The Historical Journey
Foundresses and Foundations

Our Mothers' Voices

The Historical Journey: Foundresses and Foundations

That is it, I said to myself, as I was praying before a lonely tabernacle: we must dedicate ourselves to the education of youth, renew in souls the solid foundations of a living faith in the Blessed Sacrament.... We will raise up a multitude of adorers from all the nations, to the very ends of the earth.

St. Madeleine Sophie Barat

*Before I even knew the name of our little Society the desire to bring the Name of the Lord to the heathen peoples was in the depths of my heart. This increased when I knew our Father and St. Xavier became my patron; I received many graces through h*is *intercession and I hoped my prayer would be granted and that he would lead me to these people living in the shadow of death.... Time showed me...that I could no longer entertain that thought. Then a recent event took away all hope and, if that decision is not reversed I am tied to France or neighboring countries forever. But have I given up that dream? No, the same desire increases daily and I pray that one of my companions will carry it out and that the Holy Spirit Himself will inspire her and lead her; if in our lifetime we are not able to go so far afield, then I pray that others who follow us will do so. Meanwhile may there be some who are moved to pray for these nations; may their burning zeal enkindle a flame in the heart of other women and inspire them to seize the opportune moment when God has decreed it in His wisdom and mercy.*

St. Madeleine Sophie Barat to St. Philippine Duchesne, on the occasion of Mother Barat's election as Superior General,

A storm at sea is truly a terrifying experience.... Twice the waves forced open our little portholes and have drenched our berths during the night. The masts bend, the sails are either furled or torn, the steering wheel is abandoned in order not to strain the vessel. All this is no laughing

matter unless one sees God in the storm.

St. Philippine Duchesne's account of a storm
during her voyage to the New World on the Rebecca

May 29, 1818, The Great Feast of the Sacred Heart

It was with deepest emotion that we set foot on this soil which is for us, in the eyes of faith and the designs of God, the Promised Land. Mother Duchesne's heart could not contain its sentiments of gratitude. In spite of the marshy ground she knelt and kissed the very soil. Her eyes were wet with tears, tears of joy, the kind Father Varin desired for us. "No one is looking,' she whispered to us. 'You kiss it, too.' If only you could have seen her face! It was radiant with joy that only the Heart of Jesus could inspire in a soul filled with His grace and bent on glorifying His Sacred Heart.

It was a glorious night. The stars that studded the deep blue heavens were mirrored in the silvery waters of the stream. Fireflies sparkled in the low bushes...

St. Philippine's landing in America taken from the diary of Mothers Eugénie Audé
and Octavie Berthold, companions on the voyage to the New World

We cultivate a very small field for Christ, but we love it, knowing that God does not require great achievements but a heart that holds nothing back.

St. Philippine Duchesne

My dearly loved Mother, at last we have reached the country of our desires...there are no difficulties here except when people worry too much about tomorrow.

St. Philippine Duchesne to St. Madeleine Sophie Barat
in a letter titled "From the Tribe and Village of the Potawatomi"

From every sowing there comes a harvest, and from the harvest a fresh grain is sown for a new increase. From life through death to life is the Christian cycle. Mother Hardey's work began before her day and has been carried into our own by other workers.

Margaret Williams, RSCJ, in the dedication of *The Second Sowing*
the life of Mother Aloysia Hardey.

In the beginning there was a woman who

bore as one of her names: WISDOM

She had grown up contemplating
the vine stocks of
her native land,
and the shoots that sprout
from the vine,
thus learning from this life that
springs from the roots
the secret of how to bear fruit.

She felt the love of God
like a spring welling up from
her inner depths,
like a torrent that flooded her
soul,
like the water that gives itself
over not in order to be contained
but in order to be offered, spilt,
lost.

Everything within her was
open-mindedness, welcome,
receptivity, silence,
not as the fruit of an effort or a
commitment,
but of an attraction
that had taken possession of her,
mesmerizing her gaze,
centering her search and her
desire,
on the One whom she loved
above all else.

The time ripened and the
exact moment came:
she knew that she was but a
tiny sign,
a pinch of yeast of the Kingdom
placed between the fingers
of the Other,
EMBERS in the FIRE.
That is how the fermentation
could begin
and the blaze flare up.

No footprints before her,
only the trust and the generosity
of a handful of women
gathered around Sophie,
caught up by the dream born
in the flickering light of a candle:
of dwelling in the love of Jesus,
grafted onto the tree of His Life
and guided by the wind of His
Spirit,
of being united, one heart and
one soul, around His Eucharist
and making manifest in a
wounded world
the faithfulness and compassion
of His Heart.

Two hundred years later
we carry on the little Society
whose growth Sophie nourished,
captivated by her dream,
joyous at having found the
treasure
in the legacy she bequeathed
to us,
ready to sell all we have, to
free our energies and resources
in order to possess this treasure.
It is the spring of living water
that flows from the pierced side
of Christ
and invites us to enter
into the depths
of its mystery.

Dolores Aleixandre, RSCJ

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St. Madeleine Sophie Barat and St. Philippine Duchesne:

Traveling Companions on the Journey of the Heart

Jane Shannon Cannon

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces the gospel of peace!" These words from Isaiah, chosen by Holy Mother the Church for the first reading of the feast day Mass of St. Philippine Duchesne, recall the unforgettable scene that took place in the December chill of the stone-paved entry of Ste. Marie d'en Haut when the twenty-five-year-old Madeleine Sophie Barat met, for the first time, the zealous Philippine Duchesne. Two women of amazing destiny whose paths had crossed at last: the *Journey of the Heart* was about to begin with a headlong run down that sheer precipice overlooking Grenoble and the subsequent missionary march that would overtake the world, seeking to accomplish what that very reading from Isaiah promises: "*and all the ends of the earth shall see the saving power of God."*

What did the overjoyed Philippine, ten years her elder, see in her newly embraced superior? "As if the gifts of God were limited to a certain age, as if the Holy Spirit depended on natural talent . . . For myself, when I see our Mother acting always under the guidance of God, when I compare the sweetness and unction of her words with the sharp language of those who attack her, I have no difficulty in distinguishing between virtue and passion, and I laugh at the agitation which may check God's work for a time, but will never destroy it." This glowing appraisal, written in the house journal just

months after their meeting, points to the transformation that was taking place in the woman whose quest for the religious life had floundered repeatedly in the past.

Two women from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds had converged on a common wavelength: the love of the Heart of Jesus. To each, education had been a vital ingredient of her youth – Philippine, stealing tutorial hours among the Perier boys' lessons and reveling in the subject matter deemed inappropriate for a young girl. Sophie, being led by Louis, the unrelenting taskmaster who saw, in his little sister, a sublime potential for learning and spared no scrap of energy – his own or hers – in realizing it to its fullest. What these two visionaries had experienced in their unique childhoods they now burned to impart to others – and, most of all, to imbue that love of learning with their sure knowledge of the love of God.

But the "beautiful feet" did not stay for long at Ste. Marie. There were new foundations to establish elsewhere, other novices to be gathered into the fledgling Society. In her absence, the beloved superior's charism was relayed to the little community through letters that told of her progress and especially proffered the spiritual guidance that her "dear daughter" Philippine had sought for a lifetime and that she now thrived on – the spiritual sustenance of a craving heart. At last, she was on her way. But this was only the beginning!

As she became acquainted with Father Louis Barat and as she grew more and more familiar with his sister, Mother Duchesne realized that the three of them shared a common dream: a burning desire to spread the Word of God in some distant mission

field. But when Mother Barat was named Superior General of the young order by Father Varin in 1806, her future was irrevocably tied to France. If the Sacred Heart was to have a missionary, it would have to be someone else. That hope she held out to her daughter Philippine with these thrilling words: "How happy should I be if Our Lord, having so much reason to disdain my service, should receive yours." And, from that day on, the older daughter seized upon the possibility. ("So I am allowed to indulge in my longings!")

Twelve years of longing can temper a soul. To one whose *raison d'etre* is prayer there was no petition so keenly felt (or so frequently articulated) as this desire to work among the savages on foreign soil. Yet the activities that occupied Philippine at Ste. Marie were varied and strenuous. Certainly, this indefatigable factotum of the house did not languish idly while awaiting her destiny. Energetically she applied herself to every area of work that the convent offered.

These were the years when Napoleon's vanity made life precarious for religious houses; and prudent patience was needed in matters even closer to home than distant mission fields. Finally, after his banishment, the time seemed right to draw up the Constitutions, which had been prepared in virtual hiding. Superiors of the other houses were summoned to Paris; and Philippine accompanied Mother Bigeu, bidding a premonitory final farewell to her childhood home of Grenoble and to her beloved Ste. Marie.

Events following the Council were precipitous. The Constitution and Rules of the Society gained pontifical approval; and Philippine, buoyed up by renewed hope of missionary appointment, was chagrined to be named Secretary General of the Society. And so the frustrated Mother Duchesne, who had proved her skills through years of letter writing and faithfully kept journals, was now to become the hand and the memory of her Superior instead of the happily dispatched envoy of the order. A great consolation, though, was the fact that the two dear friends were again much more frequently in each other's presence. Little wonder that the letters written by her Secretary carried the very spirit of the Superior, so close were they in mind and heart.

At last the tides were turned. Little need be told of the events that took place at the convent in the Rue des Postes in 1817. Every child of the Sacred Heart has heard the story of the visit of Bishop Du Bourg from Louisiana, of his request for religious in his mission territory, of Mother Barat's reticence and – most memorable of all – of Philippine's spontaneous outburst that ultimately won her *nunc dimittis*. No one knew better than Madeleine Sophie Barat the desire that consumed this kindred spirit. And so, although it would stretch the resources and the personnel of the Society in France, the friendship of two valiant women was about to cross the breadth of an ocean and extend deep into a New World, where untold numbers awaited the message of God's love.

Nearly a year of preparation for the adventure of her lifetime had brought Philippine Duchesne to a window overlooking the port of Bordeaux, where she waited, along with the four carefully chosen religious who would accompany her, for weather to

allow their embarkation. Surely a little sadness was mingled with her impatient longing as she wrote to her dear children in the school at Grenoble: “I am leaving things as completely as though I were about to die, since it is almost certain that I shall not return to France nor see you, dear children, and my many loved ones again in this life.” Around the same time, she mused in a letter to Mother Barat about her good fortune to be the one to be called to America: “You desired this privilege for yourself. God makes use of you where you are, but, since I could do nothing, He will try me out elsewhere, like those nuns who are changed from house to house so that different trials may bring to light the good that is in them.”

Two months of travel brought the beleaguered *Rebecca* to a dock some distance from New Orleans. It was the 29th of May and, most fittingly, the Feast of the Sacred Heart was celebrated by Abbé Martial with a Mass before the nuns set foot (and joyful kisses) on the ground beneath them. Just days before that, Philippine had written her first letter on the ship in which she described to her Superior the terrors, the discomforts and the frustrations that had beset the five neophyte travelers. It was the 16th of May, a year – to the day – from the date when Mother Barat had granted her consent for this voyage; and Philippine predicted that Sophie would not receive this verification of their safe arrival until the following October. In it she also confided the hope that there would be a letter waiting for them when the five actually arrived in New Orleans (there was not). She had reasoned that a ship had left Bordeaux at nearly the same time as the *Rebecca* and, perhaps, may have carried a letter and arrived sooner.

This would be the beginning of a lifetime of longing for word from her dear friend, her mentor, her Mother. In an age when we are spoiled by the glib conversations that e-mail, faxes, and telephones allow us, we are able to confer with associates around the world in a matter of moments. And it is hard to imagine the utter solitude that deprivation of communication inflicts – to ask a question and then wait more than a year for the much-needed response.

A glimpse of this hunger comes in the opening lines of the letter that Philippine wrote to Mother Barat on June 24 after a letter finally did arrive at the Ursuline Convent, where the five nuns were awaiting passage up the Mississippi. “I took your letter to the chapel before I read it, so that we might all thank God for this blessing.”

Finally, on July 12, the five travellers set out on the last leg of their journey. Many of the misconceptions they had as to the ease of travel on the Mississippi (compared to the Atlantic) were quickly put to rest by the perils of sand bars and log-jam snags; but the intense interest in what would be their new home led them to drink in every sight that confronted them along the forty-day trip. Names of birds, crops, and even insects were being learned with keen fascination.

By the time she reached St. Louis, Mother Duchesne should have been prepared for the disappointment that awaited her. The three streets that the city boasted (with the rather grand names of Rue Royale, Rue de l’Eglise and Rue des Granges) were unpaved quagmires with not a single cabin or shack suitable for the nuns’ use. They had been told

in New Orleans that the Bishop would probably dispatch them to a location farther out; and that, indeed, was the case.

The day after they arrived there, Philippine wrote to Mother Barat: "We are now nearly four thousand miles apart, but the farther I go the nearer I feel to you in my longing to carry out your intentions and to accomplish your desires." And now, as she faced settling elsewhere, she remembered the warm invitation they had had as they passed by Ste. Genevieve, some distance south of St. Louis. This option Bishop DuBourg promptly dismissed, assuring them that his choice of St. Charles was far better suited to their mission, since its location on the Missouri River assured its growth because of the constant stream of traffic to the West. Even the ferry that took them to their new home on September 7 was shared with prairie schooners en route to the Rockies.

The first mail that came to their new address in the "Duquette Mansion" (a primitive log cabin, but the biggest house in the frontier town of St. Charles) gave great cause for joy. When Mrs. Pratte, the mother of two of the boarders who had started school earlier in October, came to visit her daughters, she brought letters from France including one from the Mother General, who forwarded the longed-for blessing of the Holy Father on the American Mission. This blessing was extended by Pius VII to all who would join Mother Philippine Duchesne in the years to come – an encouraging mandate to one who was so plagued by self-doubts and a pervading sense of unworthiness. Her abhorrence of her position as Superior was compounded by the fact that she served so far away from any ability to confer with the Motherhouse in France. "By this time you know

that Divine Providence has brought us to the most distant village of the United States," she wrote. And a month later: "So remote are we in this corner of the world that we do not yet know if you have received a single one of our letters, but I have had the inexpressible consolation of getting several from you."

The letters that crossed the Atlantic between these two giants of the Society in the ensuing thirty-four years comprise the history of a friendship built on a common thread: the love of the Heart of Jesus and the desire to spread His message to a world so much in need of it. The fact that they never saw each other again seemed to intensify the bond forged by these missives. When Mother Barat wrote to Philippine, "As for you, my dear Mother, receive the assurance of the tender and inviolable attachment with which I am your Mother, " she was providing text that would be read and reread on the cold, lonely nights in that "most distant village of the United States." And when Philippine declared, "When I meditate on the fact that I belong to our Society, my soul expands with joy, tears of gratitude flow, and I see only happiness in privations," she was not only reminding herself of her greatest consolation but reassuring her Superior of her ability to cope with whatever trials befell her.

So many letters to France included recollections of feasts and other happy occasions celebrated in the past – often with accounts of how they were then being marked in the New World. And so many letters to America – often too late to matter – were lovingly chiding and cajoling: "Now a word regarding your request to be relieved of the office of superior. If you will just reflect a little, you will realize that this is

impossible, for I have no one to put in your place, and if you make a third foundation how can you hope to be relieved of superiority? Besides, my dear daughter, would someone else do better than you? I think not!"

How it must have broken Mother Barat's heart to read between the lines of Philippine's self-deprecating remarks: "Do name Mother de Kersaint superior. I shall keep so quiet in my corner as never to be in her way. I should add that I am ready to go anywhere you may send me, though I realize that wherever I go I may be in the way because of my age. And, too, I can never deal easily with the parents of our children. The Americans do not understand me. The Creoles want good looks and attractive manners. The best thing for me to do is to disappear, either teaching a class or caring for the sick." And later on: "I feel that I am a worn-out instrument, a useless walking stick that is fit only to be hidden in a dark corner."

Although she could not see her friend, Sophie knew that age was changing both of them. If only her old friend could once again tap the courage (almost brashness!) that had characterized her youth when she defied her father to stay up at Ste. Marie – when she picked her way through young womanhood, making choices that shocked her family and friends. If only Philippine could find in herself the confidence that others now lavished on her. When she was considering removing her from her office as superior, Mother Barat received a letter from Bishop Joseph Rosati: "In the first place, I believe there is no one among your religious who can gain as much confidence as Mother Duchesne justly receives here. All who know her respect and venerate her because of her

virtues, which, joined to age and the experience she has acquired during her long sojourn in this country, make her esteemed by all. There are few persons whom I venerate more than this holy religious. She has the true spirit of her vocation and on many occasions, known only to me, has given most striking proofs of this."

In the last year of Philippine's life, Mother Barat entrusted a letter to Mother Maria Cutts to be delivered to St. Charles. In it she sent good news of the Society's flourishing activity along with a new assignment for her aging daughter: "My dear Philippine, confidence in the Society is increasing; the order is spreading in almost all parts of the world; and from all sides we receive requests which we must refuse. Ah, if we only had Mothers as zealous and selfless as those who first went into the land where you now live, we would not need so many religious for each house, and foundations could be made more easily. Pray then, dear and loving Mother, pray earnestly that our sweet Master may have mercy on the souls who call for us and may send us apostles according to His own Heart. He will listen to you, I am sure, dear old daughter of mine, for you have always understood so clearly the value of souls and have never recoiled before an obstacle when Jesus summoned you to their aid."

In her swift reply (much of which was devoted to an outline of how the Society would go about establishing a novitiate in St. Mary's, Kansas) Philippine closed with another allusion to her age: "My letter is very badly written, but I cannot see to rewrite it. I have strength, however, to kneel in spirit at your feet to receive your blessing with all possible love and respect in the Heart of Jesus."

Since news in the nineteenth century was so slowly passed over the thousands of miles that separated St. Madeleine Sophie Barat from St. Rose Philippine Duchesne, it was a long time before the Superior in France learned of the death on November 18, 1852, of the daughter whose only legacy to her was a lifetime of letters, lovingly penned. Of these, no doubt the opening lines of her first letter from Sugar Creek must have stirred in her memory – the letter that was jubilantly headed: "From the Tribe and Village of the Potawatomi."

"My dearly loved Mother," she began, "At last we have reached the country of our desires!"

Jane Shannon Cannon attended Maryville and has served in numerous roles at St. Charles.

St. Madeleine Sophie Barat
The Two-Hundred-Year-Old Vision

Who was this woman whose impulse precipitated such a movement? In anticipation of its 200th anniversary, the Society of the Sacred Heart commissioned Phil Kilroy, RSCJ, of the Irish Province, an author of numerous articles on religious dissent and women's history, to write a biography of St. Madeleine Sophie Barat. Unprecedented access to abundant archival material around the world makes this work historically powerful and yet personally alive.

Sister Kilroy defines her writing: "This book is not a history of the Society of the Sacred Heart as such, nor is it a history of the Society of the Sacred Heart's contribution to education. Biography is an exercise in memory, a way of retrieving the life-story of a person, of telling her story again. By trying to tell some of the truth about a person and her time in history, a biographer rescues both from a stereotyping which threatens to falsify the true person in her time and setting." Sophie Barat would appreciate such an approach. She once remarked: "A historian should tell the truth." That is what Phil Kilroy has done.

Madeleine Sophie Barat:
1779-1865
A Life

Phil Kilroy, RSCJ

Prepared by the author in advance of her forthcoming publication of this biography

Madeleine Sophie Barat was a young woman born on the eve of the French Revolution, caught up in the movement to restore and recreate a society devastated by violence and war. Her adolescence was marked by the unrest and turbulence of 1789, of the fall of the monarchy and Reign of Terror, and the memory of these events stayed with Sophie throughout her life. She lived through the momentous times of the Revolution, the Empire of Napoleon, the restoration of

the Bourbons, the July Revolution and the 1848 Revolution.

In the late 18th century, Catholics in France were weighed down, first, by an image of God which was profoundly sinful, and then by a conviction that human beings were incapable of doing any good act. The mediation by the clergy was seen as the only hope of bridging the gap between God and the sinner. It was considered almost impossible to make a good confession and communion, such was the sinfulness of the human being. The impact of this devastating view of human nature meant that the practice of approaching God in sacrament had diminished, especially among the male members of the population. As a child and young adult in Joigny, Sophie imbibed these varying strands of religious experience.

By the time Sophie came to Paris, many women all over France, in a bid to restore the primacy of religion and the place of the church, had initiated small communities focused on social work, mostly in education and health. These projects began in towns, villages, and cities and gradually mushroomed throughout France and Europe into the wider world. Sophie Barat was part of that impulse and energy. Between 1800 and 1820, thirty-five new communities of women, including the Society of the Sacred Heart, were founded in France; and each year, between 1820 and 1880, six new communities were founded. The founders of these communities came from all sections of French society and included fifty-three from the lower bourgeoisie, among them Sophie Barat herself.

Sophie's leadership of the Society of the Sacred Heart was facilitated by the education she had received as a child and teenager and by her gift for making friendships. In terms of her life's work, the educational preparation provided by her brother Louis was crucial for Sophie's position in the Society. It provided her with an ascendancy over her colleagues, most of whom originated from aristocratic and upper bourgeois families in France. In addition, Sophie had a gift for making friendships, which even Louis's dour influence could not suppress. Sophie exercised her leadership through creating personal relationships with her colleagues, especially in the early years. Surrounded by gifted and energetic women, she consciously used her education and her capacity to relate to maintain her position as the elected superior general of the

communities. Despite this form of leadership, the actual personality of Sophie Barat remained hidden and veiled, since Sophie related to most persons in function of her role, and rarely in a deeply personal way. She was in that role for sixty-three years of life, from 1802 to 1865.

At the time of her death in 1865, Sophie presided over an international community of 3,359 women, who were inspired by a spiritual ideal and offered a service of education in Europe, northern Africa, North and South America. In the course of her life, Sophie bought and sold large schools and properties. She handled intricate finances deftly and made astute deals and decisions. A woman of great entrepreneurial skills, she carried out most of her business affairs through the medium of her letters. These letters are a blend of different subjects, showing Sophie at work, as a leader, friend, guide, and businesswoman. Through her letter-writing, Sophie discovered her personal style of leadership and how to articulate it. She used rhetoric in conversation and letter-writing. This enabled her to overcome obstacles and pursue her goals in a world where the leadership of women was greeted with suspicion and often with outright hostility. Today we can grasp what Sophie Barat was straining toward in her day. But she had not the words, the social constructs, nor the general acknowledgment of women's roles in today's world. Without such social confirmation and assurance, Sophie Barat made her way with her colleagues in the Society of the Sacred Heart, with church, and with governments in Paris, in Rome, and throughout the areas where the Society was present during her lifetime.

This was a real achievement because, like all women of her time, Sophie was affected by the low image women had in society generally. The view of women as secondary and inferior to men was deeply imbedded in the consciousness of men and women. Radical thinkers and activists of the Revolution concurred with this judgment. Women, who had hoped for inclusion in the Revolutionary spirit, found that they had been useful only for a time, a common experience of women in any revolutionary period. Negative views towards women were further reinforced by Napoleon, whose Civil Code defined the limited rights and extensive duties of women of the 19th century. It imposed rigid legal subordination on women in the family and in the state.

In this context, Sophie Barat's leadership of the Society of the Sacred Heart was remarkable, often more by what she did concretely than by her speech and rhetoric. Although Sophie retained the rhetoric of conformity, she moved as she needed to meet the requirements of the moment. In a world where a woman's powers and skills were not readily recognized and valued by either men or women, Sophie Barat found her way within constrictions to achieve her goals. In that sense, she was the supreme diplomat, forced to use a type of language to make herself understood. She had no script to follow, few models to learn from, and she was often compelled to work alone. She prepared the way for a new space and place for women far beyond her own time.

As a 19th century woman, Sophie Barat found her way out of a private life into a public role with a public profile; and she did this with her colleagues because she had a public service to offer which met a need in society and in the church. However, another inner narrative was taking place at the same time, one that informed the outer and gave the impulse and energy to sustain so much activity. While she was engaged in the founding and consolidation of the Society of the Sacred Heart, Sophie made an inner, spiritual journey in the course of which she continually strove to transform her image of a severe, harsh God into one of warmth and love and vulnerability. Though her exterior success was the focus of her fame in the 19th century and beyond, her inner achievement had greater, long term consequences for the image of the divine, of the holy in our time. Sophie was endowed with a remarkable capacity for human relationships, a gift she used to good effect in her leadership of the Society of the Sacred Heart. Yet it took continual efforts throughout her life to face into her own self-image, her image of God, her shadow self, and the shadow self of her colleagues. On the one hand, the image of God could be cold, empty, harsh, critical and emotionally frozen; on the other, it could be warm, full of energy, gentle, generous, and vulnerable. The effort, never easy, demanded all her courage to trust enough to let go of old centuries, old burdens. In her testament to the Society of the Sacred Heart, read after her death, Sophie Barat admitted she had only realized a part of what she had searched for all her life and that her journey was not over, nor was that of the Society of the

Sacred Heart.

Sophie Barat was a deeply religious woman whose life was lived within the basic belief in the existence of God, revealed in Jesus Christ. For her, the Catholic church was the church of Christ. Faithful to its teaching, she was nourished by the sacraments and attentive to the requirements it made of her as superior general of the Society of the Sacred Heart. She loved and practiced many devotions which stemmed from either medieval France or the ultramontane movement of the 19th century. While she did not question any of the fundamental aspects of her faith-world, Sophie's needs and her own experience of life led her to question, to challenge and change what had been given to her as immutable. But she felt secure in her beliefs and practices, and within those she created new and different spaces for women. She expanded the scope of her own authority and freedom to act which few questioned, especially in the later years of her life when Sophie Barat had already become a legend.

Sophie's vision was not solely to give young women a good basic education, which would prepare them to be either good wives and mothers, or to live a good Christian life as single women, or to enter a religious congregation; she hoped that the education given in her schools would be profound enough to inspire pupils to rebuild, renew, and transform society, wherever they lived. This was a social program, couched in the language of religion; yet, it had the potential to be highly political. Over the years, her intuition matured, developed, and expanded into seeing education as the means and the way to renew society in its depths. Sophie always returned to that initial hope and desire to heal and renew society in France after the ravages of the Revolution.

In the course of her long life, Sophie Barat was shaped and enriched by the interaction of her personal, inner journey, her network of relationships, and the spiritual ideals which motivated her and her friends. These three elements so informed, modified and transformed her that she emerged from this crucible of formation as a pioneer who, in the company of many gifted companions, had forged her own style of leadership. When she died at the age of eighty-

five years, sixty-three of them had been spent in leadership. It was a life lived constantly in the public eye, in the presence of her colleagues and wider circle of friends, family and business contacts. Expectations which friends and colleagues placed upon her were often hard to carry out. Although in her early years she strove to be perfect, Sophie, in later life, recognized that she was not a flawless leader. She recognized some of her limitations and was blind to others. Some things she understood well, others she did not. A product of her time and culture, Sophie was affected by circumstances that influenced the way she was to shape the Society of the Sacred Heart.

Sophie Barat's impulsive, energetic nature the Society through many critical phases and, in the end, ensured that it would not disintegrate. She kept faith and saw her work through to the end. Yet she functioned best in her role of, and found her relationships through, leadership of the Society of the Sacred Heart. She struggled and came to terms with her own self, and she learned painfully how to stand alone in her own individuality. This was a unique achievement and a task that all face, in any age.

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[3261 words]

Missouri's Pioneer Nun

Patricia J. Rice

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"Canonization! That's wonderful," said Virginia Robyn of St. Louis County, who is 91. Her grandmother, Mary Knott Dyer, who was a student of Mother Duchesne, told her the girls vied to thread their beloved teacher's sewing needle when her sight was failing.

Mother Duchesne, who was born in France, stepped off the steamboat, Franklin, at St. Louis in 1818. All but one of her remaining thirty-eight years were spent in St. Charles, Florissant, and St. Louis, teaching girls. In St. Charles she founded the first free school west of the Mississippi, and in Florissant, she began the first school for native Americans west of the river. She and the four nuns that came with her were the first nuns to settle here.

She was a voluminous correspondent; her 528 surviving letters and a convent journal she kept are fascinating chronicles of a booming St. Louis.

Mother Duchesne might well be called a patron of flexible, active older people. She arrived in America on the eve of her forty-ninth birthday; when she finally fulfilled her lifelong dream of living among the Indians in Kansas, she was seventy-two and infirm. She lived in a world that was changing dramatically.

She could become the patron of feminists. Mother Duchesne pushed the limits of what was allowed to a woman in her times. In the French Revolution as an individual laywoman, she risked her life to bring food, medicine, and news to cholera victims in prison and to dress the dead for burial.

In Grenoble and Paris, in France, and in Missouri, she founded academically rigorous schools for girls with the then radical aim of giving girls an education equal to that of boys. Her voyage to America had a frightening, if romantic, turn. Pirates stopped the ship but did not board.

Today, Religious of the Sacred Heart in the United States form ninety-seven communities of Mother Duchesne's figurative daughters from Boston to San Diego, and many continue her tradition of pushing the limits. One is the chancellor of the San Francisco archdiocese, the first woman to hold that post in a major U.S. city; another has served a prison term for demonstrations against nuclear arms.

Mother Duchesne "is particularly inspiring to us today because she did push the limits," said Sister Anne O'Neil, the provincial of the United States Province of the Society of the Sacred Heart whose national offices are at 4389 West Pine Boulevard, St. Louis "and today, I believe religious women have to push the church to the limits."

Many people called the indomitable Mother Duchesne holy during her lifetime. When she was living among the Potawatomi in Sugar Creek, Kansas, they called her Quah-kah-ka-num-ad, "the woman who prays always." After her death in St. Charles on November 18, 1852, nuns in her convent hired a photographer to take a daguerreotype of her in her casket, "in case she may one day be canonized," they explained in the convent journal. Days after her death, the Reverend Peter DeSmet, a "black robe" Jesuit pioneer, wrote, "No greater saint ever died in Missouri nor perhaps in the whole Union."

International fuss over naming her a saint would have astonished Mother Duchesne. She chose to wear an old, heavily mended black habit and assumed the nastiest chores including the cleaning of the outhouse, milking the cows in knee-deep flood waters, and mending the boarding

students' clothing. Even though she was superior of several convents in America, she chose the least desirable room in any house for her own and even occupied a closet under the stairs in the Florissant convent. She, however, judged herself severely and believed that she had failed in her American mission.

Rose Philippine Duchesne was born in 1769, in Grenoble, France's beautiful entrance to the Alps. Her father was president of the Grenoble bar association, a founder of the city's first public library, and a member of the judicial tribunal. He was, as well, an early supporter of moderate efforts to establish democracy in France, and it was her uncle that called a meeting on his tennis court to draw up revolutionary documents.

The eight Duchesne children and their Perier first cousins lived in adjacent houses off Grenoble's town square, the Place de St. Andre. The men were free thinkers and followers of Voltaire; the women were devout Catholics. The family remained close. Mother Duchesne's own sisters and her Perier cousins gave more generously to her schools in American than any of her American patrons.

As a girl, she heard the Reverend Jean-Baptiste Aubert talk about the Indians at Kaskaskia and Cahokia in Illinois. The child was entranced with the idea of teaching native Americans about God.

From Place de St. Andre, you can see the grey stone convent of Ste. Marie-d'en Haut halfway up Mount Rachis, the highest point in the city center. Today the convent is the Dauphiny Province's history and archeological museum. In Mother Duchesne's life it was a Visitation girls' boarding school. At 12, she and her cousin, Josephine Perier were enrolled. It was a strict school; the Duchesnes were known for their strong wills, and later Philippine wrote about how difficult it was to curb hers.

"Whenever I was willful as a boy my mother would always say, 'You are a Duchesne,'" Yves Clochard-Bossuet of Paris said here in July. He is the fifth generation in descent from Marie-Amelie Duchesne de Mauduit, a sister of Philippine Duchesne. The French seminarian made a retreat in St. Charles in July en route to New York City, where he is caring for victims of AIDS at a hospice begun by Mother Teresa. "Stubborn acts, my mother always said, were Duchesne traits," Clouchard-Bossuet said.

In her second year at school Philippine Duchesne resolved to become a nun. Her father was distressed and made her return home. She was permitted to join her male cousins' tutoring sessions in Latin, Dante, French literature, and mathematics. One of her cousins who helped her with arithemetic would become his country's minister of finance. Four of the boys served in France's national legislature, the Chamber of Deputies. After class she especially enjoyed ballroom dancing. Her sisters teased her about how seriously she practiced the steps.

"She was rather tall and well proportioned, with a noble countenance and bearing and fine manners," Mother Anna Shannon wrote in a description of Mother Duchesne in 1827. "She had blue eyes, and though slightly pitted by smallpox, her complexion was fair and clear. She was…strong and vigorous." Many others described her as having a warm, very affectionate nature.

When she was seventeen, her parents pressed her to marry a man they approved. She refused. To convince them that she was not interested in marriage, she gave away her prettiest dress and declined party invitations. After a year of this simpler life, before her 19th birthday, she asked an aunt to chaperone her in a visit to the convent. When the aunt returned without Philippine, her parents, Pierre-Francois and Rose Perier Duchesne, went to the convent and

asked her to come home. She refused. Years later she wrote about how difficult it was to cause her father pain.

In September, 1789, when she was about to take her vows to become a nun, her father refused his permission, saying that he feared for her life. He predicted that the Catholic Church would become a victim of the spreading revolution. At this time, confiscation and sale of church lands had begun. The cross on the Place St. Andre was removed, and the square was renamed Place de la Constitution.

Though initially Pierre-Francois had supported a democracy in France, he was appalled by the excesses of terror, and so he spirited his large family from Grenoble to their country villa at Grane. The villa remains in the Duchesne family today. Four years after Philippine entered the convent, France banned all religious houses. In January 1791, she joined her family in the country.

Country life was not enough for her. In April, 1793, she broke a rule of respectable French women, taking a room with another woman in Grenoble. As the Catholic Church had been France's social welfare system, after it was outlawed, hospitals, schools, and orphanages closed. Orphans roamed the streets.

Philippine Duchesne nursed prisoners, found shelter for orphans, and helped get food for the poor. She risked catching highly contagious diseases and being arrested, even killed. Her family's political influence waned and an uncle was murdered on a highway for his political views; in a separate incident his wife and children were also murdered.

After the Revolution, and with the help of her mellowed father, she gained title to her old convent. Nearly eleven years after the convent was shut, she returned to start a community there in December 1801. There was no lock on the door, windows were missing and it was damp and

cold. Over the next months, several former nuns joined the novice at the hill convent: a Benedictine, an Ursuline and several Visitation nuns. They began a boarding school for girls and struggled to find a common religious rule to live by. Eventually, most gave up and left.

Mother Duchesne's letters to her family at this time reveal a sadness that she could not bring the group to harmonize. She worried that she would be thought too headstrong, too Duchesne.

In 1803, when just four women remained, she heard of a new community of nuns, the three-year-old Society of the Sacred Heart in Amiens, France. She was attracted to its guiding principle – that charity and warmth, instead of strictness, were to be the core of the group. Rather than mold members to one ideal, it encouraged each to enhance her individuality.

In December, 1804, the twenty-five-year-old founder, Madeleine Sophie Barat (who was canonized in 1925), visited Grenoble. Philippine, then thirty-five, knelt and kissed her feet. Mother Barat had become the society's first mother general and Mother Duchesne would be its first secretary general. Mother Duchesne opened the society's first school and convent in Paris in a house on the Rue des Postes. The convent and school flourished.

As she tried to help her country recover from the Revolution, she talked to Mother Barat about her dream of becoming a missionary to the Indians, a dream that was ignited by Bishop William L. V. DuBourg, bishop of Louisiana (which then included St. Louis), when he visited the convent in Paris. He begged for nuns to establish schools for Indians and French children in St. Louis. The order was still young and too small to spare nuns for overseas missions, Mother Barat explained.

On January 14, 1817, Bishop DuBourg visited again, and again Mother Barat refused and he did not hide his chagrin as he was leaving the convent.

Then suddenly, the Duchesne impulsiveness asserted itself. Mother Duchesne fell to her knees at the threshold and with clasped hands, pleaded with Mother Barat: “Your consent, Mother. Give your consent” to help DuBourg. Mother Barat consented.

On March 13, 1818, Mother Duchesne and four nuns sailed for New Orleans from Bordeaux on the Rebecca. With much excitement, on May 25, as the boat sailed along the Gulf of Mexico, she wrote about seeing, “the point where the waters of the Mississippi mingle with those of the sea.” Four days later, as soon as she stepped on land, Mother Duchesne kissed the Mississippi ground. She had scurvy and was forced to rest at the Ursuline convent on Chartres Street before going to St. Louis by steamboat, which at that time took 40 days.

In St. Louis, Gen. Bernard and Emilie Labbadie Pratte welcomed the nuns to their house at Main and Market Streets where Mother Duchesne’s excitement was deflated by the bishop’s announcement that he had been unable to find a building for them in St. Louis, then a three-street town. Instead, he had rented a house in St. Charles.

The nuns took a carriage to St. Charles and moved into a large vertical-log Creole house. On September 14, their free school opened. The two Pratte daughters, Emilie and Therese, and their cousin Pelagie Chouteau arrived October 3 for classes at the tuition boarding academy. Fuel, water, and food, however, were scarce that winter.

By spring the boarding school had grown to include Eliza Soulard, Mary Doughtery, Odile de la Lassus, Valle, a granddaughter of the former Spanish commandant of Upper Louisiana, as well as Rosalie Lisa, daughter of an Indian woman and fur trader Manuel Lisa. Parents from students in St. Louis complained about the remoteness of the village.

By winter, a handsome two-story brick school had been completed. A highlight of the move to Florissant involved Mother Duchesne’s coaxing of the convent cow onto the ferry with

cabbages, an episode she described with humor in a letter. Today this same building is open as a memorial to her.

Initially that school flourished. Mother Duchesne taught Latin, French literature and religion while others taught English literature, composition, history, philosophy, arithmetic, art and chemistry. Classes followed the curriculum that she and Mother Barat had developed in France.

At this time she wrote that the St. Louis boarders were even more distracted by pretty clothes and bright-colored shoes than the fashionable girls she'd taught in Paris. To restrain the dressing competitions, the students were required to wear a magenta dress with black velvet piping.

A number of the women wished to become nuns, so the Florissant attic became a novitiate and within twelve years, fifty American women entered the Society of the Sacred Heart. They helped staff four Louisiana schools under some of the nuns who accompanied Mother Duchesne to St. Louis but it took nine years of struggling on the Missouri frontier before Mother Duchesne was able to find a place for a school in St. Louis.

On May 2, 1827, she led a group of nuns to an abandoned two-story brick building on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi. That land today is at Broadway and Convent Street. Most of it is in shadow under the overpasses just before the Interstate 70 exit on the merged northbound I-44 and I-55 highways.

"This isolation…has its advantage," Mother Duchesne wrote. "We are going to leave some of our twenty-four arpents (an old French land measure) in woodland where we can gather wild grapes, which are often quite delicious. Hazelnuts, strawberries, and blackberries in

abundance. We still have plenty of land enclosed for a garden, an apple orchard, a little woods for walks…and fields for corn and potatoes…"

Three nuns were sent from France to help staff the school, called the City House, to distinguish it from the convent established in the Florissant countryside.. The compound included a boarding and day tuition school, a free school and an orphanage. At first few Missouri girls could read or were interested in learning, but the climate changed. "We no longer have to urge the children to do their work; they love it," Mother Duchesne wrote to her sister Euphrosine in 1843.

"I can never deal easily with the parents of the children," she wrote from the City House. "The Americans do not understand me. The Creoles want good looks and attractive manners. The best thing for me to do is disappear, either teaching a class or caring for the sick."

But she was a favorite of the children. She would toss off her nun's bonnet and veil to let them blindfold her for blindman's bluff and she entertained the Indian children with the ticktock of her pocket watch.

After twelve years in the United States, there were six Sacred Heart schools with 350 students and sixty-four nuns, fourteen from France and fifty from the Mississippi Valley. Mother Duchesne made two difficult trips to Louisiana to visit her nuns there. On one trip, she alone was willing to care for a dying man with highly contagious cholera.

She always had an international view and wrote that she enjoyed newspapers, especially after telegraph wires were strung. The first thing Mother Duchesne turned to in the papers was the post office notice to see if mail was waiting for her. Loneliness was a theme of many of her letters and occasionally she noted that she hadn't written her family for months because she had

no money for postage. Sometimes letters were lost. In the 1830's Mother Barat wrote, asking her to return to France for a visit. That letter never reached Mother Duchesne.

"I feel that I am a worn-out instrument, a useless walking stick that is fit only to be hidden in a dark corner," she wrote in 1834. Fevers, years of enduring unheated rooms, minimal eating and sleepless nights spent praying were taking their toll.

She was nearly eighty when she initially retired from teaching. For a brief time she supervised boarders at City House. Then she learned that younger nuns were considering closing the Florissant school because of lack of staff so she took a horse cart to Florissant and went back into the classroom in order to keep the school going.

The joy of Mother Duchesne's old age was the year that she spent with the Indians. Twenty-three years after her arrival in St. Louis, she was preparing to help start a native American school in Sugar Creek, Kansas, but, because she was recovering from a long illness, her superior refused to allow her to risk her health.

"But she must come too. Why, if we have to carry her all the way on our shoulders, she is coming with us," said Reverend Peter John Verhaegen S. J., protesting to the younger superior in the City House parlor. Verhaegen himself led the mission to Sugar Creek.

So, on June 19, 1841, four nuns boarded the Missouri River packet, Emilie. In a letter to her brother, Mother Duchesne passed along a list of Potawatomi words that she had mastered in her preparation. She was not, however, fluent enough to teach, so she mended clothing, kept the mission registry, played with the children and stayed up nights nursing sick Indians.

"One really could not find better people than these," she wrote to her sister. "Charity is practiced among them as it was among the early Christians."

After a year her superior ordered her to return to the City House in St. Louis. Later, she went to St. Charles, where she spent the final ten years of her life, mending children's clothes and nursing children in the infirmary. She also gloried in having time to pray in the chapel. Mother Duchesne died November 18, 1852, as the chapel bells tolled noon. She was buried behind the convent, a few hundred yards from the shrine where her remains are entombed today.

Acknowledgements

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Education and Democracy in Frontier St. Louis: The Society of the Sacred Heart

Nikola Baumgarten.

When the Society of the Sacred Heart opened its convent in St. Louis in the spring of 1827, educational institutions in the city were scarce. With a burgeoning population of over 4,600, the town featured only a handful of Protestant pay-schools unable to satisfy the local demand. . . . Moreover, and typical of the frontier, these early St. Louis schools were often short-lived and unattractive to the city's large Catholic and French constituency. Many St. Louisans sent their children out of state or abroad for an education. More importantly, no school for the poor existed. In 1823 the new mayor of St. Louis had emphasized in his inaugural address that a free school was "more needed here than in any town of the same magnitude in the Union." But the first two public schools were not built until 1838, and even they were not entirely free . . . .

Thus, not only did the city need schools, but it required permanent ones that could satisfy the republic's quest for inclusive education. Regarding women, the Sacred Heart met that challenge directly. Its sisters intended to stay, and they addressed the needs of all the city's cultural and social groups. According to financial ability and taste, St. Louisans could enroll their daughters as full boarders in the *pensionnat*, or as half-boarders in the *demi-pensionnat* or day school, which together constituted the "academy." Children from less-affluent families attended the "free school," and at least twenty orphans were continually under the care of the sisters as well. Black girls were instructed on Sundays. The impact of all these schools was probably most

striking in the beginning, when they either presented the only educational opportunity for many local females, or supplemented a system that was clearly inadequate for the community. But even as the city and its educational infrastructure expanded, the Society's contribution remained significant. (pp. 172-73) **[312 words]**

By 1834, at least one-third of all boarders were Protestant, the proportion rising to over half in 1844, and to a full two-thirds in 1846. Even during the unprecedented surge in nativism in the 1850s, Protestants made up a formidable one-third to one-half of the incoming boarders. . . . While the boarding and day schools accommodated for the most part the relatively well-to-do families of St. Louis, the free school served the indigent poulation. Free education of the poor was firmly embedded in the Society's philosophy; indeed, the constitutions of the order called the instruction of the poor a "special privilege" and impressed on the sisters how, above all, disadvantaged children deserved the "most compassionte benevolence." (p. 175) **[119 words]**

[T]he Society made a conscious effort at social integration. Free school pupils took part in the graduation exercises and distribution of prizes with the academy and were eligible to join the much-coveted "Confraternity of the Sacred Heart."

The school made a striking difference. Prior to the Society's arrival neither public nor any other free schools existed in St. Louis; for a decade the Sacred Heart was the only institution offering an education to poor girls on a large scale. Despite the sisters' inconvenient location on the southern edge of town, the free school comprised thirty students in its first year, and sixty by the end of its second; in May 1832 it enjoyed an exceptional high of ninety-three pupils. Significantly, the foundation, with an average enrollment of sixty to eighty students, remained an

important aspect of Sacred Heart education throughout the antebellum period, that is until well after public schools were established in 1838. . . .

The Sunday school for black girls probably remained in place until a Missouri law prohibited the education of blacks. Upon its arrival in Missouri the Sacred Heart had intended to admit African Americans to its order, academy, and free school, but the bishop as well as Madeleine Sophie Barat, the Society's superior general in France, warned against jeopardizing success by tampering with local prejudice. Barat in particular scolded her superior in Missouri to "not be so foolish as to mix the whites with the blacks "lest she lose all her white students. Yet, even as the sisters instructed blacks separately, they broke the boundaries of prejudice. They were first in offering an education in St. Louis to those generally thought not worthy of one. The religious of the Sacred Heart were no egalitarians – as hired servants were scarce on the frontier, they had slaves – yet at the same time they helped the underprivileged and gave them tools with which they might better their situations.

Finally, the Society's orphanage, the first in St. Louis, continually educated and trained between twenty and thirty girls during the antebellum period. Again, these orphans were for the most part taught separately from the academy and free school. They were trained particularly in manual labor and assisted the convent with many of its daily chores, such as cleaning and knitting . . . . The sisters integrated them into the general life of the school as much as possible and treated them as well as they could. The orphan girls attended classes in the free school and participated together with all other students in the annual parish processions held on convent grounds between 1828 and 1834. Likewise, at the closing exercises of the academy in the summer of 1830, "they took their places at the Prizes, dressed just like the pupils of the boarding school, recited poetry, and received rewards, just as the other children did."

The Sisters of the Sacred Heart thus made a major contribution to the Republican ideal of universal schooling in St. Louis. The work of the order spanned the complete range of the city's population: blacks and whites, Protestants and Catholics, English and French speakers, rich and poor. For nearly a decade the sisters offered the only educational opportunities for black, orphaned, and poor girls. The numbers, when added up, were impressive as well. In the summer of 1828, the five "schools" of the Society included over one hundred girls and young women; in May 1832 attendance was close to 150, and by 1839, the combined enrollment of the *pensionnat* [academy], day school, free school, the Sunday school for blacks, and the orphanage well exceeded 200. This was a significant size, given that St. Louis's white student population totaled about 1,000 in that year. (pp. 176-77) **[626 words]**

By furthering the democratic goals of universal education carved out for the country by its founders, the sisters proved that as Catholics they too could be democrats, thus challenging the nineteenth-century notion that Catholicism and Republicanism were incompatible. While a few pay-schools already existed in the city when the order arrived in 1827, the Sacred Heart was the first local institution to bring educational opportunity to poor, orphaned, and black girls.

The Sacred Heart's all-encompassing educational effort came at initial great sacrifice. Poverty and a shortage of teachers severely taxed the strength and determination of the sisters during the founding years. The lack of instructors forced grueling working hours on these women, leaving little time for rest even during sickness. For those who came from France, moreover (which were the majority in the beginning), the pain of transition to an entirely foreign culture was added; the English language had to be mastered and the ways of the country learned. The worldliness of Americans in particular required special patience and adjustment, with the

Sacred Heart maneuvering carefully between its theological calling and the reluctance of Protestant patrons. While no outright attempts at conversion were to be made, the sisters trusted they could influence their pupils by merely exposing them to the religiously charged atmosphere of the convent. In the end, the cultural tension between the French sisters and their American clients illustrated the great achievement of the Sacred Heart. The institution succeeded in attracting St. Louisans of all ethnic and religious walks despite the odds. Evidently, the Sacred Heart offered something that other schools in St. Louis could not provide to the same degree: a high academic quality and educational values that realized perfectly the American ideal of womanhood.

The separation of the various schools and groups of children according to economic class and race may seem objectionable. That practice perpetuated the social stratification of the larger society and did little to shake up social boundaries, something a truly democratic educational system should have attained or at least aspired to. Yet the prejudices of the day unequivocally militated against such an attempt. When the option was to teach blacks, the poor, and orphans separately or not include them at all, the former was the more virtuous choice. Besides, various girls were admitted to the academy gratis. As it was, the Sacred Heart pushed the limits of universal education by defying local prejudices and reaching out to every segment of the community, including those generally neglected or discriminated against and not considered deserving of an equal chance. The sisters' leading motivation – the hope to gain converts by means of teaching, and to deepen the religious commitment of Catholics – did not lessen that accomplishment. (pp. 191-92) **[888 words]**

Nikola Baumgarten is lecturer at Selwyn College, Cambridge University.
The essay from which these passages are excerpted received the Henry Barnard Prize in 1993.

[362 words]

Philippine Duchesne
What Is She Saying to Us?

Louise Callan, RSCJ

Philippine Duchesne was a woman of the frontier in the full sense of that term. She could match experiences with any of the pioneer women of history or fiction. In her first decade in America she suffered practically every hardship the frontier offered, except the threat of Indian massacre – poor lodging, keen shortages of food, drinking water, fuel, money, and the loneliness of remote places and a foreign tongue. She saw forest fires at close range and knew the terror of blazing chimneys and dry roof-beams licked with flames. She endured cramped quarters and the privation of all privacy, the vagaries of the Missouri climate, and the crude manners of children reared in rough surroundings and without the slightest training in courtesy. Yet these same children often brought her the best gifts they could offer – wild berries, nuts, honey, fresh eggs, a side of bacon, a pat of butter, a block of home-made soap, a haunch of venison. And Mother Duchesne poured out on them all the treasures of her mind and heart, longing to draw them to know and love the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The last decade of her life was spent at St. Charles. Old, feeble, in poor health – but always busy with work and prayer, sewing for the missions, making altar linens and vestments for mission churches.

Mother Duchesne bore the burden and responsibility of the Society's first missionary venture for twenty-two years, and her position as Superior was one of her hardest trials. It seemed to give her claim in her own eyes to the hardest work, the worst accommodations, the poorest clothes, the most meager nourishment, and the longest hours of prayer – for under the pressure of work and pain, loneliness and failure, she turned always to converse with God. The night hours were ever her favorite time for prayer, when she strengthened her spirit by

deep draughts of the Divine. Those who are now reaping the harvest she sowed know the tremendous power of her inspiration. Her spirit dwells at St. Charles, where she spent the last decade of her holy life in ever deepening seclusion.

Louise Callan, RSCJ, attended Clifton (Cincinnati) and was on the faculty of Maryville; she wrote the official biography of Philippine Duchesne. She died in 1966.

Our Early Mothers

Suzanne Cooke, RSCJ

Our perceptions of Madeleine Sophie Barat are limited by our making her a saint, that is, someone we think of as distant, "holy," and unreal. The fact is that she was a real person who lived in real times. She struggled as do we.

Born in 1779, she died in 1865. The historians might well imagine that her life was marked by war and revolution. Madeleine Sophie Barat lived in the era of the French Revolution, the Revolutions of 1830 and 1848. She witnessed the first Opium War and saw the United States blow itself apart in Civil War. In her lifetime, she knew such inventions as the steam engine and the telegraph. Think of the implications!

At the hands of her brother, Sophie received a rigorous education, steeped in the classics of literature, the Fathers of the Church, the wonders of mathematics and science, as well as languages and scripture. Given her own innate spirituality, she developed the habit and discipline of regular prayer. She came to trust her intuitive sense of the Spirit dwelling within her. During her lifetime as Superior General, Madeleine Sophie opened 111 houses. She saw eight closed as a result of war and revolution; two shut down by unfriendly governments, and one break away from the Society. She wrote more than 14,000 letters. She encouraged the Society to move beyond the borders of Europe, in spite of confusing times, to places such as Missouri, Louisiana, Canada, Algiers, Chile, and Cuba. She was a real person whose life has something to say to us.

Reading her letters and hearing various descriptions of St. Madeleine Sophie, one senses that when she gave herself to God, she gave herself to God's people totally and completely. Really, one cannot explain her courage and confidence, her willingness to

act, her tenacity in the face of incredible challenge without understanding her relationship with Jesus Christ. What drew her to believe, to act, and to love is the compelling power of Jesus' person. He was real to her, just as real to her as the person whom anyone most loves.

Madeleine Sophie experienced that it is the person of Jesus, his fidelity and constant love, that transforms us if we trust and have confidence in Him. She knew Jesus loved her and she loved Him simply and straightforwardly. Their communion was the real power of love. As Maud Monahan, RSCJ, says in her biography of St. Madeleine Sophie:

"The thought of Jesus Christ took so strong a hold upon Madeleine Sophie's heart, His image and love were so deeply a reality in her soul that her all absorbing work never separated her from her God. One cannot overestimate the power that emanated from the mutual love relationship of Madeleine Sophie Barat and Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was her ideal and she loved him with a vehement, great soul love."

This relationship with Jesus Christ is the central context in which Madeleine Sophie received and developed her vision of education. She acted with courage and confidence because she saw herself as God did. She did not place upon herself the self-limitations that we so often do on ourselves. Knowing that centrality of Madeleine Sophie's relationship with Jesus Christ is very important because it explains why Sacred Heart education is inherently relational. She believed that in and through the act of teaching one experiences being loved by God and loving God in return. The spirituality of Sacred Heart education is incarnational, that is to say, at the heart of our work we recognize that Jesus is present in the students and in us. To engage in teaching and

learning in our school culture means to touch the face of God, and, more important, it means to reveal God's face to others. Ours is a sacred imperative to educate the whole child, and through the dynamic of this education we and they come to experience knowing, being loved by, and loving God.

I believe that the culture and mission of Sacred Heart schools has also been influenced by the insights and vision of Madeleine Sophie's early companions, whom I describe as our early mothers. The dynamic between these women and Mother Barat, coupled with each one's own relationship with Jesus Christ, affected the development of Sacred Heart education. So, too, the dynamic among them, within the early Society of the Sacred Heart, has influenced both the mission and the culture of Sacred Heart schools today.

Philippine Duchesne

In speaking about the early mothers, we naturally begin with Philippine Duchesne. Again, we have lost some of the wonder of Philippine because we have distanced her. We have emphasized her austerity and seriousness. And, indeed, she was serious; yet, like Madeleine Sophie, Philippine was a real person with real hopes and desires. She, too, had received the education of a young man by being educated with her brothers and cousins. Critical thinking developed by a rigorous curriculum, coupled with faith formation, were crucial to Philippine's own education. Unlike Madeleine Sophie, who had not known a religious until she became one, Philippine had been a novice in the Visitation Convent before the French Revolution. As a result, she had definitive notions about the style of religious life. As she came to know Madeleine Sophie and learn from her a new way to live as a religious, Philippine found that she had to sacrifice some of

what she had initially perceived to be so significant. She came to see that living the life of a religious on the frontier called for different experiences from the life lived as a religious in pre-Revolutionary France. If you want to know what her life really was like, read the journals of pioneer women and then think of Philippine. In the face of these graphic descriptions of life on the frontier, we can begin to imagine the power of her relationship with Jesus Christ and the vision of education that flowed from it.

Eugénie Audé

Another early mother of whom we must speak is Eugénie Audé. To her, we owe part of our spiritual inheritance. Raised to be a member of Napoleon's court, Eugénie Audé was a diplomat, a politician, and a linguist. Compelled by her image of Jesus Christ, she came to reject the life of the court in favor of a life devoted to understanding her relationship with Jesus Christ and his people. Once she met Madeleine Sophie Barat, Eugénie Audé decided that whatever the future held, membership to this fledgling group of women held the key. Intelligent, well-educated, she valued critical thinking and lively faith. Chosen by Mother Barat to accompany Philippine to America, Eugénie Audé was to found Grand Coteau and St. Michael's in Louisiana. Her dealings with the plantation owners and their daughters forced her to think and re-think the essentials of education at the Sacred Heart.

Aloysia Hardey

Then consider Mother Aloysia Hardey. While Philippine brought Sacred Heart education from France to America, it was Mother Hardey who saw that it move from the South to the Northeast and later to Canada and Cuba and beyond. Mother Hardey proved to be the ideal New York politician. Greatly admired by Archbishop Hughes, she

contributed to the building of Catholic New York at a time of persecution, suffering, expansion and confusion. Madeleine Sophie's confidence in her young American daughter led to such requests as to ask this Southerner to travel incognito across enemy lines during the Civil War to bring consolation and money to the houses in Missouri.

Like the focus of the other early mothers, Mother Hardey's was constant – *God and children.* It was her critical and imaginative thinking, coupled with her strong faith in Jesus Christ, that enabled Mother Hardey to act with such courage and confidence.

All of the early mothers believed passionately in the importance of educating girls and young women. They shared the conviction we have today, that the quality of the future will be significantly influenced by people who are well-educated, who think critically, who act with courage and compassion, and whose faith is informed and lively. Such people secure the future because they radiate hope. Given our early mothers' moment in history, their perception of women's role was more conventional than is held today. Nonetheless, most would agree with them that girls and women attend to the quality of their relationships and, in this act, hold a significant role for the building of a just society.

The mission of Sacred Heart education has been, and continues to be, to educate to an informed, active faith, critical thinking, and service to others. The aim has been constant: ensure that students gain self-knowledge, energy and purpose so that they may become people of conviction and compassion. Like St. Madeleine Sophie, we know that self-esteem must be nurtured in individuals if they are to develop into thoughtful, compassionate people. Sacred Heart education is about both the soul and the intellect. Our education of the whole child intends to address both the heart and the mind. We

enable young people to become successful because they come to know who they are and how their God loves them. Our students' future success evolves from their conviction to treat others with dignity and respect because each person is known and valued by God. To educate the whole child for us means to form conscience and develop faith-filled hearts.

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Janet Erskine Stuart, Educator *Par Excellence*

Janet Reberdy, RSCJ

She was a woman of complexity – seemingly simple and yet quite simply profound. She was a shy, retiring person who had a telling impact on individuals in her own community and on the youth of more than a dozen nations. She was a semi-cloistered nun who traveled continents in a pre-World War I ambiance in which "ladies" seldom did such things. She was a traditionalist who, at the same time, looked to the future and became an innovator and a seminally productive thinker for her own and later generations.

Her focus in education was, like that of Madeleine Sophie Barat, the foundress of the Religious of the Sacred Heart, on the development of the whole person. This focus, evident again in our times, had been an integral part of Janet Stuart's thinking three quarters of a century ago. It had – and has – five basic foundational points: a personal and active faith in God, a deep respect for intellectual values, a social awareness which impels to action, the building of community as a Christian value, and personal growth in an atmosphere of wise freedom. You will hear these fundamental concepts underlying all that Janet Stuart has written.

But who was she, and from whence sprung? She was born in November of 1857 in Cottesmore, County Rutland, England, a highly unlikely individual to become a Religious of the Sacred Heart. Her family traced its descent from Walter, High Steward of Scotland, in the reign of King David I, 1177. Also figuring in her genealogy were the thanes of Lochabar and the Banquo of Macbeth. After a succession of Lords of Avondale and Lairds of Ochiltree on the family tree, men regularly in and out of the royal favor, the baronetcy of Castle Stuart was raised in the nineteenth century to an Earldom. Robert, the second Earl, had three sons, of whom the youngest was Andrew, the Rector of Cottesmore and a priest of the Church of England. Andrew

had married twice and had thirteen children in all, eight by his first marriage and five by the second. Janet, the youngest child of the second marriage, became motherless before the age of three.

As a child, she was very intelligent, thoughtful, shy, daring, precocious. She tells us, "I remember thinking seriously on the subject of death at three years old. My brother Douglas, aged six, who was my great resource for theological questions, had explained to me what death meant, and had exhorted me to prepare for it." She tells us that she neither liked the prospect nor considered it inevitable. If Enoch and Elias had escaped it, so would she. Another question roused her mind: Who made you and why? She had learnt Bible stories and was quite taken by the one about the raising of Lazarus and the suggestion that miracles could be wrought through faith and prayer. The six-year-old ran to the graveyard next to her home where her mother already lay. "Mama, come forth," she cried, nothing doubting. As one biographer wrote, "The quiet solitude remained unbroken but something else, vital and intact still in its fragile sensitivity, received its first flaw." As she said herself later, "The disappointment was very great, and left a seed of doubt in my mind that bore fruit later." She had begun her intense and painful spiritual journey.

Now shift the scene to a comfortable rectory in Rutlandshire, where a brother and sister are discoursing in a schoolroom. Douglas breaks the silence: "Janet, Aristotle says every rational being must have an *end*. What is yours?" Janet faces the question; she does not know the answer. Neither does he. From now on begins the journey of a deeply sincere human being in quest of a reason for her existence. As a young woman of twenty-one, she wrote, "I reached a point that was more agnosticism than anything else."

And then another blow fell. Her beloved eldest half-sister, Dody, who had been a second mother to her and set her searching for the meaning of life, died. To break the shock of this

death, Janet went visiting in London where she came into contact with a Jesuit, Father Gallwey, who makes a telling comment about her: "She is sure to come right because she does not come back to the same point once it has been answered." He was right, but there remained the painful task of convincing those nearest to her that she just "follow the gleam." She felt it would lead her from her father's faith and his rectory. It was not easy. There was controversial reading and discussion, a sojourn at Cromer, "full of Quakers," she writes "and no priest nearer than Norwich; an interview with Mr. Gladstone himself, who warned her against the "grave sin of moral suicide." Nevertheless, she had caught a gleam, and on March 6, 1879, she was received into the Catholic Church. Goodbye to home, a much loved father, sisters, brothers. What passed between father and daughter no one ever knew, except for a few words penetrating the emotional ambiance. She said simply, "There was no anger, only cruel sorrow."

There was a slightly longer than three-year interval between her leaving home and moving to London. There were three stages in her movement outward: a tour through Europe in 1880; a time of heightened awareness of social problems around her (as we would term it today, a "social awareness that impels to action"), during which time she taught Sunday School and did what we would call today "tenant advocacy" for the local farmers in counties bordering London; thirdly, there was the moment of light which was to show her the direction for her future. She writes:

> One day, it was May 6, 1882, when I was walking through Regent's Park to the Helpers of the Holy Souls, I was thinking of religious life and saying to Almighty God, "O my God, I should like it very much, but You see it is impossible to think of it," and then and there standing by a bed of blue hyacinths *factum est ad me verbum Dei,* and I saw it all.

Father Gallwey suggested that she spend eight days in prayer and reflection at Roehampton, the central foundation of the Society of the Sacred Heart in London. There she

could learn of the ethos and work of this congregation. While she was there, Father Gallwey had written to the nuns that "If Miss Stuart should offer herself for the Society, she should not be refused. She is the most complete person I have ever known." She entered the noviceship on September 16, 1882. Not many years later, she became the Mistress of Novices at Roehampton and, in 1911, Superior General of the Society of the Sacred Heart. During her three years at the Generalate, she traveled to Ireland, Scotland, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Sicily, Malta, Austria, Spain, Egypt, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, North and South America, meanwhile writing The Education of Catholic Girls, a volume of essays, a book of poetry, and an account entitled The Society of the Sacred Heart.

From this point on, I shall largely allow Mother Stuart to speak for herself as I draw from the foregoing works. To the forefront always is her insight into the basis of Sacred Heart educational philosophy and its focus on the education of the WHOLE person. Five areas chiefly concerned her: 1. character formation; 2. methods of preparing the soil to enable students to become WHOLE persons; 3. training for greatness; 4. inculcating the awareness and love of sincerity as a means of training character; and, finally, 5. the role of the teacher, as a person, in the educational process. Hear her:

On Character: The word *character* signifies a distinctive mark, cut, engraved, or stamped upon a substance; and, by analogy, this is likewise character in the sense in which it concerns education. "Man of character" is one in whom acquired qualities, orderly, and consistent, stand out on a background of natural temperament, as a result of training and especially of self-discipline, and therefore stamped or engraved upon something which was prepared for them... The sum of acquired habits tells upon the temperament, and, together with it, produce or establish character... If habits are not acquired by training, and instead of them temperament alone has been allowed to have its way in the years of growth... the result is want of character or a weak character without distinctive mark, showing

itself in the various situations of life inconsistent, variable, unequal to strain, acting on the impulse, good or bad, of the moment; its fitful strength in moods of obstinacy or self-will showing that it lacks the higher qualities of discernment and self-control... Character, then, may stand for the sum of the qualities which go to make one be *thus*, and not otherwise; but the basis which underlies and constantly reasserts itself is temperament.

On Methods of Preparing the Soil: Those who take up the training of the young have usually to learn by their own experience and study what is given to very few as a natural endowment – the art of so managing the wills of children that without provoking resistance, they may be led by degrees to self-control and become a law to themselves. It must be recognized from the beginning that the work is slow; if it is forced on too fast either a breaking point comes and the child, too much teased into perfection, turns in reaction and becomes self-willed and rebellious; or if, unhappily, the forcing process succeeds, a little paragon is produced.

On the other hand, if those who have to bring up children fear too much to cross their inclinations and so seek always a line of least resistance, teaching lessons in play, and smoothing over every rough place in the road, the result is a weak, slack will, a mind without power of concentration, and in later life very little resourcefulness in emergency, or power of bearing up under difficulties or privations. We are at present more inclined to produce these soft characters than to develop paragons…

Training for Greatness: We must kindle in the minds of children the ambition to do something more, whether it be in literature, art, science, or work for others; they must give themselves to the great Cause, by self-sacrifice to be in some sort initiated into its spirit, and identified with it, and thus to make it worth while for others as well as for themselves that they have lived their life on earth. There is a price to be paid for this, and they must face it; a good life cannot be a soft life, and a great deal, even of innocent pleasure, has to be given up, voluntarily, to make life worth living, if it were only as a training in *doing without*.

Independence is a primary need for character, and independence can only be learnt by doing without pleasant things, even unnecessarily. Simplicity of life is an essential for greatness of life, and the very meaning of the simple life is the laying aside of many things which tend to grow by habit into necessities. The habit of work is another necessity in any life worth living, and this is only learnt by refraining again and again from what is pleasant for the sake of what is precious. Patience and thoroughness are requirements whose worth and value never come home to the average mind until they are seen in startling excellence…

The value of time is another necessary lesson of the better life, a hard lesson, but one which makes an incalculable difference between the expert and the untried…

We are apt to be always in a hurry now, … but not many really know how to use time to the full. Our tendency is to alternate periods of extreme activity with intervals of complete prostration for recovery.

(And this in 1910!)

On Sincerity: One more lesson must be mentioned, the hardest of all to be learnt – perfect sincerity. It is so hard not to pose, for all but the very truest and simplest natures – to pose as independent while being eaten up with human respect; to pose as indifferent though aching with the wish to be understood; to pose as flippant while longing to be in earnest; to hide an attraction to higher things under a little air of something like irreverence… It is very hard to learn to be quite true; that entails more personal self-sacrifice than almost any other virtue.

On the Role of the Teacher (and also Parents and Friends) in the Work of the Educational Process: What do we want to bring up? Not good nonentities, who are only good because they are not bad. There are too many of them already, no trouble to anyone, only disappointing, so good that they ought to be so much better, if only they would. But who can make them be more?… Those who have to educate them to something higher must themselves have an idea of what they want; they must believe in the possibility of every mind and character to be lifted up to something better than it has already attained; they must themselves be striving for some higher excellence, and must believe and care deeply for the things they teach. For no one can be educated by maxim and precept; it is the life lived, and the things loved and the ideals believed in, by which we tell, one upon another. If we care for energy we call it out; if we believe in possibilities of development we almost seem to create them. If we want integrity of character, steadiness, reliability, courage, thoroughness, all the harder qualities that serve as backbone, we, at least, make others want them by the power of example that is not set as deliberate good example, for that is as tame as precept; but the example of the life that is lived, and the truths that are honestly believed in.

It is clear that in these few excerpts from a masterful work, Janet Stuart has enunciated the same principles encoded in our present day Goals and Criteria of Sacred Heart education. The language is different, the content is the same: a focus on the development of the WHOLE person (mind, heart, spirit, character) through the nourishing of a relevant faith; respect for the things of the mind in every field; social awareness of the needs of the world in which we live; the building of community in the speedily emerging "global village"; and personal growth in an atmosphere of wise freedom. Janet Stuart probed deeply into the nature of personhood based on that seminal question which occurred to her in early childhood: What is life for? It is a question which never left her mind, and she based her philosophy of education, hers and ours, on her

insights into what it means to be human, what it means to be a fully developed human, what it means to live life really and truly.

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Rosalie Hill, RSCJ
Culture and the Kingdom

Helen McHugh, RSCJ

The Articles of Incorporation for the San Diego College for Women were granted by the state of California on October 20, 1949, and the Charter issued on December 2, 1949. Many may recall two pictures that hang in the foyer of Founders Hall there: a black and white photograph of Reverend Mother Hill in the habit of the Religious of the Sacred Heart. She is smiling, her eyes gazing out at the viewer with intelligence and kindness. On the opposite wall is a portrait of the first Bishop of San Diego, Most Reverend Charles Francis Buddy, robed in scarlet *cappa magna,* reading his breviary. These were the founders: Mother Hill, who designed the first unit of the university complex at Alcala Park, San Diego College for Women; and Bishop Buddy, who issued the invitation to Mother Hill, to come to San Diego, and gave the property so that in the motto of the San Diego College for Women, "All Might Be One."

Rosalie Clifton Hill was born in Washington, D. C. on March 13, 1878, into a family whose 17th century forebears were seeking religious freedom, denied them in England, and who came to the free state of Maryland.

She was educated in a private school in Washington, D. C. The students followed classes according to their interests which, fortunately for Rosalie, were substantial. In September, 1896, she went to the Convent of the Sacred Heart near Montreal, Sault au Recollet, and did not like it, writing to her mother that she and her sister were coming home. Her mother's directive was clear: "You stay." Gradually, she was won over, and when she left Montreal she was already thinking of entering the Society of the Sacred Heart. She entered the novitiate at Kenwood, Albany, New York, in the autumn of 1899 when she was 21 years old.

She made her final vows of profession in France. After her return to the United States,

there followed years of teaching at several Convents of the Sacred Heart and a few years at Manhattanville, charged with the Sisters' infirmary. One of the Sisters at this time, Rose Coyne, was cured of a fatal illness by prayers offered through the intercession of the foundress of the Society, Madeleine Sophie Barat. Facts in the case had to be examined in Rome; and Mother Hill, as infirmarian, had to accompany the *miraculée* to Rome. On her return to New York, she was named superior of Maplehurst in 1921. In 1927, she was made superior of Overbrook in Philadelphia and inherited a building program begun by Mother Grace Dammann, who was later to become president of Manhattanville College. With the generosity of two friends, Mrs. Nicholas Brady and Mrs. John Ryan, Mother Hill was able to complete the construction of the Overbrook chapel, a fine example of Tudor Gothic, faithfully carrying out the elegant beauty of the original handsome building.

It was while she was at Overbrook that Mother Hill learned that she was to be Superior Vicar of the western houses of the Society of the Sacred Heart. Under her guidance were placed the communities of Lake Forest and Chicago, Omaha, St. Joseph in Missouri, Seattle, San Francisco, and Menlo Park. Four of these houses had introduced work at the college level: Barat College in Lake Forest, Duchesne in Omaha, Forest Ridge in Seattle, and Menlo Park near San Francisco. At the request of the Archbishop of San Francisco, Mother Guerin, the Assistant General, had been asked to transfer the college at Menlo Park to San Francisco. There were difficult decisions to make for all the houses for which Mother Hill was responsible. Enrollment in most of the schools was low, and the worsening economic state of the country during the Great Depression gave cause for concern for the future. While she was at Menlo Park and before the announcement that she had been named Vicar, Mother Hill learned of the negotiations already under discussion between the Archbishop of San Francisco and Mother Guerin

concerning the transfer of the college at Menlo Park to San Francisco. The site for the college still had to be determined; and Mother Hill, after touring the city, urgently pressed for Lone Mountain, owned by the Diocese, a choice piece of property in the western part of San Francisco, with a magnificent view of the Golden Gate and of the city. After lengthy discussions and urgent appeals, the Archbishop approved the request and sold the property "far below its original value."

After the visit of the houses was concluded, Mother Hill came to Chicago and remained there seven years. One of the members of the Sheridan Road community wrote at this time, "We surely can appreciate the courage Mother Hill had . . . the debt on the house was great, there were all sorts of defects in the building, but by the next summer everything was in order." It was she who first considered the possibility of opening a boys' school at Sheridan Road. When Mother Hill went to Rome in the spring of 1935, she received approval for separate quarters for the Hardey School for Boys, "They came, the first band of eight little boys, five years old, all obedient and docile." Early accounts take note of the school corridors and meeting rooms which had been "decorated with artistic reproductions of the works of the great masters of western art, pious and secular, for viewing them was an education for the students." This was a note that Mother Hill was to sound often and a principle that she was to act on and encourage others to follow.

From Chicago she had directed negotiations concerning the building of the college in San Francisco, working through Mother Guerin and Mother Lenore Mejia, the first president of the San Francisco College for Women. It is not clear what part Mother Hill took in the actual design of the building. The style of architecture chosen was "modified Spanish Gothic." The building was "to fit its location with a general mass of broad base and an impressive tower surmounted by

the cross." The architect's notes listed such features as the "vaulted entrance lobby and the main corridors with vaulted ceilings." In a letter to Mother Guerin, Mother Hill had sent specifications for the architect--all of them exacting, practical, and artistic.

She was in San Francisco for the dedication of the building on January 22, 1933. She transferred the center of the Vicariate to San Francisco in the summer of 1936. Negotiations, following a landslide on the western slopes of Lone Mountain, required consultations and frequent meetings. The following year, Bishop Buddy, newly appointed Bishop of San Diego, called on Mother Hill and said, "Some day, I will ask the Religious of the Sacred Heart to come to San Diego to help me with the work of education."

The Bishop knew of and admired Mother Hill's efforts to provide qualified teachers for the four colleges in her Vicariate. He knew that she had written to her superiors in Rome and had stated the case clearly for the need to send her nuns to fully accredited universities. The only Catholic university recognized by accrediting agencies in 1937 was the Catholic University of America. She had enlisted the help of professors who directed and advised those who followed graduate programs at their respective universities. This enlightened action made her a pioneer in the field of Catholic higher education for women.

Several letters from Bishop Buddy told of the difficulties he was encountering in finding suitable property in San Diego. Mother Hill wrote to him in October of 1942, referring to "the development of your plans for us" and thought that he would be pleased to learn that "most of the vestments and sacred vessels for the chapel of SDCW have already been obtained and that we have catalogued, accessioned and boxed 1350 books for the library."

The search went on for a site. At one point, the Bishop offered the nuns a house in Old Town which the seminarians had been occupying. From a small convent at 2610 San Diego

Avenue, large plans began to take shape. Mother Hill was convinced that the architecture of the college should reflect something of the history of California and its links with the Old World, which the missionaries left to bring the Gospel to the New World. When she was in Rome for the first General Council to meet after World War II, she wrote to the Bishop that she was doing some research on a Spanish style of architecture, the "Plateresque style," an adaptation of the Spanish Renaissance style. Usefulness and efficiency were priorities, but she saw no reason why they should eclipse beauty, for it was no more expensive to build something beautiful than something ugly. What was required, she thought, was to have an overall plan, choosing the right details and harmonizing them.

The Society of the Sacred Heart agreed not only to provide the faculty but also to finance the construction, furnishings, and initial equipment of a $4,000,000 enterprise. Mother Hill secured permission from her superiors in Rome to borrow the necessary funds, and when she was asked by visiting bankers who were negotiating the loan what her security would be, she answered, "My word."

Work finally began on SDCW at Alcala Park in December, 1949; the first unit to arise was Founders Hall. The House Journal provides a glimpse of the work in progress. Mother de Léon and Mother Hill went frequently to the site; a workman was installing the large carved front doors and Mother Hill told him how to place them. He looked at her and said, "Lady, you must expect these doors to last 100 years." She answered, "My good man, I expect them to last 300 years."

Mother Hill believed strongly in the power of beauty to attract the mind and heart to God, the Source of all beauty. In a talk which she gave to the alumnae of the Sacred Heart in Chicago in 1939, she pointed out that Christian educators had carried on the mission of communicating

God's truth, goodness and beauty for centuries, and she saw the work of the Schools of the Sacred Heart following in that tradition:

> *The Creator has given human beings three spiritual faculties: memory, understanding, and will. To perfect these is the work of all education from without and of all training from within…Because human development is such an important undertaking, God has provided both natural and supernatural gifts…Besides others which have come to us through His bounty, Hope is for the memory, Truth and Faith for the intellect, Goodness and Love for the will…It is the solemn duty of the Catholic educator to work with the Creator to develop all the powers of the mind and heart. In all ages, the Church has given to her children the inexhaustible treasures of Beauty… in the catacombs, beauty traced in altars, arches and symbols, lines of simple dignity and loveliness. Down through the ages she gave to her children beauty of art in all its forms – architecture, sculpture, painting, stained glass; literature, music, ceremonial, ritual; she has her cathedrals and schools…*
>
> *After the turmoil of the 16th century when the churches seemed to part ways, there was a desire to return to earlier traditions, and the Church began to build anew throughout the world her churches and her schools, colleges and universities. In later decades, she seeks to build in beauty. Guided by her and following the example of St. Madeleine Sophie, we are striving to add beauty to our schools…We must remember that material beauty begins with an appeal to the senses but must end with an appeal to the spirit.*
>
> *In the stately halls of learning is Beauty being given to the students; in religion and philosophy is God, Infinite Beauty, reverently studied? In history is the beauty of His*

providence traced – showing the students that God is able to draw good from evil, though man may draw evil and mar the good – that in the end He will reign triumphantly and 'that of His Kingdom there shall be no end.' In science is the beauty of His laws explained? In art the beauty of his work revealed? Unless this is true, the memory of the student is not enriched by beauty, and the first end of education is not attained. St. Augustine, after having studied all the errors of his day, and tasted all the pleasures of this world, could only cry out in sorrow, 'O Beauty ever ancient, ever new, too late have I known Thee, too late have I loved Thee.'"

This thinking surely explains why in all the houses which Mother Hill governed she planned that the students be surrounded by traces of the beautiful. Benefactors from east to west had been generous over the years and had donated artistic works and handsome furnishings to the schools and, with gift money received, she bought other carefully selected items. In this way she was happy to provide a beautiful environment for the students. "Beauty will attract them," she said, "but truth will hold them."

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Grace Dammann, RSCJ
Principles versus Prejudices

Margaret Phelan, RSCJ

Grace Cowardin Dammann was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on July 9, 1872, the eldest of six children of Francis Dammann and Eileen Cowardin. She was educated at the Visitation Convent in Georgetown and was instrumental with Mary Merrick, a girlhood friend, in the beginnings of the Holy Childhood Association. In 1898 she entered the Society of the Sacred Heart in Albany, New York, where she also made her final profession in 1906.

A teacher and administrator in the schools of the Religious of the Sacred Heart in Albany, New York City, Philadelphia, and London, England, she was named superior and finally president of Manhattanville College in New York in 1930. Mother Dammann was a recognized leader in educational circles and a fearless champion of racial equality.

In 1933, the Manhattanville student body adopted the Manhattanville Resolution, eight resolutions embodying the principles of Catholic social justice toward African Americans. In 1938, Mother Dammann accepted the first African American student at Manhattanville. She explained this decision in the address "Principles vs. Prejudice," excerpted as follows:

Your education at the Sacred Heart was planned to develop in you that sense of the value of truth and that spirit of sacrifice which will 'do the truth,' cost what it may. We gave you as broad a secondary education as it is possible to give children of school age. In your study of history we tried to show you the variety in unity of the human race. In the broad sweep of historical movements, we tried to open vistas to you and show you the Church in her divine Mission in the world. We attempted to develop in you a sense of proportion and justice in evaluating times and peoples other than our own, a realization of the working out of God's laws through human instruments and a certain largeness and impartiality of view which history rightly approached should develop even in the young.

In teaching you literature we gave you as far as might be an appreciation of man's thoughts and feelings greatly expressed, which is the essence of real literature. Newman has said that literature is the autobiography of man. You were urged to find in it the history of man's mind as a whole and the record of man's feelings and aspirations. Such a study should develop sympathy--'homo sum et nihil alienum mihi est.' In this way

we sought to break down that narrowness which develops prejudices.

Moreover, even in your adolescent years you were given in an elementary way certain foundation principles of philosophy in order to combat superficiality. We tried to train you to look for causes, to ask, as far as you were able, questions which get to the bottom of things: 'What is man?' 'Why is man?' 'Where is man tending?' 'What binds him to God?' 'What binds him to his fellow-men?'

When you came to college, this same type of education was carried out on the adult level. Your minds, better able to grasp and apply principles, were led to the deeper and wider study of them, and we dare to hope that by your study of philosophy and religion you unified all else that you learned. We hope, too, that from your studies you derived a real culture. It has been described as, 'above everything love of beauty and truth, thoroughness, modesty, hate of bombast and hollow rhetoric; realism, accuracy and command of detail without, however, losing sight of the whole.' Throughout your education as children of the Sacred Heart we sought for you 'the development of judgment, of clear-sightedness, of sagacity, of wisdom, of philosophical reach of mind, of intellection self-possession and repose of mind.' We strove to develop in you, the power to think and to reason and to compare and to discriminate and to analyze. You have a right to these things, and if you have not got them, at least in some degree, then you are not really 'Sacred Heart women,' and our education has failed in you.

For some years we have known that the racial problem in Catholic education would have to be met by us not in theory only but in practice, and we have been educating our students in the principles by which it should be met. This spring for the first time a young colored girl who fulfills all the requirements applied for admission to

the Freshman class of next September.

Knowing that the decision to accept her, no matter how just and consistent, would rouse some opposition, we put the question before the Trustees. They saw it as a duty to be fulfilled and as an opportunity to 'do the truth in charity.' We made our decision on the general principle of the sacredness of human personality from which so many others flow underlying all that we considered.

It is the duty of Catholic colleges to advance Catholic Action under the guidance of the Bishops by training a Catholic intelligentsia, in the good meaning of this term. By helping the lawfully ambitious Catholic members of the Negro group to get such a training, we and other Catholic colleges will prepare them to resist those subversive influences which are working to win them over to Communistic and atheistic doctrines and activities. Even the mere instinct of self-preservation would dictate this. The call of the Holy Father gives us a nobler and more inspiring motive.

Many have said and some have written: 'St. Madeleine Sophie founded the Society for the upper classes.' This objection is not to the point, since the Negro group as well as the white has 'upper classes' based on refinement and education. However, St. Madeleine Sophie founded the Society to save souls! But she was practical and she accepted the structure of society as it prevailed when Father Varin saw the needs of the 'upper classes.' Peasant-born as she was, she taught the children of the nobility, since they needed her services, not for their 'social prestige' but for their salvation. But being a realist when she sent Venerable Philippine Duchesne to this country, she met the needs here.

In 1818, the United States was a pioneer world to which men of all ranks in the

old world had come to make a fresh start. When the Society made its beginnings in a little log cabin in St. Charles, there were no countesses or duchesses or princesses here to be taught. Our Mothers educated the children of the pioneers who represented all classes of European countries from which they had come. These men by force of character and mental ability forged ahead in this new world which offered them so many opportunities. Their children and grandchildren to the fourth generation have profited by all that their hard work procured.

The American spirit has always recognized the value of the inherent aristocracy of character and intelligence and has had a democratic distrust of class distinctions based upon anything else. Happily we now see in the most educated and cultured groups in this country a wholesome reaction towards this right sort of democracy, a breaking down of unreal and artificial distinctions in 'society,' a willingness to face the changed conditions of the world, and to return to fundamentals, to accept people for what they are as persons, not for their 'social positions.'

Never before has the world needed the thoughtful and prayerful action of understanding Catholic women as it does today, never for many generations has the choice between God and the world been so sharply emphasized. The day has gone by when we can blithely live as compartmental Catholics, with our political, business, intellectual, social activities in air-tight compartments functioning separately like parts of a well-behaved machine. Catholicism is nothing if it is not a life, unified, coordinated to its end, building up the entire personality into the likeness of Christ. We were talking a few minutes ago about the characteristics of your education as children of the Sacred Heart. You have failed to grasp the essence of that education if you keep any area of your

life outside the control of positive Christian principles or if, in spite of a sort of good will, through culpable ignorance you fail to know these principles.

If we are to have our share in this work of helping to bring about the reign of Christ, if 'Thy Kingdom come' is to be more than lip service, then we must sink our own small individual interests in these great ends. What is our little, personal 'social prestige' compared to the aims of God's kingdom! We need unworldliness, vision, greatness of soul if we are to be really effective instruments in His service, and each one who has been educated in the principles I have tried to set out for you today is called by that very fact to rise above prejudices, to be an apostle and 'to do the truth in charity.'"

Armed with the social teachings of the Church, Mother Dammann kept in touch with the non-Catholic leaders of the African American press and did much to counter the bitterness resulting from the lack of vision among Catholics on the race question.

As a leader in the field of Catholic higher education, Mother Dammann promoted the importance of a full-time faculty for Catholic colleges as early as 1935. The benefit plans for faculty that she developed at Manhattanville were far in advance of the norm for even secular colleges at the time. An active member of the National Catholic Education Association, Mother Dammann chaired the Eastern Regional Unit of the College Department in 1941 and served on the committees on Policies and Plans as well as Finance.

Mother Dammann held memberships in the NCEA, National Rural Life Conference, NAACP, Catholic Association for International Peace, American Catholic Philosophical Association, National Conference of Christians and Jews, and the Catholic Art Association. She died at Manhattanville College in New York City on February 13, 1945.

Margaret Phelan, RSCJ, attended San Francisco College for Women; she is national archivist for the Society of the Sacred Heart.

Superiors General of the Society of the Sacred Heart

1. Madeleine Sophie Barat – France – (1802 - 1865)

2. Josephine Goetz – Alsace-Lorraine – (1865 - 1874)

3. Adèle Lehon – Belgium – (1874 - 1894)

4. Augusta von Sartorius – Germany – (1894 - 1895)

5. Mabel Digby – England – (1895 - 1911)

6. Janet Erskine Stuart – England – (1911 - 1914)

7. Marie de Löe – Germany – (1915 - 1928)

8. Manuela Vicente – Spain – (1928 - 1946)

9. Giulia Datti – Italy – (1941 - 1946)

10. Marie Thérèse de Lescure – France – (1946 - 1957)

11. Sabine de Valon – France – (1958 - 1967)

12. Maria Josefa Bulto – Spain – (1967 - 1970)

13. Concepcion Camacho – Spain – (1970 - 1982)

14. Helen McLaughlin – Scotland – (1982 - 1994)

15. Patricia Garcia de Quevedo – Mexico – (1994 -)