



Archive News

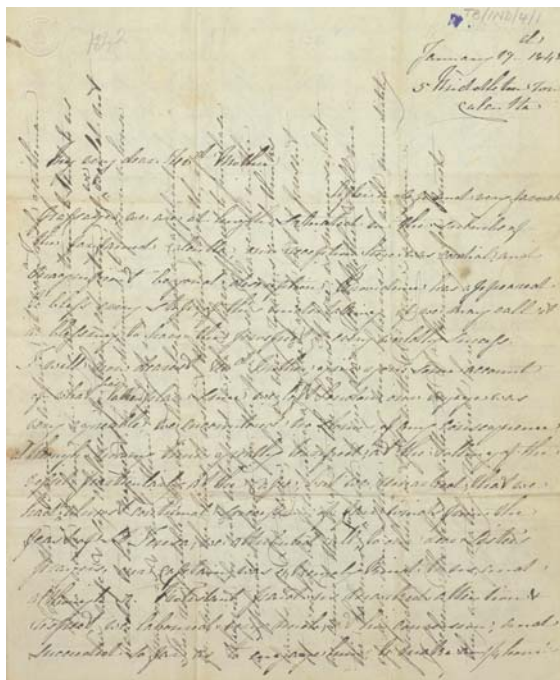
NEWSLETTER OF THE IBVM, INSTITUTE & IRISH PROVINCE ARCHIVES

Go Set The World on Fire With His Love

In this issue of 'Archive News', we explore the expansion of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary from Rathfarnham around the globe during M. Teresa Ball's lifetime.

Loreto in India 1841

27 December 1841. The first group of twelve sisters hailing from the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Ireland, set foot on Indian soil on the banks of the River Hooghly in Calcutta. All of Calcutta was agog to witness the arrival of this intrepid band from faraway lands. In the words of M. Delphine Hart, the leader of the group, “such an amazing concourse of Hindoos, Mahometans, Europeans and persons of all religions were never before seen to give way to so much curiosity (or as they say, interest) as they did on this occasion...”



The first letter received from the community in India.

The average age of the group was eighteen, the Superior M. Delphine Hart being only twenty-three. The eldest in the group was M. Martina McCann, twenty-nine, and the youngest was the Mother Superior's very own sister, Isabel Hart, sixteen years of age, still but a school girl and not even fully decided whether to become a sister on completing her education.

The Calcutta they arrived into was still under the rule of the East India Company. It was the foremost city of British India, the view from the river presenting an aspect as of a city of palaces. The house purchased for the sisters at a princely sum of forty thousand rupees, was located in Chowringhee, the poshest part of town, and seemed to Delphine Hart “more adapted for those who seek all the happiness of life than the imitators of a God who became poor for [their] sakes.”

Splendid house and interminable visitors notwithstanding, the band of twelve set to work without delay. By 3 January 1842 the prospectus was published, on 10 January Loreto House opened its doors to the first sixty pupils, and by 19 January one dormitory in the boarding was already full. Loreto in India had got off to a flying start.

Life in mid-nineteenth century Calcutta was not easy for the group of pioneering Catholic sisters – undertaking new ventures at the whim of the indefatigable Bishop Carew, contending with sickness and death, and stoically bearing numerous physical hardships. The sisters had much to test their patience and sense of duty, but they persevered. In just a few years the sisters established three boarding schools, two orphanages and three day schools in and around Calcutta – Loreto House, Bow Bazaar, Chandernagore, Murgihata, Serampore, Howrah, Entally, followed by the establishment of the East Bengal Mission in 1845, and the school in Darjeeling in 1847. The Institute had taken firm root and was ready to spread its wings north, south and east and west in the coming decades.

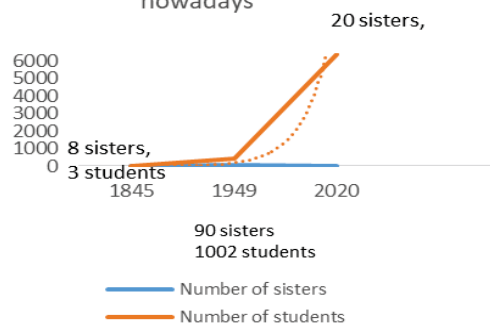
In the words of their biographer M. M. Colmcille:

“The field of the Bengal Mission had been ploughed by tireless labourers, fertilised by many sufferings, watered by many tears. It was [now] ready for planting... “Going, they shall go in tears, sowing their seeds; coming, they shall come with joy, gathering their sheaves.”

Mauritius 1845

‘Go and set the world on fire with the love of God’. With these words Mother Teresa Ball commissioned Austin Hearne, an Irish Sister aged 29 and 7 other Loreto Sisters as they left for faraway Mauritius. They departed from Ireland on the 27th May 1845 without any hope of return, on a journey to an unknown multicultural island. Mauritius was the 8th foundation of the congregation. Accompanied by the Bishop, Monseigneur Collier, they set foot on Port Louis harbor on the 8th September 1845 after a long sea trip on board “The Reaper”. The sisters’ mission was to found a school for girls where such education was non-existent. The first school opened in Port Louis with 3 girls.

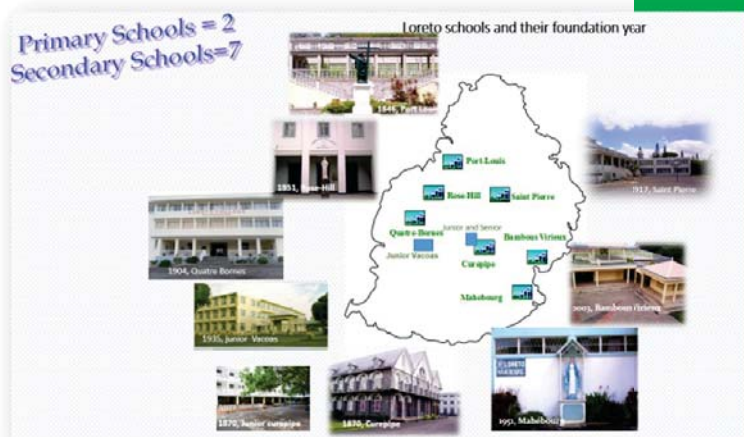
Numbers of students and number of sisters in the beginning and nowadays



Evolution in number of students over the years

In 1912, the Loreto Schools opened their doors to small boys. Throughout Loreto education, care of the faith remained a priority. Loreto Schools continue to this day to provide space for inculturation and integration dialogue. In 1976, free education was introduced, the Loreto Institute collaborated with the government and joined the project.

For the last 175 years, students continue to receive a holistic education. Past students occupy various key positions both in the public and private sectors of the country. The focus of Loreto education aims at helping the young person to acquire lasting values that will permeate their whole life, making them responsible citizens.



Loreto sisters have always responded to the needs of the time, opening educational development centers for young girls dropping out of the school system. Bois Marchand Women’s Association was created to empower women to offer their talents to the service of the community.



Loreto Sisters in the past



Loreto Sisters in 2020



**Bambous Virieux
Development Center, 1973**



Bois Marchand Women's Association, 2006

Faithful to Ignatian and Mary Ward Spirituality the Institute has converted two convents into spiritual retreat centers, Maris Stella in Souillac and Mary Ward in Curepipe.



Maris Stella Retreat Center



The generosity of Loreto Sisters knows no limit. Their own provincial library was turned into "Médiathèque Mary Ward" a convivial space for those searching for spiritual growth and formation.

To ensure that the spirit and vision of Mary Ward is passed on to future generations, a group "Keepers of the Fire" was created, imparting formation in Ignatian and Mary Ward charism, emphasizing the importance of loving and faithful service.

In the school yard of Loreto College Port Louis, is a game "hopscotch" called "La Marelle de Mary Ward" representing the life of our foundress. One square contains open circles with a question mark: Are we as students answering the needs of the marginalized and those on the borders?

Last but not least on the 8th September 2020 a bronze sculpture of Mary Ward "*on the move*" was unveiled in the school yard of Loreto College, and Junior school of Curepipe.



**Colette Deasy, the only Irish sister
now in Mauritius next to the bronze
sculpture of Mary Ward.**



Loreto Abbey Toronto, early 20th Century

Canada 1847, a new Chapter

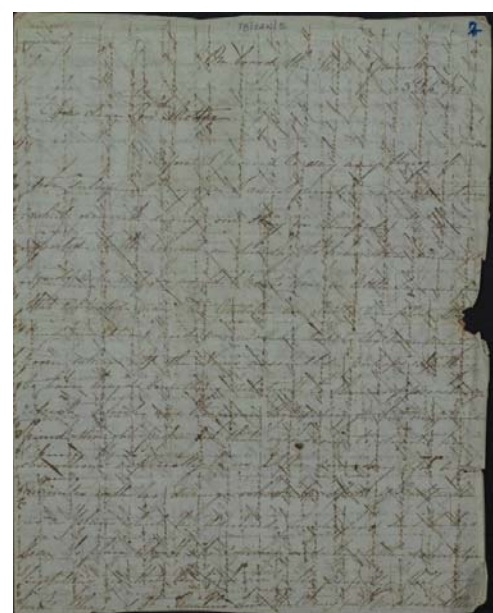
In the early months of 1847, the Most Rev. Michael Power, Bishop of the Diocese of Toronto, Canada, visited Mother Teresa Ball at Loreto Abbey, Rathfarnham, Ireland, asking for Sisters to set up an Academy for the education of Catholic girls in Canada West. The conditions would be of a harsh, pioneer type – a real challenge to the relatively young membership of the Irish Community – but there was great work to be begun, and God's blessing would be on it! In answer to Bishop Power's request, two senior professed Sisters along with two Novices newly professed and a fifth Sister still a Novice (all ranging in age from 28 to 30) were chosen to undertake this mission.

They left from Liverpool, England, on August 11th, 1847, and were privileged to sail on "The Garrick," a sailing vessel with relatively good accommodation. After a six-week ocean voyage, they sailed into New York's harbour, then down the Hudson River in a steamer to Albany, by rail to Rochester, then sailed across Lake Ontario, arriving in Toronto on the morning of September 16, 1847. In 1847, Irish Famine immigration resulted in an influx of nearly 40,000 people in a city with a previous population of 20,000. Toronto was now in the throes of dealing with dreaded immigrant fever

(typhus) ravaging the population and claiming thousands of lives.



Toronto Harbour 1847, from the
Toronto Public Library



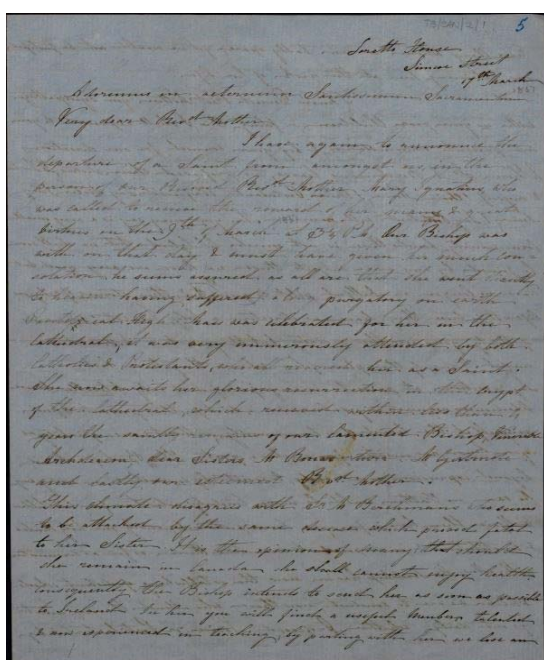
TB/CAN/05/01, the opening page of the first letter received from Canada. M. Ignatia Hutchinson IBVM to M. Teresa Ball IBVM, 'on board The Garrick' dated 03 September 1847

With the help of lay persons, the Sisters opened their Academy on September 28, 1847, with nine young girls. They were the first religious community in the city of Toronto, male or female. 15 days after the Sisters arrival, they lost their sponsor and guardian when Bishop Power died after having spent tireless hours attending to the Irish famine immigrants in Toronto fever sheds.

The first years in Toronto were not kind to the Sisters. During this period the Sisters suffered from hardships of poverty, the Canadian cold weather (for which they were totally unprepared), and lack of direction. Within five years of their arrival, three of the young pioneers had died of consumption, and a fourth returned to Ireland.



M. Teresa Dease IBVM



TB/CAN/02/01, first letter from M. Teresa Dease IBVM to M. Teresa Ball IBVM, announcing the death of M. Ignatia Hutchinson IBVM

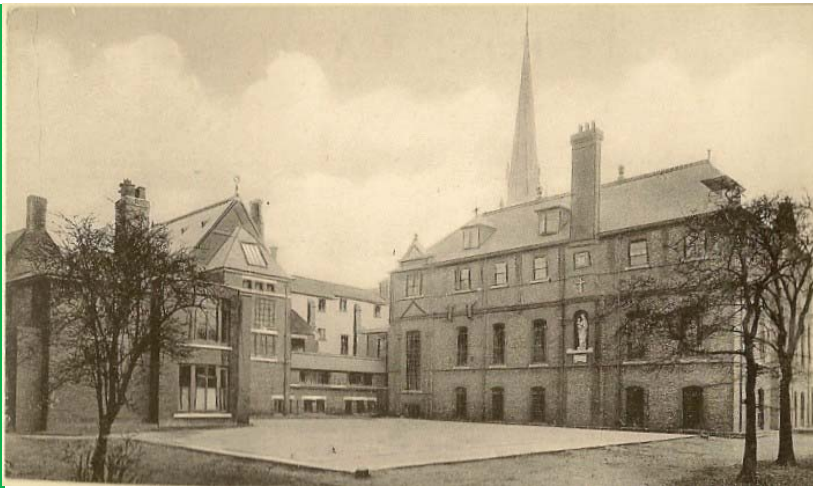
Against these odds, the young Community persevered.

With time, reinforcements came from Ireland, but also from Canada, where women entered with the Sisters to carry on their work of teaching in the new world. The Sisters continue their extended ministry in Toronto even into 2021 – a fruitful period of 174 years!

LORETTO RAINBOW, Apr. 1934 219



Pioneer Girls' School in Toronto. Loretto Convent, Duke Street, 1847.



England

1851

In 1851 Canon Laurence Toole from St Wilfred's, Manchester approached M. Teresa Ball to send Sisters to teach in his parish.

The Superior was Anne Hickey and the other pioneers, M. Assumption Houlahan, M. Antonia Bergen, Sr Euphrasia Lewin, Sr Blandina O'Connor and Sr Ambrose Croker.

The community house opened in the presbytery on 3rd October 1851. At first the Sisters taught Sunday school in a rented room. The school itself opened on 12th December 1851. Some boarders were accepted and lodged in the presbytery.

Brookside House was purchased in March 1853 allowing the Sisters to move out of the presbytery.

In March 1856 M. Alphonsa Ellis was appointed as Superior to replace Anne Hickey who had returned to Ireland. When she arrived the community was in dire poverty, selling their furniture to make ends meet. Under her leadership the community began its steady consolidation.

The house was the only mission invited to attend the General Chapters of 1862, 1868 and 1874. But in 1880 no invitation arrived and Manchester's letter of protest received no reply.

Each house in Ireland had the right to vote in the election of the Superior General but the Constitutions made no mention of houses overseas. It is possible a canon lawyer pointed out this to the Superior General, who then felt obliged to omit Manchester.



Probably as a reaction to this separation in 1886 M. Alphonsa resigned and a local chapter of elections was held every six years. M. Alphonsa was elected three times. In 1904 the bishop postponed the election in view of M. Alphonsa's ill health and she died the following year.

1866.	Properties purchased, Buildings erected, and smaller expenditures	1867.
1853.	First purchase of property on West Lane, Volume	1000 0 0
1854	Durham Gate Estate	22 0 0
1855	Building of Lodge	102 0 0
1861	" " " " " " " "	85 0 0
1862	Second purchase of property on West Lane	570 0 0
1871	Building St. Josephs Hall	550 0 0
1872	" " " " " " " "	200 0 0
	second purchase of property	57 15 0
1873	Building of Clarence St.	111 15 8
1874	Building of Chapel	100 0 0
	Richard and Frizes	100 0 0
1879	Building of Day School	47 14 6
1880	" " " " " " " "	27 14 6
1881	" " " " " " " "	12 12 2
	Station of the first Native in Our charge	56 0 0
	Chapel	10 0 0
	Lamp and Crucifix in Altar	40 0 0
	Grand Piano (purchased)	12 0 0
1868	Repairing Roof of St. Michaels	39 14 0
1891	Heating apparatus	13 10 4
1894	Work in remodeling Galleries in St. Josephs	53 0 0
1895	Making St. Michaels Oratory	576 0 0
1896	Decorating and fitting chapel	209 15 2
	Making new classroom for St. Josephs School	21 0 0
1900	Extension of Day School	1060 14 0
1902	Decorative remodeling in Library	20 10 0
	Repair of kitchen range	15 13 9
1903	Carriage passage St. Josephs Lod	50 0 0
1904	Decorative remodeling in Library room	326 0 3 115 15 2

In 1881 a rescript allowed the missions to vote in elections provided their bishop agreed. However, the state of non-communication with Rathfarnham lasted until M. Michael Corcoran visited in November 1889. Although a friendly visit the situation did not change. M. Michael visited the house at least five times after this between 1895 and 1904.

M. Alphonsa died in March 1905. Elections were held and her cousin, also Alphonsa Ellis, was elected. She had frail health and during her last illness in 1910 the community made appeals to M. Michael to accept Manchester back under the jurisdiction of Rathfarnham.

M. Alphonsa Ellis II died in April 1910 and in June M. Michael visited the house to bring about the reunion of Manchester and its branch house at Bowdon with Rathfarnham.



Selection of images of Loreto convents, schools and pupils from Loreto England, including (top to bottom) Altrincham Bowdon, Leek, Llandudno, and St Alban's.



Colegio Castilleja de la Cuesta, Sevilla

During her school years in York Frances Ball had a great friend, Concepción López, who said: *"Not until you arrive in Heaven will you understand how beautiful Spain is"*.

The first foundation was made in Cadiz on 1851, but after five years they had to return to Rathfarnham because of the Cantonal wars, and a cholera epidemic.

When M.Stanislaus Murphy was appointed Superior of Gibraltar, she was contacted by Spanish families eager to reconnect with the IBVM and not have to send their daughters to Gibraltar. In September 1888 they founded a house, in El Puerto de Santa María where the pioneers were installed: M.Stanislaus Murphy (Provincial), M.Gonzaga Flood, S. Dolores, Miss Flood, M.Stanislaus Ward, M.J.Anne Mc.Evoy, M.Columbano O'Shea, M.Mathew MacMullan, S.Presentation, Martin,



M. Stanislaus Murphy with some of the pioneers

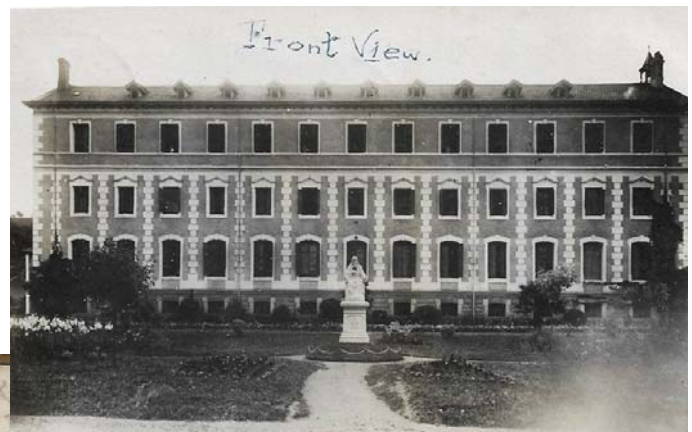
Spanish IBVM Province Foundation

1851 & 1888

Afra, M.Bernardette Mc.Mullan, M.Eithnna O'Neill, & M.Teresa Brophy.

The school was well received, but lacked a garden and "Las Irlandesas"*, who have always promoted sports, took the students to a nearby playground, to the disgust of the "conservative" families of that time. Their intention was to found in Sevilla, but since there was another religious run school in the city, they had to do it 5km away in the palace-house where Hernán Cortés died, Castilleja de la Cuesta, giving rise to our mother house on September 29, 1889.

Colegio de Zalla, País Vasco



Castilleja was a seed soon spread in Spain and arrived in the Basque Country in 1900. Three sisters went to take over the work of the future school of Zalla, inaugurated in 1904.

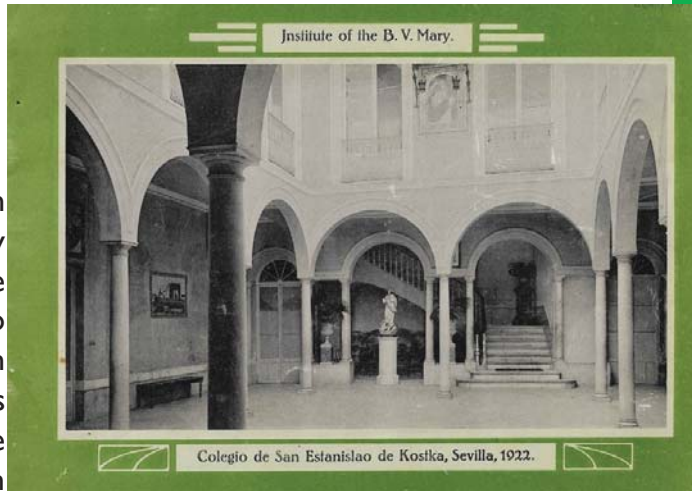


Colegio Calle Velázquez, Madrid.

In all these schools we received from M.Teresa Ball the Charism of Mary Ward: The Eucharist, being the centre of faith; love of Mary; commitment to justice, and for this reasons, in each Foundation of middle and upper class students, there was always a free School, which after the Second Vatican Council could be socialized.

It was thought that it would be beneficial to have a school in Madrid, that would also serve as a resting place for the sisters on their trips from Zalla to Castilleja. In 1904 a school was opened on Calle Rosales, after a brief stay in Calle Zurbaran, in 1909 they moved to Villa Gloria, where Velázquez's School was founded.

What about Sevilla? The Jesuit Fr.Martín Prieto insisted on a mixed school that began on Calle Bailen, with the name of San Estanislao in 1907. That would later be moved to Calle Las Palmas.



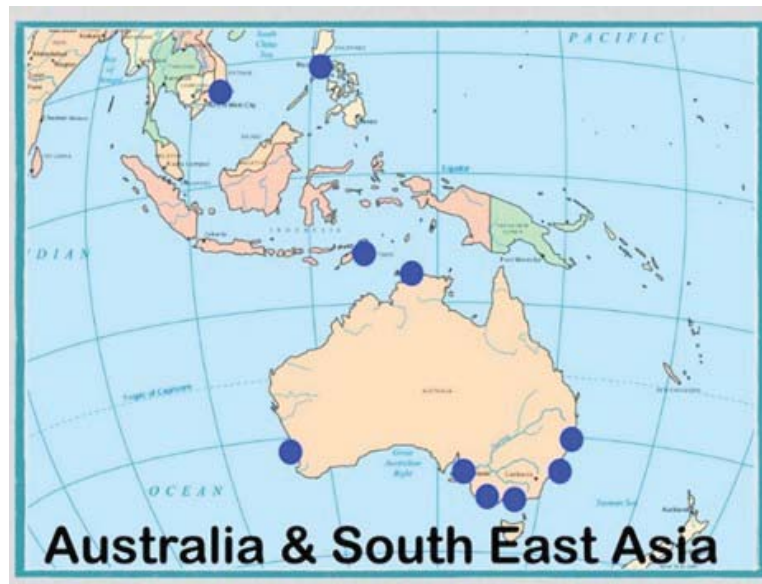
Colegio San Estanislao, Sevilla



**M. Stanislaus Murphy IBVM,
foundress of the IBVM Spanish Province**

***“Go and proclaim to everyone”
As Javier lived with great courage.
With a True and brave heart,
Teresa, fair, joyful and woman did it!***

*In Spain we are known as “Las Irlandesas”, because the first sisters came from Ireland.



Loreto and the Tyranny of Distance*: the Australian Foundation 1875

On 20th May 1875, Mother Gonzaga Barry with seven other Sisters and two postulants obeyed the call to mission with trepidation but also with courage. The request for Loreto Sisters to establish a convent and school in Australia had been made by the new bishop of Ballarat, Bishop Michael O'Connor to Superior General, Mother Scholastica Somers. The Sisters were asked to travel to the other side of the world. This was a two months' journey, if all went well, and meant extreme discomfort and danger. The group had every expectation of never seeing their Irish

home again. In fact, M. Gonzaga made that daunting journey five times.

The two extant diaries of the journey from Ireland to Australia, that of Mother Gonzaga's and Mother Berchmans Stafford's, are held in the IBVM Archives. They are detailed accounts meant for the eyes of the community back home in Ireland. As such, many of the discomforts, the doubts, fears and conflicts may not be recorded. Even given this sanitised version of events, the voyage still sounded harrowing. Nearly all the travellers suffered terribly from seasickness, not for just a few hours

Australian Pioneers, photo taken in 1903 –
Standing: M. Dorothea Frizelle, M. Berchmans Stafford, Sr. Bruno McCabe
Sitting: M. Boniface Volcker, M. Xavier Yourelle, M. Gonzaga Barry, M. Aloysius Macken
Front: M. Margaret Mary Hughes
Absent: Sr. Joseph O'Brien and Sr. Gertrude Quinn (died 1882)



*The 'Tyranny of Distance' is a term used by historian Geoffrey Blainey to describe how distance shaped Australian history.



**SS Somersetshire, on which the Australian pioneers sailed,
State Library of Victoria**

but for weeks at a time. However, they also record a liberating experience. Such a novel journey must have had a significant effect on their worldview.

By the time the missionaries landed in Melbourne on 19th July 1875, they were a cohesive team, prepared for the challenge with the help of a strong, grounded, trusted leader and, perhaps, a leap of faith.

The following day saw them travelling by train to Ballarat, the 'Golden City'. In time they purchased their first property which would become Loreto Abbey Mary's Mount, now Loreto College Ballarat. The expansion continued across Australia with convents, schools, kindergarten, teachers' colleges, commercial colleges and a university college.

Although not a foundation made by Mother Francis Teresa Ball, whose establishment of Loreto in Ireland we are celebrating this year, the Australian foundation followed her model with the Sisters' courage to move.



**Ballarat East, 1870s, showing gold mining operations.
The pioneers stayed at the St. Alipius Presbytery on first
arriving in Ballarat, close to these mines.
State Library of Victoria**

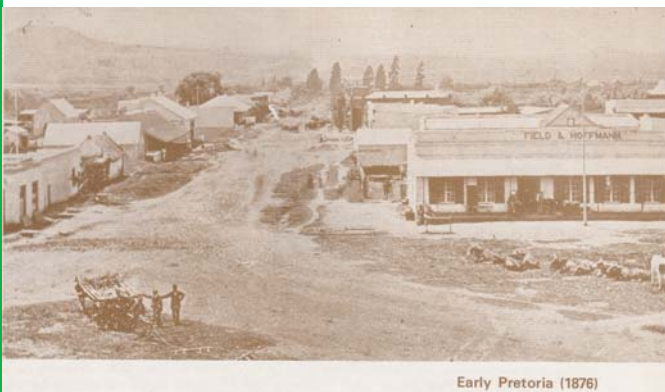


Loreto Abbey Mary's Mount, c.1876



Loreto and South Africa 1878,

“the maddest missions that has ever been inaugurated since Eternal Wisdom sent forth twelve more or less illiterate men “to teach all the nations!”



Early Pretoria (1876)

In 1833, M. Teresa Ball led a small group of Sisters to Navan, Co. Meath, to open the first Loreto convent and school outside the city of Dublin. This new foundation slowly flourished, and in time expanded within the Diocese of Meath and internationally. In 1877, Loreto Navan responded to the repeated appeals of Charles Jolivet, Bishop of Transvaal for a Loreto mission in his diocese. His sister, M. Margaret Mary Alacoque Jolivet, M. Teresa Colahan and M. Josepha Colahan, Mary Christine Garry, and Charles Eugenie Ansquer, (both postulants) volunteered for this pioneering mission. On 1 March 1878 the five missionaries left Navan.

A long and arduous journey, the Sisters travelled by sea and ox wagon, crossing

the Drakensberg Mountains, in ox wagons mostly a night due to the intense heat, was especially arduous. On 17th May 1878 they finally reached their destination, the then ‘sleepy little dorp’ of Pretoria. M. Joseph Colahan IBVM’s described their arrival in Pretoria :

“A tiny house with gaping apertures where the windows should have been, just planted down on the open veld – it would seem, by mistake. ‘my heart seemed to me suddenly, to be down in the tip of my little toe. I seemed to realise in a flash the full folly of the enterprise on which we had embarked and said to myself for the first time and, I may add the only time – “Am I mad?”



The awful feeling of depression continued until, having descended from the wagon, Father Walsh conducted us into the little chapel.

There, as soon as I found myself in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, a load seemed to fall from me and never since has it returned.'

On Friday 7 June 1878, Loreto Convent, Pretoria welcomed its first pupils, with the opening of the High School and later the Parochial School. The early years remained tumultuous, with the convent in Pretoria commandeered by the Military during the Boer War in 1879, the death of the founding Superior, ill health of Sisters, low numbers of new entrants to religious life and ongoing difficulties in governance. In spite of all, the mission continued to attract dedicated women from Ireland and South Africa. In keeping with M. Teresa Ball's commitment to accept new invitations to form new missions and ministries, the IBVM (Loreto) South African presence expanded; new foundations were made in Hillcrest, Strand, Sea Point, Glen Cowie and later into Zambia.

An IBVM (Loreto) presence continues in 2021 in Loreto schools and the presence of Sisters in Pretoria, and Zambia, engaged in a variety of ministries.

For further information on ministries in Zambia, see
<https://www.mwia.org.au/projects/zambia/>



Loreto Lydenburg



Loreto Hillcrest



Loreto Convent Strand



Loreto Convent Seapoint



Loreto Glen Cowie



A Short History of the IBVM USA Foundation 1880

The United States of America is known as a “melting pot” because its peoples came to the US from various countries. In a sense, the IBVM US region is also a “melting pot,” having foundations made from Loreto Canada (1880) in Joliet, Illinois; Loreto Navan (1954) in Phoenix, Arizona; and Loreto Fermoy (1967) in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Mother Teresa Dease, then the Mother General of the North American Branch of the Institute, received a request from the pastor of St. Patrick parish in Joliet, Illinois for sisters to start a school. M. Teresa decided that she now had sufficient Sisters to begin a new foundation south of the Canadian border.



M. Teresa Dease IBVM

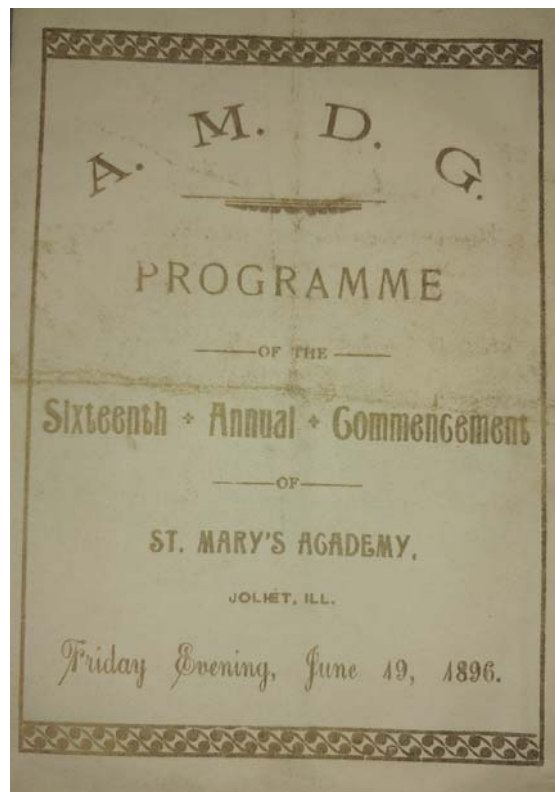
That same year, she left Canada with three Sisters and travelled to St. Patrick parish to begin this first foundation in the US. St. Patrick school began September 17, 1880 in the basement of St. Patrick church with eight pupils.

St Mary's
Academy,
Joliet, Illinois

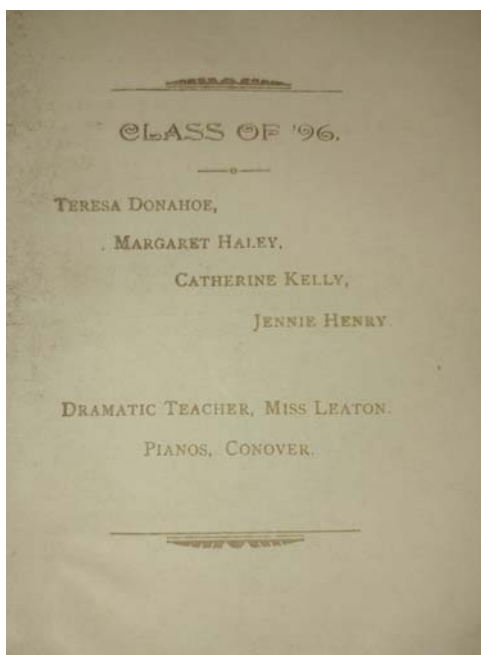


Neither Navan nor Fermoy were aligned with M. Teresa Ball's Loreto Sisters when each sent Sisters to the US. In 1954, five Loreto Sisters arrived in Phoenix at the request of Bishop Daniel Gerke. In 1967, Bishop Phillip Hannan (Louisiana) requested sisters from the Fermoy IBVM community to start a school.

The North American Branch of the IBVM separated from the Irish Branch in 1881 and became the North American Generalate at which time it was composed of Sisters in Canada and in the United States. It was not until 2003 with the Reunion that the United States (both those from North American branch & Irish branch (Arizona) became the US Province. In 2020 the North American region was formed.



Above and Left: Graduation Programs for the first graduation from St Mary's Academy, Joliet, Illinois, 1896



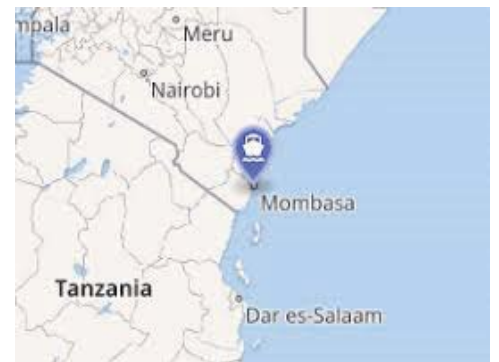
Betty Crotty IBVM & Cindy Langlois IBVM,
USA Region Archivists

Eastern Africa 1921

Before she died in 1861 M. Teresa Ball, the foundress of the Irish Branch of the IBVM had sent her Sisters to bring Mary Ward's charism to different countries across the world with the words, **"Go Set the World on Fire with His Love"**. However Mary Ward's charism would not reach East Africa until 1921, but down through the years a total of 216 sisters who have lived and worked in the Province would surely have brought the challenge of Teresa Ball to fruition. Perhaps it is by God's design that we will celebrate our centenary and the Bi-centenary of Ireland in this same year 2021.

The beginning was small –an invitation to come to Kenya, East Africa to open a school in Nairobi for the children of the settlers. The Superior General of Loreto at the time, Mother Raphael Deasy, responding to the request, decided to send a little band of six sisters, to begin the new mission. Mother Borgia O'Shaughnessy, an Irish missionary working in Australia was appointed the leader of the group. She was asked to pass by India and collect four other Loreto Sisters. The mission was placed under the Indian Province and later, in 1931, placed under the South African Province until eventually becoming a Province in its own right.

L to R: Dolores Stafford, Raphael Gordon, Borgia O'Shaughnessy, Catherine Beauvais, Francis Teresa Murphy and Sixtus Naughton.



The six foundresses arrived at Kilindini Harbour in Mombasa on October 18, 1921. They were welcomed warmly by two Holy Ghost priests before they continued the long train journey to Nairobi on the same day. Preparations were made at once to open a school. There were seventeen (17) pupils when school started on November 11, 1921. It is interesting to note that the sisters readily took on an outreach to the local women and children as well as setting up schools across the country.

Loreto Msongari, the first foundation in 1921



Loreto Msongari Today in 2021



LORETO EASTERN AFRICA PROVINCE FOUNDATIONS

1	Msongari	1921	14	Loreto House	1977
2	Catholic Parochial	1925 - 2011	15	Matunda Convent	1980
3	Eldoret	1929 - 1975	16	St. Joseph's Kangemi	1988
4	Limuru	1936	17	Nakuru	1988 - 1993
5	Mombasa	1936	18	Mary Ward Centre	1989
6	Valley Road	1942	19	Novitiate Kangemi	1992 - 2002
7	Kiambu	1949	20	Teresa Ball House Kangemi	1995
8	Eastleigh	1953	21	Nyakato Tanzania	1998
9	Red House Kiambu	1964 - 1973	22	Obuasi, Ghana	2005
10	Novitiate Msongari	1965	23	Karinde	2015
11	Changamwe	1968 - 1990	24	Isinya	2017
12	Matunda High	1969	25	Buswelu Tanzania	2017
13	Taru	1972 - 1978			

Sadly due to a variety of changes in the country and lack of personnel, some foundations listed had to be closed or given to others.

Each school has its own particular and interesting story to tell about its beginnings and the reason why it was founded. Loreto Limuru for example, opened in 1936, was the first Catholic Secondary School for Kenyan girls. This school has influenced thousands of women and men across the world through its past pupils, one of whom was Wangari Maathai who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004.

With the opening of the Novitiate in 1965 the Institute became rooted in Kenya through our first two Kenyan sisters, Malia and Ephigenia seen in the photo below:

**Recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize,
Loreto past pupil, Wangari Maathai**



L to R: Paulina Lewela, Angeline Khayeka (RIP), Maria Thimba, Justina Nthambi, Malia Katala, Ephigenia Gachiri, Maria Goretti Oriambo and Seraphine Oweggi



The Province has been greatly enriched by the band of Loreto witnesses gone before them, and by those who returned to Ireland for medical care etc as well as the current members numbering 86 sisters and nine novices. They have enabled Loreto to move beyond Kenya and set up missions in Tanzania and Ghana. Sisters have been missioned to work in South Sudan and Zambia. Attached to these foundations the Sisters continue with other ministries as well.

The launch of the Loreto East Africa Province Centenary Celebrations has been scheduled to take place on January 23, 2021 and will close on January 29, 2022.



***For all
that has
been
Thanks
for all that
is to come.
Yes.***

**Nuala Brangan IBVM
Province Archivist, East
Africa
nualaloreto@gmail.com**



BEGINNINGS

IBVM PERU

1981 - 2020

Responding to the spirit of Vatican II at the end of the 1970s, the IBVM Sisters of the Spanish Province felt urged to start a mission beyond their borders. Affinity of culture and language drew them to look towards South America. Outstanding among enthusiastic members was **M. Pilar Pemartin IBVM**, who formulated plans for a mission in Argentina.

Meanwhile the Spirit was active in Latin America, in a village called LAMUD in Amazonas, Peru. A catholic couple of the village, **Isabel Davila and Gilberto Santillan**, were knocking insistently on the door of their diocesan bishop, Mon. HORNEDO, begging for religious Sisters for their pueblo.

Fr. Eguilior, SJ later to become parish priest of Lamud, was witness to their plea, and became the bearer of these longings to Spain. In a 'casual' meeting in Loyola with IBVM Sisters, he told the tale of this couple's longing, and the rest is history.

Two longings became one and something new came into being.

In 1980 M. Agnes Walshe, IBVM Superior General and M Miriam Ibarra IBVM, Spain's Provincial, travelled to Peru, to see and to listen, to meet and to decide.

In October 1981, seven IBVM members came from Spain to start a mission in Peru.



These seven Sisters settled into two separate communities, one in Lamud in Amazonas and the second in Chiclayo on the coast. They were to be under the authority of Spain. A bus journey of more than 30 hours separated them, putting paid to a fond hope in Spain that at weekends the sisters would visit each other!

During the following years, other sisters from Ireland, Spain, Australia and India joined the Peru mission, and missions were started in Huambo (1985–2000), Baca Flor, Lima(1990 -) Naranjal (1997-2002), Jicamarca (2002 -), Chancay (2005-2011) and Huaycan (2018 -) In 1998 the mission became a Region under the central authority of the Institute.

Meantime young Peruvian women expressed interest in knowing IBVM's charism. This necessitated the move to Lima, the purchase of the central house, BACA FLOR, providing the possibility of attending formation courses in CONFER, Lima. (Later formation was continued in Naranjal and Chancay.)

During the following years, different IBVM members came and went. As did several young women who experienced the life of the sisters, and have carried Mary Ward charism into secular Peruvian life. Miroslava, a daughter of that original couple who responded to the call of the Spirit, is now a member of IBVM Peru Region.

In 2020 we are 9, one from Peru, Spain, India and 6 from Ireland. Of the original pioneer group, four (all Spaniards) have died, two have returned to Spain, and Irene Reynolds (Irish), at 88 years of age, continues to serve the mission in Jicamarca, Lima, Peru.

Current Mission



Left: Lamud, Amazonas

Right: Huambo



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