even tolerate a female Society of Jesus.[45]

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[41] J. Grisar, *Maria Wards Institute vor römischen Kongregationen (1616-1630)*, English translation I. Corless and P. Griffith, Mary Ward's Institute Before Roman Congregations (1616-1630) (vol.1), p. 81.

[42] J. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute Before Roman Congregations (1616-1630)* (vol. I), p. 81.

[43] Letter from Mary Ward to the Infanta Clara Eugenia, 1st. January 1622. Original: Archives Générales du Royaume de Belgique, Brussels, PEA 458, ff. 3r-4v. The original letter is in French, the English translation used here is in H. Peters, *Mary Ward: A World in Contemplation*, p. 326.

[44] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 326.

[45] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 326.

Ward may have interpreted Vitelleschi's kindness to her as a sign of support. There is a hint of a certain naïveté in Ward regarding the normal courtesies that would be paid to her because of her position, not just in the religious world, but in the secular world, as a woman of noble birth. As Grisar puts it: "[b]eing himself of the nobility, Vitelleschi would naturally have received these noble ladies with the perfect courtesy due to rank and title demanded by the etiquette of the period".[46] Given her own background there can be no doubt that Ward was accustomed to the expected etiquette of class and tradition but, as subsequent evidence will illustrate, she had a tendency to mis-read the particular courtly behaviour of the Roman Church. It was an understandable failing, but it was a failing that would cost her greatly particularly when it came to her dealings with the Curia.

A deafening silence: the response of the Jesuits to the opposition faced by Ward

In the end, given the explicit prohibition of their Constitution, there was little the Jesuits could do for Ward. Those Jesuits who supported her Institute saw the potential of her enterprise; their support was based on the conviction that Ward's Institute could play a vital role by educating women who would remain loyal and steadfast in the face of the Protestant threat that was sweeping Europe. Those members of the Society who knew her personally remained steadfast and loyal to her even in the face of opposition from their own Jesuits confrères. Her spiritual directors in particular, were as much the subject of speculation and innuendo as Ward herself. These supporters, most notably Roger Lee and John Gerard, were forced to negotiate a fine line between obedience to their own Society and their fidelity to Ward's Institute. Their loyalty would come at a high price. Both experienced exile, not just the physical exile that removed them from any contact with Ward's Institute, but an exile that cast them beyond the boundaries of respectability and propriety as defined by their own Society.

Ward's opponents within the Society saw her enterprise as having the potential to undermine the reputation and status of the Society. The correspondence, penned by opponents from within the Society, sent to the beleaguered Vitelleschi, between the years 1618 and 1622, contained a number of common themes: the authors' concern at

[46] J. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute Before Roman Congregations (1616-1630)* (vol. I), p. 79.

the extent to which the Institute imitated the manner and way of life of the Jesuits; the apparent disobedience of Jesuits who supported Ward's enterprise and the derisory attention this was attracting from Jesuit adversaries. Grisar describes the situation which caused so much annoyance for the vast majority of Jesuits:

> The question of the English Sisters had therefore brought with it a host of really painful clashes for Society, and aroused widespread disagreement among the Fathers: [...] it threatened to injure its good name and its prestige, values on which it placed great weight, and so to provide their ever watchful opponents with a sharp weapon against the Society. [47]

With their reputation at stake, damage limitation was essential for the Jesuits: clear lines had to be drawn between the Society of Jesus and Mary Ward's Institute. The problem of a few dissident supporters within the Society could be dealt with by the Jesuit authorities but as far as the wider Church was concerned, the Society took every opportunity to detach itself from this increasingly troublesome group of women. For the reasons highlighted in this investigation, the Society could not have acquiesced with Ward's plans but their obvious and public distance did much to undermine the credibility of her enterprise. Their public silence was far more effective than any statement from Jesuit authorities. The Society would not expend energy in defending its position in regard to an Institute that they could not or would not recognise. Their silence provided ample opportunity to the adversaries of Ward to deliver the most unrelenting and insistent attacks not just on her Institute but on her reputation. Where the Jesuits were aloof and silent, other adversaries were loud and shrill and chief amongst this group were the English clergy who found a willing audience for their disparaging discourse.

The English clergy's campaign against Ward's enterprise

The vehement campaign waged by the English clergy against Ward cannot be understood in isolation from the incessant antipathy of the English clergy towards the Jesuits. This antipathy was motivated by the clergy's jealousy at the success of the Jesuits on the English mission field. The Jesuits, unlike their mendicant counterparts, were not bound by a vow of stability and this meant that they were free to carry out

[47] J. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute Before Roman Congregations (1616-1630)* (vol. 1), p. 78.

their ministry beyond the boundaries of diocese or parish. The secular clergy on the other hand were confined by such boundaries and they saw the intrusion of the Jesuits as gravely compromising their autonomy and authority within their own diocese and parishes.

Furthermore, there can be little doubt that, given the persecuted state of the Catholic Church in England, both groups, clergy and Jesuits, were vying for the support of the same, relatively small number of wealthy patrons. The smouldering animosity between the two groups was given full vent in 1598 when, as Marotti points out, the Pope appointed the Jesuit sponsored secular priest George Blackwell as Arch-Priest in England.[48] Ongoing rivalry now turned to open hostility; in the secular clergy's view the Jesuits had found favour in Rome and this appointment proved their case. The Jesuits were now an open target in a distasteful and unfortunate battle. It was a battle which had drastic consequences for Ward. The Institute provided the ideal ammunition with which to attack the Jesuits.

There was no better way to undermine the reputation of the Society than to highlight what the secular clergy believed to be the questionable activities of a group of women for whom they coined the pejorative term 'Jesuitesses'. When it came to preparing their armoury the clergy's methods were invidious and divisive. They sought scandal where there was none; they presented rumour as fact and they grossly exaggerated the more innovative aspects of Ward's enterprise in their efforts to present it as a rebellious and schismatic Institute.

In an effort to assess the validity of the clergy's claims some attention must be given to the evidence from the Institute itself. The dearth of primary sources makes this a particularly difficult task. Fortunately for this investigation however, a valuable report written by a member of the Institute in England, Sr. Dorothea, is available. The document was written before the same year that the reports from the English secular clergy were beginning to reach Rome.[49]

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[48] A.F. Marotti, 'Alienating Catholic in Early Modern England: Recusant Women, Jesuits and Ideological Fantasies', A.F. Marotti (ed.) *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts*, p. 17.

[49] The document is quoted in M.C.E. Chambers, *The Life of Mary Ward* (vol. 2), pp. 27-39.

Sister Dorothea's narrative: a first hand account of the Institute's apostolate in England

In her report to her Superior Sr. Dorothea begins by describing the clandestine nature of her work: [50]

> I dare not keep schools publicly as we do beyond the seas
> but I teach or instruct children in the houses of parents which
> I find to be a very good way, and by that occasion I get
> acquaintance, and so gaining first the affections of their
> parents, after with more facility their souls are converted to God.[51]

The testimony reveals the restrictions the members of the Institute in England had to work within or circumvent. It also indicates the purpose of Ward's Institute which she refers to so explicitly in the first plan for her Institute, namely, the conversion of England:

> Since the very distressed condition of England, our native land,
> is greatly in need of spiritual workers; [...] so it seems right that
> women could and should provide something more than ordinary
> in the face of this common spiritual need.[52]

In keeping with Ward's plan there is a strong catechetical dimension to Sr. Dorothea's work, she writes: "I teach them their *Pater, Ave*, Creed [and the] Commandments".[53] The narrator's work is not limited to catechetics; her pastoral work is also clearly evident: "I tend and serve poor people in their sickness. I make salves to cure their sores, and endeavour to make peace between those at variance".[54] There can be little doubt that this pastoral work tended not just to the physical needs but also the spiritual

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[50] The account is addressed to an unnamed Superior. Chambers suggests that it is "Francis Brookseby" [*sic*] Chambers, *The Life of Mary Ward* (vol.2), p. 26. Peters does not commit herself to the identity of the recipient she maintains that simply saying that it " is possible" that it is Frances Brooksby.
H. Peters, *Mary Ward: A World in Contemplation*, p. 357.
The account begins: "According to your command I intend in the best and briefest manner I can to relate my proceedings and manner of living [...] M.C.E. Chambers, *The Life of Mary Ward* (vol. 2), p. 26. A copy is available in Margaret Horde's (Ward's secretary) handwriting in the CJ Archives, München-Nymphenburg, Documents before 1645.

[51] M.C.E. Chambers, *The Life of Mary Ward* (vol. 2), p. 27.

[52] *Scholae Beatae Maria* (c.1611-1612) Original: Jesuit Archives in Rome (Archivium Romanum Societatis Jesu (ASRI), Fondo Jesuitico 1435, Fasz. I Nr.3). English Translation AIR [typescript] p. 1.

[53] M.C.E. Chambers, *Mary Ward* (vol.2), p. 27.

[54] M.C.E. Chambers, *Mary Ward* (vol. 2), p. 28.

needs of the recipients since it provided Sr. Dorothea with the opportunity to dispose "souls to God".[55]

The writer also indicates that her activities were not confined to a particular locality; "in these works of charity I spend my time not in one place, but in many, where I see there is best means of honouring God."[56] This mobility for the sake of mission is a clear mirroring of the Society's commitment to be ready to "go anywhere His holiness will order [...] for the sake of matters pertaining to the worship of God and the well being of the Christian religion".[57] It also facilitated a very necessary precaution; by moving from place to place, Sr. Dorothea would have a better chance of avoiding detection and prosecution. As, however, the next stage in the investigation will reveal, the real threat came from those within, rather than without, the Catholic community.

Given the precarious existence of Catholics in England, Sr. Dorothea was never far from danger of discovery, though ironically, it was the opposition to Ward and her Institute by the English priests, including those of the Society, which proved a greater threat to Dorothea than the opposition of the Protestant authorities. The recollection of an incident in the house of the nobility where she was saying bears this out: "The Father (a Jesuit) and the Benedictine [...] fell into talk of me, both of them commended me much: the Father wished there were a thousand such as I in England. I was fearful lest should suspect who I was [...] for neither of these did approve but much oppose against Mrs. Mary Ward and her company."[58]

It is interesting to note that the priests accepted, and indeed, commended the work of Sr. Dorothea but clearly disapproved of Ward's Institute. Ironically, the Benedictine priest goes as far as to suggest that: "[...] they would see Mary Ward and some of hers to live and labour in the manner I do, then they should like well of them [...]".[59] According to Sr. Dorothea, the priest in question was critical of the members of the

[55] M.C.E. Chambers, *Mary Ward* (vol. 2), p. 32.

[56] M.C.E. Chambers, *Mary Ward* (vol. 2), p. 28.

[57] Ignatius of Loyola, *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, translated by G.E. Ganss, Cons. [588], p. 80.

[58] M.C.E. Chambers, p. 32.

[59] M.C.E. Chambers, p. 37.

Institute since "they live in great houses for their ends only, and by their means to draw the Society thither".[60] There can be little doubt that given the fact that many of the members of the Institute were of noble birth, their connections would have opened the possibility of these women finding the type of accommodation described by the priest.

On the other hand, Sr. Dorothea, with whom this priest was so impressed, was in fact living in a noble woman's house in a very subordinate position. It can also be assumed that the members of the Institute sought out the direction of the Society, but in the priest's view this was purely for their own purposes rather than for any wider sacramental/apostolic function. The priest was clearly unhappy with the manner of life of the members of this Institute; "retiredness and recollection were fittest for them" in his view and, in common with many of his contemporaries, he feels that it was "unfit that women should live out of monasteries".[61]

The Benedictine's opinion clearly reflected what was generally regarded as appropriate and fitting for women in the Church and society of the time. The apostolate of female religious should be confined to the convent. In his final attack on Ward's Institute, the Benedictine "in a jesting manner" asked Sr. Dorothea if she would be a "galloping nun" or a "preacher" to which the shrewd Dorothea answered that she was "content" in her "present state".[62] It is clear that this secret member of the Institute had as much to fear from these priests as she had from the secular authorities should her real affiliation to the Institute be revealed. She writes, "as long as I am not suspected to be one of you, I am well beloved, and all I do is exceedingly well liked of".[63]

The tone of the report is underpinned by the tenacious spirit of Sr. Dorothea; it was a spirit that served her well when she was questioned by the civil authorities regarding her refusal to attend Protestant services. She describes her encounter in the following way: "I was much urged to conform myself to the laws of the realm, and was

[60] M.C.E. Chambers, *Mary Ward* (vol. 2), p. 37.

[61] M.C.E. Chambers, *Mary Ward* (vol. 2), p. 37.

[62] Sr. Dorothea dates this incident April 2, 1622. M.C.E. Chambers, *Mary Ward* (vol. 2), p. 39.

[63] M.C.E. Chambers, p. 38.

threatened with imprisonment if I would not yield".[64] Unhappy with her answer the Justice expresses the view that "a good husband" would help to change her views to which Dorothea boldly responds: "I answered he would find himself much deceived in that point, because I would not for a million of worlds be other than I was". [65]

It is important to note that Sr. Dorothea's long narrative was not written as a defence of Ward's Institute. Yet for that very reason it is a most effective defence since it indirectly questions the objections that were made by the Benedictine priest who failed to recognise a member of the Institute he was so strongly opposed to. In many ways, Sr. Dorothea represents the dilemma faced by all the members of Ward's Institute. She knows there is opposition, but the precarious nature of her existence prevents her from initiating any meaningful defence. The Church's reluctance to approve the Institute placed its members in a very difficult situation; they had little support to draw on when they came under attack.

The report from Sr. Dorothea provides a very important backdrop from which to view the intelligence sent to Rome from the English clergy. No matter how beneficial their work, the English clergy could not envisage a role for female religious outside the cloister. In the absence of the Church's endorsement, even at its most local level, the Institute was at an enormous disadvantage. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to carry on the apostolic work of education and catechetics without the support not just of the bishop, but of the local priest. The negative words of a priest or bishop would be enough to dissuade the families of potential candidates for the Institute from allowing their daughters to enter. The necessity of this approval was understood not just by Ward but more significantly by her adversaries.

The English clergy's attempts to undermine Ward's plans

In 1621 while Ward was seeking confirmation of her Institute in Rome, Peters suggests that "hints had already been made about a document delivered to the Pope".[66]

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[64] M.C.E. Chambers, *Mary Ward* (vol. 2), p. 33.

[65] M.C.E. Chambers, *Mary Ward* (vol. 2), p. 33.

[66] H. Peters, *Mary Ward: A World in Contemplation*, p. 338.

The author of the document was the Englishman, Archpriest William Harrison.[67] Clearly dismayed by the apostolic activity of the women in England, the Archpriest informs the reader: "they learn Latin, they practise speaking in public in order to hold religious conversation with externs".[68] He accuses the members of the Institute, referred to by him as "Jesuitessess", as women of "bad repute, frivolous and shameless, and a scandal to the Catholic faith".[69] The author also implicates the Jesuits by highlighting the fact that members of the Society are known to have given direction to the Institute.[70]

If Harrison's words were taken at face value, and it can be assumed they were given his position, he was raising serious concerns about the consequences of non-enclosure. It is interesting to note that this is the same objection put forward by the Benedictine priest in Sr. Dorothea's report. According to the Archpriest's report these women were roaming around England, engaging in activities that were both theologically and morally unacceptable for women. According to Peters, Harrison rejects any notion of female co-operation since in his view women were "frail (mollis); fickle (flexibilis); treacherous (lubricus); inconstant (inconstans); prone to error (erroneus); always seeking novelty (novitatis semper affectans) and subject to thousands of perils (mille periculis obnoxious)". [71]

Harrison's attack is clearly based on gender; in his view women were not to be trusted, they were incapable of any service to the Church, and as a consequence they should be subject to the most rigorous authority and control. Given the necessary clandestine nature of the existence of the members of the Institute it is difficult to

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[67] William Harrison (b.1553) was Archpriest of England from 1614 until his death in 1621. Harrison studied in Rome from 1603 until 1608. He was a central character in the conflict between the English secular clergy and the Society of Jesus. H. Peters, *Mary Ward: A World in Contemplation*, p. 351, [n.] 94.

[68] An extract of the undated Archpriest's article is in the Vatican Library, a further one in the Archives of the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide and a third in the Westminster Archives in London. The original cannot be found; the three copies are of the same date. The Vatican library copy bears the title: "Informatio de Jesuitissis ad Apostolicum Sedem per Reverendum Archipresbyterum Angliae nuper defucntum et ab assistentibus post eius mortem subscripta." For copy in Westminster Archives, London see A. XIV, pp. 213 -220. English Translation available in H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, pp. 338-341. H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 339.

[69] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 340.

[70] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 340.

[71] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 341.

establish evidence that would unequivocally support or contradict all the claims made in Harrison's report.

At the same time, in the light of the information in Sr. Dorothea's report, Harrison appears to have been well briefed on the activities of the members of Ward's Institute in England. Peters suggest that he may have met individual members of the Institute "of whom he did not approve".[72] It is clear that the Archpriest used the information he had to present his case to Rome. His case was that women were undertaking catechetical work that was unsuited to their gender and that furthermore they were disregarding the boundaries of the cloister.[73]

The Archpriest died in 1621, his report was taken to Rome by his former assistant, John Bennet, in November of that year.[74] Peters comments on the timing of Bennet's arrival in Rome: it was almost exactly a month to the day before the English women arrived. Peters maintains that it must certainly have been publicly known that Ward was preparing to go to Rome. More importantly still, this "seriously compromising article" could be presented by Bennet as "grounds for a papal audience".[75] Bennet quickly secured an influential position, he found friends among the Curia and amongst these powerful allies he made his thoughts on Ward's Institute apparent. According to Peters, Bennet became an important conduit forming "the channel by which attacks on the Institute could flow into Rome from England".[76]

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[72] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 340

[73] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 340.

[74] Bennet was a Welsh man who completed his theological training in Douai and Spain. He retuned to the English mission in 1591. He was imprisoned for his efforts on behalf of the Catholic community and on his release he, along with his brother Edward, was appointed assistant to Archpriest William Harrison. After Harrison's death he was sent to Rome to secure the nomination of a bishop for England. While there he made a number of influential friends. These connections helped him to secure the appointment of an apostolic vicar for England as well as pursuing his opposition to Ward's Institute. He returned to England in 1623, seven years before Ward's Institute was suppressed. He died a few months after his return. H. Peters, *May Ward: A World in Contemplation*, p. 351, [n. 95].

[75] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 339

[76] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 328

In view of his well connected friendships, Bennet knew more than Ward when it came to the Curia's position on the Institute.[77] Thanks to this insider knowledge, he could reassure his English brethren that the Yorkshire woman could "never in this courte [sic] gett other allowance but with clausure".[78] Bennet was writing in February 1622 while Mary Ward was still waiting for the Congregation of Bishop and Regulars to consider the case for the approbation of her Institute. It would be fair to say that any cleric could have arrived at Bennet's conclusion: the Curia would never approve of a congregation without enclosure.

Bennet's correspondence represented the kind of insider-outsider mentality that kept Ward in the dark with regard to the decisions being made about her Institute while he himself had access to the kind of information that might have helped or hindered her cause. A letter from Bennet to his brother Edward written at the close of 1622 provides a good example of the kind of insider information the English agent had access to. According to his sources the Pope "from the very first day did utterly mislike" Ward and her companions. Bennet informs his brother:

> I knowe some prelates wroughte to speak in there [*sic*] behalfe [*sic*] where his holiness would not heare; yet are as there friends not a shamed to abuse his holiness his name with approbation of soe ridiculouse an institute as here, it is by all men of judgement censured and denied wherof I could tell many ridiculous perticulers.[79]

It is interesting to note Bennet's version of Ward's meeting with the Pope. Whether or not he bases his information on fact is difficult to establish. Even if Bennet exaggerated the Pope's personal opinion of Ward one fact remains. She did not get the approbation she sought.

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[77] Peters identifies Cardinal Ottavio Bandini as a friend of Bennet's. Bandini, who came from Florence to Rome in 1558; Clement VIII made him a member of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars which was placed under his direction until his death. It was in this role that he became directly involved in Mary Ward's case in Rome. H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, pp. 325-328.

[78] Letter from John Bennet to William Bishop, 22nd February, 1622. Original: Westminster Archives London, B XXV/53. Quoted in U. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward und ihre Grüdung: Die Quellentexte bis 1645*, (vol.1), p. 649.

[79] Letter from John Bennet to Edward Bennet written from Rome, 18 December, 1622. Original: Westminster Archives, London, A. XVI, pp. 686-687. Quoted in U. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward und ihre Grüdung: Die Quellentexte bis 1645* (vol.1), p. 736.

There is no doubt that Bennet was an effective channel of communication between Rome and England; his ability to access and disseminate damaging information against the Institute had a detrimental effect on Ward's efforts for approbation. Bennet was not alone, however, in his vigorous protest against the Institute; the views of the Benedictine encountered by Sr. Dorothea in England were well represented in Rome by his confrere, Robert Sherwood.[80] Sherwood wrote a shorter but according to Peters, a "more dangerous" attack on Ward and her Institute. [81]

An attack on the moral reputation of Ward and the members of her Institute

In his pamphlet style document, written between 1621 and 1622, Sherwood launches an attack on Ward and her Institute that goes much further than Harrison.[82] Whereas Harrison was concerned with the need for the enclosure of the women since, in his view, they were undertaking an apostolate unsuited to their gender, Sherwood insists on their enclosure because of their immoral lifestyles. In his attack he maintains that Ward had to leave the Poor Clares because of concerns with regard to her chastity on her begging trips to externs. Allied to this, Sherwood accuses several members of the Institute of having suffered moral shipwreck. The Institute is also accused of entrapping pious girls and spending their dowries while the pupils who are sent to their schools publicly produce immoral plays so that they may be able, according to Sherwood, to consort with seculars or preach in churches. Concern is also raised at the fact that these women have closed their doors to all other clergy because of their preference for the members of the Society.[83]

Speaking in the name of his Congregation, Sherwood suggests to the Gregory XV that these immoral women should be sent to an order already confirmed or enclosure

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[80] Robert Sherwood (alias Sherington) was born in Somerset in 1588 and entered the Benedictine order in Douai. He was ordained in 1615 and in 1621 he was elected Procurator of the English Benedictine community. He represented his Order in Rome up to 1622. After his sojourn in Rome he returned first to Douai and then to England where he was Provincial of the English Benedictines from 1633- 1641. H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, pp. 341-342.

[81] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 341.

[82] Peters maintains that the petition was written between 24th December 1621 and the end of May, 1622. H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 342. Original: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Fondo Capponi 47, ff.64r, 65v. Quoted in U. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward und ihre Grüdung: Die Quellentexte bis 1645* (vol.1), pp.664 –666. For English translation and summary H. Peters, *Mary Ward: A World in Contemplation*, pp. 342-343.

[83] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, pp. 342-343.

should be imposed upon them; in Sherwood's view there was no other remedy but to dissolve their Institute.[84] As with Harrison's report, Sherwood exploits the non-enclosure of the Institute for his own purposes. He presents rumour and innuendo as fact and in the process does irreparable damage to the character and reputation of Mary Ward and her followers.

Sherwood's timing was more than opportune; it was deliberately vindictive. His petition was submitted to the Pope at the same time that Ward was negotiating the approval of her Institute. Thanks to the efforts of Harrison and Sherwood, not just the way of life of the members was being questioned but the moral character of their lives was also being held up for scrutiny. There is no evidence to suggest that Ward was aware of the accusations made in these reports and, in the absence of any defence from the Foundress, these were the reports that were available to the Pope prior to her petition for his approval of her Institute.

Ward's efforts to secure papal approval for her plans

The Foundress arrived in Rome in December, 1621, to present her case to the Pope Gregory XV. Ward's memorial, presented to the Pope for the approval of her Institute, was in sharp contrast to the covert methods of Harrison and Sherwood. In seeking the approbation of her Institute she spoke plainly and directly:

> We humbly beseech that by the authority of the See Apostolique, the aforesayd Institute (holyly observed by the said Fathers of Society of Jesus) [....] together with their Constitutions, manner of life, and approved practice (altogether independent, nevertheless, of the sayd fathers) may likewise be approved and confirmed, in and to us, to be intirely practised by us [...].[85]

The strong reference to the Society of Jesus points to Ward's conviction that the path of the Institute towards approval might be made smoother by the fact that she sought to adopt the Constitutions and way of life of an order that had been previously approved of. While she accepted the limitations that might be imposed on her Institute

[84] H. Peters, *Mary Ward,* pp. 342-343.

[85] A copy of the memorial is available in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Fondo Capponi 47, ff. 50-51v. Quoted in U. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward und ihre Grüdung: Die Quellentexte bis 1645*, (vol.1), pp. 597-600. Dirmeier (vol. 1), p. 598.

by virtue of their gender ("soe farre forth as God hath not prohibited by diversity of sex") a certain naïveté is apparent when the improbability of Ward's request is considered.[86] It was to say the least, highly unlikely that the Pope would approve of an Institute of women who were so closely modelled on the Society of Jesus. This was a fact that her adversaries exploited to ridicule the efforts of the English woman and her company.

In a letter to his brother Edward, John Bennet describes the situation of Ward and her companions in Rome:

> The Jesuitesses one Friday the 18th of this present were received with their petition in the congregation of regulars [...]. They would have thee wandering institute confirmed without clausure and office to take a fourth vowe as the Jesuits to the Pope [....]. They are a fullie to this towne and I assure you have much impeached the opinion which was hold of the modesty and shamefulness of our country women. Fynally without clausure they must dissolve, which is fitt nere knowne with you, that they delude noe more young women to the hazard of there ruyne. Here are carried about many odd histories of them which I have noe leisure to referre.[87]

As Bennet's letter indicates, as well as the fact that Ward's Institute could never be approved of without the acceptance of enclosure, her case was further hindered by the gossip and rumour that were being spread through the streets and piazzas of Rome. This spurious speculation on the character of the Institute was not helped by the sight of Ward and her companions in Rome. These women, who described themselves as religious yet openly walked the streets of Rome and worshipped in its churches, must have been a strange sight indeed to the inhabitants of the seat of Christendom where tradition dictated that those who entered a convent had died to the world never to be seen again. Even the women of the nobility did not appear so openly in the streets and when they did their face was partly concealed by a veil.[88]

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[86] Dirmeier (vol. 1), p. 599.

[87] Letter from John Bennet to Edward Bennet, written from Rome, 25th March, 1622. Original: Westminster Archives, London B. XXV/57. Quoted in U. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward und ihre Grüdung: Die Quellentexte bis 1645* (vol.1), pp. 661-662.

[88] Chambers described the dress of Mary Ward and her companions as a "long black silk cloak, fastened to the top of the tightly fitting white cap" the cloak did not conceal the linen band over their forehead which according to Chambers "strictly belonged to conventual attire". In this description the members of the Institute were dressed neither as religious or secular, a scenario which must have posed difficulties for those who saw them. M.C.E. Chambers, *The Life of Mary Ward* (vol. 2), p. 7.

According to Grisar: "The Roman populace reacted in their own customary satirical fashion: they laughed and ridiculed them" which, in his analysis, was preferable "for if their behaviour had been seen as an innovation, action would have been quickly taken by the authorities".[89] Given the paucity of their resources it would have been impossible for the members of the Institute to travel or dress in the way local custom dictated for women of their class. As a consequence their straitened circumstances drew attention to them, attention which did little to advance or promote the merits of their case.

In her efforts to counteract the damage that was being done to her Institute and to her reputation, Ward asked for permission to found a school in Rome so that the Curia might see at first hand the work of her Institute. Her request was granted and in October 1622 she founded a school at the corner of Via Monserrato/Vicolo Montoro. The school was successful because of its novelty. Pupils were not restricted to education within a cloistered setting and the tuition was given gratis. In her letter to the Infanta Clara Eugenia, Ward writes that one hundred and twenty girls of various ages attended the school daily and that the success of her school was attracting much praise for the Institute.[90] The achievements of the Roman school may have silenced her enemies but their attack against Ward was only temporarily halted.

The Foundress established the school in Rome because of her conviction that the work of the Institute would speak for itself. In her view the school would show the Cardinals the benefits that might be accrued from a more active apostolic role for women in the Church. The foundation of the school was motivated by the hope that the Church would recognise the value of Ward's enterprise. But with the odds stacked against her, Ward's actions were questionable particularly in the light of the increasingly straitened circumstances of the members of the Institute in Rome. Yet, despite the obstacles that were placed in her way, Ward appeared to be undeterred. Her personal insight and experience sustained her through the difficult negotiations in

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[89] J. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute Before Roman Congregations (1616-1630)* (vol. 1), p. 70.

[90] Letter from M. Ward to Infanta Clara Eugenia written from Rome 25 February, 1623. Original: Archives Générales du Royaume de Belgique, PEA 459, ff.60r -61r. Quoted in U. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward* (vol.1), pp. 755-757.

Rome, whether or not she could sustain the loyalty of those who joined her Institute is a question that gives rise to the next stage of this inquiry.

"They are but women": some of the issues facing Ward as leader of her Institute

In a talk to the members of her Institute in St. Omer, Ward refutes the words of a priest of the English Seminary there, who argued that the fervour of the members would soon diminish given the fact that they were "but women".[91] Ward gave a spirited response;

> It is true that this fervour doeth many times growe cold.
> But what is the caus? [*sic*] Is it because we are weomen?
> No, but because we are imperfect weomen. There is
> not such difference betwen [*sic*] men and weomen that weomen
> may not doe great matters [...] and I hope in God it will
> be seen that weomen in tyme to come will doe much .[92]

Her response to the opinion of the unfortunate priest revealed her fundamental belief that women, as well as men, could comprehend God. It was this conviction that inspired those who were loyal to her and inspired new members to join her Institute. Bennet's letter indicates the fact that young women were continuing to join her Institute even in the absence of papal recognition.[93] But papal approval was essential if Ward's Institute was to survive. The necessity of this recognition was urgent: approval was needed to protect not only the flourishing apostolate of the Institute, but also the welfare of the increasing membership of young women who were attracted to its ideals. Parents were withholding the dowries of daughters who entered an Institute that had yet to be officially recognised by the Church. This situation resulted in great difficulties for the Institute regarding the resources they needed to survive.

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[91] Peters is reluctant to assign a conclusive date but suggests that it was either 1617 or 1618. H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 257.

[92] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, pp. 267-268, footnote [n.] 37.

[93] It is difficult to establish the exact numbers of members in Ward's Institute. At the time of its suppression in 1631, the Inquisition archives indicate the profile of the community in the Paradeiserhaus in Munich. There were thirty-three in the community; sixteen were English; ten were German and the remaining members came from Venice, Naples, Spain and France. Among this community of thirty-three there were more than ten novices. There is no reason to suggest that the youthful and international profile of this community was not repeated in other houses of the Institute. I. Wetter, *Mary Ward: Under the Shadow of the Inquisition*, pp. 78-79.

The members were in dire need; far from the extravagant lifestyles attributed to them by their adversaries, they endured a precarious and insecure existence. It was clear that in some places, in Liège in particular, the community was dependent on alms and, as Peters points out, "alms were not always given and even when their beggars' pleas were heard, donations trickled in slowly and thinly".[94] This hand to mouth existence was used to full advantage by their enemies; it proved that women were incapable of managing their own affairs. The truth was, of course, that the successful campaign of the Institute's opponents had widespread repercussions that included the loss of income through the non-payment of dowries.

The difficulties caused by this precarious situation must have created a certain amount of anxiety for those who committed themselves to Ward's enterprise. There can be little surprise that given the circumstances some members, recognising the uncertainty of their future, would have expressed their disquiet amongst each other and even among the friends of the Institute. But one member in particular chose to articulate her concerns in a more public way through a pamphlet entitled *Godfather's Information.* [95]

"Godfather's Information": opposition from within the Institute

The source of the pamphlet, written in March 1623, was a woman called Mary Alcock.[96] Alcock was an early member of the Institute but left it a few years before her death in 1627. It is clear that she was not working alone and that the information she supplied was collected and used by an adversary of Mary Ward's but no evidence remains to indicate who the "Godfather" might be. [97]

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[94] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 424.

[95] The manuscript is headed "Certain observations delivered me by Mrs. Marie Allcock, the first Mother Minister of Mrs. Marie Warde's company Leodes (Liège), yea, the first of all who was publicly so called." Original: Westminster Archives, London, A. XVII, pp.59-62. Quoted in U. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward* (vol.1), pp. 762-764.

[96] Please note: Chambers spells Alcock with a double ll i.e Allcock – possibly in fidelity to the original English spelling, while Peters spells the name with one l i.e. Alcock. For the sake of consistency Peters's version will be used.

[97] According to Peters "Her partner is not known. The title 'Godfather' can have several connotations. It states nothing and can, if it comes to that refer to both to the author or the receiver of the information". H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 356.

The former member of the Institute condemns Ward for her vanity and extravagance; she claims that while Ward and her companions were in England they "carried themselves so vanielye (I may saye immodestly in attire) that they were esteemed curstisans and suspected for hoores".[98] Writing in the same salacious tone Alcock accuses Ward of allowing her sister Barbara to dress in an immoral way, sending her and a companion into a hostelry in an effort to win souls: [99]

> [S]hee dressed her owne natural sister Barbara Warde in a tufft taffeta gowne and riche peatcicoats etc. trymed of the newest fashion in deape jeolowe [*yellow*] ruffes etc. her breaste bare downe to the guirdell, and sent her with on [*one*] compaingnion drest in licke sorte to lie in inde [*inn*] to gaine soules (she sayde) [...].[100]

The accusations made by Alcock are shocking in the implicit suggestions they make regarding the behaviour of Ward and her companions' behaviour. Alcock did not stop at these scurrilous claims. In a further attack on Ward's character Alcock accuses the Foundress of squandering the community's resources on travel and extravagant gifts, she says: "When shee traveileth she ys extraordinary joviall [...] and most lavishe in her expenses both at home and abroad."[101] As well as this, according to Alcock, Ward trained her Sisters with the intention of sending them to other convents with the sole purpose of reforming them:

> [...] she would often affirme and saye, shee was sure when her order was confirmed (which shee kneaw would be shortlye) that manye of her companie by reson of theire worthynes and perfection showld be imployed by his holiness comande and placedin diverse monasteries, to reforme other religiouse orders. Therefore it behoved them to take courage, and shew themselves more then [*sic*] women.[102]

That such a vindictive attack was made, by an early member of the Institute and, given her position, a trusted one, must have struck a severe blow not only to Ward,

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[98] "Godfather's Information", March 1623. Quoted in U. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward und ihre Grüdung: Die Quellentexte bis 1645* (vol.1), pp. 763.

[99] Barbara Ward was Ward's sister and a member of the Institute, she died in Rome in January 1623 and was buried in the English College.

[100] "Godfather's Information". Quoted in U. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward* (vol.1), p. 764.

[101] "Godfather's Information". Quoted in U. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward und ihre Grüdung: Die Quellentexte bis 1645* (vol.1), p. 763.

[102] "Godfather's Information". Quoted in U. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward und ihre Grüdung: Die Quellentexte bis 1645* (vol.1), pp. 764-765.

but also to those who remained loyal to her. There is no evidence to suggest that Ward responded to the attacks. The first reference made by Ward to Alcock in her extant correspondence occurs in 1627. Writing to Winefrid Wigmore, a trusted confidant, Ward says: "Poor Mary Allcock! Mother Elizabeth (Cotton) will tell you she is dead, and how she died".[103] The response indicates not just the benevolent attitude of Ward to an individual who launched such a vehement assault on her but it also points to the possibility that Ward knew that she was dealing with a troubled mind in Alcock.

The claims made in "Godfather's Information" may have had a relatively small audience and, given the questionable motivation of the source, biographers and historians have invested little time in defending Ward against the accusations made in the document. Peters, for example, discounts the veracity of Alcock's claims, and more importantly the reliability of Alcock herself, she suggests: "It is possible, and more than probable, that Mary Alcock was one of those disaffected members of the Institute who disapproved of the expansion of the work of the Institute in the English mission".[104]

In Peters's opinion Alcock might have wanted to participate in the English mission that carried with it "clothing befitting the occasion and a presence in social life" but was precluded from doing so by her role as house-prefect in St. Omer and later Liège. Without disregarding Peters's view, or indeed giving status to such a dubious document, there is probably another issue at play. Alcock's slanderous attack represented more than a petty jealous about clothes and other such accoutrements: it represented a dangerous development in the Institute.

Those members, few though they might have been, who were opposed to Ward, or more specifically to her plans for expansion, could find powerful allies who were more than happy to provide the vehicle through which these disaffected members could vent their anger. The effect of such attacks was insidious; whether they found form in the written or spoken word, the claims made could neither be proven or

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[103] Letter from M. Ward to Winefrid Wigmore, 29th September 1627. Original: CJ Archives, Nymphenburg, Brief, nr. 42. Autograph."Godfather's Information". Quoted in U. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward und ihre Grüdung: Die Quellentexte bis 1645* (vol. 2), p. 245.

[104] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, pp. 355-356.

contradicted. Ward may not have been aware of these accusations but they were corroding her reputation and, as a consequence, the endeavours of her enterprise.

A powerful adversary: the work of the English Agent against the Institute

If there was doubt about whether or not "Godfather's Information" had reached Rome, no such doubt exists about an equally vindictive document penned by the appropriately named Thomas Rant. This priest became the successor to John Bennet, as the Agent for the English secular clergy. His predecessor may have been unsuccessful in his attempts to have the Institute dissolved but he had been successful in undermining the reputation of the members of the Institute and in this regard his successor had much to build on. Ward knew that in Rant she was faced with a powerful adversary. Writing to Winefrid Wigmore she says:

> Mr. Rant, the English priest who negotiates here in Mr. Bennittt's place, makes himself horse with speaking against the Englishgentleweomen, and ther Institute, hath most certainly put upp foole memories against us all full of horrable lyes, to his holyness [Urban VII],to Cardinal Thoris, now Bishop of Perugia, and with him hath done us much hurt [...] I am told he hath put upp the same memoriall to your Cardinal Caraffa [Naples] also.[105]

The Foundress must have been aware of a Petition that Rant had sent to Urban VIII in July, 1624, who in turn passed it on to the Congregatio de Propogana Fide.[106] In his Petition Rant expresses his grave concern to the Pope at the Institute's lack of enclosure. In common with other opponents, he questions the morality of its members and suggests to the Pope that the best solution would be to dissolve the Institute.[107] Peters describes Rant's Petition "which dealt with unauthorised innovations in

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[105] Letter from M. Ward to Winefrid Wigmore, written from Rome, 25 January 1625. Original: CJ Archives Nymphenburg, Brief, Nr. 26. Autograpgh. Quoted in Dirmeier (vol. 2), p.96. Another letter written in the previous year from Ward to Winefrid Wigmore indicates the problems that were arsing for the Instiute as a result of the efforts of its adversaries, including Rant's : "My dear Mother, you wilbe content with thes few lines, for I have rise before day to write them being this day to travel 20 miles in my way to Piruge [....] you would morvell to see how mush opposition there ys already against that beginning. [...] all goes in extremity ill at Leige [*sic*]. In England ours are much contemned".

Letter from Mary Ward to Winefrid Wigmore, written from Rome on 18th January 1624. Original: CJ Archives, Nymphenburg, Brief Nr. 15. Autograph. Quoted in Dirmeier (vol.2), p. 38.

[106] Original: Archivio della S.Congregazione de Propogana Fide, vol. 205, f.435rv, 441v, 442r. Quoted in Dirmeier (vol. 2) pp. 62-64.

[107] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 389.

propagating the faith" as a "clever move". [108] His attack was not made from the point of view of Canon Law, which would have slowed down the process considerably, but from the point of view of women's involvement in an active apostolate and this ensured a more immediate response. The Petition was effective: the Congregation decided that Cardinal Giovanni Millini would represent their decision to the Pope. In their view enclosure should be imposed on the women.[109] All of this was taking place while Ward was preparing her own submission to Urban VIII; nothing had been communicated to her about the proceedings of the Congregation.

The English Agent had enjoyed greater success than other opponents and in his covert enterprise he used every means he could in his attempt to bring down the Institute. Grisar recounts the following incident: "He came into possession, no one knows how, of a small packet of letters which had come from England and were addressed to Mary Ward as General Superior of the English Sisters".[110] Rant made full use of the address given to Ward in the letter: "admodum Reverendae in Christo Matri, Matri Mariae de la Guardia Generali nostrae".[111] As Grisar points out "[h]e used the title to prove that the members of Mary Ward's foundation considered themselves real nuns" even though their congregation had not been confirmed.[112] Rant was apparently enraged by the idea that Ward would assume this title for herself without the necessary approval from the Pope.

The English Agent made every effort to exploit this miniscule piece of evidence. He immediately wrote to Cardinal Magalotti, one of Urban VIII's private secretaries, urging him to "show the address of the letter to the Pope, that he may see the title they usurp without any authority from the Holy See, so that he may provide that such an extravagant Institute should proceed no further".[113] As Magalotti was in Frascati the letter failed to reach its intended recipient but this setback did this did not deter the

[108] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 390.

[109] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 390.

[110] J. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute Before Roman Congregations (1616-1630)* (vol. 1), p. 174.

[111] J. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol. 1), p. 174.

[112] J. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol. 1), p. 175.

[113] Letter from Thomas Rant to Cardinal Lorenzo Magalotti, 15^{h} June, 1625. Original: Westminster Archives, London, A. XIX/50-51, pp. 151-153. M.C.E. Chambers, *The Life of Mary Ward* (vol. 2), pp. 144-145, 168-169 for English summary.

resolute Rant who showed the letter to Cardinal Bandini, one of the Cardinals who was dealing directly with Ward's case, as well as to "three eminent Benedictines". [114] In common with his predecessor, Rant's position as Agent for the English clergy ensured easy access to powerful contacts. Yet again, Rant's objections did not fall on deaf ears and on the 11th April in 1625, the Pope directed the Congregations of Bishops and Regulars to suppress the Institute houses in Italy.[115] It was to be the first step in the road to the suppression of the entire Institute and the arrest of its Foundress as a heretic in 1631.

Conclusion

In the concluding chapters of his seminal work on the English Catholic community (1707-1850), Bossy seeks to articulate the reasons for the apparent stagnation of growth in the population of the Catholic community after the initial spurt in the Counter Reformation era. It is worth quoting Bossy at length:

> If I were asked to choose a single incident to illustrate the turn of the tide I would suggest the rejection of the ideal and practice embodied in Mary Ward's *Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary* [...]. Here, I think, the community had been offered the opportunity for a second wind, which could have carried its phase of primitive expansion on through the seventeenth century. In rejecting it, it registered its determination to play safe, and missed the boat for a couple of generations. [116]

Bossy's observation is striking in its directness: the author implies that Ward's apostolic contribution was not merely advantageous *but necessary* for the Counter-Reformation Church. Moreover, the author implies the stultifying consequences of this rejection not just for Ward's Institute but for the Catholic Community in England. This rejection identified by Bossy began, with the English clergy and with the Jesuits but, as the next chapter will illustrate, it would soon be acted upon by the ecclesiastical authorities in Rome.

The attack by the English clergy may have been motivated by the desire to undermine the status and reputation of the Jesuits but Ward's Institute became the primary

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[114] J. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute Before Roman Congregations (1616-1630)* (vol. 1), p. 175.

[115] The Congregation also wrote to Cardinal Carafa in Naples giving him the same order.

[116] J. Bossy, *The English Catholic Community, 1570-1850*, p. 282.

casualty in this ignominious battle for ecclesiastical superiority. There was one cause which united the English clergy and the Jesuits: the dissolution of Ward's Institute. In the final analysis both groups utterly rejected the notion that women would have a role in the apostolate of the Church. By 1624 much damage had been done to Ward and her Institute; the improbability of approval was guaranteed thanks to the work of her opponents from within and without. Rumour and innuendo had proved to be a valuable currency for the Institute's enemies. The information and reports they had on Ward and her companions had bought them powerful friendships and consolidated their worth in the upper echelons of the Catholic Church.

The investigation in this chapter has identified and recalled some of the more vehement attacks on the Institute and in the light of this investigation two important points come to the fore. Firstly, the attacks are focused on the non-enclosure of the women and the consequence of this for their moral character. Secondly, the women's educational apostolate is not the *primary* target, the opponents are much more concerned with the women's catechetical apostolate and even this is confined to England. In summary, it might be suggested, that even the most vehement of opponents could have tolerated the Institute's educational enterprise if the women had accepted enclosure. This will become an increasingly important issue when it comes to examining the fate of the Institute after its suppression in 1631 and its transfer to Ireland more than two hundred years later.

Given the level of subterfuge and intrigue the Institute's opponents engaged in, it was becoming increasingly apparent that Ward would have to adopt a more circumspect approach in her efforts towards approval. There were few the Foundress could rely on or confide in. Winefrid Wigmore was one such confidant. Wigmore was one of the founding members of the Institute and, as has been noted in a previous chapter, one of its most able educators. The volume of correspondence from the Foundress to Wigmore indicates not only Mary Ward's reliance on Wigmore's skill and ability, but also on her friendship.[117] In her letters she keeps Wigmore informed of her progress, or the lack of it, in Rome. She confides in her friend:

[117] Many of Mary Ward's letters to Winefrid Wigmore include a request from the foundress to take up an appointment, for example, while Winefrid was Vice-Superior at Munich Mary Ward writes to her: "I have byn so long been prating about your Collidg hear in Prague"[....] after this praise of

> I thinke dear child the trouble and long lonelyness you heard me speak of ys not far from me [...]. You are the first I have uttered this conceit so plainly to, pray for me and for the work. Yt grieves me that I cannot have you also with me to help bear a part, but a part you will and shall bear howsoever [...].[118]

The words are remarkable; there can be little doubt that Ward was aware of the growing opposition to her Institute and the problems therein, but her foresight could not have predicted the dramatic consequences of the actions she would take less than six years after these words were written. Both would endure a "long loneliness" and Wigmore would truly have a share in Ward's sufferings. In the early months of 1631 both women were arrested and imprisoned by the Inquisition. What is even more remarkable is the role that both women played in the events which lead up to this catastrophic event. Both women set in motion a chain of events which consolidated the fate of their Institute and lay down the foundations for what would become the dangerous memory of Mary Ward. As the next stage in this study will indicate Ward herself would hasten the arrival of the calamitous events of 1631.

Winefrid's work, Mary requests "your Reverence (Winefrid) with your mition must come towards Prague". (The mission in Prague was founded in 1628). Letter from Mary Ward to Winefrid Wigmore, written from Prague, 10th June 1628. Original: CJ Archives, Nymphenburg, Brief Nr. 51. Autograph. Quoted in Dirmeier (vol. 2), p. 322.

[118] Letter from Mary Ward to Winefrid Wigmore written from Rome, 27th October 1624. Original: CJ Archives, Nymphenburg, Brief Nr. 23 Autograph. Quoted in Dirmeier (vol. 2), pp. 81-82.

Chapter IV
THE SUPPRESSION OF MARY WARD'S INSTITUTE

This chapter focuses on the extent to which Ward herself may have hastened the actions taken by the Church in the suppression of her Institute in 1631. Unaware of the decisions that were being made in Rome, Ward encouraged her followers to defy the efforts of the Pope's representatives to put an end to her enterprise. The result of her failure to adopt a more cautious approach resulted in an ambivalent legacy concerning Ward. On the one hand she is presented as an innocent victim subject to the underhand manoeuvrings of a powerful ecclesiastical organisation and, on the other hand, she is portrayed as a dangerous and defiant schismatic who cared little for tradition or convention. The task of this chapter is to establish the sequence of events which culminated in the suppression of the Institute in 1631. In undertaking this task, this chapter will examine the role played by the ecclesiastical figures who were dealing with her case as well as the role played by Ward herself.

The events outlined in this chapter are the most significant events in the history of Ward's Institute. They resulted in the creation of a legacy so problematic that key figures within the Institute would do everything in their power to obliterate Ward from the landscape of their communal memory. This is an important stage in the investigation. It seeks to shed light on one of the most tumultuous periods in the Institute's history which had a profound impact on its foundation in Ireland. If the Irish foundation hoped to survive and prosper the members of that foundation had to separate themselves from the legacy of one who had been imprisoned and condemned by the Church as a heretic and schismatic. The impact of this self-selected disinheritance will form the subject matter for the latter stages of this investigation.

Ten years of Ward's efforts towards approbation ended in 1631 with Urban VIII's bull of suppression. The effects of this Papal intervention were both immediate and long term. The immediate aftermath of the Bull saw the termination of the Institute and its apostolic enterprise. Although the members of the Institute could adapt and recover from this catastrophe, there was another more lasting and more injurious consequence for the Institute: the condemnation of Ward as Foundress. On the one hand, Ward had advanced the cause of apostolic women religious but, on the other,

she had defied the Church in doing so. The Church responded by placing her under arrest as a heretic and schismatic and a rebel to the Church.

A veiled history: the Inquisition files dealing with Ward's case

The question at the heart of this enquiry centres on the extent to which Ward herself was instrumental in hastening the suppression of her own Institute by providing the Curia with the evidence that would, for once and for all, prove their case against her. This is an issue that has been largely neglected by researchers heretofore and such neglect is understandable given the controversial subject matter they were dealing with. The concern of early researchers was to restore and rehabilitate the memory of Ward and therefore they were understandably cautious in bringing to light any evidence which might further incriminate her in the eyes of the Church.

In more recent years researchers have been concerned with the ecclesiastical and canonical issues surrounding the identity of her Institute and, in the light of this, the focus moves slightly from Ward herself to the broader issues of ecclesiastical recognition and approbation. A crucial element of this particular investigation concerns Ward's dealings with the Curia and this is mainly available in the files from the Inquisition.

In 1998 the Catholic Church opened the Inquisition files concerning the Curia's dealings with Ward during the tumultuous years leading up to the suppression of her Institute and its immediate aftermath (1630-1638). During these years Ward was, according to the research undertaken by Immolata Wetter, "under the shadow of the Inquisition".[1] Before Wetter's publication, only one scholar had been allowed access to the Inquisition files: the Jesuit historian Joseph Grisar.[2] Grisar had been commissioned to write the necessary *Positio* in response to the Institute's request to

[1] The phrase is used by Wetter in the title of her book: *Mary Ward: Under the Shadow of the Inquisition.*

[2] Joseph Grisar was a Jesuit priest and Professor of Modern Church History at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. When the Institute petitioned Rome for the opening of the beatification process for Mary Ward, Grisar was asked to give his expert opinion. In order to carry out this role he was allowed access to the Inquisition files. He was the first and only scholar in the twentieth century to be allowed access to these files. Because of the silence imposed on him by the Church in relation to the files, his book *Maria Wards Institut vor römischen Kongregationen* (published in 1966) ends in 1630 when Ward was about to face imprisonment. The files were open to the public in 1998. It was the first time the members of the Institute had access to the primary sources concerning Ward's case after 1630.

begin the beatification process for Ward. In the course of his research he was granted access to the closed archive of the Inquisition. In 1931 Grisar presented his findings to the Curia and, though he was granted permission to publish his account of Ward's Institute, he was bound to life long silence on the material that he had researched in the Inquisition archives.

Immolata Wetter, an historian and member of Mary Ward's Institute, was seconded to Grisar in 1953 to assist him with his research.[3] After Grisar's death in 1967, Wetter continued the work of preparing the documents for Ward's canonisation process for the Roman Curia. In 1998 the Inquisition archives, about which Grisar had been sworn to secrecy, were opened and Wetter was to spend the remainder of her life analysing the documents until she ensured the dissemination of her research with her publication *Mary Ward: Under the Shadow of the Inquisition* which was first published in 2003.

Intrigue, secrecy and censorship provide the backdrop for the examination of the events leading up the publication of the papal bull of suppression *Pastoralis Romani Pontificis* (1631) and yet, thanks to the work of Grisar and Wetter, a clear picture is emerging which guards against an over simplification of the complex issues that culminated in the suppression of Ward's Institute. In reconstructing the negotiations which took place between Ward and the Roman Curia, Wetter highlights the failure of both parties to understand what they perceived as the intransigent position of the other. Undoubtedly, the Church could not approve that which it had prohibited by Canon Law, but the question also remains as to whether or not the Institute's case was further complicated by the Foundress' naïveté in understanding the political machinations of this powerful dominion.

[3] Immolata Wetter was born in Germany in 1912 and entered Ward's Institute in 1933. She taught in the schools of the Institute until they were closed by Hitler in the 1930s. In 1953 she was seconded with Sr. Edelburga Eibl to work with Grisar on the case for Ward's canonisation process. After the deaths of Grisar and Sr. Edelburga she continued to work on the case alone. She became the accepted authority on Ward disseminating her knowledge through lectures and publications, including *The Letters of Instruction* which are used in the course of this dissertation. In 1998 she began her investigation of the Inquisition files. Her laborious work bore fruit in the publication of her book *Mary Ward: Under the Shadow of the Inquisition.* She died in November 2005 as the English translation was being prepared for print.

Ward's negotiations were characterised by an almost complete lack of understanding of the layers and levels of authority within the Curia. The evidence indicates that this naïveté was interpreted as defiance by her opponents and as a result, the suppression of her Institute was hastened by what the Curia perceived as Ward's disobedience in the face of the Church's authority. The difficulties raised by the apparent inability of both sides, Ward and the Curia, to understand the *modus operandi* of the other form the substantive material of the next stage of this inquiry.

As the previous chapter illustrated, Ward's adversaries were keen to provide the Curia with incriminating evidence against the Institute and their accusations made a significant impact on the position the Curial congregations took in relation to the Institute. In recognition of their co-operation, the opponents were kept well informed of the increasingly pessimistic outlook for the future of Ward's Institute. Ward, by contrast, was kept at a distance. Because of the failure of the Curia to communicate directly with Ward she continued to believe in the possibility of a positive outcome for her case. It was a belief that appeared to be supported by the apparent silence of the Curia; as long as they continued to meet, she believed no final decision had been made. It was a misunderstanding that would cost her dearly. One of the most influential Curial Congregations that dealt with Ward's case was the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide and given the centrality of their role the investigation now turns to the work of this Congregation.

The Congregatio de Propaganda Fide and Ward's Institute

The Congregatio de Propaganda Fide was established by Gregory XV shortly before his death, its first meeting took place in 1622. The Congregation was responsible for the missionary work of the Church with a particular focus on locations where the Catholic Faith was under threat. In 1624, the year of the first proceedings against the Institute, the Congregation was made up of thirteen Cardinals; four of these were already familiar with the case of the Institute since they were also members of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars.[4] Given the composition of the membership of

[4] The Congregation of Bishops and Regulars received Ward's petition in 1622. Their task was to establish whether or not Ward's foundation could be given approval. They refused to recommend the approbation of the Institute unless it accepted enclosure. The task of the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide was to deal with the accusations that were being made against the Institute. Four Cardinals, Bandini, Millini, Santa Susanna and Valeri were members of both Congregations. They were familiar

Propaganda, it would be fair to say that even at the very beginning of its deliberations at least half the members of the Congregation were opposed to Ward's enterprise. Allied to this difficulty was the determined attitude of the Secretary to Propaganda, Francesco Ingoli, against Ward's efforts. In his analysis of Ingoli's contribution to the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, Grisar is careful to be fair to a man, who in his analysis "did not escape the lot of humanity".[5] In his defence of Ingoli, Grisar highlights the onerous responsibility he held as Secretary to the Congregation. He had "to provide equipment, engage workers and train them, open correspondence with the missions and Religious Orders and guide the Congregation onwards".[6] These tasks were undertaken while he maintained the smooth running of the Congregation and, more importantly, exercised discretion and diplomacy in keeping the peace among a diverse group of powerful Cardinals among whose number was the Pope's nephew, Ludovico Ludovisi.

Notwithstanding his indisputable diplomatic and organisational skills Ingoli was no friend of the Institute. The Secretary to Propaganda de Fide was, according to Grisar, a well known adversary of the Society of Jesus and approached the Institute "through Jesuit opponents, whose prejudiced attitude he should actually have seen, but which incited him in the campaign against them [the members of the Institute]".[7] The previous chapter has illustrated the level of animosity that was directed at Ward's

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with Ward's case because of their membership of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. They opposed her enterprise. There could be little hope that the same Cardinals would reconsider their position when it came to deliberate the case in Propaganda. This significant number of opponents was given further momentum by the fact that of the thirteen Cardinals who composed the Congregation, five were, according to Grisar "constantly, or for long periods, absent from Rome". Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute Before Roman Congregations* (vol. 1), pp. 221-222.

[5] Francesco Ingoli was a lawyer and a linguist. He was appointed Secretary to the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide in 1622. He was an able man but his zeal for the law conditioned his approach to innovation as exemplified in his treatment of Ward's Institute. He intervened in Galileo's case by writing a paper in which he maintained the sun moved around the earth, supporting his proposal not with scientific but with theological arguments. His intervention raised his profile in ecclesiastical circles. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol.1), pp. 223-225.

[6] Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol.1), p. 225.

[7] One of Ingoli's primary tasks was to establish or re-establish the power of the Roman Church in the mission fields. It was more often than not the case that the Society of Jesus had already successfully established themselves in the regions Ingoli was interested in. Frustrated by the Jesuits' success Ingoli took a more hardened view against them and as a consequence the opponents of the Society found a listening ear in the Secretary to Propaganda. The association of the Institute with the Jesuits would be a most unfortunate connection when it came to Ingoli's view of them. Thomas Rant, for example, one of the most notorious adversaries of the Institute and of the Society's, and whose work against the Institute has been referred to in the previous chapter, was a friend of Ingoli's. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol.1), pp. 226-227. H. Peters, *Mary Ward: A World in Contemplation*, p. 389.

endeavours by the English clergy and which can largely be attributed to her association with the Jesuits. Suffice it to say here that the consequences of Ingoli's alliance with the opponents of the Society were bound to have a detrimental impact when it came to the formation of his opinion on Ward's Institute.

Ingoli's authority within the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide

Given Ingoli's opposition to the Institute, it would be an understatement to suggest that the odds were stacked against Ward's innovative enterprise. To make matters worse even the working procedure of the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide seemed to conspire against her. All documents sent to the Congregation passed through the Secretary's hands. The Cardinals were already overburdened with other Curial responsibilities and, as a result, the membership was completely reliant on Ingoli to analyse and prioritise the material that was submitted for their consideration. As a consequence the Secretary retained tremendous influence. According to Grisar: "There were times when only he [Ingoli] had the whole correspondence in hand, was the first to read it through, to deal with it, and finally to classify it".[8] In other words Ingoli could dictate the agenda for the meetings and prioritise the points for discussion.

It would be unfair, and imprudent to accuse the Secretary of withholding evidence that would assist in Ward's case or even in her defence. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the Congregation never called Ward to address the accusations made against her nor is there any conclusive evidence to suggest that the Congregation sought to verify the veracity of the claims made by her opponents. According to Grisar, the Congregation was entirely dependent on the accusations levelled against the Institute by the English secular clergy so that the information the Cardinals had to hand on the Institute was, in Grisar's words; "exclusively from the Sisters' enemies".[9]

Many of these Cardinals were by now familiar with the Institute's case and with Ward personally. Given their first hand knowledge, Grisar raises the question as to why these Cardinals remained silent in the light of such spurious evidence. In Grisar's

[8] Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol.1), p. 225.

[9] Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol.1), p. 245.

assessment these Cardinals were: "experienced Princes of the Church, whom one would have respected and have trusted not to take accusations as factual without a hearing and a proof".[10] The Cardinals appeared to retreat in the face of what must have been the most biased evidence presented to them, as Grisar says: "there still remains an unhappy feeling that the Congregation did not order a re-examination of the unproved accusations, whose injustice should have been clear to even some of those involved".[11] In this analysis, justice was not served in the Cardinals' dealings with Ward's Institute. Given the very serious evidence against them it would seem reasonable to expect that the members, or at least the Foundress of the Institute, might be given the opportunity to defend their case.

This failure by the Cardinals to summons Ward to defend her case is significant. It formed a pattern of behaviour which characterised the Curia's dealing with Ward. The Cardinals appeared to give precedent to the accusations made by the Institute's opponents rather than the first hand account of Ward's own testimony. Grisar summarises the "regrettable omissions" in the Congregation's procedures:

> [...] the Congregation did not arrange for the examination of the English Agent's harsh accusations, which were certainly the reasons for the proceedings; [...] they did not invite at that time the Jesuit general, whose Order the opponents constantly pointed out as the founder and benefactor of the Institute; [...] the accused who were still in Rome were given no opportunity of defending themselves [....].[12]

In the final analysis these "omissions" give a clear indication that the Curia were more inclined to attend to the words of the Institute's adversaries than to the direct evidence of the Institute's apostolate which was available to them at first hand in Rome. Moreover, it answers the question as to why Ward and her companions appeared to be so silent with regard to the accusations levelled against them. Unlike their opponents, who appeared to have direct access to such powerful ecclesiastical Congregations, the members of the Institute had to rely on rumour and hearsay. This in turn put them in a precarious position; the lack of official communication with the Institute required a great deal of prudence in discerning the true source of the speculation concerning the

[10] Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol.1), p. 247.

[11] Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol.1), p. 248.

[12] Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol.1), p. 250.

future of the Institute. This was in sharp contrast to Ward's direct and forthright approach when it came to dealing with matters of her Institute. But for all her honesty and directness, the Yorkshire woman lacked an important skill: the ability to read between the lines of Roman diplomacy.

Acquiring a new language: Ward and ecclesiastical diplomacy

In 1624 Ward secured a private audience with Urban VIII at Frascati. Given the content of her conversation with the Pope, it would seem that she had some intimation that all was not well in terms of the approbation of her Institute. In her letter to Winifred Wigmore in Naples she recalls her meeting: "I told his holiness we wear [*sic*] come to supplycate that he would confirme [*sic*] in earth that which had byn [been] confirmed in Heaven from all Eternity".[13] She reminded the Pope of the practical necessity of his approbation since: "till yt [it] were confirmed the parence [ts] of ours would paye no portitons [dowries] and that thereby we suffered" as well as indicating her awareness that "most orders in Gods Church had indevred to hinder us [...]".[14]

Ward's directness was met by Urban's diplomacy. He made no commitment towards granting the Foundress's request, instead he informed her that he had "notis" [notice] of the case and that on his return to Rome he would "be informed how all stood by such Cardinalls as had delt in the matter". It is interesting to note that in response Ward asked the Pope "that yf he would committ it to Cardinals to be discoursed of, that yt might be to some few, not such a number as before".[15] This request indicated Ward's unhappiness, or at least unease, with what she knew of previous proceedings.

This account of her meeting with the Pope provides an interesting insight into Ward's manner of proceeding and it gives a clear indication of her straightforward approach regarding her negotiations with the Curia. It also illustrates her personal courage.

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[13] Letter from Mary Ward, written from Rome, to Wigmore Wigmore in Naples 27th October, 1624. Original: CJ Archives München-Nymphenburg, Brief Nr.23. Autograph. Quoted in U. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward und ihre Grüdung: Die Quellentexte bis 1645* (vol.2), pp. 81-82.

[14] Letter from M. Ward, written from Rome, to W. Wigmore in Naples 27th October, 1624.

[15] Letter from M. Ward, written from Rome to W. Wigmore in Naples 27th October, 1624.

Considering the place of women in the Church and society of the seventeenth century, only a woman of deep personal conviction could have spoken so directly with the supreme authority of the Catholic Church.

Yet the account is also a reminder of her unfortunate tendency to misinterpret the customary courtly behaviour of the Roman court. In her recollection of their meeting she describes the Pope's "carrage" [carriage] as "very pleasing, and gratfull" while his "countenance" was very "contentfull [...] he had neither byn disgusted, nor had a desire to give disgust".[16] Ward was willing to accept the normal displays of polite diplomacy as a sign of benevolence to her Institute; her failure to appreciate Urban's evasiveness led her to believe that the Pope remained well disposed towards her Institute.

The suppression of the Institute houses in the Papal States and Naples

The extent to which Ward's petition influenced the Pope is unclear; but at the end of 1624 Urban appointed a smaller congregation of four Cardinals to review the case.[17] Even if, in the appointment of this special congregation, the Pope was responding in a positive way to Ward's request, Grisar maintains that none of the group was "particularly partial to the Institute".[18] These Cardinals were committed to re-establishing the traditions of the Church; there was little likelihood that they would ever give a favourable response to the novel innovations of Ward's Institute. Given the position of the Cardinals, there is no surprise that Ward would write to Wigmore: "all four [Cardinals] are bent to do what hurt they can"[19] and three days later she wrote that the Cardinals "are all disposed to doe there worst".[20]

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[16] Letter from M. Ward, written from Rome, to Winefrid Wigmore in Naples 27th October, 1624.

[17] Grisar identifies these Cardinals as Bandini, who had previous responsibility for the business of the English women; Millini, who was Vicar of Rome and would have therefore dealt with the English women on their arrival in Rome; Cobelluzio (Santa Suzanna) and Antonio Barberini a member of the Capuchin Order and older brother of Urban VIII. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol. 1), p. 165.

[18] Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol.1), p. 165.

[19] Letter from M. Ward to W. Wigmore, written from Rome, 3rd February, 1625. Original: CJ Archives München-Nymphenburg, Brief Nr.27. Autograph. Quoted in U. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward und ihre Grüdung: Die Quellentexte bis 1645* (vol.2), pp. 97-98.

[20] Letter from M. Ward to W. Wigmore, written from Rome, 6th February, 1625. Original: CJ Archives München-Nymphenburg, Brief Nr.29. Autograph. Quoted in U. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward und ihre Grüdung: Die Quellentexte bis 1645* (vol.2), pp. 98-99.

In this instance the Foundress's instincts were accurate; despite her petitions to the special congregation, as well as her memorials outlining the evolution of her Institute, the four Cardinals decreed that the Institute could not be approved without enclosure. The Cardinals insisted the houses in Rome, Naples and Perugia would be suppressed; it was their view that it would be unacceptable to have such an irregular congregation operating in the Papal States and in Naples. On the 11th April, 1625, the Pope, based on the recommendation of the four Cardinals, authorised the suppression of the houses identified. This was the first step towards the suppression of the entire Institute in 1631.

Despite this apparently clear and conclusive directive, the content of the decree was never communicated to Ward herself. On the 19th of April 1625 she writes once again to Wigmore: "I doe not thinke we shal be sent from Rome, becaus by force we must be expullered, or els we stay still hear. I have long expected thos bushopps that were appointed to come vissit us, but they come not [*sic*] we shall surely hear something of them by the next post".[21] The failure on the part of the Cardinals to communicate directly with Ward led her to believe that her case was still being reviewed whereas in fact efforts were already under way to begin the suppression of a number of houses of the Institute.

The suppression of the three houses identified by the decree was painfully slow. According to Grisar, the English sisters in Naples were unaware of the 1625 decree to suppress their houses and, as a consequence, "they remained there undisturbed for another three years".[22] The reasons for such a delay may be accounted for by local ecclesiastical circumstances, for example, the death of the Cardinal in Naples in 1626 undoubtedly set aside the less urgent matters of the region which included the question of the continued presence of a relatively small group of women who were engaged in an educational apostolate.

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[21] Letter from Mary Ward to Winefrid Wigmore, written from Rome, 19th April, 1625. Original: CJ Archives München-Nymphenburg, Brief Nr.31. Autograph. Quoted in U. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward und ihre Gründung: Die Quellentexte bis 1645* (vol.2), pp. 108-109.

[22] Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol.1), p. 207.

Given the particular circumstances, the rather tentative approach of the Church in carrying out its own decree against the Institute might be explicable and yet a further more intriguing question remains. This question centres on the Cardinals' decision to suppress the houses in the Papal States and Naples only. It seems reasonable to ask that, given the reason for the suppression of these houses, that is, non-enclosure, why the suppression was not extended to include the houses north of the Alps.[23] There is no question of the Cardinals not having the authority to do this: they had been authorised by the Pope to make recommendations on the Institute's case.

In accounting for the Cardinals' and, indeed the Pope's reluctance to pass a final verdict on the fate of the entire Institute Grisar suggests the following reason:

> Even if objection to her plans still existed, rather than resort to rigorous treatment of her case, most of the Church dignatories could not ignore the personality of the Foundress, revered by many distinguished men. Something of what was alive and glowed in her must have communicated itself to at least some of the Cardinals of the Congregation. And that could indeed be the reason why a hasty suppression of the whole Institute had not taken place.[24]

The response posited by Grisar is, of course, speculative and in that regard is not entirely satisfactory. There can be little doubt that Ward was indeed a charismatic woman; her personal letters reveal a warm and candid personality but unfortunately the Cardinals did not keep a record of their views on the Foundress. Despite the lack of documentary evidence, Grisar's suggestion seems reasonable even if difficult to prove in fact given the dearth of the evidence. It should of course also be remembered that the Cardinals dealing with the Institute's case were occupied primarily with matters concerning the Papal States and that issues concerning other regions attracted less urgent attention. But whatever the reasons for the delay in suppressing the entire Institute, the fact remains that its enterprise was allowed to continue in the houses north of the Alps. This gave the Foundress and her companions reason to believe that their case was still under consideration.

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[23] These included St. Omer (founded: 1609); Liège (founded: 1616); Cologne and Trier (founded 1620/21).

[24] Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol.1), pp. 210-211.

The uncertain future of the Institute

It should also be remembered that behind these Curial deliberations there was a very human story that had immense consequence for the members of the Institute. It was imperative that Ward secure the future of her Institute; she could not contemplate failure since, as Peters says: "It was she who carried the crushing responsibility of almost one hundred young women who remained true to her and the Institute".[25] Ward herself had highlighted the difficulty caused by the Church's reluctance to approve the Institute; this lack of official approval caused concern to the parents of candidates for the Institute and, as a result dowries were not paid.

Given that the Institute offered tuition *gratis*, the members were, as has been highlighted in previous chapters, increasingly reliant on alms and this in turn meant that many of the houses were, in Peters's words, "suffering unimaginable deprivation".[26] The failure of the Church to act expediently and efficiently in carrying out its decree did little to alleviate the precarious position the members of Ward's Institute found themselves in. The failure of the Church to act in a more decisive manner simply compounded their uncertainty. Allied to her belief that her case was still being considered by the Cardinals, the responsibility for the welfare of her companions also accounts for Ward's efforts to continue to found convents and schools without the requisite approval of the Church. What was seen as defiance by the Church, and by those individuals within the Institute who were so keen to obliterate her memory, takes on a different perspective when viewed from this context.

Further foundations of the Institute despite the suppression

Believing that her case in Rome was in abeyance, Ward left the city on the 10th November 1626 and travelled North. At the invitation of the Maximilian of Bavaria she established the Paradeiserhaus in Munich (1627) and also made efforts to establish foundations in Vienna (1627) and Pressburg (1628). These foundations were made in order to give financial help to the houses in St. Omer and Liège and eventually those of Cologne and Trier. Where she had failed with the religious

[25] H. Peters, *Mary Ward: A World in Contemplation*, p. 430.

[26] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 430.

authorities, Ward found acceptance with the civil authorities who were more interested in the education that the members of the Institute could offer than in the canonical issues surrounding the Institute.

Despite the success of these foundations Ward's actions are questionable. The understandable, but inadvisable, speed with which these foundations were made was brought to a halt when the same effort was applied to the proposed foundation in Vienna. It seems remarkable that Ward would, within six months of her foundation in Munich, attempt another foundation in Austria: the Institute had by no means consolidated its position in Germany. As well as problems of personnel, the members who had arrived there had yet to prove themselves in adjusting to the language and customs of the place. It can only be surmised that she considered the project had a more than reasonable chance of success and that such a foundation was seen not just as advantageous but as necessary in the Institute's efforts towards approval.[27]

The friends of Ward's Institute expressed their concern at the speed of these foundations. Ward's confessor, John Gerard, now in exile, wrote to Henry Lee that he would advise her to consolidate the foundation in Munich, "better it were to have that house well and fully furnished, than to strive and strain to erect others". Gerard's rationale for this more streamlined approach was clear: "for if that house where you are doe flourish, the fame and opinion of that good which there is done will make them to be desired in other places".[28] His caution did not prevent the foundation in Vienna, as far as Ward was concerned she could not turn away an opportunity that might further the cause of the Institute as well as providing the opportunity for what she perceived to be a necessary ministry in Austria.

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[27] The fact that Ferdinand II, the Emperor of Austria, was the brother-in-law of Maximilian I, Elector of Bavaria, gave Ward cause for confidence for a successful foundation in Vienna. Allied to this, she believed that these two powerful Rulers could use their influence in Rome to further the cause of her Institute. There were also apostolic reasons. Ward saw the need to educate people in the faith since, according to Grisar; "In the once Catholic Vienna only a third of the population had remained loyal to the old Faith [sic]". Ward's educational enterprise would have proved a valuable support to the Emperor on his work at "the restoration of Catholicism to his dominions". Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol. 2), p. 8.

[28] Letter from John Gerard to Fr. Henry Lee written from Ghent on the March 8th 1627. Original: CJ Archives Nymphenburg, Nr. 10. Autograph. U. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward und ihre Grüdung: Die Quellentexte bis 1645* (vol.2), p. 175.

The Emperor was more than generous in his support for the new foundation; he provided the members of the Institute with accommodation and an annual pension which helped to sustain the foundation. The apparent success of the Viennese foundation was to be short lived. Although the foundation had been welcomed and encouraged by the civil authorities, Ward had made a fatal error. She had failed to seek the approval of the ecclesiastical authorities for her establishment.[29] It was a mistake which was to cost her dearly and that would help to consolidate the case that was being mounted against her in Rome.

Viennese disquiet reaches Rome

Two weeks after his return to Vienna, Bishop Melchior Klesl, wrote to Cardinal Bandini giving full vent to his indignation at the maverick foundation which had been established without his permission. During his sojourn in Rome, Klesl had become friendly with Bandini and so his letter would have found a listening ear from an influential Cardinal.[30] Grisar summarises the pertinent points of Klesl's communication to Bandini. He was outraged by the fact that a school had been opened in Vienna without his permission, allied to this the Sisters refused to accept the authority of the Bishop subjecting themselves instead to the Superior General who, in turn, submitted herself to the authority of the Emperor.[31]

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[29] Grisar raises the question as to whether or not "there was guilt in this omission" and exonerates Mary Ward of any such fault by stating: "We may take for certain that Mary Ward and her companions, considering their attitude towards the Church, would never have ignored the obligation, which had been re-enforced by the Council of Trent, if they had been conscious of the fact, that, in their case too episcopal authority could insist with full right on a request for approval". Grisar's argument seems reasonable; there is nothing to suggest that Mary Ward was defying the Church authorities in failing to seek their permission, if she is at fault her fault lies in the fact that she assumed the Emperor had taken care of this responsibility. The matter is one that is based on confusion rather than defiance. As Grisar highlights the pre-eminent position of the Emperor in Vienna, as "the highest Monarch among the Catholic Princes" so that "one could only too easily suppose that further permissions could be dispensed with because of his position as Emperor". Nevertheless it was an unfortunate omission and one that would cost the Institute dearly. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol. 2), p. 11.

[30] Ottavio Bandini was made a Cardinal in 1596 at the age of thirty eight. He was entrusted by Gregory XV with the business of Ward's foundation and his membership of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars and the Congregatio de Propaganda de Fide kept him in constant contact with the Institute's business. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol.1), p. 88.

[31] The mention of the Emperor would have had a provocative effect in Rome, since according to Grisar it "was well known that there was much opposition between the Barberini Pope and the Habsburg Monarchs". Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol. 2), p. 32.

There can be little doubt that viewed from the perspective of Canon Law, Klesl had a case. His permission had not been sought for the foundation in Vienna. The Cardinal had raised a sensitive issue for the Church and this concerned the place of Church authority in Counter-Reformation Europe. It should be remembered that in Ward's plans for her Institute she placed her foundation under the authority of the Pope, rather than the local bishop, and the results of this were now apparent where she had, to all intents and purposes, ignored the authority of the bishop. Klesl seemed determined to make the most out of this issue. He was well informed on the Institute's struggle for approval as he himself had been in Rome during the years where the Institute's case was first being considered (1622-1627). It would be fair to say that, given his knowledge of the opposition to Ward's foundation, his dissatisfaction was not just with the Institute's failure to secure his permission for their foundation but with their presence in the diocese in the first place.

Further allegations made to the Cardinals against Ward's Institute

When the Congregatio met on the 21st March 1628, they were furnished, probably by Ingoli himself, with Klesl's letter. As well as this evidence, Ingoli presented other defamatory evidence against the Institute. Peters identifies the sources of Ingoli's catalogue of accusations against Ward and her companions as coming from Harrison, Sherwood, Kellison and Rant and perhaps *Godfather's Information* as well as the "gossip wagged by tongues in Rome".[32] Given this collection of sources many of the accusations presented by Ingoli have been articulated, in one form or another, in the previous chapter but it may help to underpin the tone of Ingoli's opposition to the Institute by highlighting a number here. According to the evidence presented by Ingoli:

1. The Institute was founded by a Jesuit of little education who was succeeded by a former Poor Clare nun of a masculine cast of mind.
2. The main work of the Institute consists in preaching in countries, in spreading the faith especially among women and even the heathen; in teaching girls, and that in all subjects, as do the Jesuits. Like these, they also take three vows, have no enclosure, and can be dismissed by their general superior although they themselves are bound to the congregation.[33]

[32] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 468.

[33] A copy of Ingoli's document, written in Italian, is available in the Archivo Segreto Vaticano (AV), Misc., Arm. III/34, f.485rv. It is dated July 1628. The Italian edition is available in U. Dirmeier (ed.)

As is clear from these initial accusations, Ingoli was introducing the case against the Institute on the basis of Canon Law by emphasising the fact that the members of the Institute had transgressed the acceptable apostolic boundaries prescribed for their own sex. He then turned to other aspects concerning the way of life of Ward and the members of her Institute:

> 3. They are proud, with a mania for liberty, and garrulous.
> 4. In England and Flanders the general superior drove around in a four-hand, and pretended to be a duchess incognito [sic].[34]

Ingoli's list of accusations concerning the members' moral behaviour was scurrilous and bears a remarkable resemblance to *Godfather's Information*, which was referred to in the previous chapter:

> 5. They make long and expensive journeys, covering the costs from alms received. These journeys are dangerous for their chastity as proved in the case of one of them in Bruges in Flanders. In Naples they were given a house by a distinguished man, offered on the condition that he might choose five of them and have them at his disposal.
> 6. They feign sickness in order to avoid the law of fasting.
> 7. In England they have a bad reputation, and in the Jubilee Year (1625) they were publicly called whores.
> 8. One of them has a child. Her name and her partner in sin can be given.[35]

Although Peters is reluctant to give fuel to these claims by even attempting to defend the Institute against them, nevertheless she is effective in her attack on them when she observes: "[i]t is remarkable that Ingoli could testify to the depravity of the Englishwomen in other parts of the world, but not of those who lived under the eyes of the Curia in Rome".[36] Grisar goes further than Peters in questioning the integrity of those who were willing to accept such specious evidence:

> That such a collection of such [sic] accusations, some insignificant, some atrocious, was taken seriously especially by high-ranking prelates, and used against women who had no possibility of defending themselves, places the foregoing in a dim light.[37]

Mary Ward und ihre Grüdung: Die. Quellentexte bis 1645 (vol.2), pp. 325-326. An English translation is available in Peters and this is the source used here. H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 468.

[34] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 468.

[35] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 469.

[36] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 469.

[37] J. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol. 2), p. 75.

To this day there is no archival evidence to support the claims made by Ingoli's *Relatio*. The Secretary to the Congregatio was relying on hearsay and this was never questioned by the ecclesiastical authorities who held the fate of the Institute in their hands.[38] Even if Ward had been given the opportunity to defend her case, the damage was done. The Church was rejecting her Institute not only on grounds of canon law but on the basis of the moral reputation of the members themselves. It was these accusations that would find their way to the Inquisition files and without any contradictory evidence it was this portrayal of Ward and her companions that would become part of the official record. There can be little wonder that subsequent generations would find such an inheritance so problematic.

Ward's knowledge of the proceedings among the Cardinals

It is difficult to assess the extent of Ward's knowledge of proceedings in Rome in 1628. In a letter to Wigmore, sent from Prague, she writes: "Hear will be fine times, a great persicution in all lykelyhood ys at hand by occasion of the Cardinall Archbushopp of this place, and the Nuntio, as also the Cardinall Archbushopp of Vienna, there letters to the Pops holdiness what iurisdiction [jurisdiction] they should have ovr [over] ours."[39] Her words indicate a very limited knowledge of proceedings in Rome; she was no doubt reliant on the members of the Institute who continued to reside there and who had, in turn, to rely on very vague information.

There was nothing in her correspondence that indicated a comprehensive knowledge of the events in Rome or more importantly the scurrilous evidence that was being read into the records of the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide. She knew there was opposition and that it was coming from powerful sources within the Curia but she showed no awareness of the full extent of the proceedings against the Institute.

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[38] Grisar attempts to get behind the source of the accusations and in the process he vindicates the English women as well as undermining the evidence presented by Ingoli's evidence. There is no need to present the complete analysis provided by Grisar but an example may help to illustrate the evidence he employs to repudiate Ingoli's spurious account of the Institute. In his fifteenth point, Ingoli accuses a member of the Institute as having compromised her vow of chastity at "Bruges" in Flanders. No foundation of the Institute existed in Bruges. J. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol.2), p. 79.

[39] Letter from M. Ward to W. Wigmore, written from Prague, 6th May 1628. Original: CJ Archives München-Nymphenburg, Brief Nr.50. Autograph. Quoted in U. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward und ihre Grüdung: Die Quellentexte bis 1645* (vol.2), pp. 312-313.

Without being fully informed of the extreme measures that were about to be enacted against her Institute, Ward continued to expand her foundation and in the process, to consolidate her ideals and principles as envisioned in the plans for her Institute. Her efforts were to reach a dramatic and catastrophic conclusion.

The final steps towards the suppression of the entire Institute

When the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, presided by the Pope, met on the 21 March 1628 the fate of the Institute was sealed. Given the mounting evidence presented by Ingoli against the Institute, the way was now clear for its complete suppression. Once again a special congregation of Cardinals was assigned by the Congregatio to examine the case; their role was not to investigate the evidence but rather to establish the most efficient way of carrying out the suppression which could prove to be a greater challenge given that the Institute now enjoyed the support of two powerful monarchs.[40]

From the outset there was a serious deficiency in the proceedings, as Grisar states: "the will to prohibit was present before a corresponding examination of the admissibility of suppression was ascertained".[41] There would be no re-examination of the case. The Cardinals met not to deliberate on the merits of the case but to determine how best to terminate the enterprise. The members of the Congregatio who met in 1628 were more or less the same group who met in 1624. Their former reluctance was now replaced by a more urgent need to put a halt to what appeared to be the rapid expansion of an Institute that had failed to secure Papal approval. Grisar highlights the possible reasons for their more determined attitude:

> If they were now in agreement about taking stricter measures, the reason was, that the development that was taking place, and the allusion of the respected Cardinal Klesl to the completely independent procedure of the Sisters, [....], awakened alarm, that a movement was growing that threatened to spread quickly and

[40] Four Cardinals were appointed to examine how the suppression might be carried out; these were named by the Congregatio as Millini, Borgia, Ludovisi and Zacchia (San Sisto). Of the four Millini was a known opponent of the Institute, although it matters little how the rest felt since their task was to ensure the suppression was carried out, not to review that case. J. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol.2), p. 35.

[41] J. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol. 2), p. 34.

> would finally lead to the disruption of hierarchical authority and the old ecclesiastical prescriptions.[42]

In other words in failing to secure the approval of Klesl to make a foundation of her Institute in Vienna Ward had made a serious error. She had undermined the authority of the hierarchy and in doing so she had unwittingly assisted the Church in making its case against her Institute.

The findings of the special congregation of Cardinals

The special congregation met only once, on 13th April, 1628. Their findings were reported to the 94th Session of the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide in the presence of the Pope. Peters outlines the recommendation of the special congregation to the Congregatio:

> [...] they gave it as their judgement that a community of women like the Jesuitesses who lived without any enclosure but who took vows, was forbidden by canon law and should on that account be suppressed; all the more so because they taught girls according to the Jesuits' teaching curriculum, and even [...] intended going on the mission to preach the gospel, if not to distribute the sacraments.[43]

There are, of course, in the judgement clear echoes of the opponents objections to the Institute and these can be summarised succinctly. Firstly, the Institute *could* not be allowed to exist since it blatantly ignored the precepts laid down in Canon Law for women by refusing to accept enclosure. Secondly, the Institute *should* not be allowed to exist since its members undertook an apostolate that transgressed the accepted norms prescribed for women. Moving from the reasons for the suppression, the special congregation then turned to their more specific mandate in recommending how the suppression might be executed with the most efficiency and expediency. The key issue here was to avoid the necessity of promulgating a papal bull since such a move might result in unpleasant diplomatic repercussions given the support of the secular authorities for Ward's enterprise.

The recommendation was made that the Nuncio of each region where the members of the Institute resided was assigned the responsibility of informing the local Ordinary

[42] J. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol. 2), p. 36.

[43] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 470.

that the Institute was to be suppressed. This may have seemed to be the most diplomatic way but, as the example of 1625 has shown, it was by no means the most efficient or even the most expedient since it was too reliant on the local context as will be seen in the next step of this investigation. It also meant of course, that once again, the Church never communicated the outcome of its deliberations to Ward herself.

The suppression of the entire Institute begins

The first house to feel the effects of the Congregatio de Propaganda's Decree was Naples.[44] The instruction for the suppression of the Institute in Naples was forwarded to Nuncio of Naples, Alessandro Bichi on the 14th July 1628. According to the terms of the Decree, and the Congregatio's recommended procedures, it was now the duty of the Nuncio to inform the Archbishop of the suppression but, according to Peters the Nuncio "preserved silence".[45] Dissatisfied with the Nuncio's apparent hesitation the Congregatio turned to the Cardinal Archbishop Buoncompagno himself.

According to Chambers, Buoncompagno was hesitant in carrying out the decree because he was an "especial encourager of schemes of education in his diocese" and "had taken a warm interest in the welfare of the Institute House in his city".[46] Unfortunately, Chambers does not cite her reasons or her sources in making such claims but this does not mean that her suggestion was based on speculation only. The evidence clearly shows that there was a delay in proceeding with the suppression and that the educational enterprise of the Institute was valued by the people of Naples thus supporting Chamber's claim that the Archbishop recognised the value of the women's apostolate. Despite the support of the Cardinal Archbishop for the Institute's enterprise, the suppression was implemented.

Behind these historical facts is, of course, the human story of the women who were members of Mary Ward's Institute and who endured this suppression. According to Congregatio's information there were eight members in the Naples foundation; four of whom were Italian and four of whom were English. The Cardinals recommended

[44] This is ironic since it was one of the houses mentioned in the 1625 ruling but the intended suppression of 1625 was never effectively carried out.

[45] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 471.

[46] M.C.E. Chambers, *The Life of Mary Ward* (vol. 2), pp. 304 -305.

that the Italian women be sent home to their families but the fate of the remaining women is less certain. Their school was now closed and the remaining members of the Naples' community were in a state of dire poverty. Despite the request of the influential citizens of Naples to Cardinal Barberini that the women be able to resume their commendable educational work, they were prohibited from doing so.[47] Even the Jesuit General Vitelleschi was moved by their plight, writing to the Superior of Naples, Mary Radcliffe, he says: "You know very well that anguish is the daily bread of the Lord's servants, and that his Divine Majesty is pleased to be near those who are undergoing sufferings out of love for Him".[48] Vitelleschi instructed the Provincial of Naples to allow the Sisters to remain in the house that they had rented from the Jesuits thus indicating the poverty that was a direct consequence of their suppression.[49]

The tuition the Sisters offered was given without cost, but the boarders, at least, would have provided some income as would the dowries of entrants whose parents recognised the value of the Institute's work. Deprived of their livelihood there can be little doubt that they endured an impoverished existence. Unfortunately for researchers, the archives remain silent on their fate. Referring to this remarkable dearth of evidence Grisar makes the point: "It is regrettable that all further documents dealing with the fate of the house are lacking. So it cannot be said with certainty when the suppression finally took place and what befell the individual Sisters".[50]

The reaction of the opponents to the suppression

When the Decree came to suppress the Institute's house in Vienna and to suspend its work, the authorities there met a very specific challenge: the Emperor strongly supported the work of the Institute. The Nuncio-extraordinary, Giovanni Battista Pallotto, whose previous correspondence had provided the Roman authorities with incriminating evidence against the Institute, now faced a dilemma.[51] He had been

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[47] J. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol. 2), p. 96.

[48] Letter for Muzio Vitelleschi written from Rome to Mary Radcliffe, 16th December, 1628. The Italian copy is available in the Archivium Romanum Societatis Jesu (ASRI), Naples, 16. f. 195v (Nr. 211). An extract in English is available in H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 472.

[49] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 472.

[50] J.Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol. 2), p. 97.

[51] Giovanni Battista Pallotto had written to Rome in June 1628 complaining that Ward and her companions had left Rome without receiving the requisite approval for their Institute. They were now

ordered by Rome to suppress the Institute but, if he carried out this mandate, he would almost certainly lose favour with the Emperor whose support was essential in the highly charged political climate.[52] His manner of dealing with the dilemma would have significant consequences for Ward and her Institute in Vienna.

Pallotto met Ward in Vienna on the 10th September 1628. He did not indicate to her that the decree had come for the suppression of her Institute but persuaded her that the case might still be reviewed and that her presence in Rome would increase the likelihood of a favourable outcome. The once ardent opponent of the Institute now seemed keen to support its cause. Grisar maintains that his personal meeting with Ward may have changed his view but he also acknowledges the fact that her removal to Rome was, to say the least beneficial for Pallotto.[53] In persuading Ward to return to Rome he had placed the problem back in the hands of the Roman authorities. Moreover, the absence of the Foundress from Vienna would ensure that the suppression of the Institute in his region would encounter less resistance.[54]

The Nuncio-extraordinary had acted in a most astute manner. The passage of time may prohibit contemporary commentators from passing judgement on Pallotto's motivation for persuading Ward to go to Rome, but it is true to say that Pallotto did not indicate that he had been ordered to suppress her Institute in Vienna. The Nuntio's dealings were, to say the least, less than direct: the Foundress was encouraged to believe that all was not lost and that her case might still have a positive resolution. Despite debilitating ill-health, she left for Rome in January 1629 convinced that the cause of her Institute might still be saved. She was forty-four years of age.[55]

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in Prague and according to Pallotto they were using the seal similar to that of the Jesuits, as well as this their superior allowed herself to be called the General Superior. A copy of Pallotto's letter is kept in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vatican (BV). Barb. lat. 6956, ff.36r-38v. The letter is dated June 7th 1628. The copy, written in Italian is available in U. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward und ihre Grüdung: Die Quellentexte bis 1645* (vol.2), pp. 319-321. An English summary is available in H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, pp. 455-456.

[52] Pallotto had to keep both the Church, who had issued the decree for the suppression of the Institute, and the Emperor, who supported the Institute's work on side.

[53] J. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol. 2), p. 116.

[54] Despite Pallotto's manoeuvrings it would be at least a year before he would succeed in suppressing the house in Vienna. H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 496.

[55] According to Chambers, Ward was "thrown into a state of severe and complicated illness [...] she could not stand upright or lie down in bed, bur was bent almost in double". M.C.E. Chambers, *The Life of Mary Ward* (vol.2), p. 283. Ward suffered from gall stones and occasionally her letters to her

Ward's efforts to halt the suppression

Ward, and her travelling companions, arrived in Rome in February 1629.[56] The long journey across the Alps in the middle of a harsh winter meant that her health was gravely compromised and her intended business had to be postponed for a further three weeks. When she had made some kind of recovery she attended to her task: the confirmation of her Institute. In June 1629, she wrote to Pallotto informing him of her audience with the Pope. Ward repeated a mistake she had made a few years previously: she interpreted the normal gestures of courtly behaviour as a sign of a favourable outcome for her case. The pattern of behaviour by the Roman Curia also remained unchanged. The Pope ordered another special congregation of four Cardinals to examine the case. According to her biographers, she herself was present at the Cardinals' meeting despite her "cough" which meant that "she rested neither day or night".[57] Her illness did not prevent her from speaking for "the space of three quarters of an hower [hour], without being interrupted with her owne infirmity, or any present finding what to contradict or oppose".[58]

Grisar disputes the claim that Ward addressed the Cardinals. He points out that her appearance before four Cardinals is "not found in any other source" and, that this "omission" is all the more remarkable because "this event, unusual as it appears to us even today, would of necessity have attracted attention then".[59] Moreover, it is highly unlikely that a group of Cardinals who had previously agreed to the suppression of the Institute would sit in silence for forty-five minutes listening to its Foundress.[60] The most likely scenario is that Ward may have been called upon to answer questions by

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companions communicate the condition of her health or the fact that she is going to the "baithes" [baths]. Writing to Winefrid Wigmore in April 1625 she asks for "anie mony can be had there for my going to the baithes (which ys now not without need)". Original: CJ Archives München-Nymphenburg, Brief Nr.32. Autograph. Quoted in U. Dirmeier (ed.) *Mary Ward und ihre Grüdung: Die Quellentexte bis 1645*, (vol.2), p. 109.

[56] Chambers identifies these companions as Winefrid Wigmore, Elisabeth Cotton, Anne Turner, Henry Lee (Roger Lee's nephew) and Robert Wright (a relative of Ward's). M.C.E. Chambers, *The Life of Mary Ward* (vol.2), p. 285.

[57] M. Poyntz and W. Wigmore, 'A Briefe Relation', p. 35.

[58] M. Poyntz and W. Wigmore, 'A Briefe Relation' , p. 35

[59] J. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol. 2), p. 245.

[60] Grisar suggests that the incident recorded twenty years after the event may have been unduly stressed or exaggerated. J. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol. 2), p. 247.

the Cardinals. Regardless of the nature of her participation, the outcome remained the same. Ward's Institute was to be dissolved and she had yet to be informed of this.

After months of futile negotiation Mary Ward left Rome with the impression that her case was still being considered. Grisar accounts for this extraordinary conviction on the part of the Foundress: "There are eight (Propaganda) documents, dated from the period before and after Mary Ward's Roman journey, dealing with the refusal of the petition for Confirmation. Yet none is addressed to the Superior General [Ward] and nowhere is it stated that she was to be informed of the prohibition of her Institute".[61] It is difficult to explain the failure of the Church authorities without entering the realm of speculation; but whatever the reason for their silence, the lack of official correspondence had given the beleaguered Foundress cause to hope.

Ward's misunderstanding of the state of affairs in Rome

The Church's failure to deal directly with the Foundress caused confusion and uncertainty and imbued Ward with the expectation that her case was still being considered in Rome and might yet be saved. On the other hand, Ward showed a clear naïveté in reading the signs; she interpreted the normal diplomatic customs as evidence of support for her cause. Allied to this apparent lack of judgement, the evidence also shows that she continued to establish schools and foundations despite the fact that her Institute had not yet been approved. These are indisputable facts but yet, Ward's actions might still be defended.

It is clear from her letters and other correspondence that Ward was a woman who had a direct approach; she presented her case in a straightforward and open manner and assumed that others did the same. There is no reason to suggest that she exaggerated the tone of her meetings with the Roman Curia or other ecclesiastical authorities. Her meeting with the Viennese Extraordinary-Nuncio, for example, shows that if blame was to be ascribed for the misrepresentation in communicating the real state of affairs then the perpetrator was the ecclesiastical diplomat rather than Ward herself. The second issue concerns her judgement in continuing to found despite the uncertain future of her Institute. Two points might be made in her defence on this matter; the

[61] J. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol. 2), p. 252.

first is that she was encouraged to do so by powerful civil authorities whose support of her work she believed might further the Institute's cause in Rome.

The second, is that she hoped the success of these houses might help to ease the burden of poverty felt by other Institute houses, particularly in Liège. Despite this defence, there can be no diminution of the consequences of the actions that Ward took. Her ongoing effort to found houses of the Institute raised alarm in Rome and consolidated the case against her Institute and yet there is no question here of defiance. Her actions reflect the determination of a woman who not only believed in the necessity of her work but who now carried with her responsibility for the lives of the women who had left family and home to join her Institute. It may have been this issue in particular which motivated the actions she took in Liège and which resulted in her arrest as a heretic and schismatic.

The suppression of the foundation in Liège

On the 5th August, 1630, Nuncio Lagonissa reported to the 127th Session of the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide that the first house of the Institute founded by Ward in St. Omer in 1609 had been suppressed.[62] This coincided with the suppression of the houses in Cologne and Trier (August 1630) but it was the suppression of the house in Liège that was to have the most remarkable consequence for the Institute and its Foundress.

Although other houses of the Institute would suffer the same fate as the Liège foundation, in many ways, it was a foundation that endured more hardship than most. From its beginning events seem to frustrate the possibility of a successful and fruitful Institute foundation. The community had never been able to unburden itself from the heavy debt incurred on its behalf and the conditions, caused by the dire poverty of the members, were horrendous. Peters highlights the fact that between the years 1627 and 1635, nine sisters died, many of these were very young women.[63] It was into this dismal context that Congregatio ordered the suppression of the Institute in Liège on

[62] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 512.

[63] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 512.

the 2nd October, 1629. It was an action which provoked a remarkable response from Ward herself.

Ward's letter of 1630: a final act of defiance?

Although the Cardinals' had initiated the suppression of the Institute they did fall short of instigating an even greater penalty: the recommendation that the Pope would issue a papal bull condemning the Institute. It is ironic then that it was the actions of Ward herself which directly contributed to the issuing of a this papal document the repercussions of which would be felt well into the twentieth century among the members of the Institute in Ireland. In 1631 Ward wrote a letter to the members of her Institute urging them to disregard any efforts made by the ecclesiastical authorities to close their convents. Ward's letter was the final piece of evidence the Church needed against her.

No matter how much evidence might be posited in defence of Ward, it is difficult to explain the letter she wrote to the members of her Institute in Trier, Cologne and Liège. It was a letter in Immolata Wetter's words that "became a dark tunnel bringing her under the shadow of the Inquisition".[64] The letter was discovered by Grisar in the Congregatio de Propaganda de Fide archives. The original letter, written by Ward in English no longer exists. The Latin translation was sent to Rome, the introduction and conclusion are missing.[65] The extant text of the English translation is given here and it reads as follows:

> I am astonished that Ours are losing courage so quickly, while they have so much reason for confidence. But patience! On returning here, I found six weekly letters of yours, as well as others. Regarding those orders for suppression of the Institute, and other matters of the same kind, I would have you know that the basis for what has been determined against us rests on falsehood, and that the decrees themselves were written and sent out by Cardinal Bentivoglio, the old enemy of our Institute. The aforesaid order was given without His Holiness' knowledge. You must not be surprised that I have not written to you sooner about this, since it was not made knows to any of the Cardinals of the congregation to which His Holiness entrusted this business, except for the one above mentioned the only author and promoter of the order. I myself heard

[64] I. Wetter, *Mary Ward: Under the Shadow of the Inquisition*, p. 32.

[65] I. Wetter, *Under the Shadow of the Inquisition*, p. 32.

about it in a letter from Mother Campian.[66] Nor did the Cardinal himself want the matter to come to my ears before the order had been carried out.

Whatever is imposed on us by anyone on the basis of this order is to be rejected by Ours everywhere. They are to excuse themselves with all due modesty and reverence, replying that they had heard from me that the author of this decree was against our Institute, that he had written it on his own initiative, without a mandate from His Holiness, and without the knowledge of the other Cardinals to whom jointly the consideration of that business was entrusted.

And as I have already written in previous letters, if it seems good to bishop or nuncios to proceed a sentence of excommunication (which I would not believe) let it happen; a remedy will be found. It is for Ours to remain faithful to their Institute, and to suffer persecution for it, although this persecution, when the source of it clearly considered, must be judged as an act of great severity. As for the Instruction which seems to absolve Ours from obedience to superiors, I certainly do not know the originator of it; but experience will truly show that only the loss of divine grace can separate us from that undeserved happiness.[67]

In Ward's extant correspondence this letter must surely count as the most remarkable. In it the Foundress indisputably advises the members of her Institute to resist the Church's efforts to suppress their houses. To the objective reader it is quite simply an act of defiance. Some explanation must be offered for the extraordinary instructions given by Ward to her companions. In an effort to defend the statements made by Ward, Peters points to the fact that the letter was translated into Latin from English. The entire letter was not translated, but according to Peters, "extracts from it only were passed on" leading her to suggest that "only the most dangerous sentences, compacted tightly together, were translated and strung together so that explanations or qualifications were omitted".[68] In other words Peters questions the accuracy of the translation of the letter maintaining that the more controversial aspects of the letter were emphasised. Without the full original English version and without knowing the identity of the person who translated the letter from English to Latin it is difficult to agree with Peters' explanation.

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[66] "Campian" was an alias for Winefrid Wigmore.

[67] The letter is quoted in I. Wetter, p. 33 and H. Peters, p. 525 and Grisar (vol. 2), pp. 268-269.

[68] H. Peters, *Mary Ward*, p. 526.

Ward's letter reaches Rome

The Latin version of the letter was sent to Rome by one of the Institute's most ardent adversaries: Nuncio Pierluigi Carafa. The Nuncio to Cologne sent the letter to Francesco Ingoli, the Secretary of the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, on the 10th May 1630. According to Carafa, he received the letter from a friend and in confidence: he does not identify his source. In conjunction with the question of the Nuncio's source, Grisar raise two further issues. The first is whether or not Carafa had the original letter in his possession; the answer is no. He had been asked by Rome to forward the original and was unable to do so. The second question is whether or not Carafa had seen the entire letter; once again the answer is negative. In his reports to Rome Carafa said that he had sent a copy of the letter that he had *seen*, and this was an incomplete letter without an introduction or conclusion.[69]

Given the level of subterfuge that had been exercised by Ward's adversaries a fundamental question arises regarding the authenticity of the letter in the first place. In supporting the authenticity of the letter Grisar makes the following points. Firstly, Carafa would have recognised a forged letter and would not have submitted it to Rome. This seems reasonable, but only on the basis that Carafa would not have been so much concerned with the possible injustice of such a move but with the fact that his own reputation was at stake. Secondly, Grisar points to the evidence of internal information - the reference for example to the "six weeks of letters", "former correspondence" etc - as further evidence of its credibility. Thirdly, according to Grisar, the tone of the letter suits the "open, upright character of the Foundress". Fourthly, the close companions of Ward encouraged the members to follow the instructions given in the letter.[70] Despite the evidence provided by Grisar to support of the authenticity of the letter, he also acknowledges that:

> [W]e have only an incomplete letter of the Superior General translated from the original, which the Nuncio of Cologne probably did not have in his hands, so that for him also a scrutiny of the translation was not possible. From that it follows further that no guarantee is given whether the excerpt is accurately translated,

[69] J. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute*, p. 267.

[70] This is a point that will become particularly evident in the examination of Winefrid Wigmore role as Visitor to the Liège community. J. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol. 2), p. 270.

> or curtailed by omissions. If the letter is to be used as reflecting the mind of the writer, the objections to its complete accuracy and reliability are to be considered unconditionally.[71]

In common with Peters, Grisar highlights the difficulty regarding the translation and in the light of this he questions the accuracy of the letter that arrived in Rome. Such questions did not appear to burden the ecclesiastical authorities who were willing to accept the letter at face value.

Ward's letter: an imprudent action?

Behind the concerns regarding the authenticity and translation of the letter, there is of course a more troublesome issue. This concerns Ward's apparent lack of judgement in sending the letter in the first place. In order to address this issue one question in particular must be addressed. This question centres on whether or not she was correct in believing that the situation justified the instructions she sent to her companions. In response to this question two points might be made. The first point is Ward's reference to Cardinal Bentivoglio, "the old enemy of our Institute", and to her implicit belief that he had a central role in bringing about the suppression. There is no evidence to suggest that the Cardinal played a role greater than that of any other member of Congregatio de Propaganda Fide in advocating the suppression of the Institute. It appears in this instance that Ward was relying on rumours that she had heard in Rome and this was unfortunate. It may have been that the Cardinal was a well known opponent of the Institute but the evidence is not there to support the claims made in the letter.

The second point is that she believed a final decision had yet to be made by the special congregation of Cardinals appointed by Urban VIII. Since a great deal of attention has already been given to the failure of the Roman authorities to communicate their decisions directly to Ward, suffice it to say here that the conviction expressed by the Foundress in the letter is an understandable, albeit unfortunate, one. In the light of these observations it would appear that Ward was basing her statements on erroneous or, at least incomplete information, and therefore it would be difficult to justify the instructions she issued.

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[71] J. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol. 2), p. 272.

No matter how understandable her actions might have been there is no avoiding the fact that Ward was instructing the members to defy the authority of the papal representatives. Grisar attempts to explain the instructions given by her on the basis of "sound moral principles".[72] Ward still believed in her God-given mandate and Grisar points out that in the light of this she saw her community as a "new form" of religious life, "legally permitted on trial with full authority".[73] The members of her community could not revoke their vows, even if the Superior General herself ordered it.[74] While Grisar's argument is well made, it is not entirely convincing. No matter how her words are explained it is hard to avoid the fact that she instructed her Sisters to defy the suppression of the Institute. This alone would be enough to tarnish the reputation of Ward in the eyes of the Church.

There are, perhaps, more human reasons for this lack of judgement. Wetter, for example, highlights a break in the relationship between Ward and her director John Gerard thus depriving her of one of her prudent advisors. Gerard would certainly have cautioned her against sending the letter. Secondly, Ward seems to have been unaware of the levels of authority within the Curia. Her upbringing in recusant England had not prepared her for dealing with an ecclesiastical hierarchy and even in her latter years, as Wetter points out: "It was hardly evident to her that orders given by a nuncio were based on papal authority".[75] And finally, years of petition on her part and mischievous work on the part of her opponents had left her worn down, and as Wetter says; "a certain hardness had built up in her making her cling too tenaciously to her concerns".[76]

The letter is the response of a woman whose struggle for approval had taken an enormous toll. The opponents of her enterprise had succeeded in their efforts to dissolve her Institute and in the process they had damaged the reputation of its Foundress. Ward's letter to her companions marks the final act in a long played out

[72] J. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol.2), p. 283.

[73] J. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol.2), p. 281.

[74] For Grisar's full defence of Ward's actions see *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol. 2), pp. 280 -283.

[75] I. Wetter, *Under the Shadow of the Inquisition*, p. 35.

[76] I. Wetter, *Under the Shadow*, p. 36.

drama for which there could be no satisfactory resolution. On the 15th June 1630 Ward's letter, in Latin translation, came to the attention of the Inquisition.[77] The months before hand would see the unfolding of another episode which would have dramatic consequences for Ward and her Institute.

In April 1630 Ward left Rome for Munich accompanied by Wigmore. On their arrival at Munich the Foundress heard reports that the suppression of the houses was underway. Deeply concerned at this news she dispatched Wigmore as Visitor to Liège, one of the houses subject to the suppression, in September 1630.[78] It was a decision that was to have devastating consequences for both women.

Winefrid Wigmore as Visitor in Liège

As previous correspondence has shown, Wigmore was a woman in whom Ward placed great trust. She had been with Ward at the outset of the Institute's foundation and had travelled with her to Rome during her first negotiations with the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. Wigmore had shown herself to be an able educator and leader whose readiness to answer the needs of the Institute was indisputable. In her role as Visitor to Liège however, she proved to be an imprudent envoy for Ward in a time and place where the Institute was held up to enormous scrutiny.

On arrival in Liège, Wigmore did not immediately declare the purpose of her presence. In her role as Visitor Wigmore was authorised, as Grisar describes it: "to cancel the illegal Suppression of the Houses, to re-establish unity in the community" and "to restore honour to the recognised Rule and obedience to the Superior General".[79] The house had been suppressed in April but a number of Sisters remained living there. On the 5th September she called the community together, removed the superior from office and appointed her own. In direct defiance of the terms of the

[77] The letter reached the community in Liège shortly after it had been suppressed. It caused great confusion and the community turned to their confessor for guidance. The Jesuit passed it on to another Jesuit seeking his guidance who in turn passed it on to the Nuncio. I. Wetter, *Under the Shadow*, p. 37.

[78] In her role as Visitor Wigmore had full power to issue orders concerning individual members and community life. Ward may have appointed Wigmore as Visitor as her presence was needed in Vienna and Munich. J. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol.2), p. 321.

[79] J. Grisar, *Mary Ward's Institute* (vol. 2), p. 323.

suppression, she ordered the remnant of community to resume the previous manner of the conventual routine which included the ringing of the bells and the renewal of their vows despite the fact that the community's confessor had strongly advised them against such action.[80] To all intents and purposes the members of the Institute in Liège were to ignore the instructions of the Pope's representative in favour of their Foundress' emissary.

The actions she took did not go unnoticed by the authorities; the community's confessor resigned from his position when Wigmore refused to follow his counsel. When Carafa, the Nuncio of the region, visited the Liège community the reception was hostile, to say the least. According to Wetter: "When Carafa dared to cast doubts on Mary Ward's nobility, the Visitor reminded him of his own lowly origins and bought nobility".[81] No matter what the motivation for her response this appears to be an enormous lack of judgement on Wigmore's part and one that could only add to the trouble the community found itself in. Wigmore refused to acknowledge the Nuncio's authority by rejecting the decree of suppression. Exasperated by Wigmore's defiance, Carafa brought the women who remained in Liège to trial.[82]

In his letter to Propaganda, Carafa proposed to Ingoli that Ward be imprisoned and a papal bull be promulgated. In his report to the Congregatio, Ingoli drew on Carafa's report of the trial but went further; he proposed that the Visitor should also be imprisoned. The report came to the attention of the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide on 21st November 1630. The next day, Urban VIII, who had presided at the meetings of Propaganda, ordered that all documents in the possession of Propaganda should be forwarded to the Tribunal of Faith. This referral of the Institute's business and more latterly the Foundress's letter to the Tribunal placed Ward, as Wetter puts it, "under the shadow of the Inquisition".[83] Since Propaganda had now passed on the case to the

[80] I. Wetter, *Under the Shadow*, p. 40.

[81] I. Wetter, *Under the Shadow*, p. 41.

[82] Wetter identifies these women as: Mary Copley, Elizabeth Hall, Catherine Smith, Bridget Hyde, Mary Wivell, Anne Morgan and Winefrid Wigmore. According to Wetter, Anne Morgan had already asked the Visitor to leave the community "because of her fear of excommunication". I. Wetter, *Mary Ward under the Shadow of the Inquisition*, p. 42.

[83] I. Wetter, p. 61.

Inquisition, its final act in relation to the Institute was to write to the relevant Nuncios instructing them to imprison Winefrid Wigmore and Mary Ward.

Ward's arrest and imprisonment

One of Ward's companions and the co-author of her biography, Mary Poyntz, witnessed the arrest of her Foundress and described it in the following way:

> [....] on the 7th of February (1631), then a Friday, about four of the clocke in the afternoone, came to our house, the house the forenamed Deane with two Canons of the same Church, reading a letter directed to himself to this tenour: "Take Mary Ward for an Herteicke, Scsimaticke and Rebell to the Holy Church." She blessed herself with horrour to heare that named [....].[84]

Ward was arrested in the Paradeiserhaus in Munich and was transferred to the Anger Convent of Poor Clares where she was to spend the duration of her internment.[85] Because of her poor state of health she was accompanied by another member of the Institute Anne Turner, who, along with the Foundress, had to endure the harsh conditions of their prison. Her companions were permitted to bring her food twice a day and their Foundress, drawing no doubt on recusant background, used the paper the food was wrapped in to write on.[86] The letters, known as the "Lemon Juice Letters", were written by Ward to her Sisters instructing them on how to proceed during the weeks of her imprisonment as well as giving them an account of her own circumstances. The following is an extract from one of these letters, it was written on the 13th February:

> Least I should forget, I have little or noe liquor [lemon juice] left. We can only once a day read what you writ, wanting fire. Your last papers I cannot warme till night. These religious [Poor Clares] are very respectful and charitable, and surely very good. Our habitation is the place of the despaired of the sick [....] where sometimes we fry and sometimes we freeze [....].[87]

Two days later she writes:

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[84] M. Poyntz and W. Wigmore, *A Briefe Relation*, p. 37.

[85] In the meantime, Wigmore had also been imprisoned under the jurisdiction of the Inquisition and remanded in the Grey Sisters' Convent in Liège.

[86] The words were written in lemon juice and only became legible when held over a fire.

[87] The "Lemon Juice Letters" are in the CJ Archives, Nymphenburg Brief Nr.56. Quoted in U. Dirmeier, *Mary Ward und ihre Gründhing* (vol.3), pp. 149-150.

> I have had great pain and lameness in one hip all over, ever since I came hither. Had yesterday and the day before good fits of my old disease [....] yet have abundance of health and strength to spend for my Lord and Master and in His service. Who knows what God hath determined by these accidents. *Vale* be merry and doubt not in our Master.[88]

The remarkable spirit that had sustained Ward throughout the long years of rejection and persecution had not been diminished. It was this spirit that continued to inspire the members of her Institute who remained faithful to the memory of their Foundress long after her death. It is unfortunate that this tenacious spirit would never be known by the first members of the Irish foundation.

Urban VIII's Bull of Suppression: *Pastoralis Romani Pontificus* [89]

With Ward's arrest it appeared as if the situation could not deteriorate any further. Although Ward's release from prison was secured on the 14th April 1631, another catastrophic event was yet to unfold. [90] In the same month of Ward's release, Urban VIII's most severe penalty against the Institute was instituted: the promulgation of *Pastoralis Romani Pontificus* (1631). This was catastrophic for the Institute: once this papal bull was issued it could never be revoked and, as the next chapter in particular will illustrate, this caused immense problems for successive generations of the Institute in Ireland.

The bull condemned Ward and her Institute of "Jesuitesses". This meant that those who continued to acknowledge Ward as Foundress found themselves in a most precarious position. They would be forced to choose between loyalty to Ward or loyalty to the Church that had condemned her as a heretic and schismatic. The consequences of their choices, especially from an Irish perspective, form the subject matter for the final chapters of this dissertation.

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[88] Quoted in U. Dirmeier, *Mary Ward und ihre Gründhing* (vol.3), p. 160.

[89] A "bulla" was originally a circular plate or metal. In the course of time it came to be applied to leaden seals. The "bull" that was used to authenticate the seal of the papacy or royalty eventually came to be applied to describe the document itself. By the fifteenth century a papal bull was distinguished from other documents to describe decrees of grave matter. *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, vol. 3, s.v. "Bulls and Briefs". Thus the promulgation of the papal bull in Ward's case is of particular significance.

[90] Ward wrote to the members of her Institute on the 2nd February 1631 ordering them to obey the Pope's decree.

The bull decreed that all houses of the Institute were to be suppressed; the vows that the members had taken were to be annulled and they were prohibited from living together. The bull condemned the women for undertaking work that the Church considered unsuitable for their gender. An extract from the bull illustrates the point clearly:

> Free from the laws of enclosure, they wander about at will [...] have been accustomed to employ themselves at many other works most unsuited to their weak sex, [...] to female modesty and particularly to maidenly reserve - works which men of eminence in the science of sacred letters [...] undertake with much difficulty and only with great caution.[91]

The innovative vision, the seeds of which had been planted in the recusant background of her native Yorkshire, had been, for once and for all, rejected by the Church. The bull categorically rejected the non-enclosure of the members of her Institute and condemned them for undertaking roles that were considered to be unsuitable to their "weak sex". Ward's refusal to compromise on the issue of enclosure had cost her dearly. Subsequent generations would be willing to adopt a more nuanced position. They accepted enclosure as a condition of support for their enterprise but in doing so they lost sight of a vision that encapsulated a far more radical role for women in society and in the Church.

The vehemence of the language emphasised the complete rejection, even abhorrence, of the notion that women could undertake a more active and collaborative role in the Church. The papal bull described the members of Ward's Institute as "poisonous growths in the church of God" the Pope decreed that they were to be "torn up from the roots lest they spread themselves any further."[92] In the Church's view these women had caused so much harm that they were to be considered as "suppressed, extinct, rooted out, destroyed and abolished".[93] The Bull was posted on the doors of St. Peter's, St. John Lateran, the Roman Chancellery and at the Campo de Fiori, it was sent to the Nuncios in Naples, Brussels, Cologne and Vienna - everywhere Ward was

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[91] UrbanVIII, *Pastoralis Romani Pontificus*, 13th January, 1631. L. Cherubini (ed.) *Magnum bullarium Romanum a beato Leone magno usque ad S.D.N. Benedict. XIV, editio novissimai* (Luumburg, Goss, 1742) (vol.4), n. cx, 180-182. The English translation is given in M. Wright, *Mary Ward's Institute: The Struggle for Identity*, Appendix B, pp. 190-193.

[92] *Pastoralis Romani Pontificus.*

[93] *Pastoralis Romani Pontificus.*

known. This was the last drastic measure by Rome to put an end to the activity of a woman who rejected the conventions prescribed for women religious. It was an action that was to have consequences which would last well into the first hundred years of the Institute's foundation in Ireland. Ward had been publicly disgraced by the Church that she had sought to serve.

In 1632 Ward made one final journey to Rome seeking an audience with the Pope hoping at the very least to clear her name. Peters remarks that "on one anonymous day, whose date has not even been recorded, Ward was acquitted of the charge of heresy".[94] Ward remained in Rome for a number of years under the protection of the pope; though she had been cleared of heresy the suppression of her Institute continued. What had been once been a flourishing Institute was reduced to a small group of surviving members scattered throughout Europe. Realising that her stay in Rome was futile Ward returned to the place which had inspired her missionary activity: England. She died in her native Yorkshire in January 1645 surrounded by a small group of companions.

Conclusion

Wetter was the first researcher to be able to disseminate the record of the Inquisition archives which deal with what happened to Ward's Institute after her arrest. There are many points which might be made in the light of Wetter's research but in relation to this investigation the most important is this:

> According to the documents now at our disposal, what finally convinced the Pope of the need for the total abolition of the Institute was Mary Ward's letter as general superior of 6 April 1630, and her sending of Wigmore as Visitor to Liège with the same instructions.[95]

The investigation undertaken in this chapter of the events leading up to the suppression of the Institute supports Wetter's conclusion. There can be no doubt that it was the Church's intention to dissolve the Institute. Whether or not Ward had written the letter, the suppression was inevitable. But the letter itself was to have a devastating effect. It provoked Urban VIII's bull of suppression outlawing the Institute and its Foundress. The Institute may have had the capacity to recover from

[94] H. Peters, *Mary Ward: A World in Contemplation*, p. 587.

[95] I. Wetter, *Under the Shadow*, p. 130.

the suppression but it would be centuries before it would recover from the effects of Urban VIII's words. A long shadow had been cast over the legacy of the Foundress of the Institute.

The first companions of Ward, including Wigmore, would remain faithful to her memory; they recognised in her a pious woman who had sought only to serve God and the Church. Inspired by her memory, they continued to commit themselves to the idea of an active, unenclosed apostolate for women religious. They continued their work of education albeit on a smaller scale because of the impact of the suppression. As the years progressed, fidelity to Ward's memory became increasingly problematic. If the Institute was to survive it would be essential that it distance itself from the one that was proscribed by Urban in 1631. More particularly if the Institute hoped to achieve the approval of the Church which it was so eager to serve, it had to separate itself from a woman whom the Church had condemned as a heretic and schismatic.

As time progressed the autonomy of the Institute, so valued by its Foundress, continued to feel the weight of ecclesiastical authority. Within this struggle a new generation of opponents attacked the existence of the Institute by drawing attention to the fact that it had been founded by a woman who had been convicted and imprisoned by the Inquisition. For successive generations of the Institute the memory of Mary Ward became a dangerous memory. Every generation would find its own way of negotiating this controversial legacy. But for Ireland a unique situation arose. Almost two hundred years after the death of Ward, the Irish women who would populate the Institute continued to devote themselves to the original enterprise of education but with one important difference: they had never heard of Mary Ward.

From its founding moment, the Irish branch of the Institute was incomplete: it had been denied access to Ward's founding vision. The Irish members of the Institute had to settle for a more acceptable, conventional model of religious life that would ensure the future of the Institute but deny their past. As a result the founding vision was seriously compromised. The question remains as to what version of Ward's Institute arrived in Ireland or indeed whether or not it arrived in Ireland at all. In order to limit the parameters of the investigation, the inquiry will focus on the common link between the original Institute founded by Mary Ward (1609) and the Irish Branch of

the Institute founded by Teresa Ball (1821) namely, the education of women. This investigation forms the subject matter of the next chapter in this dissertation.

Chapter V
BEARERS OF A DANGEROUS MEMORY: FRANCES TERESA BALL AND THE FOUNDATION OF THE INSTITUTE IN IRELAND

The previous chapter has identified the circumstances which gave rise to the problematic legacy that was created around Mary Ward. In the absence of any defence presented on her behalf, the attitude to Ward's apparent defiance became increasingly hardened. The record of Ward's endeavours posed a challenge to the members of her Institute. They would have to choose between fidelity to the Foundress and fidelity to the Church that had condemned her. By the time of the Institute's foundation in Ireland a decision had been made. The form of the Institute that was brought to Ireland by Teresa Ball in 1821 had lost sight of the innovative spirit of its Foundress. In fact, it had lost sight of the Foundress herself. Mary Ward, as this chapter will illustrate, was quite simply written out of the history of the Institute. Teresa Ball (1794-1861) arrived in Ireland with a radically altered version of the history of the Institute which replaced the original innovative vision with a more cautious and conservative one.

Teresa Ball, whose endeavours form the substantive subject matter for this stage of the investigation, provides an important case study. In her efforts to establish the Institute in Ireland, circumstances denied her access to Ward's original founding vision. An examination of Ball's enterprise offers an opportunity to survey and articulate the effects of this imposed history with regard to Ward's educational legacy in the Irish context.

There are two major concerns in this chapter. The first is to account for the emergence of the flawed history of Ward's Institute which arrived on Irish shores in 1821. The second is to examine the implications of this flawed history on the enterprise of the Irish branch of the Institute.

In a letter to Angela Browne, written twenty eight years after she had established a school of the Institute at Rathfarnham, Ball wrote to the Superior at the Bar Convent, York: "I never was informed of the merits of Mary Ward. M. Babthorp [sic] procured

the confirmation of our holy rule".[1] This extraordinary statement captures the full extent of the obliteration of Ward's legacy from the Institute she had founded. The reason for this obliteration can be most fully understood by examining the Papal decree Quamvis iusto and its background.

The prohibition on the recognition of Ward as Foundress: *Quamvis iusto* 1749 and its background[2]

From the time of Ward's death (1645), the Institute had always selected its own chief superior. In 1742, the members of the Institute in the German houses continued that tradition and elected Francesca Von Hauserin as their chief superior. The bishop of Augsburg objected to the appointment; he was keen to appoint the superior of the Augsburg community in order to consolidate his authority over the houses in his diocese. The members of the Institute resisted his attempts and appealed their case to Rome.

The bishop challenged their appeal by highlighting the fact that this was the same Institute of "Jesuitesses", founded by Mary Ward, which had been condemned by Urban VIII. He questioned the legitimacy of their autonomy since this had never appeared in the *Rules* which had been approved by Clement XI in 1703. In response to this dispute, the Pope, Benedict XIV promulgated the Apostolic Constitution, *Quamvis iusto*. In presenting *Quamvis iusto* Benedict XIV strenuously denied that the

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[1] Letter from Teresa Ball to Angela Browne (Superior at the Bar Convent York) 9th January 1849. AIY: 2/C1/13. The reference made by Ball to "M. Bathorp" was to Anna Barbara Babthorpe (1647-1711), who was elected Chief Superior of the Institute in 1697. Anna was a member of the famous Babthorpe family who left England to escape persecution and entered convents and religious houses en masse on the continent. (See footnote no. 28 Chapter II). Realising that Rome would never approve the Institute and its constitutions in the form that had been previously presented, Babthorpe, presented a shorter and revised version of the constitutions which were referred to as 'The Eight-One Rules'. Although the rules were based on the Jesuit tradition (including part of the Jesuit Constitutions), they were also deficient in capturing central elements of the spirit of Ignatian text, particularly with regard to mission, which was so central in Mary Ward's original plans. As Mary Wright points out: "In essence this selection was an amalgam of spiritual ideas and pious and practical exhortations which had been divorced from their original context and so had lost their meaning in relation to the whole". M. Wright, *The Struggle for Identity*, p 54-55.The text, despite or, as Wright suggests, *because* of its limitations was approved by Pope Clement XI in 1703. This is the "rule" referred to by Ball in her letter to York.

[2] Benedict XIV, Apostolic Constitution, Quamvis iusto, April 30, 1749, in *Magnum bullarium Romanun, bullarum, privilegiorum ac diplomatum Romanurum Pontificum amplissima* collection: Benediciti Pape XIV bullarium, Akademische Druck-u Verlagsanstalt, 1966, vol. 3, 54-68. English translation available in M. Wright, *Mary Ward's Institute: The Struggle for Identity*, pp. 196-213.

1631 bull of suppression had been revoked or relaxed in any way.[3] Moreover Benedict was emphatic in stating that the approbation of his predecessor, Clement XI, was for the *Rule* of the Institute and not for the Institute that was founded by Ward.[4] In this emphasis, the notion of *two* Institutes was beginning to emerge. The "first" Institute founded by Ward and suppressed by Urban VIII in 1631 no longer existed according to this Papal intervention. The "second" Institute which Benedict was seeking to protect was "founded" with the approbation of its *Rules* in 1703.

This notion of two Institutes was given further impetus when the Pope decreed that the members of the Institute were prohibited from recognising Ward as Foundress:

> the English Virgins may not in any way acknowledge Mary Ward for their mother or foundress. It is even less lawful for them or any other persons to call upon her as saint in heaven, to pay her any public worship, or to perform any other act by which her asserted or supported sanctity may seem to be approved and attested.[5]

This Constitution was an attempt to protect the members of the Institute but it would have a devastating impact on the identity of Ward as Foundress and the original vision of the Institute. In commending the actions of his predecessor, Urban VIII, Benedict did further damage to Ward's reputation:

> When considering the whole of her conduct, we have reason to admire the leniency of Urban in her regard, who sought to recall her from her errors and her obstinate opposition to the Apostolic Decrees by acts of clemency, rather than by suffering the law to take its course and inflicting upon her the punishments which she had deservedly incurred.[6]

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[3] Urban VIII, *Pastorlis Romani Pontificis*, 1631.

[4] Clement XI Brief, *Inscrutablili*, June 13th 1703. Letters Apostolic by which Clement PP., XI., June 13th, 1703, Approved and Confirmed the Rules AIY: vii-viii. English translation available in M. Wright, Mary Ward's Institute: The Struggle for Identity, Appendix c, pp. 194-195. The approbation of the Rules of the Institute by Clement XI in 1703 has particular significance in the Irish context. In the first place the decree was frequently referred to by the members of the Irish branch in their correspondence concerning matters of government in the Institute. And in the second place, as Ball's letter to York indicates, since this first papal approbation of the Institute was granted to Anna Barbara Babthorpe, the members of the Irish branch accepted and acknowledged her as the foundress of the Institute.

[5] Benedict XIV, *Quamvis Iusto*, 1749. The prohibition from recognising Mary Ward as Foundress of the Institute remained in place until 1909. M. Wright, *The Struggle for Identity*, p. 204.

[6] Benedict XIV, *Quamvis Iusto*, 1749. M. Wright, *The Struggle for Identity*, p. 204.

Benedict was bound to the judgement of his predecessor and the only evidence available to him included the most scurrilous allegations made against Ward which Ingoli had carefully preserved in the Inquisition archives. The object of his Constitution was to protect the members of the Institute who were appealing to him and the only way he could do this was to distance them from the Institute that had been founded by Ward. It was a cataclysmic decision but, the Pope believed, a necessary one.

Given their precarious position it was difficult for the members of the Institute to openly express their opinion on Benedict's decree. If the members continued to recognise Ward as their Foundress their allegiance would identify them as descendants of the Institute which had been founded by her (which of course they were) and the Institute which they had rebuilt would be dissolved once more. In the meantime those who entered her Institute were given an alternative version of their collective history. An example of this alternative founding story is available in the efforts of the Irish branch to document the origins of their foundation most notably through the biographies of their foundress, Teresa Ball.

The erroneous history in the biographies of Teresa Ball

The biographies of Teresa Ball are revealing not just for the information that they contain on the life of the foundress of Ward's Institute in Ireland but, more importantly for this investigation, on the ambivalent legacy of Ward in the Irish context. In his biography of Teresa Ball, published in 1879, the author, William Hutch, is anxious to clarify that there was no connection between the *Jesuitesses* founded by Ward and the *English Ladies*.[7] He states:

> Some writers of eminence have confounded the Jesuitesses with the early members of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary; nor is this so very surprising, since there were many points of resemblance between both Institutes. [8]

[7] The "English Ladies" and the "Jesuitesses" were terms used to describe the same group. Hutch makes the erroneous distinction between the two groups. The only distinction was in the connotation of the terms.

[8] W. Hutch, *Mrs. Ball: A Biography*, footnote (b) p.48. The biography was written in 1879, sixteen years after the death of Teresa Ball and over fifty years since the foundation of the Institute in Ireland (1821). (Dublin: James Duffy and Sons, 1879). It is claimed in *Joyful Mother of Children* (published in 1961) that "the vast bulk of [Teresa Ball's] letters was lost or destroyed by Dr. Hutch". E. MacDonald [A Loreto Sister], *Joyful Mother of Children* (Dublin: M.H. Gill and Son, 1961), p. 70.

According to Hutch there can be no connection between these two groups since Ward's Institute had been condemned and suppressed by Urban VIII in 1631. Highlighting the support the English Ladies received from the religious and secular authorities Hutch asks:

> If the "English Ladies" and the Jesuitesses were *identical* would Clement XI, in 1703, have approved the Rule of the "English Virgins" in the face of his predecessor's decree to suppress in 1631? [...] but why waste argument when the controversy can be finally set at rest by reference to the Bull, *Quamvis Justo,* of Benedict XIV, [...]. In that Bull Pope Benedict XIV *expressly* notices the mistakes of those writers who had confounded "the English Virgins" with the Jesuitesses. [....] the Pontiff goes on to show that *they could not be*, and *never were the same*; and finally [...] he solemnly forbids, under the most severe ecclesiastical censures, any person to assert that "the English Virgins", [....] were identical with the Jesuitesses, condemned and suppressed by Urban VIII. This, we fancy, sets the question at rest forever.[9]

It is interesting to note that Hutch points to the Papal Bulls, (Urban VIII 1631; Clement XI 1703 and Benedict XIV 1749), to make the case for the claim that there was no connection between the Institute founded by Ward, referred to him as the "Jesuitesses", and the English Virgins or the English Ladies at York.[10] Despite the evidence that he presents Hutch's conclusions are erroneous. This chapter will illustrate the convent founded at York had a direct connection to Ward through the person of the foundress of the Bar Convent Frances Bedingfield.

In his biography of Teresa Ball published two years (1881) after Hutch's work, Henry J. Coleridge entitles his work *The Life of Mary Teresa Ball: Foundress in Ireland of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*[11] No mention is made of Ward.[12] Almost eighty

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[9] W. Hutch, *Mrs. Ball: A Biography,* p. 49 footnote (b).

[10] Hutch maintains: "Mary Ward never had the slightest connection, *in any way, with the Convent of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin, at York,* for the very simple, but sufficient reason, that Mary Ward was dead many years before the Convent at York was founded". W. Hutch, *Mrs. Ball: A Biography, p. 49 footnote* (b).

[11] H.J. Coleridge, *The Life of Mother Frances Teresa Ball: Foundress in Ireland of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Dublin: M.H. Gill & Son, 1881).

[12] It is not until his later publication on the history of the Bar Convent at York (1887) that Coleridge makes the direct connection between Mary Ward and the convent at York describing it as "the

years after Coleridge's work (1961), Evangeline MacDonald, a member of the Institute, described the Bar Convent (York) as a house of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, founded by Ward. She describes Ward's ideas for her Institute as so "novel" that they were "considered quite scandalous" in the early seventeenth century.[13] In common with Hutch's publication, MacDonald acknowledges the fact that Ward was arrested as a heretic by the Inquisition and that the Institute she founded was suppressed. But she also points out that Ward's "orthodoxy" was "vindicated" by Urban VIII after her release in 1631 thus validating her acceptability as Foundress of the Institute. In MacDonald's words: "At great personal cost and with great suffering, cheerfully, even joyfully, borne, Mary Ward had blazed a trail in the Church of God".[14] In the space of eighty years, spanning the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Ward is presented as a heretic condemned by the Church to an almost martyr like figure. The truth, as previous chapters have illustrated, lies somewhere in between.

The primary task of these biographers was, of course, to narrate the life of Teresa Ball rather than present the early history of the Institute. Nevertheless the early biographies of Hutch and Coleridge, particularly Hutch, exemplify the problematic relationship of the Institute to its Foundress. Hutch dealt with the issue by dissociating the Institute from Ward, Coleridge chose not to mention her and MacDonald sanitised her. As well as using the Institute archives, Ball's biographers were reliant on the material that was provided to them by members of the Institute. Most notable among these documents is the manuscript life of Teresa Ball.

The origins of the Institute in the manuscript life of Teresa Ball

In the *Manuscript Life of Teresa Ball* (subtitled *Memoirs of Mother Teresa Ball by Sisters Who Were her Contemporaries*) the Sisters give, not only their recollection of their Foundress, but they begin by describing the foundation of the Institute.[15] Their account will be given in detail here since it is significant from two perspectives. Firstly,

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legitimate issue of the labours of Mary Ward". H.J. Coleridge, *St. Mary's Convent Micklegate Bar York (1686 -1887)* (London: Burns and Oates, 1887), see Preface, p. vii.

[13] E. MacDonald, *Joyful Mother of Children: Mother Frances Mary Teresa Ball*, p. 18.

[14] E. MacDonald, *Joyful Mother*, p. 20.

[15] Loreto Archives, Rathfarnham [AIR], "Manuscript Life of M.M. Teresa Ball" P2/20/x. In a note on the manuscript life the archivist says: "It seems to have been written in the 1870's. This may be one of many M.S. prepared for distribution [....] and for Fr. Coleridge S.J." Signed: Mary Blake 1987.

it is the account that Hutch drew on in his biography. Secondly, and more significantly, it clearly illustrates the version of events that the members of the Irish branch of Ward's Institute believed about their origin. The writers begin:

> This Institute is of both ancient and honourable origin. For hundreds of years it has done its work and like many others is the child and offspring of persecution, for exile because of faith was the very occasion of its institution. It is one of the very first if not the very first religious congregation founded expressly for the great work of education [...].[16]

This introduction, although general, contains an acceptable overview of the foundation. It identifies the first members of the Institute with particular emphasis on their nobility:

> Among the first members were to be found many Ladies of the highest rank, descended from the noblest families in England [...] Anne, Countess of Chester, Lady Frances Bedingfield, Lady Barbara Babthorp [*sic*] [...] to these we may add Lady Mary Poyntz, related to the Royal House of Stuart, Winefrid Wigmor [*sic*], daughter of Count Wigmor [*sic*] of princely descent, Johannah Brown [*sic*] and Catherine Smith, both of honourable lineage.[17]

No mention is made of Ward; instead the writers are keen to highlight the exemplary lives of the first members:

> Their time was divided between prayer, religious instruction and teaching. Their manner of life was very strict, they eat [*sic*] but once a day, slept on straw, and to the practice of many other austerities joined hard and incessant labour.[18]

The account deals with the suppression of the Institute in the following way:

> Heaven blessed their work at first with rapid and extraordinary success but hardships, persecution and trials of every kind were not slow in coming to seal with true heavenly stamp, [*sic*] the labours of our first Mothers and sisters in the cause of truth. Even to the saints, the severest trials are those that arise from the opposition of the good, nay often of the holy. And this was the suffering they were called upon to bear. Like their Divine Master who went about doing good to all and yet was reviled [...] so did the

[16] 'Manuscript Life of M.M. Teresa Ball', p. 2.

[17] 'Manuscript Life of M.M. Teresa Ball', p. 7.

[18] 'Manuscript Life of M.M. Teresa Ball', p. 9.

> zealous labours of these noble women meet with misrepresentation and reproof.[19]

The record carefully avoids any mention of Ward and makes no reference to the exact nature of the "misrepresentation" and "reproof". Without mentioning the Bull of Suppression (Urban VIII, 1631), the account explains that the Institute was approved by Clement XI Bull in 1703. In the following extract there is a remarkable reference to the "foundress" of the Institute: "This Bull was issued to Mother Mary Anne Barbara Bapthorp, [*sic*] a woman of great holiness and zeal. The title of Foundress is justly given to her as she rendered many signal services to the rising Institute". [20]

Not only is Ward displaced in this version of the Institute's foundation but the account clearly distances itself from the so called "Jesuitesses":

> An error arose and a report was spread that the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary approved by Clement XI was the same that had been previously condemned by Urban VIII under the title of Jesuitesses. Benedict XIV however fully examined the question and set the affair at rest by a Bull dated 30th April 1749, and beginning "quamvis justo Dei judicio" in which he declares the two orders really distinct, reviews the condemnation of the pretended order of Jesuitesses, confirms the approbation of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary and excommunicates all who shall hereafter attempt to confound the two orders.[21]

This became the official version of the foundation of the Institute. It had been founded by a group of noble English women who had fled their country because of religious persecution and who devoted themselves to the education of young women. Although the Institute they founded had incurred some opposition, it eventually won the Church's approval. This account, as has been stated, contains elements of the true version of events. It is not what is *included* but what is *excluded* that is alarming and this exclusion centres on Ward. No mention is made of the Foundress, her plans for her Institute or the novelty of her enterprise. The account makes no reference to the suppression of the Institute or the imprisonment of Ward and Wigmore; the Foundress is absent in every sense from this version of the founding story. The Institute is given

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[19] 'Manuscript Life of M.M. Teresa Ball', AIR: P2/20/v, pp. 9, 10, 11.

[20] 'Manuscript Life of M.M. Teresa Ball', pp. 24-25.

[21] 'Manuscript Life of M.M. Teresa Ball', pp. 30-31.

a new foundress: Anna Barbara Babthorpe, who is praised for her piety and for her service for the Institute.

Not only is Ward displaced as the true Foundress, but the manuscript life of Teresa Ball makes a clear distinction between the Institute of Jesuitesses founded by Ward and the Institute of English ladies that Teresa Ball entered and brought to Ireland. Moreover, there is a somewhat ominous tone when the writer reminds the reader that anyone who "confounds" the two Institutes faces excommunication. It is perhaps little wonder that Hutch was so keen to adhere to this version of events and explains why Coleridge avoided the issue completely.

There is no suggestion here of dishonesty on the part of the women who recorded this version of events: this is what they had been told and they had no access to evidence which might prove otherwise. In presenting the early history of the Institute no primary sources were available to them, they depended on the version of events that had travelled to Ireland at the time of their foundation.

No matter how this version of events emerged the result was the same: it became *the* official history of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Ireland. Nor did this erroneous version of events remain in Ireland: besides the foundations established by Ball in Ireland foundations of the Institute were also made in India (1841), Mauritius (1845), Canada (1847), England (1851), and Spain (1851). None of these foundations would hear of Mary Ward or more importantly have access to the original founding vision of the Institute. Yet, there *was* a story of origin for the members of the Irish branch and this centred on Teresa Ball. As their foundress, this Dublin woman would design and direct a new chapter in the Institute's history. Her leadership spanned one of the most prolific and productive eras in the history of women religious in Ireland: the nineteenth century. Because of Ball's efforts there was a new beginning for the Institute in Ireland. Before conclusions can be drawn about the implications of the erroneous version of the Institute's history that was brought to Ireland some attention must be given to the Irish foundress herself.

Teresa Ball: her time and place

Frances Ball was born in Dublin in 1794, into a prosperous merchant family. The Ball family could certainly be described as being part of the new Catholic ascendancy that was shaping the social and cultural identity of Ireland in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Her brother Nicholas, having had a successful career in the law, was appointed a judge in 1865. Anna Maria Ball, the second eldest of the Ball children, was a well known philanthropist whose efforts to assist the Catholic cause were not confined to her younger sister's enterprise.[22]

The family had access to an education that was denied to most of the Catholic population. Their wealth made it possible to send the children to be educated in schools that had a particular attraction for the upper classes of Irish Catholic society: the Jesuit College at Stonyhurst and the Bar Convent.[23] Following in the footsteps of her older sisters, Anna Maria and Isabella, Frances Ball began her education at the Bar Convent York, in 1803. The Bar Convent has already been referred to in the introduction to this chapter but given the prominent role it was to play in Frances Ball's life, and indeed in the history of the Irish branch of Ward's Institute, it seems necessary to give it further consideration.

[22] Anna Maria Ball (1785-1871) was a past pupil of the Bar Convent, York, and was among the leading Catholic women in Dublin society in the nineteenth century. The older sister of Teresa Ball married John O'Brien, a wealthy merchant in 1805. Her resources and connections enabled her to establish an orphanage in Harold's Cross Dublin as well as a House of Refuge in Ashe Street. M. Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century Ireland*, p. 36. Among Anna Maria Ball's friends was Mary Aikenhead; during her stay with the O'Brien family Mary Aikenhead was introduced to Daniel Murray. The meeting proved fortuitous for both: Murray was interested in founding a branch of the French Daughters of Charity to Ireland and Mary Aikenhead appeared to be a willing foundress. In 1812, Mary Aikenhead and a second candidate for the new foundation, Alicia Walsh, began their novitiate at the Bar Convent. They returned in 1815 with the purpose of establishing a new foundation based on the York rules rather than following their original intention of founding an Irish branch of an already existing order. Unlike the order Teresa Ball would found Aikenhead, did not limit her apostolate to education. The cholera epidemic of 1832, persuaded Aikenhead, whose sisters had been visiting cholera patients, to set up St. Vincent's Hospital, Dublin. By the late 1800s the Irish Sisters of Charity would become associated with orphanages, asylums, industrial schools, reformatories and hospices. M. Peckham Magray, *The Transforming Power of the Nuns: Women Religion and Cultural Change in Ireland, 1750-1900*, pp. 18-19.

[23] Stonyhurst College was originally founded by the Jesuits in St. Omer in 1593. Ward would have been familiar with its work there since the first school and convent of the Institute was founded in St. Omer in 1609. It relocated to England in 1794. Nicholas Ball attended the Jesuit College at Stonyhurst.

St. Mary's Convent Micklegate Bar York

The Bar Convent was established in 1686 by Frances Bedingfield, a member of Ward's Institute.[24] Bedingfield joined the Institute at the age of sixteen and took her vows in 1633. In 1645, at the age of twenty nine, she was present at Ward's death bed, thus refuting Hutch's claim that there was no direct link between the Institute founded by Ward and the Bar Convent.[25] A link can certainly be seen between Bedingfield and Ward. Her personal knowledge of Ward was no doubt a significant experience for Bedingfield since, inspired by the Foundress, she was determined to return to England to provide a Catholic education for the oppressed community.[26]

The effects of the penal laws resulted in the fact that Bedingfield's efforts were met with strong opposition yet, thanks to the perseverance of the early community, the Bar Convent, according to Henry James Coleridge, was seen as "one of the great and singular glories of Catholic England under the years of persecution".[27] In their annals the members of the Bar Convent community testified to the difficulties they encountered:

> For a long succession of years, suffering and persecution were the portion of the first members of our Institute [...] Rev Mother Frances Bedingfield, who headed the heroic colony [...] was arrested after her arrival in London [...] through the interest of her family, she was liberated but forbidden either to keep a priest or instruct youth.[28]

The annals describe the courage and creativity of the tenacious superior who seems to have imbibed the spirit of her Foundress in the face of such difficulties. According to the Annals: "No fears, no threats deterred her; she changed her name to "Long", and with her little community exchanged the religious habit for a matronly dress".[29]

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[24] In common with the Babthorpes, most of the Bedingfield family entered religious life. Ten of the eleven Bedingfield daughters entered convents, three in Ward's Institute. footnote 58, Chapter I.

[25] G. Kirkus, *An IBVM/CJ Biographical Dictionary of the English Members and Major Benefactors (1667-2006)*, p. 43.

[26] After Mary Ward's death in 1645 the companions remained in Heworth for five years, after the execution of Charles I in 1649 the companions left England and settled in Paris (1650). Frances Bedingfield was the only one of the group that was to return to England.

[27] H.J. Coleridge, *The Life of Mother Frances Mary Teresa Ball*, p. 29.

[28] Extracts from the 'Annals of the Institute', Bar Convent York. AIY:3/F/2.

[29] 'Annals of the Institute', Bar Convent York.

The Bar Convent progressed thanks to the ingenuity of its superior but it also benefited from its location in York where the "Trades [*sic*] people", who appreciated the educational opportunities for their daughters offered by the community, ensured that their bills were "regularly paid". Although they were grateful for this "blessing" the community knew hardship of another kind, as the annalist recalls: "[w]hen the revolution in 1689 broke out and such an addition made to the Penal Law this house was regularly searched".[30] Fortunately for the community "some kind of warning generally preceded the arrival of the pursuivants, which enabled the community to remove the lamp that burned day and night before the Blessed Sacrament".[31]

The persecution of Catholics seemed to strengthen, rather than diminish, the determination of the Bar Convent community in their efforts to promote the Catholic faith. The martyrdom of Fr. Thwing in 1680, for example, left an indelible mark on the community. The Annals' record that the martyr's "hurdle" passed the convent "on his way to martyrdom".[32] The community believed that the passage of this unfortunate priest had made their neighbourhood "hallowed" and their hope was that the house had received a "blessing from the intrepid champion of Christ". [33]

Notwithstanding the trials and tribulations that the members of Ward's Institute in England faced, a letter from a member of the Hammersmith Community reveals the Sisters loyalty to their Foundress.[34] In 1792, well over one hundred years after the death of Ward, Elizabeth Nason a member of the Hammersmith community wrote: "I have as much confidence in the intercession of Mary Ward, as in any of the uncanonised holy persons I have heard of [...]". The writer also informs the recipient that "We visit her [Mary Ward's] tomb every summer". [35] Whether or not such devotion pertained in the York community is difficult to establish. Coleridge makes no reference to the fact. What is clear however is that in 1810 the community at the

[30] 'Annals of the Institute', Bar Convent, York.

[31] 'Annals of the Institute', Bar Convent, York.

[32] Extracts from the 'Annals of the Institute', Bar Convent York.

[33] Extracts from the 'Annals of the Institute', Bar Convent York.

[34] The Hammersmith community was founded by Bedingfield in 1669. She remained there until 1685. There can be little doubt that Bedingfield established many of the devotions to Ward that are mentioned by the member of the Hammersmith Community.

[35] H.J. Coleridge, *St Mary's Convent, Micklegate Bar York [1686-1887]*, p. 241.

Bar Convent elected a Superior whose actions would have far reaching consequences not just for the legacy of Ward in the Bar Convent but for the Irish foundation of Ward's Institute. The Superior's name was Elizabeth Coyney.[36]

Elizabeth Coyney 1559-1826 and her role in the destruction of Mary Ward's memory

Elizabeth Coyney's appointment to the role of Superior of the Bar Convent was preceded by her appointment as Mistress of Schools. It is significant that Coyney exercised her responsibility for schools during the time that Ball attended school there (1803-1808). Coleridge describes Coyney as "one of those earnest characters who can do nothing by halves".[37] Her thorough approach to religious instruction was, according to Coleridge's sources, "conducted on a plan calculated to foster excessive anxiety in spiritual matters, rather than the more salutary spirit of generous and loving devotion".[38] Whether or not this severity had an impact on the type of education offered by Ball will be investigated at a further stage in this chapter. A more pressing and striking concern at this stage of the investigation is the effect of Coyney's reaction to the news of *Quamvis iusto*.

The first signs of revolutionary activity in France brought with it a large number of Catholic émigrés. Many religious and priests arrived at the door of the Bar Convent seeking refuge and the influence of the latter in particular was to have significant consequences for the community. With the arrival of the French émigré priests the community were made aware of Benedict's *Quamvis iusto*. Coyney was horrified to learn that by continuing to look to Ward as Foundress the community were directly opposing the Pope's instructions. In her efforts to re-affirm the community's loyalty to the Pope, Coyney instigated a devastating crusade against Ward's legacy. Coleridge describes it in the following way:

> Every effort was made to obliterate the memory of Mary Ward. Treasured memorials of her were destroyed; books and papers in

[36] Elizabeth Coyney (1759-1826) was born in Holywell. She was the daughter of Dr. William Coyney and his wife Teresa. She was a pupil at the Bar Convent from 1770 to 1776 and entered the novitiate there in 1779. G. Kirkus, *IBVM/CJ Biographies*, p. 66.

[37] H.J. Coleridge, *St Mary's Convent Micklegate Bar York*, p. 275.

[38] H.J. Coleridge, *St Mary's Convent Micklegate Bar York*, p. 274.

> which mention of her occurred were mutilated or consigned to the flames; and the young novices were taught to disclaim all connection with her.[39]

The Superior was so gripped by the desire to establish the orthodoxy of her community she determined that the Sisters would confine their apostolic endeavours to the confines of their convent by adopting a strict form of enclosure.[40] Furthermore the Superior insisted that any foundations that might be made from the Bar Convent would be independent, financially and juridically, of that establishment. This directly opposed Ward's plans to establish a network of communities that would be united by a common mission and governed by a Chief Superior drawn from the membership of the Institute.

In an even greater departure from the Foundress' original enterprise Coyney placed the Bar Convent under the jurisdiction of the local bishop. It seemed as if the Superior of the Bar Convent was set on a course to completely obliterate any association between her community and Ward. Thus the apostolic and innovative way of life Ward and the founding members of the Institute had so tenaciously fought for was replaced by a deeply conservative, monastic form that was heavily influenced by the émigré Benedictine and Carmelite priests.[41]

Coleridge's sources describe Coyney as having a "hot temper" and a "propensity to act from impulse which often betrayed her into indiscretions".[42] These personal traits ill disposed her to deal with what must have been the alarming content of *Quamvis iusto*. Coyney's temperament dictated a remarkably cautious reaction: faced with the choice between loyalty to her Pope and loyalty to her Foundress the Superior chose the former and consolidated her loyalty by destroying anything that could identify the community with Ward.

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[39] H.J. Coleridge, p. 279.

[40] Up to this point the Sisters' ministry had extended beyond the convent to include visiting the sick in their homes. H.J. Coleridge, *St Mary's Convent Micklegate Bar York*, p. 282.

[41] It had been a tradition that the Bar Convent community had drawn on the service of the Society of Jesus as confessors. Once Elizabeth Coyney became aware of *Quamvis iusto* she severed this connection fearing that it would confirm the community as deserving the title "Jesuitesses" spoken of in such a disparaging way in Benedict's bull. H.J. Coleridge, *St Mary's Convent Micklegate Bar York*, p. 279.

[42] H.J. Coleridge, *St Mary's Convent Micklegate Bar York*, p. 277.

Severing a future life line to the remaining Institute houses in Europe

The impetuous character of Coyney's leadership resulted in the isolation of the community from the Mother House in Munich. Having failed to receive confirmation of her re-election as Superior (1810) from Munich, Coyney, became concerned at the possible fate of the Institute there. Under the guidance of the convent's confessors she petitioned the Holy See requesting that York be freed from its juridical ties to Munich and that the community be placed instead under the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical authorities in their own region.[43] The response was favourable, the Papal rescript informed the Superior that the community had permission to "withdraw [...] from their obedience to the Superior of Munich" and to "transfer their obedience to the Vicar Apostolic of the Northern District for the time being".[44]

Since the decree was dependent on the existence of the Paradeiserhaus, Coyney was eager to resolve the matter and to this end she sent an envoy to Germany in order to establish the fate of the Institute there.[45] In her response the Superior of the Munich convent, Françoise Gräfin von Kostelezky opens her letter to Elizabeth Coyney by expressing her "pleasure" at "receiving intelligence" of the York Community.[46] But the positive tone is superseded by the news that the house had been suppressed in 1809.[47] The Paradeiserhaus had managed to survive the ecclesiastical suppression of 1631 but it could not, it seemed, withstand the civil suppression now imposed on it as Von Kostelezky's letter reveals:

> Many of our sisters have died during the time that we have lived dispersed in the city. At the period of our suppression we numbered forty two in community and now we are reduced to twenty–five. We lived in suspense and uncertainty during the

[43] For a more detailed of the treatment of this issue see M. Wright, *The Struggle for Identity*, pp. 95-97.

[44] Papal Rescript, dated June 30th 1816, AIY: 3/C/a. See also H.J. Coleridge, *St. Mary's Convent*, pp. 288-289.

[45] H.J. Coleridge, *St. Mary's Convent*, p. 289.

[46] Letter from Françoise Gräfin von Kostelezky to the Superior of the Bar Convent, April 16th 1817. AIY: 1/16e. The original letter was written in French, an English translation is available in H.J. Coleridge, *St. Mary's Convent*, pp. 289-291.

[47] Mary Wright describes the suppression imposed on the Munich community: "At the beginning of the nineteenth century, liberal reforms based on the theories of the Enlightenment came into vogue in the various German states. As in France, governments took control of education away from the church. The suppression of religious houses, which began with the closure of contemplative communities in 1802, affected the Paradeiserhaus in Munich in 1809". M. Wright, *The Struggle for Identity*, p. 89.

> last seven years that preceded this catastrophe, and during that time we had much to suffer from every possible kind of trouble.[48]

Despite the bleak news from the Paradeiserhaus, Françoise informed the recipient that the Institute houses in Augsburg, Altötting and Austria were "flourishing" and that they continued to receive novices.[49] Coyney, for reasons known only to herself, chose not to make contact with these houses and adopted instead a separatist approach removing the York community from the remaining houses of Ward's Institute.

It is unfortunate that time and circumstance would have placed Elizabeth Coyney in a key leadership position in the Bar Convent at such a significant moment in its history. In her term as Superior of the Bar Convent, Coyney had damaged the legacy of Ward by replacing the original innovative vision with a cautious and conservative one. In her efforts to confirm the community's loyalty to the Pope and his representatives she handed over the autonomy that formed the bedrock of Ward's plans for her Institute. In her vehement adherence to the prescripts of *Quamvis iusto* she denied the rightful place of Ward as Foundress and by separating from the European houses she delayed the possibility of communicating with, and thus rekindling, the original founding vision for future generations. In the absence of any record of the reasons for the decisions Coyney made, the best defence that can be made in her favour is that the actions she took were motivated by her desire to protect her community from the wrath of *Quamvis iusto.*

It is extraordinary that Coyney would have occupied such key roles in Ball's life, first as her Mistress of Schools and then as her Superior when she entered the community in York. Since she was denied access to the founding story and the original vision of Mary Ward, the Irish woman would acquire instead the spirit of the Bar Convent. This was the spirit which laid the foundation stone of Teresa Ball's Irish mission. In order to appreciate this vision some attention needs to be given to the education Ball herself received at the Bar Convent.

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[48] Letter from Françoise Gräfin von Kostelezky to the Superior of the Bar Convent, April 16th 1817.

[49] Letter from Françoise Gräfin von Kostelezky to the Superior of the Bar Convent, April 16th 1817.

Teresa Ball's education at the Bar Convent

When Ball left Dublin in 1803 to attend school in the Bar Convent she became part of an establishment that was to form the archetype for the schools she would subsequently found. Her strong personal connection to her alma mater, and subsequently the home of her religious formation, ensured the constant interchange of policies and ideas that shaped the kind of education she provided for women in Ireland.

The biographers of Ball and the archives of the Bar Convent have little to say about the school days of the Irish foundress. Hutch informs his reader: "Unfortunately, but few records of Miss Ball's school-days at York have been preserved to us".[50] This is hardly surprising given that no record would be kept of the lives of individual pupils. The dearth of archival material does not, however, prevent Hutch from commenting that his subject "not only won the esteem of her superiors at York, but she was also beloved by her young companions for her good-natured disposition and the winning amiability of her manner".[51]

To support his claim, Hutch points to the life long friendship that exited between Ball and her school friends, Elena Roberts and Christina Gordon.[52] The former would send her children to the school founded by Ball at Rathfarnham, while Christina Gordon would write of her school friend: "any one connected with my *first,* my *best*, and my *dearest* friend, Frances Ball, must be ever dear to me".[53]

Apart from the efforts made by Hutch to describe the personality of Ball little can be said by way of the curriculum that she encountered while a student at the Bar Convent. The account books however give a glimpse into the nature of the educational environment she shared with three other Irish girls as well as students

[50] W. Hutch, *Mrs. Ball: A Biography*, p. 8.

[51] W. Hutch, *Mrs. Ball: A Biography*, p. 13.

[52] Elena Roberts's daughter, Concepcion Maria Magdelena Lopez, would be educated at the Bar Convent but would enter in Teresa Ball's foundation, Loreto Abbey, Rathfarnham in 1839. Mac Donald describes Lopez as one of Ball's "most trusted and efficient auxiliaries". She held the role of Superior for most of her religious life. E. Mac Donald, *Joyful Mother*, pp. 184-185.

[53] W. Hutch, *Mrs. Ball: A Biography*, p. 14.

from Yorkshire, Durham, Cumbria and Cadiz.[54] In 1804 Teresa Ball's parents received the following receipt for their daughter's expenses at the Bar Convent.

Dancing 2~2
Music Lessons, use and tuning [of] instruments 3~9
Flannel, Gloves, Muslin Sashes, Cutting Hair 10~6
Repairing gowns and frocks 3~6
Washing £ 1~10 Shoes 14~9 New Stays 15
Letter 1~4 paper pens books 15 ~9 1~5 2~19~9
Letter 1~4 paper pens books 15~ 9 1~5
Materials for work 1~49
Spending money, sundries (medicines) 1~1
Board 10~10

The accounts record that the bill was paid in July with the sum of £30 and that the balance (£5~9~6) was credited to Ms Ball's account.[55] It has already been stated that Coyney was Mistress of Schools while Ball attended the Bar Convent, although described by the Bar Convent's archivist as a strict disciplinarian", it also clear that this educational regime of the school was not restricted to academic pursuits. The inclusion of music and dancing were, of course, seen as appropriate for the education of the young ladies in the care of the community.

It is also interesting to note the allowance of spending money; unfortunately there is no indication of where or how the money was spent but its inclusion indicates that the pupils had some outlet from their daily lessons. The expenses that were accrued on clothing reflect the needs of a growing child and the itemised bill also indicated the luxuries, including "muslin sashes", which the wealthy merchant family could afford for their young daughter.

[54] Bar Convent Account Books for School, "Copies of the Young Ladies Bills from Jan 1797", AIY: A/C B4. The account book indicates that there fourteen girls in Teresa Ball's class. The Irish girls are named as: Frances Butler, Jane Dames and Catherine Doddy.

[55] 'Account Books', 1804, p. 234.

The accounts also show that the inhabitants of the school did not escape illness as the bill for "medicines" indicate. The children's health was a particular concern for the community; it was essential to keep infectious illnesses at bay or, at the very least to isolate them, and to this end the Infirmarian had a particularly onerous responsibility.[56] The entry in the account books for Teresa Ball in 1805 include the expense incurred for two "mourning frocks, petticoats, shawls and markings"; a somewhat poignant reference to the death of the young girl's father.[57]

The curriculum at the Bar Convent

Despite the interesting details that the accounts offer the reader, they give little insight into the provision of academic subjects available to the students at the Bar Convent. In order to attain this information earlier records must be referred to. The first of these records was written in 1638; it was a report on the educational enterprise of the Institute describing it as being characterised by "unusual excellence".[58] The pupils were taught "Latin, German, French, English and Italian". The writer also reports that the pupils were "instructed" in a "variety of general knowledge, music, painting and embroidery". Great emphasis was laid on "self-control and self-government" as well as the "fear and love of God".[59] As the second chapter of this study has highlighted, these subjects were also identified in Ward's three plans for her Institute. At a first glance the curriculum looks conservative but, as a previous survey of the provision for women's education had illustrated, the inclusion of Latin brought an innovative departure in women's education.

Almost one hundred years after this report was written, Ann Aspinal, in her efforts to extend the boundaries of the Bar Convent sought legal advice in order to procure the

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[56] Helen (Sr. Joseph) Kirby was born in Lancashire in 1775 and was admitted to the Bar Convent in 1798. According to the CJ/IBVM *Biographies* she served for many years as Infirmarian to the "pensioners" i.e. the children in the boarding school. Helen Kirby died in 1864. Her dates suggest that she would have been Infirmarian during Teresa Ball's school days. G. Kirkus, *IBVM/CJ Biographies*, p.115. Concern for health and anxiety with regard to illness were not confined to the eighteenth century. It remained a concern for Teresa Ball when she founded her own school; she rarely refers to the pupils at her school without making reference to their health as a survey of her letters will show.

[57] 'Account Books', 1805 p. 252.

[58] 'Note on Education given by the English Ladies', 1638. AIY: 5/A/7.

[59] 'Note on Education given by the English Ladies', 1638.

necessary permissions for her plans.[60] The "advice" outlined the type of education received by students at the Bar Convent schools: "They are taught to read and write [...] Geography, French, the use of y [the] needle in different branches, music, dancing etc".[61] The document also refers to the existence of the two schools: "Besides yr [their] Boarding School for pensioners, there is a day school for yr poor Catholics".[62] The separation between the two schools is also mentioned: "They have schools appropriated to themselves with their respective Mistresses, separated from y school of yr young Ladies Pensioners [...]."[63] This was obviously an important point to include if Ann Aspinal were to win approval for her plans. A mix of social classes would have proved unacceptable, particularly for those who were paying for their daughter's education.

Deviations from Ward's original educational plans

It is interesting to note that Latin is not mentioned in the petition. Given the dearth of records there is no way of establishing whether or not Latin was removed from the curriculum at the Bar Convent. On the other hand, there is no evidence to suggest that Ball studied Latin during her school days nor did she introduce it to the school she founded in Ireland. By the end of the eighteenth century therefore, an innovative dimension of the original curriculum designed by Ward is missing.

Given the troubled history of the Institute, it is perhaps remarkable that so many of the elements of the educational enterprise of the Institute would have remained the same. This is an important point since the curriculum Ball studied at the Bar Convent is exactly the curriculum that she brought to Ireland. To this extent there is a measured continuum with the educational legacy of Ward. The break is not in terms of the curriculum offered but in the philosophy behind it and this is manifested in a particular way in the omission of Latin. The inclusion of Latin in Ward's plans for her

[60] Ann Aspinal (1710 – 1789) is described in the *Biographies* as "a person of prayer, artistic vision and business acumen". The Lancashire woman held the position of Superior of the Bar Convent for twenty-nine year during which time the financial situation of the house improved allowing her to make significant extensions to the house which included the construction of a chapel. G. Kirkus, *IBVM/CJ Biographical Dictionary*, p. 33. See also H.J. Coleridge, *St. Mary's Convent Micklegate Bar York*, pp. 170-221.

[61] 'Advice to Mrs Aspinal' (undated). AIY: 5/A/5

[62] 'Advice to Mrs Aspinal'.

[63] 'Advice Mrs Aspinal'.

schools reflected her belief that women should encounter a more rigorous academic curriculum than the Church and society believed they were capable of. Teresa Ball, as this chapter will illustrate, tended to lean towards the more conservative curriculum that emphasised female accomplishments over academic achievement.

More can be said about education in the Bar Convent by surveying the brief biographical sketches available in the Gregory Kirkus' work *An IBVM/CJ Biographical Dictionary of the English Members and Major Benefactors (1667- 200).* Its relevance for this enquiry lies in the fact that it offers an interesting profile of the kind of women who entered Ward's Institute in England and who subsequently taught at the Bar Convent. It also important because these were the female role models that Ball and her contemporaries were expected to emulate. A brief overview of some pertinent biographies will suffice to make a number of observations about education in the Bar Convent and it is to the task the investigation now turns.

Teachers at the Bar Convent

The teachers who taught at the Bar Convent were, for the most part, past pupils of the convent themselves. Given the enclosure that Coyney had insisted on, it could be reasonably assumed that the women who taught at the Bar Convent were reliant on the education that they themselves received for the instruction that they gave to the pupils before them. A survey of the biographies of the women who entered the community indicates that most spent at least some of their religious lives teaching in the schools. Sr. Stanislaus Knight (1781-1851) for example, was educated in the Bar Convent and entered there in 1808 (Ball attended school in the Bar Convent from 1803 to 1805). She "assisted" in the school for some thirty years but from 1831, "she suffered in body and mind" until she died in the care of her family in 1851.[64] Apart from the reference to the illness Sr. Stanislaus suffered, no specific account is given of her contribution to education at the Bar Convent.

[64] G. Kirkus, *CJ/IBVM Biographies*, p. 115. It would have been extremely rare for a professed sister to return to the care of her family. The *Biographies* say that Sister Stanislaus did so with the approval of the Bishop but the reader is not informed of the identity of the person/persons who made the request. The fact that permission was given indicates the care of the woman's family and, perhaps, the community's acceptance that they could no longer take care of Sister Stanislaus.

It is clear that one of the greatest assets a candidate for the religious life could have was flexibility since they were often called on to undertake a variety of responsibilities within the convent/school setting. A contemporary of the unfortunate Stanislaus Knight is a case in point: Susannah Calely (1786-1862). Having been educated at the Bar Convent Susannah became a novice there in 1804. During her religious life Susannah (Sr. Regis) was Mistress of the Day School, Second Mistress in the boarding School, Sacristan and Mistress of Novices.[65] There can be no doubt that all of these roles were undertaken under the vow of obedience since personal ambition would never have been tolerated in convent life. That is not to say that such ambition did not exist, rather, it is to emphasise the point that communal, rather than individual needs, dictated the ministries that Sisters were assigned to. There was no room for personal preferences.

The year 1804 also saw the admission of an Irish woman, Esmy Carr (Corr) (1780-1861), to the Bar Convent.[66] Although Esmy, (Sr. Ignatius), had been educated in the Bar Convent she thought first about entering a contemplative order until she was directed back to the Bar Convent by a priest. She was to spend the remainder of her religious life, which spanned well over fifty years, teaching in the schools or serving as Head Mistress of the boarders. One cannot help but speculate as to whether or not the Irish woman sometimes regretted her decision to turn down the contemplative life which had initially attracted her. Given that there is no account of her apostolic endeavours from Esmy herself such questions have to be relegated to the realm of speculation.

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[65] G. Kirkus, *CJ/IBVM Biographies*, p. 56.

[66] A survey of the biographical sketches indicates the large number of Irish women who entered the Bar Convent. Many, in common with Esmy Carr, were educated at the Bar Convent and returned to enter in a place that was familiar to them. In fact Teresa Ball's own niece, Mary Ball (1825-1867) was educated at Bar Convent and entered there at the age of nineteen. Others were directed to the Bar Convent by priests/spiritual directors who were themselves of Irish origin but now worked in England. A relatively recent example is the case of Mary Anne O' Connor (1902-1942). Sister Patricia, as she came to be known, had been educated at Loreto Convent, Killarney but the influence of her fellow Kerry man, Fr. Mullane, who was serving as a curate in the Church of the English Martyrs directed her to the Bar Convent. She was admitted to the Bar convent in 1925 and, after her training as a teacher in Endsleigh College, Hull she returned to teach in the Junior School. Sister Patricia was killed, along with four other sisters, on the 29th of April 1942 during an air raid.

G. Kirkus, *Biographies*, p. 141.

Another Irish woman who deferred her entrance to the Bar Convent was Rosetta O'Reilly (1783-1820). Rosetta (Sr. Gonzaga) was educated at the Bar Convent where she was described as "light-hearted, clever and accomplished" making her an amiable student and friend.[67] In 1811 she returned to York and entered there at the age of twenty eight, now Sr. Gonzaga, the *Biographies* record that she was a popular and engaging teacher. Her teaching career was cut short in 1820 by her death at the age of thirty seven.

The attractive account of Rosetta O'Reilly's life is counterbalanced by the rather sparse account of her compatriot, Sophia Teresa (Sr. Francis Borgia) Hines (1781-1855) who is described in the *Biographies* as "one of the members who it is impossible to endow with any personality".[68] After her profession in 1813 she taught in the schools for a number of years, this was followed by a five year stint of "caring for the linen", before another five year term as librarian.[69] No record is kept of her apostolate from 1838 to her death in 1855. In other words, seventeen years of her life in the Institute are unaccounted for. Though it would be difficult to hypothesise at this distance it would be interesting to know the reason for Sr. Francis Borgia's removal from her school ministry. Unless the needs of other ministries within the convent were absolutely pressing, it would be difficult to imagine how a Sister, with an aptitude for teaching, would be removed from this important work.

The brief biographical sketches of the lives of the women outlined above have one thing in common: they were all past pupils of the Bar Convent. Without denying the absolute absence of opportunities for women in the eighteenth century it could also be suggested that these women had a positive experience of their education at the Bar. Their decision to return to York, even after the space of a number of years, testifies to the attraction their *alma mater* still held for them.

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[67] G. Kirkus, *Biographies*, pp. 143-144.

[68] G. Kirkus, *Biographies*, p. 106.

[69] G. Kirkus, *Biographies*, p. 106.

The teaching Sister: a paradigm of virtue

It is evident that the authorities in the Bar convent could draw on a steady number of recruits to teach in their schools. As the case of Sr. Francis Borgia suggests, those who were deemed unsuitable could be removed from the school without undermining the integrity of the apostolate. In other words, there was no shortage of personnel. In their activity as teachers, the Sisters were also role models. They exemplified a particular ideal of Catholic femininity and this centred on purity, piety and humility. This is an issue that will be examined in more detail in the investigation of the Institute in Ireland.

It is no coincidence that the records kept on individual Sisters tended to emphasise their religious devotion, rather than the particular character of their contribution to education in the Bar Convent. By focusing on the spiritual attributes of the Sister an example of a good, religious woman was presented to successive generations. In this regard the records had an important role in recruiting future candidates. It was not what one did but *how* one did it that was important. The later biographical record of Sarah Thompson's life (1851-1912) illustrates the point. According to Kirkus: [Sarah] "was said to be very shy and retiring, so it is perhaps fitting that nothing is recorded of her life except that she was a good and faithful religious".[70] This is a regrettable omission. There is undoubtedly more to say on the life of Sarah Thompson. This example is a clear illustration of one of the challenges for those pursing research in the field of the history of education. The dearth of documentary evidence on teachers' lives in the classroom has left a lacuna which is difficult to fill without wandering into the area of speculation. This is clearly evident in the individual cases outlined above.

To draw this aspect of the investigation to a close the following points can be made. For the most part, the vast majority of the Sisters who educated Ball were past pupils of the Bar Convent. Many of these Sisters had entered the Institute as soon as their own education finished, "late" vocations were the exception rather than the rule. No matter how noble their efforts in the classroom, their own education dictated the limits of what was available to Ball and her contemporaries. There appears to have been

[70] G. Kirkus, *Biographies*, p. 165.

little room for educational innovation. By the time Ball was a pupil at the Bar Convent the enclosure that Elizabeth Coyney had insisted on isolated the community not only from other educational establishments, but also from other Institute schools. So while, the Jesuits for example, would be able to draw on the experience and resources of their international network, the Bar Convent would have to rely on its own tradition.

The brief survey of the *Biographical Dictionary* highlights the fact that a great deal of emphasis was placed on the personal characteristics of the Sisters who taught in the schools rather than what they taught or how they taught. The characteristics that defined a good religious were centred on humility and obedience. Whether or not the same characteristics were expected of students who attended Institute schools will be an interesting question for a later stage of this enquiry. The Bar Convent was a community of women where pupils and Sisters had constant contact. Many of the boarders including Ball were young children when they began their education there and on the verge of young adulthood when they left.

Given that the pupils led a life that was almost as enclosed as the Sisters, the only female role models that were available to the pupils were the Sisters themselves. That so many would choose to join their ranks suggests that these young girls found these role models attractive, but a larger question remains. This question centres on the influence religious Sisters had in shaping the acceptable model of womanhood and the extent to which they themselves were shaped by the society and Church of their time. This question will provide an interesting lens through which to view Teresa Ball's particular contribution to women's education in nineteenth century Ireland.

Answering the philanthropic need in nineteenth century Ireland

Having completed her education at the Bar Convent Ball returned to the family home in Eccles Street, Dublin. It would be fair to say that her life was uneventful; it followed the routine of other young women of the Catholic middle classes. It was a routine that was punctuated by needlework, social events, charitable work, attendance at Church and the reception of the sacraments. Ball's biographer, Hutch, describes the

"select" society in which she moved as being "composed by persons of distinguished by birth, wealth, refined education, social worth, and irreproachable lives".[71]

It was in the context of this "select society" that Ball first met Daniel Murray, coadjutor to John Troy, Archbishop of Dublin.[72] Murray became her spiritual director and when he saw the first signs of her religious vocation he saw the possibility of bringing the educational traditions of the Bar Convent to Ireland.[73] The time was more than opportune. Ireland needed well educated Catholic women to sustain the philanthropic drive that became a particular feature of nineteenth century Ireland.

By the early 1800s the Irish Catholic Church was consolidating its position within the socio-political landscape. The wealthier classes in particular were at the forefront of this new found Catholic confidence. Their resources and connections had allowed them to benefit from the education and professional training that was available, for those who could afford it, on the Continent. The rise to power of the Catholic ascendancy highlighted the distinction between the social classes. It separated the wealthier classes from the poorer classes and it established their values as those which the poorer classes were expected to aspire to. The records show that convents did not escape this stratification of Irish society, in fact, many, including the Order founded by Ball, consolidated it.[74]

In this context of a rising Catholic ascendancy women were finding a new role in society and the Church. In her book *Nuns in Nineteenth Century Ireland* Clear makes the point that the Irish Catholic Church, emerging from the Penal days, "relied heavily on the activities of women. It also relied upon the Catholic middle classes for financial and human resources".[75] In this way a new philanthropic role was emerging for women in nineteenth century Ireland; but this role was confined to middle class women whose activities were, more often than not, directed at women from the lower

[71] W. Hutch, *Mrs. Ball*, pp. 19-20.

[72] Murray succeeded Troy as Archbishop of Dublin in 1825. He was particularly interested in the work of education and under his leadership of the Catholic Church in Dublin (he died in 1852) he encouraged the establishment of three female religious orders, including Teresa Ball's foundation.

[73] Murray was aware of the Bar Convent given its popularity among the Irish Catholic middle class.

[74] This is an issue that will be examined at a later stage in this chapter.

[75] C. Clear, *Nuns in Nineteenth Century Ireland*, p. 30.

classes. According to Maria Luddy; "Religion gave middle class women the excuse to organise voluntarily, to enter the public domain and engage in work which was socially useful".[76] The apostolate of these women was important to the Church before the development of convents and houses of religious.[77]

In the light of these developments Daniel Murray identified the need for well educated women who would be drawn from the middle class if this philanthropic drive were to be sustained. He looked to the Bar Convent, a school that attracted the kind of clientele Murray wanted to retain in Ireland, as providing the model for his enterprise. In Easter week, 1814, he wrote to Elizabeth Coyney informing her of Ball's intention to join the community at York: "[Frances] means to offer herself as a humble candidate for your Institute, and hopes though with great difficulty, to obtain her mother's consent, unfettered by any restriction". Murray also expressed his own plans: "I cannot give up the hope of seeing a house of your holy institute in this country, and I trust the little treasure that we are sending you may give some colour of claim to that blessing, and may eventually facilitate the means of accomplishing it".[78] His appeal to Elizabeth Coyney to establish a branch of the Institute in Ireland was met with her typical caution. Coyney wrote:

> I have consulted our bishop on the subject of your Lordship's letter, and he agrees to our accepting Miss Ball as a member of our holy Institute, with a view to our training her to be a foundress of a house of the same Order in Dublin. In the event of such a project being realised, and that she be allowed sufficient time for the great undertaking, which could not be under five years at least, as we cannot hold out a possibility that we can contribute to such an establishment either by sending a colony from this house, or by pecuniary resources; this work must rest solely on Miss Ball and her friends, whose decision we gladly await.[79]

The way was clear for a foundation of Ward's Institute in Ireland. But as the previous investigation has shown the extent to which the Order founded by Ball could truly be

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[76] M. Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century Ireland*, p. 23.

[77] Luddy makes the point that the rapid expansion of female religious life after 1850 institutionalised philanthropic endeavour and put a halt to the contribution of lay women. For a more detailed treatment of this issue see M. Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century Ireland*, pp. 21-53.

[78] Quoted in H.J. Coleridge, *The Life of Mother Teresa Ball*, p. 46.

[79] Letter from Elizabeth Coyney, York, to Daniel Murray, Dublin, 30th May 1814. AIR: AL/1.

referred to as *Mary Ward's Institute* was questionable given the detrimental influence of Coyney's leadership. Moreover, it was clear from her response that Coyney had rejected any notion of an affiliation between York and the Irish foundation. She also insisted that "it may not be made known to one unnecessary person that Miss Ball is fixed on for the projected Establishment, such a report spread abroad, would neither be pleasant to the young lady herself nor to us".[80] Though Coyney cited her concern for Ball as the reason for the silence she insisted on, it would also be fair to suggest that the Superior may have been afraid that the "report" of a new foundation would have flooded her with similar requests.[81] Whatever her reason it must have put a great deal of pressure on Ball who was forbidden to talk about the real reason for her return to the Bar Convent.

In 1815 Ball returned to the Bar Convent to begin her novitiate there. The surroundings may have been familiar to her but the onerous task for which she was being prepared must have weighed heavily on her. Although she had declared her intention of becoming a nun, she had never indicated an intention to assume the role of a founder. Ball left no record of her personal feelings at that time but a letter from Daniel Murray to his *protégée* gives the reader an insight into the doubts that must have assailed her:

> Let me entreat you dear child, not to continue wearing out your poor mind by anxieties which have no foundation, and part of which I cannot but attribute to that crafty enemy who can sometimes assume appearance of an angel of light. You may never be called on to quit your present happy retreat. If you be, we are to hope that it will be under the direction of God [...] I have reason to expect that you will be in the company of those Seniors, whose presence you say would render your happiness complete. How, my dear child could you call this a cross, particularly when it was appointed to you in the ordinary way of duty?[82]

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[80] Letter from Elizabeth Coyney, York, to Daniel Murray, Dublin, 30th May 1814.

[81] Coleridge accounts for Coyneys' aversion to dependent houses as part of her reaction to *Quamvis iusto*. There is one instance in which she agreed to inspect a house in Leeds from the point of view of making a foundation there at the request of a Dominican, Fr. Underhill, but the annals record "the affair ended with that day's drive". H.J. Coleridge, *St. Mary's Convent*, p. 283.

[82] Letter from Daniel Murray, 41 North Cumberland Street, 20th October 1820, to Teresa Ball in York. AIR: AL/2.

It is unfortunate that no record exists of the letter Ball sent to Daniel Murray.[83] His response however indicates the reluctance of the twenty six year old woman to leave the safety of the enclosure of the York community. Murray's reassuring words may have alleviated the young woman's anxieties in the short term but what he failed to recognise was that her fears were well founded. Ball could not rely on the companionship or the experience of the "Senior Sisters" Murray had alluded to in his letter. Coyney had stated quite clearly, and Murray knew this, that the Bar convent would not sacrifice members of the community to support the foundation in Ireland.

Even before she returned to Ireland Ball's proposed foundation appeared to flounder. One of the first volunteers for the Irish foundation was the aforementioned Rosetta O'Reilly whose life was cut short by tuberculosis in 1820. This devastating blow was succeeded by the death of another volunteer Bridget (Sister Austin) Sheridan in 1821.[84] One year after she received the letter from Murray assuring her that she would be in the presence of Senior Sisters, Ball arrived in Dublin in the company of Anne Therry, (Sister Mary Baptist) aged twenty five and Eleanor Arthur, (Sister Mary Ignatia), aged twenty three. These three women were the founding members of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Ireland. None of them had heard of the woman who had first begun the original enterprise. Upon their arrival in Dublin, (August1821), they immediately set about their apostolic enterprise: education.

The foundation of the Institute in Ireland

In the first months of their arrival in Ireland Ball and her companions stayed in Stanhope Street, Dublin with the Sisters of Charity, founded by Mary Aikenhead, a past pupil of the Bar Convent. The first school established by Ball was in Harold's Cross, Dublin. More suitable accommodation had been purchased, thanks to Murray, in Rathfarnham (Dublin) and the school and community transferred there in November 1822. The first house was called "Loretto" and this name was used for

[83] This might be explained by the fact that the letter was written to Murray before his appointment as Archbishop of Dublin. It is more than likely that he either destroyed or did not retain any letters of personal nature prior to his becoming Archbishop.

[84] It is interesting to note that Bridget Sheridan had no dowry, Murray was reluctant to accept her on this basis, since, according to MacDonald, she would have insufficient resources to support the new foundation. Teresa Ball undertook to pay her dowry indicating her eagerness to find personnel for her foundation as well as the financial resources she had at her disposal. E. MacDonald, *Joyful Mother*, p. 73.

almost all subsequent foundations, thus the members of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary became popularly known as "Loreto Sisters" – a name which prevails to this day.[85]

Apart from the religious formation that she received at the Bar Convent Teresa Ball arrived in Ireland with the 1707 Constitutions which included the *Rules* that governed the various offices that were necessary for the smooth running of the house.[86] In the *Rules for Superiors* the centrality of education in the lives of the Sisters is emphasised: "It is her [the Superior's] duty to be very careful that the Mistress of Schools duly perform their offices: this duty being the chief part of our vocation".[87] In other words, education was not just a task that was undertaken because it was useful or even because it was necessary; it was undertaken because it was intimately tied up with vocation of being a Loreto Sister. This understanding is strongly emphasised throughout the *Rules*, for example, Rule 46 states:

> Let them [the Superiors] admonish those who teach that they undertake this heavenly work with much fervour, considering rather the souls of the scholars redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, than their outward figure lest through human respect they lose the merit of their labour.[88]

The strong evangelical emphasis is also clearly seen in the "Rules for the Prefect of Schools" which states: "She who is entrusted with the care of children, who come to our schools for instruction, must remember that the chief end of her office is to gain souls to almighty God".[89] Given the strong emphasis on the salvation of souls the

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[85] Teresa Ball chose the name "Loretto" because it was the popular belief that house of the Holy Family had miraculously moved from Nazareth to Loreto in Italy. Teresa Ball wanted the early community to emulate the character of the Holy Family. Towards the end of the century the spelling was changed to "Loreto" and this is the spelling that will be used in this dissertation.

[86] Mary Wright highlights the significance of the 1707 Constitutions: "When Frances Ball made her novitiate the Bar Convent was changing to the monastic model of religious life [....]. The *Gilbert Constitutions* [my note: which showed no sign of the Ignatian text and emphasised the role of the bishop] were adopted in 1816. But the constitutions which France [Teresa] took back with her to Ireland in 1821 were the earlier ones based on the 1707 Ignatian text, which were still used in the rest of the Institute houses. She has left no explanation for this decision". M. Wright, The Struggle for Identity, p. 102.

[87] 'Rules for the Superior of Each House' (n. 43) p. 12. AIR: P2/18/v.

[88] 'Rules for the Superior of Each House' (n. 46) p. 12.

[89] 'Rules for the Prefect of Schools' (n.1) p. 84.

question must be asked as to how the redemptive purpose of education would find expression in the syllabus, the answer is given in Rule 4:

> those natural arts that are taught in our Schools for the improvement of young girls are not to be neglected, but carefully attended to, yet much greater regard is to be paid to those things which are immediately conducive to the good of souls and are more conformable to our Institute which chiefly intends that youth may be well instructed in spiritual matters and in with sentiments of true piety. [90]

The spelling out of the "heavenly work" for those who entered the Loreto Sisters had an important function in unifying a group of individuals under a common goal: the salvation of souls. In other words, they were not just teachers; they were actively involved in the redemptive work of the Church. It was as if, rightly or wrongly, those who entered a convent had taken on a more noble vocation since they were prepared to devote their entire lives to apostolic endeavour. This clearly defined motivation for their enterprise moved women religious beyond the realms of philanthropic endeavour. In many ways this was an unfortunate development since one of the most fundamental conditions of female religious life, enclosure, meant that their lives were removed from the public domain.[91] Yet although the women who entered convents were seen as leaving the world behind them, the world of the convent, in some instances at least, reflected the social mores of nineteenth century Ireland. This was particularly the case when it came to the social stratification of many religious communities and the schools they organised.

The social stratification of Loreto education "poor schools"

The point has already been stated that the nineteenth century saw the stratification and consolidation of social classes. Convents were not immune from this stratification as the following example, from the Loreto Annals, illustrates:

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[90] 'Rules for the Prefect of Schools' (n.4) p. 84.

[91] This is a development which supports Luddy's claim that coinciding with the "pre-eminence" of religious women in philanthropic engagement is the almost "complete absence [...] from the 1850s onwards, of independent charitable societies organised by lay Catholic women". M. Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century Ireland*, p. 21. Where the contribution of philanthropic women had once been welcomed in the public domain, the cloister now became the more acceptable location for women's charitable endeavours.

> By the liberality of Mr and Mrs John Scully,[92] who at their own expense provided desks and benches etc., the Poor School was opened in May 1823. The number of Children daily attending are on average, 10, though many bribes were made to entice them to the neighbouring Methodist establishment. They are taught Reading, Writing, Spelling, Arithmetic Needle work [*sic*], Knitting, platting straw etc. Dinner is prepared for the most destitute each week.[93]

At a first glance this looks like a generous and practical educational provision for children from the poorer classes but when compared to the provision made for the boarders a number of contrasting points emerge.

> The young ladies being 40 in number are taught English, French, Italian, Spanish, Geography, History, Heraldry, use of Globes, Writing, Arithmetic, Painting, Needle and ornamental Work [*sic*], besides being attended by the best Masters in vocal and instrumental Music, Dancing, Riding and Drawing. These branches undergo examination twice a year. The Archbishop has not only the condescension to preside, but provides and distributes the premiums himself.[94]

It was clear that the curriculum was designed to equip the pupils who attended Loreto schools for the stations they were to occupy in life, thus while the "young ladies" in the boarding school were taught "ornamental work", the children of the poor school were taught how to "plat straw".[95] Both schools had some dealings with high profile Catholics but the expression of that connection manifested itself in a different way for the poor school. The poor school was *reliant* on benefactors like the Scullys to furnish and resource their premises; it was a dependent relationship.

The Annals are inclined to accuse the Methodist community of "enticing" pupils away from the "poor school". Yet the provision of the weekly meal in the Loreto poor school must also have acted as some kind of incentive to the pupils. In the year 1829 the poor school received a donation of £10 and this "furnished 40 cloaks and warm

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[92] John Scully's wife is never mentioned by name in MacDonald's biography of Teresa Ball. She was in fact, a sister of Ignatia Arthur (one of the first founders). Mrs. Scully and her husband John were loyal benefactors of the Loreto foundation. E. MacDonald, *Joyful Mother*, p. 86.

[93] 'Annals of Loretto', Book I dated 1832. AIR: P2/17/u.

[94] 'Annals of Loretto', Book I dated 1832.

[95] 'Annals of Loretto'.

petticoats" while "36 were dresses in bonnets of their own manufacture".[96] The children were not expected to pay a fee but those who could afford to do so were required to pay one penny a week to "procure books and stationery". This payment was of benefit to the schools not just from the point of view of resources; it also had a social benefit, since according to the Annals the payment "induce[d] the better kind to attend".[97] Even within the poorer classes a kind of stratification was applied.

Commenting on this entry in the Annals, MacDonald says: "It is pleasant to think of the thirty-six proud little creatures setting off for the 'chapel' on that joyful Easter morning dressed up in their new Easter bonnets, happily conscious of the stir they created, and of the envious glances cast at them by their less fortunate companions!"[98] Neither, the Annals or Mac Donald's biography (published in 1961) gives a sense of the real poverty of the "less fortunate" pupils who attended the poor schools.

The Sisters provided for the education of the children in the poor school and, sometimes for other basic needs, but the children were not encouraged to move beyond their station in life. The poor school met a need but it maintained the status quo; those who could afford to, received a better education, provided by the best "Masters" money could buy. The provision of education for the children in the poor school, on the other hand, seemed to be based on a sense of charitable duty rather than a desire to improve their situation. "Cloaks" and "warm petticoats" met the immediate need of this vulnerable group but little was done to tackle the causes of such endemic poverty in the first place. Given the social context of nineteenth century Ireland this was understandable. In keeping with the culture of the time the poor schools consolidated, rather than challenged, the strict class structures that prevailed. John Coolahan expresses the situation succinctly when he says:

> Schooling was not viewed as a means of achieving greater social equality; rather the poor and the working classes were largely seen by leaders of church and state as a self-perpetuating sector of society for whom a limited education of literacy and numeracy was deemed sufficient.[99]

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[96] 'Annals of Loretto'.

[97] 'Annals of Loretto'.

[98] E. MacDonald, *Joyful Mother*, p. 125.

[99] J. Coolahan, *Irish Education: Its History and Structure* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1981), p. 55.

Allied to the need to maintain the social order through education, it would be fair to suggest that the Loreto Sisters had to maintain a particular allegiance to the middle class.[100] Like many other religious orders they were dependent on the middle classes to fund the initiatives they made.[101] The financial support of the Scullys' to the poor school in Rathfarnham is a case in point.[102] The middle classes also supported, and facilitated, the work of religious orders in secondary education. As Coolahan points out, secondary schools were conducted in "private, fee-paying institutions" and as a result they were seen as a "middle class concern".[103] In the light of this social reality, the Order depended on the middle classes to send their daughters to its schools since, without their fees, the schools would not be funded. The next stage of this investigation presents an overview of the educational milieu inhabited by middle class girls in the early years of Loreto in Ireland.[104]

Loreto Abbey: a boarding school for young ladies

A survey of Ball's correspondence indicates that the curriculum offered at Rathfarnham (Dublin) reflected the type of education thought to be appropriate for

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[100] This of course was the experience of the Ursuline Sisters who found themselves in a similar situation as has been illustrated in Chapter Two of this dissertation.

[101] Clear makes the point that; "The Catholic business and professional classes were the chief suppliers of the money that went to found and maintain convents". Among others examples she cites the case of the Sisters of Mercy who were invited to Carlow in 1836 by the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin who had received a donation of £7,0000 for the purposes of founding a convent. Clear explains "The initiative to found a convent often came from philanthropic local people, so in regions where the proportion of wealthy people was small, the chance of a convent being set up were considerably less". C. Clear, *Nuns in Nineteenth Century Ireland*, pp. 42-43.

[102] For example one of the first entries to the Annals records: "Mrs. J. O' Brien, Mrs. Ball's sister, [...] came forward on many occasions as a special friend and in the commencement allowed the Confessor, during years, the use of her carriage."

Another entry reads: "Mr. and Mrs. J. Scully are entitled to the unceasing gratitude of each member of the Establishment. [...] Mrs. Scully's kind acts and personal services are innumerable. She furnished the Reception room, inspected the building of the Chapel and has, on all occasions, proved herself a warm and active friend".

In 1850 the Annals read: Our benefactor, Mr Francis Somers, died at Gorey at 9 o' clock a.m. [...] and was interred [...] in the cemetery he had constructed adjoining the Convent of Loretto [...]. Mr. Somers left £21 annually for Masses, £30 annually for the support of a missionary member at Loretto Abbey, Rathfarnham. More extensive donations were bequeathed to the Community at Loretto Abbey, Gorey and £9 for the later at Loretto, Rathfarnham". "Annals of Loretto", Book I.

[103] J. Coolahan, *Irish Education*, p. 55.

[104] Up until the "Free Education" scheme introduced by the Government in 1967, all Loreto schools in Ireland required students to pay fees.

young ladies.[105] In a letter, to the foundress of Loreto in Canada for example, Ball describes the routine of the school:

> The first Tuesday of every month, the Mistress of Schools reads aloud the judgements of the pupils written by their Instructresses: on these reports the premiums from France are annually distributed: some pupils were adjudged 13 beautifully bound instructive books.[106]

The premium system was intended to reward work and effort. It is interesting to note that "premiums" came from France adding to the continental feel of the school as well as maintaining the interest in French instilled in Ball in her school days at York. In the early annals Ball expresses her happiness in the "success accruing" from the "short residence of the Nuns in France". As well as this the Irish foundress is pleased to report that the "pensioners [...] evince the same facility in speaking French as English".[107]

The Annals also testify to the genteel existence of the inhabitants of a Loreto boarding school. In Loreto Abbey, Dalkey for example, while the poorer classes suffered the ravages of the Great Famine (1845-1850) the pupils and Sisters of the south county Dublin school prepared for the passing of Queen Victoria's ship:

> 1849: August 6th. The Telegraph at Dalkey announce the arrival of her majesty, Queen Victoria at 3 ½ o'clock p.m. opposite Killiney hill. At 6 ½ o'clock p.m. the royal yacht came in sight of the Grotto of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Dalkey. The nuns in ceremonial veils stood in ranks on the terrace opposite the sea. The novices and Lay Sisters wore white veils and the pupils were also attired in white with blue sashes. The Abbey bells rang a joyful peal. "God save the Queen" was melodiously chanted, accompanied by the harp and pianoforte etc. The Abbey flags were unfurled. "Welcome" was printed over the Grotto. "Go teach all nations" and "God save the Queen" waved from the Abbey [...].[108]

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[105] The type of education advocated for girls from the middle classes had given much attention in Chapter Two of this dissertation.

[106] Letter from Teresa Ball, Rathfarnham, to Teresa Dease, Toronto, 29th November, 1851. AIR: P2/B2/6.

[107] 'Annals of Loretto', Book I.

[108] 'Annals'.

The account made it clear that the seeds of nationalist rebellion would not be sown in Loreto schools. Another extract from the Annals show the relative wealth of the Order in a time of Famine. In 1849 Teresa Ball writes:

> The year terminates with 55 in community, 55 Boarders, all enjoying health, peace and concord, all debts discharged. The establishment is heated with 40 fires, 100 lights illuminate it, oil is chiefly used. The sanctuary has besides, 64 candles. 25 books were distributed for premiums in the classes. These works were purchased in Paris.[109]

The peace and concord described by Ball were maintained of course by the smooth running of the school and the *Rules* make provision for this: "They [the Sisters] must have particular care that silence and modesty be observed, therefore all bustling and running to and fro must be strictly forbidden and when the scholars have done with school they must go out two and three in order".[110] The emphasis was on orderly and genteel behaviour and the Sisters themselves were expected to model this gentility even when correcting bad behaviour. The *Rules* cautioned the teaching Sister to: "wholly refrain from using unbecoming words, lest they give occasion to their scholars of following their example". [111]

Such gentle methods did not always work however, as Ball's letter to a parent indicates:

> Dear Madam,
>
> To prevent the painful feelings which are likely to arise from the perusal of your Daughter's letter, I beg leave to mention [...] that the treatment termed severe solely consisted in requesting your Daughter to stand for 5 or 10 minutes to prevent her from stamping the ground with much violence when one of the Religious reminded her to hold up her head: also in dismissing her from the class when she could not be prevailed on to cease from interrupting her companions during the recital of their lessons.
>
> Your Daughter was removed from her place at Table [sic] and in the School room, until she merited to return. She has resumed her usual station in the Refectory, but she remains one seat lower in the School room till she becomes more

[109] 'Annals'.

[110] 'Rules for those who teach in the Schools' (n.8) p. 93.

[111] 'Rules for those who teach in the Schools' (n.7) p. 93.

> satisfactory. On one occasion when she refused to comply with a simple request, she was not allowed to sit down until she accomplished what she was asked.
>
> We are not aware how your Daughter can mend her defects without being admonished of them, and we presume the method adopted leaned more to gentleness than to severity. However if N.N. cannot make herself happy under these circumstances, we shall be obliged by her removal.[112]

This letter highlights a number of points; firstly there was little privacy for the pupils: Ball was clearly referring to a letter written by the pupil to her mother, this meant that she had either read herself or it had been brought to her attention. Secondly the letter emphasises the value placed on deportment: the girl was reprimanded for not holding up her head. Thirdly, it seems as if the girl was not willing to obey the instructions given to her by the Sisters and although the punishment was relatively mild it was also public. The letter concludes by making the point that the Sisters would not be drawn into a more severe form of punishment. In a letter to a parent whose child exhibited similar behaviour, she makes the point clearly:

> Dear Madam,
> I deeply regret that our Community find it impossible to readmit your little girl to school. Some of our delicate ladies have acknowledged, that in justice to nearly forty children, they could not devote the time and exertion required to educate your child, who appears to require less gentle methods than are resorted to here. Consequently the means adopted for her improvement proved ineffective.
>
> Be assured, dear Madam, that earnestly as we desire to cooperate in the education of your dear child, we consider the circumstances of the case calculated to render her residence in this Establishment more injurious than serviceable. [113]

As well as discipline issues Ball also had to deal with the non-payment of fees. There are a number of letters to parents requesting the payment of outstanding fees which must have been an ongoing problem.[114] Given the financial demands of maintaining

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[112] Letter from Teresa Ball, Rathfarnham, to a parent, June 1825. AIR:P2/A2/2.

[113] Letter from Teresa Ball, Rathfarnham to a parent, April 1828. AIR: P2/A2/12.

[114] For example in a letter written to a parent on the 19th April 1831, Ball writes: "Dear Madam, I am under the necessity of requesting that some arrangement be made for the payment of the sum of £34.14s". This was to defray the costs of "pension, washing clothes, lesson on harp and piano forte do.

and resourcing a boarding school, it may have made good economic sense to retain as many pupils as possible, even difficult ones, as long as the fees were paid. But the letters cited make it clear that Ball would rather dismiss a disruptive pupil than resort to more rigorous discipline methods.

The relationship between pupils and teachers at Loreto Abbey Rathfarnham

Besides these very rare examples of the dismissal of pupils the Annals, and Ball's letters, indicate that on the whole, a good relationship existed between the Sisters and their pupils. In a letter to Teresa Dease, she says: "I have told our dear little pupils to prepare for their first Communion [...]. One child is from Calcutta, another from Madras, a third from Spain, whose Mamma spent 7 years here for education. We call Mercedes Gordon our grandchild, her Mamma and aunt having made their first communion here".[115] It is clear from the letter that Rathfarnham contained a very international community. In another letter to Teresa Dease, Ball mentions "our youngest pupil from Buenos Ayres" whom she describes as "intelligent for six years of age".[116] Past pupils who had married well and were now stationed in the colonies were keen to send their children to their *alma mater*. Few children would have seen their parents for the duration of their school days, not just because of the difficulties of travel, but also because Ball insisted "that children entrusted to us should not be removed during the term allowed for their education".[117] The school community, pupils and Sisters, became their family and in a later letter to Dease, Ball uses this exact term: "Except a few slight colds, our *family* [my emphasis] of 119 enjoy health, spirits and prosperity". [118]

The *Rules* caution the Sisters against becoming "too familiar with their scholars" and in particular against preferring "one or two above the rest [....] since they are all

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in Drawing and work. New music books, stationery, clothes. Lessons in Dancing, do. in Singing". AIR: P2/A2/16.

[115] Letter from Teresa Ball, Rathfarnham to Teresa Dease, Toronto 13th December1851. AIR: P2/B2/7.

[116] Letter from Teresa Ball, Rathfarnham to Teresa Dease, Toronto, 20th January 1853. AIR: P2/B2 /11.

[117] Letter from Teresa Ball, Rathfarnham to parent, 19th February 1830. AIR: P2/A2/15.

[118] Letter from Teresa Ball, Rathfarnham to Teresa Dease, Toronto, 17th February 1852. AIR: P2/B2/8.

children of God".[119] But given the length of time the pupils spent in the company of the Sisters and the personal circumstances of each pupil it must have been difficult to avoid this prohibition. Ball herself is recorded as having "adopted" one of the children. The manuscript life of the foundress recalls that when Avis (?) Flannery lost her parents at the age of two months she was:

> adopted by our Mother, who lavished upon her the most anxious and tender care; not only to render her an accomplished member of society, should her lot be cast beyond the cloister walls; but to aim at a far higher mark by fitting her for Heaven, whither she was called at the tender age of 17 and by special privilege her remains reposed in the Cemetery, not far distant from those of her loved Mother. [120]

The relationship that existed between the Sisters themselves deserves much more attention than can be given here. But aside from the parameters of this investigation, the task itself would be a difficult one since few records remain which might provide the basis for such an examination. The personal letters of the Sisters who taught in the schools were destroyed at their death. What remains is the business correspondence between the Sisters of the various houses. While they often include a note of enquiry about an individual's health they give no real sense of the friendships that existed between the Sisters. In her book *The Transforming Power of the Nuns*, Magray explores these relationships and, in particular examines, how they impacted on the lives of celibate women. In the closing paragraphs of the relevant chapter she makes the following point:

> [....] the female world of the convent was a far richer and more complex experience than contemporaries or recent writers have recognized. Roman Catholic convents had provided for centuries unique conditions in which women lived their entire lives with other women, in communities bound by complex ties of obligation, obedience, and love.[121]

In applying this observation to the Loreto Sisters it can be seen that the Annals and letters reveal the warmth of the care that was extended to the pupils who attended Loreto schools, especially when they were in trouble. They also reveal the constraints

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[119] "Rules for those who teach in the Schools" (n. 9) p. 93.

[120] 'Manuscript Life of M.M. Teresa Ball'. AIR: P2/X/20.

[121] M. P. Magray, *The Transforming Power of the Nuns*, p. 72.

Magray deals more extensively with the relationships that existed in religious communities in chapter four of her book, pp. 46-73.

placed on women who had, to all intents and purposes quit the world, but who still experienced the need to give, and receive, human affection.

The "ties of obligation, obedience and love" were no doubt felt by all those women who became members of the Loreto Order, but the common bond of humanity did not guarantee equity. Like many female religious Orders the Loreto Sisters had, within their communities, a class structure. A distinction was made between "Choir Sisters" and "Lay Sisters"; the Choir Sisters taught in the schools while the Lay Sisters performed the domestic duties that enabled the school and convent to function. The account that follows shows the inequality and disparity that existed between the two groups.

The Constitutions brought from York by Ball spell out the distinction between the "decrees of persons" admitted to the Institute:

> The first is those who being endowed with wit and eminent talent for the Instruction of Youth are employed in the Chief offices of God's greater glory. The second is those who must exercise themselves only in the inferior domestic works and must be content with the lot of Martha, being persuaded that they shall receive from God the full reward of their labours if they serve their neighbours with all diligence and charity [....].[122]

First and foremost, this Constitution sets apart the Choir Sister from the Lay Sister by clearly stating that the former has a far superior role to the latter. It also implies that those who taught were endowed with "wit and eminent talent" while those who engaged in domestic work were not. While those who taught in the schools could take pride in the fact that they were engaged in the "Chief offices of God's greater glory" those who worked in the kitchens had to content themselves with the "inferior domestic works".

More disturbing still is the link between the candidate's social background and the degree of religious life she was admitted to. In the Constitutions entitled "On those we receive for the Instruction of Youth" the statement is made that: although "birth, reputation and riches will not suffice [....] nevertheless, they will certainly serve to

[122] 'Constiutions of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary'(n.5), p. 3.

give edification and to promote the honour and glory of God and so render them more desirable for this Institute".[123] This streaming of candidates meant that those who came from a wealthy background and, who could afford an education that would enable them to take up a teaching post, were destined for the role of Choir Sister.

A survey of the Annals of Rathfarnham highlights other differences that existed between the Lay Sisters and the Choir Sisters. In describing the lighting of the convent chapel for example, Ball records the fact that "The nave of the Church contains nine lamps for oil and two lustres. The young ladies transept has a lustre with eighteen candles. The Lay Sisters' transept has a branch with 6 candles".[124] There is no record with regard to the lighting for the Choir Sisters but even in the detail given here, the Lay Sisters are placed below the boarders in terms of the allocation of resources and were segregated from the rest of their religious community. The next entry, referring to the Community celebration of a votive Mass, makes this latter point clear: "The professed Sisters knelt on one side of the altar, the novices on the alternate side, the Lay Sisters were in the chancel gallery where they adore".[125] This kind of segregation, physical and social, was accepted not just by the community but by the pupils since it reflected their own home experience of the treatment of domestic servants.

The Lay Sisters were thought incapable of taking on what the Constitutions referred to as the "chief offices" but they were expected to show a great deal of flexibility and aptitude in the work they were required to do. In 1850, the Annals report that "[a] kind benefactor taught our Lay Sister, who bakes and makes barm, to brew double X porter for the delicate members in the establishment".[126] The Lay Sisters contribution to the community enabled the foundation to be more or less self-sufficient. In her letter to Teresa Dease the Irish foundress writes: "We have 20 Lay Sisters: one bakes, another makes excellent shoes: candles are also made, brewing progresses".[127]

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[123] 'Constitutions of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary', see in particular 'On those we receive for the Instruction of Youth', p. 27.

[124] 'Annals of Loretto', January 19th 1850.

[125] 'Annals of Loretto', January 22nd 1850.

[126] 'Annals', 1850.

[127] Letter from Teresa Ball to Teresa Dease 20th Jan 1853. AIR: P2/B2/6

Since there was no professional training available in the Convent, those Sisters who came from less well off backgrounds, but who may indeed have had an aptitude for teaching, were never able to move beyond the rank of Lay Sister. As Magray states: "the sisters of the second degree could not and did not become sisters of the first degree. The barrier was impenetrable; social mobility was not a feature of convent life in nineteenth century Ireland".[128] Thus convents emulated and reinforced the social distinctions that were to be found in society at large without questioning the disparity they created between those, whom by coincidence of birth, were deemed inferior or superior. Magray points out that "this class distinction [....] has now become an awkward and embarrassing memory for many orders as well as a regrettable, if not reprehensible, feature of women's religious life in the eyes of some scholars".[129] It would be fair to suggest that given their status within the community, Lay Sisters, although central to the success of the enterprise, found themselves on the margins of it. Their work and labour provided for and maintained the smooth running of the school and community but it was the Sisters who taught in the schools that were seen to be the key figures in the enterprise.

The Sisters who taught in Loreto Abbey

In the early plans for the Institute it was Mary Ward's intention that as far as possible the schools she founded would be staffed by her own Sisters. This was also Ball's intention and from the moment a suitable candidate entered the novitiate she was prepared for her role as a teacher as her letter illustrates:

> Postulants and Novices will have plenty to occupy them for two years and a half, to learn the spirit of religious life and how to teach in our schools, to practise accomplishments, take care of Boarders and Day children; learn to teach Christian Doctrine [...].[130]

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[128] M. P. Magray, *The Transforming Power of the Nuns*, p. 44.

[129] M. P. Magray, *The Transforming Power of the Nuns*, p. 42.

While it might be reasonable to argue that the division between Choir and Lay Sister reflected the social stratification of the nineteenth century, it is unfortunately the case that it continued well into the twentieth century. In the case of the Loreto Order it ended with Vatican II in the 1960s.

[130] "Draft Letters of M. Teresa Ball" green folder. AIR: X/2k Cf 2/1/Ay.

This is an important insight into the integration of preparation for the school apostolate within the suitable candidate's religious formation. The integration shows the centrality of education within the ethos of the Loreto Sisters. There was no separation between the candidate's apostolic and religious formation. A later letter to Teresa Dease gives further insight into the nature of the training the novices received: "We have received seven postulants gratis, since last April. 4 in our novitiate have voices, a professor teaches them singing twice a week. A drawing master attends 15 of our nuns, who learn landscapes".[131] The foundress of Rathfarnham was determined to ensure that school was staffed by those who were properly equipped to undertake teaching duties and to this end the arrival of an already skilled candidate was always welcome: "I have this day received two boarders and a diamond postulant, one in 1000. She spent 11 years in France, speaks with a nice accent and possesses a nice mind".[132] In another letter written in 1842 to the foundation in Munich, Ball wrote:

> Our community enjoy good health. All we need is a religious sister of pious disposition, who has a talent for the study of modern languages, a good knowledge of her native language, and the capacity to express herself in French or Italian or even in Spanish. The dowry is of little importance compared with the facility in writing her native language well. [133]

So important was the need for a language teacher that Ball was willing to forgo the requisite dowry in lieu of the candidate's potential contribution to the school apostolate. By that stage of course, the foundation at Rathfarnham, had been in existence for twenty years; the success of the school plus the increasing number of candidates put the convent on a more secure financial footing. This security meant Ball could exercise more discretion in applying the criteria for the admission of candidates. Nevertheless the acceptance of candidates minus a dowry was exceptional; most brought a dowry with them. There are, for example, three letters dating from the year 1843 which make specific reference to dowries. In a letter to one of the candidate's parents, Dr. Duggan, Ball writes:

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[131] Letter from Teresa Ball, Rathfarnham to Teresa Dease, Toronto 20th June 1853. AIR: P1/B2/12. The novitiate refers to period of time a candidate spent in the congregation before she took her vows.

[132] Letter for Teresa Ball, Rathfarnham to Eucharia Dease, Fermoy, 21st Oct 1856. AIR: P1/7/C1/14

[133] Letter from Teresa Ball to Munich 14th July 1842. 'Draft Letters of M. Teresa Ball' green folder AIR:X/2k Cf 2/1/Ay

> I will receive Miss Duggan, and be accountable for her expenses at Loretto during her life, should she be disposed to remain when the period of her Profession shall arrive, two years hence, as sickness or delicate health shall not cause her removal, unless she demand it.
>
> Should Miss Duggan change her mind, or in the event of her being released from mortality before the usual period for Profession, the sum of £300 (if received from her) shall be returned to you without interest.[134]

Besides the specific reference to the sum of the dowry the letter provides other interesting information; firstly the candidate came from the professional class, secondly good health was an important consideration given the demands of the life to which the candidate asked to be admitted and thirdly, the dowry was at the disposal of the community once the novice was professed. As well as bringing a dowry many sisters were also the recipients of family legacies as Ball's letter to Letitia McGarry's sponsor indicates: "You were so kind as to mention today, that you will pay for Letitia during her Novitiate at Loretto, the same Pension as when she was at school, and in attaining her majority that you will pay her fortune. I willingly receive Letitia on these terms".[135]

The dowries brought by aspiring members and the fees paid by the boarders afforded female religious communities economic independence, the manner in which they exercised this independence will be referred to in the concluding phase of this chapter.

The archives reveal little about the personality of the women who entered or the temperament of the students they taught. The picture is given of a genteel and remote existence which removed the inhabitants of the convent from the more rudimentary aspects of life in nineteenth century Ireland:

> Mr and Mrs and Miss Croft teach the Piano Forte and singing here twice a week. A nun oversees our 70 boarders at the Piano Forte. Music never flourished more here, but piety predominates in the first class; all these young persons are lady like. We have

[134] Letter from Teresa Ball, Rathfarnham to Dr. Duggan, 16th January, 1843. AIR: P2/A2/47.

[135] Letter from Teresa Ball, Rathfarnham to Miss Mc Garry, 17th January 1843. AIR P2/A2/48. As well as the letter cited there are other examples of family legacies: Eleanor Arthur (niece of Sr. Ignatia Arthur, one of the Ball's companions in the Irish foundation brought with her a dowry that enabled Teresa Ball to begin the construction of the convent chapel. E. Mac Donald, *Joyful Mother*, p. 169.

> several nuns teaching music: our pupils practice two hours each day: a few spend 3 hours a day at music. Painting and drawing are greatly cultivated. At 6 o clock a.m., by choice, some strike up the harp before their companions are out of bed.[136]

As is clearly seen in the letter the emphasis in the school was on piety and gentility which were seen as befitting the conduct of a lady. The extant letters of Ball make no record of the academic achievement of the pupils who attended Loreto Abbey. Her reports on their progress are confined to their proficiency in music and French: the kind of parlour accomplishments which would serve them well for a middle class marriage. This was the type of education Ward had rejected in the plans for her Institute, emphasising instead a more rigorous academic training for the students who attended her schools. In their opposition to her Institute, Ward's adversaries claimed that she was preparing her students to take up a role beyond the confines of the cloister or the home. The education the boarders received at Rathfarnham did not appear to have the same emphasis.

The annals and letters are bereft of any information with regard to the pedagogy employed at Loreto Abbey. In common with the records from the Bar Convent, the emphasis was not on what was to be taught or how it was to be taught but on the person of the educator. The Rules remind the Sisters that: "They ought to endeavour with God's grace, to give such edification that not only her words but her actions and behaviour, may be a lesson to those under her care".[137] Their lives were to be characterised by "meekness, humility and charity".[138] These characteristics were, of course, highly desirable for women in the Catholic Church of the nineteenth century since the same qualities were to be found in the popular portrayal of the Virgin Mary. In the nineteenth century nuns embodied, in theory at least, the example of the Mother of God: humble, virginal and obedient.

As [Mrs.] Thomas Concannon points out: "the whole aim and purport of a consecrated virgin's life was attained by [...] striving to make herself, as nearly [sic] as was possibly to human imperfection a copy of the Blessed Virgin". The author

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[136] Letter from Teresa Ball, Rathfarnham to Teresa Dease, Toronto 16th May 1856. AIR: P1/B2/19.

[137] 'On those we receive for the Instruction of Youth', p. 27.

[138] 'On those we receive for the Instruction of Youth', p. 27.

maintains that this was a "task well understood by Irish nuns".[139] It was a task that had a particular emphasis and this emphasis concerned the virginity of Mary. By consecrating themselves to a life of virginity women religious could come closer to the ideal that was set before them. In common with Mary, women religious were seen as the antidote to the evil set loose by Eve. The sin of Eve could be redeemed by the purity, virginity and humility of women religious.[140] As the evidence will soon show there can be little doubt that this identification with the Virgin Mary placed women religious in the same highly idealised, other worldly state.

The cloister and the world

The model of female religious life, particularly the form adapted by the Loreto Sisters, removed nuns from the society they came from. Unlike their philanthropic sisters they chose to undertake their apostolic endeavours away from public view. For the Loreto Order the submission to a cloistered way of life was far removed from the original intention of Mary Ward whose refusal to accept cloister had seen her condemned as a heretic. Given the experience of Ball at York it is hardly surprising that the Irish foundress was willing to accept enclosure as a necessary condition of religious life. Even very rare trips undertaken beyond the cloister required a great deal of effort as Ball's letter to the Superior at the Bar Convent illustrates:

> Proceeding on our foundations, we visit the Blessed Sacrament before we set out, and on our return for a few minutes. We commence our journey repeating the Litany of the Blessed Virgin. In summer, a light black shawl covers our habit, which has an eye at each pocket hole in the seam and one in the seam at the back with corresponding hooks in the waist of the habit. We remove our guimp and veil until we arrive at our destination, and substitute a stiff linen collar with a broad hem, a deep black bonnet and thick veil. The poor call us 'Sisters'. Thus Mrs. Lambert and I were accosted at the station house where we alighted from the train, after seeing another

[139] T. Concannon, *The Queen of Ireland: An Historical Account of Ireland's Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* (Dublin: M.H. Gill and Son, 1938).

[140] It is interesting to note the timing of Pius IX's dogma on the Immaculate Conception in 1854. This marked a landmark in Catholic ecclesiology since it was the first dogma to be declared "infallible". The concept of Mary as a sinless mother had a profound effect on Catholic female sexuality and identity. It marked a renewal in Marian devotion in the nineteenth century that shaped the spiritual and religious formation of women religious in a particular way. A more detailed analysis of the popular images of Mary and their effects on Catholic female identity is found in M. Harmington, *Hail Mary? The Struggle for Ultimate Womanhood in Catholicism* (New York: Routledge, 1995). For a theological analysis of the place of Mary in the Catholic tradition see E.A. Johnson, *Truly Our Sister: A Theology of Mary in the Communion of Saints* (New York: Continuum, 2003).

> foundation. By order of our venerated Archbishop, our covered car and driver were in readiness to convey us to the Abbey.[141]

The reference to the modifications made in the habit suggests that, as well as the practical necessity of travel, the Loreto Sisters were not keen to draw attention to their identity. The inclusion of the incident at the station may indicate one possible reason for this apparent desire for anonymity. More interesting still is the provision of the "covered car" which not only protected the Sisters from public view but prevented the Sisters from observing the world outside their convent. In the same letter, Ball tells the recipient that when the Sisters are travelling in winter: "We keep the blinds of the car down, say our beads, knit stockings while driving, and make our examen".[142]

Every effort was made to maintain the separation from the world that the Sisters had accepted when they entered the Abbey.[143] The implication is that they were not only separated from the world but protected from it. In a letter to Paul Cullen, Daniel Murray's successor, Teresa Ball replies to Cullen's statement: "At Dalkey, no one has been admitted to visit the Holy Sacrament at the 40 hours' Devotion".[144] In her assertive response to Cullen, Ball contradicts the claim that no "externs" were admitted but as an addendum to her letter she states: "Our young religious express being nervous when strange men and women are admitted in the evening to adore in the same choir with nuns and pupils".[145]

In a very beautifully illustrated scrap book kept by Teresa Ball, the Irish foundress had inserted cuttings from papers and extracts from other sources, mostly pious thoughts and prayers. A survey of its contents seems to suggest that Ball used the

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[141] Letter from Teresa Ball Rathfarnham to Angela Browne York, 2nd April 1851. AIY: 2C.1/16.

[142] Letter from Teresa Ball to Angela Browne, 2nd April 1851.

[143] In a letter to a future candidate TB advises the aspirant: "Your decision to embrace religious life [....] and to practice our characteristical virtue of obedience, in order to be assimilated to Christ, free from the interference of worldly relatives, induces me to observe that this life of penance requires resolution to commence; the first step of renouncing the world, is to be followed by the more difficult one of renouncing self". Letter from TB 8th August, 1855. green folder AIR:X/2k Cf 2/1/Ay

[144] Letter from Teresa Ball to Paul Cullen, 6th May 1854.AIR "Copies of Letters in Dublin Diocesan Archives", P2/17/g. The "forty hours" refers to the forty hours of perpetual devotion and prayer that were held in the chapel before the Blessed Sacrament.

[145] Teresa Ball Rathfarnham to Paul Cullen, dated 6th May 1854. Ball points out to Cullen that "externs" were admitted to the devotion and that in fact "to accommodate the public, the nuns' stalls were removed from the little chapel".

scrap book as a kind of bridge to the world beyond the cloister. One of the cuttings carefully preserved by her is a letter from a priest recalling his visit to Loreto Abbey Rathfarnham. It is quoted here because it illustrates the esteem and status in which those who had chosen to enter a convent were held. The letter was written to a parent whose daughter had entered at the Abbey and whom the priest had met on his visit there. His letter which was later printed for "select circulation" and it is this printed copy which is preserved in the scrap book. In praising the daughter's decision to enter a convent, and her father's acceptance of the choice she made, the priest writes:

> In the words of the Redeemer -"she has chosen the better part". In that religious and peaceful retreat happiness is not precarious and uncertain as in the world, and exposed to a thousand risks of being lost [...]. This life [religious life] approaches nearest in perfection to the life of the Blessed in Heaven [...]. How truly gratifying then must it be to your feelings as a Christian parent to have been blessed with a daughter worthy to be called to such a state of sublime perfection. This, in the eye of religion, is a higher dignity than if she were called to be queen of an earthly kingdom [...].[146]

The letter provides a clear illustration of the highly idealised image of female religious in nineteenth century Ireland. They were seen as "earthly angels" who had left a sinful world behind them.[147] It would appear as if women religious accepted this image. As this survey has revealed however, female religious life was far more complex.

The foundresses of nineteenth century religious congregations exercised great responsibility in their roles of leadership. Teresa Ball for example was responsible not just for the school and convent in Rathfarnham: she was the authoritative leader of over thirty foundations throughout Ireland, Canada, Spain, India, England, Mauritius and India. Because of her enterprise the initial foundation had spread on a level that could never have been imagined in 1821.[148] As contemporary scholarly research

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[146] The letter is written by P. Durcan P.P. on the 19th April 1843. AIR: Teresa Ball's "scrap album", 7B/37. The inside cover reads "Mrs. Ball Loretto Abbey, Rathfarnham".

[147] The letter is written by P. Durcan P.P. on the 19th April, 1843. AIR: Teresa Ball's "scrap Album".

[148] The year of the Irish foundation of Mary Ward's Institute.

suggests nineteenth century female religious were a powerful group within the Irish Church society.[149]

Conclusion

In the homily he delivered at Teresa Ball's requiem Mass in June 1861, the Dominican, Thomas Burke, referred to her as "a second foundress of the Institute of Mary".[150] Given the erroneous history of the Institute there is no sense in which Burke was crediting Ward as the first foundress, but he quite rightly attributes the title to Teresa Ball. She was indeed a foundress and a successful one. The point has already been made that in Ball's lifetime the Institute would be established not just throughout Ireland but in six other countries. Through her personal authority she maintained the unity of the various convents that were founded from the Mother House at Loreto Abbey Rathfarnham. The educational enterprise she established continues to this day. These facts define Teresa Ball as a significant character in the history of Mary Ward's Institute.

On the other hand the memory of Mary Ward had been completely obliterated from the founding story Teresa Ball received at York. There can be little surprise therefore that the innovative spirit of Ward would not reach Irish shores in the first wave of Loreto foundations. A "new" founding story was created which placed Teresa Ball at its centre. The Dublin woman proved a more acceptable and respectable foundress than the woman who had been condemned by the Church as a "poisonous growth" and from whom the veil of suspicion had never been lifted.[151]

Despite this flawed version of events, the Institute in Ireland thrived. It enjoyed enormous success, both in its membership and in its educational enterprise. On the surface at least, it seemed to incur no ill effects as a result of the displacement of its original foundress and identity. Yet a close examination reveals that the separation from Ward's original founding impetus *had* an effect in the Irish context.

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[149] Magray Peckham examines this issue extensively in her publication: *The Transforming Power of the Nuns.*

[150] H.J. Coleridge, Appendix, "Sermon Preached by the Rev. Thomas Burke, O.P., June 1861" pp. 353-368. For the quotation given above see p. 366.

[151] Urban VIII, *Pastoralis Romani Pontificis*, 1631.

Where Ward sought to push the boundaries of women's education, Teresa Ball consolidated them. Ward looked at the needs of her time and envisaged a place for women in the Church and society and in doing so rejected the narrow curriculum that was thought sufficient for a woman's education. Teresa Ball too recognised the needs of her time but her response was to provide a curriculum that was based, not so much on academic excellence, as it was on the kind of accomplishments that would equip women for a life in the cloister or the home. This was exactly what Mary Ward had refused to accept.

Teresa Ball's schools were successful because they were acceptable. The education the pupils received at Loreto Abbey *reinforced* rather than critiqued the female stereotype. The emphasis was on gentility and obedience. In his essay "Women and the Church since the Famine", J.J. Lee makes the point: "[d]utiful woman teachers, including many dedicated nuns, taught girls obedience, docility and resignation to the role assigned to them by a male providence". [152] This was certainly evident in the emphasis placed on the example of the Sisters who taught at Loreto Abbey Rathfarnham.

Moreover this notion of femininity was closely tied to social class and the values of the Catholic middle class in particular were to have a formative influence on the Loreto education project. In the funeral oration for Archbishop Daniel Murray, whom Teresa Ball had described as "our Founder in Ireland", William Meagher described the contribution of the Loreto Sisters in the following way:[153]

> Ladies of high rank and ample fortunes and rare endowments and most cultivated minds, presented themselves before him, ready to quit all things for Christ, to do all things for the realisation of their Bishops' long contemplated holy design. The Order of Loreto was established, and that rain of benediction commenced which has filled not Dublin merely, but the whole land and many lands with the accomplishments of education and the fragrance of piety combined.[154]

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[152] J.J. Lee, 'Women and the Church since the Famine' in M. MacCurtain and D. O' Corrain (eds.) *Women in Irish Society: The Historical Dimension* (Dublin: Arlen House, The Women's Press, 1978), pp. 41-42.

[153] Letter Teresa Ball, Rathfarnham to Teresa Dease, Toronto, 7th April 1857. AIR: P1/B2/24.

[154] W. Meagher, "Notices of the Life and Character of his Grace Most Rev. Daniel Murray, Late Archbishop of Dublin: The Commemorative Oration" (Dublin: Gerald Bellew 1853), p. 38.

The truth is of course that the Loreto Order was also populated by Sisters from the less well off classes but the rigid social stratification applied by the Order ensured that accomplishments of these Sisters were reserved for the more menial tasks of convent life. In this way the Loreto Sisters assisted the Church and society in maintaining the impermeable borders which separated the rich from the poor.

In their educational enterprise the Loreto Sisters applied the same social stratification. In so doing they contributed to the rise of the Catholic middle class in preparing young women to assume the respectable role of wife, mother or nun. The poor were provided with an education that kept them apart from the children of wealthier classes. The education they received consolidated their position in society by providing them with enough to be useful and employable but not enough to cross the class divide. They were expected to assimilate the respectability of the middle classes but they could not expect to join their ranks.

The moral authority of the teaching Sister was consolidated in the self-sacrifice which saw her commit her entire life to God. This sacrifice removed her from the secular world and kept her apostolic endeavours hidden from public view. It was this kind of separatist mentality that Luddy maintains "damaged the position of women in society by undertaking work based on vocation rather than a committed desire to alter the position of women in society".[155] The Loreto Sisters were concerned with the salvation of souls rather than furthering the cause of the members of their own gender.

The pupils who attended Loreto schools shared the enclosed lives of the Sisters who taught them. Far from preparing them to engage with the world, the cloistered life the boarders inhabited kept them separated from it. Mary Ward's belief that women "could and should do something more than ordinary in the face of the common spiritual need" found little resonance in the type of education offered in Teresa Ball's establishment.[156] In a curriculum that was punctuated by piano lessons and needlework, academic accomplishment was seen as a useful acquisition rather than

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[155] M. Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century Ireland*, p. 216.

[156] *Schola Beatae Mariae* (1611-1612).

the means which would enable the women who attended Loreto Abbey to make a significant contribution to society.

Separated from the founding vision of Mary Ward, the Loreto Sisters were content to settle for the prescriptive roles laid down by civil and ecclesial authorities of the time. Instead of availing of the opportunity to establish collaborative relationships with philanthropic women, their work took place behind convent walls. The freedom from cloister which Mary Ward had so tenaciously guarded was accepted as a condition of their religious life by the Loreto Sisters. This retreat from society created a kind of dualism that presented the convent as a place of refuge from a sinful world.

Along with other female religious congregations, the Loreto Sisters represented the ideal image of the Catholic woman: virginal, pure and dedicated. As if to consolidate the female stereotype, their apostolic endeavour was undertaken quietly and unobtrusively. The Catholic hierarchy could content itself with knowledge that the necessary work was undertaken out of sight and out of mind. It was an ideal situation for the Church and society but it was a missed opportunity for the cause of women. The independence, leadership and autonomy exercised by female religious were, without doubt, opening up new paths for women in which they could live and work together. But by removing themselves from society the success of their efforts was not available to other women.

As the nineteenth century evolved entrants to convents grew suggesting that religious life was seen as a superior choice. [157] This growth was to have a detrimental effect on the progress of women's engagement with society. Echoing an earlier theme Luddy makes the point that the emphasis on collective philanthropy being organised through religious communities "denied Catholic lay women the opportunity of establishing voluntary societies on an independent basis, and consequently, of developing any critique of the social origins of poverty and destitution". [158]

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[157] In 1800 there were 120 nuns in Ireland; by 1851 the number had risen to 1, 500 and by 1901 the number was over 8,000. T. Fahey, 'Nuns in the Catholic church in Ireland in the Nineteenth Century', in M. Cullen (ed.), *Girls Don't Do Honours: Irish Women in Education in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Dublin: Women's Education Bureau, 1987), p. 7.

[158] M. Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century Ireland*, p. 45.

The first Foundress of the Loreto Sisters had provided them with a vision which would have enabled them to engage in the kind of critique that Luddy describes. The obliteration of her memory from the history of the Institute set the innovative efforts of Mary Ward back not just by decades but by centuries. By accepting the cloister so vehemently opposed to by Ward, the Loreto Sisters had diminished their ability to engage with the world. Moreover, the pupils who attended their boarding school were trained not to question but to accept the strict parameters which would prescribe their future roles of wife, mother or nun.

This investigation has illustrated the devastating intervention of *Quamvis iusto*; from 1749 to 1909, the descendants of Mary Ward were prohibited from recognising her as Foundress. This chapter has attempted to illustrate the consequences of that prohibition. It has also highlighted the significant role that individuals played, particularly Elizabeth Coyney, in replacing the original innovative vision with a cautious and conservative one. History would dictate that Teresa Ball would receive her early religious formation at one of the darkest moments in the destruction of Ward's legacy. The foundation of the Institute made in Ireland was at the very best, a shadow of Ward's original intention.

The foundation made at Rathfarnham had, however, one crucial link to the Foundress: its dedication to the education of women. This would provide a vital life line to the original vision. By the turn of the century individual characters would emerge who would seek to rehabilitate and reinstate the memory of Mary Ward. Chief among these individuals was Frances (Michael) Corcoran (1846-1927). Under her leadership the Loreto Sisters would be asked to return again to the original vision of Mary Ward, but, like her Foundress, she too would endure the censure of a Church that was not yet ready to accept the ideas of a reformer. The events that unfolded during her term as Superior General of the Irish branch of Ward's Institute give a clear illustration of the troublesome relationship that existed between female religious and the Catholic Church. It is these events, and in particular their impact on women's education, that form the subject matter for the next chapter.

Chapter VI
A CASE OF HISTORY REPEATING ITSELF: MICHAEL FRANCES CORCORAN, THE LORETO SISTERS AND WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN IRELAND

The previous chapter considered the foundation of the Institute in Ireland paying particular attention to the educational legacy of Frances Teresa Ball. The argument was made that the prohibition on the recognition of Ward as Foundress gave rise to a more conservative approach in the Loreto educational enterprise. The final chapter in this dissertation will push this theme further. It will adopt the methodology of the previous chapter by exploring the issue through the case study of another leadership figure in the Irish branch of the Institute, Michael Corcoran. In common with Teresa Ball, Mother Michael (Frances) Corcoran (1846-1927) emerges as a key figure in the history of Ward's Institute in Ireland.[1]

During Corcoran's term as Superior General the members of the Institute were once again allowed to recognise Ward as Foundress. An examination of the circumstances surrounding this event will be given some attention in the initial stages of this chapter. The lifting of the prohibition regarding the recognition of Ward as Foundress was a remarkable event not just in terms of the history of the Institute, but for Corcoran personally. As this chapter will show Corcoran's ideas regarding women's education reflected Ward's innovation rather than Ball's conservatism. But innovation was not the only point of similarity between Ward and Corcoran. In her efforts to return to Ward's original plans, Corcoran's innovations would be rejected and in her case the rejection came not only from the hierarchy, but from the members of her own Institute. In order to examine Corcoran's attempts to introduce a more innovative approach to Loreto education three inter-related issues will be examined.

[1] Frances Corcoran, or Mother Michael as she was to become known, was born in Gardiner Street, Dublin in 1846. The daughter of Michael Corcoran and Anna Maria Magan, Frances became a boarder at Loreto Convent George's Street Dublin. On completing her education at this establishment she spent a further year in a Belgian convent. A retreat in her *alma mater* strongly influenced her decision to become a nun and in 1865 she entered Loreto Abbey Rathfarnham taking her father's name Michael. In 1888, at the age of forty two, she was elected Superior General of the Irish Branch of Mary Ward's Institute. It was a position she was to hold for thirty years distinguishing her as one of the longest serving leaders in the Institute's history.

Firstly the chapter will focus on Corcoran herself. Drawing on primary sources, the study will attempt to give some background on the character and personality of one of the most important figures in the history of the Irish branch. Secondly the chapter will present an overview of the Loreto Sisters involvement in girls' intermediate or second level education. This aspect of the study will focus on the people at the heart of the enterprise: Sisters and pupils. Thirdly, the chapter will examine the efforts made by the Loreto Sisters to consolidate their role in the controversial question of women's higher education at the turn of the twentieth century. And finally, the chapter will conclude by bringing to light documentary evidence not previously employed by researchers. The material consists of a series of letters written by the Loreto Sisters to the Archbishop of Dublin expressing their concern at Corcoran's leadership. The letters provide an interesting lens through which to view a theme which runs throughout this chapter: the ecclesiastical constraints within which female religious had to operate. They are pertinent to this study because they reveal the difficulties that faced female religious when they tried to implement more innovative approaches to their enterprise. Before turning to this examination however one task must be attended to and this is to account for the events which allowed the members of the Institute to recognise Mary Ward as their Foundress.

A Foundress restored

As the previous chapter has illustrated the members of Ward's Institute were prohibited from recognising Ward as Foundress by papal decree. This decree was promulgated by Benedict XIV in 1749 and remained in place until 1909. Despite this prohibition the memory of Ward was kept alive thanks to the fidelity of individuals to the memory of their Foundress. This fidelity is exemplified by the Augsburg community. According to Wetter, down to the twentieth century a member of the community was appointed for three months at a time to repeat three names that should not be forgotten by the Sisters. Then the three names were to be passed on to the next Sister appointed to the task. Two of those remembered were English martyrs, the third was Mary Ward.[2] This secret fidelity was supported by the interest in Ward from individuals outside the Institute.

[2] The names of the martyrs were Edward Catherick and John Lockwood. According to Wetter, Mary Poyntz, one of the early members of the Institute brought their relics to Augsburg. I. Wetter, *Mary Ward: Under the Shadow of the Inquisition*, pp. 19-20.

In England, for example, Canon Lawrence Toole was keen to find out more about the origins of the Loreto Sisters since he had invited them to make a foundation in his Manchester parish. The priest was aware that a shadow clouded Ward's legacy and this seemed to convince him of the need for a biography. This idea was supported by leaders in the Institute, most notably by the Irish woman M. Joseph Edwards and the result was Chambers's two volume biography.[3] The interest in Ward continued to grow. This gave rise to a new confidence in Ward's case and the result was a petition to Rome requesting the rehabilitation of Ward's good name and the permission to recognise her as Foundress.

The effort was greatly helped by the support of Cardinal Merry de Val (Cardinal Protector of the Institute) and Abbot Francis Aidan Gasquet (Abbot President of the English Benedictine Congregation).[4] These individuals proved to be powerful allies in Rome. Success came on the 20th April 1909 when Pope Pius X declared "that there is nothing henceforward to prevent the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary [...] from acknowledging Mary Ward, even publicly, as its foundress".[5] This ended the imposed amnesia that had prohibited the members of the Institute from recognising Ward as Foundress but, as Corcoran's case will shortly illustrate, it would be some years before her legacy would be fully claimed by the members of her Institute.

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[3] M.C.E. Chambers, *The Life of Mary Ward 1585-1645* (London: Burns and Oates, 1885). Mother Joseph Edwards entered in Balbriggan, Dublin but transferred to Munich because of a dispute about jurisdiction in Ireland. She moved from Germany to England and lived at England's Lane, Haverstock Hill, London. I. Wetter, *Under the Shadow of the Inquisition*, footnote 15, p.204.

Mary Catherine Elizabeth Chambers was originally a member of an Anglican community for women. In 1876 she converted to Roman Catholicism. She was a friend of John Henry Newman who directed her to Mary Ward's Institute in 1879. She travelled with Joseph Edwards across Europe gathering sources on her biographical subject. She died one year after the completion of her work. I. Wetter, *Under the Shadow of the Inquisition*, footnote 15, p.204.

[4] Cardinal Merry de Val was appointed Cardinal Protector of the Rathfarnham branch of the Institute in October, 1907. As the title indicates de Val had special responsibility for the affairs of the Institute. Wright explains that with the appointment of de Val the Superiors of the Institute had an advocate who was independent of the local diocesan authority. M. Wright, *Mary Ward's Institute: The Struggle for Identity*, p. 186.

[5] Sacred Congregation for Religious, *Rescript*, April 20th, 1909. The Pope was careful not to discredit the words of his predecessors by maintaining that the intention Benedict XIV was merely to separate the Institute from the so-called Jesuitesses and not to discredit Ward. English translation: M. Wright, *Mary Ward's Institute: The Struggle for Identity*, pp. 215-217. See also I. Wetter, *Mary Ward Under the Shadow of the Inquisition*, p.209.

There can be no doubt that time and history determined the events that would shape the history of the Loreto Sisters. But these women were not merely subjects in history; their actions also determined the course of events. Michael Corcoran is a case in point: the evidence will show that her own personality would emerge as a strong force in the unfolding history of the Irish Branch. In this regard the large volume of Corcoran's personal correspondence, as well as the testimony of those who knew her, provide a unique perspective through which to view one of the most remarkable periods in the history of the Loreto Sister. It to these sources the investigation now turns.

Corcoran as Novice-Mistress

Acquin Lyne was a member of the Rathfarnham branch of the Institute and, more significantly for the purposes of this study, was a novice during Michael Corcoran's term as novice mistress a post which she held from 1875 until her election as Superior General in 1888. The regard in which Corcoran and Lyne held for one another is reflected in the letters, more than one hundred, which passed between them. Given the warm relationship that existed between the two there can be little surprise that Lyne's biography of Corcoran is, to say the least, a favourable sketch of her life.[6]

Lyne gave her account of Michael Corcoran in two editions: "Recollections of my Novice –Mistress"[7] and "Recollections of Rev. Mother M. Michael".[8] In her memoirs Lyne describes Corcoran in the following way: "Mother Michael Corcoran was an ideal novice-mistress. We loved, respected and esteemed her. We trusted her fully and

[6] Given the rather biased tone of Lyne's biographical account of Michael Corcoran there can be little surprise that the writer would choose to focus on the positive personal traits of her subject describing her as "intellectual, foreseeing, even-tempered, gentle but firm, patient and, above all full of charity". Despite the demands of office Lyne maintains that the Superior General "took an immense interest in each house and in the wants of each individual". Corcoran is described by Lyne as a "true spiritual mother". Acquin Lyne's work is a valuable document in recalling the life of a unique, and in Lyne's analysis, an exceptional leader. But given the close relationship that existed between the two, as well as the obvious esteem in which the author held her subject, Lyne's biography must be treated with some caution. But apart from the limitations of a somewhat biased biography, a picture emerges of a woman whose leadership was characterised by originality and innovation. The personal testimony and the assertions made by Lyne can be tested against the most reliable of sources: the words of Michael Corcoran herself. In her term of office Corcoran's own authority and particular style of leadership is expressed in the voluminous correspondence she maintained with individual Sisters and with communities.

[7] A. Lyne, 'Recollections of my Novice-Mistress'. AIR: 1/B17/MG2.

[8] A. Lyne, 'Recollections of Rev. Mother M. Michael'. AIR: 1/B17/MC14.

indeed had every reason to do so". [9] The author points out that the esteem in which Corcoran was held could be accounted for by her "motherly kindness and great interest in all of us heightened by her transparent spirituality and zeal for our good".[10] In Lyne's biographical sketch Corcoran is presented as a straightforward down to earth woman who "abhorred affectation of any kind". Lyne recalls "she was very particular for example in making us pronounce our words without affecting our accents".[11]

As novice mistress Corcoran held a key position not just in the Loreto Order but in the lives of the individuals who were her novices. A testimony to the loyalty of her ex-novices is their return to novitiate during the summer months when Corcoran gave conferences on spiritual matters and other issues pertaining to the religious life. Corcoran drew on the experience of the recently professed Sisters to prepare the novices under her care for the challenges which lay ahead for them. Lyne recalls one such "conference":

> One day she asked each of them [the professed Sisters] to write on a slip of paper the kind of person who was hardest to live with. This was done and the slips passed up to her. She opened and read them one by one, and coming to a paper on which was written a "busybody" she called it out as she had done with the others but added "I think I agree with this [....]". However she decided later that a "jealous" person was worse but was of [*sic*] opinion that the two were often united in one. [12]

Her practical approach to the formation of her novices was not limited to preparation for community life. Mindful that the novices were also being prepared to teach in the schools Corcoran "frequently gave [....] instructions about the management of children". Her methods in terms of classroom management were remarkably enlightened for the turn of the century: "[S]he told us never to say to a child: "You are rude", or, "You are stupid", but instead to come down on the act and say: "that was a rude way of acting or speaking and not worthy of you". [13] This enlightened attitude

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[9] A. Lyne, 'Novice-Mistress', AIR B17/MG2.

[10] A. Lyne, 'Novice-Mistress'.

[11] 'Novice-Mistress'.

[12] A. Lyne, 'Novice-Mistress'.

[13] A. Lyne, 'Novice-Mistress'.

was also evident in her insistence that the novices should be exposed to Science. According to Lyne "She even gave us some lessons in science –and this before the subject was introduced into girls' secondary schools". Corcoran taught the novices how to do "scientific experiments and let some of us help her in order to give us practical experience and confidence".[14] Unfortunately Lyne gives no indication as to the nature of the experiments or the facilities that were available to the Sisters. Nevertheless the inclusion of this memory indicates the innovative and industrious character of Corcoran's personality.

As well as being responsible for the temporal needs of her novices Corcoran was also responsible for their spiritual formation. The *Recollections of Rev. Mother M. Michael* provide an interesting insight into the kind of spirituality Corcoran espoused for her novices: "She urged us to acquire the habit of conversing with God, to take all our troubles and difficulties to Him [....] as our best and dearest friend".[15] This was in sharp contrast to the Jansenism which, according to Lyne, had "tainted" the nuns "of her time".[16] The reader of the biography is informed that Corcoran "avoided imposing restrictions as far as possible [...] She considered it was quite enough to obey the Rules and Constitutions exactly without adding trying and embarrassing regulations and prohibitions".[17]

A picture emerges of an innovative, progressive leader; at the same time Corcoran was also mindful of the more traditional tenants of religious life. According to Lyne's more extensive biography:

> She was a great believer in the advantages of "common life", and induced us to believe that it was the very best for us. She said God's blessing rested especially on all those who shared it, while many ills and temptations awaited those departed from it, without necessity.[18]

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[14] A. Lyne, 'Novice –Mistress'.

[15] A. Lyne, 'Mother Michael Corcoran'.

[16] 'Mother Michael Corcoran'.

[17] 'Mother Michael Corcoran'.

[18] 'Mother Michael Corcoran'.

As well as emphasising the necessity of the common life Corcoran also highlighted the importance of obedience reminding her Sisters that they consider "not whom they obey, but in his stead Christ Jesus for whose sake they obey". [19]

Corcoran as educator

In her recollection of Corcoran's leadership as Superior General, Lyne returns to her subject's innovative efforts in regard to women's education. According to Lyne "Almost her first care was to promote the cause of the higher education of girls". [20] Corcoran was particularly concerned that "our girls should get the benefit of University Degrees if they so wished and especially if they meant to be nuns".[21] The biographer is keen to illustrate the foresight that Corcoran appeared to have in regard to educational provision. When the Gaelic League was founded in 1893, she was "most eager to learn Irish". According to Lyne she "managed to engage one of the founders of the Gaelic League to give her Irish lessons and invited any of the nuns who were willing to form a class".[22]

The biographer herself gives an interesting account of the Irish classes that were provided for the Loreto Sisters:

> One Summer during the holidays she got up an Irish Course in Stephen's Green for about thirty nuns. This course lasted three weeks and three teachers were engaged for it – two from the Leinster school of Irish and one from University College. The teacher we considered best was Mrs. de Valera[23] and we learned an immense amount from her in the time, and we all agreed in thinking she was ideal for the work. We liked her immensely and she liked us too [....] she made the work most interesting introducing games, stories etc. in the language and explaining all the initial difficulties so clearly that we were ready to go on with the study ourselves.[24]

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[19] 'Mother Michael Corcoran'.

[20] 'Mother Michael Corcoran'.

[21] 'Mother Michael Corcoran'.

[22] 'Mother Michael Corcoran'. Harford makes the point that like many female religious were keen to support the revival of the Irish language and culture; in common with many priests they feared the growth of English secular culture and the possibility that in might undermine devotional Catholicism. J. Harford, *The Opening of University Education to Women in Ireland*, p. 111.

[23] "Mrs de Valera" was Sinead Flanagan, a teacher from the Gaelic League. She later married Eamonn de Valera, President of Ireland.

[24] 'Mother Michael Corcoran'.

With regard to methodology "Mrs de Valera [....] made a rhyme or rather rhyming story for our class, which brought in all the irregular Irish verbs. One of the nuns set it to music and it was played and sung for them in the Concert Hall to give them pleasure, which it did".[25] As well as providing for the education of her Sisters, Corcoran was keen to compensate for the gaps in her own knowledge. Lyne tells her reader: "she also began Algebra and Latin getting one of her former novices to teach her" since "[t]hese subjects were not in fashion when she was at school, but she was eager to learn everything that was on the curriculum". [26]

In another example of Corcoran's innovative approach to education Lyne tells the reader that:

> Reverend Mother [...] set apart two large rooms in the old part of the house – one for a museum and the other for a library. The museum was stocked very quickly with really beautiful and even valuable exhibits sent by our houses in foreign places – Spain, India, Australia, Africa, and also with gifts from the friends of the nuns and children.[27]

This is an interesting detail since it indicates not just Corcoran's creativity but the benefits that were accruing from the networking that was taking place between the "mission houses" and Rathfarnham. Corcoran herself was a central figure in this international network, as Superior General it was her responsibility to visit the mission houses and to survey the work being done there. On her return from her overseas visitation she gave "lectures" to the nuns and pupils at the Abbey on the places she had visited. Corcoran availed of the latest technology available to her, according to Lyne: "she had a lantern and showed views of the different places she had been to [...]. She used to take the photographs herself as photography was one of the arts she had taught herself". The Superior General did not confine her subject matter to her own experience; as well as the lectures on her visits to the mission houses the reader is told that her audience also received lectures on "Palestine in the time of our Lord, History, Architecture etc." Given her audience, "[s]he took great trouble in preparing for these lectures and spoke most fluently and fascinatingly".

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[25] This refers to the visit of the de Valeras to Loreto Abbey Rathfarnham where according to Lyne, Corcoran "treated them as if they were old friends of hers". A. Lyne, "Mother Michael Corcoran".

[26] 'Mother Michael Corcoran'.

[27] 'Mother Michael Corcoran'.

Lyne maintains that these lectures were so successful that they were asked "for time and time again" and the Superior General never refused "if she had the necessary time".[28]

Michael Corcoran and Mary Ward

Despite the prohibition on the recognition of Ward as Foundress, Corcoran was faithful to the memory of the Yorkshire woman.[29] Lyne's recollection provides a remarkable insight into Corcoran's fidelity:

> She had a great devotion to Mary Ward and trained us to reverence her and pray to her as the Foundress of our Institute, though she was not at that time officially declared to be such. Years afterwards when the Pope declared that she was the Foundress of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary she was over-joyed that her long cherished desire had come to pass.[30]

It is extraordinary that Corcoran was championing the cause of Ward seven years before the Church would restore her to her rightful place as Foundress. It is difficult to account for Corcoran's knowledge of Ward except to note that Chamber's biography of Mary Ward had been published in 1885, while Corcoran was novice mistress. Allied to this, the stronger links with other Institute houses, made easier by improvements in travel and communication, meant that the Sisters in Loreto Abbey, Rathfarnham were no doubt aware of the growing support for the cause of Mary Ward. But none of these suggestions can be adequately supported without the personal explanation of Corcoran herself which, as far as the documentary evidence suggests, she never recorded. Nevertheless the letters written by Corcoran reveal her clear conviction that Mary Ward, and not Teresa Ball, was the true Foundress of the Institute.

In a strongly worded letter, written in 1911, to Cardinal Rafael Merry de Val, she writes[31]

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[28] A. Lyne, 'Mother Michael Corcoran'.

[29] This prohibition was brought about by Pope Benedict XIV's *Quamvis iusto* (1749) and was examined in some detail in the previous chapter.

[30] A. Lyne, 'Recollections of my Novice-Mistress'.

[31] Cardinal Merry de Val was appointed Cardinal Protector of the Rathfarnham branch of the Institute in October, 1907. M. Wright, *Mary Ward's Institute: The Struggle for Identity*, p. 143.

> Yesterday for the first time, I read in the Catholic Encyclopaedia, an article on our Irish branch of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Sister Mary Gertrude, the writer sent it to the Editor without my knowledge and permission. In the article she seems to imply that our branch does not belong to the Institute founded by Mary Ward. Several times lately I have heard it stated that we do not belong to the Institute but that Teresa Ball is our Foundress. I humbly beg your Eminence to obtain for us an authoritative statement that we are part of the Institute founded by Mary Ward.[32]

It is remarkable that two years after the members of the Institute were allowed to acknowledge Ward as Foundress some Sisters continued to believe that Teresa Ball was the true foundress. It is clear from Lyne's account that even as novice mistress Corcoran supported Mary Ward's cause. When she took up her position as Superior General, Corcoran was in contact with an international group of Institute members who shared her views. A letter from Mother Boniface in Portland, for example, illustrates this point:

> It would be grand [...] if the cloud which is hanging over "Mary Ward" [*sic*], our Mother, could at last be removed. I have read with great pleasure Father Coleridge's preface to her life: he explains away so beautifully all the difficulties of Benedict XIV's Bull and seems to have a high regard for our first Mother. [33]

If the events of time and place separated Teresa Ball from the legacy of Mary Ward, then history would prove more favourable to Corcoran. In 1909, when Mary Ward was restored to her rightful place as Foundress, Corcoran wrote to the Superior of the Bar Convent:

> I feel as if we have been foundlings up to this, and now we have found our Mother, and she has been recognised as such. I am curious to know how some have received the news. [...] Hide nothing for I want to know who are true children of IBVM. [...] Now we must pray for her speedy glorification, but we must not talk of her as if she were already beatified. No candles before her picture, or any of that.[34]

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[32] M. Corcoran's letter to Cardinal Merry de Val, 4th February 1911. AIR: P2/4/10/40.

[33] Letter from M.J. Boniface to Michael Corcoran 9th January 1890. AIR: P2/4/9a/11.

[34] Letter from M. Corcoran to M. Hilda, York 26th April 1909. AIR: P2/3/5/113.

The two letters give an interesting insight into the status of Mary Ward in the Institute. On the one hand, there can be no doubt that she had her supporters but, as Mother Boniface points out, "a cloud" was still hanging over her which meant that not all members of the Institute were happy to acknowledge her as their Foundress. It should also be said that although Corcoran rejoices in the restitution of Ward's legacy she rarely, if ever, mentions the name of the Foundress in her general letters to her Sisters. There can be no doubt that Corcoran had a strong personal loyalty to her Foundress but without more conclusive evidence it is difficult to establish the exact nature of the influence of this legacy on the Superior General. There are occasions in Corcoran's life, however, particularly between the years 1900 and 1909 when her interaction with the Church hierarchy, albeit at a local diocesan level, closely mirrors Ward's experience. Since this will be the subject of investigation in the concluding stages of this chapter suffice it to say here that Corcoran's devotion to Mary Ward was significant given the undercurrent of opposition that still appeared to flow against the Foundress.

In order to comment more fully on the way in which Corcoran's legacy reflected the more innovative aspects of Ward's original vision a more focused examination of her educational ideas is required and this examination forms the subject matter for the next stage of this inquiry.

Corcoran and educational innovation

In her biographical sketch of Corcoran, Evangeline MacDonald highlights the Superior General's determination to raise the standard of education in Loreto schools.[35] In order to do this Corcoran visited the Endowed Schools in Manchester to investigate the methods and curricula employed there. On her return from England she prepared a report for her Sisters, she begins by explaining the purpose of her visit:

> As we are all united for the one end, the promotion of God's greater glory, and as this is to be done mainly in the education of youth our constant endeavour should be how to discharge that duty as perfectly as possible [...] for this end we undertook our journey to England, in order to see for ourselves what systems are used in the schools there, and,

[35] Corcoran was elected Superior General in 1888, a position she held for over thirty years. E. Mac Donald, 'Mother M. Michael Corcoran 1846-1927: 4th. Superior General', AIR MG/2/6 MacDonald draws heavily from Lyne in this twenty two page sketch of Corcoran's life.

> comparing our own, correct what is deficient and introduce any improvement we might think beneficial. [36]

There are a number of points that are worth highlighting here. The first is the strong vocational dimension of the educational enterprise for Loreto Sisters. Their work as a teacher was seamlessly connected to their life as a Sister. The final goal was the same: perfection for the sake of God's Glory. This is *the* continuum that connects Mary Ward, Teresa Ball and Michael Corcoran: these three leaders constantly reminded the Sisters in their charge that their purpose was the glory of God and the chief means of achieving this glory was through their educational enterprise. This unified the lives of individuals into a common purpose and sustained their efforts even in the midst of the difficulties they encountered.

It can also be seen that Corcoran was willing to learn from other systems. Here again she shares something in common with Mary Ward who modelled her school system on the Jesuits. Teresa Ball, on the other hand, does not appear to have had as much opportunity for educational innovation; she seems to have been content to transfer the education she received at the Bar Convent without much, if any, alteration.

Corcoran's introduction to her report indicates that Loreto schools could benefit from new ideas and fresh thinking, and that there was, at least some room for improvement. Although Corcoran is interested in innovation, she is also concerned with the more conventional aspects of education. In her report she makes the following observation:

> On entering the schools in England which we visited, the first thing that forcibly struck us was the order and attention in each class. [....] The teacher's voice was always low and distinct, she did not question in order, any child was liable to be called, this ensured attention. In a school of 200 there was no noise, and the eight classes were all working.[37]

Given the emphasis placed on orderliness and attention it would be interesting to know whether or not Corcoran was making an indirect comment to the Sisters in Loreto schools for whom the management of pupils might have been a particular

[36] No date or title is given on the report. It is catalogued in Loreto Abbey Rathfarnham Archives as P2/B3/1/. For the purposes of footnotes it will be referred to as 'Report on Endowed Schools in England'.

[37] M. Corcoran's 'Report on Endowed Schools in England' AIR: P2/B3/1/3.

challenge. In the next stage of her report she describes the teaching methods used by the teachers in the Endowed school: "[...] the blackboard helps the Teacher to impress any difficult words on the class, during reading the meaning of every word is asked and much general information is acquired".[38] When it came to the children's writing skills she notes:

> [...] even in 2nd class the children are trained to composition by writing from memory short stories, sometimes a story is written on the Blackboard [sic], in which adjectives and adverbs are omitted, and the children have to supply them.[39]

Corcoran is impressed by the teachers who prepare their lessons so well that "they do not need to use the text book during the lesson".[40] Provision was also made for the "grown girls" who came to school and who were "backward in their studies". According to Corcoran; "they are not put into a class with little ones, but they are in what is called a "probationary class". The lessons are the same as those of a younger class".[41] Unfortunately there is no record to indicate the extent to which these methods were employed in Loreto schools nevertheless the report gives a clear insight into Corcoran's attempt to inform her Sisters of innovative methods which they were encouraged to introduce into their own teaching.

Competition among second level girls' schools

It was imperative that the Loreto Sisters maintain and develop the standards of education in their schools. This was essential not just for the pupils who were attending Loreto Schools but for prospective pupils. Given the increase in the number of second level schools for girls there was greater competition for pupils; in this more competitive era it was important that Loreto schools maintain a favourable public profile. In her letter to Mother Teresa Ball,[42] Corcoran gives a cautious reaction to the news that the Mistress of Schools will not be entering the Abbey students in the Feis Ceoil Music competition:

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[38] 'Report on Endowed Schools in England'.

[39] 'Report on Endowed Schools in England'.

[40] 'Report on Endowed Schools in England'.

[41] M. Corcoran's 'Report on Endowed Schools in England'. AIR: P2/B3/1/3.

[42] Teresa (Laura) Ball was the grand-niece of Frances Teresa Ball, foundress of Loreto in Ireland.

> If your reasons for giving up the Feis are better than any for continuing it, then alright, but do not go by what nuns opposed to it say. It is a strain on the children, but it will also be an occasion to train them to do their best at their duty and to leave success to God [...]. In these days of competition it is necessary to train girls not to yield to excitability.[43]

The Superior General was concerned for the welfare of the pupils and was careful not to undermine the authority of her Mistress of Schools, to whom she left the ultimate decision. At the same time Corcoran knew how the absence of the Loreto pupils from such a public competition might be perceived. Music had a high profile in a girls' school as Corcoran reminds the recipient of the letter: "having visited many schools, I see that to fill a school there is nothing like music. I mean a girls' school".[44] It was not enough that the pupils and teachers of Loreto schools knew the high regard in which music was held; if Loreto schools were going to continue to attract pupils it was essential that the public were also aware of what Loreto schools had to offer.

Corcoran herself had her own musical tastes as this addendum to one of her letters to Acquin Lyne written from Loreto Abbey Rathfarnham illustrates:

> The concert was magnificent, but the music was too classical for me. I heard experts say that we never had such good music. I made them learn "A Nation Once Again" in case we had Home Rule. [...] the singing and playing of it was most spirited, and all the men in the room, joined in the chorus. The effect was splendid. I heard that Redmond is disappointed at the lack of enthusiasm throughout Ireland. There is none in our neighbourhood.[45]

Besides the competition that existed between Loreto schools and other convent schools there was also inter-Loreto rivalry which Corcoran clearly refers to in a letter written from Dalkey in 1908. She expresses her concern at the "disedification that has been given to outsiders by some of ours". She identifies the source of the "disedification": "The matter has reference to the music competitions, and the remark

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[43] Letter from Michael Corcoran to Mother Teresa Ball 21st September 1903. AIR: P2/B2/2/34.

[44] Letter from M. Corcoran to M. Teresa Ball 21st September 1903. AIR: P2/B2/2/34.

[45] Letter from M. Corcoran to Acquin Lyne 27th May 1914, AIR P2/4/17/81. This is an interesting shift in political ideology in Loreto leadership. As the previous chapter illustrated Ball was happy to embrace English culture as her account of the boarders at Dalkey welcoming Queen Victoria's ship indicated.

was, that Loreto Sisters have lost some reputation for loyalty and charity on account of apparent jealousy of the successes of others".[46]

She cautions those involved against making "comparisons between school and school" since "outsiders may take what we say more seriously". In the light of this she advises "the best thing is to say nothing on the subject".[47] She encourages her Sisters to be: "glad of the success of all, and hope that all may do well, and this should apply every subject taught as well as to music. [...] What is the good of success if accompanied with anything that displeases God or wounds charity in the least".[48]

At the end of the day there was probably little that Corcoran could do to put a halt to the inter-school rivalry that existed between Loreto schools, particularly since the competition appears to have been ignited as much by the nuns as by the pupils.

By the turn of the twentieth century female religious congregations had consolidated their place on the educational landscape and there is no doubt that Loreto in concentrating on the education of middle class girls was also in competition with the Ursuline and Dominican Sisters.[49] Writing from Loreto Abbey Rathfarnham, she cautions one of her Sisters: "Will you tell the nuns not to be so foolish as to let seculars think that you are afraid of another congregation coming near you. Put it into the heads of people that you fear competition and the next thought will be that you are inferior". [50] Corcoran is concerned that the apparent fear that some of the Sisters had of competition from other teaching congregations would give a bad example to "seculars" and that the articulation of the apparent threat would undermine the public perception of Loreto schools.[51]

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[46] Letter from M. Corcoran, 2nd June1908. AIR: P3/1/12.

[47] Letter from M. Corcoran, 2nd June1908. AIR: P3/1/12.

[48] Letter from M. Corcoran, 2nd June1908. AIR: P3/1/12.

[49] The Dominican Sisters would prove to have a particular role in relation to the Loreto Sisters and the relationship between the two Orders will be the subject of further discussion at a later stage in this chapter.

[50] Letter from M. Corcoran to Mother Raphael, 9th April 1913. AIR: P2/4/6/2.

[51] The term "seculars" was frequently used by female religious to describe lay men and women.

In the light of this, it is clear that Corcoran had to keep a fine line between motivating her Sisters to achieve the highest standards possible, while at the same time avoiding the type of competitiveness that was in danger of undermining their common goal. She attempted to achieve this balance by reminding her Sisters of the "higher goal" for which they were all working. In a letter she sent during the summer vacation she writes to them:

> The school year is over. You have all worked very hard, and you are now getting a much needed and well earned rest. [....] Concentrate your energies now on your own spiritual progress [....] Recall what you desired and did for your pupils. You thought of them and planned for them. You drew the scheme of study that would suit them best. You prayed for their success and you ardently wished the highest success for them; Exhibitions, prizes and other distinctions. You even longed to see your school take the highest place among the schools of Ireland, and many of you spent much energy in labouring to win that coveted place! [...] Now turn all those reflections on your own work for your own souls! Pray that the Institute may be blessed with saints.[52]

This was a well penned letter: it recognised and praised the Sisters for their achievements but it also reminded them of the spiritual "achievements" which they were expected to attend to. It was important that the teaching Sisters did not confine their activity or their ambition to "worldly matters" since their lives were to be motivated by heavenly, not earthly, rewards. As in Teresa Ball's time, the Sisters lives were expected to be an example to those they taught; this had an important impact on recruiting future members as Corcoran reminds Acquin Lyne:

> Are you doing your best to make a good impression on the girls by your manifest aiming at holiness? [...] Do you know that it frets me that no postulants are offering themselves? Is it our fault I wonder? Are we giving as good example as we ought? Pray that we may know God's will and do it perfectly.[53]

The recruitment of future candidates was essential for the survival of the congregation and its apostolate and since these would continue to be drawn mainly from the schools it was essential that the highest of ideals were presented to the girls. The next stage of

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[52] Letter from M. Corcoran, 4th July 1914. AIR: P2/B3/1/39.

[53] Letter from M. Corcoran from Loreto, Calcutta to Acquin Lyne 23rd January 1903. AIR: P2/4/17/12.

this study presents an overview of the group at the heart of the educational enterprise governed by Corcoran: the pupils in Loreto schools.

Pupils at Loreto

The kind of world the Loreto pupils inhabited, although not unique in terms of other convent schools, was certainly interesting. In an article on "The Loreto Schools in Ireland" (1904), Jean Victor Bates describes the physical environment a pupil at Loreto Abbey Rathfarnham occupied:[54]

> In the dormitories, as in the class-rooms, hygiene is the chief consideration. Each girl has her own cubicle, with a wooden bed, washstand, chair, and cupboard. Truth to tell, the looking-glasses are not over large, and the Spartan simplicity of the rooms might not appeal to some luxurious young women; but the sweet mountain air which flutters the pink curtains, the dazzling whiteness of the linen, and the spotlessness of the floors, atone amply for any bareness.[55]

No description of education in the Abbey would be complete without a reference to music:

> The Loreto nuns have proved themselves to be thoroughly musical, both by their own ability and by the places in the musical world taken by their pupils in after-life. The sisters are skilled harpists – their fame is almost universal and the harp students consider themselves fortunate if they can manage to study for a time under their direction.[56]

The idyllic picture continues: "They have an orchestra of about fifty members, and on concert night it is a pretty sight to see the head sister conducting her band through some difficult pieces". Apart from music, "embroidery and needlework are given prominence in the scheme of education" nor is "laundry" neglected. The author notes that the girls are "initiated into the mysteries of this somewhat neglected branch of domestic knowledge".[57] Every effort is made to communicate the author's impression of a self-sufficient female community: "Even the electrical generating-station is entirely controlled by the sisters, who would scorn to allow any of the stronger sex to

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[54] J.V. Bates, 'The Loreto Schools of Ireland', *The Girls' Realm*, 1904 pp. 26-34. (ed.) S. H. Leeder (London: Bousfield, 1904-1905).

[55] 'The Loreto Schools of Ireland', p. 29.

[56] 'The Loreto Schools of Ireland', p.29.

[57] 'The Loreto Schools of Ireland', p.31.

touch their beloved machinery".[58] The publication that this article appeared in was intended to communicate the "stories" of boarding school life and there are occasions, as the previous extracts illustrate, when the reality is slightly embellished. The description of the Head of the Order, Michael Corcoran is a case in point:

> Her word is law, and from sisters and children alike she expects, and gets, unquestioning obedience. A glance at her shrewd, good tempered face is however, sufficient to show that this obedience is not enforced thorough fear. She is plainly as loving-hearted as she is shrewd, and this is saying much. She is more far-sighted and well-informed than are most of her sex, even in these days of higher education for women. Her duties, as a member of the Loreto sisterhood, demand constant study in almost every branch of knowledge. She has herself learnt, taught, sympathised with, and watched human nature all the world over. Girls have been her "hobby", and her gentle heart never fails to find some good even in the most troublesome of her adopted daughters, whether so girls or nuns.[59]

The article presents a picture that was intended to present a favourable picture of boarding school life inhabited by pupils and nuns in the early years of the twentieth century. The author is, of course, writing as an outsider looking in, a situation perhaps which allows the observer to portray a very romanticised view. The in-house publication the *Loretto Magazaine*, on the other hand, was penned by the pupils themselves. The articles provide an interesting lens through which to view the attitudes and opinions of the girls who attended Loreto schools in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

A word from the pupils: the Loreto Magazine[60]

The first edition of the Magazine was produced in May 1895 and the preface stated its purpose:

> The object of this Magazine is to encourage Loretto Girls to write easily and pleasingly on various subjects. To do this, they must practise such writing, and as we wish to make the most of their efforts, we shall be as indulgent as possible to the young contributors, and entice them to improve by

[58] 'The Loreto Schools of Ireland', p.31.

[59] J.V. Bates, 'The Loreto Schools of Ireland', p.34.

[60] By 1896 the second "t" was dropped in favour of the "Loreto" version. The footnotes referring to the magazine will adhere to the original spelling of Loretto.

> degrees. [...] we feel certain that in many a home, not only in Ireland but all over the world, there will be a warm welcome from the Loretto children to "THE LORETTO MAGAZINE".[61]

The first edition included articles on "Teaching by Pictures"[62] and "The New Woman".[63] The latter is worth quoting from since it communicates the very firm attitude of the writer, identified only as Y.Y., to the role and potential of women. The writer is keen to highlight the physical and intellectual inferiority of women, stating:

> [...] women have always possessed and (in full consciousness of their possession), have always exercised a second-rate intellectual capacity; and that is all they have succeeded in showing, in spite of the loud-voiced claims they make just now of equality with men. Let us confess it – women have had their chance as well as men, and they have fallen into their proper position. They are physically weaker and mentally more superficial. They cannot join in men's sports, nor rise high in men's professions.[64]

In other words, women, according to the writer, should accept their inferiority and abandon their vain and ill advised efforts towards equality. The writer condescends to women's education but even this is qualified: "They *can* be and should be, educated, mentally and physically, so as to develop all their powers. They can be brilliant musicians, but not great composers; helpful nurses, but not famous surgeons; pleasing writers, but not inspired poets".[65]

In other words women, the writer argues, should be educated to their full capacity. But even if they reached their potential they were still inferior to men. The writer was keen to remind women of the consequences of women's equality:

> Those who clamour so loudly to be equal to men should remember that, by that very act, they renounce their claim to woman's privileges. Let them have votes for Parliament, and enter it, if they like; let them be doctors, lawyers, soldiers or sailors; but then let them be content to stand in the tram car, and push their way at the railway station. Let them carry

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[61] The Loretto Magazine, Midsummer, 1895.

[62] G.S., 'Teaching by Pictures', *The Loretto Magazine,* Midsummer, 1895, pp. 11-15.

[63] Y.Y., 'The New Woman', *The Loretto Magazine,* Midsummer, 1895, pp. 20-22.

[64] Y.Y., 'The New Woman', p. 21.

[65] Y.Y., 'The New Woman', p. 21.

> their own parcels, and, above all, let them pay their own bills since they wish it so much.[66]

The writer concludes with the following statement:

> But let them leave the other women – the women who are content to devote the energy of a cultivated mind and the affection of a sympathetic heart to the fulfilment of their duties as daughters, wives, and mothers – let them leave *these* the little courtesies of life, and the happiness to be found in the peaceful shelter of a loving home.[67]

The article is certainly provocative and highly stylised for the purposes of argument. Nor were these views unique. Given the socio-cultural context of the nineteenth century, these views would have represented a fairly typical attitude towards women who sought to push the equality agenda. As this study will show, one of the greatest obstacles facing those who advocated women's education was the notion that the best locale for the enterprise of women was the family home. It is interesting to note that these views could have been easily interchanged with the views on women's education in Ward's era which were given such prominence in the second chapter of this dissertation. It is extraordinary that in this instance they were penned by a pupil or past pupil of a school of the Institute.

Immediately after this article "Another View of 'Women's Progress'" appears.[68] This article, penned by "M.E.", is not intended to rebuff the arguments made in "The New Woman" but to present, as it states in its title "another view" on the topic. The writer praises the "laurel-crowned pioneers of our cause" who are "daily adding new recruits to their ranks in their chosen careers of science, medicine, law, art and literature".[69] The writer also recognises the contribution of "home workers" those not "urged on by want of money" or "any other especial cause, to earn a livelihood".[70] These women too, in the writer's view, contribute to the progress of their "professional sisters by

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[66] Y.Y., 'The New Woman', p. 22.

[67] Y.Y., 'The New Woman', p.22.

[68] M.E., 'Another View of "Woman's Progress"', *The Loretto Magazine*, Midsummer, 1895, pp.22-23.

[69] M.E., 'Another View of "Woman's Progress"', p. 22.

[70] M.E., 'Another View of "Woman's Progress"', p. 22.

their intelligent sympathy".[71] The writer is also eager to point out the particular role of these "home workers" in charitable work:

> There are churches to be decorated, bazaars and concerts for charities to be worked up, and impulse given to literary circles. And besides all this, many of these girls have mastered more than one branch of knowledge, so that, come what may they will be able to retain their position to the end as happy and useful members of society.[72]

These articles give an interesting perspective on the attitudes towards women's equality. The first illustrates the negative reactions of those who viewed women who campaigned for women's progress as wanting the benefits of equality with no appreciation of the implications. Although the second article attempts to praise women who have "progressed", it too offers a fairly limited understanding of equality. Girls were encouraged to reach their potential but this potential was defined not by their ability but by their gender. The traditional roles of wife and mother still prevailed.

Before leaving this survey of articles on the education of women, it is worth highlighting the fact that in the Midsummer edition of 1897, the subject of women's education once again appears. The author, Marion Mulhall, expresses the opinion that: "The vexed question as to superiority of male and female intellect is one that should never be discussed, because the premises are so different that it can never be settled".[73] Notwithstanding her reluctance to discuss the issue, Mulhall is not reticent in proposing the type of education that is suited to the members of her sex. The writer advocates a vocational education which would prepare a woman to "hold her place and fulfill her obligations in the society or community in which her lot is cast".[74] In advancing the idea that "the present age is one of rapid progress" Mulhall maintains that it "almost a necessity for girls to know two or three modern languages".[75] She concludes by noting: "The requirements of our own time point to the urgency of making technical, practical and manual instruction a principal feature in all general

[71] M.E., 'Another View of "Woman's Progress"', p. 22.

[72] M.E., 'Another View of "Woman's Progress"', *The Loretto Magazine,* Midsummer, 1895, p. 23.

[73] M. Mulhall, 'Woman's Education', *The Loretto Magazine,* Midsummer, 1897 (pp. 11-14), p. 13.

[74] M. Mulhall, 'Woman's Education', p. 13.

[75] M. Mulhall, 'Woman's Education', p.14.

schemes of education".[76] Unlike her co-writers on the topic Mulhall sees women's education as being determined by the needs of the time rather than by the perceived limitations of gender.

The pupils' perspective on events at Loreto Abbey Rathfarnham

The Magazine included a regular feature "Yearly Notes" in which the pupils of Loreto Abbey, Rathfarnham gave an account of the highlights of their academic year.[77] The pervasive climate of religious life is evident in the accounts describing the Reception and Profession Ceremonies of the young women who entered Loreto convents, many of whom had been pupils in the schools.[78] Given the high profile that the Sisters had in the lives of the pupils' there can be little wonder that religious life was considered to be an attractive option. The "Yearly Notes" illustrate this point:

> The nuns for India left on the 5th October. The Mother Provincial, M.M. Gonzaga Joynt, took with her some new member for the Indian Mission, among them were two of our school companions who had been in Loretto from early childhood. [...] They are now in the Indian Noviceship at Assansol, full of fervour and happiness hoping that more of their companions will follow.[79]

The arrival of the Sisters from the mission houses must have brought a great deal of excitement to the somewhat confined existence of boarding school life. The high profile which Michael Corcoran held is also reflected in the Magazine:

> Great excitement on the 10th instant, the day fixed for Rev. Mother's return. The front lawn was beautifully illuminated, as it was later than we expected when notice was given of the arrival. There was a musical entertainment next day, preceded by addresses of welcome [...]. The Concert Hall was decorated with evergreens and scrolls, "Welcome Home" prominent everywhere. Just before supper a tar-barrel was lighted in the backlawn. It blazed up grandly in the dark winter night, and the wind, which rose suddenly, blew the sparks about in pretty, fantastic shapes. We had three day's recreation, the merriest imaginable.[80]

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[76] M. Mulhall, 'Woman's Education', p.14.

[77] 'Yearly Notes' (unidentified author), *The Loretto Magazine*, 1895, pp. 53-57.

[78] The Reception ceremony marked the transition of the woman from being a candidate for the Order to becoming a novice. The Profession ceremony was when the Sister professed her vows.

[79] 'Yearly Notes', 1895 p. 54.

[80] 'Yearly Notes', 1896, p. 74.

Corcoran must have been a welcome figure for the pupils'. Her presence brought novelty and excitement into the routine of the boarding school which would have followed the routine of the convent very closely. "Retreats" for example are mentioned as a regular occurrence. In November 1894 there were one hundred and twenty "exercitants" who hoped that the "harvest" during the school year would be as "plentiful as it should be, after the splendid seed sown during these three peaceful days".[81] There must have been quite a seamless transition for those who chose to enter the Abbey as a novice.[82]

Pupils' academic achievements

As well as the "Yearly Notes" examination results were also a regular feature in the Magazine. The success of pupils and students in the Intermediate, Matriculation and University examinations were given every year. The successful candidates were presented from Loreto Schools throughout the country and this no doubt, increased the sense of competition between schools. The Magazine was also eager to hear news of the success of past pupils of Loreto:

> If any of our former pupils, who, by their own endeavours, have succeeded in working out for themselves a good position in life, would like to send us an account of their experiences, we shall be happy to insert it; and if they object to having their names published, their initials will do equally well.[83]

Unfortunately no response to this request was evident in subsequent editions of the Magazine. Nevertheless, the request illustrates the point that the magazine created a network between the Loreto pupils, past and present. It extended the shared communal experience which had first begun in Loreto schools. There are a few occasions, for example, when the readers sought advice from other readers, as in the

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[81] 'Yearly Notes',1895, pp. 53-54.

[82] It is also interesting to note that the only profiles in the magazine were biographical accounts of founding members/Sisters of the Irish Branch. See for example: 'Memories of Loretto' an account of the life of M. Baptist Therry (1796-1827), (Therry was one of Teresa Ball's early companions.) In *The Loretto Magazine*, Midsummer, 1895, pp. 9-11. These accounts may have been intended to edify the women who read the magazine by setting before them the example of their "blameless li[ves], perfect performance of religious duties, and most patient suffering". Memories of Loretto' (unidentified author), *The Loretto Magazine,* Midsummer, 1895, p. 11.

[83] *The Loretto Magazine*, Christmas 1895, p. 68.

case of "Betty, a girl of 17", who lived in a "lonely part of the country" and who wished "for some pleasant occupation to fill up three or four hours every day". Betty was interested in hearing "some helpful suggestions" from the readers of the Magazine.[84] Once again, subsequent issues give no indication as to whether or not her request received a response.

The *Loretto Magazine* offers a unique perspective on the experience and underlying ideas that governed the experience of Loreto pupils in the late twentieth century. In the light of this survey two points might be made. Firstly, there was an almost seamless connection between the life of the boarders and the life of the Sisters. Secondly, it would appear as if the pupils who attended Loreto schools received a good academic training but what they were to do with that training was still being determined by the prescriptive roles assigned to them by society and which they appeared, in general terms, to accept. From the foundation of Ward's Institute the Sisters who taught in her schools were, in most instances, the primary role models for the women they taught. As the Institute evolved these role models appeared to embody the more conservative views assigned to their sex particularly with regard to women's education. This resulted in the situation whereby, towards the end of the nineteenth century, a more progressive understanding of women's education was more often than not to be found *outside* the cloister.

Pioneers of female second level education

Female religious were, by the end of the nineteenth century, far from a novelty on the Irish landscape; they were consolidating a significant role in Irish education. But they were by no means considered pioneers in that regard. They were recognised as leaders and they were respected for it, but their role of leadership was seen very much in the context of their religious communities not in terms of the contribution they might make to society in general. Women religious were to be admired certainly, and their contribution was valued but not considered essential. Their work was restricted to the confines of the cloister and this removed them from the public domain. It was within this domain however, that the question of women's access to education needed to be

[84] *The Loretto Magazine,* Midsummer, 1896, p. 59.

debated. The need for this public debate was much appreciated by their lay counterparts, particularly within the Protestant tradition.

In her work on female education in Ireland (1700-1900), Susan M. Parkes pays particularly close attention to the work of Protestant women pioneers Isabella Tod (1836-96), Margaret Byers (1832-1912) and Anne Jellicoe (1832-1880).[85] These three women played a vital role in pursuing the cause for an academic education for women that would be equal to their male counterparts. Jellicoe in particular made a significant impact on women's education in the south of Ireland when she founded Alexandra College in 1866. According to Parkes, Alexandra College "aspired to offer girls not only a secondary education but also a university-style liberal education to fit them for careers as teachers".[86] The importance of Alexandra College on the landscape of female education is also highlighted by O'Connor who states:

> Alexandra [...] became the first institution for girls in Ireland to aspire to higher education, not just in terms of an academic style of education but with the University in view. [...] the founding of Alexandra College [...] marked decisive step towards a more equitable role for women in Irish society.[87]

The academic curriculum offered by Alexandra College was assessed and sustained by the success of its pupils in the Trinity exams.[88] This external certification of women's academic achievement would do much to advance the cause of women's education as will be seen in the debate surrounding the Intermediate Act.

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[85] For an interesting discussion on the contribution of these three women's contribution to girl's intermediate education see S.M. Parkes, 'Intermediate Education for Girls', D. Raftery and S.M. Parkes (eds.) *Female Education in Ireland 1700-1900: Minerva or Madonna*, pp. 69-104.

[86] S.M. Parkes, 'Intermediate Education for Girls', D. Raftery and S.M. Parkes (eds.) *Female Education in Ireland 1700-1900: Minerva or Madonna*, p. 73.

[87] A.V. O' Connor, 'Influences Affecting Girls' Secondary Education in Ireland, 1860-1910', *Archivum Hibernicumi* XLI (1986), pp. 83-97, p. 84. O' Connor reminds the reader that it would be twenty years from the founding of Alexandra College before women's university education would become a reality. She also makes the point that "Alexandra's influence on girls' second level education was not very marked". She explains this comment by suggesting: "This is not surprising at a time when the very idea of higher or collegiate education for girls was not accepted by society, and when the difference between girls' primary and secondary education was not very clear". *Archivum Hibernicumi* XLI (1986), p. 84.

[88] The Trinity College Exams began in 1869. They were held once a year and examined a range of subjects at three levels (junior, intermediate and senior). See S.M. Parkes, 'Intermediate Education for Girls', D. Raftery and S.M. Parkes (eds.) *Female Education in Ireland 1700-1900: Minerva or Madonna*, p. 75.

By 1866, the founding year of Alexandra College, Loreto Abbey Rathfarnham had been in existence for forty years. The question might well be asked as to the position that the Loreto Sisters took in the debate on female education. There is no evidence to suggest that they formed a collective voice, or that they combined their efforts with any other female congregation involved in a similar enterprise in expressing their opinion on female education. Their closest allegiance was to the Catholic hierarchy and for this clerical collective the issue of women's educational opportunity was not an issue.

Female Education and the Intermediate Act of 1878

Against the background of female advancement in education was the larger question of the endowment of denominational education. Those involved in the administration of Catholic schools saw themselves at a disadvantage in comparison to their Protestant counterparts. The hierarchy wanted the funding of Catholic schools but they abhorred the idea that the state would encroach on their educational territory. As Coolahan, explains the Catholic Church was determined to pursue the government for funding for its schools but the problem for the Government was how such funding should be given without seeming to endow denominational education.[89]

The Intermediate Education Act of 1878 provided the solution. The Act provided for the funding of schools by awarding payments related to the success of pupils at public examinations.[90] Parkes highlights a number of significant features pertaining to the Intermediate system from the point of view of women's participation. Firstly, girls received separate exhibitions and prizes in order to avoid competition with boys. Secondly, few women examiners were appointed despite the growing number of suitably qualified women. Thirdly, programme to be studied was the same for boys and girls although there was some variance in the combination of subjects. And, finally girls and boys were to be examined separately.[91]

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[89] J. Coolahan, 'Church-State Relations in Primary and Secondary Education', pp. 132-151. P.Mackey & E. Mac Donagh (eds.) *Religion and Politics in Ireland at the turn of the Millennium*, p. 135.

[90] The funding for these payments, given in the form of payments to schools and individual pupils, was drawn from the money that was accrued with the disestablishment of the church in 1869.

[91] S.M. Parkes, 'Intermediate Education for Girls', D. Raftery and S.M. Parkes (eds.) *Female Education in Ireland 1700-1900: Minerva or Madonna*, pp. 80-81.

Since the awarding of prizes was based on the number of pupils who achieved a pass grade, high numbers were entered for the exams. Schools were eager to attract pupils and in order to serve this purpose results were published. This became a significant feature of the Intermediate system. The publication of results gave rise to a great deal of competition between schools and between Protestant and Catholic Schools in particular. The first examinations were held in 1879 but it would be at least another ten years before the Loreto Sisters would admit pupils for the Intermediate exams.

Convent schools and the Intermediate system

The editorial of the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* of 1883 accounted for the absence of Catholic girls from the examinations because of the "physical strain and nervous excitement" caused by the exams which was "decidedly and permanently injurious to the more susceptible temperament of females".[92] This "excitement" was, according to the editorial, caused by the fact that "[g]irls have to travel to distant 'centres' to mingle with strangers; in fact they must rough it for a week or more without adequate protection".[93] The twentieth century Catholic girl was, from the perspective of this editorial, as rarefied and delicate a species as the twentieth century Catholic nun. Needless to say the editorial agreed with the decision of convent schools not to admit their female pupils to exams: "we think the nuns are quite right in preferring maidenly modesty and healthy development of their pupils to the honours of the Intermediate Board".[94]

A bishop's views on the state certification of education

The editorial cites the competitive nature of the system and the public means of examination as the justifiable reasons as to why convent schools were reluctant to send forward their pupils but a letter from Michael Corcoran gives another reason for

[92] Quoted in T.J. McElligot, *Secondary Education in Ireland 1870-1921* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1981), p.53.

[93] Quoted in T.J. McElligot, *Secondary Education in Ireland 1870-1921*, p. 53.

[94] Quoted in McElligot, *Secondary Education in Ireland*, p. 53.

this cautious approach. In her letter to Archbishop William Walsh, written in 1893, Corcoran makes the following remark:[95]

> I beg to remind your Grace that if our successes at the public examinations have not been great enough to satisfy you it is owing to my obedience to your wishes. I did not send in pupils of this house for the Intermediate until this year when I got your Grace's reluctant permission, and you so often expressed disapproval of the public examinations that I thought I was acting according to your wishes in not urging on the nuns to make the girls in the other houses go in for them. [96]

The letter clearly explains Corcoran's reason for not admitting girls to the Intermediate examinations: the Archbishop had expressed his doubts about the examinations. This letter appears to give another perspective on the statement made by Parkes that Walsh "encouraged and supported the Catholic convent schools to enter their pupils".[97] No record is available of Walsh's response to Corcoran's letter.

Another exchange between Corcoran and Walsh illustrates the latter's opinion on the state certification of education. It appears that Corcoran had asked for permission to have her Sisters trained for the Cambridge or Oxford Certificate for teachers. The Archbishop sent the following reply; it is quoted in full since it reveals the reasons for the distrust he held for state certification of teachers or pupils:

> Dear Rev Mother,
> If you really think it necessary to get this certificate, I suppose the inconvenience which the getting of it involves must be submitted to. But my personal opinion is that it is a great mistake for nuns not to take their stand upon the excellence of their teaching work.
>
> Examinations and certificates are sometimes the only evidence that can be had of the fitness of a person for the

[95] Archbishop William Walsh (1841-1921) became the Archbishop of Dublin in 1885. Walsh was a gifted and clever man. He became strongly associated with the nationalist cause but this was not his only area of interest. He served on the Senate of the RUI and in 1908 was elected the first chancellor of the National University of Ireland. Despite his unquestionable prowess Walsh's biographer, Thomas Morrissey, describes him as a "poor preacher. According to Morrissey "the written word was his [Walsh's] forte. The pen his medium". T. J. Morrissey, *William J. Walsh: Archbishop of Dublin, 1841-1921*, p. 353. The voluminous correspondence which exists between Walsh and the Loreto Sisters is a small sample of his penmanship.

[96] Letter from M. Corcoran to William Walsh, 17th July, 1893. AIR: P2/B3/4/1a.

[97] S.M. Parkes, 'Intermediate Education for Girls', D. Raftery and S.M. Parkes (eds.) *Female Education in Ireland 1700-1900: Minerva or Madonna*, p. 83.

> work of teaching. But everyone knows that they are only a very imperfect and unsatisfactory test, and that the one real test is the work actually done in the school.
>
> Whilst we have this to point to, we may safely afford to be independent of that which is far inferior to the eyes of all who know anything of educational work.
>
> Besides this modern craze about certificates is simply an offshoot of an exceedingly dangerous movement which is in full play in several continental countries and which it is a leading point of the "Liberal" programme to introduce into these countries – at first of course, only into England. This is to bring the whole work of education in all departments and all its branches under the direct control of the State, insisting on a certificate from the public authority as a sin qua non for even liberty to teach.
>
> However if you think that your work really needs these English certificates, there is I suppose nothing for it but to submit to the inconvenience.[98]

Even though the Archbishop had agreed to Corcoran's plans it was hardly a resounding endorsement. Apart from the great distrust that was expressed about state interference it was also clear that Walsh was not in favour of the professional training of women religious. It was as is if they were the bastion of the Catholic faith, and they at the very least, had a duty to remain free from the potential danger of state interference. A year later (1897) Corcoran once again requested Walsh's permission to establish a "training department" for second level teachers in Loreto Abbey Rathfarnham. Her plan was to have "our teachers qualified for training by sending them in for the Senior Oxford examinations".[99] The Archbishop's secretary, Denis Petit responded to her:

> I find his Grace is not in favour of having our nuns submitted to examinations for certificates, and he holds that as long as the Bishops' resolution remains he, even if were not in sympathy with it, would be bound by it. Nor does he think the government is likely to bring in legislation in reference to the education in secondary Schools in Ireland. Hence it is quite clear that he does not approve of the project you have in view.[100]

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[98] Letter from William Walsh to M. Corcoran, 23rd October, 1896. AIR: P2/3/14/08.

[99] Letter from M. Corcoran to Fr Pettit, 29th December 1897. AIR: P2/B3/4/1c.

[100] Letter from Denis Pettit to M. Corcoran, 2nd December 1897. AIR: P2/3/14/11.

As if to cement the authority of the Archbishop, Pettit adds: "With reference to the question of allowing nuns to travel in the trams he holds it very strongly that it would be most undesirable". [101] The last statement is quoted from the letter because it indicates the level of control and authority exercised over women religious by the hierarchy. The correspondence between Walsh (and/or those deputised by him) and Corcoran clearly shows that there was little that women religious could do without the permission of their local bishop. When Corcoran sought to bring about the innovation that she deemed necessary for the professional development of her Sisters, Walsh did little to support it. In fact, the letters indicate his disapproval of any such innovative measures.

In Walsh's view the Sisters should satisfy themselves with the knowledge that their teaching was successful enough without looking for any external recognition to credit their achievements. This attitude delayed, at the very least, the progress of women religious not just in terms of *how* they educated but also in terms of the kind of education they themselves would receive. The efforts of women religious to professionalize their apostolate was, in this instance, hampered by the attitude of an external authority whose judgement appeared to supersede that of the Superior General's.

Women teachers and certification

The certification of second level teachers was, by no means confined to women religious. In her research, Parkes traces the development of the professional training of teachers; although teachers within religious congregations received "basic" teacher training their lay colleagues had little available to them. By 1898 the situation had improved for lay teachers when the Royal University and Trinity College introduced their Diploma in Education. The author notes that both diplomas were open to women and that "although the numbers taking the examinations were small, the majority of them were women".[102] This suggests that women were eager to have their work recognised since the formal awarding of a diploma would have helped to secure their

[101] Letter from Denis Pettit to M. Corcoran, 2nd December 1897.

[102] S.M. Parkes, 'Intermediate Education for Girls', D. Raftery and S.M. Parkes (eds.) *Female Education in Ireland 1700-1900: Minerva or Madonna*, p. 95.

professional status. From the point of view of tenure and job security women religious had an advantage over their female lay colleagues. Membership of their congregation made certain that they would be employed and maintained as a teacher. As long as they remained in their congregation their position was secure. For women, who were not members of religious congregations, it was essential that they secure an income and thus professional recognition was not simply an advantage, but a requirement.

Despite the apparent security of their position, it was, nevertheless important for female religious to be professionally trained and recognised: Corcoran's initiative is a case in point. There can be no doubt that the common life made it possible for women religious to live together with a level of security and independence that was not available to women who chose not to marry or not to enter a convent. On the other hand, female congregations had to generate an income if they were to sustain their independence and develop their apostolate. Corcoran recognised this: the professional training of her Sisters was essential in order to maintain and raise the standard of education available in Loreto schools. It was not enough that Sisters applied themselves to their endeavours for the greater glory of God – that may have been their motivation – but something more tangible was needed if their apostolate was to survive.

While their lay colleagues availed of the training and diplomas offered by the Royal University and Trinity College, women religious continued to train for the Cambridge Certificate. As Parkes points out, this meant that by 1919 when the first Register of Secondary Teachers was published, most holders of the Certificate were women religious.[103] This was a rather unfortunate development for women religious. It was not that their qualification was inferior; the suggestion is that because their training occurred *in-house* they were educated *apart* from rather than *with* lay colleagues. This in turn helped to create and sustain a kind of mentality that ring-fenced their participation in the question of women's involvement in higher level education. In order to understand the contribution of Corcoran and the Loreto Sisters to this debate

[103] S.M. Parkes, 'Intermediate Education for Girls', *Female Education in Ireland 1700-1900: Minerva or Madonna*, p. 95.

the next stage of this study provides an overview of women's higher level education in the late 1800s.

The question of women's access to higher education at the turn of the nineteenth century

The traditional belief that women's education should not exceed the requirements of their station in life, namely wife and mother, ridiculed the notion of women's equal access to education. In the light of these beliefs, the obstacles that had to be overcome in terms of women's education at second level were even greater when it came to higher education. Although some form of Intermediate, or second level education, for women was seen as a useful advantage, the view was held that women did not *need* higher level education. The prejudice against women's presence in higher level education was compounded by the fear, articulated by Parkes and Harford, that the "presence of young women in male colleges would be a serious distraction, and worse still, a danger to morals".[104]

This prejudice did little to halt the pioneering efforts of women reformers. These women looked at what was happening in England where, by 1895, almost all universities were admitting women to degrees. This development encouraged their efforts, and thanks to their perseverance, the first step towards higher level education was secured when women were admitted to examinations in Trinity College Dublin and the Queen's Institute in 1869. Although it was a step forward it was insufficient. It tested women's academic ability but it did not provide the tuition that was available to their male counterparts. Women could sit university examinations but they could not sit in the lecture theatres or avail of the tuition that would prepare them for the examinations. As the women who were at the forefront of the movement pointed out: it did not appear as if those who had passed the exams "derived any advantage from possessing these certificates". [105] Parkes and Harford state the situation succinctly:

> The lack of public confidence in the separate women's examinations and the failure to create a group of women graduates who could teach in women's colleges were a

[104] S.M. Parkes and J. Harford, 'Women and Higher Education in Ireland', *Female Education in Ireland 1700-1900: Minerva or Madonna*, p. 105.

[105] S.M. Parkes and J. Harford, 'Women and Higher Education in Ireland', *Female Education in Ireland 1700-1900: Minerva or Madonna*, p. 108.

> disappointment, and what was needed was for women to be able to matriculate and obtain degrees at the universities.[106]

If women's education and certification were to be recognised on equal terms as men's then they needed full and equal access to university degrees. The establishment of the Royal University of Ireland in 1879 went some way in advancing women's equal access to higher education but it was a limited step. On the one hand, women could obtain a degree from the RUI but they could not attend lectures in the colleges where the fellows of the RUI taught, namely the Queen's Colleges and the Catholic University College. The establishment of women's colleges overcame this obstacle: by providing "university classes" for women they prepared their students for the matriculation and degree examinations. Foremost among these women's colleges was Alexandra College. In 1884, among the nine women graduates who were the first recipients of the RUI degrees, six had been educated at Alexandra College.[107]

Corcoran, the Loreto Sisters and women's higher education

This is the context within which Corcoran recognised the potential of her Order's involvement in women's higher education. At first her views were not shared by the Catholic hierarchy who were slow to advocate the participation of Catholic women at higher level. They reviewed their stance however when the numbers of Catholic women attending Protestant women's colleges increased. Given their increased participation in Intermediate education, female congregations were well placed to respond to the growing demand from Catholic women for higher level education. Most notable among these congregations were the Dominican, Ursuline and Loreto Orders. The Loreto Sisters established university classes in St. Stephen's Green in 1893 and this setting became the centre for all Loreto students and others wishing to pursue university degrees. Given her interest in the professional training of the members of her own Order there can be little surprise that Michael Corcoran fully supported and encouraged the endeavour.

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[106] S.M. Parkes and J. Harford, 'Women and Higher Education in Ireland', *Female Education in Ireland 1700-1900: Minerva or Madonna*, p. 108.

[107] S.M. Parkes and J. Harford, 'Women and Higher Education in Ireland', *Female Education in Ireland 1700-1900: Minerva or Madonna*, p. 110.

The location of the Loreto university classes at St. Stephen's Green may have caused difficulty for some Loreto Sisters who were no doubt keen to retain university students in their own Loreto schools. In a letter to her Sisters in 1894, Corcoran cited three reasons for "confinement" of university classes in one, central location. Firstly she maintained that the limited number of Sisters could not sustain the demands of the "heavy teaching" or the "laborious preparation" required. Secondly the Sisters in other Loreto schools could concentrate on the intermediate and elementary classes, since these in her view were where "future successes" were laid. And finally the concentration in one location would prevent "the drain upon resources" that was necessary to "work such classes successfully". [108] Corcoran was a pragmatist as well as an idealist: the Loreto Sisters were in no position to offer university classes in all their schools. This strategic approach indicated Corcoran's methodical and systematic approach to education. The decision to concentrate resources into one location in St. Stephen's Green proved to be fortuitous. Between the years 1890-1900 Loreto had twenty women graduates out of a total of two hundred and sixteen.[109]

The case for women's colleges

Despite the success of the women's colleges, women, Catholic and Protestant, were still on the margins of higher education. The prohibition on their presence within universities meant that they could not fully avail of the facilities, (libraries, laboratories etc.), offered to their male counterparts. Between the years 1901 and 1908 women continued to advocate for the full participation of women at higher level. It was within the context of this debate that a growing division was appearing amongst the advocates themselves: they disagreed on the issue of mixed versus single sex women's colleges. Those who supported co-education wanted women to have equal access to the established universities. Those who supported single-sex colleges wanted to retain women's colleges but with financial support from the state. The Loreto Sisters supported separate women's colleges.

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[108] Letter from Michael Corcoran "Arrangements made in August 1984 for the University Classes". AIR: P2/4/8/21.

[109] Alexandra College had eighty-four; St. Mary's College (Dominican Sisters) had seventeen; the Queen's College in Belfast had nineteen; Queen's College Cork had one; Queen's College, Galway had two and Magee College in Derry had twenty. S.M. Parkes and J. Harford, 'Women and Higher Education in Ireland', pp. 105-143.

The case made by the Loreto Sisters was presented to the Robertson Commission, by James Macken, Professor of English at St. Patrick's Training College, Dublin. Macken's argument strongly supported state endowment of the university classes offered at Loreto College. The alternative was the admission of its students to the regular university lectures and other university facilities. He highlighted the serious "disadvantage" the Loreto Sisters were at because of having to provide university classes out of their own resources.[110]

The founding of the National University of Ireland in 1908 put an end to the debate surrounding single versus co-educational colleges. Women were now admitted to all degrees within the NUI. Those who had argued against co-education, particularly those who were associated with the women's college, found themselves in a precarious position. The advent of full and equal access of women in university life reduced the need for single-sex women's colleges. The only way of securing their future was to be recognised as a college of the NUI.

When it came to the efforts of the Loreto Sisters for the recognition of Loreto College as a women's College, Corcoran does not come to the same prominence as she has heretofore. As the later stages of this chapter will illustrate, she was involved with other initiatives in the Irish branch which brought her into direct conflict with the Archbishop of Dublin. Since this is an issue that will be dealt with in more detail in the closing stages of this chapter, suffice it to say here the documentary evidence highlights the role played by Mother Eucharia Ryan, Superior of Loreto College. The evidence suggests that Ryan was largely responsible for the efforts made by the Loreto Sisters to secure their footing in the world of women's higher education. Whether or not she was motivated by the same principles that inspired other female activists will become apparent in the light of an examination of her efforts.

[110] S.M. Parkes and J. Harford, 'Women and Higher Education in Ireland', *Female Education in Ireland 1700-1900: Minerva or Madonna,* pp. 124-145.

The efforts towards the recognition of Loreto College as a College of the National University of Ireland

In her first efforts Ryan showed great ambition and in 1910 she wrote to the Senate of the NUI requesting that Loreto College be recognised as a *college* of the National University. In her application to the Senate she described the College as deriving "singular advantages from its central position and splendid site, and also from the fact that it draws students from the various other Loreto Convents throughout Ireland and abroad".[111] In accounting for the success of the College she highlights:

> the earnestness and enthusiasm of the students, and the excellence and efficiency of the staff composed as it always has been, of extern professors and lectures of distinction, as well as by members of the community who are either University graduates or who, by special training and experience are highly qualified teachers.[112]

In the list of staff she provided fifteen "professors and teachers" were identified. Five of these were men, all of these held a B.A. degree, four had an MA and one had a D.Ph. They taught Classics, Mathematics, History, Mental and Moral Science, Psychology and the History of Education. The names of six female lay teachers were given: two held a B.A. degree; two held an M.A. and the remaining two held a Diploma and Certificate (Köln). They taught Mathematics, Logic, Irish, French and German. The four remaining teachers were Sisters. No qualifications are identified for the Sister who taught Mathematics and German, one Sister held a B.A. and taught English Language and Literature. As well as a B.A., another Sister held a Cambridge Diploma and taught the Theory of Education while the remaining Sister also held a Cambridge Diploma and taught the Practice of Education.

Ryan was true to her word when she described the College as being supported by the work of "extern professors and lectures": it is worth noting that the Sisters made up less than a third of the teaching staff. The Sisters were not in a position to provide a significant number of appropriately trained personnel for the College. There can be no doubt that, given the education reforms that had taken place, there was a higher number of women entering with at least a good Intermediate education and some

[111] E. Ryan, 'To the Senate of the National University of Ireland', 27th January 1910 p.3, AIR [not catalogued].

[112] E Ryan, 'To the Senate of the National University of Ireland'.

Sisters, as the catalogue of staff in the College shows, had achieved a B.A. degree but these were rare exceptions. The vast majority of teaching Sisters were concentrated in second level education and received their teacher training on the ground. Due to the demands placed on a limited number of personnel the Sisters were given the training that was required for the apostolate they were involved in and no more. Corcoran, as has already been seen, believed in the education of her Sisters but had to find a way of doing it without "taking nuns much from their classes".[113] The apostolate was a priority and time could not be given to training or study that might have appeared to exceed the needs that were required for Intermediate education. This of course meant that the College had to rely on "external" personnel and this brought its own financial consequences. In describing the financial position of the College Ryan states:

> The total receipts of the College for the year ending the 1st July, 1909, were £1,340 10s. 4d. The yearly income from students' pension and fees is spent entirely upon the maintenance of the students and the working of the classes. The deficit, if any, is made good from the resources of the community. Professor's fees are paid by the hour and vary according to the Class and the subject taught. [114]

The fees from the students would have gone some way in paying for the salaries of those who taught but, given their limited resources, there was no way in which the Loreto Sisters could expand and develop their facilities to the extent that was needed for higher level education. The facilities available to the students included:

> [...] lecture rooms and general accommodation for 120 students, [...] a well-equipped laboratory, [....] a library which contains all the books needed for students of the Arts Courses. The section relating to Modern Literature is especially well supplied.[115]

Ryan presented a very positive picture of the College, but it was in need of development if it were going to continue to attract young women who now had the option of participating fully in university life in a campus setting. Without the funding that the recognition Loreto requested would bring, the survival of their College was in jeopardy. This was something Ryan recognised and in her closing statement to the Senate she puts the case clearly:

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[113] Letter from M. Corcoran to Denis Pettit, 29th November 1897. AIR: P2/B3/4/1c.

[114] E. Ryan, 'To the Senate of the National University of Ireland'. 27th January, 1910.

[115] E. Ryan, 'To the Senate of the National University of Ireland', 27th January 1910.

> The question, then, of "Recognition" is one of vital importance to the College and its students. If the privilege is granted, it means the continuance of the work which has been carried on in Loreto College with such conspicuous success for the past twenty years; but if withheld, it means the breaking up of an important and flourishing centre of University studies.[116]

The request for the College to be recognised as a College of the University was refused. Ryan, determined to secure the future of the College, began to look at other options and among these she considered the idea of seeking recognition of the College as a *Women's College* offering an Arts degree.

Ryan's efforts for the recognition of Loreto College as a women's college

The Irish bishops supported the idea of a Catholic women's college and in 1911 they wrote to Ryan asking if she would be: "prepared to open a college for women students in Loreto Stephen's Green, in connection with the National University, which could be recommended for application under the National University as a college for women".[117] In response to Browne's letter, Ryan, with the permission of Corcoran and her Council, sent a draft of her proposed outline of studies for an Arts degree that could be offered by Loreto College. In her plans she "endeavoured to formulate a scheme" which would not "interfere with the work of University college but rather "supplement the courses given there" in offering women the kind of education "specially suited to their needs". In her design for First Arts, for example, she omits "all the purely technical science subjects [...] and all those languages which are rarely selected by women students".[118]

For the honours degree courses she includes the study of History, Logic, Psychology, Ethics and Latin since these allow for the "most useful combinations for those who intend to become teachers, as the majority of our girls do, and also for those who follow a university course with a view to general culture".[119] It was important that

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[116] E. Ryan, 'To the Senate of the National University of Ireland', 27th January 1910, p.8

[117] Letter from Robert Browne, Bishop of Cloyne, to Mother Eucharia Ryan 3rd Feb 1911. AIR [not catalogued].

[118] Letter from E. Ryan to unidentified bishop 2nd April 1911. AIR [not catalogued].

[119] Letter from E. Ryan to unidentified bishop 2nd April 1911. AIR [not catalogued].

Ryan present the College as offering something that did not mirror the NUI scheme of studies too closely and this is reflected in her proposal to the bishops.

In her proposal to the Governing Board of the NUI Ryan points out that the NUI and the College were both working towards the same end:

> In view of the fact that the place of women in the University is now so definitively established, it is earnestly hoped that the University will promote any differentiation of studies which may prove specially suitable for their higher training, and, to this end, will recognise in Loreto College the proposed courses, the value of which will lie in the unity of their purpose.[120]

Despite her efforts, Archbishop William Walsh, a member of the Senate of the N.U.I. wrote to her in July 1911 describing the case for the application as "quite hopeless".[121] This was because the "information required by the Charter and University Statute was not given in the application, and therefore the matter was "out of order" and "could not even be proposed from the chair".[122] Apart from the technical difficulty in the application Walsh drew attention to another obstacle:

> There is, I can see, a great unwillingness to recognise a College that has an intermediate or secondary department in any way mixed up with it, and this seems to create a very serious difficulty, as it is not easy to see how you can set up a separate University establishment until recognition has been secured.[123]

In order to overcome this obstacle the Loreto Sisters purchased another premises on St. Stephen's Green, number 77, in which they proposed to offer university classes thus separating the third level students from the Intermediate students. All of these efforts reflected the Order's commitment to women's higher education but their work failed to secure the recognition they sought. The prevailing socio-academic climate would not support the principle of a separate women's college. As Parkes and Harford point out, "giving recognition to women's colleges would undermine the three

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[120] E. Ryan, 'Application for the Recognition of Loreto College as a Recognised College of the National University', [n.d.], p. 4. AIR [not catalogued].

[121] Letter from William Walsh to Eucharia Ryan 15th July 1911. AIR [not catalogued].

[122] Letter from William Walsh to Eucharia Ryan 15th July 1911.

[123] Letter from William Walsh to Eucharia Ryan 15th July 1911. AIR [not catalogued].

constituent colleges of the NUI, which were now all open to women".[124] Allied to this, it would also undermine the work of the pioneers who had fought so tenaciously for equal access for women in the first place. Harford offers an astute assessment of the difficulties facing those who sought the recognition of women's colleges:

> While at first women's colleges had represented a safe, valid and legitimate space for women to participate in higher education, they came to symbolise the exclusion of women from the university domain and the marginalisation of women's educational needs and rights.[125]

This observation reflects the difficulties faced not just by women's colleges but also by women religious who were involved in the enterprise of education. There can be little doubt that in the mid-nineteenth century women religious were making a significant contribution to women's education. By the early years of the twentieth century however they found themselves at a disadvantage. In the first place their cloister removed them from the public domain and as a consequence they were removed from the public debate concerning women's higher education. Secondly, there appeared to be little women religious could do without the approval of the hierarchy.

Given the authority of the Church over women religious it, was more advantageous for them to pursue the agenda of the hierarchy who were not in favour of women's participation in co-educational establishments. Thus an unfortunate division was created between women themselves. On one side of the argument were those who would accede to nothing less than women's full participation in higher education in a co-educational setting and on the other, those who supported women's access to higher education but only in all female setting. It is clear from Ryan's efforts that the Loreto Sisters were eager to pursue the latter agenda. But as well as separating themselves from the efforts of women who advocated co-education the Loreto Sisters also separated themselves from those pursuing a similar agenda.

The application by Ryan to have the College recognised as a women's college was also hampered by the fact that the Dominican Sisters had made the same request for

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[124] S.M. Parkes and J. Harford, 'Women and Higher Education in Ireland', *Female Education in Ireland 1700-1900: Minerva or Madonna*, p. 138.

[125] J. Harford, *The Opening of University Education to Women in Ireland*, p. 160.

their College, St. Mary's, in Eccles Street. This was an unfortunate development: it was highly unlikely that the Governing Board of the NUI would give approval for *two* women's colleges since this would have opened up a floodgate of similar requests from around the country. In her study on Dominican education in Ireland, Maire Kealy suggests that if the two Orders had submitted a joint application their request might have received a more favourable response.[126] This would have been a favourable solution but not an attractive one apparently to the Orders involved. Both Orders were significant players in the provision of second level education for middle class women and therefore both were competing for the same students. The rather competitive nature of the relationship that existed between the two Orders is expressed in a letter written by Michael Corcoran to Archbishop Walsh:

> When you told me that you were allowing the Dominican nuns to come to the south side of Dublin I understood that you meant them to have the same advantages as we have. Now I hear from visitors that you are taking an active part in their work, and for the sake of our Institute I feel bound to remind your Grace of your promise made two years ago that if you ever did anything towards founding a college for the higher education of girls you would give it to us.[127]

Corcoran is referring to the Dominican's decision, supported by Walsh, to set up a college in Merrion Square, not far from St. Stephen's Green. Their plan was to provide not just Intermediate education, but also higher education, for Catholic women. In her research Kealy points out that Walsh "took a keen interest in the University classes in Eccles Street. He presided over the prize-days in schools and colleges and was in constant contact with the nuns".[128] In light of the material available it would be difficult to apply the same statement to the Loreto Sisters. He may have been supportive of the Loreto enterprise but he could not be described as taking a "keen interest". Corcoran's implicit suspicion that the Archbishop favoured the Dominican's efforts may have been well founded. As Parkes and Harford point out, the fact that Walsh was in a "powerful position to effect reform", as a member of the Senate of the RUI, must surely have increased the concern of the Loreto Sisters.[129]

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[126] M.M. Kealy, *Dominican Education in Ireland 1820-1930*, pp. 142-143.

[127] Letter from M. Corcoran to William Walsh 17th July 1893. AIR: P2/B3/4/1a.

[128] M.M. Kealy, *Dominican Education in Ireland 1820-1930*, p. 132.

[129] S.M. Parkes and J. Harford, 'Women and Higher Education in Ireland', D. Raftery and S.M. Parkes (eds.) *Female Education in Ireland 1700-1900: Minerva or Madonna*, p. 113.

Given the nature of the competition that existed between the two Orders, allied to the fact that neither Order had a history of working in partnership with other female congregations, there was little likelihood that a collaborative approach would have been considered. Such an approach may have strengthened their case, but considering the attitude that prevailed against women's colleges it seems unlikely that they would have prevailed even in a joint effort. Despite the rejection of both applications the Dominican and Loreto Sisters continued to be involved in the higher education of women through the provision of halls of residence for women attending Universities.

From a women's college to a university hall

The Loreto Sisters had purchased 77 St. Stephen's Green for the provision of University classes; when their application was turned down they responded to the situation creatively by turning the building into a hall of residence. There may have been some apprehension from the Loreto Sisters about assuming the responsibility of such a facility and even from Eucharia Ryan herself. This is evident in the existence of a memorandum in which she sets out the reasons for and against the establishment of a University residence. In the argument against such an enterprise she expresses her "fear" of "the responsibility incurred in undertaking the management of young girls who must be allowed a large measure of liberty and who will be obliged to spend several hours in the week in the mixed classes of University College where they will be beyond the control of the nuns". [130] She also questions the extent of the influence that the Sisters could have in "moulding" the "character of the students" since "some" were of the opinion that the students would be "under the direct influence of their university professors and lecturers and be strongly affected by the ideas and tone of mind prevailing among their associates outside the hostel". [131]

The reasons for the establishment of residence far outweighed the reasons against its establishment. In response to the concerns raised she expresses the view that: "A hostel properly understood is a hall of residence in which the students are under the direction of the principal and her staff in all that concerns their spiritual, moral and

[130] E. Ryan, 'Reasons against opening a hostel in connection with National University', [n.d.] AIR [not catalogued].

[131] E. Ryan, 'Reasons against opening a hostel in connection with National University'.

intellectual training".[132] In order to facilitate this training, Ryan proposed that the Sisters would "provide religious instruction and sodalities for the students" thus ensuring a "solid foundation" in "Catholic piety and doctrine".[133] This would enable the staff to counteract "the dangers and temptations which confront students who read widely" and who "hear problems subversive of faith and morals openly discussed around them".[134] In other words, the hall of residence could shelter, or at least minimise, the harmful effects of University life for its residents.

The memorandum also supports the idea of the hall of residence since without it many Loreto pupils would find alternative accommodation and, as a result, "many good vocations will be lost to the Institute". [135] Most striking of all the reasons however is Ryan's observation is that if Loreto did not provide a university hall the "Dominican College Eccles Street will be the only Catholic house of studies in connection with University College, Dublin". She continues:

> [...] and as one of the chief difficulties in the way of recognition has been the existence of two colleges claiming the privilege, once we are out of the way, an application for recognition from Eccles St will certainly be received favourably by the Senate. This, should it happen, will give the Eccles Street nuns the lead not only in University work but in secondary education as well, and we shall forfeit the position we have held in Ireland up to the present.[136]

Ryan's fear that the Dominican Sisters would have the upper hand in women's higher education, albeit in a very limited form, is, perhaps understandable given the efforts she had made on behalf of Loreto. It is also clear from this statement that Ryan still held out the hope that Loreto College would be recognised by the University. It was of course, as history has shown a hope that would never be realised.

By 1913, thanks to Ryan's efforts, Loreto Hall was established as a house of residence for university students. The brochure advertising the residence describes it as a "striking specimen of eighteenth century architecture, with its spacious lofty, and well

[132] E. Ryan, 'Reasons in favour of a hostel', [n.d] AIR [not catalogued].

[133] E. Ryan, 'Reasons in favour of a hostel'.

[134] E. Ryan, 'Reasons in favour of a hostel'.

[135] E. Ryan, 'Reasons in favour of a hostel'.

[136] E. Ryan, 'Reasons in favour of a hostel'.

proportioned rooms, imposing staircase and decorated ceilings".[137] As well as the student accommodation the residence also contained "Reception Rooms, Dining Hall, Library, Laboratory and Recreation Hall".[138] True to her plans for the spiritual welfare of the residents the brochure states: "the students attend daily Mass at University Church which is close by. The Rosary is said every evening in common. A course of Religious Lectures is given each term and Sodality meetings in which the students are grouped according to their year, are held at fixed times". [139]As well as looking after their spiritual welfare the intellectual and social life of the students was provided for through "Literary, Debating, Language, Dramatic, Choral and Orchestral Societies".[140] The students could also receive "coaching from the members of the resident staff in the main subjects of the University Course".[141] The hall of residence proved to be highly successful.

For eighteen years Ryan managed and directed University Hall until her sudden death at the age of sixty seven. In her tribute to Ryan, Mary Macken, Professor of German at University College, Dublin and a past student of Loreto College, described her in the following way:

> Nobody whom I have ever met understood better than Mother Eucharia the true meaning of "universitas", nobody laboured more consistently than she to realise that ideal, nobody summed it up better in her own person than that nun whose frail and delicate body yet reflected humility and sweetness, strength and dignity – emanations of a culture whose roots are Divine and whose flower and fruit fill the fields of human endeavour with beauty and abundance.[142]

Whatever about her physical frailty, Ryan's strength of character enabled her to persevere in her efforts to have the contribution of the Loreto Sisters to women's higher education recognised. Her efforts would bring a limited form of success but,

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[137] Brochure for Loreto Hall, 77 St. Stephen's Green 1913-1914. AIR: [not catalogued].

[138] Brochure.

[139] Brochure.

[140] Brochure.

[141] Brochure.

[142] M. Macken, 'An Appreciation of her [M. Eucharia Ryan] Work and Character', [unidentified newspaper cutting] [n.d.]AIR [not catalogued].

more importantly, her efforts ensured that the Loreto Sisters played some part in women's higher education.

The distance of time makes it difficult to critique the contribution made by the Loreto Sisters to women's higher education. Nevertheless, a number of points can be made even if these are tentative. As has been previously stated, enclosure put the Loreto Sisters at a disadvantage. In their efforts for the recognition of their women's college they found themselves on the margins of the debate on women's access to education and even here their views had to be approved by the hierarchy. When the universities opened their doors to Catholic women in 1908 a group who had been to the fore in providing intermediate education for women in Ireland now found themselves unable to avail of the opportunity because of the restriction placed on them by cloister. [143]

Eucharia Ryan and Michael Corcoran

Given the nature of the events that surrounded the discussion on Loreto Hall, it would seem as if Ryan appeared to eclipse Corcoran in terms of education. A survey of the Loreto archives yielded very little by way of correspondence between the two women during what might be considered a crucial time. There are a number of reasons why this might be the case. The first is quite simply that such letters may not have been retained. Though this would seem unusual given the nature of the issues involved, it is also the case the archives on the university classes are themselves remarkably scarce. The second reason is that Corcoran was on General Visitation from 1902-1904; during these years Ryan more than likely communicated with Corcoran's deputy, Anotonia Cullinan or the General Council. The fact that Loreto Abbey Rathfarnham was relatively accessible from St. Stephen's Green may have minimised the need for a great deal of written correspondence. There may have been opportunities for face to face meetings between the two women. It is also fair to say that in her role as Superior General, Corcoran had to attend to other pressing matters that were affecting the Institute. Given that this appeared to be the most reasonable conclusion, it seemed

[143] The Irish Universities Act became law on 1st August 1908. This in effect saw the creation of two new universities in the North and South. As Parkes and Harford point out this Act brought an end to the campaign for women's equal access to higher education. Women were now admitted to all degrees in the Queen's University Belfast and The National University of Ireland.

S.M. Parkes and J. Harford, 'Women and Higher Education in Ireland', D. Raftery and S.M. Parkes (eds.) *Female Education in Ireland 1700-1900: Minerva or Madonna*, pp. 136-137.

appropriate to identify other developments that may have distracted Corcoran's attention from the university question. At least part of the answer to the questions raised here was provided by archival enquiry. This inquiry uncovered the opposition encountered by Corcoran in her efforts to return to Ward's original idea of a single union under one Superior General

Corcoran and the Union of the Institute

By the early 1900s the Institute was not a "unified juridical entity" because of the long term effects of Urban VIII's Bull of Suppression and, because of what Wright refers to as "external political circumstances". Over five thousand members were governed by superiors general in Nymphenburg, Mainz, St. Pölten and Rathfarnham, together with some independent houses, including York. This, of course was far from the original intention of Mary Ward who had wanted one unified Institute under the jurisdiction of a superior general elected by the Institute. In collaboration with other Institute leaders it was Corcoran's intention to explore the possibility of uniting the Irish branch with the remaining branches of the Institute under one superior general. This was a return to Ward's founding intention but it was greeted with dismay by those who opposed any move towards Union. The (Roman Catholic) Dublin Diocesan Archives yielded files of correspondence addressed to Archbishop William Walsh from a number of Loreto Sisters, mostly based in the Dublin convents, expressing their disquiet at Corcoran efforts towards the Union of the Institute.[144]

The letters were not catalogued and appeared to be bound together as they were received rather than in any other particular order. In her biographical sketch of Corcoran, MacDonald makes frequent reference to the "split" and the "troubles" that the Superior General endured because of her efforts towards Union.[145] But she is hesitant in identifying the source of the opposition Corcoran encountered. It may the case that MacDonald was aware of the letters that existed in the archive of the Dublin diocese and considered them too sensitive to use but it is difficult to find the evidence to support this. For the first time these letters are presented for the historical record in

[144] M. Wright, *Mary Ward's Institute: The Struggle for Identity*, pp. 122-123.

[145] E. MacDonald, 'Mother M. Michael Corcoran, 1846-1927', p. 17 and p. 18. AIR MG/2/6.

order to present a more rounded picture of the events of one of the most tumultuous periods in the Irish branch.

The letters are significant on a number of levels. Firstly they help to account for Corcoran's less extensive involvement in the Loreto Order's efforts towards women's higher education. Secondly, the letters illustrate that key figures within the Irish Branch rejected Ward as Foundress looking instead to Teresa Ball as the more respectable role model for the Irish Sisters. Thirdly, they illustrate the authority the hierarchy held over women religious and the way in which members of Corcoran's own Order were able to use that authority for their purposes. Fourthly, the correspondence will indicate the level of opposition that Corcoran encountered from *within* her own Order: the correspondents were *as responsible* for Corcoran's fate as the Archbishop of Dublin. The correspondence is presented in the next stage of this study.

'My lord Archbishop': the letters from the Loreto Sisters opposing Corcoran's plans

In 1900, Corcoran sent a letter to her Sisters that would set in motion a chain of events which would bring her into direct conflict with Walsh. The letter was on the subject of the union of Mary Ward's Institute:

> Dear Sisters,
> For some time many members of our Institute have discussed the project of effecting a general Union to all the branches of our Institute under one government [...]. By Union we understand a central government in Rome under a Mother General where authority shall extend to all such branches of the Institute.

In giving her reasons for the proposed Union, Corcoran advises her Sisters:

> We have to think, not only or chiefly of greater present good, but of good in the future, not of ourselves only but of those who come after us, of those who are crowding into our Novitiates, who have a right to expect the handing down intact of the primitive spirit and tradition of out Institute [...] and there must be no smallness, no selfishness, no narrowness. We know from reading the early history of the

> Institute the idea of the Foundresses was to have all the members of the Institute united under one head. [146]

A meeting was held in Rome, in 1900, which brought together the superiors general from all the branches in order to discuss the matter. The Archbishop of Dublin, William Walsh, heard of Corcoran's plans to attend the meeting. He was strongly against the idea of such a Union and refused to give her permission to attend:

> I view the whole project of the Union with such misgivings that I could not conscientiously take the responsibility of personally furthering it in anyway. Hence, for instance, I could not take it upon myself to give any permission to any of the Sisters to go to Rome for the purpose of attending a 'Congress'. [...] Whoever the sisters have to blame, if they are ultimately involved in arrangements distasteful to them they will certainly not have to blame me. [147]

Having been refused permission by the Archbishop of Dublin to attend the meeting Corcoran sought and received permission directly from Rome. She writes to her Sisters:

> Some have expressed a fear that lest showing any further wish for Union, or a wish that we should attend the meeting in Rome, would look like insubordination to the Archbishop. But he has not given any order to us. He has only expressed his misgivings and told us that he would not give the requisite permission [...] I fail to see where there could be a suspicion of want of obedience [...] there is nothing underhand in what we are doing. I have kept nothing back from the Archbishop or from you.[148]

It was clear that there was a growing division between the sisters who supported Union and those who didn't and the latter group, as Corcoran's letter indicates were suspicious of her actions. Allied to this was their concern, highlighted by Corcoran, that she defying Walsh wishes.

Most striking among the correspondence in the Dublin Diocesan Archives are the letters to Walsh from Teresa (Laura) Ball, grand-niece of Mother Teresa Ball, foundress of Loreto in Ireland. Teresa Ball was initially in favour of Union, she had

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[146] Letter from Michael Corcoran on the subject of Union 20th July 1900. AIR: 4/40a.

[147] Letter from Michael Corcoran to William Walsh to M. Corcoran [undated]. AIR: 2/2/C3/25.

[148] Letter from M. Corcoran to Loreto Sisters, 8th September 1900. AIR: P2/19/B12.

attended the 1900 meeting in Rome with Michael Corcoran.[149] By 1904 however it was clear that Ball had changed her mind on the subject of Union. In a letter written to, Gonzaga Barry,[150] Ball gives the reasons for her change of mind on Union. As far as Ball was concerned the Institute was never intended to be international:

> The Irish Loreto Institute of the B.V.M. was founded by Mother Teresa Ball & Archbishop Murray for Ireland – for the furtherance of Catholic interests & chiefly Catholic in Ireland, if it could further these interests elsewhere also so much the better, but Ireland was not to be sacrificed [...].[151]

This is a significant statement in that it indicates how removed such a key figure in the Irish Branch was from Mary Ward's original plan for an international Institute to be governed by one superior general. Furthermore, the writer suggests that most of the Irish Sisters were opposed to such a Union: "I cannot be a party to forcing on the majority of the Irish nuns – devoted and holy nuns, a form of religious life, which they had no idea of embracing when they made their vows".[152] The opposition of the hierarchy was also, according to Ball, a key factor in influencing her position:

> The Irish Bishops and Priests are all opposed to the changes. I do not think the Bishops are influenced by the motives you attribute to them – a desire to keep us under their jurisdiction [...].
>
> But they are interested in the welfare of religion and therefore of Religious Education in Ireland, which they are appointed to guard, & of which they are the best judges. And I am disposed to conform my judgement to theirs, when they tell me that it is better for religion in Ireland that we should remain as we are. [...] Besides, even supposing them mistaken we cannot carry on our work – obtain Novices for

[149] As well as being Mistress of Schools in Loreto Abbey, Rathfarnham, Teresa (Laura) Ball was also a member of Corcoran's Council. The Council acted in an advisory role to Corcoran and in order to fulfill the role they were sometimes privy to information the larger membership would not have had.

[150] Gonzaga Barry, a native of County Wexford, was foundress of the Institute in Australia in 1875. Barry was one of Corcoran's greatest allies and an outstanding leader in the Institute. She was a great supporter of Mary Ward's cause and her letters make frequent reference to the Foundress. Barry's innovative leadership, particularly with regard to education, deserves more attention than can be given to it in the parameters of this study.

[151] Letter from M. Teresa Ball to Gonzaga Barry, 3rd November 1904, Dublin Diocesan Archives. [not catalogued].

[152] Letter from M. Teresa Ball to Gonzaga Barry, 3rd November 1904, Dublin Diocesan Archives. [not catalogued].

> our Institute or pupils for our schools [...] if they are unfriendly to us.[153]

The crux of the issue is clearly stated: in Ball's analysis it would be an imprudent move by the Irish Sisters to go against the wishes of the hierarchy. As Ball states, without the support of the clergy and hierarchy it would have been difficult to sustain the success of the Order's enterprise. Priests and bishops often advised parents on where to send their children to school; young women were often guided by clerics when it came to joining a religious congregation.

Underlying this is the apparent willingness of women religious to hand over their authority to the ecclesiastical authorities. Teresa Ball, for example, is content to defer her judgement to that of the bishops and priests. In her view their judgement and knowledge were superior to hers even when it came to matters in her own congregation in which she herself held a leadership position. It could also be said, of course, that Ball was content to defer to their judgement since it confirmed her view. The letter also shows that women religious were capable of attempting to adopt a more pro-active stance if they thought they could influence the outcome of events. In an extraordinary letter to William Walsh, Ball suggests a plan of action that might be adopted by the Archbishop and that would see the removal of Corcoran as Superior General. She begins her letter by stating that: "Some of our Irish nuns, who have the interests of our Institute very much at heart, are encouraged by your Grace's kindness in our present troubles [...]". [154] She then suggests: "As to the present troubles, and the disunion which still exists among us, many of us think that the only effectual remedy will be found in Your Grace <u>appointing</u> [...] a new Chief Superior and partly a new Council [...]".[155] In Ball's view:

> [N]othing would help more to restore union and happiness among us than the announcement by your Grace of your intention to yourself appoint our next Chief Superior and Council and to continue your care and control of our Institute and its affairs until until such a time, at any rate, as

[153] Letter from M. Teresa Ball to *Gonzaga Barry*, 3rd November 1904, Dublin Diocesan Archives [not catalogued].

[154] Letter from M. Teresa Ball to William Walsh, 21st April 1905, Dublin Diocesan Archives [not catalogued].

[155] Letter from M. Teresa Ball to William Walsh, 21st April 1905, Dublin Diocesan Archives [not catalogued].

> you judge that a General Chapter and an election can be wisely held.[156]

It is significant that Ball herself was a member of Corcoran's Council and therefore in a position of trust when she suggested to the Archbishop that he appoint a "new" Chief Superior [General Superior]. She clearly feels that Corcoran is no longer capable of unifying the Irish Branch of the Institute and in her request to Walsh she undermines Corcoran's authority. It is also clear that Corcoran could not have been aware that this letter was sent to Walsh since at the end of her letter Ball writes:

> This letter is quite unofficial, I am giving you the views of many of the nuns, but no one knows that I am writing to your Grace except Fr. Peter Finlay S.J. he advised me to do so. Should your Grace require to communicate with me I beg, as a great favour, that you will do so through Fr. P. Finlay.[157]

As well as the request for confidentiality, another twist is added by the reference to Fr. Finlay's involvement in the affair. According to Ball the Jesuit supported and encouraged the actions she took. The correspondence between Finlay and Ball must have been closely guarded since nothing remains of any written communication that took place between them. With or without these letters, this issue remains the same: Ball, a member of Corcoran's Council was advising the Archbishop to remove her as General Superior.

The correspondence from Ball to Walsh gives some indication as to the level of division and dissent that appears to have pervaded the Irish communities. Following Teresa Ball's communication to Walsh another member of the community at Loreto Abbey Rathfarnham wrote to the Archbishop making it clear that the Irish Sisters were not in favour of Union:

> [...] one thing is certain we don't want it [Union]. We want the patronage of our Bishops and priests and the growth of our Institute throughout Ireland. The Union may help the growth of our Institute throughout the world, but we as a body, see no good effects likely to accrue through it to Ireland.[158]

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[156] Letter from M. Teresa Ball to William Walsh.

[157] Letter from M. Teresa Ball to William Walsh.

[158] Letter from MJ Imelda Cassidy to William Walsh, 2nd June, 1905, Dublin Diocesan Archives [not catalogued].

And as if to cement the Irish identity of the Institute she continues: "We were no more founded by Mary Ward than the Irish Sisters of Charity, and I do not see why we should leave our own Mother, [Francis Teresa Ball], for one who incurred ecclesiastical censure, even though she was misunderstood".[159] In the writer's view there is no connection between the Loreto Sisters and Mary Ward. Frances Teresa Ball had become the respectable replacement and in her grand-niece, Laura Teresa Ball, the writer sees a suitable replacement: "Mother Teresa [Laura] Ball would in the recent crisis be our most suitable Rev. Mother. She is a woman of large sympathies, devoted to the interests of the Irish branch, a born ruler, without a particle of jealousy nor a shadow of favouritism".[160]

In this view Frances Teresa Ball and Mary Ward were being placed on opposite ends of the scale when it came to their reputation. Frances Teresa Ball was respectable Mary Ward was not. Furthermore, as well as the likely association between Laura and Frances Ball there was an implicit association between Corcoran and Ward. As in the case of Mary Ward, Corcoran's innovative plans would be assailed by those who refused to contemplate the changes she advocated. Unfortunately for Corcoran this opposition was internal as much as it was external. A letter from a member of the community in Stephen's Green illustrates this point:

> [...] Two York nuns are to come directly for the holidays. One is the Mother Salome, whose recent "Life of Mary Ward" has disedified some intelligent seculars. They said "History repeats itself" – M. Corcoran is in the same lines, of doing away with episcopal authority [...] and she is as fond of gadding about as Mary Ward was.[161]

The letters in the Archbishop's archives show clearly that the opposition to Union quickly turned to opposition towards Corcoran herself. A subsequent letter from another member of the Rathfarnham community holds Corcoran's leadership up for scrutiny. In common with the other opponents the writer identifies Corcoran as the source of division:

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[159] Letter from MJ Imelda Cassidy to William Walsh.

[160] Letter from MJ Imelda Cassidy to William Walsh.

[161] Letter from M. Gertrude to William Walsh, 7th July, 1907, Dublin Diocesan Archives [not catalogued].

> The last time you addressed this community you spoke strongly, though, very kindly, of the unfortunate party-spirit which pervaded some part of its members: I grieve to say, that the spirit still exists among them and has even gained in strength and bitterness. It will exist and grow, as long as it is encouraged by Rev. Michael, and as long as she is allowed to rule this house, and to gather young ambitious members around her giving them power and offices.[...][162]

As well as her leadership, other aspects of Corcoran's personality are held up for scrutiny: "Rev. Mother spends most of her time in photography, nature-study, and looking after animals, occupations, however good in themselves, hardly suitable for the Chief Superior of a wide-spread Institute".[163] No fault is left undisclosed, the writer continues: "She knows that she is out of sympathy with the great majority of her nuns: why does she retain her office? Moreover, her deafness unfits her, as she cannot or will not use a trumpet".[164] It is difficult to assess the level of opposition that existed towards Corcoran. In the survey of the letters that are held in the Dublin diocesan archives, the correspondence can be assigned to a relatively small number of individuals but these were persistent in their complaints. It is also clear that Corcoran had her supporters, particularly among the younger members whom Corcoran would have directed as novices. These may have suspected that the opponents to Union, and to Corcoran herself, were writing to the Archbishop but no letters exist in the archive to show that they wrote to defend their Superior General against the attacks that were made on her. Indeed no letters exist from Corcoran in response to her opponents which suggests that, in common with Mary Ward, she was not alerted to this correspondence and therefore could not seek to rebut the damage to her reputation.

Whether or not the Archbishop viewed these correspondents as reliable sources is difficult to establish since no record of his response to these letters exists. One thing that is certain, however, is that in 1906, the end of Corcoran's term of office as superior general, he refused to allow the General Chapter to meet. This in effect meant that Corcoran had been removed from office and could not be re-elected. As an

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[162] Letter from M. Ignatius Irwin to William Walsh, 3rd August 1905, Dublin Diocesan Archives [not catalogued].

[163] Letter from M. Ignatius Irwin to William Walsh.

[164] Letter from M. Ignatius Irwin to William Walsh, 3rd August 1905.

interim measure Walsh appointed, Mother Dolores Ryan, as Corcoran's successor.[165] Corcoran was to leave Loreto Abbey Rathfarnham to take up residence in a Loreto convent on the north side of Dublin (Balbriggan). An eye witness recalls the events that took place surrounding Corcoran's departure:

> On Wednesday, 1st. August, certain of our sisters went to town to our house in George's Street, to consult the doctor. While they were there, the coach of his Grace the Archbishop came to the door and the Portress was handed a letter for M. Dolores Ryan, to be given to her on her arrival. The man was told that she was not in town but he said that she would come in the evening. Meanwhile the Archbishop had telegraphed M. Dolores: "Must speak with you tomorrow at 12 o' clock. Excuse me for troubling you." M. Dolores was in Gorey. Mother Paula sent a few lines about the affair to Rev. Mother General. When Rev. Mother [Michael Corcoran] heard this she immediately felt that it had to do with her deposition. Many of us thought the Archbishop wanted to talk to Mother Dolores about the new school programme. However, the sisters were full of fear and anxiety.[166]

The account goes on to describes how Corcoran herself heard the news and her reaction to it:

> So far no one had officially told Rev. Mother that she was deposed. It was exactly what one reads in the lives of the saints. Her own novice becomes General Superior in place of her, and she only knows it from hearsay, yet she has no word of complaint. She expended her strength in consoling those about her and comforting them.
>
> But next date, Friday 4th August, the anniversary of her re-election as General, there arrived a letter from his Grace, saying that M. Dolores was to take over the office of General with all authority. She told us this, and then asked us to leave her alone while she wrote some letters.[167]

The meeting between Corcoran and Ryan must have been a difficult occasion for both women. The account describes the arrival of Ryan in Rathfarnham to replace Corcoran as General Superior:

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[165] Mother Dolores Ryan, was a sister of Mother Eucharia Ryan's and was Superior in Loreto North Great Georges Street, located in Dublin city centre.

[166] 'Letter of a Sister Benedicta Joseph, who has meanwhile died, to certain other sisters, reporting the occurrences at Rathfarnham'. Loreto Abbey Rathfarnham 6th August, 1906 AIY E 81//2/2(i).

[167] 'Letter of a Sister Benedicta Joseph'.

> Rev. Mother went out to the hall, and all the sisters followed her. Mother Aquinas went down to the coach and helped Mother Dolores alight. Rev. Mother went towards her and met her on the middle of the steps (which led from the garden to the Hall). She welcomed her, then M. Stanislaus did too and then the other sisters. No one said a word. Rev. Mother stepped back and looked on. She seemed quite overcome. Her eyes were full of tears. She said "Poor child, it is a hard trial for you, but you must go through with it." When everyone had greeted M. Dolores, Rev. Mother led her to the Chapel and placed her in her own place. (The General Superior, Superior and Novice Mistress have their own place in the Chapel). She herself knelt in the place that she had had 18 years before as Novice Mistress. She prayed very earnestly for along time, and then took M. Dolores into her room and stayed with her for a long time. She wanted to go to the Chapel, but M. Dolores told her that she ought to go to bed and have a rest next morning. She was exhausted.[168]

These events were the direct result of Archbishop William Walsh's intervention: he clearly believed that if Corcoran remained in office she would do irrevocable damage to the Irish branch. The correspondence he received from a small number of individuals in the Dublin convents appeared to confirm his view. But this view was not held by the vast majority of the members of the Institute. In 1907, one year after Walsh's intervention, the leadership of the Irish Branch met for their General Chapter they elected Corcoran for her fourth term as superior general.

In 1914, in a general letter to the Irish Sisters, Mother Michael reflected on what she called "the dark years in the history of our Institute", she writes:

> For my part, I willingly and sincerely plead guilty to many defects of character, and to still more defects and shortcomings in the spiritual life, and knowing all that it is painful enough for me to hold a position in which I have to rule others and guide others who are better than myself. But as long as God leaves me at the head of the institute I am bound to maintain discipline, and to lead all others under me to, both by word or example to the perfection of their holy vocation. If I have failed to do so in the past, and if instead of being a help, I have been a hindrance to any sister in the working out of her vocation, I here and now humbly and unconditionally ask her pardon. And on the other hand, if

[168] 'Letter of a Sister Benedicta Joseph'.

> anyone has done or said anything to my detriment, I willingly and lovingly forgive her.[169]

The extraordinary events in the early years of the twentieth century coincided with the efforts of the Loreto Sisters with regard to women's higher education. It is impossible to make any conclusive comments on the way in which the division caused by the question of Union might have affected the energy that was required to make a more robust and concerted effort in terms of the university issue. Perhaps if the Sisters had united their efforts in the issues of women's higher education a more progressive outcome would have emerged. And no matter what professional relationship existed between Corcoran and Ryan, for example, it must have been complicated by the fact that Corcoran's replacement was Eucharia Ryan's sister. As for Corcoran herself, the energy she had placed in educational innovation was now needed to maintain her own authority and leadership.

In 1913, Corcoran was elected for a fifth term of Office. Five years later she suffered a profound stroke the effects of which were catastrophic. She died in 1927 at the age of eighty-one.

Conclusion

The investigation in this chapter has sought to position the Loreto Sisters in the context of the efforts that were being made to further women's access to education. The evidence suggests that although they were significant providers of women's education, in particular, they were by no means pioneers. They appeared to follow, rather than initiate, educational innovation. Despite the best efforts of Corcoran, their attitude was dominated by competition rather than collaboration. Had they attended to forging stronger links with other female congregations, their efforts with regard to the higher education of women, for example, might have brought more success. It could also be suggested that internal rivalry between Loreto schools inhibited the potential of a common voice. Allied to this, an opportunity appears to have been lost in not forming a more consolidated national network of Loreto Schools.

[169] General letter from Michael Corcoran, 13th December 1914. AIR: P2/3/35.

With the exception of Corcoran, a rather cautious approach appeared to dominate Loreto policy in regard to women's education. Even in the example of the Order's efforts to have Stephen's Green recognised as a women's college, the motivation appears to have been the provision of education for Catholics rather than equal access for women. It must be said, however, that given the parameters within which the Sisters were operating this was an understandable development. It can also be said that the education provided by the Loreto Sisters, at intermediate and higher levels, was distinguished by its excellence. Given the restrictions that were placed on the Sisters internally and externally, they educated women to the highest standards available to them. This is evident in the enormous success of the Loreto students in the university and intermediate examinations. Many of the women who studied or taught in their schools would themselves become advocates for women's equal access to education. In this way the Order provided well educated and articulate women who would further the cause of women.

The investigation also consolidated an underlying theme in this dissertation. This theme concerns the precarious position of women religious vis-à-vis the Catholic hierarchy. As this chapter indicates, the local bishop, could if he chose to, exercise control over almost every aspect of the life of women religious; from their professional training to their means of transport. Few, if any, significant decisions could be made without his authorisation. Women religious had an important role in implementing the plans of the hierarchy in terms of education but this did not remove them from the inferior position in which they were placed. The relationship between women religious and the hierarchy was characterised by subservience not collaboration. The enclosure women religious inhabited was determined as much by attitude as it was by physical boundaries: they were kept in their place as much by prohibition as they were by convent walls.

On the other hand Michael Corcoran stands out as a woman who refused to be curtailed by the restrictions prescribed by Archbishop William Walsh. Despite the efforts of her opponents she refused to hand over her authority. Her re-election, after her very public disagreement with the Archbishop, signified the determination of the members of the Rathfarnham branch of Mary Ward's Institute not to submit to his influence.

The chapter began by investigating the circumstances that led to the restoration of Ward as Foundress if the Institute. But, as the closing stages of this chapter illustrate, there was much to do in the rehabilitation of her memory. Mary Ward was still viewed with suspicion by a number of members of the Rathfarnham branch. At the turn of the twentieth century Teresa Ball was still considered by some members as the true foundress of the Institute: the innovative vision of Mary Ward had yet to be recovered. In Michael Corcoran the Loreto Sisters had an opportunity to remember Mary Ward but the "dark years" of opposition and dissension appeared to stultify Corcoran's innovative leadership. It is ironic that Corcoran's life would mirror so closely the woman she referred to as "our Mother".[170]

[170] Letter from M. Corcoran to M. Hilda, York 26th April 1909. AIR: P2/3/5/113.

CONCLUSION

The question underlying this research concerns the manner in which papal and curial intervention in the history of Mary Ward's Institute prevented subsequent generations from implementing the more innovative plans of the Foundress particularly with regard to women's education. This question is answered by making two significant claims. The first is that Ward's ideas were genuinely innovative. The second is that by being separated from Ward's original vision the Loreto Sisters suffered a deficit that had an effect on their educational enterprise.

In order to establish the accuracy of these claims this dissertation has focused on three related inquiries. The first established the extent to which Ward's ideas could be considered innovative. The second reconstructed the events that resulted in the rejection of her plans by ecclesiastical authorities and in the displacement of Ward as Foundress of the Institute. The third investigated the effects of this imposed amnesia by examining the educational enterprise of the Loreto Sisters during the first hundred years of their foundation in Ireland. The results of these inquiries form the substantive subject matter of this conclusion.

Mary Ward: innovation or emulation?

The first chapter of this dissertation examined the relationship between Ward's recusant Yorkshire background and her views on women's contribution to the Church. This contextual analysis raises a number of issues. Firstly, any examination of her ideas on women's contribution to the Church and society must be understood in the context of her time. Her ideas originated in her recusant Yorkshire background. Here she saw the contribution that women could make to the Church. This is an important point. Ward was motivated primarily by a desire to assist the Catholic Church. The Church by contrast would come to see Ward as being in opposition to its long held traditions.

This contentious situation emerged because of Ward's efforts to establish a role for women that removed them from the traditional locations of women's apostolic endeavour: the home and the cloister. Though other congregations were willing to accept the imposition of cloister as a condition of their religious life, Ward refused to do so. It would be imprudent however to claim that Ward was this first and only

female foundress to envisage an apostolic role for women religious outside the cloister. The Ursulines for example attempted a similar enterprise but unlike Ward they came to accept cloister as a way of ensuring the Church's support for their endeavours. What distinguishes Ward is her tenacity in the face of the stern opposition she faced which wanted her to accept cloister as a condition of female religious life.

It should also be noted, as outlined in Chapter II, that in the plans she drew up for her Institute Ward *emulated* the Jesuit tradition. But in her attempts to adopt the rule and manner of life of the Society of Jesus, Ward was highly innovative. This rule would ensure the independence and autonomy of the members of her Institute from the jurisdiction of the local bishop. This was exceptional in the culture of her time which insisted that women religious be placed under the care and supervision of a local ecclesiastical authority figure.

In terms of women's education the second chapter showed that a great deal of Ward's curriculum reflected the accepted approach to women's education in the seventeenth century. But there was one notable difference: the inclusion of Latin. Ward insisted that the pupils who attended her schools, and the Sisters who taught in them, would acquire this language. This was in contrast to the prevailing attitude of the time which considered Latin to be unnecessary for a women's education. Latin was the common language of the legal, medical and ecclesiastical worlds. In other words it was thought unnecessary for a woman's education since she would rarely move beyond the world of the cloister or the home. Moreover, women were thought incapable of learning the language.

The inclusion of Latin in the schools of Ward's Institute marked a departure from the parameters that defined a woman's education. It was a move that would be highlighted by her opponents to illustrate the way in which Ward was undermining the traditional roles and attitudes that were assigned to the female sex. It reflected her belief that not only could women acquire the language, but also that they had the same right to the academic curriculum that was available to their male counterparts.

The first two chapters in this dissertation situate Ward's innovations in her experience of the matriarchal environment of her native Yorkshire. This informed her appreciation of the contribution that women could make to the Catholic Church. In her attempts to create the framework for this contribution Ward's plans for her Institute emulated one of the most successful male congregations of the seventeenth century. In adopting these plans for women Ward was highly innovative. In this way Ward's plans reflect both imitation and innovation.

Ward was a woman of her time in that she recognised the need for well educated women who could assist the Church in its catechetical apostolate. But in her response to these needs Ward refused to be confined by the prescriptions of the time. By refusing to confine her activities to the confines of the cloister, Ward questioned the prevailing attitude which considered women to be intellectually and spiritually inferior to men. The originality of her enterprise is rooted in her conviction that women were capable of an apostolic enterprise that would be designed, directed and implemented by women and for women. It was an enterprise which the Church considered to be a dangerous innovation.

Mary Ward: a blessed memory or a dangerous memory?

The third and fourth chapters sought to unravel the complex events which led to the suppression of Ward's Institute and her arrest as a heretic. This investigation revealed one fundamental fact. Ward's ideas were rejected by the Church not because they were novel but rather because they were being proposed by a woman. The hierarchy of the Church had supported the manner and rule of life that consolidated the Jesuits' autonomy and independence but the same freedom could not be extended to women.

The third chapter in this dissertation highlighted the source of the opposition that was levelled against Ward and the members of her Institute. The English clergy used Ward's Institute to make an indirect attack on the Society of Jesus. These attacks became increasingly scurrilous undermining not just the Institute founded by Ward but the Foundress herself. The Jesuits' silence appeared to give fuel to the allegations made against Ward. The damage done to the reputation of the Foundress was devastating.

As Chapter IV has illustrated, it was these allegations that placed Ward under suspicion and investigation by the Roman authorities. This chapter also showed that the investigation applied by the Church was, to say the least, deficient. The documentary evidence points to the fact that Ward was never given the opportunity to defend herself against the accusations that formed the Cardinals' opinion of her enterprise. Furthermore, in the absence of any defence it was these allegations that would be recorded as the official account of Ward's enterprise.

For her companions who knew her, Ward was described as "our dearest mother, of blessed memory".[1] In the Church's view Ward became a "poisonous growth" that had to be "torn from the roots".[2] Her companions based their opinion on their personal knowledge of Mary Ward. The Church based its opinion on the accusations made by her opponents. But Ward herself was not without blame for this contentious situation. Her imprudent decision to write to her members encouraging them to resist the closure of their houses hastened the suppression of her Institute. Furthermore, it consolidated the Church's opinion that Ward was a rebellious figure who sought to undermine the authority of the Church.

The combination of salacious allegations and the imprudent actions taken by Ward herself resulted in the formulation of an official record that was highly edited. Most significantly it excluded the primary motivation of Ward's enterprise: her efforts to assist the Church. Within Ward's own lifetime the official record would be articulated most forcefully in Urban VIII's bull of suppression. Once this was promulgated there was no going back. No matter what the Church might say privately it had denounced Ward publicly. The Church had created a dangerous memory for successive generations of Ward's Institute.

Fidelity or survival

The implications of this dangerous memory were considered in the fifth and sixth chapters of this dissertation. The fifth chapter highlighted the invidious position that

[1] The phrase is taken from M. Poyntz and W. Wigmore, 'A Briefe Relation of the Holy life and Happy Death of our Dearest Mother of Blessed Memory, Mrs. Mary Ward'.

[2] Urban VIII, *Pastoralis Romani Pontificus*, 13th January, 1631.

the members of the Institute found themselves in. If they hoped to survive they would have to choose between loyalty to the woman who had initiated their enterprise or loyalty to the Church that had condemned her as a heretic. The evidence suggests that they chose the latter.

It was a decision that was determined by the Church in Rome. The papal decree *Quamvis iusto* (1749) was a fateful response to a difficult situation. The Institute had survived because of the loyalty of the early companions to Ward's memory. But now it was becoming a dangerous memory. In their efforts to maintain their independence and autonomy the surviving members of the Institute came to the attention of the Roman authorities. Those who opposed their endeavours reminded the Pope that this was a maverick Institute. To consolidate their case they pointed to the fact that the Foundress had been imprisoned by Urban VIII as a heretic. In Pope Benedict XIV's view the only way the Institute could survive was to dissociate itself from Mary Ward. In order to consolidate this separation the members of the Institute were prohibited from recognising Ward as Foundress.

The events at the Bar Convent in York illustrated the consequences of this prohibition. Elizabeth Coyney in particular left no stone unturned in wiping out any trace of her community's association to Ward. The cloister that Ward had resisted throughout her life time was imposed with vigour by Coyney. In a further effort to distance her community from Ward, Coyney placed her community under the jurisdiction of the local bishop and separated the Bar Convent from the remaining houses of the Institute. These external actions reflected the internalisation of the imposed amnesia that sought to expunge the memory of Mary Ward. The name of the Foundress was never to be spoken during Coyney's leadership of the Bar Convent.

The fifth chapter highlighted the significance of these events from an Irish perspective. Teresa Ball, foundress of Ward's Institute in Ireland completed her education and novitiate at the Bar Convent during the years of Coyney's leadership. This, in effect, meant that Ball never heard of Mary Ward. An examination of the primary sources revealed that Ball returned to Irish shores with an erroneous version of the Institute's origins. The memory of Ward had become so problematic that she was expunged from the founding story. She was replaced by the more respectable

figure of Anna Barbara Babthorpe but Ball herself would come to dominate the founding story of the Institute in Ireland.

There can be little doubt that Ball emerges as a key figure in the history of Ward's Institute. By the time of her death Loreto foundations had been established in Ireland, Canada, India, Mauritius and Spain. When it came to education however Ball adopted a conservative approach. The primary sources showed that the curriculum followed by the pupils at Loreto Abbey, Rathfarnham mirrored the traditionally accepted approach to women's education. It was a curriculum that centred on the parlour accomplishments that would equip young women for a life in the cloister or the home. These narrow parameters of female existence were consolidated by the cloistered life of teachers and pupils.

In Ball's leadership a great deal had been gained but a great deal had also been lost. Through Ball's leadership the position of the Loreto Sisters in the landscape of female education was consolidated. But it had significant limitations. Ward's educational vision emerged from her conviction that education could enable women to take up a role that would not be confined to the cloister or the home. The educational enterprise introduced by Ball reflected the values of her time: it prepared women to confine their accomplishments to the parlour and the home.

Had Ward's vision been allowed to emerge in the Irish foundation the Loreto Sisters may have been in a better position to provide a more innovative and dynamic curriculum for the women whom they educated. Like Ward, Ball was a woman of her time and place but, unlike Ward, Ball appeared to be content to accept the parameters that the Church and society prescribed for women. Where Ward's vision was characterised by innovation Ball's was characterised by conservatism. And it was Teresa Ball's vision and not Ward's that shaped the Loreto educational enterprise in the most critical years of its foundation in Ireland.

The final chapter of this dissertation brought another Loreto leader to the fore: Michael (Frances) Corcoran. Her contribution to the Loreto enterprise was significant for the purposes of this study because, unlike Ball, Corcoran recognised Ward as the true Foundress of the Institute. A survey of Corcoran's contribution illustrated that

she was keen to introduce innovation to the Loreto educational enterprise. She prioritised the professional training of the Sisters who taught in Loreto schools and insisted on the pupils' participation in state examinations. This removed the enterprise from the narrow parameters that had circumscribed such innovation in its founding years.

In an extraordinary turn of events, it was Corcoran's efforts to return to Ward's original founding vision that stymied the educational innovation she was so keen to implement. In the early 1900s Corcoran, mindful of Ward's founding intention, proposed to unite the Irish branch with the rest of Ward's Institute. The opposition to her plans revealed two fundamental issues. Firstly, key figures within the Institute in Ireland considered Teresa Ball to be the true foundress of the Institute. Secondly, the primary sources reveal the level of episcopal control that could determine the course of events in the lives of women religious.

The early years of the twentieth century saw a lost opportunity for the Loreto Sisters. The energy that was needed to introduce educational innovation was now divested in Corcoran's effort to retain her autonomy and authority. It was unfortunate that this era of division and dissension coincided with new possibilities in women's education. Given the evidence available in the primary sources, it would appear as if the Loreto Sisters lacked the collective voice which would secure their future in women's higher education.

The woman that might have led them in that pursuit now found her leadership under scrutiny by the Archbishop of Dublin. It was a situation that was brought about by the correspondence of the members of her Institute who were unhappy with Corcoran's plans to return to Ward's vision. They considered Corcoran's innovations to be as troublesome as those of Ward's. In common with that of Ward, Corcoran's innovative spirit was rejected. Unlike that of Ward, the rejection came from the members of her own Institute.

As a result of the correspondence he received from the Loreto Sisters, the Archbishop removed Corcoran from office and appointed a successor of his choosing. The move was a temporary one in that Corcoran would be returned to office the following year

but its effects were long term. The documentary evidence appears to suggest that the innovative character of Corcoran's leadership never fully recovered after the events of the early 1900s.

In the light of these conclusions it would appear that the intervention made by the Catholic hierarchy in the history of Ward's Institute prevented subsequent generations from implementing the more innovative plans of the Foundress particularly with regard to women's education. Had Teresa Ball arrived on Irish shores with the authentic founding story perhaps the contribution of the Loreto Sisters to women's education might have been more innovative. Nonetheless, as this dissertation has shown, there can be little doubt that their educational enterprise made a fine contribution to women's education in Ireland. The regret is not for what was, but is rather regret for what *might have been.*

The parameters of this dissertation

Given that this research has attempted to cover three eras it was not possible to provide a detailed analysis of the activity of Institute schools. This was most notable in the examination of the schools founded by Ward in Europe. Unfortunately many of the primary sources concerning these early foundations were destroyed because of the bull of suppression or because of local destruction of records through fire or the loss of property or civil unrest caused by war or rebellion. In establishing the nature of the vision that gave rise to Ward's educational enterprise the research undertaken has relied on her early plans for the Institute, correspondence and fragments of her autobiographical writings. These have served an important purpose in the research.

On a related theme the personal accounts of the day to day lives of the pupils and teachers who were at the heart of the enterprise were not preserved for historical record. The absence of their voice means that the record is incomplete and this is reflected in the limitations of this study. There is by contrast a rich visual archive, mostly of photographs, dating from the nineteenth century, which shows pupils and teachers at work. Future research will have to find an effective means of integrating this archive in the written text.

This research has not accounted for the survival and continuation of the Institute in the immediate aftermath of Ward's death. There are two reasons for this. The first is that such an investigation would have taken the research beyond the parameters of this dissertation. The second is that this investigation has already been undertaken most skilfully by Mary Wright, whose research on this important question is available in the volume *Mary Ward's Institute: The Struggle for Identity.*

Finally, the research has not offered an examination of the application of Ward's vision in Loreto schools *today.* This contemporary inquiry deserves a more considered investigation than the parameters of this dissertation would have allowed. It would be a research question in itself. Those who are responsible for Loreto trusteeship are already engaged in this important exercise. In the last few years their work has been disseminated through a number of documents on the theme of Loreto education from a contemporary perspective.[3]

Having acknowledged the limitations of this study there are a number of issues that have emerged in this study that may not have been articulated heretofore and that are worth highlighting, some of which are mentioned below.

Mary Ward, Teresa Ball and Michael Corcoran

This study has provided an examination of the contribution of a particular female congregation, the Loreto Sisters, to women's education. The advantage of focusing on one congregation is that it allowed the research to consider the impact of historical,

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[3] The documents concerning Loreto Education are produced by The Loreto Education Office, Dublin. This office provides a service to Loreto primary and post-primary schools on behalf of the Loreto Trust Board. This service includes leadership training, in-service training, making current research available, as well as maximising expertise within the Loreto network of schools. For a selection of publications on Loreto education today see for example:

'Supporting Loreto Education' (Dublin: Loreto Education Office, 2007).

'Loreto Handbook' (Dublin: Loreto Education Office, 1995).

'Kolkota Guidelines: The International Guidelines from the Loreto/IBVM Meeting in Kolkota, India' (Dublin: Loreto Education Office, 2002).

'The Educational Philosophy of Loreto Schools: Schedule 2: Articles of Management' (Dublin: Loreto Education Office, 2001).

'Loreto Handbook' (Dublin: Loreto Education Office, 1995).

political and ecclesiastical events on the evolution of the congregation's enterprise over three different centuries. The three women who came to the fore in this inquiry, Ward, Ball and Corcoran, provided the lens through which these events could be considered.

In many ways, Ward and Corcoran emerge as heroic figures. They fought a valiant battle in their efforts to secure a more equitable role for women in the Church and in society. But Ball was the more successful leader. In her forty years of leadership she established thirty three Loreto foundations throughout Ireland, Europe and Asia. This was an extraordinary achievement considering the fact that in 1821 Ball arrived on Irish shores with only two companions. A testament to Ball's leadership is the fact that the vast majority of these houses remained affiliated to Rathfarnham. This unity was secured because of Ball's personal authority and charism.

The success of Ball's enterprise was ensured by her ability to read the signs of the time and to respond to them within the parameters that were prescribed by Church and society. In common with Ball, Ward and Corcoran understood the signs of the time and the needs of their time. But unlike Ball, they were unable to negotiate the intricate boundaries that sought to determine and contain their response. The Church, that Ward sought to serve and the Institute that Corcoran sought to serve were not yet ready for their innovations.

These three women bring together the official and unofficial history of the Institute they governed. The official history is available in their plans and constitutions. The unofficial history is available in their letters and correspondence. This correspondence provides a unique perspective from which to view their personal response to the events that shaped their leadership. Given the vast volume of Corcoran's correspondence it is interesting to note that no extensive biographical research has been undertaken on her life. The "text" of Corcoran's life would provide an interesting subject for a biography particularly given the contemporary scholarly interest in twentieth century history.

The role of memory in archival research

In his work on memory, Johann Baptist Metz describes two types of memories. The first is the type of memory that functions as a "refuge from present disappointments", the kind of sentimentalising that reflects on the good old days. The second type of memory is "dangerous memory" that makes demands on those who remember. According to Metz this type of memory has "future content".[4] This dissertation had described Ward's memory as a "dangerous memory" for the members of her Institute. It was dangerous for two reasons. Firstly, the members of her Institute were forbidden to remember her by papal decree and to do so would have placed their enterprise in jeopardy. Secondly, her memory was dangerous because in remembering her vision the members of her Institute would have had to review their current practice in the light of her innovative vision.

On a related theme, the research undertaken in this study has sought to retrieve the memories that were driven underground by the ideological forces of their day. The memory of Ward, as Foundress of the Institute, was driven underground because it proved to be problematic for the Church that had condemned her as a heretic. The Inquisition files are a case in point. The silence that surrounded these files meant that an incomplete picture of the events leading to the suppression of the Institute prevailed. Those who sought to retrieve these files, including Grisar and Wetter, were motivated by the belief that the archive had something more to say on the legacy of Ward. Their research opens the space within which "opposing testimonies" can be examined.[5] This is an important exercise because it brings the researcher closer to the truth of what happened.

The task of retrieving that which might otherwise have been forgotten carries with it a concern that is aptly described by Kearney when he asks:

> How much of the past should be remembered and recounted? How much forgotten and forgiven? How do we respect the summons of history – personal or communal – to be recollected again and again, so that our debt to the past be

[4] J.B. Metz, and J. Moltmann, J. *Faith and the Future: Essays on Theology, Solidarity, and Modernity* (New York: Orbis Books, 1995), pp.7-8.

[5] Richard Kearney in dialogue with Paul Ricoeur. M. Dooley, R. Kearney (eds.) *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1999), p.16.

> honoured, without our succumbing to resentment and revenge? [6]

One of the most important decisions taken in the course of this research concerned the inclusion of a selection of the letters that are in the custody of the Dublin Diocesan archive. These were the letters written by a number of Loreto Sisters to Archbishop William Walsh opposing Corcoran's plans. The letter writers never intended anyone other than Walsh to see their correspondence and this had to be borne in mind when viewing the material. They were included because they provided the documentary evidence that was needed to account for the Archbishops' intervention during Corcoran's leadership. They illustrate the level of opposition that Corcoran experienced in her efforts to return to Ward's original plans. They are the first hand accounts of those who were part of the events described by Corcoran as "those dark years". [7]

There is an ethic in remembering and this ethic concerns those who engage in archival research. This ethic means that as well as finding the source that might prove their hypotheses the researcher must also be open to the source which might question or contradict them. This is a humbling task because it reminds the researcher that the final word can never be said on the subject of her research.

The potential contribution of this research

This research has been informed by the work undertaken by other researchers working in the field of the history of women religious and the history of women's education. In recent years, the research on the history of women religious has tended to focus on their apostolic endeavour. This study highlights the need for the researcher to investigate, as far as it is possible to do so, the *internal* events that shaped the external enterprise. This is available to researchers through the personal letters and correspondence of the members of congregations and these will need to be brought to the fore in future research on women religious.

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[6] M. Dooley, R. Kearney (eds.) *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, p.18.

[7] General letter from Michael Corcoran, 13th December 1914. AIR: P2/3/35.

As this study illustrates, the Church was keen to limit the apostolic activities of women religious to the confines of the cloister. By the nineteenth century this became not just an accepted regulation, but a welcome condition of female religious life. Cloister separated women religious from society and in the long term this worked against them. It institutionalised their apostolic endeavour that, in some cases at least, would have benefited from a greater degree of public accountability. The imposition of cloister also set women religious apart from the members of their own sex. For example, when women secured the right to participate fully in higher education women religious were still prevented from doing so. In evaluating the contribution of women religious to women's education researchers will have to keep in mind the restrictions that were placed on women religious themselves.

The problematical relationship that existed between women religious and the Church emerged in a significant way in this study. It offers one perspective on the larger issue concerning the role of women in the Catholic Church. Commenting on the role of women religious in nineteenth century Ireland, Rosemary Raughter makes an important observation. Raughter suggests that, on the one hand, the contribution of women religious won them "acclaim from the hierarchy, clergy and laity" but that, on the other hand, it failed to "win them admission to the power structures of a patriarchal and increasingly authoritarian church".[8] As their numbers in Ireland dramatically decrease, there is an urgency for researchers to consider the role played by women religious in advancing, *or not* as the case may be, the position of women in the Irish Church.

This research has as its core the role of memory in the creation of a collective identity. Communities of women religious are characterised by the fact that they are intergenerational. As Elizabeth Smyth points out "institutional memory" is "maintained by the presence of women who represent a continuum of age and experience".[9] This study has attempted to show what happens when the institutional

[8] R. Raughter, 'Pious Occupations: Female Activism and the Catholic revival in Eighteenth Century Ireland', R. Raughter (ed.) *Breaking the Silence: Religious Women and their History* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2005), p. 46.

[9] E. Smyth, 'Women Religious Recording and Writing History', B. Boutilier and A. Prentice (eds.) *Creating Historical Memory: English Canadian Women and the Work of History* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), p. 103.

memory is interrupted. Apart from the written record, there is more research to be undertaken on the role of the oral tradition in retaining institutional memory and this presents its own challenges not least given the situation of the numerical decline of women religious outlined above.

Finally it is hoped that this study will have something to say to those who are involved in the enterprise of Loreto education today. Put simply it may offer a perspective on how the past had brought us to the present. In 1631 the Church decreed that Ward's enterprise was "null and void and of no authority or importance".[10] Today there are 150 Mary Ward schools and colleges, with 70,000 students, 5,500 staff members as well as hundreds of thousands of past pupils in more than fifteen countries throughout the world. In April 2008 two Irish Loreto Sister opened a second level school in Rumbek, South Sudan. It is the first time that girls in the region have had the opportunity to attend second level education. The story continues.

[10] UrbanVIII, *Pastoralis Romani Pontificus*, 13th January, 1631.

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