

SHCJ STORIES



Mother Mary Amadeus Atchison SHCJ





M.M. AMADEUS ATCHISON SHCJ

1881-1955

and

CRISIS AT ANUA

JUSTICE IN ROME

by

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MOTHER MARY AMADEUS ATCHISON SHCJ (1881 - 1955)

How does one come to know a woman long gone? By many of the ways by which one comes to know her in life: by the things she chooses to say and do and by her spontaneous acts and utterances; by what delights her, makes her laugh, worries her, makes her sad; by what she praises and what she blames, and by what strikes her as curious and odd; by what she notices and comments on, by what she confides about her inner processes and perceptions; by where her loyalties lie, who her friends are and where she feels most in her element; by what she lives for and by what she is ready to die for.

Sometimes in real life one is deflected from the essential person by misleading appearances. And sometimes, a person who has left a written legacy can be better known on paper than in life. This is because one can get at her, unmasked and defenseless. And though one must work to resurrect her from the archival dust, there may come a moment when one can say: I know you.

At any rate we now have only one way of getting to know Mary Amadeus Atchison and that is through her

writings. We are fortunate as a Society that she wrote so copiously and in so many genres and that, thanks to our archives, so much of what she wrote is preserved. Because she is a key figure in our history. She was in office as superior general for twenty-two years and, after Cornelia, she was, I believe, the foremost interpreter of the rule and spirit of the Society.

In this brief article, based solely on documentation in our Roman archives, I can do little more than introduce her to those who never knew her and recall her to those who did. And I will limit myself to the years 1922-1936, occasionally borrowing from the future. I begin with 1922 because in that year Amadeus (as I will henceforth call her) took on the care of the whole Society through her election as first assistant general (or AG as the assistants were then dubbed) to the just-elected superior general. After 1936 she will remain in office for ten more years, but that is another story.

The picture of Amadeus that will emerge in this article is necessarily colored by my own affinities and interests. Even though I try where possible to let her speak for herself, what I choose as representative reveals a bias. So *caveat lector*. My dearest hope is that those who remember her will not feel that I have distorted the picture beyond recognition.

Sr. Veronica Rochford, Amadeus' close associate of many years, wrote a short memoir of her. She tells us that Amadeus began life as Mary Atchison in Sydney, Australia. Amadeus, looking back, recalls her upbringing as 'Spartan'. When she was eleven, her father died and when she was twelve her mother brought her to England where she and her younger sisters were confided to the Holy Child nuns at Mayfield. There she completed her school years bedecked with honors, and entered the Society. After her novitiate at Mayfield she went to Cherwell Edge to do an Oxford honours degree in history, going immediately afterwards to Mayfield as prefect. In 1910 she returned to Cherwell Edge as vice-principal where she remained for the next six years. In 1911, her youngest sister Gladys entered the Society and became Sister Mary Angelica. The First World War took her only brother Jack, killed at the front in 1915. Then from 1916 to 1922, at Harrogate, she had her first taste of holding office in the Society. It was at the end of this stint as superior that she was brought onto the general council as first AG. In each phase of her life she stood out among her companions as winsomely attractive and uncommonly gifted. Did she provoke jealousies? Did she unconsciously trade on her gifts? Perhaps she will give us some hints when we come to look at her personal notes.

TO ROME AS FIRST ASSISTANT GENERAL 1922-1924

But now the 1922 chapter is in session. It is a momentous chapter for it sets the stage for the next wave of expansion. Circumstances being favorable, it says, the motherhouse will move from Mayfield to Rome. The decision is motivated by a number of considerations recorded in the general chapter minutes of 1922: our 'close connection with the Holy Father and the Centre of Christendom'; it would 'facilitate business'; 'the Society would be better known and therefore would expand'; and, finally, it would give the Society 'greater prestige and standing'.

There is deep significance in the removal to Rome. In one sense it is the return of the Society to Cornelia's heartland, the Rome of her first fervor as a Catholic amidst holy men and women and persons of distinction. In another sense the move is a bursting out of the Society's swaddling bands - as Amadeus would later say of the move to West Africa - into the freedom of the whole world symbolically gathered there. Amadeus will come to embody in her own person this broad embrace of heart and sweep of mind while revelling in the particularities of Italian life.

Such a move will require a major overhaul of Society structures. Up to this time, England has been the parent and America the hardy offspring. It means the separation of the general council from England and its direct responsibility there; the erecting of a province in England with its own council; and the demotion of the English 'parent' to the status of one of three sisters, albeit the senior one, since the American province is to be divided into Eastern and Mid-Western provinces. Amidst such weighty matters, decisions are taken about talking in the refectory, staying up late, keeping house journals. Christmas becomes a first class feast and Easter is elevated to second rank!

Amadeus is at the peak of her powers. She is the first-named of the group of four chosen to advise and assist the superior general. Etheldreda Parry and three of her assistants are living at Mayfield. Etheldreda (63) is the local superior there and Anthony Long (49) her local assistant. Magdalen Ryan (64) is novice mistress, and the lone American, St. John McMaster, is the eldest at 65 and acts as general treasurer and secretary. She is also general monitress - the person charged with calling to the superior general's attention any failings which affect the corporate well-being. Amadeus, a mere 41, is the only non-resident AG. She lives at St. Leonards as

superior and travels over the South Downs to Mayfield for council meetings, which are frequent.

These five preside over a Society which has achieved a respectable size and spread: 499 sisters and 27 novices in 21 houses. In Europe there are nine houses: Mayfield, St. Leonards, Cavendish Square (London), Preston, Blackpool, Mark Cross, Harrogate, Cherwell Edge (Oxford) and Rue Perronet (Paris). There are 260 sisters living in these houses, 62 of whom are lay sisters. In America there are 239 sisters, 54 of whom are lay. They are spread from East to West in 12 houses: Sharon Hill, Spring Garden Street, St. Leonard's, St. Edward's and Rosemont, all in or near Philadelphia; St. Elizabeth's and Suffern in New York; Melrose near Boston; St. Veronica's and Waukegan in the Midwest, and Cheyenne and Portland in the West.

The Society is educating 19,124 children and young adults in its 12 American and 9 European educational institutions. Business from all these houses and schools comes before the general council.

The council minute book shows Amadeus often absent with Etheldreda on visitation. But the other three make a quorum and they conduct much of the

business while visitations are in progress. What kind of business? Once the decision is taken to move to Rome, an English provincial council must be named. Superiors are picked up like pieces on a chess board and set down in new roles. The consequent uprooting and shifting about of superiors and assistants is something of an earthquake in the tightly articulated body that is the Society in England. One has the impression reading chapter and council minutes that government by *fiat* was far simpler than our present government by corporate consensus. If the Society slipped in some matter of observance, a decree went out that corrected the abuse and everyone stepped back into line. The Rule and Customal were fixed points of reference and it was universally understood that perfect observance was an infallible path to holiness. Discernment belonged to those in office, as did obedience to the Rule, but that obedience left little to be discerned by those in the ranks. Our foremothers flourished, some grew holy and all somehow kept their personal idiosyncracies intact under the regime.

Financial decisions loom large and are noted in terse and lucid words, but one can imagine long preliminary conversations to clarify and debate the issues: shall we buy? sell? mortgage? lend? invest? reduce the interest on a loan? Almost always the

answer is unanimously yes, except when the American province has ambitions beyond its means. Then there are quarterly balance sheets from all the houses to be read, appointments to be made or unmade, minor adjustments to the Rule to ask for from the SCR, and sisters to be admitted to vows, temporary and perpetual. Names appear which we have all known and which have since been engraved on tombstones. The Society acquires new properties - Fribourg; Via Boncompagni (henceforth to be called 10 VB); Summit, New Jersey; Combe Bank; St. Veronica's in Chicago. And it divests itself of others: Mark Cross. New works are begun and old ones given up. Buildings go up at Rosemont and are added at St. Leonard's, Philadelphia. Those who knew Cornelia are asked to send depositions in view of a possible Cause. Emily Patmore's life is read and the decision is made to publish it.

At least until 1936, the above would be a typical description of council business. But it is just such business that weighs inordinately upon the mind of the new general, Etheldreda. Towards the middle of 1923, after a prolonged stay in Rome with Theresa Walton, the provincial, to settle the purchase of a Roman property for the Society's new motherhouse, a black cloud comes down upon her. She begins to show signs of depression which deepen and darken

until she becomes almost obsessed with her own incapacity. She even stops going to Communion. But in Rome an irreversible process has been set in motion.

The 10 VB journal tells how Magdalen Ryan accompanied by Mary of Assisi Bethell goes to Rome in May, spending two months with the Cenacle sisters until they can move in on June 27 and make the house habitable for the next wave of 'colonizers', Marie Osmonde de Maillé and Ignatius Waite. Then come St. John McMaster at the end of August, and Etheldreda with Magdalen Ryan on October 3. With the arrival of Amadeus on November 17 the whole general council is *in situ* in Rome. The first Christmas is delightfully informal. Amadeus writes a ridiculous play about the demise of the old boiler, satirizing the months of travail and work stoppages which have plagued their time of settling in. But their days as a happy group are numbered as Etheldreda goes into her decline.

Then, a pathetic letter addressed to the AGs:

"I have come to the conclusion that it is my duty to resign my office as Superior General of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus...the responsibility of the office completely paralyzes me and I feel unable to perform my duty as it

ought to be performed. Therefore I beg of you to ask the Sac. Cong. of Religious to relieve me as soon as possible of so heavy a burden.”

This is in April 1924. As 1st AG Amadeus has to pick up the reins, perhaps asking herself what part her own personality has played in this falling apart of a capable woman who had four times been an AG herself and had already been in harness for twenty years when she was elected general. Amadeus had taken her to specialists in Fribourg and London who concurred that she was indeed ill. Waiting in Oxford for her release to come through she writes to Amadeus: “It is a most painful experience as you may imagine...you ask me how I am...physically well, but sick at heart...do pray hard for me. I need your prayers badly.”

The SCR issues the rescript on May 16, 1924, and Amadeus’ telegram reaches Etheldreda next day: “I received the telegram this morning. As you may imagine I feel truly awful!...Thank you for all the trouble you have taken over the matter. I hope that now all will go AMDG, now that my unworthy self is not at the helm.” For the next six months Amadeus carries on as provisional head of the Society, having called a special general chapter of election for October as the Rule prescribes.

The Society has already experienced a huge shaking-up with the removal of the motherhouse to Rome when this second upheaval takes place.

Amadeus is the one who has to convoke a general chapter barely more than two years after the previous one. The youngest and least experienced in government, she has so won the confidence of the Society that she is unanimously elected superior general on the first ballot. We have no personal notes from this era to tell us what are her inner thoughts, but there is a hint in a letter written to her old 'soul friend' St. John Russell from Rome, June 23, soon after Etheldreda's resignation:

“The Retreat Padre was ‘*giovane and un po' timido*’, but as far as I was concerned, that did not matter in the least, and I got all I wanted from the real giver of the Exercises - the *Diletto* Himself. It was nothing very striking - just a deeper conviction that ‘Love is His meaning’; that, consequently, Love must be our return and that the price of Love is a lavish giving of oneself...It is strange how as one grows older one's spiritual aim becomes more and more simplified and reduced to a few big principles - Love, the all-embracing Providence of God, seeing Him in everything (which Mother Julian says is perfect joy)...I am not anxious about the present happenings, Giovannino, [her pet name

for St. John] - In fact I sometimes wonder if I should be more concerned! It seems to me that if we try to do God's will and trust Him absolutely, that he must see to all things else for us....The events which make such flutters in our dovecotes are very small to God, and I think He must smile sometimes!...we have to do our best...but having done our best the result can safely be left to Him with the confidence that 'all manner of thing shall be well'."

HER FIRST TERM 1924-1930

The 1924 chapter gives Amadeus two AGs from the previous council, St. John McMaster and Anthony Long and two new ones, Francis Xavier Topham (51), a long time superior, and St. John Russell (51), her 'Giovannino'. Both have come off the recently created English provincial council. St. John McMaster remarks in the journal on their speedy obedience, for they drop everything and are in Rome within four days of their election. 'Long live this spirit of our Society', she exclaims. But it is not a robust group. Francis Xavier will be replaced in 1929 because of ill-health; St John McMaster has heart trouble and will be hospitalized and given the last rites, recovering, but periodically having to spend weeks confined to the second floor of 10 VB; and St. John Russell will be off the map with a nervous complaint for a year and a half. Even Anthony Long will have her months in hospital. During this first full term Amadeus divides her time between establishing the pattern of life and work of the Roman community, council business and personal visits to all three provinces. She makes a first extended visit to America, October 1925 to July 1926, then goes to the European houses March to

August 1927, and to Europe again May to August 1928. In November 1928 she returns to America, this time also visiting New Orleans and Grand Coteau on the trail of Cornelia, and does a scouting tour of California with a view to making a foundation there. She returns to Rome in early autumn, 1928, by way of England after almost a year's absence. On each of these trips except the last she is accompanied by one of the AGs, but by 1928, with the exception of Anthony Long who is needed in Rome, not one of them is well enough to go with her, so she takes along Imelda Whitehead. Imelda will also replace Francis Xavier who will soon have to withdraw altogether.

A closer look at Amadeus busy about each of these tasks will reveal something of her character and personality.

Life at 10 VB

It will be a year before Amadeus leaves Rome to set out on her first journey. During this time she takes stock and becomes a Roman. She is in no hurry to crowd in upon new provincials: Hildegard Toohey in the Mid-West, Felix Tighe in the East and Theresa Walton in England. It is a year of relative peace after the upheavals of the move and the unexpected chapter.

Amadeus' presence acts as a kind of magnet for English-speaking clerics touring or residing in Rome. The Benedictines are represented in the persons of Cardinal Gasquet, our Cardinal Protector - and a most attentive one - and his secretary Philip Langdon. Their visits to 10 VB are many. The Jesuits are in and out: Frs. Donnelly, Walmsley, Thurston, MacMahon, Welsby and Archbishop Goodier. (Fr. Welsby preaches the Christmas Triduum, but 'no one seems to have cared for it' records the journal.) The Augustinians come from across the street: Dr. O'Gorman and the young priests and seminarians there. Later more will be heard from the famous Dominicans: Thomas Garde, Bede Jarrett and Garrigou-Lagrange. One can visualize these visits, usually on the occasion of masses or benedictions or retreats, followed by social gatherings in the parlor or *salotto* with Sr. Ignatius' high and delectable teas (of which, of course, only the guest partakes). There are outings, a longer stay in Florence, and papal events: consistories, audiences and masses, canonizations - St. Thérèse of Lisieux and the Curé d'Ars, Bernadette and the North American martyrs. By December there are 14 lady boarders bringing in some income, and by April 1925, six students in residence are being 'finished' under the direction of St. John Russell. A series of 16 lectures is offered to

them and to interested outsiders: Mary Gerard on Ancient Rome BC 510-AD 476, Osmonde (in French) on Roman Art, and St. John Russell on The Christian Church Under Pagan Emperors. Bands of students descend upon 10 VB from Fribourg and Neuilly, swelling the numbers and creating further excitement. In late summer, Amadeus takes a house at Nemi overlooking the lake in the Alban Hills to provide relief from the Roman heat and give a rest and change to the overworked community of ten (herself, 4 AGs, Gerard, Osmonde, Ignatius, Pauline and Aloysius). Later, through Aldobrandini connections, a small villa in Frascati, the Villa Rasponi, will become their summer refuge until the war. In this her first year as general, Amadeus establishes the typical pattern of life at 10 VB. The Roman community becomes for those who live there the center of the world, with Amadeus very much the key figure in this world. In spite of her rather austere appearance, her presence signifies warmth, security, inspiration, challenge and *joie de vivre*. She is obviously spreading her wings, and in the joy of her expanded universe she wants to tell the SHCJ at large what she sees and hears.

Her first general letter to the Society written on Gaudete Sunday for Christmas 1924 is also typical. It is a mixture of the sublime - reflections on the

Christmas mystery - and the mundane - visitors, Cardinal Gasquet's jubilee, a stay in Florence, 6 masses on Christmas (!). But she has not yet struck her stride as letters go. The next one breaks the mold with exuberant and humorous detail about the canonization of Thérèse of Lisieux: Herbert Thurston just in front of her in his threadbare cassock ('how typically Jesuit', she remarks in a personal letter). There is an offertory gift of little birds "looking rather bewildered" and "chirping all the time" and she adds the comment of an Italian paper: "Perhaps the little saint enjoyed their chirping more than the Gregorian and Palestrinian music of Perosi's choir" (which her musical taste would probably have deplored). We are treated to a fascinating sidelight:

"A French lady visitor to 10 VB had been in class with Thérèse. She remembers Thérèse as a very timid and sensitive little girl who did not easily make friends with her companions. They were forbidden to prompt each other in class, and on one occasion Thérèse did so and was corrected by the mistress. The child felt the reproof so much that she spent the rest of the lesson in the vain attempt to stop her tears!...Monsieur Martin used to come and fetch his little daughter, and ...Thérèse would walk along holding his hand, and every now and then give a little jump in the air, I suppose to let off suppressed steam!"

This same letter goes on to describe with relish the villa at lake Nemi where they will go in July. And in August, from there, another letter goes out for the Feast of the Assumption. It is full of homey detail: Osmonde forgetting she had her water pail and carrying it into town to the grocer's shop; the daily horarium, the plan of the house, the quaint characters who serve them. The whole is sprinkled with Italian words and phrases. One has the impression that she is speaking to a large and affectionate family who, of course, will feed on every crumb of information about life in Rome. Perhaps there are some who will not, but her enthusiasm tends to sweep all along with her. Always there is a reflection, simple and lovely, on the feast being celebrated. For instance, for the Assumption she writes:

“If our Lady is always powerful and gracious, she is surely so in greater measure on her feasts, and so we can approach her on Saturday [Aug. 15] with greater confidence and entrust our own personal concerns and those of the Society to her. Let us ask her to teach us the meaning of the Hidden Life which is the source from which we are to draw our own distinctive spirit and show us how to put its lessons into practice by making better use of the precious opportunities of our daily lives.”

The Assumption, Christmas and Epiphany, Easter and Corpus Christi often call forth a letter. Usually she manages about three such letters a year and more often than not they are written at the last minute and arrive late.

Her Letters

Here I would like to step back from 1924-25 and comment on the collection of Amadeus' letters in the Roman archives. There are four interrelated levels of self-revelation among these letters.

...To Ecclesiastics

The most formal level is of business correspondence with priests and prelates. Those letters we have relate mostly to the West African mission. In them she is frank, direct, courteous, and on several occasions witheringly critical. The turn of phrase and personal style show her elegance, ease of expression and ready intelligence.

To Bishop Shanahan (Prefect Apostolic of Southern Nigeria), Jan 22, 1930:

“...As I have already told your lordship, I and my council are each and all, personally and

officially, much in favour of the proposal [to go to Calabar]. But we are all agreed that any missionary enterprise, especially a first venture, is of such great importance that it requires very careful consideration and a first hand knowledge of local conditions which can only be acquired by a visit to the country."

To Bishop Hinsley (Apostolic Visitor to the British Missions in Africa), June 25, 1931:

"...Dear Monsignor, forgive me if I speak my mind frankly. I am more than ever convinced that the present state of things is quite impossible and that if the new Society [of missionary priests] is not put on a solid basis, i.e. if it is not given a definite organization, scheme of training and, at least a nucleus of PERMANENT workers, the result will be fatal to the mission."

To Bishop Heerey (successor to Shanahan), March 7, 1934:

"...I deeply regret having had to take this step [appeal to the Propaganda] but you have forced me to do so by the manifest injustice of your action with regard to the nuns....let me say in conclusion that what has grieved me most in this sad affair is that you whom I have always trusted as a personal friend and looked up to as a Superior who would protect the nuns committed

to your care have in this first real trouble failed to do so.” (Privately she wrote that she was sorry for him because he would find himself ‘*dans la soupe*’ at the Propaganda.)

...To the Society

Then we have Amadeus’ letters to the Society. These constitute a significant body of comment on events mixed with spiritual exhortation, meditations on the great liturgical feasts and commentaries on the Rule. In them Amadeus is seen as finely educated but never stuffy. She has a way of capitalizing on the more spiritual parts of the Rule, which everyone has assimilated, to lead her readers one simple step further into the mystery. She is never abstruse or overly clever but, like the gospels, appeals to both the wise and the simple. These letters come from her broad mind and the deep well of her prayer and prove her an accomplished guide in the ways of the spirit. We have already seen several examples, to which I add others:

New Year’s Day, 1929:

“...During these past days we have been celebrating together the feast of the Adorable Birthday [a favorite phrase], and like the

Shepherds and the Kings we have 'found the Child with Mary His Mother'. The Mother knows His secrets, the precious 'many other things which Jesus did' which are not written in the Gospels...She, therefore, will be our best teacher in the 'School of Divine Science' where we are to learn the spirit of the Holy Child - a spirit of humility, charity, and obedience which flows like a spring of limpid water from 'Eternal Wisdom in the lowliness of His Humanity'. The Rule bids us 'contemplate' our Divine Model - that is, to gaze at Him for a long time thoughtfully and prayerfully until we see and understand the beauty of His lowliness and feel inspired to copy it in our own lives."

January 28, 1930

"Now I must tell you of my visit to Frank Connelly. As you know, his daughter has often promised to bring him here but nothing came of it. Just before Christmas she came to see me and of her own accord asked if I would go to see him, as owing to his age he could not go out much....Our first sign of Frank was of a little old gentleman with white hair and beard, dark eyes and courtly manners. He seemed pleased to see us and said: 'You are my Sisters and I am Brother Frank'. 'Yes,' I said, 'and all your Sisters pray for you'. 'They pray for me?' and his face lit up. '...The Sisters must have been praying for me for a *long* time, for I am nearly 89'!!....The

Roma Unitas lectures are in full swing and bring audiences to our little Hall. Prince George, complete with gloves and umbrella, still comes and puts himself in the front row and we still have the motley collection of 'celebrities' which could not be found, I imagine, outside the Eternal City!"

June 22, 1944. The second world war continues to rage. Amadeus is still in Rome which, since June 6, has been in the hands of the allies. She is cut off from direct communication with the Society, but through circuitous channels sends these words from her heart:

"I want to send a message to my big *famiglia* for Christmas and it is this, that 'all should cultivate a spirit of joy' (Rule 78)...our Mother Foundress left us, her children, a legacy of joy which must be cherished in our daily intercourse. Joy is spontaneous and cannot be forced, there is nothing more free than joy, nothing that so evades constraint for a forced joy would no longer be joy but an unreality. Our community life requires that joy should be maintained on a high level for this reason - that the continual contact of the same individuals...may easily become painful and gall to nature, and unless care is taken, there will follow constant little clashes of temperament, frequent annoyances, and loss of temper which may lead to depression

and gloom. If we add to this the differences in character, nationality, education, and all the spiritual and corporal infirmities which we carry about with us till our last breath, we have to own that community life...would soon become a burden, even to the most valiant souls, if joy did not enter to help us bear present trials....”

...To the Roman community

Then, more intimate and informal, there are her letters to the Roman community. They are among her most interesting and charming. They come from Fribourg, Paris, England, America and Nigeria. She addresses the community in terms of endearment: *Carissime*, My Dearest *Familuccia*, *Caro Piccolo Gregge* [little flock], *Carissima Familuccia Mia*, *Carissima Sacra Famiglia*. Messages come in the form of ship and train logs with amusing anecdotes about fellow passengers and their states of rail or sea worthiness, diagrams of cabins and berths, menus, and quirky details that catch her fancy. She always notices animals and makes friends with tiny children. There are showers of postcards and letters, some scribbled in pencil in lurching trains. They show how emotionally tied she is to 10 VB, the community and its doings. We meet her as an observant traveler, a person of manifold interests

who misses nothing of the flora, fauna, or topography of her surroundings. She not only observes but gives genus and species in exhaustive lists. In turn, she is kept abreast by a reciprocal outpouring of home news in every port of call.

To Francis Xavier and the 10 VB community, from Fribourg, August 13, 1928:

“M.M. Aquinas has had all her teeth out (she only had 13 left) and is having a plate made. The dentist promises to make her ‘*très belle*’ by the time he has finished with her. What a trial teeth can be. They are troublesome when coming, troublesome when we have got them and troublesome when going. And yet I remember seeing in the museum at York rows and rows of skulls of the Roman soldiers of the Sixth Legion and there was not one but had a complete and perfect set of grinders! I noticed the same thing last year at Milan in the case of St. Ambrose. Well, I suppose we pay the price for our ‘advanced’ civilization in this as in other ways.”

To the community, June 14, 1933, from Sharon Hill:

“It gave me quite a thrill when I saw the Italian flag and realized that I would soon be on Italian soil *in mezzo alla cara familuccia*....God is very good to let us have such a beautiful spot as Rasponi [villa in Frascati] - my travelling in

many lands makes me realize that we can voice the trees and the skies and the sea in the chorus which they give to God in witnessing that His work of creation is 'exceeding good'."

To the community, November 2, 1934, from the train to Paris:

"I am thinking of the '*familuccia*' and do not like the feeling of getting further and further away from it. But '*pazienza*' - the time will pass as it always must do and in the meantime we are always in *cor unum*."

To the community, March 2, 1935, from Cherwell Edge:

"I send you all much love and hope you have a helpful Lent and joyful Easter. You will, if you 'watch' with Our Lord in the coming days, not necessarily by extra 'devotions' but by more 'devotion' in the sense in which it is used in the Mass."

...to provincials

The next level of correspondence has to do with the provincials. For much of her time as general, Amadeus is accompanied by Felix Tighe in America

and Paul O'Connor in England. These three had all known the Society in England and though they were very different in character and personality they understood one another well. The relationship of Paul to Amadeus was that of spiritual daughter to mother, and this strong connection which was antecedent to her taking office as provincial perdured throughout her mandate. We have in the Rome archives 80 letters of Paul to Amadeus but none from Amadeus to Paul (and very few to the other provincials). From the one side of the correspondence, we can imagine the other as spontaneous, frank, affectionate (but she was not uncritical), and very personal. Amadeus would have written freely about their souls, their difficulties and their human context.

We have one important later letter from Amadeus to Paul about the post-war era to come. It was written from Rome when England and Italy were already at war and very soon after the U.S. intervened against the Axis powers. It shows her ability to step back from the evolving tragedy, read its implications as regards the Society and advise its provincials:

December 14, 1941 to Paul O'Connor, from Rome:

“...I feel very strongly that the Society should begin at once to meet the wants of the new age

which will follow reconstruction and readjustment in which education will have an important part, and we, as educators of the youth of tomorrow, must be prepared to take our part in the new order and, if necessary, to readjust our educational system to meet the needs of the future. For it is useless to think that we can go back to the conditions of the past twenty-five years. The world upheaval is so vast that it is bound to affect all departments of life....We must face reality...cast aside all the trappings that do not help - all that is out of touch with life.

....a word of advice in connection with our future subjects. During these years of war, girls will have had unusual responsibilities laid upon them in various forms of national service and consequently they will surely have acquired self-reliance, initiative and a higher sense of duty....I think we should bear this in mind and in our formation of them...be ready to advise and guide without repressing or baulking those who have vision and energy to go forward."

...to individuals

Finally, we have several collections of personal letters. The most important is a series of 56 to St. John Russell, 'Giovannino', which spans the years 1923 to 1938. Besides these, there are 29 of St.

John's monthly permission letters which call forth from Amadeus extended comments and spiritual advice. For, short of several months, Amadeus was St. John's immediate superior for 24 years. St. John is intellectually gifted, nervous and intense. She is also deeply humble. She and Amadeus were close as girls and young women through school and family connections although there was a difference in age of 7 years, St. John being the elder. (St. John's father, Charles, was Lord Russell of Killowen and Lord Chief Justice of England.) One could say they were bosom friends who in faith did not shirk the authority/obedience relationship in which they had been placed. This required adjustments on both sides and the bridging of awkward phases in their friendship. St. John it was who with her lantern slide lectures for children became known as 'Lampighter' and achieved modest literary fame with her books for children. She also took charge of the students and organized their program of studies until illness prevented her from over extending herself. In Amadeus' letters to her we come a step closer to the stuff of which Amadeus is made. She is off her guard, so we are apt to read things which offend 'political correctness' or the national pride of Americans, for, it must be said, that first she does look down her rather prominent nose on things American - American accents, institutions, and

education. She finds Americans superficial. Unconsciously she is a bit uppity and snobbish, and she comments relentlessly on good and bad taste as she goes her rounds. But with further exposure, the grace of God, and no doubt a dawning sensitivity to her American AGs, such attitudes are modified. In spite of these less admirable traits, her soul's aspiration and her absolute givenness to God come right off the page of these letters to St. John:

February 29, 1924 from Rome. Amadeus has been there for three months as AG to Etheldreda:

“I can confine myself to the strictly personal which isn't much. I am very well in body but the Light is being very dimly reflected and the Life most inadequately lived. Thomas à Kempis never spoke a truer word than when he said: ‘Occasions do not make a man frail, etc’ and surely one's spiritual life should not be at the mercy of place or circumstances, should it? This sounds as if I were in the depths! I am but only learning wisdom by experience which is the best way to learn, *non è vero?*”

May 15, 1924, from Rome. Etheldreda has put in her petition for resignation:

“God's ways are certainly strange and wonderful. I rely much on that compact [of

prayer] Giovannino so remember it often won't you. I did love seeing you again and renewing our spiritual comradeship, and I think I did rise a little out of the rut of mediocrity during that Holy Week in Paris. It is so foolish to waste one's time over trifles when the realities are so real and so close but I am always being surprised at my own lack of consistency and I should like to be logical as the Saints were and to press straight on to the goal without wandering into bye paths which lead nowhere!"

December 11, 1925. From St. Leonard's, Philadelphia:

"I have only time to scratch this tonight *in fretta e furia* but you know I think of you very often and love you very much even though my letters are few and short. How I would love to write at length or better still have a nice talk! I would tell you many funny things which would make you laugh. One needs a sense of humour in the U.S.A. The other day I saw written on a laundry van: 'Put your duds in our suds' - this is typical!"

January 1, 1926. From Melrose, Mass.:

"I understand exactly how you are feeling about things in general and yourself in particular. The fact that the Beloved does not let you feel His Presence as he did formerly does not matter - it

is all part of His plan for you and as dear H.T. [Herbert Thurston, SJ] says, it is the circumstances of our lives which sanctify us if only we have the courage to use them. I know it is hard to go on in darkness and dryness, but you know Our Lord is there all the time and that though you may not taste His sweetness you are getting strength to do His will and all peace which comes from doing it. So my dearest Giovannino, the only thing to be done is to keep on keeping on and to give Our Lord the best proof of your trust by casting all your care on Him.”

March 8, 1932. In her permission letter, St. John writes:

“Don’t grow tired of telling me my faults or give it up because I am sensitive with you, dearest Rev. Mother. I can’t have so very many more years to serve Our Lord and I do want to give Him a more generous service in my old age.”

Amadeus answers:

“Yes to everything, *cara Madre*. Thank you very much...I am sorry for having so often been ‘un-human’ (= un-Christlike) and for having caused you needless suffering. May we both enter deeper into the mystery of the ‘Love which passeth knowledge’ during these remaining days of Lent.”

One other trove of letters is worthy of note. In 1941 a member of the Roman community is dying painfully of cancer in the Blue Nuns' hospital across Rome - Damian MacDonnell. Amadeus sends her a daily note full of interesting news, tender concern and bracing spiritual help. Altogether there are 55 of these. One random example (on paper 2x3 inches) gives the tenor of them all:

“Beloved Child,

My love and a big blessing are packed into this wee note. I hope you continue to make progress and that the visitors will bring me a good report. I heard from Angelica & she says they liked your recollection of M.M. Magdalen [Ryan] so much & she asked me to tell you that dear Mother really looked ‘gallant’ in death with a firmness about the chin which really suggested a warrior taking his rest. Your account was certainly very nice & original.

Keep in the Will of God, & offer up all the unpleasant things to Him & they will be given back to you in Love. God bless my child. Your loving *madre*.”

Council Business

Returning to home base at 10 VB, we need not linger over Amadeus' part in decision-making. Routine council business is dealt with from day to day as circumstances require. There is evidence that Amadeus tries to improve administrative procedures by systematizing them. For instance, she wants each house to keep a full record of all properties, their title, cost, date of purchase and current value, and tries to separate house and school accounts. She wants to go to the bottom of things, to gather all pertinent information and see all sides before deciding issues. But one has the impression that, though she is businesslike, council meetings are not her prime interest. She is more in her element matching wits with intelligent visitors in the parlor and mingling with simple folk.

'In Journeys Often'

We have already gathered some impressions of Amadeus' life in Rome, of her correspondence both official and personal, and of her council work. Now, briefly, we shall see what her visitations are like. First it should be said that there is a great difference between her visits to Paris, Fribourg and England, and her visits

to America. In Europe she knows the nuns, has a younger sister - Mary Angelica - who is living in the province, and she is closely in touch with the houses and their works. When she goes into any house she is welcomed as a homecoming member of the family as well as with respect. When she goes to America for the first time, she is known only to the provincials and those few who have been to chapters. She must conquer the province, and she does. Because she is on unfamiliar ground, she is constantly on the alert to soak up every bit of information, not only about the SHCJ but also about her surroundings and the culture. For example, in 1929, she is in the West and is being shown the sights by her hostess. Her journal records:

“Saw, in Beverley Hills, home of the ‘movie stars’ - Mary Pickford - Tom Mix (the former cowboy!), Harold Lloyd (who has planted a big hill with trees & has a canyon and waterfall on his estate) and Charlie Chaplin! Latter has beautiful garden with hedge of roses, pergolas, ground carpeted with purple ice-plant, lovely palms, - lawns - and beautiful orange grove.”

Early on in her tenure, Amadeus had taken the trouble to gather up her ideas on government, under 28 points. These ‘Hints on Government’ culled from different sources guide her in her dealings with the sisters as she goes her rounds. Several extracts from these points,

preserved on tiny lined notepaper in her smallest writing, show something of her way of proceeding:

1. Don't form your opinion of any nun merely on what others say. Listen to their remarks and observe but form yr. own estimate.
3. The less you assert authority the more readily it will be obeyed. Ask do not order. This was St. Ignatius' method.
6. Nothing spoils good govt. more than interference with subordinates.
8. If it is clearly your duty to correct, do it; if in doubt leave it alone.
9. ...never force a person if you can help it but, if possible, consult people beforehand as to what they would like to do.
16. Don't go back on a decision when one is made. Don't call it in question again but carry it out.
21. Don't go beyond the Rule!
25. Don't let everything that is in your mind be known. Keep your own counsel. Good to have a certain mystery about a superior.
26. Don't ever give your subjects reason to think you are being 'run' by anyone.

Within the framework of ship or train bookings, Amadeus' visitation itineraries seem to evolve on a rolling basis according to local exigencies. When she arrives at a house, the nuns assemble to greet her formally, then everyone proceeds to the chapel where the *Veni Sancte Spiritus* and the *Magnificat* are intoned. She sees each sister individually, takes the measure of the house, and reflects back what she sees in a conference. What is she looking for? Among her early notes is a scheme for provincial visitation. The first part has to do with the house and the second with the sisters. The vows, the Rule, and the 'works of zeal and charity' are the chief points of reference. Under the heading Poverty, there is much to consider: "food, lodging, clothing in the convent? unnecessary extravagance in the school? use of money given by way of friendship/alms? unnecessary travelling by supr. or subjects?" Under observance of Rule, she lists silence, punctuality, religious modesty, spiritual duties, charity and the rule of the superior - is it *fortis*, *suavis*, *spiritualis*? When she comes to the individual sister, she is interested in knowing if she is 'happy and contented' and 'if not, why?' She wants to know if she finds it hard to keep the Rule in this house, if there is a supernatural atmosphere, if she has difficulties with the superior, her sisters or the children, if she has time for her studies and her spiritual duties or if

there is 'rush or disordination'. Does she have any representations? How is her health? her family?

In every school Amadeus is entertained with a concert. The children, especially the small ones, delight her. In her letters home to 10 VB she records verbatim whole conversations with them. We read of the Pasadena Christmas play complete with acts, scenes and spontaneous dialogue. I (age 7) have a distinct memory of a 1937 visit from a great personage from Rome who sat still and solemn, flanked by the nuns we knew, receiving our homage, Holy Child style. Never did we guess how avidly her quick mind was taking in every detail, comparing, judging, generalizing, missing nothing of the humor of the moment.

While it is clear that Amadeus carries out her visitations dutifully with respect to the points outlined above, her deeper desire is to communicate a love for the way of life envisioned by Cornelia. The Rule is no dead letter to her. She brings it to life by relating it to the prayers of the liturgy and the office, the scriptures and the realities of the contemporary scene. She is never merely pious or platitudinous. She brings spiritual strength, sweetness and theological depth to her conferences with the sisters. We have in the archives a collection

of chapter conferences given between 1927 and 1934. Typical is one dated April 3, 1931, given in Calabar to the little pioneer group of missionaries: Joachim, Edith and Laurentia with Magdalen Walker. I quote in part:

“‘Thy Kingdom come’ has always been the rallying cry of the followers of Jesus Christ. It must be still more so in these days of selfish nationalism when nation is preparing to rise against nation and the Xtian ideal of the brotherhood of mankind remains a mere chimera. The Church has instituted the Feast of Christ the King to keep before our minds the universal character of Our Lord’s kingdom. And His Vicar on earth has emphasized this by his great interest in missions and in the evangelization of the heathen world. I rejoice to think that his words [Pius XI] spoken to the whole world are addressed to you four members of the SHCJ. I rejoice that the Holy Child has outgrown His swaddling bands and has come to His Epiphany, that through you He is to be manifested to the Gentiles, that through you his name will be carried before the people and kings (chiefs!)....I believe, too that this means a new stage of growth for the SHCJ - wider interests, more imperial [cosmopolitan] outlook, more apostolic spirit.... You are the pioneers and a fuller life will come to us all through your work and your sacrifice....”

THE AFRICAN MISSION 1929-1931

The most important single act of Amadeus' administration between the years 1924 and 1936 is the founding of the African mission. "I suppose this is the biggest enterprise we have undertaken since Mother Foundress sent pioneers to America," she writes to Giovannino, November 1929. (Already in Africa, she is beginning to take the measure of the Society's sphere of influence - its size, its possibilities, its peoples.) There is a vast documentation of this founding event and its subsequent moments. The following article, Crisis in Anua, Justice in Rome examines in detail the crises that arose. Here I give only a brief sketch of Amadeus' key part in the enterprise.

Formally, it begins with a letter to Amadeus on November 2, 1929 from Bishop Hinsley (later Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster), Apostolic Visitor in Africa. He begs the Society to send three sisters to Calabar to take up the work of Magdalen Walker. Hinsley is a friend of Amadeus. He picks up where an earlier conversation had left off: "You will be pleased to hear that I had a good talk with Sr.

Magdalen at Calabar and again at Aba,” he begins. (Magdalen Walker is a Mayfield old girl and contemporary of Amadeus. They are school friends. Magdalen had joined the Irish Sisters of Charity and later felt herself called to the missions. In seven years she trained teachers, established several schools and assembled a small band of young women who aspired to religious life.) Hinsley continues:

“But her work will die unless she gets help at once....If you could see the condition of things among the women and girls out here and could with your own eyes see also what wonders Sister Magdalen has worked, you would at once secure at least three sisters for Calabar....Sister Magdalen would join your Order and make over all her works to you. For God’s sake and for the sake of thousands of souls secure assistance for this Saint of the Nigeria missions.”

Then, later in November, Bishop Shanahan - old, eccentric, holy, unreliable but still in office as Vicar Apostolic of Southern Nigeria - adds his appeal in terms which make us blush: “How sad to see heretics take over hundreds of thousands of those unfortunate people who have waited so long for Christ and His Blessed Mother and meet instead the Heralds of the prince of Darkness” [the Protestant missionaries]. Amadeus, after dealing with him at close quarters

and acknowledging his holiness, comments: “but there is a decided KINK which makes it difficult to get on with him. You never know quite where you are and I have a feeling that he feels we were forced on him by Msgr. H.” Amadeus, however, is strongly moved, and so is her council, to back the venture immediately; but prudence suggests that in such an important matter they wait to consult the general chapter to be held in June, 1930.

The chapter minutes for June 26 record that after hearing all the pros and cons and reading letters from Magdalen Walker,

“...the Chapter were unanimous in their desire to undertake the work and expressed their approval with great enthusiasm. It was decided though that Rev. Mth. General should first go and see Calabar & the mission work in order to make sure that conditions were satisfactory...the mission itself should be under the Mother General.”

And so, on Wednesday, September 3rd at 4.00 p.m., Amadeus sails from Liverpool on the R.M.S. Adda with Geneviève (age 44), her recently elected 2nd AG and monitress. They arrive in Calabar on September 20, an “epoch-making day” according to Geneviève. They make a perfect team. Geneviève, known to us as a rather strait-laced superior general,

shows herself a witty, observant traveler and a marvelously game companion on the trek. They both keep copious notes on African history, culture, customs and beliefs. and what begins as a visit of a few weeks stretches itself into an eight-month stay. "So far," Amadeus writes on October 18 to Joseph Dalton, new 1st AG (age 64) and aunt of Laurentia, "I have not made any plans for my return. There is still much to plan and settle and I have still to see the Bishop. I feel that having come so far and spent so much money, it will be best to leave everything arranged for the future so that there will be no hitch later." (Once she actually meets him, she writes in confidence to Joseph Dalton, "Please ask Mother Foundress to make the Bishop resign! She knows how tiresome they can be.") During most of the time they are in the company of Magdalen who astonishes them with what she has been able to accomplish in a brief seven years. "Truly", writes Geneviève, "she is in every sense of the word a valiant woman." Amadeus, seeing how the people have responded to her writes, "To judge by what Sister Magdalen has accomplished single-handed, I would say that these people could do anything if only they were properly trained."

With Amadeus satisfied well before her departure that conditions are indeed favorable for a

foundation, the first three missionaries have been named and sent to learn the fundamentals of tropical nursing. They arrive in Calabar on October 18: Joachim Forster, Edith Rudwick and Laurentia Dalton, (two British and one American, for the mission is from the beginning interprovincial). They come on the same boat with Bishop Shanahan and his band of raw recruits for the new St. Patrick's Missionary Society. At this point the six, including Magdalen Walker who is treated as the senior member of the missionary group, begin regular observance within a very irregular set of circumstances. It requires a change of habit, horarium, diet, language (they learn 'pidgen') and social customs. The young St. Patrick's Fathers are more like brothers in the household of the faith and their constant proximity raises new questions and new answers. By Nov. 13, Amadeus is writing to Giovannino "there are many 'problems' in missionary work which can only be understood on the spot and it was lack of experience which made me think I could do it all in a few weeks."

Amadeus is truly the founder, after Magdalen Walker, of our African mission. She lives the mission life 'in journeys often', experiences the physical hazards and recognizes the need to plan boldly and creatively. And she envisions the pattern of expansion. "In order

to reach as large an area as possible,” she says, “I foresee that we shall have to have small convents at strategic points and from them work the outlying districts through native teachers.” She lays down the basic ground rules for community life, but in everything she takes counsel with Magdalen who is to act the part of superior when Amadeus and Geneviève go. (This is, to us, a strange arrangement, but it is understood that Magdalen will soon be transferring her vows to the SHCJ, and she has the experience which the new missionaries lack.)

As Christmas approaches, Amadeus sees that she cannot promise to be back in Rome. What she tells Joseph Dalton, November 1, 1930, gives us some idea of her founding activities:

“I still have to go round the district to arrange finally about schools, etc. and this takes time....Then, the Bishop wants me to visit Onitsha (200 miles) and the missions in the Ibo country, and also go to Ogoja...hardly evangelized at all. I have to see the educational authorities and get them (I hope) to accept the scheme we are drawing up for our schools. Then we want to make a beginning of the native sisters while I am here, just a first stage as ‘aspirants’....” (She receives the first four Handmaids as aspirants on January 15, providing them with a simple Rule.)

And to Giovannino, December 1:

“Having been round the country I shall now have to plan out the whole future scheme of work.”

Amadeus' letters home are rich in detail. She enters a chief's house and can list from memory every object in sight, describing each one in a profusion of particularities. Reduced to the language of facial expression and gestures when confronted with a whole village, she tells of falling back on the fascist salute as the best way to show her joy in meeting them.

In Calabar, on the feast of the Flight into Egypt, February 17 - kept as a celebration for the whole African continent - Amadeus is present as Bp Shanahan lays the foundation stone of the first Holy Child chapel in Africa, built with the \$1000 given by the Cornelia Connelly Association. The inscription reads: “To the glory of God and in Memory of Mother Cornelia Connelly SHCJ, 1931: Take the Child and His Mother and flee into Egypt”. On that day the bishop ‘outlined all that the coming of the Society would mean to the people & especially to the girls and women’, Geneviève records.

Finally, on Easter Sunday, April 5, having had to resist the pull of Africa and having lost part of her

heart to the Nigerian mission, Amadeus sails for England. The ship which lies in the river just below the convent signals its departure with a loud hoot. The trio + 1 is left behind to face the future which will be signed by many small crosses and one big one.

Amadeus will not return to West Africa until January, 1936. In the meantime, she will compose a rule for the Handmaids of the Holy Child and she will have to deal with a great crisis, the precipitous expulsion from the mission of two Holy Child nuns, Edith and Vianney, by Bishop Heerey. This act calls into action in defense of the sisters all Amadeus' heavy ammunition as superior general. A consequence of the crisis is that she has to cope with Magdalen's unexpected decision not to enter the Society after all, and sends new recruits to strengthen the Society's presence and to expand its works.

HER SECOND TERM 1930-1936

We have already seen how Amadeus began her second full term of office, 1930-1936, with a trip to Africa. The African mission together with the promotion of Cornelia's Cause will be the *leitmotifs* of this whole period. In the background is the depression, the Abyssinian War, the Spanish Civil War, the effects of the Lateran Treaty, and the rise of fascism in Italy and of national socialism in Germany. The Second World War is brewing. Each of these world events impinges on Amadeus' awareness and on her government.

With regard to Africa, the Handmaids' novitiate is established at Ifuho, Teresa Xavier Fletcher is put in charge of their formation and Amadeus sends her many pages about the direction this should take. Marie Osmonde will oversee the building of the beautiful chapel there. Fidelis Hothersall is installed as mission superior. With this act the mission settles down, the work expands to new centers and outstations and another era begins.

With regard to Cornelia, Amadeus oversees the publication and translation into four languages of

Marie Osmonde's psychological study. It wins instant acclaim and many friends to Cornelia. Amadeus' general letters are full of instances of people from unexpected quarters rising up to praise Cornelia: "...you have probably heard," she writes in 1932, "of the Rector of the *Petite Seminaire* at Marseilles who has preached seventeen panegyrics on Cornelia Connelly since January." She consults about formally beginning the process of beatification, launches a campaign of prayer for miracles, and rarely fails to weave into her spiritual exhortations Cornelia's words or the words of her Rule. In 1933 the Pylon - the Society magazine - is begun with the double aim of spreading knowledge of Cornelia and interest in the African mission. Contributors include *pezzi grossi* like G.K. Chesterton, C.C. Martindale SJ, Bede Jarrett OP, Pierre Charles SJ, Maurice Baring, Paul Claudel, Ronald Knox, Martin D'Arcy SJ, Cecily Hallack and our own Mary Joachim Forster and St Luke Lynch. The Pylon will have a long and happy run on our little stage. On April 25, 1935, Cornelia's body is exhumed and placed in the beautiful tomb prepared for her in the Mayfield chapel.

In Rome, the community extends its field of activities. It becomes the hearth for many English-speaking people in the city. There is an impressive

number of converts received at 10 VB and a constant recording of first communions and first masses. Students continue to come from the four winds and the lecture series becomes more and more ambitious. 10 VB has almost outgrown itself and a new and larger site is sought. Amadeus' 1st AG, Joseph Dalton, keeper of the house journal, records her own reception of 'Extreme Unction', and dies in Rome of lung cancer in 1935. Amadeus, away in England on visitation writes home: "...she has been a dear and gentle influence in the community, the embodiment of that courtesy, the fine flower of charity, which Mother Cornelia wished her children to possess in all their dealings with others." She is replaced by Maria del Carmen Finlay. New foundations are made, old ones relinquished: Pasadena (1931), Birmingham (1933/1935), St Elizabeth's in New York (1935). Cheyenne is given up in 1933. After the foundation in Africa, the next most important is the Society's first foothold in Ireland. The decision is taken in 1935 to look for a site where Irish aspirants to the African mission can be received. St. John Russell is charged with the search which results, finally, in the foundation of Stamullen.

During this period Amadeus makes three long visitations and one short one: to America, November 1932-July 1933; to Paris and England, December

1933 - February 1934 (this visit is interrupted by the crisis in Anua); to England, November 1934-July 1935; and to Nigeria January - April, 1936. These are long and exhausting journeys, and though Amadeus always longs for Rome and the Villa Rasponi, she never loses her sense of adventure in the present moment.

PERSONAL WRITINGS 1924-1940

Now that we know something of Amadeus through her public, semi-public and more intimate dealings, we presume to invade her inner world where what she says to herself and to her God can be overheard. The Rome archives has a collection of 16 bound notebooks which contain her personal jottings. Four of these are diaries which have daily entries of passing events between 1937 and 1946. These are immensely valuable if one wants to follow her steps. Two are notebooks which record letters written between 1936 and 1944. Geneviève put a little note inside the cover of one: "It was said [of Amadeus] that she did not answer letters. It is possible - I have not got her word for it - that this summary of letters written by her was made in order to satisfy her own conscience that she had not failed in her duty" (1951). The evidence shows that in one year alone, 1936-7, she wrote 960 letters, not counting those sent to Calabar. One other notebook full of addresses and visiting cards shows something of the wide net she cast in friendship. There is also a small diary containing a quotation from Cornelia for each day of the year. At the end, Amadeus adds extracts from many other sources. In another book she keeps notes

of her visit to New Orleans and Grand Coteau in 1926. This is a precious document recording conversations with Sacred Heart nuns who remember Cornelia and Mary Peacock. She records conversations with descendants and friends of Sara Gough and Phoebe, John Henry's nurse. They give chilling first-hand accounts of their slave days as well.

At last we come to the more personal notebooks. The first contains notes of her daily meditations, 1925-35, in English, French, Latin and Italian (she is comfortable in all these languages). At the head of the book she writes: "Retreat, June 10-19, 1925. Resolved to write my meditation every night before going to sleep." This lasts uninterruptedly for 6 weeks, then tails off to resume intermittently until 1935. She is very much in tune with the liturgical year, using scripture or liturgical texts as her point of departure. We hear her on her birthday, 1924:

"43 years of life already gone - nearly 24 in religion. What might I have been now had I been faithful? Thank Him for His loving patience & for His patient love. What can I still be *per Ipsum, cum Ipso et in Ipso*? Ask for Love as a birthday gift. Promise to renounce personal vanity."

This puts in a nutshell the whole tenor of her spiritual life - awareness of failings (especially vanity), desire for union, and love at the center of all. Then we read on July 20: "Month since Retreat. Beginning to slide a little." Time passes and we hear her saying:

"Avendo già Dio messo in cuore a Amadeo di amarlo' [God having put it into Amadeus' heart to love him], God would not give the desire if He did not mean to satisfy it to the full. Let me trade on this/beg it more insistently" (February 1926).

There comes a moment in 1931 when St. John Russell, her 'Giovannino', has told her some home truths:

"Thank Him for showing me the obstacles to His reign in me. What are they? Aloofness, unhuman. Too impersonal. Chilling effect on others - not making friendly feeling in Council. What must I do?

- a. Take individual personal interest in work, concerns, doings of others.
- b. Look friendly & not aloof
- c. Share news & interests
- d. Meet G.A.s every week?"

She is very hard on herself and we read much that is like the following (October 1926): “How much am I letting my life be spoilt by petty larcenies - small self-gratifications? unfaithfulnesses, general sloppiness - shirking self-denial”. Little phrases keep cropping up: ‘Looking straight at God’; ‘to be His chattel’; ‘beating down self-love’; ‘Smile! Don’t look severe & abstracted’; ‘*hic et nunc*’ [do disagreeable things NOW]. In October, 1928 she writes: “Ask to be a true Amadeus....Ask to be worthy of my name.”

As we move on from 1936 to the notebook covering 1937 it is clear that her prayer has changed. She no longer meditates easily on the scriptures and the liturgy, and this worries her. She copies out from Dom John Chapman OSB: “Med. has done its work. It has led the Soul to God and the Soul now wants merely to be with Him, not to think about Him - not even about His Passion - but to think of Him as present here & now.” She talks to Fr. Henry Keane SJ about it:

“H.K. Jan. 26th 38 (i) spiritual doldrums - becalmed - not advancing, quite peaceful but am I getting easy-going and natural? not conscious of ‘practising virtue’. (ii) Path made easy by help & devotion of others, not many obstacles to overcome. Even in the practice of charity I get

back more than I give. (iii) Am I really detached fr. places & people and interesting things? Vanity? Unconsciously getting attached? (iv) Do I take enough trouble? conscious of effort? leading an interior life, a life of prayer & sacrifice? Am I? or not? Scattered and extraverted. (v) Prayer disinclined to meditate or think. Not so much Our Lord as God (Trinity) in my soul. This breaks down at times. Test when travelling - do not take opportunity for anything extra. Part[icular] Ex[amen] Devotions - none except the Mass. Yet drawn to praise and thank God - conscious of His goodness all the time - find Him in nature and in people. Want to do His Will and be used by Him. To serve & please Him in others. Yet I bite off the corners for myself.”

He reassures her:

“H.K. (Jan. 28th 38) 1) All right, not spiritually becalmed. 2) Don’t meditate if you do not find it a help. You have not left O.L.’s life because you do not use it for meditation. 3) God can and will send the cross when He sees it is necessary. 4) Be very faithful in the ordinary duties of Rule, esp. prayer. Breakdown in spiritual things while travelling is due to the travelling (change, movement etc.). 5) Don’t make P.E. if it has ceased to help you. It was intended for eradicating ext[ernal] faults & defects. 6) Take what God sends as it is & give it all back to him in LOVE.”

There is a mysterious little entry early in this notebook. It is a quotation. From what? a letter? a book? Whom is it about? Herself and St. John Russell? There is too much that speaks of their situation for it not to be about them: "The substantial prayer of both was mystical, a high union with God of the centre of the soul through charity, but owing to the more transparent nature of X, this union became conscious in her friend & Superior." An educated guess is that this is Herbert Thurston SJ writing of his two friends in some article or book on spiritual things.

Just as the world's refuse dumps are the archaeological key to how a civilization lived, so the faults a person wants to overcome are a clue to her personality. Amadeus keeps coming back to the same ones. She is constant in her inconstancy, forever fighting against procrastination, aloofness, vacillation, untidiness, vagueness. She catches herself in the overly quick response, the over-eager leap into the conversation to tell what she knows. She tries to curb her need to shine - to cut a *bella figura* and to have the approval of all.

Once when she has recorded a double dose of reality from one of her AGs, she ends, "Jesus, help me!" It is a cry from the heart. And she enjoys quoting some unknown wag: "We cannot be Saints without feeling

we are pigs.” Poor woman. She is at Sharon in 1938, staggering under the weight of a community of 70 or so nuns to see, and she writes:

“Holy Thursday. *Ego egenus sum et pauper sum.* Nothing done for Holy Week - everything haphazard & slipshod. Have acted on impulse instead of principle. Proof that I do much for show. Occasions show what I really am - weak and unstable. *Domine doce me!*”

We must not think that her awareness of these shortcomings makes her morose. Though she is always in ‘need of a pull-up’, she is in fact always pulling up and so she stays even. And her view from the inside is much more drastic than the view from the street.

It is tempting to go on and on quoting her, but further incursions into her private life do not reveal any great change in the basic orientation of her soul or her perennial struggle with her failings and her habit of recording aspects of both. It is enough to say that her prayer seems to become more passive, and her awareness of faults more active.

Besides Amadeus’ close friends in the Society there are at least two devoted (and illustrious) priest

friends who serve as soul companions to her: Henry Keane, a Jesuit, and Thomas Garde, a Dominican. Keane she often consults about Society matters; with Garde she shares her inner life. For many years Garde is the regular weekly confessor to the Roman community. One notes that Amadeus is increasingly attracted to the clean intellectuality of Dominican spirituality. She quotes St. Thomas more and more frequently and seems to find strength in the contemplation of unchanging truth. 'T.E.G.' (Thomas Edward Garde) is a regular entry in her letter books and diaries, and 'Fr. Garde' walks through the house journals at a steady, faithful pace.

It is not necessary to speak of many things when attempting to describe the angle of Amadeus' spiritual bent. It is neatly theological. The God who draws her is triune and dwells within. The Eucharist is the visible, tangible point of entry into the mystery. Christ impresses His being upon the soul and body of the one who removes all obstacles, and so diffuses His presence abroad through her. Yes, Mary is there too, as the one who brings the high mysteries down to earth and shows Amadeus how to humanize them. And that is all.

Two brief quotations from her notes to herself illustrate the above: "Try to say comm[unity] prayer

as well as possible (office & vocal prayer of Rule). For the rest I am stationary - can only turn inward to the Trinity in my soul - Life, Light, Love, Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier, and that seems to satisfy” (Rome, 1940). And: “To diffuse the sweetness & love of Christ - now is the moment; time is passing & I may not have much opportunity left. (How much more I could have done for Granny.) See and bring out the good in others - don’t always fasten on and hammer at their faults, that sometimes destroys personality” (Pasadena, 1937).

It should be said that Amadeus’ apostolic outreach is very great. Under her orchestrating hand ministries to the local people spring up around Villa Rasponi in the Alban Hills. It is her one chance to create a ‘church’ after the image she conceives, and, unwittingly, she becomes for the people there the ‘vicaress’ of Christ.

We have seen something of the notebooks but one would have to handle them to realize that they are a jumble of quotations, addresses and phone numbers, lists of things to do, and personal jottings in ink and pencil, and in her several styles of writing, manuscript and cursive. Her spiritual notes occupy solid blocks of space. Two notebooks are almost entirely in French. One records a retreat given in

February, 1927. It is very indicative that the other is exclusively devoted to excerpts from a study of Elizabeth of the Trinity which she copies out day by day in August/September, 1940. And another contains long passages in French from From the Eucharist to the Trinity by M.V. Bernadot OP. Yet another has a verbatim record of a retreat in 1939 with W. Lawson SJ. There are many short quotations from various authors. They, too, taken together, indicate a certain emphasis on interiority. In her gallery, we also find G.K. Chesterton, Edward Leen, St. Thomas, Maritain, Claudel, Catherine of Siena, Augustine, Garrigou-Lagrange, Surin, Dame Gertrude More, Janet Stuart, Bede Jarrett, Martin D'Arcy, Faber, Ullathorne, Newman, Osuna, John of the Cross, Underhill, Teresa of Avila, Thérèse of Lisieux (she is, for a time, very enthusiastic about her 'little way'). Her extracts, while not un-pious, are theologically dense and chewable rather than sweet to the taste.

CONCLUSION

Although I have poached on the years after 1936 to illustrate this account of Amadeus, it is my intention to stop with her third re-election in that year. The account of her war years would make a book in itself. Readers will want to know, however, how the story ends. So, briefly, Amadeus' third term stretches to ten years - to 1946 - because she and her council decide to stay in Rome and are trapped and isolated by the war. The hardships of these years seriously undermine her health, so that when in 1946 she gives the Society into the hands of Geneviève, she is beginning to lose her memory. There follow 9 years of increasing senility until, at St. Leonards in 1955, she dies a child mentally but in the sight of God a woman grown to full stature. Amadeus: lover of God, loved by God; lover of simple folk and in return, loved and held in reverence by them. And the Society: it is after God, the dearest thing in her life.

I will let her say farewell to us in her own words:

From Stamullen, June 1946:

Carissime,

It is with a very full heart that I come to thank you for your dear letters which brought me your love and gratitude in a measure far beyond what I have deserved.

You have been so faithful to me during the twenty-two years I have been privileged to be your 'Mother', and I shall miss my contact with you sorely. But life is made up of joys & sorrows, and as we grow older we realize better that there is only one thing that really matters - the Will of God in our regard, and our faithful correspondence to it. So I have laid my offering of you all on the altar of sacrifice, in union with our Lord's oblation on the Cross and its mystical renewal in the Mass.

I am very happy that you will have dear Reverend Mother Mary Geneviève to take care of you in my stead. She and I have worked together for many years, and I have a deep affection for her personally and a great esteem for her selflessness and her devotion to duty.

May God bless each one of you and give you all that you need and desire to run with ardour in the Way He has pointed out for US. I count much on the help of your prayers and remain,

Yours lovingly and gratefully in J.C.
Mother Mary Amadeus S.H.C.J.

CRISIS AT ANUA, JUSTICE IN ROME

In these 1990's Catholics have become sadly accustomed to stories of sexual misconduct on the part of Church personnel. In the 1930's such stories were hardly whispered let alone made specific. And the untrue ones had little chance of public refutation.

In 1933 two such untrue stories were told of two Holy Child sisters, early pioneers of the Society's mission to Calabar. Mary Edith Rudwick and Mary Vianney Raverty. Dark rumours gathered around them and, although they were never officially blamed, their innocence was never proclaimed nor made public. A shadow was cast over their lives, and each would have carried to her grave an inner wound that no subsequent vindication could heal.

Of what were they accused? Edith was reported to have had oral sex with one of the African men on the Anua compound. Vianney, on the same compound, was accused of sexually molesting the babies in her care, perhaps causing the death of one of them. Both nuns, ignorant of the charges brought against them, were summarily expelled from the country on orders of the Vicar Apostolic of Southern Nigeria. Later accusations were even more creatively fantastic:

Edith was said to have had a lover, the driver Moses. She met him regularly at the sound of a whistle in the night. She also gave him poison to administer to another man. These stories were simultaneously the culmination of several prior histories and the cause of a subsequent chain of events. Both the prior and the subsequent histories must be laid out if the core event is to be seen in its true light.

This not to say that everything to do with the case can be made clear. People's motives can never be fully judged. The degree of complicity on the part of other actors besides the two principals is unknown. Were the accusations founded on mistaken identity? Were the tales the invention of imaginative malice? Or were the accusers simply mad? The period in question is abundantly documented in the Roman archives of the Society (1), but the archives do not answer all the questions. Often one must conjecture from the trail of circumstantial hints they offer. Because of the complexity of what transpired in Anua, any attempt to unravel the threads will result in over-simplification or distortion, so reader beware.

Why bring this sad episode to light after so many years of making a secret of the real charges against Edith and Vianney? Because others are telling the

story from their own perspective. Examples of extra-Society accounts of the Anua crisis are multiplying, all favourable to the Society. Both Bishop James Moynagh and Bishop Thomas McGettrick, members of St. Patrick's Missionary Society, mention it in their memoirs (2). Thomas Kiggins quoting Bishop McGettrick devotes a long paragraph to it in his recently written Maynooth Mission to Africa (106-7). Therefore it seems opportune to add to the accounts what can be derived from the Society's own archives. A further reason for producing our own account is that between 1934 and 1936 the Society moved heaven and earth to defend the two accused sisters. This chapter of its history is one of its more glorious. Its pursuit of justice deserves to be known within the Society.

It is time, then to proceed up the several trails which lead through the 'bush' to Anua in 1933.

BEGINNINGS

The first path begins up the Cross River in front of Calabar Town at 9:30 a.m. on October 18, 1930. Mary Edith Rudwick (English, 42 years old), Mary Joachim Forster (English, 34) and Mary Laurentia Dalton (American, 28) were welcomed by Rev. M.M. Amadeus Atchison, Superior General, and Rev. M.M. Geneviève France, General Assistant. The last two had gone out on the launch to meet the RMS Appam from which the first three would disembark. On the landing stood Magdalen Walker (English, 49) with her welcoming choir of school children (S3 b.35).

Magdalen Walker had been in Calabar since 1923. She was an Irish Sister of Charity who had transferred her obedience to the Vicar Apostolic of Calabar when she came out alone. The three Holy Child missionaries had become a unit when they met at Holme Hall in Yorkshire to follow a course in tropical nursing prior to sailing. The two Reverend Mothers had been in Nigeria spying out the land for several months with Magdalen as guide. After seven years in Calabar, Magdalen had become a living legend and a recognized educator of the first rank. Her Montessori school in Calabar and her

preparation of young teachers for the school in Anua were already the talk of Nigeria. But she desperately needed to guarantee continuity for her educational scheme and, especially, for the small group of trained African teachers who aspired to the religious life. After several abortive attempts to attract other congregations, she had resorted to Amadeus who had been her dearest school friend at Mayfield and she brought to bear upon her the pressing invitation of Bishop Hinsley, Apostolic Visitor to British Africa. It was agreed that Magdalen would join the Society and break in the newcomers, acting toward them *in loco superioris*. The Society would in turn assume responsibility for her works and be from the outset the beneficiary of her vision and gift.

The three Holy Child missionaries and Magdalen were thus brought into a strangely unconventional relationship, canonically speaking. Technically still an Irish Sister of Charity, Magdalen now owed her obedience to Amadeus and under her had the charge of three professed Holy Child Sisters. All was duly covered by proper rescripts from the Sacred Congregation for Religious and from Propaganda Fide (3). Magdalen would be required to make a six months' novitiate before transferring her vows, but Amadeus, disappointed by the unexpected requirement, asked that it be postponed until

building projects were completed and the new sisters were well into their work under Magdalen's guidance. Her term of office would end in April 1934. Through this arrangement, the Society was able to use Magdalen's talent and experience to establish the SHCJ mission, and Magdalen had the Society's backing to enable her to realize her great dream of bringing to birth an indigenous congregation. But an arrangement which at first seemed practical and beneficial to all concerned began to go wrong because of tension in the group. With the arrival of three additional Holy Child sisters during Magdalen's three-year mandate, further inter-personal complications arose.

Teresa Xavier Fletcher (American, 32 years old) and Mary Vianney Raverty (Irish, 43) arrived in January 1932 and were followed a year later by Marie Osmonde de Maillé (French, 34) who came in March 1933 with a medical team recruited principally by her.

Magdalen as superior and the six early missionaries wrote confidentially and at length to Amadeus and Geneviève. Many of their letters are preserved in the Rome archives and allow one to know, at almost any given moment, how each viewed the work, her SHCJ companions, and her co-workers. By May

1933 the sisters and the ‘medicals’, as they were called, had begun to polarize; and among the sisters subtle factions had formed around Magdalen on the one hand and Edith on the other.

Another excellent insight into what had gone on over the two-and-a-half years is found in Geneviève’s report to Amadeus, written after visiting the mission in November 1933 (S4 f.53-4). She had come at the sisters’ request as special visitor with discretionary powers. In her meticulous way she interviewed each person on the scene, including the Vicar Apostolic and the medicals, and recorded their observations (S4 e.45,48-52).

In general, it can be said that scruples of conscience over the irregular canonical situation, exaggerated loyalty to Society traditions, and a growing antipathy toward Magdalen put Edith, stationed at Anua, at odds with Magdalen in Calabar. Highly competent and thorough, Edith was also a worrier. It was said that she would have been ready to appeal to church authorities had the Society not taken steps to put things right (S3 g.176).

Joachim, who lived with Magdalen in Calabar, justifiably admired her superior. She took on the self-appointed role of *alter ego* and echo to

Magdalen's every opinion. Her overly loyal defense of Magdalen alienated the others and resulted in her own isolation.

Laurentia, the youngest in the group, put a foot wrong in each camp. Innocent, pretty, impulsive, generous, highly sensitive and very zealous, she was taken to task by Edith for being too friendly with the young Maynooth priests and by Magdalen for presuming permissions, once or twice with disastrous effects. Laurentia loved the work and the people and was greatly loved but she was often teary and ill.

All three took to the work with enthusiasm and each was successful in her own sphere. It was the dynamic among them and around Magdalen, as well as their separation from accustomed sources of affective support, which made for trouble.

When Vianney and Teresa Xavier arrived there was temporary relief and work was redistributed. Vianney had been trained in dispensary work and was destined for Anua but she began more comfortably at Calabar. The oldest in the SHCJ group, she was nevertheless insecure in herself and timid. She was subject to mood swings - up one day, down the next. Everyone appreciated her goodness and loved her, but she was difficult to be with for

any length of time. She gradually overcame her feeling of strangeness with Magdalen and was able to benefit from her kind understanding. In the light of subsequent events, she finished by questioning Magdalen's motives (S3 e.36).

Teresa Xavier, a cheerful, even person, a rock of common sense, was posted to Anua and was gradually drawn into Edith's orbit. She had complained to Magdalen of Edith's habit of criticism, but after a time she could not stand out against it and temporarily lost some of her natural joy and objectivity.

It is sad to see how such good people, could, with the best of intentions, make one another so miserable.

Osmonde was the last to come upon the scene. She seems to have stood alone in the group and brought to it the objectivity of the late-comer. She was a French aristocrat, a duchess in quest of absolute poverty and total givenness to God. She took to Africa as to her native soil. In herself Osmonde exhibits all the traits of the '4' on the enneagram. She is special: her name is 'written in heaven'. She is creative: she has an idea a minute about the mission. She has an interior life with God which is

eventful and dramatic. Osmonde's letters to Amadeus, her spiritual mentor, are embarrassingly personal, charting as they do her highest aspirations and deepest desolations. Upon arrival she instantly picked up the tension in the group and named it 'fear of Magdalen'. But further exposure to Magdalen revealed another person with the same passion for God as herself, and Osmonde loved her for it. She was never blind to Magdalen's idiosyncrasies - her orders and counter orders, her orders meant as suggestions and suggestions meant as orders. But Osmonde could dive below the oddities of personality to recognize a kindred spirit. One has the impression that between them roles gradually reversed themselves, with Osmonde finally becoming Magdalen's confidante.

All six SHCJ were newcomers to the tropics. The first five found the physical adjustment difficult. Both Magdalen and Osmonde noted the effect of the climate on their nerves. Reactions normally under control were brought to the surface and exaggerated by heat, dampness, insects, fevers, dysentery, toothache, sleeplessness and change of diet. Osmonde alone seems never to have been ill. It would be no act of fancy to name the climate as a protagonist in the crisis which was to blow up in Anua and bring down disaster upon Edith and Vianney.

MAGDALEN WALKER

A second path also begins in Calabar. Magdalen Walker arrived there in 1923. An enigmatic figure to many, she stands at the center of all that led up to Anua in 1933. For that reason it is necessary to devote space to her here (4).

Magdalen went to Nigeria as the *protégée* of the fabled Bishop Shanahan, CSSp, Vicar Apostolic of Southern Nigeria, Shanahan saw her as the one to start the missionary congregation which was to become the Holy Rosary Sisters. As it happened, the women who were ready to begin and who had been working in Calabar for some time returned to Ireland to begin their novitiate there under Dominican sisters. Magdalen was left for 4 months with Mary Martin, another Mayfield friend, who had decided not to join the others. (Mary was later to spend two years with the Holy Rosary Sisters then leave to become founder of the Medical Missionaries of Mary.) Then Magdalen was alone until the Society took up the mission in 1929-30. This was agreeable to her because she really preferred solitude to the company of others. The one pole star of Magdalen's firmament was and remained the irrevocable dedication of herself to the African mission (5). But

as late as 1933 she was still hoping that her own Irish Sisters of Charity would come out to support her with a foundation in Nigeria. Between times, there is the whole history which brought the Holy Child Sisters to Nigeria instead.

It is clear from documents in the archives of the Irish Sisters of Charity that Bishop Shanahan had repeatedly tried to enlist that congregation for Southern Nigeria. But over and over the superior general refused, principally on the basis of there being no suitable person among them to lead the venture. That, of course, suggests that she did not deem Magdalen (then Sr. M. Charles) a possible candidate although she had volunteered after meeting Shanahan in 1919 and for four years had cherished the hope that her congregation would finally accept Shanahan's invitation. When it was clear that he would not ask again after so many rebuffs, she took the decision to ask leave of absence to go alone.

There are various interpretations of what the understanding of this 'leave' meant. Her superior general made it clear that mission to a foreign country was for life. She did not expect Sr. M. Charles to return ever, although she facilitated her going.

Magdalen understood that she was going to Africa for life and was never to return - which was also her own desire. She was still technically an Irish Sister of Charity on leave of absence whose obedience was, for the time being, to Shanahan. Nevertheless the Irish Sisters were good to her, sending her materials for her work. And Magdalen continued to correspond with the superior general and several of the sisters in Ireland.

Shanahan understood 'leave' to mean that Magdalen was now a permanent subject of the Vicar Apostolic and at his disposal for his plan to found a missionary congregation. In 1926 his first plan for her was switched to the founding of an indigenous congregation.

The archbishop of Dublin and the Vicar General of Westminster gave the rescript its official interpretation. It was 'in no way a dispensation from vows or permission to leave the congregation permanently'. The SCR was trying to protect her lest she be 'thrown out on the world' should the project fail (6).

Amadeus understood 'leave' in yet another way. When Magdalen looked to the Society to assure the future of her educational scheme and of the

indigenous sisterhood, Amadeus expected that, with the proper indult, Magdalen would subsequently become free to transfer her vows from the Irish Sisters of Charity to the Society and that it was Magdalen's unconditional intention to do so. And unofficially she gave Magdalen to understand that she would be allowed to spend the rest of her life in Africa.

There were only two things on Magdalen's agenda: remaining in Africa for the rest of her life and bringing to birth the indigenous congregation. When Amadeus and Geneviève first went to Calabar in the autumn of 1930, met Magdalen and saw what she had done, they were overcome with admiration for this amazing missionary. She had put down a very solid base upon which the Society could build and which dispelled all doubts about the chances of success for the Society's mission. It was an obvious step to place Magdalen as guardian angel over the first three recruits who would need to learn as quickly as possible what Magdalen could teach them. But for the unexpected condition laid down by the SCR late in 1930 that Magdalen should make a six months' novitiate before transferring her perpetual vows to the Society, Magdalen would have become a member of the Society on Epiphany 1931 in the presence of Amadeus, Geneviève and the first three missionaries.

It is interesting to speculate on how this might have changed the course of history. As it happened she had, as an Irish Sister of Charity, to take on the apostolic and spiritual guidance of three women deeply formed in another tradition, a tradition she knew only from the outside as a pupil at Mayfield. In fairness to her it must be said that she put herself heart and soul into the task, keeping Amadeus minutely informed of the progress of the mission and of the health and well-being of the sisters confided to her, and whom she sincerely loved in the Lord.

But Magdalen was never made for such a task. Socially inept, she could not manage the casual exchanges of everyday life. Her bent was toward a solitary interiority. Intensely prayerful and mortified, she unconsciously set rigid standards which felt alien to the Holy Child sisters. And, never having had much skill in living a community life, she had no idea how to create a spirit of ease and joy in the group. She had never had to bring others into her plan, nor explain her mind; she had simply acted and gotten things under way. Accustomed to working alone and giving executive orders, she continued in this mode. Sometimes vague, sometimes forgetful and absent-minded, sometimes peremptory or contradictory, she became an enigma

for those who owed obedience to her. These traits were compounded by frequent bouts of ill health and imprudently meagre diet. Magdalen's forte was education. With young people and children her skills were unsurpassed.

By April-May 1933, Magdalen was feeling too much hostility from Edith and too little confidence on the part of the others to go ahead with joining the Society. After all, were she to join she would find herself committed for life to an incompatible group since by her vow she was never to leave Africa. It is at this point that it becomes difficult to read her intentions and understand her actions.

Here one should remember that Magdalen's immediate superior was Amadeus. Yet not until July did she tell her of her decision not to enter the Society. There was no discernment with her, no laying out of pros and cons, just the stated fact: she had decided. Before this, other factors had weighed in the balance. The medical team of three - doctor, pharmacist and nurse - working in Anua, had begun to chafe under the umbrella of the Society and wanted more and more control - over space, over finances, over supplies, over their indigenous helpers. Magdalen on her occasional visits would settle them by acceding to their requests, thus

seeming to undermine the authority of those SHCJ on the Anua compound who were only trying to honor the mutually agreed arrangement between medicals and the SHCJ (S4 a f). The medicals' growing hostility toward the nuns on the spot ultimately became generalized to include Magdalen as well.

Another factor may have confirmed Magdalen's decision not to join the Society. On June 25, 1933, Bishop Heerey, Shanahan's successor as Vicar Apostolic, went to Anua to bless and officially open the hospital at Anua. In the evening he spoke to Magdalen and asked her to take charge of the Handmaids and become their novice mistress since permission had just come from Rome to open the novitiate. Had Magdalen already confided to Heerey her decision not to join the Society? Does that explain why he did not first consult Amadeus whose 'subject' she was? How much had Magdalen told Heerey of the tension between herself and Edith, for instance? The archives do not offer answers. If Magdalen were not to join the Society, and because she was already 'vowed' to the African mission, here was a task which would keep her in Nigeria indefinitely. "Nothing could have made me happier than the present arrangement and the knowledge that I shall spend the rest of my life with my dear native

children,” she immediately wrote to the superior general of the Irish Sisters of Charity (7). And she asked her for copies of the constitutions, customal and novices’ guide so as to model the Handmaids’ rule on their own.

Here it must be noted that Amadeus had sent Holy Child sisters to Calabar at the expressed wish of Bishop Hinsley precisely to carry forward Magdalen’s beginnings with the Handmaids (S2 a.3). When Amadeus understood that now Magdalen wanted the Society to back her up as novice mistress to the Handmaids even after she had separated herself from it, she made clear that such a plan could not work. Rome would probably not sanction it since the SCR would consider her position as an ‘unattached’ religious anomalous. Furthermore, the different training and spirit would create confusion for the Handmaids. Either the Society or the Vicar Apostolic would have to assume complete responsibility for them (S2 b.118).

Now, the alternatives for Magdalen were either to quit the field and join a contemplative order (which indeed was her natural bent) and so continue to offer her life for the mission, or to find another way to guarantee continuity to the Handmaids. At this point both she and the Vicar Apostolic wrote to the Irish

Sisters of Charity to send help. An abrupt cable replied: 'Cannot accept'. It is not clear at what point Magdalen told her six SHCJ charges that she would not be joining. She certainly confided her decision secretly to Vianney and Osmonde. Amadeus informed the Society of Magdalen's decision by letter on February 18, 1934 (S4 g.55). By then Magdalen had gone from Nigeria leaving the Handmaids in Holy Child hands. Prior to her going Osmonde had written on her behalf to a Carmelite friend whose convent was thinking of making a foundation in Africa but nothing came of it.

It was Magdalen's fate to be misinterpreted by those who wished her well and those who wished her ill. There are two possible ways to view her maneuverings between making her decision in April/May not to join the Society and her departure. She can be cast in the role of betrayer who underhandedly and secretly tried to wrest control of the Handmaids from the Society to guarantee her own permanence in Africa, and was foiled. Or she can be seen as a heroically selfless woman who was willing to sacrifice herself and her own hopes in order to smooth the Society's path and guarantee the future of the little band she had gathered round herself. Fr. Kilmartin was one of those who construed her part in the Anua crisis as a

complicitous move to be rid of the Holy Child sisters (S5 a.16). And there were those who took her word for it that she was as shocked and distressed by it as were Amadeus and Geneviève. This writer takes sides with Osmonde who writes of Magdalen on September 17, 1933:

Most people think in and on lines. S [Magdalen] thinks in space, and when people say she's changed her line, it's not quite true. She never had one! And it is disconcerting *au premier abord*. And she meets emergencies almost too well!! But it's I think rather concentration on the present moment than anything else, though the other and uglier interpretation may seem more obvious (S3 g.176).

THE 'MEDICALS'

A third trail begins in Belgium in the 1920's (8). There Lubov Lengaouer ('Luba') teamed up with Marie Madeleine D'Hondt ('Quick'). Luba was a Russian refugee from the Bolsheviks whose father had been governor of Archangel. A Catholic convert from the Orthodox church, Luba had done her medical studies in Belgium and met Quick there when she nursed her through meningitis. Quick gave out so many versions of her own story that nothing definitive can be said of her background. Osmonde thought that Quick's father had been a merchant in precious stones and that Quick had been forced to leave home penniless when she refused to marry the man chosen for her, but this proved to be untrue (S3 f.137). Certain it is that Quick was a native Belgian, a skilled bacteriologist and a good administrator. She held an important post as head of the laboratory of the faculty of medicine in Lille. Both Luba and Quick had moved in Catholic circles in Belgium and enrolled as volunteers in the lay medical mission movement. They were keen to devote themselves to medical work in some deprived part of the world and had almost committed themselves to a mission with another congregation when they met Holy Child. By the autumn of 1931 Quick was already corresponding with Osmonde.

Osmonde had gone from Rome to Fribourg in May 1931. From there she set about the task of providing a medical component for the African mission. Quick was one of the people she contacted, Luba another. She wrote to Quick in Lille to ask her about recruiting a nurse for Calabar and about the sending of medical supplies with the next wave of SHCJ missionaries. She also gave Quick pamphlets and articles about Cornelia and the Society's mission. Charmed with what she read, Quick said that she and Luba would go to Calabar themselves were it not for financial constraints and family obligations (Luba, 32, was supporting émigré parents). But she offered to go to Fribourg in her free months - January, February - to teach Osmonde something about colonial medicine. She also wanted to see SHCJ life up close. So Quick stayed as a guest at Villa Beata (Fribourg), and before long was thinking seriously of going to Calabar with Luba. At the time, Quick was young (24), fervent, and leaning towards religious life. In July, Luba and Quick were both in Fribourg for an international missionary congress. Amadeus met them there . It is probably then that she worked out with them the terms of their contract and decided to mission Osmonde to Calabar.

In August the formal two-year contract was signed by all parties. According to its terms, the Society undertook to provide generously for Luba's parents

during her absence, and to give room and board as well as a monthly stipend to the medicals. In addition, the Society underwrote their passage out and back and much incidental equipment. The larger sums and expenses would be paid from monies collected by the team in Switzerland, France, Belgium and England. To this end, during the last half of 1932, Osmonde, Luba and Quick criss-crossed Europe, 'questing' and giving talks about Africa. Between times, Osmonde followed a tropical medicine course in Lille and served an apprenticeship in the Montessori method in London. And she learned how to sole shoes, throw pots, and set up a loom. Quick lectured in Fribourg and studied midwifery. Luba continued her practice, studied dentistry, accompanied Osmonde in Lille, and went with her to England. Two more volunteers were added to the unit: Madeleine Hennion (who at the last minute was prevented from going by ill health) and Wilhelmine Schwaller (Swiss, 32) - both nurses.

In early November, the four laywomen went to Rome, stayed at Via Boncompagni under Amadeus' wing and, dressed in their mission uniforms, were received in a private audience by Pius XI. Luba and Quick were made Children of Mary in the convent chapel. Osmonde's name is conspicuously absent in the convent journal. A small revealing note in Amadeus' hand made after 1935 reads : 'Nov. 1932, Rome -

accusations against MMO. [Osmonde] Anxiety of M.M.G [Geneviève] obliged to alter arrangement' (S 4 i.17). This no doubt refers to Luba's and Quick's request that Osmonde have nothing to do with the medical side of the work in Nigeria.

During the months prior to departure, the relationship between Osmonde and the medicals had gone from good to precarious. It may be that Osmonde's aristocratic family connections and her French ways irked the two Belgians (one by birth, one by adoption) (S4 m.117). Whatever the root cause of the friction, it is clear from the medicals' letters to Rome that as adult 'professionals' they chafed under the thumb of a nun - and one barely older than themselves.

Osmonde took it for granted that she was the leader of the unit. She expected, and had been pressed by Quick, to work with them in Nigeria. So it was a bitter disappointment for her to be told by Amadeus that the medicals had expressly asked that she not be involved - she who had done so much to organize the venture. But the medicals had a way of slipping into their letters criticisms dressed up as pieties. They were plausible and persuasive and Amadeus and Geneviève were quite taken in by them.

Osmonde, for her part, had seen enough of Luba and

Quick during her two months with them in Lille to warn Amadeus of their tendency to get their own way by using one person against another. Quick, she observed, could get anything out of Luba. She also caught glimpses of their readiness to see nuns in a bad light (S3 g.160).

Here it should be noted that according to the Colonial Office in London, the medicals would be allowed to practice only because the Society was assuming responsibility for the unit as 'proprietors' and 'governing board'. Not having British diplomas, they could not receive salaries in a British colony. So the very terms of their engagement with the Society would necessarily place them in a position of dependence, one calculated to bring out their natural resentments.

In response to representations and complaints from Osmonde on the one side and the medicals on the other, and in order to make the relationship of the medicals to the Society absolutely clear, Amadeus drew up a document 'to secure the complete professional independence of the medical unit, while defining their collaboration with the Sisters' (*emphases hers*) (S4 a e).

The traits which Osmonde had noticed in Luba and Quick in Lille gradually revealed themselves and became magnified after their arrival in Calabar in

March 1933. They spent the first three months there while their house in Anua was being made ready. At first they were thrilled with everything and everyone, especially with Magdalen whom they praised unreservedly. This natural affinity between themselves and Magdalen laid the ground for what would follow. In Anua they would meet with what they interpreted as interference from Edith and Vianney, and claim that Magdalen was the only one who understood what Amadeus really intended for them in the way of professional autonomy. In Calabar, immediately and successfully, they set to work examining the boarders and day pupils as well as the mothers and babies, and there seemed to be no problems.

When the medicals went to Anua in June they entered their 'kingdom'. This was their destined medical center and they had big dreams for it. Almost at once they began planning how the convent and the school buildings might be converted to medical purposes, notwithstanding the presence of the nuns - Vianney, Edith and Teresa Xavier. They would need more instruments, they said, more supplies, and more financial security. Petty conflicts blew up with the two on the compound, Edith and Vianney. And the trouble was always attributed to the nuns' fatigue and nervousness. Luba even proposed that all the nuns be sent on leave 'because all of them are immeasurably

tired' (S4a d). But the real villain and cause of conflict was represented to be Osmonde in Calabar. Out of rancor for not being allowed to work with them she had turned against them, Luba wrote to Amadeus. In a long letter of complaint, which Magdalen encouraged her to write, Luba devoted six pages to Osmonde's character. She was a liar, a psychotic, she sought personal glory, she lacked modesty, she fomented intrigue and all was confirmed with examples and laced with humble regrets and piety. Even if all were true, the letter would be a poisonous piece of slander. But Amadeus was sufficiently impressed to wonder privately about Osmonde's state of mind. This is but one example of how time and again the medicals played Magdalen against the nuns, pouring into her ears the grievances she then persuaded them to write to Amadeus.

Geneviève's arrival to look into the tension between Magdalen and the nuns, and her interviews with the medicals and with the bishop, revealed that the medicals had already told the bishop they wanted to break their contract with the Society and come under his authority. (And what else had they told him?) Circumstances had already guaranteed them autonomy *vis à vis* the Society because on the eve of Geneviève's arrival they had delivered into the bishop's ear their crowning accusations. Whether they had calculated these strategies or not, the field was now theirs.

BISHOP HEERY

A fourth trail starts in Onitsha, ecclesiastical center of the Southern Region of Nigeria. Charles Heerey was installed there as coadjutor to Shanahan in 1928 and had been Shanahan's own choice to succeed him. A Holy Ghost Father, Irish and 36 years old when ordained bishop, Heerey had gone to bed in distress for two days when he learned of his appointment. That he was 'deep down a shy and sensitive person' is attested by one of his priests (9). He was also very prayerful, which may explain why earlier he had been made director of the new seminary for Nigerian priests.

Bishop Hinsley had made it clear to Amadeus in 1930 that Shanahan would have to be replaced, so it was Heerey to whom the Society would look as local Ordinary in Nigeria. Although Shanahan actually retired in July 1931, he stayed on in Nigeria until April 1932, creating an awkward situation for Heerey who never felt in charge when Shanahan, a sort of 'Great White Father', was anywhere near. But in any case, just as Shanahan as Vicar Apostolic was on his way out, Heerey had to remove himself from the scene because he fell ill and stayed away from Nigeria for over a year. This meant that,

practically speaking, Magdalen Walker and the Holy Child sisters were left to get on with the work without reference to the local Ordinary until as late as October 1932. With the exception of Magdalen, Heerey barely knew the sisters and had no personal grasp of their situation. Even after his return, he was up country in Onitsha, 200 difficult miles away, and his visits were few, although Edith remembered him as approving and kindly up to June 1933 (S4 m.118). Two more sisters had arrived during his absence, but he seemed not to know of Vianney's existence even after she had been in the country for over a year (S2 b.106).

Heerey and Amadeus corresponded. They had met briefly in Nigeria and remained in contact as Ordinary and Superior General. The tone of their letters, while friendly, does not suggest real friendship. One exchange concerned the medical unit which was being recruited. Heerey was keen to include a medical mission in his pastoral scheme, so he welcomed the Society's initiative. Though he gave some specific directives about securing approval for the medical team from the Colonial Office, he made no mention of a contract between the unit and himself (S2 a.44). He would later complain of his authority being by-passed.

One has the impression from what Heerey said in letters and did under pressure that he was a naively earnest young man, sincere and pious, but overwhelmed by complex administrative responsibilities for which he had not been trained. He did not have the freedom of mind to think deeply about any given problem and rushed unthinking into solutions which he would later have to reverse. The Anua crisis was to reveal an essential weakness of character which led him to seek a short-term cover-up to prevent a local scandal. In the long term the scandal would become international and be laid at his own door.

Heerey's character is reflected rather negatively in the impressions others had of him. Magdalen Walker knew him before his consecration as bishop, but only later through her dealings with him did she have grounds on which to base her comments. It is in her letters to Amadeus that one catches an undertone of mistrust of Heerey. He is 'difficult'; he does not keep confidences; he is 'hasty in action and in speech'; he has 'sacrificed the welfare' of the young Maynooth priests to 'save the good name of his own congregation'. 'He makes very contradictory statements in various quarters'; he is 'in bad odour with the government for making imprudent statements in writing then having to withdraw them

& apologize'. (S2 b.69,88,92,93,101,104,111). Yet Magdalen told him before telling Amadeus that she would not be joining the Society. What Heerey learned about the inner dynamics of the SHCJ community would have come from her. Certainly Edith's name would already be ringing in his memory with a negative resonance when the Anua scandal broke.

Shanahan saw Heerey as 'a man of sterling spiritual value. That's everything,' he said. But it was not enough to make Shanahan feel affection for him (10). The young Maynooth men found him a hard taskmaster (11). Heerey's confrère in the episcopacy, James Moynagh, was a close friend. So it was not enmity which made him say that Heerey was 'narrow in his thinking' and 'a man of very limited vision'. Moynagh once had occasion to experience Heerey's narrowness when an innocent encounter with a sister was misrepresented. 'From that onwards I was careful of Archbishop Heerey,' he said.

In 1933, Heerey was back in Nigeria only six months or so when he came to know of Magdalen Walker's decision not to enter the Society. His dealings with her at this point became equivocal and inconsistent, and they form a kind of backdrop to

Geneviève's visit which would take place in November.

Heerey was personally concerned for the future of the Handmaids and had secured from Rome approval for their foundation. But he forgot that the Society too, in answering Hinsley's invitation to go to Calabar, had assumed responsibility for the future of the Handmaids. Knowing of Magdalen's decision to separate herself from Holy Child and perhaps unconsciously thinking the Handmaids were her charge rather than the SHCJ's, he assumed that she was the obvious person to take on their formation. On July 25 he asked her to do just that. We hear of this meeting in the letter she wrote a week later to the superior general of the Irish Sisters of Charity. Presumably thinking Magdalen was now under his authority in all but name, he approved her contacting the Irish Sisters, thus entering into a double game with the two congregations and with Magdalen.

He kept Magdalen on the line by seeming to nourish her cherished hope that she would be able to remain in Africa with the Handmaids *in perpetuum*, and he tried through her to lure the Irish Sisters to Nigeria to give stability to the foundation. At the same time, he strung the Society along by asking Amadeus to back Magdalen with the Handmaids even after her

separation from it. When both congregations said 'No', he discarded Magdalen and left her to her fate, falling back on the Holy Child sisters to train the Handmaids. To the Irish Sisters he had written of Magdalen: 'I feel she is still needed here' (13). To Amadeus he wrote, 'I think you know how anxious I have always been that she should return to Europe' (S4 c.17).

Geneviève was coming in November. She would pass on to Heerey Amadeus' message that until Magdalen's indult of 1930/31 was revoked by her own act she would 'still remain in the position of an SHCJ subject' (S4 d.4). But by then Heerey would, by his own act, have made Magdalen an accomplice, albeit an unwilling one, in the Anua crisis.

ST. PATRICK'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY

A final path begins alongside that of the three Holy Child sisters who disembarked in Calabar in 1930. Five newly-ordained Maynooth men and two more from Meath got off the same boat and scattered to the various missions assigned to them by Shanahan - Calabar, Anua, Ifuho, Oran, Essene. They had been recruited by Patrick Whitney who had just received permission from Propaganda Fide to found St. Patrick's Missionary Society *ad experimentum*. Notwithstanding the fact that Whitney was still the only member of the incipient Society, he hoped that this first band of missionaries would eventually sign up. Young and inexperienced as they were, three of them were destined for distinction: James Moynagh and Thomas McGettrick would become bishops and Patrick Costelloe the superior general of the St. Patrick's fathers. Also in the group was an older man, Michael Kilmartin, who would play a part in the Anua crisis.

Whitney had lured these men out to Nigeria on a set of shaky premises. They were led to expect financial support and the presence of experienced mentors, the veteran Holy Ghost fathers. But very soon after their arrival Shanahan moved the Holy Ghost men

up country leaving the newcomers to fend for themselves. There was no single person in charge of them. Thomas Ronayne who had been in Calabar since 1920 was an obvious person to name as superior of the group but he and Whitney had quarrelled and become estranged. There had been no attempt to give the men a mission orientation prior to their going, and there was no pastoral plan to fit into. Each priest was on his own to manage as he saw fit. Nor was there any guarantee of continuity in the mission stations nor any set way of proceeding. Only the exceptional personal qualities of those sent out saved the venture from failure. The bonds of fellowship forged at Maynooth and on the voyage out held them together (14). This situation became a great bone of contention for both Amadeus and Magdalen Walker because these were the priests on whom the sisters and the success of their mission would depend.

In the Roman archives of the SHCJ there are two files containing very strong letters to Hinsley and Heerey from Amadeus and Magdalen Walker deploring the situation of the young priests and begging for prompt intervention. They cover the years 1931-1934 (S2 a b). There is little doubt that these letters were influential in shaping policies which affected the St. Patrick's men. Magdalen was

distressed as well by the absence of experienced confessors and spiritual directors and ran a campaign to recall from France Fr. Biechy, CSSp, who had built up the mission in Anua. Failing this, she angled for other men of her own designation. Word of her preference for the CSSp's reached the young volunteers and annoyed them. Magdalen was twice their age and vastly more experienced. This fact, coupled with her aloof and condescending manner further alienated the men and did not help relations between them and the Holy Child sisters.

One man, Michael Kilmartin, stationed at Anua, became embroiled in SHCJ inter-community affairs. He was going through some personal crisis and sought solace with Laurentia. Laurentia for her part was having a hard time with Edith who simply took over every project and left Laurentia with no work to call her own. Either Edith's behavior drove Laurentia in Kilmartin's direction or the sympathy between Kilmartin and Laurentia so worried Edith that she made life even more difficult for Laurentia. The upshot was that Magdalen changed Laurentia to Calabar; that Kilmartin was furious with Edith and Magdalen; and that Laurentia went through a sort of crisis of obedience. A showdown in Calabar between Walker and Kilmartin just before Kilmartin went on leave partly cleared the air. But Kilmartin, naturally

prejudiced against Edith, would return and find himself involved in the Anua crisis. Two other St. Patrick's fathers, Costelloe and Whitney, were to play an ambiguous role when, for the sake of a possible government grant to the medicals, they appealed the verdict of Propaganda Fide.

Notwithstanding the internal dissension in both groups and the cross-currents of attraction and antipathy, the Holy Child sisters and the young priests were generally on terms of mutual friendship and support. After all, they had sailed to Africa together as neophytes and had formed a bond. It was this basic sense of mutual loyalty which made it possible for the relationship to survive the effects of the Anua crisis.

ANUA

Five distinct but interconnected paths led to Anua, scene of the action, in late 1933. A brief note on Anua is in order. The mission was opened with a resident priest in 1914 under the then Prefect Apostolic, Joseph Shanahan. Until that point it had been a simple outstation of Calabar. Although Anua compound became the Catholic showplace of southern Nigeria, there was a great need yet to be met - education for girls. In 1929 Magdalen Walker opened a small school in Anua using as teachers several of the young women aspirants to religious life (future Handmaids) whom she had trained in Calabar in the Montessori method. She visited the school once a month to supervise the work. When Edith and Laurentia went to Anua in 1930 they took over the school and developed the mission to include a small dispensary, a unit for girls 'who needed protection and rehabilitation' and a *crèche* for outcast twins. From Anua the sisters visited a number of outstation schools and opened a second dispensary in Ekot Ene. As dispensary work increased, the need for a full-fledged medical service became ever more urgent. Bishop Heerey and Magdalen Walker promoted the recruitment of nurses in Europe and dreamed of opening a small

hospital in Anua. Osmonde in Europe recruited, organized and helped fund a team of three medical professionals, and so brought the dream to realization. In July 1933, Anua became the proud center of the Holy Child medical mission with a proper hospital under construction. By October 1933, the medical work was flourishing but the team's connection with Holy Child had become strained and tenuous.

THE CRISIS: HEEREY, EDITH, VIANNEY, GENEVIÈVE

The stage is now set and the actors are to some extent known. The account of what happened will proceed on the evidence given by the different actors at different moments in the unfolding of the argument.

As early as August 1933 hints of a crisis appear. Teresa Xavier reported to Amadeus a conversation with Heerey which took place some eight months after the events of which he spoke. Heerey said that in August 1933, Fr. Phil O'Connor CSSp was in Anua for the priests' retreat and the 'medicals saw him' there. Later they went down to Port Harcourt to confession and it was then that O'Connor urged them to 'make a clean breast of it to the Bishop', and Luba wrote to Heerey to arrange an appointment with him in Anua as soon as possible. Around the same time, Magdalen also wrote to Heerey asking him to meet her in Anua because there was 'serious trouble between the medicals and the nuns'. The bishop was busy up country but he finally got to Anua in early October and wired Magdalen to come. 'He then heard the difficulty.' At the same time, Luba saw him and 'did as Father O'C had told her'.

Heerey says he asked Luba if she wanted him to help her 'and when she answered in the affirmative, he told her that she would have to give him permission to use the information which she had given him which Dr. L. consented to do' (S8 d.89). There was, it would appear, some grave issue to report.

Edith too, writing to Amadeus, said that Vianney remembered that the day of the conversations with Heerey was October 19, that Luba spent 2 hours with him and that later he and Magdalen looked over plans for a noviceship for the Handmaids at Anua. Vianney, she said, noticed how changed Heerey's manner to her was. 'Perhaps that evening had been the beginning of the libels', she quoted Vianney as saying (S4 m.119). Vianney herself, writing to Amadeus on the 22nd, three days after the 'conversation', felt that Magdalen was secretly planning with Heerey a sort of *coup* over the Handmaids and that she had successfully prejudiced the bishop against the sisters (S3 e.136).

Osmonde takes up the story from her perspective in Calabar. On the night of October 30, Luba sent a telegram to Magdalen in Calabar to say that Quick badly needed a change and would be coming for two days. Magdalen was irked because she was

preparing the rooms for Geneviève and Fidelis (the new superior), expected on the 5th of November. Quick reached Calabar tired and agitated the afternoon of the next day. Magdalen was called away, so Quick latched onto Osmonde and, walking up and down the compound, began a diatribe against Fr. Kilmartin. When Magdalen returned, Quick and she talked for a while before supper and they continued the conversation after night prayers, Quick having called Magdalen out of the chapel. Osmonde stayed on to make a Holy Hour and so was in chapel when Magdalen returned and threw herself on her knees sobbing. Osmonde asked if she could do anything to help but Magdalen answered, "No, go to bed...if only people could be proved mad". A little later Osmonde approached her again and this time was told, "Oh do pray, Rev. M. General will break her heart".

Next day, Magdalen went with Quick to see Fr. Meehan at the mission. The reason given by Magdalen was that Quick needed to go to confession. Magdalen told Osmonde not to credit whatever Quick told her and that she was better left alone. But Quick did collar Osmonde and spoke to her about each nun in turn: Vianney was nervy and uneven but holy; Laurentia was '*une enfant*' and not responsible with men; Teresa Xavier was good and thoughtful of

people; Edith was a good missionary but not a good nun - she opposed Magdalen. Quick had been angry with Osmonde herself but she was still a good nun. Osmonde later told Magdalen that she felt something was decidedly wrong with Quick. To which Magdalen replied, "If only one could prove to be mad people who said certain things" (S4 e.49).

Now Teresa Xavier picks up the thread. She said that Quick returned to Anua with Fr. Meehan on November 2 and that Meehan went on to Onitsha from Anua to talk to Heerey (S4 p.144). (Edith remembered that Quick was perfectly pleasant to her at this point.) On November 4 Edith and Vianney went to Calabar to welcome Geneviève and Fidelis. On the 5th, while the visitors were landing in Calabar, Heerey was in Anua interviewing the medicals for three hours (S4 p.144). Teresa Xavier learned later that Quick had threatened Heerey: she would take the case to the civil courts. This so alarmed Heerey, obsessed with fear of scandal, that he got Quick to promise not to do it because he would 'settle the whole matter' (S4 p.144). Heerey returned for a second conversation with the medicals the following morning (S8 d.87).

Geneviève continues the story. At 6:00 p.m. the same day Meehan arrived at the convent in Calabar

with a letter for Geneviève from Heerey. It commanded her to send Edith and Vianney home by boat the next day, November 7 (S4 I.81). On November 7 Geneviève sent a special messenger to Heerey to explain the impossibility of sending the nuns away so quickly and she asked his reason for the command. A telegram which had crossed her message came on the 8th to say that if the nuns had not already gone, they were to sail on the 10th. On the 9th Geneviève telegraphed Heerey asking for an interview and she went to meet him in Anua. In answer, Heerey sent a message back to await his arrival 'if decision not made'. The meeting between them took place on the 10th in Anua. Only then did Geneviève at last learn the formal charges made by Quick to Magdalen and to Meehan and carried by Meehan to Heerey in Onitsha. These were the accusations already referred to at the beginning of this article. But there was a significant discrepancy in Quick's report which Heerey discounted. Quick had told Magdalen and Meehan in Calabar that it was Vianney who had been seen with one of the men. But when Quick spoke to Heerey in Anua, it was Edith; and Vianney's offense was molesting the babies. It appears that the second accusation was an afterthought. On the Sunday following, November 12, Geneviève told Edith (and presumably Vianney as well) that the Bishop had ordered her to send

them home, and that she could give them no reason (S4 I.81). It should be added that already Geneviève had seen the need to send Vianney home permanently because her temperament was not suited to the mission. And she recognized Edith's great need for time away from Nigeria. She would probably have taken both home with her had Heerey not intervened to expel them (S4 a.7).

Why did Geneviève not tell Edith and Vianney what the accusations were? Heerey himself explained later in a letter to Amadeus (S4 c.33). He said that Magdalen Walker had strongly advised against it fearing that the two nuns, already upset over their expulsion, would be further undone on the long voyage home (S4 d.43).

Edith wrote a statement which said she saw Heerey at 8:30 a.m. on Monday, November 13, and begged to be told the reason for her expulsion. Heerey said that if her conscience did not inform her on the way home, Rev. M. General would (S4 m.121). Again, on November 16, Edith sent Heerey a message to Anua saying she thought he should tell her more. He answered that he did not want her back in Anua, and that he had to travel in any case. To Geneviève he said he was fearful of the effect on the 'informant' should she meet the accused (!). So, on November

22, the two 'accused' sailed from Port Harcourt, never to return to Nigeria (S4 i.81). Edith wrote to Amadeus from shipboard on December 8, 1933:

"With regard to my being sent away from the mission this way I wish to tell you I have no idea of the reason for it. That it would seem I have disgraced the Society in some way is the greatest pain of all...I am ready, God helping me, to make reparation whatever way you wish....There could not be anything much greater than to have had to give up this work - the longing of my life - and which in spite of all difficulties has been so full of joy" (S4 m.114).

Returning to the first conversation between Geneviève and Heerey, it is important to mention that Geneviève had asked to interview Quick. This the bishop refused 'because of her condition of extreme nervousness and because she had said that she preferred not to speak of the matter again'. It would seem that upon learning of Geneviève's coming to Anua, Quick had had a nervous collapse and had stayed in bed for the duration of the visit. Geneviève then asked Heerey to secure a signed statement from Quick's own hand, which he undertook to do. But in the end he demurred 'owing to her nervous state'. There never would be a signed statement from either 'witness' (S4 i.81).

Between November 19 and December 2 Geneviève saw Heerey several other times. She asked him if he were not going to take ‘the very necessary step of interviewing the accused man’. At first he hesitated as he was ‘still a prey to this fear of scandal, but finally he agreed to do so’. The accused man, whom Quick claimed she had identified, proved to be innocent beyond a doubt. Three other likely suspects were then mentioned but nothing further was done to investigate their involvement (S4 I.81).

THE ACCUSATIONS, AMADEUS

After the departure of Vianney and Edith, Geneviève stayed on in Nigeria to complete her commission from Amadeus. She met Heerey on several other occasions when he insisted on the separation of the medicals from the Society and the closing of the school at Anua and at the outstations, thus severing the Society's last link with the place. In this way Heerey in effect appropriated the convent and other Society properties and broke the contract between the medicals and Holy Child - actions which were later contested by Amadeus.

The accusations against the two nuns were such that they could not be committed to paper, so Amadeus had to wait until Geneviève's return to learn the whole story. Geneviève sailed on January 1, leaving Fidelis Hothersall installed as superior to begin a new era with Laurentia, Teresa Xavier and Osmonde. Joachim had left Nigeria for reasons of health before the Anua storm broke. Magdalen Walker sailed with Geneviève as far as the Cameroons where she was to have a long vacation before facing the rest of her life.

Amadeus was on the eve of setting out on a visitation of the English Province when Geneviève was finally

able to unburden herself to her face to face in Paris. At that point Amadeus went into action. First, she would interrogate Edith and Vianney. If they were innocent she would cancel her visitation and leave no stone unturned to restore their reputations. The archives preserve the hand-written notes of the carefully constructed series of questions put separately by Amadeus to Edith and Vianney. The interviews took place at Cavendish Square on February 16 and 17, 1934, in the presence of Amadeus and Geneviève. This was the first time either Vianney or Edith had heard what it was they were accused of. Each one categorically denied every element of the charges and signed a declaration of innocence which they were prepared to repeat under oath (S4 k.111; m.115; j.98-102). Two days later Amadeus wrote to the English Province saying that she had to return to Rome 'to deal with important and urgent business connected with the Society in Nigeria. The matter is very serious and I ask your prayers that truth may prevail' (S4 g.55). The very next day, Amadeus wrote to Heerey:

"In the presence of Mother M. Geneviève, I have interviewed, separately, Mother Mary Edith & Mother Mary Vianney, and in a searching cross examination have confronted each with the grave accusations brought against her by Mlle d'Hondt. Each has given, in word & writing, a

full & categorical denial of the charge and is prepared to swear to the truth of her assertion by a solemn affidavit.

Since you, my Lord, have failed to investigate the charges & have accepted them on the unproved assertion of one person, you have thrown on to me the duty of clearing the reputation of my nuns.”

And Amadeus asked Heerey to send immediately ‘written evidence of the accuser’ and continues:

“I am astonished and pained that you, my Lord, whose office constitutes you the father and protector of the religious confided to your care...have turned the nuns out of the vicariate without hearing a word from them in their own defence.”

Heerey had written to Amadeus on November 19, 1933: ‘Either the nuns or the medicals had to leave Anua - the nuns could afford to go with the least comment from the public....The interests of souls demanded it’ (S4 c.20). And to this Amadeus replied: ‘I answer that the end does not justify the means - the grave injustice which has been done to these two religious & through them, to the whole Order to which they belong’ (S4 i.79).

In the wake of the interrogation of February 17 and the shocking disclosure of the charges against her, Vianney wrote pathetically to Geneviève from Oxford:

“I am just at cracking point & think if I write to you I shall probably feel better. I know I should not want any comfort except from our Lord....I feel as if I were dragging the Society through the mire and it is nearly killing me” (S4 k.112).

Amadeus was now bent on justice. Her next step was to lay the situation before her council in Rome and seek advice as to the best way to proceed. In all that followed, Geneviève was her strong right arm. From Père Creusen they obtained an opinion from the point of view of Canon Law which put Heerey in the wrong on three counts: he broke a private contract; he closed a house of a pontifical institute, and he appropriated to the mission property belonging to the Society. Although he had the right to remove a religious under his jurisdiction, he was bound to make sure of the reality of the accusation against her (S4 i.84).

They went also to the Cardinal Vicar, Msgr. Marchetti, and set the case before him. The first alternative he put - drop the case - was out of the

question. In the second instance, he said the case fell under the jurisdiction of the Apostolic Delegate, but Hinsley was based in East Africa and difficult of access. The third alternative was to go to Propaganda Fide where the cardinal had informal contacts and could set the machinery in motion (S4 i.80). At this point Amadeus remarked to her council, that she was sorry for Heerey because he would find himself '*dans la soupe*' at the Propaganda (S4 f.53). It is certain that he had not taken the measure of Amadeus. On March 15 she presented a formal petition to the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda Fide, Fumasoni Biondi. It contained a statement of the case, a chronology of the events surrounding the expulsion of the nuns given by Geneviève, a detailed description of the charges brought by Marie Madeleine d'Hondt (Quick) against Vianney and Edith and a set of final observations by Amadeus (S4 i.81). Since these observations constitute in essence the Society's demand for justice, they deserve to be quoted in full:

"Eminence,

With reference to the above Report, I beg you to consider:

1. That these grave charges are made against two nuns of irreproachable life by one lay person,

a comparative stranger, of a highly emotional type, whose speech and behaviour when she is roused are violent and unrestrained.

2. That the Vicar Apostolic, while admitting the incredibility of the first charge, has nevertheless accepted as 'incontestable truth' this person's unproved report because, as he writes, he 'could not doubt her candour' and because 'she is not so wicked as to concoct the whole thing'. Yet he believes the nun to be guilty of an act which he cannot believe the secular is wicked enough to invent.
3. That the Vicar Apostolic, after making known the second grave charge - that of the abuse of the bodies of infants in a manner likely to cause their death - nevertheless declares that it can be dropped, thus leaving the accused nun under a terrible stigma.
4. That the Vicar Apostolic has, moreover, taken action on unproved report of this one person, and has summarily turned out of the Vicariate the two sisters without any investigation or without hearing a word from them in their own defence. This action was taken against the representation of my Assistant General who was acting as visitor in my stead, with full power to deal with the situation.
5. That in consequence of this hasty action of the Vicar Apostolic, these two nuns have had

three months of suspense and mental anguish before the charges could be made known to them.

6. That moreover, in consequence of those allegations, the Vicar Apostolic has closed the convent in Anua and turned the remaining sisters out of the district to the great detriment of the work. Furthermore, he has broken the private contract made between us and the medical unit and, without any reference to us, assumed control of them and of the buildings erected by our Society.
7. That in all the questions arising out of this situation, the Vicar Apostolic has given the impression that he is unduly influenced by Dr. Lengauer who is a very convincing speaker, that he takes her word in preference to that of anyone else, and that, even in minor matters he takes the side of the seculars against the nuns. Furthermore he has given the impression that, in this case, he is the victim of panic and of an exaggerated fear of scandal.

Therefore, Eminence, since the Vicar Apostolic has failed to make the necessary investigation, he has thrown upon me the defending my religious. I have held a preliminary inquiry on February 16th and 17th and in a searching cross-examination have made known to each sister

separately the grave charges. Each has given in word and in writing a full and categorical denial and is prepared to repeat this denial on oath.

Having thus done all that lies in my power, I appeal to Your Eminence. In my opinion and in that of my Council, the action of the Vicar Apostolic constitutes a grave injustice, not only to the two sisters concerned, but to the whole Society of the Holy Child Jesus. Therefore, with full confidence, I commit the cause of our Society into the hands of Your Eminence and appeal to you to vindicate its good name and to safeguard its material interests.”

Archbishop Hinsley was providentially recalled to Rome in April of the same year and made a Canon of St. Peter's. Because of his knowledge of West Africa, his connections with Propaganda Fide and his great friendship with Amadeus, he became instrumental in helping along the process of vindication. His advice to Amadeus and his companionship throughout the crisis was a great support to her (S4 i.83; h.56-76).

Also in April as a result of a long conversation between Hinsley and Père Pierre Charles SJ, new facts came to light which discredited the medical team. Père Charles, a Belgian living in Louvain, was associated with a Belgian medical mission to the

Congo. He had for several years had dealings with Quick. In a three-page document he gave a number of instances proving her mental instability. His summary opinion was that she was a hysterical person in the medical sense whose '*mythomanie*' focused by preference on sexual fantasies; that the almost savage passion she had for Dr. Lengauer (Luba) was a form of morbid attachment; and that the two had so interacted that their witness could not be considered independent and that their accusations in themselves did not deserve credence (S4 o.137). The document was passed from Hinsley's hands to Cardinal Fumasoni Biondi's and surely played a large part in the vindicating of the two Holy Child nuns (S4 h.60).

Amadeus received from Heerey the written evidence of the charges against Edith and Vianney sometime in March. The accusations were stated on two pages in Heerey's own handwriting, signed and dated by him March 7. They were not, therefore, the sworn statements of the accuser as requested but Heerey's own account of Quick's charges. Hinsley advised that Edith and Vianney be asked to answer the charges under and in the presence of Canice O'Gorman OSA. This was done on May 1, 1934, at Cavendish Square. Because these pages constitute the 'matter' of the Anua crisis, they are

here quoted in full along with the refutations sworn by Edith and Vianney:

Evidence of Charge Against Mother Mary Edith

1. A whistling call was heard several times at night in the direction of the Convent. Heard even when Mother Mary Edith was not there. Not heard since the Sisters left Anua. (three witnesses)
2. One night in the month of November last, a man was seen standing in front of one of the doors of the Convent - the entrance of the Sisters' Oratory. No recollection of the whistling having been heard this particular night. Witness had her bed on the Veranda of the bungalow of the Medical staff. The time was about midnight. Witness sat up. Thought the man was a thief, and watched carefully. Mother Edith was seen come out from the Oratory and come straight towards the man. The man was a native dressed in white singlet and Khaki Trousers. There was no struggle of any kind. Mother Edith seemed to go on her knees in front of the man. He remained standing. Witness came down from her bungalow and was seen coming down by the Doctor. Doctor gives evidence of this. Witness says there is no possibility of mistake in what she saw - the man and the Sister engaged in a revolting sin *contra*

naturam de sexto praecepto. Neither the man nor the Sister seemed to have seen witness. Before witness returned they both went away behind the Convent. Witness did not wait to see more but retired to the bungalow in horror. The Doctor saw her return & asked her if she were unwell. She said 'No'.

I have shown the above to Miss D'Hondt. She says it is a true account of what happened and is ready to testify to it on oath.

Needless to say, from the first I have warned Miss D'Hondt of the awful responsibility of making a charge of this nature. She said she realized that and wished that she could be proved mad rather than that what she saw should be true.

She first related the affair to Sister Magdalen in Calabar after some days of anguish. Sister Magdalen said she could not doubt her sincerity. After much persuasion she prevailed on her to tell one of the Fathers. He too said he could not doubt her veracity. He at Sister Magdalen's request came to me at Onitsha assuring me that it seems unfortunately too true. I proceeded at once to Anua to interview witness. She related to me all the details, and though the details are appalling I could not conclude that she was under any hallucination or malicious intent. I enquired of the medical authority available if

there could be hallucination (gave no reasons for my enquiry). The doctor could not detect the slightest symptom of hallucination.

+ Charles Heerey C.S.Sp
Vic. Ap.

(S4 j.105)

Mother Mary Edith's handwritten statement

I, Mother Mary Edith, having touched the Holy Gospels, and called God to witness, solemnly declare as follows:

1. That I never heard, and know nothing about any 'whistling call' mentioned in connection with the accusation against me.
2. In answer to the terrible charge that one night in the month of November I came through the Oratory door, met a man, and committed a shameful sin with him, I declare
 - a) That I spent only one night during that month (that of November 3rd) in Anua.
 - b) Since the door referred to became an Oratory door, I have never passed through it at night. I do not remember ever passing through it at night even

before it became an Oratory door, which change was made in the month of June 1933.

- c) With regard to the charge of having met a man at night, and having committed a shameful sin with him, I once more call on God to witness that I give a complete and absolute denial to this charge, and I know of nothing that could give the least foundation for it.

Edith M. Rudwick
(In Religion Mother Mary Edith SHCJ)
1st May 1934

The undersigned, formerly Consultor of the Supreme Congregation of the Holy Office, bears witness that the above sworn declaration was made and signed in his presence in the Convent of the Holy Child, Cavendish Square, London.

Canice O'Gorman OSA
1st May 1934

(S4 j.106)

Evidence of Charge Against Mother M. Vianney

1. Seen to be fondling and kissing the babies in the orphanage (2 witnesses).
2. Seen to be fingering the babies, boys (one witness) and girls (two witnesses) in the genital organs and (one witness) pressing some external object through the vagina of a baby girl.
3. Known to have taken, on occasions, one or other of the babies to bed with her during Siesta Time (2 witnesses).
4. Seen to give, or try to give, her breast to one of the babies (one witness).
5. One of the babies, known to have been abused as in (2) died with unaccountable suddenness (2 witnesses).

Witnesses are prepared to give the above evidence on oath.

†C. Heerey Vic Ap

(S4 j.103)

Mother M. Vianney's handwritten statement

I, Kathleen Mary Raverty, in religion Mother Mary Vianney, having touched the Holy Gospels,

call God to witness to the truth of what I am about to state.

1. In answer to charge No 1 namely that I have been 'seen fondling & kissing the babies in the orphanage' I declare that I have played with [and] petted the children & remember when Cornelia put her head on my shoulder kissing her woolly head. I have no recollection whatever of having kissed any other baby.
2. To charge No. 2 namely 'of fingering the babies on the genital organs etc'. I give the most absolute denial.
3. To charge No. 3 'of having taken on occasions one or other of the babies to bed with her at siesta', I again give an absolute denial.
4. To charge No. 4 of being seen to give or try to give her breast to one of the babies,' I give an absolute denial.
5. The answer to charge No. 5 is contained in the answer to charge No. 2.

Kathleen Mary Raverty
May 1st 1934

The undersigned, formerly consultant of the Supreme Congregation of the Holy Office, bears witness that the above sworn declaration was made and signed in his presence in the Convent of the Holy Child, Cavendish Square, London.

Canice O'Gorman OSA
1st May, 1934

(S4 j.104)

CONCLUSION

Sometime later, Hinsley submitted to Propaganda Fide on the Society's behalf a budget of extracts from letters between Heerey on one side and Amadeus and Geneviève on the other. They contain as well copies of the 'evidence' against Vianney and Edith. Some unidentified person appended to the budget several pertinent observations:

1. First hand evidence was asked for. The Vicar Apostolic has given it in his own writing, under his signature.
2. The event is stated as happening November. It was in October, as the vicar apostolic himself said that it happened on a Sunday, and his letter of dismissal was dated before the first Sunday in November.
3. In this account, the Doctor, for the first time, is mentioned as being connected with the affair. There was no mention of her when the Vicar Apostolic gave his official report.
4. The medical authority 'available' was Dr. Lengaouer a close friend of the accuser and the second witness where two are cited (S4 i.81a).

Finally Propaganda Fide, having found the evidence insufficient, decreed that the medicals were to leave Anua and Teresa Xavier tells the story:

“The verdict of Propaganda came about 13th of July 1934. Mgr. H. went to Anua and read the document to the medicals. According to the reports of the natives employed in the compound, M.D’Hondt made a scene and Mgr. H. walked out and went straight back to Onitsha” (S4 p.144).

It seems that independently Heerey sought counsel from Propaganda and gave his own account of his action in regard to Edith and Vianney. His justification was always the avoidance of scandal. Hinsley wrote to Amadeus about this saying:

“Rome was astonished at his impetuous imprudent and unjust action and could not understand why he should ask the SC [Propaganda Fide] as to what to do when he had already done the worst he could do to make all advice futile.”

and he continued:

“When by his action he had done all he could to create an atmosphere of suspicion - ripe as suspicion always is with the worst scandal - he opened the flood gates to scandal (S4 h.74).”

Heerey received from Propaganda Fide a strong reprimand stating that his own action had precipitated the crisis (S4 i.85).

Propaganda's verdict did not declare the sisters innocent. It simply indicated that the charges against them were 'not proven'. The medicals were to leave Anua under the guise of a leave of absence (S4 i.89). Their passage home was booked and their departure imminent when news reached Fidelis that the verdict was being appealed. It appears that the medicals had succeeded in persuading Heerey and two of the Kiltegan priests that they were to receive a large government grant of £1200 for the hospital (S4 h.68). In order not lose it with the departure of the medicals, Heerey intervened (S4 i.195). The government doctor in Lagos was enlisted in support of the medicals (S4 i.194) and his letter to Hinsley and Chiavoni at Propaganda arrived mysteriously by way of Bristol (where Magdalen was residing) 'in an unofficial envelope', said Hinsley, 'and in a hand we all know' (S4 h.66).

Teresa Xavier gives another version of the appeal. She said the medicals sent from Anua a chief whom they had bribed and given a car to go to Onitsha to convince the leading Europeans that the sisters had 'got the Pope to recall them because they had made

known what sort of people the nuns really were'. Heerey took the position that Chief Essien represented his people and should be supported, hence his appeal (S4 p.144). She does not seem to know of the pending grant.

When word reached the other Chiefs of Anua that Essien had acted as their spokesman, he who was 'not the first, the second, or even the third chief of Anua', they repudiated his action in a formal protest to Teresa Xavier, now in Calabar:

"We heard one day that a note came from Rome to Anua demanding that the doctors must leave Anua and we the Chiefs of Anua, together with the Church members and other gentlemen in the town, were very very pleased, because we have been seeing that those doctors are keeping the Holy Convent as a public place, and also making scandal in different ways, thus harlotting etc., which are altogether against the Catholic Religion. Please do not think such actions are preferable."

He goes on to describe how Essien was bribed by the medicals with 'sixteen barrels of cement, sixteen dozens of zinc etc.' and how he went then

"...to Aba, Port Harcourt, Enugu, Onitsha and Umohia informing the head Europeans there to

write apologies to the Governor, that he may refer them to His Holiness the Pope, so as to allow them to remain still at Anua" (S4a b).

It seems that the governor took prompt action in response to Essien's defence of the medicals and sent the Assistant Director of Police to Anua to interrogate a number of the men connected with the convent and hospital. The Roman archives preserve a collection of letters written by the men thus questioned declaring that the medicals tried to bribe them to tell the police fantastic tales against all three SHCJ who had lived at Anua.

Fr. Kilmartin became involved either because he was asked by the Assistant Director of Police to make preliminary inquiries or he appointed himself. Peter, one of the boys who worked in the hospital, told in his own words what he was bribed to say to the police:

"On the 3rd of August 1934 my mistress called me secretly in the private examine room and promised to pay me £1 monthly as my wages if I come out before the Governor and prove as a witness that the nuns used to attend men to the convent girls every evening. Secondly that Mother Edith kept Moses as her friend pretending to help him as a driver. Every evening

Moses had to come to her calling her by whistling. Thirdly that Mother Edith had poisoned Peter Nnaji in care of Moses, that is she gave Moses poison to poison him when he was here and many other foolish lies they advised me to say before Governor against the nuns....I told them facely that I did not see any of these..." (S4a b).

These letters were sent on to Propaganda in support of the July verdict. The repercussions of the interrogations of course fanned out from Anua to all the surrounding stations by bush telegraph, and scandalous stories about Edith, Vianney and now Teresa Xavier, though denied as untrue by the Anua men, were on everyone's lips. It was through this grapevine that the Holy Child sisters in Calabar and the Handmaids in their various outposts came to learn the specific charges made against the nuns.

In October, Propaganda rejected the appeal 'for the sake of justice and discipline' (S4 i.77). Heerey informed the medicals that they were to leave the area which they did on November 7. But convinced of Luba's probity, he recommended them for government posts in a leper settlement in Osiombo, Benin (S4 h.69; i .85). At this time Heerey stated to Fumasoni Biondi:

“At my request the government has consented not to hold an enquiry....The Governor asked me if it was intended that the two nuns should return to Nigeria. I answered that I had very strongly urged upon the authorities that they should not do so...”(S4 n.124).

By March 1935 Amadeus had caught wind of a possible government inquiry and wrote to the former Governor, Buchanan Smith. He replied that the reports which had reached him had obliged him to make a preliminary police inquiry but that no grounds were discovered for criminal charges against the nuns and therefore no official investigation had taken place (S4 n.125). But his successor must have honored Heerey’s recommendation against the nuns returning, for in August his Lieutenant Governor wrote to Moynagh, now Prefect of Calabar-Ogoja:

“...in view of the fact that at least serious rumours were current locally when the ladies left Calabar, His Excellency does consider it undesirable that either of them should return to Nigeria and His Excellency would view with particular regret their presence in the Calabar Province” (S4 n.126).

This provoked a strongly worded letter from Amadeus to the High Commissioner in Enugu. She began:

“As Superior General of the Congregation and as a British subject by birth, I wish to protest against the attitude of the Government in regard of the two Sisters....”

Then she accused the government of injustice on four counts and concluded:

“I wish to repeat my formal protest that the Sisters in question, both highly respected members of the community should virtually be excluded from Nigeria and prevented from continuing valuable work in Calabar Province. For the sake of truth and justice, I request that this letter be placed on the government files” (S4 n.124).

But neither Edith nor Vianney was destined to see Nigeria again.

Returning to the previous July (1934) ... It is clear that Hinsley had been working successfully behind the scenes not only to bring about a favorable verdict at Propaganda but also to remove the St. Patrick's fathers and the Holy Child sisters from Heerey's jurisdiction. It was announced on July 22 that Calabar-Ogoja would be cut off from the Vicariate of Southern Nigeria and would become a prefecture under the jurisdiction of the St. Patrick's fathers. Soon after, Amadeus learned from Hinsley that

James Moynagh had been named Prefect Apostolic. This was good news, news not yet made public. The action of the St. Patrick's fathers in supporting the appeal against Propaganda's verdict had put in doubt the degree to which the fathers were on the side of the Society. But Moynagh was known to be friendly. Amadeus and he arranged to meet on December 14 at the Exchange Hotel in Liverpool. This was a crucial moment in the history of the Holy Child mission because on Moynagh's answer hinged the Society's staying or leaving Nigeria. Moynagh, accompanied by Pat Whitney, superior general of the St. Patrick's fathers, was able to give Amadeus unqualified assurance that the fathers wanted the Society to stay. From that moment on the two congregations set out on a new era of happy, but business-like and clearly defined, collaboration under Moynagh's kindly leadership (S4 i.95).

The Roman archives have a very small piece of note paper, inscribed by Moynagh:

“Note sent by Revd Mother M. Amadeus, Supr. Gen. SHCJ in 1948. I first met her in a Hotel in Liverpool when she wished to know did I want SHCJ continue in Calabar after tragic events of 1933.” +JM

The note in Amadeus' best hand reads:

"I found in Meath's fair principality
Virtue, vigour, and hospitality;
Candour, joyfulness, bravery, purity
Ireland's bulwark and security."

THE FATE OF THE 'MEDICALS'

Quick returned to Belgium and set about collecting funds for Benin. When news of the medicals' expulsion from Anua began to be known in Belgium, inquiries were made of Amadeus and she directed them to Propaganda Fide. But Quick went on the offensive and showed supportive letters and testimonials from Heerey for the government post in Benin, and put in circulation calumnies against the Society and the several nuns by name. For months wild stories multiplied unopposed (15) and were believed by highly placed churchmen until Père Charles SJ, coming to the rescue again, told Amadeus and Hinsley to have them checked officially (S4 i.86-88). To Amadeus Hinsley said: 'Cheer up! We will fight this out to the last ditch' (S4 h.73). Fumasoni Biondi at Propaganda wrote to the Papal Nuncio in Belgium and to the Bishop of Liège asking them to silence the calumnies (S4 h.75). No more was heard of Quick until 1952 when Heerey reported that she had died by her own hand, the time, place, and circumstances unknown (S4 s.145). A disturbed woman had brought her life to a sad end. The final verdict of all who had dealings with her was that she was mad. Even Heerey came to admit it (S4 h.74).

Luba was last heard of, at least in the Roman archives, on October 17, 1936. The following appeared in the Nigerian Daily Times for that day:

LEPERS STRIKE !

Serio - comic Events in Benin
'LADY DOCTOR MUST GO'
or Lepers March to Benin

D.O's. SERIOUS WARNING.
(Daily Times Special Telegram)
Benin City, Friday, Oct 16 '36.

A serio-comic incident has occurred at the B.N.A. Leper Settlement at Osiombo, where some lepers rose against the Lady Doctor and not only refused to undergo further treatment but also demanded immediate transfer of the Doctor elsewhere or they would come to Benin.

On receiving the reports, the Oba at once deputed Councillor Erom to accompany the District Officer, Mr. Hawkesworth, to the Settlement.

The District Officer lectured the lepers and after reprimanding the ring leaders and accomplices warned them against recurrence (S4a b).

END NOTES

The author gratefully acknowledges the generous assistance of the SHCJ archivist in Rome, Radegunde Flaxman SHCJ.

Amadeus, Superior General

All material is taken from the documentation in the SHCJ Roman archives:

Boxes A 1-5 and S 1-2 (letters, diaries, note books, papers)

Via Boncompagni house journals, 1923-1946

Minute Book of General Chapters

Minute Book of General Council, Vol 2

Student Register, 1924-1939

The Pylon, 1934-1938

Necrologies

Crisis at Anua, Amadeus and Rome

1. Nearly all the documents consulted are to be found in the Roman Archives of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus boxes S2 to S5. Also consulted were the journals of the Roman

motherhouse for the years 1932-1935, and articles from *The Pylon*, volume 1, 1934.

References between brackets in the text refer to the box, folder and document in question and are shown as follows: (S1 a.1)

2. McGettrick, 96-7; and Moynagh, 24
3. Rescripts are on file in the archives
4. Most of the information about Magdalen Walker is taken from S2 a.1-23 and S2 b (75 letters to Amadeus Atchison); and from Colman Cooke's biography, especially pages 32-166. Other information was found in Kiggins and in Forristal.
5. See note 3
6. Cooke, 59-70
7. *Ibid* 152
8. Much of the material in this section is taken from the 55 letters written by Marie Osmonde de Maillé to Amadeus Atchison, between 1932 and 1933
9. Forristal, 189
10. *Ibid* 210
11. Kiggins, 85
12. Moynagh, 24-5, 32
13. Cooke, 158
14. Moynagh, 26
15. Box S4 o. contains the relevant material

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Forristal, Desmond. The Second Burial of Bishop Shanahan. Veritas Publications. Dublin, 1990.

Kiggins, Thomas. Maynooth Mission to Africa. Gill and Macmillan. Dublin, 1991.

McGettrick, Thomas. Memoirs. Abakaliki Diocese. nd.

Moynagh, James "Reminiscences". Unpublished manuscript, 1979.

