



# Archive News

December 2021

NEWSLETTER OF THE IBVM, INSTITUTE & IRISH PROVINCE ARCHIVES

## Mary Ward and Teresa Ball

In recent years, the archival collections in our care have been increasingly consulted and examined to explore the relationship between Teresa Ball and Mary Ward. What did Teresa Ball know of Mary Ward? How did she see her relationship with the wider Institute? What implications did this have for the subsequent expansion and development of the Institute? On occasions, we have been invited to give talks and more frequently we have welcomed visitors from IBVM and CJ provinces into the archives, and are

challenged to select only a small amount of the material here to enable a discussion on the connection between these two women: Mary Ward and Teresa Ball.

Archives are retained for their historic, legal or evidential value, and in attempting to answer these questions or at least to provide the raw material, from which further analysis, discussion and interrogation can occur, the evidentiary value of the documents in our care becomes apparent.

In this brief article, we will attempt to highlight some of the documentary evidence that we provide to researchers and visitors alike to facilitate their exploration of this significant question.

Images

Disbursed August 1796

Butcher	22	1	5
Beer	1	15	4
Fish	1	0	6
Butter	0	16	4
Eggs	2	5	3
Gardenstuff	4	5	3
Bread, Flour, beam & coals	32	16	14
Carls	2	6	6
Spices	2	10	4
Salt	4	4	2
Ten & Beer	12	2	2
Ten for the poor, Charis	1	10	0
Dinner	2	15	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>
Poling sheep	2	9	6
Reaping out	12	6	6
Charity to the found (begs)	10	9	2
Refriger & gardeners	12	4	4
Letters	12	4	4
Wood mending & ground washing	2	1	1
and	15	10	10
Bookie binding, paper & stamps	1	14	4
and, waxes washing with M <sup>r</sup> Roulard	2	2	2
M <sup>r</sup> Bishoprick's interest	0	7	6
For cap	0	7	6
Osbalwick & coach hire	11	2	9
Black serge	11	2	9
20 yards of Cotton for hangings at 2/6 p <sup>r</sup> yard	1	7	9
Shewal for quilt & patchwork	2	10	4
21 3/4 yards of best tick at 2/3 p <sup>r</sup> yard	2	10	11
Black worsted binding & stuff for apparel	2	14	2
Green American for the hangings	2	14	2
Backstony, lace, buttons, rings & thread	2	12	11
Spice of blankets	2	12	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Total disbursed</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Balance</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Sum</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0</b>

In family of  
Catharine Rouby

Left: Expenditure accounts, Bar Convent York 1796  
Below: Detail showing coach hire to Osbaldwick, 1796  
Reproduced with kind permission from The Bar Convent, York

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and	15	10	10
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In family of  
Catharine Rouby



The Painted Life 12, in which Mary Ward is pictured recalling "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God"

Frances Ball (1794 – 1861), was a pupil in the Bar Convent York from 1803—1808. Political and social upheaval combined with difficulties in travelling meant that she lived in close proximity with the Sisters and community over a continuous period of five years at a time when the community maintained and revered the memory of Mary Ward and her vision of her Institute.

An extract from the financial accounts kept by the Superior, M. Rouby records the money spent each year bringing the students to Osbaldwick to visit Mary Ward's tomb. As a pupil Frances Ball would have partaken in these expeditions, and it is difficult to imagine that she did so without understanding their purpose and significance. The influence wielded throughout her life by her formative experience as pupil, novice and Sister with this community, are recorded in contemporary biographies, her personal correspondence and in Institute folklore.

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God  
....."

Biographies of Teresa Ball record her arrival as a pupil in York in 1803, and a tour of the school gardens by her older sister, Anna Maria, who quoted the scripture passage: *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice.....* A phrase that held such significance for Mary Ward, it is likely that Anna Maria became aware of it through her knowledge of Mary Ward.

B. 1 April 13<sup>th</sup> 1814  
 "Fr. Ball has sanguine expectations, that he will be able to accomplish her purpose. We mean to write a letter to you offering her to your Community as an humble candidate for your holy Institute."

Stoughton and Daniel God. I Frances Mary, Teresa Ball  
 thought on all accounts most unworthy of appearing in your presence, yet relying upon your infinite goodness and mercy, I moved with a desire of seeing you here before the great Bishop of the Bar Convent which Assembly equal to your divine projects, Poverty, Obedience & Modesty are the constituents of the Bar Convent which I profess that I will constantly live, & take care of the constitution of youth according to Obedience, understanding all conformably to the Rules of our Institute confirmed by the Pope, to which he has added his Constitutions. Therefore humbly ask of your goodness guidance through the blood of Jesus Christ, that you would vouchsafe to unite this Island in our service, & when abundant you befriend it, as you have already done before this time.  
 Yours truly  
 Frances Mary, Teresa Ball

My Lord,  
 I have consulted our Bishop on the subject of your Lordship's letter who agrees to our receiving Mrs Ball as a member of our holy Institute with a view to training her for a house of the same in Dublin, in the event of such a project being set on foot.

Recent re-examinations of the letters exchanged between Dr Daniel Murray, Archbishop of Dublin and M. Elizabeth Coyney, Superior, the Bar Convent, York in 1814, agreeing the acceptance of Frances as a novice in York, have yielded excited responses.

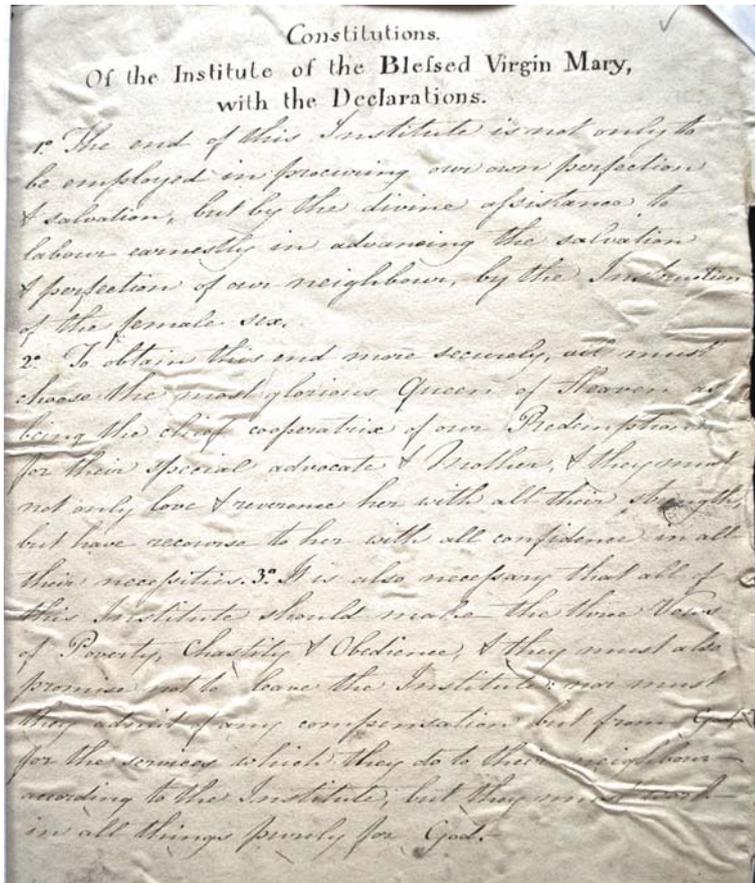
In 1814, the Bar Convent was still very firmly part of Mary Ward's Institute, and Frances explicitly hoped to enter, (and was accepted as a member of) this same "holy Institute".

The vows taken by Teresa on 09 September 1816 followed the traditional vow formula. In the same year that Teresa made her vows, the Institute in York, under the direction of M. Coyney considered the legacy of Mary Ward so problematic and dangerous, that a systematic removal and eradication of Mary Ward from library, archival documents and oral memory began.

Images:  
 Upper left —extract from letter of Dr Murray to Mrs Coyney, April 1814  
 Upper right—vows of M. Teresa Ball, September 1816  
 Bottom—extract from letter of Mrs Coyney to Dr Murray, August 1814

"a member of our holy Institute"  
 "a house of your holy Institute in this country"

However, Teresa had spent 7 years in the Bar Convent, surrounded by and imbibing knowledge and the charism of Mary Ward.



The Constitutions transcribed by Teresa Ball in York

Returning to Dublin in 1821, Teresa brought with her, the documentation necessary to undertake the foundation of a house of that “holy Institute” in Ireland.

The work of many hours of transcribing, it included copies of Constitutions, Customs, Exhortations on Rules, and histories of the Institute. Although the community in York had adopted new Constitutions in 1816, Teresa chose the 1707 Constitutions which were based on Mary Ward’s earlier Constitutions. This foundational document prompts a recurring question of ‘why’? Why did she choose these older Constitutions, which were more authentic to Mary Ward’s vision, than new ones which then bound the community she belonged to, in York?

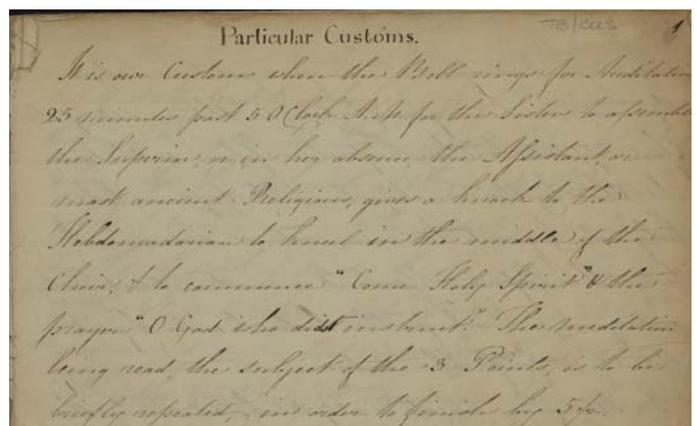
Ink smudges, stains and fingerprints indicate that this was a much used document, subject to frequent reference and referral, not just to

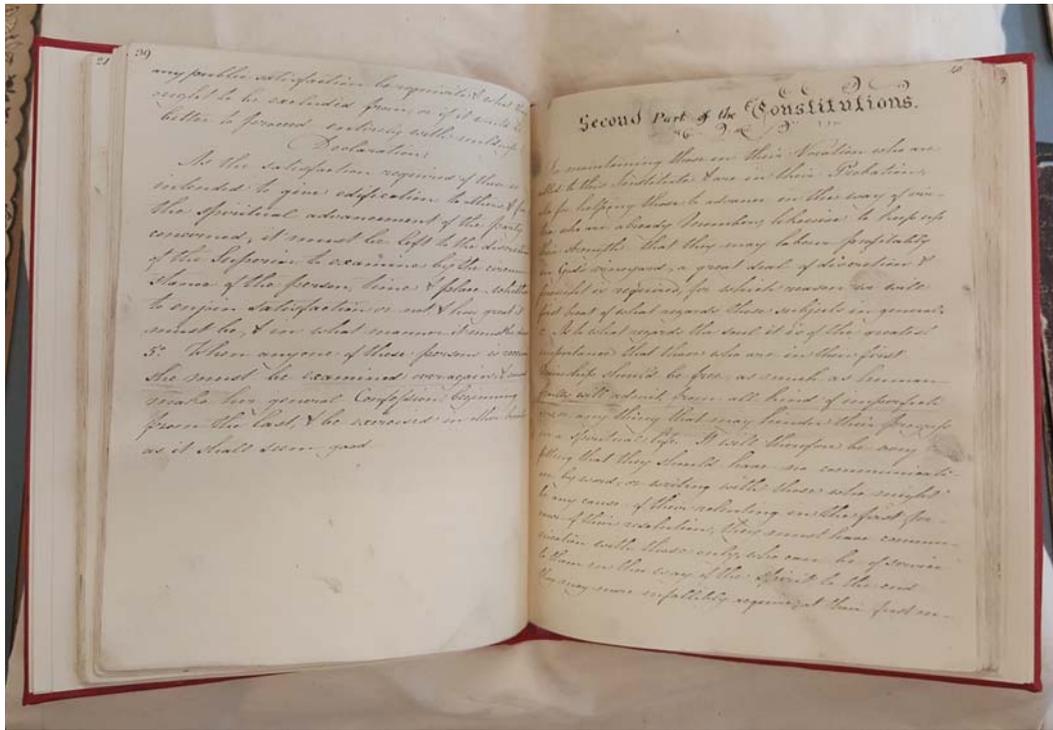
Teresa but to those women who followed her. As each Superior departed for a new foundation, she was handed a copy of the “black book” i.e. the Constitutions, a powerful symbolic

act of the physical and intellectual transfer of the traditions, heritage, charism and rules of the Institute to a new generation.

M. Teresa chose the 1707 Constitutions which were based on Mary Ward’s earlier constitutions.

Extract from the Customs transcribed by Teresa Ball in York





Knowledge of Mary Ward is implied in her decision to name the first IBVM house in Ireland, 'Loreto Abbey', after the Italian shrine of Loreto, which held such significance for Mary Ward. Teresa Ball's correspondence (now digitised, copies of which are available from all IBVM Province Archives) are a rich and generous source of insights into her thoughts and motivations.

Correspondence with the community in York contains frequent references and allusions to her deep connection with the community and the wider Institute. Close reading of the letters reveal that she referred to the Bar Convent York as "the mother abode" [i.e. mother house], and in later years, she acknowledged that each new foundation undertaken, was a "filiation" or daughter house of the Bar Convent York.

Documents, such as those outlined above, are offered to researchers and visitors alike for reading, interpretation and analysis. According to surviving archival

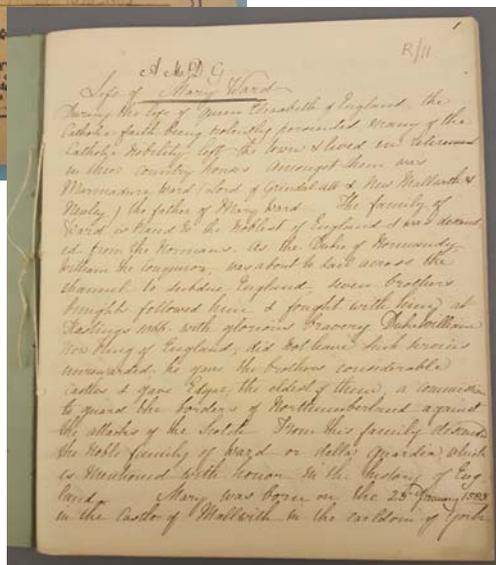
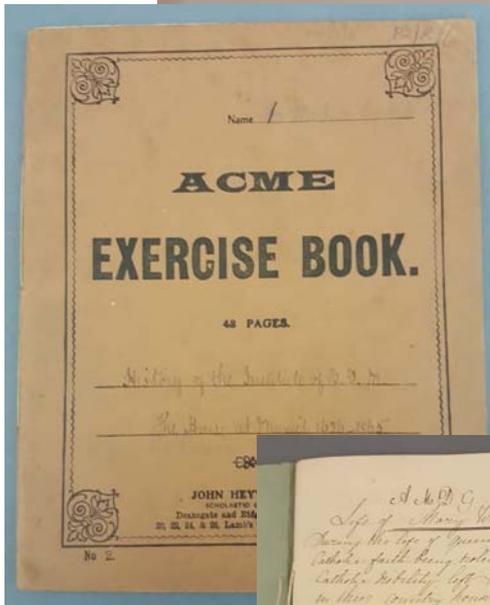
records, Teresa Ball made only one overt reference to Mary Ward in a letter of 1849, responding to a query from M. Angela Brown, York. She wrote: "*I never was informed of the merit of Mary Ward. M. Bapthorpe, I was told, procured confirmation of our holy rule.*" Since 1631 and the infamous Bull of Suppression, the Institute founded by Mary Ward was according to Canon Law, ruthlessly suppressed. Mary Ward's problematic legacy had seen the eradication of her name and early history of the Institute from almost all sources held in York. Teresa Ball's response should be read in

The Bar Convent York was "the mother abode" [i.e. mother house] for M. Teresa Ball

this context and it requires further contextual interrogation and research.

Teresa Ball remained, throughout her life, a member of the Institute she had entered in

York. She maintained strong ties with the birthplace of her vocation, adhered faithfully to her religious formation and transmitted the charism she had imbibed to those women who followed her.



Above:

'The Institute Tree' originally held in Loreto Navan

Left:

A sample of manuscript biographies of Mary Ward and histories of the Institute held by the Institute Archives. The provenance (origin and history) of these biographies are unknown, but highlight early efforts to reclaim the connections with Mary Ward.

This is an abridged version of an article which appeared in the international edition of 'Archive News', December 2019.