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The Early Years of Holy Cross in Texas 1982-3
1870-1900

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Like the man of Macedonia in Acts, Texans from a way back have been inviting missionaries to come over and help them. The first bishop of Galveston, Jean Marie Odin, himself a missionary from France, meditated upon the old Spanish missions still standing from the days of the Franciscans who had come, as he said, "to civilize the savages and plant the faith in Texas."¹ His successor, Bishop Claude Marie Dubuis, also a missionary from France, called in 1869 upon another French expatriate, Father Edward Sorin, Superior General of the Congregation of Holy Cross, for religious of his society. Now for well over one hundred years Holy Cross priests, brothers and sisters have been coming to serve in the schools, parishes, missions, and other ministries of Texas, making it one of the historic fields of their communities.

The present paper has grown out of research on the antecedents and history of St. Edward's College in Austin, and those are its focus. But it also includes notices of St. Mary's Parish in Austin and of the Holy Cross Sisters' academies at Nacogdoches, Austin, Clarksville, and Marshall, so as to give a general picture of Holy Cross in Texas during the lifetime of Father Sorin and a little beyond. Even so, some will wish more had been said about the legendary Sister Joseph~~ine~~.²

It was late in August of 1869 that Father Sorin received a letter from the chancery of the Galveston Diocese requesting him to send teachers for St. Mary's College in the city of Galveston. The school, which was supposed to begin classes in October, had

been founded by Bishop Odin in 1854. Although it had suffered from the Civil War and inadequate staffing, it had great potential, the diocesan authorities were sure. The people of Galveston wanted a really good school, and the best choice of a religious community for that was the one that had "done so well at Notre Dame." It could have the building and property and would be given a free hand in the running of St. Mary's.³

Father Sorin was interested, but did not have the religious to send there that fall. It appears that the bishop meant to keep him interested, for he offered him also a Texas-sized tract of land in Bee County.⁴

That same fall, both Bishop Dubuis and Father Sorin went to the First Vatican Council, which opened at Rome on December 9. It is often said that they met on shipboard and that is why Holy Cross came to Texas.⁵ This researcher has found nothing to confirm that. It is clear, however, that they talked about their business while they were in Rome.⁶ Before the Council was disrupted by the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War the next summer, Sorin had made a commitment to the Texas mission. The Provincial Chapter at Notre Dame that summer announced the decision to accept St. Mary's and named the religious who were to go there.⁷

Father Daniel Spillard was first designated the leader of the mission, but a change was made sometime later to Brother ^{Boniface} Francis Muher. This religious -- "indeed a good man", a confrere once said -- was later president of St. Joseph's College in Cincinnati and director of the Manual Labor School at Notre Dame, where he died in 1913.⁸

On his way to Galveston Boniface stopped in New Orleans for a

visit with Holy Cross religious there. He arrived alone in Galveston on Friday, September 9, 1870 and was given charge of the college by the vicar general, Father Louis Chambodut. The next Monday he was teaching. There were twenty-four boys in that first class taught by a Holy Cross religious in Texas.⁹

Over the weekend he had wired New Orleans asking for Father Richard Shortis to come at once and help him. Shortis did come, but stayed only a brief while. The needs of the school were met by "four efficient brothers sent from Notre Dame," as the Notre Dame Scholastic of November 5 reported it. The reference was probably to Brothers Philip, Gregory, Charles and Pancratius. Father Charles Padey first and then Father John Ruthmann served as chaplains that first year, Brother Boniface recalled many years later.¹⁰

The Community's first year in Galveston was a honeymoon. After a month there, Boniface wrote Sorin giving his early impressions. The college building was beautiful and located on an elevation with a good view of the bay. The grounds were spacious, the city free of sickness and the climate delightful. The boys were a little wild, but not really bad. "Taking it all and all," he concluded, "I trust in God we will meet with success. A great field is open for us in Texas."¹¹

Several weeks later he informed Sorin that the bishop wanted him to take another college, in Brownsville, and would be glad to get Holy Cross people for still other places. "Tell Father General," Boniface quoted him, "to bring as many religious from France as he can."¹² In December the brother had more specific indications from the bishop for Sorin. He could have not only Brownsville, but

also a parish and school in Houston, a school in Laredo and the old Franciscan mission of San José near San Antonio. In the same letter Boniface said that St. Mary's College was doing well, with eighty-four boys enrolled. "This seems really our country," he said, "where we can do much good."¹³ In the spring Sorin received from the vicar general the title deed to the school.¹⁴

The second year was also a good one at St. Mary's. The reputation of the college was high in Galveston; it was, in fact, attracting Protestant and Jewish as well as Catholic boys. Bishop Dubuis and Vicar General Chambodut thought highly of the Congregation and kept talking of getting it for Brownsville. A postulant named Brother Joseph became "the first brother that took the habit in Texas."¹⁵ There was some tension over leadership, however. Since Brother Boniface had asked to be relieved of it, Father A.G. Bernier was sent to replace him as director at mid-year. Bernier soon found that Boniface was reluctant to turn the real authority over to him. Boniface, for his part, while allowing that Bernier was "a good man", couldn't understand why he wanted to change everything. In late February Boniface received a new obedience, but he made a strong representation about the ruinous effect his removal just then would have on the college.¹⁶ So he was left there. That spring of 1872 Father Sorin visited Galveston. His great objective was to follow up Bishop Dubuis' invitation, to be discussed later, to send religious to Austin. But, of course he was sizing up the situation in Galveston also, and he apparently was convinced that Boniface was indeed the heart and soul of the college for he was back there as director in the fall.

From this time on the position of Holy Cross in Galveston seems to have deteriorated. Boniface was away in the summer of 1872, and he thought that neglect of recruitment had hurt enrollment. Also, a number of the best students from the last year had transferred out. The quality of instruction did not seem to be the problem-- that was better, if anything, Boniface thought. Other documents show, however, that certain of the religious were not making a good adjustment to Galveston and were seeking to be changed to other houses. Nevertheless, the school year 1872-73 finished on the upbeat, with closing exercises which were well done and made a good impression on the public.¹⁷

That summer Brother Boniface was transferred to the presidency of St. Joseph's College in Cincinnati. One reason for that was probably that, as a German American, he could work well with a German community. Replacing him in the directorship at Galveston was Brother John Chrysostom Will. The new director found the situation difficult. Faculty morale was low. Both the religious and the public were disappointed at the loss of Brother Boniface. In the opinion of one brother there, the school was difficult to run because the people were not like those in the north. It was not easy to please them nor to "manage" their children. The faculty felt that the local clergy were not supporting them and that even the diocesan authorities, especially Father Chambodut, once very friendly, had become indifferent. Enrollment was down because of that, perhaps, as well as because of the removal of Brother Boniface and the financial panic of '73. Added to all this was the grievance of not having a chaplain in the house. The brothers had to walk a mile to the Cathedral for Mass and the

sacraments. No wonder Brother John was reported to be feeling sick and discouraged.¹⁸

It seems that Holy Cross might well have retired from Galveston after that bad year of 1873-74. Father Sorin was now interested in making a new start at Austin. As the school year ended he instructed Father Daniel Spillard, newly installed as pastor there and the leader of the Texas mission now, to negotiate for the withdrawal of the religious from Galveston or to see to it that they got enough students. He was to do this tactfully, of course. A further sign of Sorin's declining interest in Galveston was the fact that as late as August that summer John Chrysostom was wondering what he was going to do for faculty in the coming year. He then had with him only Brother Joseph, who was supposed to be making his novitiate.¹⁹

But the Congregation did not definitely retire from St. Mary's for several years more. At least two religious, Father Joseph-Celestin Carrier and Brother Anselm joined the house in 1874. Carrier, for sure, was there until 1876. Asked years later for some information about St. Mary's, Brother Boniface stated that the religious of Holy Cross were withdrawn from there in 1877. When the former Superior General of the Congregation of Holy Cross, the Most Reverend Pierre Dufal, came to the see of Galveston in 1878 as auxiliary bishop, he tried to get Father Sorin to send them back, but failed. And in the next year the relationship ended altogether when Father Sorin returned the title deed of the college to Bishop Dufal.²⁰

The tenure of Dufal, it may be added here, the only Holy Cross man ever to serve in the Texas episcopacy, was short and vexed. From the beginning he was involved in misunderstandings with the

ordinary, Bishop Dubuis, and he left the see in 1880.²¹

But there was still much for Holy Cross to do in Texas. As indicated earlier, Bishop Dubuis had offered it a number of other places. Nothing came of references he made to Houston and Laredo, but there was some follow-up for San Antonio and Brownsville, and of course much for Austin. The small results for San Antonio and Brownsville may be reviewed first.

The bishop once suggested that the Congregation might use San José Mission, then a short distance outside of San Antonio, as a convalescent home or mission center. Actually, however, in 1873 he turned it over to a band of Jesuits exiled from Mexico by that country's Liberal Reform.²²

Holy Cross did go to Brownsville, but stayed only one year and that an unhappy one. The Oblates of Mary Immaculate had established a college there in earlier years, and now, in the early 1870's, wanted Holy Cross to teach in it.²³ Finally, in the fall of 1873, two Holy Cross seminarians and a layman were sent to Brownsville from New Orleans. Assisted by a local layman, they undertook to run the school under the loose supervision of the veteran Oblate missionary, Father Parisot. One of the seminarians, the Reverend Mr. Francis Molloy (to be at St. Edward's College later, 1889-99, as Father Molloy), was named director and did his conscientious best to make a go of a bad situation. The other seminarian, however, was something of a joker and no great help.

There were further difficulties. It is not clear that Father Sorin authorized the sending of religious to Brownsville. It appears that Father Mariné, then vice-provincial in the South was the one who did it. But shortly afterward he left for France, and

Father Michael Robinson in New Orleans took over his responsibilities in New Orleans. Difficulties rapidly piled up for Mr. Molloy. The school building was in bad condition, but he had been warned not to obligate his own community for improvements. He seems to have gone ahead anyway, and made himself liable for the debts he thus incurred. The other seminarian, up to various antics and not doing much work, was hard to live with. Father Parisot had the good sense to stay away from the school as much as possible.

It began to look as though going to Brownsville was a mistake, so Father Robinson, with Father Sorin's approval, directed the missionaries to come back to Louisiana. But the weeks went by and they did not come. Finally, at Christmas time, the layman showed up at St. Isidore's School at New Orleans and "unfurled" for Father Robinson "a most woebegone tale." This and later correspondence made it clear that Molloy was stuck for the time being with his problems in Brownsville. It was spring before the seminarians, with the cooperation of the Oblate authorities finally got back to Louisiana.²⁴

Before going to Austin, we must note that the Holy Cross Sisters went in 1871 to Nacogdoches in East Texas to open a school. Among those who went there was Sister Joseph Potard. Apparently the community stayed there only a year. But when the others left, Sister Joseph stayed to work with the Spanish-speaking because she feared that if she did not, they would lose contact with the church. Her personal decision to do this separated her from the Congregation, but she continued to wear the habit throughout the twenty years she pursued this solo apostolate. Finally, aging and sick, she went to a hospital in Houston in 1893 and died there. Father Hurth of St. Edward's brought her remains to Austin, where

her grave marker, without the C.S.C., is still to be seen. The secondary source on which this, the present account is based is a newspaper article entitled "A Remarkable Women ... Sister Joseph ~~was~~ ^{won a place in the history of Macgregor.} Written by Carolyn Ericson, it appeared in the Sunday Sentinel of that city on March 30, 1975.

In the meantime, the Congregation was answering the call to Austin and Travis County that would have priests, brothers, and sisters working within a few years at a parish church and school, a farm, a boys' academy, and a girls' academy. In addition, the priests would be opening up their historic ministry to the missions of Central Texas.

On February 6, 1872, Father Bernier, then director of St. Mary's College in Galveston, had a visitor from Austin. He was Father Nicholas Feltin, a priest of Galveston Diocese and pastor of the only Catholic congregation in the capital city. Dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, the church there was (and is) called St. Mary's. Father Feltin talked about the interest one of his parishioners, the widowed Mary Doyle, had in getting a school for Catholic boys started at Austin. The fall before she had discussed with the bishop the possibility that she would give him a farm she owned south of the city for that purpose. Now the pastor and the bishop raised the question whether Holy Cross would be interested in having the school and perhaps also the land. The bishop said he would like to talk to Father Sorin about it.²⁵

Father Bernier passed the word on to Father Sorin, who came to Galveston in late March. He said he would open the school, but ^(only) in accordance with the community policy that he would get the parish school in Austin too. The bishop agreed to that, one must infer and agreed also that Sorin would get the farm which Mrs. Doyle's will

at that time left to the bishop. In early April then the the two of them went to Austin. The bishop took Sorin to Mrs. Doyle's residence and introduced him. They may all have talked together again before the bishop left for other appointments. Father Sorin stayed in the city about three days, it seems, and got a great deal done. He told Feltin, as the bishop apparently had not, that a Holy Cross man would be replacing him as pastor. Feltin ~~seemed~~ took ~~he~~ the news "very well" then, but he fought the change later.

A large part of Sorin's business on this fateful visit to Austin had to do with land. Feltin later charged that Sorin put pressure on a reluctant Mrs. Doyle to change her will so as to leave her farm to the Congregation instead of to the diocese. If so, he must have discussed the matter earlier with the bishop. At any rate, under date of April 9, 1872, Mrs. Doyle conveyed to Sorin for \$995 the 398-acre tract south of the Colorado River, about three miles out from Austin. It was a virtual donation. At the same time Sorin acquired from William Robards a 123-acre tract immediately to the west of the other, receiving twenty acres of it as a donation and paying fifty dollars an acre for the rest.

Arriving back in Galveston late the next night, Sorin sat down and summarized these transactions for the bishop. He now had 521 acres as a basis for starting a school. (It must be remembered that the combination of a farm and boarding school was common in Catholic education for years.²⁶) But Mrs. Doyle was to have the use of her land during her lifetime, which meant that the Congregation could expect no immediate income from it.²⁷

Still she hoped to see the school started that very fall. When she did not, she wrote Sorin to express her disappointment and

and to ask if he had forgotten his promise. Now in failing health, she feared she would die without ever seeing the school she had wanted so much. And so she did, on February 5, 1873.²⁸

The Austin Statesman of February 7, carried an account of her funeral out of St. Mary's Church and eulogized her, noting her gift of land "as a site for a branch of the celebrated school of Notre Dame. This act," it added, "was only one instance of her noble generosity." And in her will she cancelled the \$995 payment Sorin was to have made for the property.²⁹

It would be several years yet before the school was opened, in accordance with her wishes. It is a little story in itself why this was true. An underlying reason, surely, was the scarcity of the Congregation's human and financial resources for all it was trying to do in those years at Notre Dame, Cincinnati, Watertown, New Orleans, and elsewhere. And in Austin there was the impasse that persisted until 1874 between Sorin and Feltin over the pastorate of St. Mary's Church and over the parish school. Feltin had made a considerable personal investment in the parish. He had built a school which he and a Sister St. Joseph had conducted for seven years. He had bought downtown lots for its grounds and for future expansion. He was starting a new church with his own hands. And he had done much of this with his own money.

He considered the school building and the lots as his own property and insisted that he be compensated for them before turning them over to anyone else. Besides he was sure that the bishop did not expect him to hand over the parish to a Holy Cross pastor until Sorin had opened the boys' school for which Mrs. Doyle had given him land. As tension between himself and Sorin mounted,

he even raised questions about the latter's good faith in the school project.

Sorin, for his part, was clear from the beginning about getting the Church, but was willing to give Feltin and the bishop time to work out a convenient transfer. But as months went by and Feltin stayed on, writing one long letter after another about his own interests and Sorin's allegedly questionable proceedings, Sorin became exasperated. Why did not the bishop use his authority, he wondered, to remove Feltin from the pastorate? His Lordship knew very well that it was to go to Holy Cross as part of the Austin mission. Reminding him of that, Sorin wrote that he himself would not even have gone to Austin to talk, land or no land, if the bishop had not consented to it ahead of time. It was not simply a notion either; it was community policy. For example, in 1871 he had told the bishop of Milwaukee that the Congregation would have to have St. Bernard's parish in Watertown if it was to open a school there. Indeed, any religious community with a serious intention of doing good had the same policy.

In early 1874, Sorin wrote a particularly sharp letter to Bishop Dubuis. Was he, all other questions aside, going to let the Congregation have the church in Austin or not? This seems to have brought results although no reply from the bishop is found, nor is it clear how all the points in dispute were cleared up. The record does show, however, that Sorin bought two city lots from Feltin and that the Holy Cross Sisters bought the school building from him. Most decisive of all, Sorin and the bishop met in Austin and signed on April 24, 1874, an agreement for the transfer of the parish. Sorin and his successors in office forever were "to hold in trust the Church of St. Mary's in Austin." Father Feltin then

gave up the church though he tarried around it for a while, officiating there for the last time on May 3.³⁰

Thus in the annus mirabilis of 1874 the three branches of Holy Cross opened the Austin mission. The first Holy Cross pastor of St. Mary's was Father Daniel Spillard, 35, who graduated from Notre Dame in 1864 and whom some Holy Cross religious still remember. He was, as noted before, a leader of the community in Texas into the 1880's. On April 23 the vanguard of the Holy Cross Sisters, Mother Angela Gillespie and Sister M. Austin Barnard, arrived to start work in St. Mary's parish school. And on September 21 two Holy Cross brothers, Maximus Petit and John of the Cross Hanratty, went out to the Doyle farm to, as Father Spillard reported it, "make a beginning."³¹ Brother Maximus would spend the rest of his life there, dying in 1896. His grave is still to be seen in the community cemetery, a few hundred yards from the site where the Doyle farm buildings and the old St. Edward's College campus were located. One hundred years after his arrival the Texas State Historical Commission set up an appropriate marker near the grave.³²

Incidentally, another event of 1874 affecting Holy Cross in Texas was the creation of the San Antonio Diocese. Bounded on the north by the Colorado River, the new diocese included the farm and later St. Edward's College. St. Mary's on the other side of the river in Austin, remained in the Galveston Diocese.³³

As the new plantation took shape, Father Sorin indicated that it had a special place in his heart. "Among all our foundations," he said, "that of Austin is my Benjamin."³⁴ During the next quarter of a century the religious there made great advances toward his vision. In the same period the sisters also went out to Clarksville

and to Marshall, and the priests to various missions.

On the farm things moved slowly in the 1870's but as the century went on it became a well known local institution. Holy Cross people tried naming it, first Mount St. Austin and then Sacred Heart Farm.³⁵ Apparently neither title ever caught on locally. An old Travis County map labels it "The Catholic Farm," which was probably local usage, along with "St. Edward's Farm." Farming in Texas, the religious learned early was neither easy nor always profitable. Heat and semi-aridity were often adverse factors. After low yields of cotton and corn in 1875 and 1876, Brother Maximus was inclined to throw in the towel on crop farming. It might be better "in this part of Texas," he suggested, to raise cattle. And that is what many Texans were doing in those cattle-driving days. Actually St. Edward's farm was used for both crops and livestock.³⁶

In spite of drought and low prices, Father Sorin remained convinced that land was a good investment. In 1881 he bought an adjacent tract of one hundred acres from Mrs. Doyle's daughter and son-in-law, the Sneeds, which increased the size of the spread to 621 acres. In a report of 1886, the land was valued at \$18,690 and the livestock-- horses, cattle, and hogs-- at \$3,250.³⁷ For many years-- it was sold in 1962-- the farm remained a significant auxiliary enterprise of the school which Mrs. Doyle had envisioned.

Holy Cross operated the farm for several years before beginning the school. The intention, and even some initiatives, to open a school are reflected in contemporary sources, however. Shortly after coming to St. Mary's, Father Spillard indicated that he favored opening it promptly. He even got a state senator to start

looking into the matter of a charter for it. In 1875 the sale of the land the Congregation had in Bee County yielded \$2,000 which, Father Sorin told Spillard, Brother John Chrysostom would be sending him from Galveston to use for putting up the school. Around this time also there were rumors that Mrs. Doyle's heirs were thinking of suing for the recovery of her property since nothing was being done on it for Catholic education.³⁸

Earlier Sorin himself had chosen the site where the campus would be. There is a faint indication at this point that it was the present location. He now told Spillard to form an administration, taking the presidency himself, to start collecting building stone and to do some publicity that would indicate serious intentions about a school. Accordingly, Spillard went out one day with Brother Maximus and a local builder to prospect for suitable building stone. The stone was found and some of it collected, but there is no evidence of further progress at this time.³⁹

It was 1878 before the first class was taught on the farm. It was made up of half a dozen boys from neighboring farms whom Father Gillaume Demers met with in the farm house. In the spring and summer of the next year the first "schoolhouse", as they called it in those days, was put up nearby. Father Spillard, still acting as quasi-president out of St. Mary's referred to it once as "St. Aloysius Preparatory School" for the future "University of Holy Cross." In about 1880 Brother Sixtus McGrath, who would serve at St. Edward's for many years, and Father Michael Robinson joined the incipient faculty.⁴⁰

In 1881 the proto-St. Edward's, as we may call it, left the stage. The name St. Edward's Academy was adopted, and Father John Lauth received a formal obedience to be president. A second

schoolhouse was put up, which made it possible to open a boarding department. Father Lauth, who was in poor health, was active as president for less than a year, and Father Spillard had to resume the leadership for some time. In 1883 Father Michael Robinson was appointed president, but was replaced after a year by Father Peter Franciscus. That October Father Peter J. Hurth, 27, arrived, fresh from the presidency of St. Joseph's College in Cincinnati. With his arrival, say the Chronicles, "a new era seemed to dawn upon St. Edward's." Young, energetic, and able, he "became at once the soul of the institution." Although it was two years before he was named president, he was its real leader for the ten years he was there.⁴¹

It was he who obtained for it in 1885, under the name of St. Edward's College, its first charter.⁴² The earliest catalogue of the institution that we have is that of 1885-1886. It contains a list of the sixty-one students enrolled that year and their places of origin, almost all in Texas.⁴³ It states that "St. Edward's College is conducted by priests and brothers of the Congregation of Holy Cross, who devote their lives to the education of youth." On the faculty list were Fathers Franciscus (president), Hurth and John Lauth; Brothers Kilian, Sixtus, Remigius, Hubert and Benedict; three laymen and Dr. W.J. Mathews who would be the school physician for many years. "The system of instruction and discipline," the prospectus notes, "is that of the celebrated University of Notre Dame, Indiana, conducted by the same Congregation and acknowledged to be the leading Catholic institution in the West." On the residence staff were "devoted sisters" who made every effort to provide "all the comforts of home."⁴⁴

An 1886 report helps to fill in the picture of the institution at this time. It lists eleven professed sisters: Isabella, Margaret, Egypt, Marcella, Enidius, Flaviana, Sylvia, Marciana, Cesaria, Monica, and Eustelle; and six brothers in farming or other non-teaching work, or infirm: Robert, Maximus, Alpheus, Xystus, Nicholas, and Athanasius. The total assets of the farm and school were reckoned at \$34,590.⁴⁵

The appointment of Father Hurth to the presidency that year ushered in a progressive era for the college. Solid people like Brother Flavian, Father John Scheier and the Reverend Mr. (later Father) William Ollmert joined the faculty and continued on it for many years. A fine school publication called the College Echo made its appearance in July 1888. Its first issue contained the news that work was about to start on the new building a mile to the west on the Robards tract. The site was on college hill near the umbrella oak (or Sorin Oak) where the present Main Building stands. As noted earlier, it was the spot Father Sorin himself had selected years before. The architect was Nicholas Clayton of Galveston.⁴⁶ That summer while the new college was being started Father Hurth went to Notre Dame to join in the celebration on August 15, of Father Sorin's Golden Jubilee. Among the tributes in the exhibition there honoring the "venerable Patriarch" were poems in Latin and German and an oil painting of the Madonna, all by "busy professors at St. Edward's."⁴⁷

When the new college building was finished, Father Hurth tried to get Father Sorin to come for dedication on October 10, 1889. Then 75, Sorin did not attempt it, although he must have regretted the disappointment this would cause in Texas. The ceremony was a splendid one anyway. President Hurth paid tribute

to all, especially Mrs. Doyle, who had made the day possible. And ex-Governor Francis Lubbock recalled that he had often stood on the front steps of the new state Capital during the past year and looked at the new college rising across the river. The sight had made him grateful, he said, because such religious institutions taught their students to be "good men, good citizens, and good Christians."⁴⁸

St. Edward's was now impressing the public and attracting more students. Not only its location and facilities, but also the nature and quality of its education were reasons for this. Enrollment quadrupled between 1887 and 1891, with two hundred students in attendance by the latter year.⁴⁹ There is a delightful report of Father Provincial William Corby's visit to the campus on February 25, 1890. Printed in the Norte Dame Scholastic of the next month, it depicts the zesty scene which greeted the visitor and records his reaction to what he found at the college. There stood the grand new building looking across the Colorado River toward the handsome Capital, also recently completed. Cattle abounded on the farm, and frisky young Texans rode broncos or played ball about campus. So excellent were the students in academic and dramatic exercises at a reception program later that afternoon that, "the good Father...astonished and delighted... exclaimed sub rosa with the Queen of Sheba: 'I have found that the half hath not been told me!'"⁵⁰ His admiration was anticipated in an Austin newspaper after the closing exercises in June the year before: "St. Edward's College may rightly be proud of the accomplishments of its students in all the branches of knowledge and culture."⁵¹

As the 1890's advanced there were the inevitable vicissitudes.

The financial panic of 1893 and a continuing money scarcity hurt enrollment. In October of that year the school's founder, Father Sorin, died. In the following year, Father Hurth was called to the episcopacy and left St. Edward's. The Austin area as well as the school would miss him, for it was said that a public occasion seemed not to be complete without his presence. Also, the Sisters of the Holy Cross, who had served at St. Edward's for twenty years, were withdrawn from it in 1895.⁵²

Nevertheless, it continued to move forward under the administrations of Fathers Edward Murphy, Peter Klein, and John Boland for the rest of the decade. A gymnasium, natatorium, and auditorium were built, and an artesian well dug. Steam heating and electricity were introduced in the Main Building.⁵³ Extracurricular activities had a notable growth. The music program in 1896 included a chapel choir, an orchestra, a band, and a mandolin club. There were learned and pious associations. Dramatics had a strong program. Athletics were becoming organized and interscholastic. Baseball, the American game, was most popular, but track was preferred by some and football was making itself known.⁵⁴ As the century ended, Austin looked south at one of the area's liveliest institutions.

The quarter century that launched the college also brought growth and change for Holy Cross downtown. An urgent need that Mother Angela had to deal with during the weeks of spring 1874 while she was in Austin was for more space. There was one small building with one room for the sisters to live in and another for classes. She promptly acquired a nearby stone structure, and even that was soon crowded, with enrollment rising to eighty pupils. Before leaving, Mother Angela telegraphed for Sisters

Rose, Boniface, and Arcadia to come to Austin. In August Sister Mildred arrived to be the director: with her came Sister Cyrilla.⁵⁵

As time went on a separate schoolhouse was built for the boys, who were taught by one of the sisters. Only small boys were accepted. In 1885 the new St. Mary's Academy was opened, and all the girls went there. Two Brothers, Conrad and Andrew, arrived that year to teach the boys at the parish school. Brothers continued there past the turn of the century.⁵⁶

At St. Mary's Church there was everything to do. Since it was the only Catholic church in town, pastoral duties were considerable. Moreover, a larger structure was needed. Father Sorin was not impressed with the start on this made by Father Feltin. Sorin stated his vision of something befitting a capital city-- "an ornament...of which everyone would be proud." Accordingly, he had Father Spillard make a new start right away, in 1874, under the direction of the Galveston architect, Nicholas J. Clayton who later designed St. Edward's Main Buildings, both the one of 1889 which burned and its successor of 1903 still in use. Work on St. Mary's proceeded slowly; it was not substantially completed until 1884. The pews and stained glass windows were put in even later. But the structure, now St. Mary's Cathedral of the Austin Diocese, was worth waiting for. One of the architectural delights of Austin, it is indeed an ornament of which everyone is proud.⁵⁷

Father Spillard remained pastor of St. Mary's at least until 1882 when he went out to St. Edward's. Father Peter Lauth then took the leadership at the parish, although the bishop seems not to have confirmed him as pastor until 1884. Serving in that

capacity until 1888, he was well liked in town. He once won a contest for the title of most popular minister in Austin, even though he did not campaign for it as the others did.⁵⁸

For the sisters at St. Mary's parish, the vision of a separate academy in Austin became a reality in 1885. Called St. Mary's Academy, it was located a short distance from the church. It advertised itself as a place where "young ladies and little girls" could get an education that was "moral and Christian" as well as cultural and useful. Needless to say, it also enhanced the social life of generations of students at St. Edward's. The impression it made upon the public is reflected in the account a local reporter wrote of its commencement exercises in Millett's Opera House in June 1890. There was no way, he conceded, to describe "all the beautiful changes that can be presented by 250 fair girls of every age from babyhood--almost--to womanhood." And their three-hour program of singing, music and drama was marvelous. President Hurth of St. Edward's closed the exercises "by a few remarks in his clear, brilliant and forcible style," and the curtain fell upon what was termed the sixteenth year of St. Mary's Academy.⁵⁹

During most of the fifteen years before 1900 at the new building the directors were in succession, Sister Mary Pauline and Sister de Pazzi. The latter obtained from Bishop Gallagher of Galveston in 1889 the right to an^{academy} administration quite separate from the parish.⁶⁰ For over sixty-five years, until developers acquired the site from them in the early 1950's, the Sisters of the Holy Cross pursued their educational mission at the downtown academy.

In 1881 the sisters opened the Academy of the Sacred Heart at Clarksville up toward the Red River in Northeast Texas, about thirty miles south of Broken Bow, Oklahoma. Sisters M. Eudoxia Davis and Faustina Ranger were the pioneers of this mission and stayed there until the community left it in 1883.⁶¹

At this time also the sisters took a school at Marshall, about fifty miles farther south. Their stay here lasted from 1880 to 1968. It arose from a meeting of the pastor, Father Louis Granger, of St. Joseph's Church at Marshall with Mother Angela when she was making a visit to the sisters at Clarksville. Being favorably impressed by the sister, Father Granger invited them to come to his parish. They accepted and began teaching there in 1880. Facilities were expanded and changes made in the 1880's. In 1882, a small building was put up to make St. Joseph's School for Boys. In 1885, the girl's school, which had been taking boarders since 1881, also got a new building. It was chartered the next year under the name of St. Mary's Academy. In 1890, St. Joseph's ended the school year with 77 scholars and St. Mary's with 95.

After Sister Eudoxia came to Marshall she served as superior until 1890. Her successor was Sister Josepha McHale. It was Sister Prudentiana Brennan, however, who became the most legendary of the Holy Cross Sisters at Marshall, serving there from 1880 until 1913.⁶²

For the Texas missions of Holy Cross before 1900 the trail is faint. Documentary evidence at hand is scanty and lacking in specifics. Yet, it is enough to show that a start was being made on what evolved in the next century into a superb apostolate to

the Hispanics as well as to the Anglos of Central Texas. As early as 1881, Father Jacob Lauth, C.S.C., lamented that the Congregation was so slow about getting priests into this field who know Spanish.⁶³ In 1885, Father Franciscus spoke of the need for a clearer understanding between the community and the bishop about the missions. It had already done much work with them, and they were in "good order," he said. Holy Cross should be assured of its position in regard to them. A few months later he returned from up north to St. Edward's and promptly went out to attend to the "neglected missions" of the area.⁶⁴ In testimony to the work with the Spanish-speaking which grew out of such early efforts, a Superior General, the Very Reverend J. Wesley Donahue would say more than fifty years later that it was one of the finest things he found Holy Cross religious doing anywhere.⁶⁵

In conclusion, Holy Cross was in Texas for many years before 1900. Some of its work were ephemeral, but others have continued for more than a century. All of them have in some way been responses to a call to "come over here and help us."

Footnotes

Most of the source material for this paper is found in the Indiana Province Archives at Notre Dame, the archives at St. Edward's University at Austin or the archives of the Sisters of the Holy Cross at St. Mary's College, Notre Dame. Almost all the correspondence used is in the first of the collections. The letter of Bishop Odin is in the Catholic Archives of Texas at Austin.

1. Odin to Society for the Propagation of the Faith at Lyon, France, February 14, 1856, in the Odin file of the Catholic Archives of Texas in Austin.
2. Her grave is found today in the Holy Cross Community plot of Assumption Cemetery in Austin. Née Ernestine Potlard, she joined the Holy Cross Sisters, but later carried on an independent apostolate. The letters C.S.C. do not appear on the cross marking her grave.
3. Pierre Parisot, The Reminiscences of a Texas Missionary (San Antonio: Johnson Bros. Printing Co., 1899) p. 33; University of St. Mary, Galveston, Texas: Souvenir Volume of the Silver Jubilee of the College under Jesuit administration, (Galveston 1909), p. 7; Bellaclas to Sorin, August 26, 1869.
4. Sorin to Dubuis, [September ? or October ?] 15, 1869 (letter not fully legible); Boniface to Sorin, April 20, 1871 (Sorin speaks of 2,000 acres and Boniface of 6,000.); Dubuis to Sorin, December 19, 1872, speaks of turning the title to the land in Bee County and other properties over to Brother Boniface.
5. E.g.g. St. Edward's University 1980-82 Bulletin, p. 7; Brother Kilian ~~Beirne~~, c.s.c., From Sea to Shining Sea: The Holy Cross Brothers in the United States (Valatie, N.Y.: Cross Press, 1966), pp. 46.
6. Sorin to Dubuis, December 9, 1872; Sorin to John M. Henni, October 30, 1871.
7. "Chronicles of the Congregation of Holy Cross in the United States," Notre Dame, 1895.
8. Boniface to Sorin, October 11, 1870; Rev. P.W. Condon to Sorin, September 11, 1873; Brother Kilian ~~Beirne~~, From Sea to Shining Sea, p. 76.
9. Boniface to Sorin, October 11, 1870.

10. Ibid; Shortis to Sorin, October 11, 1870; University of St. Mary, Rev. John Toohey, c.s.c., to Sorin, December 27, 1870.
11. Boniface to Sorin, October 11, 1870.
12. Boniface to Sorin, November 27, 1870.
13. Boniface to Sorin, December 17, 1870.
14. Boniface to Sorin, April 23, 1871.
15. Boniface to Sorin, December 5, 1871.
16. Boniface to Sorin, February 7, 1872; Bernier to Sorin, February 9, 1872; Boniface to Sorin, February 25, 1872; Bro. Charles to Sorin, September 11, 1873.
17. Boniface to Sorin, November 1, 1872; Bro. Agatho to Sorin, November 27, 1872; Agatho to Sorin, December 2, 1872; Charles to Sorin, September 11, 1873.
18. University of St. Mary, p. 12; John Chrysostom to Sorin, August 29, 1873; Charles to Sorin, September 11, 1873; John Chrysostom to Sorin, September 21, 1873; John Chrysostom to Sorin, September Bro. Maurice to Sorin, October 6, 1873; Charles to Sorin, November 1, 1873; Maurice to Sorin, November 6, 1873; Charles to Sorin, February 25, 1874; John Chrysostom to Sorin, April 30, 1874.
19. Sorin to Spillard, June 14, 1874; John Chrysostom to Sorin, August 21, 1874.
20. University of St. Mary, p. 12; John Chrysostom to Sorin, April 30, 1874; Robinson to Sorin, February 26, 1875; Spillard to Granger, April 20, 1875; Sorin to Dubuis, August 17, 1876; Sorin to Dubuis, August 19, 1878; Dufal to Sorin and Granger, [August] 19, 1878; J.M. Guyot to Sorin, Galveston, March 1, 1879; Sorin to Spillard, April 1, 1879.
21. Dubuis to clergy of Galveston, August 21, 1878; Dufal to clergy of Galveston, December 17, 1878; Spillard to Sorin, February 27, 1878; Dufal to Sorin, March 17, 1879; Sorin to Spillard, April 1, 1879; Dufal to Sorin, May 10, 1879; Spillard to Sorin, September 30, 1879.
22. Boniface to Sorin, December 17, 1870; Dubuis to Sorin, December 19, 1872; Dubuis to Sorin, January 3, 1874.
23. Parisot, Reminiscences; A. Jaundet to Sorin, April 5, 1871.

24. Molloy to [Robinson ?], October 12, 1873; Robinson to Sorin, October 18, 1873; Robinson to Sorin, November 6, 1873; Robinson to Sorin, November 14, 1873; Robinson to Sorin, December 9, 1873; Robinson to Sorin, December 12, 1873; Robinson to Sorin, December 26, 1874; Robinson to Sorin, January 2, 1874; Robinson to Sorin, January 9, 1874; Molloy to Robinson, March 12, 1874; Robinson to Sorin, March 29, 1874.
25. Bernier to Sorin, February 9, 1872; Feltin to Sorin, March 21, 1874.
26. For example, Holy Cross had farms with its schools at Notre Dame, Watertown, and New Orleans, as well as at Austin.
27. Bernier to Sorin, February 9, 1872; Feltin to Sorin, March 21, 1874; Sorin to Dubuis, April 10, 1872.
28. Mary Doyle to Sorin, November 17, 1872; telegram of Feltin to Sorin, February 5, 1873.
29. Last Will and Testament of Mary Doyle, Travis County Court-house records, Austin.
30. Feltin to Sorin, June 11, June 12, and December 14, 1872; January 16, January 22, January 31, and April 4, 1873; February 11, and March 21, 1874; Sorin to Dubuis, February 16, and April 5, 1874; legal declaration of Father Sorin, April 21, 1874; Dubuis to Sorin, February 16, 1874; legal conveyance of Austin city lots to Sorin by Dubuis, April 21, 1874; Spillard to Sorin, May 3, 1874; Sorin to Spillard, August 13, 1874.
31. William Corby to Sorin, April 8, 1874; Maurice to Sorin, March 25, 1874; Chambodut to Sorin, April 21, 1874; Spillard to Sorin, September 23, 1874.
32. General Directory of Houses and Religious 1962: Congregation of Holy Cross, Rome 1962, p. 190; "Holy Cross One Hundred Years in Texas, 1874-1974," pp. 2, 5-6; Maurice to Sorin, March 25, 1874.
33. The Official Catholic Directory (New York: P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1979) p. 829.
34. Sorin to Spillard, May 8, 1874.
35. Brother John, Maximus, and Ubaldus to Sorin, November 21, 1874; Sister M. Rose to Sorin, March 8, 1877; Sorin to Spillard, February 2, 1879.
36. Spillard to [Sorin] October 17, 1876; Spillard to Sorin, July 25, 1876.

37. Spillard to Sorin, August 4, 1881; Report of May 1, 1881 on St. Edward's College and farm. The report was probably made to Sorin by Franciscus.
38. Spillard to Sorin, May 3, 1874; Spillard to Sorin, June 22, 1874; Spillard to Sorin, August 27, 1874; Spillard to Sorin, September 23, 1874; Spillard to Sorin, July 28, 1875; Sorin to Spillard, August 23, 1875; Spillard to Sorin, September 13, 1875; Sorin to Spillard, September 18, 1875.
39. Spillard to [Alexis Granger] ? , September 28, 1875; Sorin to Spillard, February 2, 1879.
40. Joe P. Byrne, "Early Days at St. Edward's," St. Edward's Echo, VII, 7 (April 1926) pp. 3-4; Sorin to Spillard, n.d. ; Spillard to Sorin, August 14, 1879; "Chronicles of the Congregation of Holy Cross United States of America (Notre Dame, 1895).
41. Spillard to Sorin, August 4, September 23, November 26, 1881; L.J. L'Etourneau to John Lauth, November 11, 1881; Spillard to Sorin, September 11 and 28, 1881; Robinson to Sorin, August 26, September 25, 1883; Franciscus to Sorin, June 23 and 25, 1884; Peter Lauth to Granger, November 24, 1884; Hurth to Sorin, October 10, 1885.
42. Hurth to Sorin, August 7, 1885.
43. Catalogue of St. Edward's College, Austin, Texas 1885-86, p. 11-12, (in St. Edward's University Archives).
44. Ibid, pp. 3-7.
45. Report ^{of May 1, 1881} probably made by Franciscus.
46. The College Echo I, 1 (July 1888) p. 1. The same issue carries on p. 13 a related story from a local newspaper, The Austin Daily Dispatch of July 16, 1888.
47. The College Echo I, 2 (October 1, 1888) p. 1.
48. Ibid II, 2 (October 1889) pp. 1-7; Sorin to Hurth, April 29, 1889.
49. Eighth Annual Catalogue of St. Edward's College, 1891-1892, pp. 29-35; Hurth to Sorin, August 4, 1891.
50. Notre Dame Scholastic, March 29, 1890. pp. 460-463.
51. Texas Vorwärts, June 21, 1889.
52. Ibid, September 11, 1894; T.E. Walsh to Corby, January 21, 1892; Hurth to Sorin, June 5, 1894; The Chronicles of the Congregation of Holy Cross, p. 8.

53. Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of St. Edward's College, July 3, 1893; July 20, 1894; Murphy to Corby, Austin, April 2, 1895; Klein to Corby, Austin, August 10, 1895; Klein to Corby, December 18, 1895. Catalogues of this era also reflect these developments.
54. E.g. The College Echo, March, 1895, pp. 16-17; Catalogue 1896-97, pp. 59-61; Catalogue 1898-99, pp. 55-57.
55. Manuscript history of St. Mary's school and academy (archives of St. Mary's College) pp. 7-11; Sister Perpetua to Sorin, September 8, 1875.
56. Ibid, p. 12; Sister Mildred to Sorin, p. 18; Peter Lauth to Sorin, January 31, May 8, August 8, and August 11, 1885.
57. Spillard to Sorin, June 28, 1874; Spillard to Sorin, March 2, April 2, June 2, 1875; Sorin to Spillard, November 3, 1875; P. Lauth to Granger, May 23 and June 15, 1883; Franciscus to Sorin, November 14 and December 22, 1883, February 13, 1884. See Willard B. Robinson, "Houses of Worship in Nineteenth - Century Texas", Southwestern Historical Quarterly, LXXXV, 3 (January 1982) pp. 265,267.
58. Chronicles of the Congregation of Holy Cross ;
Franciscus to Sorin, May 8, 1884 *and Oct. 10, 1885*
59. Advertisement for St. Mary's Academy in The College Echo, July, 1888, p. 15; Austin Daily Statesman of June 21, 1890 quoted in The College Echo, July, 1890, pp. 15-16.
60. Manuscript history of St. Mary's School and Academy, pp. 21-27.
61. Manuscript history of the Holy Cross Sisters at Clarksvill (in the archives of St. Mary's College).
62. Manuscript history of the Holy Cross Sisters at Marshall (in archives of St. Mary's College).
63. Jacob Lauth to General Chapter, April 5, 1880.
64. Spillard to Sorin, August 14, 1879; P. Lauth to Granger, November 24, 1885; Franciscus to Sorin, June 2, 1885; Hurth to Sorin, September 24, 1885; Franciscus to Sorin, October 10, 1885; Article on Texas in the Notre Dame Scholastic, March 29, 1890.
65. Father Joseph Houser, c.s.c. to me, orally. To be precise, Father Houser remembered that Father Donahue called the missions the "most fruitful" work of the congregation.