

HOLY CROSS IN TEXAS

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HOLY CROSS IN TEXAS 1900-1925

In 1900 Holy Cross religious, men and women, completing thirty years on the Texas mission, had four houses there, three of them at Austin and one at Marshall. In the former place two priests were engaged in pastoral work at St. Mary's Parish and two brothers were teaching at its boys' school. A short distance away was St. Mary's Academy, where some twenty-five sisters were educating and caring for two hundred girls and young ladies. South of the city the priests and brothers were operating St. Edward's College, comparable in size to the academy, and, as an auxiliary enterprise, a farm of several hundred acres. Holy Cross priests were also "helping out" summers and weekends with pastoral work outside of Austin, some of it among the Spanish-speaking people of the area. In Marshall the sisters conducted another academy for girls, also called St. Mary's but smaller than the one in Austin, and St. Joseph's Industrial School for boys.

This paper offers a glimpse of what was going on at all these places in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The best researched part of it is the section on St. Edward's College, on which the presenter has done intensive work for the institution's centennial history. The other sections are not as authoritative, but they may be adequate for our present purposes.

Other Workers in the Vineyard

A notable thing about the Catholic Church of Austin was that there had been none but Holy Cross churchpeople serving in it since 1874, the year the sisters, priests and brothers of the congregation first arrived. The situation was not altered until 1902 when the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul came to the city to open Seton Infirmary. Significantly, it was the CSC pastor of St. Mary's Church, who officiated at the dedication of the new building and it was St. Edward's band that furnished music during the open house that followed. The next religious to come were the Sisters of the Presentation, exiled from France in 1903, who began that same year thirty-five years of domestic service at St. Edward's.¹

Five years later the Paulists arrived, causing some stress on the old order. The work of these dedicated Americanists with the University of Texas seemed in a way to sanction the attendance of Catholic students at the state institution, a formidable competitor in any case. Also the bishop was creating a new parish, St. Austin's, and putting it in the care of the Paulists. Accordingly, the Holy Cross pastor of St. Mary's was concerned about where the boundary between the two parishes would go. He

wanted it to be at Twenty-second Street but could live with Nineteenth, which was finally settled upon. The presence of the Paulists, moreover, put the CSCs upon their mettle in the matter of standing with the bishop.² And at least one of the Paulists was a zealous promoter of the Temperance Movement, which was well and good, but the next thing would be Prohibition.³

Another community which seemed to be interested in the Austin area was that of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMIs). They had been on the Texas mission much longer than Holy Cross and had done a great deal of work with the Mexicans below Austin and along the border. It was to the Oblates, as noted later in this paper, that Holy Cross in 1925 handed over the care of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Austin.

St. Mary's Parish

In the summer obediences of 1900 Father James Rogers was replaced as pastor of St. Mary's Parish by Father John O'Keefe, who would remain in that post for sixteen years. Named assistant at the same time was Father Joseph Kirsch. With some help from the priests at St. Edward's, these two men served the whole Catholic community of Austin, a city of over 20,000, and its environs.⁴

A sampling of parish activities may help to bring back the turn of the century. On the feast of the Assumption in 1900, a solemn high mass was celebrated at the church by Father John Boland, the president of St. Edward's, with Father O'Keefe and his assistant acting as deacon and subdeacon. The pastor gave the sermon, handling his subject "in a masterful manner." Early the next year the St. Mary's Literary and Dramatic Society, newly organized, staged an Irish comedy under the direction of Father Kirsch. The entertainment gave scope to local talent and delighted audiences at its two presentations. Two years later Bishop Nicholas Gallagher of Galveston was at the church for Confirmation. The crowd on hand for the ceremonies was so great that chairs had to be set in the aisles. Father Boland was again the principal celebrant for the Mass, after which the bishop confirmed 107 persons, eighteen of them adults and mostly converts, - "one of them a negro," as a reporter noticed. A final instance of parish events is from Holy Week of 1904. On Holy Thursday there was a High mass at 8:00 a.m., followed by a procession carrying the Blessed Sacrament to the repository at the altar of the Blessed Virgin. Thirty girls in white and twenty surpliced altar boys added to the impressiveness of the occasion.⁵

One of the bonds of the parish to the community was St. Mary's School for Boys which a faculty of two brothers conducted from 1885 to 1918. (The priests of the staff with some help from the sisters for the small boys had kept it going before the latter

date.) When classes began in the fall of 1900 the brothers there were Francis de Sales Cullinan and Ambrose Hart. At the end of the year commencement exercises were held in St. Mary's Hall before "a large and appreciative audience." Among those awarded silver medals for excellence of one kind or another that night was Tom Byrne, whom your historian talked to seventy years later to gather some history. Tom had attended St. Edward's after leaving St. Mary's.⁶

Apparently Brother Francis was at St. Mary's straight through to the end of the Boys' School. In the summers he would go out to the farm or perhaps visit New Orleans, where his cousins, Brother Bertin Sherman and Sister Attracta, were stationed. He would also go out to the community camp at Waveland, Mississippi, and take the waters of the Gulf to ease his rheumatism. But then he was glad to get back, as he said after such an excursion in 1913, "to dear St. Mary's School" with his "esteemed friend father O'Keefe." Brother Ambrose must have been away for a while. At any rate, pleading health problems, he once asked to be changed "to the North." Two years later Brother Francis was asking that his old colleague be sent back. His absence was hurtful to both the school and the parish, where he was "beloved by all," Francis said. Accordingly, Ambrose did return and hoe out his row.⁷

Why the brothers left the Boys' School is not entirely clear to a later generation. For one thing, Father O'Keefe was gone then, and a school with a low attendance of only thirty-seven boys in two classrooms obviously bothered the new pastor, Father Thomas Hennessey. He called it a "miserable little school." The parish paid the Community \$400 a year for each brother and furnished their room and board. Thus the operation may not have seemed cost effective. Then apparently there was an interest in coeducation, something the the brothers weren't doing in those days. At any rate, the pastor put the question before the bishop in the fall of 1917 and the brothers were gone the next year. The Holy Cross Sisters, who now had the school back, took both girls and boys and had eighty pupils.⁸

In 1906 Father Kirsch was replaced as assistant pastor by Father William Marr, who remained at St. Mary's for over a decade and became one of its legends. Interested in people generally and especially attentive to the young, he endeared himself to the whole parish. He was also popular at St. Mary's Academy where he served as chaplain.⁹

In the winter of 1915-1916 with Father O'Keefe ailing, Father Marr was acting pastor and had Father James Gallagan helping him. Unfortunately, the grippe was bad that season, and everybody on the staff was affected by it--Fathers Marr and Gallagan, Brothers Francis and Ambrose, as well as Father O'Keefe. By late February the others were feeling better, but Father Marr was in Seton

Infirmity with complications and getting worse. Presently it became clear that he was a dying, and his brother, Father George Marr, CSC. was summoned from Portland. Although the sick man fought to stay alive a little longer, death reached him three hours before his brother did, on March 17. But it was a beautiful death, said Father Gallagan, who was at the bedside, and accepted with resignation.¹⁰ Grieving parishioners wanted Father Will buried in Austin, not in the community plot, but in the general Catholic cemetery, for, they said, it was always his wish to be among his people. The provincial gave the desired permission.¹¹

When your presenter was in the novitiate more than forty years ago, Father George Marr, then a senior citizen, was assigned there. He would often say, as he offered a temerarious opinion, "Now I'm not here to go against the novice master, but I'll say this even if they do send me to Texas for it." Father George may have been one of those who gave Texas its Siberian reputation in the community, but I know now it had a special place in his heart.

On the day of the funeral Father O'Keefe was up and around and seemed to Father Gallagan "as well as ever," though greatly affected by the death. In fact, he had not been really well for several years. There had been talk of removing him-- Bishop Peter Hurth at one time was mentioned as a possible replacement. But O'Keefe himself had resisted the idea of retirement. Now, however, he was at the end of the line. By the summer of 1916 he was so poorly that he was recalled to Notre Dame, where he died in September.¹²

Three pastors served at St. Mary's for the remainder of the period under review. The first was Timothy Murphy, who was there for only one year, with Gallagan continuing as assistant. Next came Father Thomas Hennessey. He was succeeded in 1920 by Michael Quinlan. The Irish dynasty was becoming a long one.¹³

St. Mary's Academy in Austin ¹⁴

St. Mary's Academy in Austin moved into the 1900's a well known and much respected local institution. Sister M. De Pazzi who had been directress there since 1889 was nearing the end of her term of office. In March of 1900 a veteran Texas missionary, Sister M. Faustina Ranger, was called to her reward and was buried out of St. Mary's Church. The commencement of that year was held at the Hancock Opera House a few blocks from the school.¹⁵ In 1901 Sister Sophia Rooney became directress, beginning a term that would last until 1906. Enrollment in 1902 reached an impressive 222.

In general commencements were a great way to display to the public the accomplishments of St. Mary's students. That of 1903 was

prefaced by an art levee which occupied four rooms in the Academy building. A reporter called it a show of which both the sisters and the young ladies could be proud. In 1906 the exercises at Hancock's led one observer to the reflection that each June gave the doubter clearer evidence of the doctrine of progress. Successive commencements were "a moving picture of ... progress in the education of the Minim, the Miss and the Maid...." 16

The house chronicles for spring term of 1909 provide a sample of how each term added to the history of the school. In February the painters were in and gave the place a going over from top to bottom, so that it looked sharp indeed. New rose bushes were set out that month also. On Washington's birthday the Class of '09 gave a colonial ball, but there were no social functions during Lent.

From Easter Thursday to Low Sunday the girls had a retreat conducted by a Paulist, Father Sullivan. Bishop Gallagher was in town that Sunday, so there was confirmation for six girls, and two of the little ones made their first communion. That evening the bishop came over again for an entertainment and supper in his honor. Among the eight priest who visited at that time also were Fathers O'Keefe and Marr of St. Mary's parish. The following morning the bishop said Mass for the visitors, then met with them in the community room and besought them to encourage their young people to go to Communion frequently.

May, needless to say, was a busy month. May devotions were held at end of school days during the week and in the evenings of the weekend. On May 6 the pupils of the first and second senior classes gave a Mother Goose Ball. The annual picnic for one reason or another did not come off, except for the Minims; the Martin family apparently made facilities available to them. The third week of the month brought a musical and literary entertainment featuring the juniors and minims.

June meant examinations and closing exercises as usual, except that school closed on June 10th so that Sister Alodia who was going to Ireland could get away a little early. The annual retreat of the sisters followed, with another Paulist as retreat director.

Reckoning from 1874, the year Holy Cross arrived in Austin, St. Mary's held its fortieth annual commencement in 1914. The site was the assembly hall of the Academy where "an interested and cultured audience" was gathered to watch the sweet-sad ceremony. After the pupils finished their program, Father O'Keefe handed out diplomas--seven in English and one in music--to the eight graduates. Father Marr was the speaker of the day. He spoke of the opportunities opening up for women in the world, allowed that they were the equal of men, but still thought that they did best

in the home.¹⁷

The school year 1919-1920, well recorded in the chronicles, had a number of highlights. Sisters Georgetta who had served at St. Mary's for twenty-six years returned to the Mother House in failing health that fall and died there at Christmas time. The Thanksgiving Ball put on by the high school boarders and day students was great. The hall was handsomely decorated, the pupils came in evening dress and dancing to the music of Shakey's Orchestra went on until eleven. In December St. Mary's received the victory flag for the best record in the War Saving Stamps Drive of all the schools in Austin. Another echo of the war and honor to the Academy was the second prize that Miss Josephine Shall won in the spring for her contest essay, "What are the benefits of enlistment in the U.S. Army?"

In April 1920 Mother General Aquina made her official visit to Austin. Her companion was Sister Boniface who had taught at St. Mary's forty years before. Of course old students of Sister Boniface living in the city were thrilled to see her. Included in the visit was Our Lady of Guadalupe School, whose students put on special programs in honor of Mother General. It is not recorded whether she saw the historical parade which the city had for the San Jacinto celebration while she was there. She must in any case have been pleased that St. Mary's float on the Lone Star State was considered a marvel and that it won the third prize of fifteen dollars.

May was quiet. Sister Carlos had to go to Seton Infirmary for an eye operation and was there for three weeks. The boarders had a picnic in East Woods on the 13th, but were back in time for May devotions that evening. Closing ceremonies that year included a program of essay readings in the assembly hall on Sunday evening, June 6. Subjects ranged from "Deliberate Villains in Shakespeare" to "The Freedom of Ireland." The following Wednesday there was the commencement, which closed with an address by Father Schumacher, the president of St. Edward's, on the subject of education. A solemn high mass followed by benediction the next morning, with several Holy Cross priests in the sanctuary and music by the sisters and their pupils, was the last exercise of the series.¹⁸

Let us leave St. Mary's with a glance at its golden jubilee in May of 1924. Among many communications received on the occasion were a blessing from the Holy Father and good wishes from former superiors and from other houses of the sisters, from clergy, religious, alumnae and friends. There were also many gifts of money, works of art and the like. An open house was held, with exhibits of work done by St. Mary's girls. Among the distinguished visitors who came to pay their compliments were the mother general and the bishop of San Antonio.

The Holy Cross Sisters in Marshall¹⁹

The community of Holy Cross sisters at Marshall in this quarter century numbered ten religious, more or less. Of these the best known was Sister Prudentiana Brennan, directress from 1902 to 1914. The larger of the two works of the mission was St. Mary's Academy, with enrollments most years something over one hundred pupils. A breakdown for the fall of 1902 showed exactly one hundred day scholars and fourteen boarders. As usual, the non-Catholic contingent was large--fifty--but one convert was noted. Two years later the enrollment overall was about the same, and seventy were non-Catholic. Figures stayed in this ballpark during the later years. Until 1905 when the sisters bought it, the academy was the property of the local parish, St. Joseph's, pastored by Father Granger. St. Joseph's Industrial School for Boys, a parish property throughout, was the smaller work. Taking enrollments at random, we find it had fifty pupils in 1907 and sixty in 1912.

A selection from the annals of the house give an idea of life on this mission. There was the big evening celebration of the feast of the Immaculate Conception in 1904 when the illumination of the convent drew a large crowd of Catholics and other townspeople to the grounds. On that occasion the Children of Mary, dressed in white and carrying lighted tapers formed ranks in front of the academy and moved in procession singing hymns to the Blessed Virgin. There was the cold January that followed, when wood was hard to get and the sisters gathered three or four classes together into one room to keep their pupils warm. But it all seemed worthwhile when a visiting bishop, speaking to the congregation of the parish "paid flattering tributes to the sisters" and congratulated the people on the fine schools they had. The ordinary, Bishop Edward Dunne of Dallas, visited three times that year and at least once the academy pupils improvised an entertainment for him. Both schools closed the year with eclat. The exercises of the boys' school were above average and the singing better than you'd expect of boys. As for the academy, the large audience enjoyed a well prepared program and left "feeling proud that home talent could present such high grade entertainment."

A review of another random year, 1908-1909, is equally instructive. The house stayed open the summer before, with the sisters making their retreat there. Returning in the fall were Sisters Prudentiana and Lucia, whose time of service on the

mission was now lengthening out. In charge of the laundry and the housekeeping was Sister Lutegarde. In February there were examinations with results that drew the praise of the pastor. Later some of the Jesuits from St. John's College at Shreveport visited. One of them talked with the seniors of the academy about "Julius Caesar" and found them well up on the play and its characters. A neighborly gesture by the local Daughters of the Confederacy was the presentation to the school of two portraits of Jefferson Davis. Although the donors avowed the aim of promoting interest in southern patriots, they also wanted to express appreciation for the sisters. What could have been a real downer was the outbreak of a fire which threatened to destroy the sisters' house, the church and the boys' school. But with prayer and timely help, thank God, the damage was contained. Regrettably, the Mother General, who was scheduled to visit Marshall in May, could not get there because heavy rains made the railroad from Austin impassable. She went to Cairo instead.

A big event in 1911 was the dedication of the new St. Mary's Academy building on November 5 by the new bishop of Dallas, the Most Reverend Joseph Lynch. That morning there were two masses, low one at 7:00 which the bishop offered and a solemn high at 10:00, for the congregation of St. Joseph's Parish. For the ten o'clock Father Boland of St. Edward's College in Austin was celebrant, a Jesuit from Shreveport deacon, and Father O'Keefe of St. Mary's Church in Austin subdeacons, while the bishop gave the sermon. Later in the day the ceremonies of blessing and an open house were held. The occasion was enlivened by the presence of the Knights of Columbus in a body and by St. Joseph's Brass Band thirty strong, which serenaded the bishop at the rectory before the dedication and played "several choice selections" during the afternoon in the balcony of the academy. The hundreds of Marshall people who visited the building and looked through its classrooms, auditorium and sisters apartments went away feeling proud of this addition to their city. The next morning the pupils gave a short program for the bishop and the visiting priests who were still there.²⁰

We can imagine the satisfaction with which the sisters showed the mother general around the new building and how pleased she was to see it. Some thought the occasion ranked above the dedication among the highlights of the year.

In the sisters' community each year could be expected to bring changes. After fourteen years as superior Sister Prudentiana in 1914 was transferred to California and replaced at Marshall by Sister Reparata. The next year it was Sister Angelique who was moved; she had been at the academy for some time. So had Sister Ebba and Bruno when they were reassigned in 1918.

A big loss for everybody was the death in that year of the past

Monsignor Granger, who had brought the Holy Cross Sisters to Marshall thirty-eight years before. Present for the obsequies were Bishop Lynch of Dallas and thirty-one priests for whom the sisters provided hospitality.²¹

The year Monsignor died the bishop made several visits to the parish and academy. At the academy he expressed gratitude for its hospitality and remarked on the warm and friendly atmosphere there. It was, he noted, a cheerful, homey and comfortable place for the pupils and the sisters. He wished he had more like it in his diocese.

And this perhaps will do to give us an idea of how the Holy Cross Sisters were making a difference in the town that later gave us the Marantos (Sister Bernarda and Brother Peter Celestine) and Father David Verhalen.

The Hispanic Ministry²²

Shortly after 1900 two young priests of Holy Cross were sent to Texas in hopes that they would recover from tuberculosis. One of them, Father James J. Trahey (the author of The Brothers of Holy Cross) succumbed there in 1906 and is buried in the community cemetery in Austin. Fifty-seven years later, I was present when a classmate of his and a former president of St. Edward's, Father Mathew Schumacher, celebrated Mass for him in the chapel of Vincent Hall Scholasticate on campus.

The other priest was Irish-born Patrick O'Reilly. The story has been told elsewhere of how he recovered a measure of health and, being gifted in language, took up pastoral work among the Mexican people of the Austin area. By mid-1906, while still at St. Edward's, he had taken a census of them with a view to getting a church for them started. Before the end of the year, he had received an appointment from the bishop to do so and was raising money for his project. He had already bought a lot to build on.

At the same time, his health still not robust, he was working hard to minister to the people. On Saturdays he visited missions at Manor, MacNeill, Hornsby Bend and Elgin, taking one each week apparently. On Sundays he was at St. Mary's, where he said an 8:30 Mass with instructions in Spanish, gave benediction, and in the afternoons taught Sunday school. "I believe I have met my life's work," he told the provincial, "and am going into it with my whole heart and soul." It must have been a matter of great satisfaction to him when Our Lady of Guadalupe Church on the corner of Fifth and Guadalupe streets became a reality.

After several years, hemorrhaging badly, Father O'Reilly had to be hospitalized. A worried sister at Seton Infirmary in 1914

expressed the hope that God would spare him to continue the good work he was in. He did go back to it, but was down again two years later. This time Holy Cross people had to think seriously about the next step. They could let the local Hispanic apostolate go, in which case the bishop would probably assign it to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. One of the objections to that, however, was that Guadalupe Parish might then be enlarged at the expense of St. Mary's. It would be better if a Holy Cross man could be found to carry on the work. Father Timothy Murphy, the pastor of St. Mary's and concerned about the division of its territory, suggested Father George MacNamara of St. Edward's, who knew some Spanish.²³

Presently, however, O'Reilly was feeling well enough to go back to his post, with the promise of help. The one then assigned as his assistant was Father Walter O'Donnell of St. Edward's, and it was he who succeeded Father O'Reilly as pastor when the latter had to leave in August 1917.²⁴

Discussion of the future of the parish has left us with valuable information about the magnitude of the hispanic apostolate in the area. O'Reilly estimated the number of Mexicans in Austin at 2,000 with many more in the surrounding country. O'Donnell made the figure for Austin and its fringes lower--about 1,000, he said--with some five hundred more in towns and on ranches within ten or fifteen miles. Almost four hundred received confirmation from Bishop Gallagher at Guadalupe church on Low Sunday of 1917. At the same time, it was a matter of concern that the Baptists and Methodists were proselytising in this traditionally Catholic ethnic group.²⁵

In one way or another Father O'Reilly managed to provide some schooling for the children of the neighborhood. At one time he had the use of a private house for the enterprise, at another it was the church itself and again it may have been an annex built to the church. Unable to get Holy Cross sisters for the school, he was glad to have the Houston Dominicans who came in about 1911. They retired in 1919, however, when the new pastor, Father O'Donnell got an agreement from St. Mary's of the Lake to take the school.²⁶

At first the only sister sent was Sister Leonidas who ran the school with help of Miss Fanny Corona. In the next year Sister Millicent arrived. Apparently the sisters, who had been living at the Academy, then took up residence in a house provided for them by the Catholic Daughters of America near the church. Help also came from the local Home Mission Guild which Father O'Donnell helped to form before he was replaced by Father Angus MacDonald.²⁷

As their apostolate matured, the corps of sisters grew to four and

the number of people they worked with increased. Attendance at the school began at a low level each year because families were still away picking cotton. In mid-October however, it rose to two hundred pupils. By the mid-1920's the Mexican American population was shifting toward the east side, and in 1923 two sisters began going over there to teach singing and catechism in a tent. But the bishop didn't like the idea; he told Father MacDonald to take the tent down and provide decent facilities.²⁸

In the meantime the dedicated Father MacDonald was doing fine work in the parish. Its membership was growing so much in fact that Bishop Christopher Byrne who now headed the Diocese of Galveston wanted an increased commitment to it from Holy Cross. When that was not forthcoming, the bishop turned the parish over to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The transfer was made on January 1, 1925. Shortly thereafter the church was relocated to its present site on the east side.²⁹

The Holy Cross Sisters, praising Father MacDonald for his kindness to them, continued their work, now with Oblate Father Jesus Prieto and his assistant (Would you believe that Father Prieto is in Austin again, all but sixty years later and that I've socialized with him from time to time at community soirees and met him last summer at the Guadalupe Church bazaar?) In the summer of 1925, our closing point, Sisters Leonidas and Albana were teaching summer school to about ninety children. In the afternoon with the help of some of the older ones they were fixing up a new house provided for them at 406 West Fifth. Presently they would move with the church to the east side where they would serve the parish into the 1960's.³⁰

A part of the Hispanic ministry that must be mentioned briefly was the one at St. Edward's. The evidence I have of it is slight, but, so to speak, first hand. In 1974 Macario Gutierrez and his brother David came to the brothers' house there, and it was I who answered the doorbell. They said that Macario had been baptized at St. Edward's and wanted his baptismal certificate. We located it at nearby San Jose Parish, whither it had been transferred. Two years later Andres Cantu came by with a similar request. He had been baptized at St. Edward's in 1914. In this case, we did not find the certificate right away. In both instances the men were becoming age-eligible for social security and recalled that St. Edward's had been their place of baptism. They may have been only the tip of the iceberg.³¹

St. Edward's College

In 1900 St. Edward's College, clearly visible on the southern horizon, was a familiar landmark to people in Austin across the Colorado River. In education since 1878, it had received a state

charter as a college in 1885. A number of Holy Cross religious--Brothers Sixtus McGrath, Kilian Flanagan, Stanislaus Clark, and Flavian Volini, with Fathers John Scheier and William Ollmert--had been serving there from the 1880's. Father Peter Klein, president for the past five years, was now yielding his office to Father John Boland, who came from Sacred Heart College in Watertown, Wisconsin. Other notable changes in the obedience of summer 1900 included the transfer of Father Scheier to Notre Dame and of Father William Moloney to St. Edward's.³²

Father Boland was to serve as president, except for the year 1908-1909 when Father Patrick Carroll replaced him, until 1913. He was then succeeded by Father Emiel DeWulf who had already been on the faculty for some years. In 1919 Father Matthew Schumacher from Notre Dame took the leadership and held it to the close of our period, 1925. For the college the quarter century under consideration was interesting in many ways, but also frustrating. Despite efforts to achieve real growth, especially in the Schumacher administration, St. Ed's remained in that respect pretty much on dead center. Enrollments seldom rose much above 150 students. To complicate matters two disasters, a fire in 1903 and a tornado in 1922, nearly bracketed the era.³³

The first of these disasters occurred on April 9, 1903, Holy Thursday -- fortunately without loss of life. The cause of the fire is unclear, but its result was the loss of the Main Building (contemporaries would say "the college") with its library and of its furniture as could not be saved before the blaze became inferno. But there was a bright side. Everyone was alive. Students, faculty, firemen and friends had acted heroically. Austin and Travis County community had shown neighborly kindness. Almost all of the other buildings had been saved. Father Boland told the press that the College would be rebuilt.³⁴

Presumably after a quick house council meeting, Father Boland next day wired the provincial, Father John Zahm, then in France, informing him of the disaster and asking permission to rebuild also to build a separate dormitory. Zahm gave the permission promptly and the work was done that summer with impressive results.³⁵ An anonymous visitor in late September couldn't get over it. He recalled the old campus on the Doyle Farm to the east where there had been a small frame building and twenty-five students. Now there were two fine large structures, not to speak of smaller facilities, and an enrollment of over 200 students. The visitor was sure there was "no other such educational place in the South." Community members in later years seeing the place the first time reacted similarly. Father George Howarth, taking up an assignment there in 1909, told the provincial that he had expected something like Sacred Heart College in Watertown. Here he was "in a college second only to Notre Dame in greatness and beauty." And Father John De Launay, at St. Edward's to go

retreat in 1915, said that he "never thought we had such a beautiful place in Texas." (He included St. Mary's Church also in that happy surprise.)³⁶

St. Edward's certainly had shown vitality with its brave recovery, and the strong comeback gave hopes that it would now grow and develop satisfactorily. In fact it did not. Enrollment was limited by competition from other schools, poor crops, hard times, and large events like the Mexican Revolution and World War I. Although it stayed above 200 until 1908, it was usually below 150 thereafter through the war. Financially it managed to get by because, as from the beginning, operating costs were low, people watched the pennies and Notre Dame would help out in an emergency. Plant expansion was, under the circumstances, neither urgent nor feasible. But for all its limitations the school did a quantity of good work and led a lively existence. All in all, it was not unlike many other small colleges of the period--small and struggling, but tough and viable.

The corps of religious at St. Edward's kept changing with the rhythm of their form of life, although persistence is also seen in it. Before 1910 a number of the old time--faculty who had carried over into the new century were gone. Besides Father Scheier, these were Brothers Sixtus, Kilian and Stanislaus. Brothers Flavian, however, remained until 1925. Brother Conrad Heiser who had taught at St. Mary's Boys' School since 1885 came out to St. Edward's around 1900 and was there until 1936. Among the new names prominent before World War I were George O'Connor, Thomas Corbett, and William Maloney among the priests and Louis Gazagne and Linus Voigt among the brothers. Wartime arrivals included Fathers Peter Forrestal, George MacNamara and James O'Brien. Right after the war Father Joseph Maguire, later president of the institution, came on the scene. Last but not least in this enumeration is Father Paul Foik who arrived in 1924 and eventually became editor of the multi-volumed Our Catholic Heritage in Texas sponsored by the Texas Knights of Columbus.³⁷

Alfred J. Brown, a lay member of the faculty from 1913 to 1916, nearly half a century later composed for your historian a memoir which includes recollections of his religious colleagues at that time. It was their custom, he said, to gather on the front porch of the Main Building at recreation periods. Father Boland the president would always take a corner seat on one of the benches. Fathers De Wulf, O'Connor, Moloney and Corbett, Brothers Flavian, Louis, Conrad and others would be there also. They would talk of many things: of school, of old students, of the elections, "of cabbages and kings."

Brown also testified that the religious, though of different national origins, handled the emotions generated by World War I in an edifying way. Taking meals at the community table, he was

seated with "a brother of German descent, one born in France, also a brother with an Irish brogue...." Nevertheless, he said, he had "never heard an un-Christian word spoken at that table." He evidently didn't know about the attitude of an immigrant Polish brother in the house. This one was so upset about reported German atrocities against the Poles early in the war that he had "no use for two other religious, an observer said, because they were German."³⁸

For priests on the faculty the question of serving as military chaplains became important. Father O'Brien said he was ready to go and made application for it. While waiting for an answer, he predicted to the local community, to their considerable amusement that he would be another Father Corby and have a monument erected to him. The trouble was he wasn't yet a naturalized U.S. citizen. Another faculty member who was eager to get a military chaplaincy was Father George MacNamara, but he was beaten out by a Paulist.³⁹

Through the administrations of the quarter century the academic program was revised gradually. In Father Boland's time four courses of study were defined: classical, English-scientific, commercial and preparatory. Father Carroll may have been the first to mark off grammar, preparatory and collegiate work in modern style. Father De Wulf's special interest was the introduction of some mechanical, pre-engineering and agricultural work. The great reformer, however, was Father Schumacher. He established the high school as a distinct entity, sought to bring the college up to university standards and in 1925 obtained for it a university charter.⁴⁰

Just as Schumacher was starting a push for a "Greater St. Edward's," a tornado struck the campus. The date was May 4, 1922. It killed one student, sheared off the upper part of the dormitory (Holy Cross Hall), destroyed the gymnasium-natatorium, and killed one student. But as in 1903, there was a buoyant recovery. The debris was cleared away, the dormitory was rebuilt and other damage repaired. Indeed, the situation seemed to favor the ongoing campaign for a Greater St. Edward's which would be "the Notre Dame of the Southwest." Schumacher even persuaded the provincial to let him hire a professional fund-raising firm to help raise money. Results, however, were disappointing.⁴¹

Although Schumacher was frustrated in his efforts to raise St. Edward's to new levels, he must still be accounted one of its greatest leaders. Moreover, he plugged within the Holy Cross community for the expansion of its work in Texas. In 1922 Bishop Byrne of Galveston asked the provincial, Father O'Donnell, to take Sacred Heart Parish and St. Mary's University in Galveston (where Holy Cross had begun its Texas mission in 1870). Schumacher, whose support was enlisted by the bishop, urged O'Donnell to take

them both. Should not the congregation have a policy of growth in Texas, he asked. It could not simply stand still. People were sometimes heard to say that it had not grown as it should have in so many years. But in this instance the argument did not prevail.⁴²

In 1925 Holy Cross lost Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish and St. Edward's became a University. What would happen to its work in Texas over the next half century and more we now know, but that generation did not. In the meantime, the old saying that "Man proposes but God disposes" was verified many times over.

End Notes

- 1 Southern Messenger , XI.5 (June 5, 1902), p. ; ibid XIV, (Sept. 3, 1903), p.8.
- 2 John O'Keefe to Andrew Morrissey, August 3, 1907.
- 3 Patrick O'Reilley to Morrissey, July 4, 1916.
- 4 Southern Messenger , IX, 21 (July 19, 1900), p. 8.
- 5 Ibid IX, 47 (Jan. 17, 1901), p. 5; ibid, XII, 9 (April 23, 1903, ibid XIII, 7 (April 7, 1904), p. 4.
- 6 Southern Messenger , X, 17 (June 20, 1907), p. 5; conversation of author with Tom Byrne, June, probably in June , 1978.
- 7 Francis de Sales Cullinan to Morrissey, June 7, 1913; Cullinan to Morrissey, August 11, 1913; Brother Ambrose Hart to Morrissey, June 30, 1913, July 2, 1915.
- 8 Hennessey to Morrissey; Sept. 12, 1917, September 23, 1917, June 6, 1917, Dec. 5, 1917; Raymond Clancy ed. The Official Catholic Directory of St. Mary's Parish , March 1943, p. 20. (Hereafter referred to as Clancy.)
- 9 Clancy, 23.
- 10 Emiel DeWulf to Morrissey, Feb. 17, 1916; Gallagan to Mossissey, Feb. 17, 1916, Feb. 25, 1916 and March 21, 1916.
- 11 Day letter of people of St. Mary's to Morrissey, March 18, 1916; telegram of Morrissey to O'Keefe, March 18? 1916.
- 12 Gallagan to Morrissey, undated 1916; O'Keefe to Morrissey, July 30, 1913; Timothy Murphy to Morrissey, June 13, 1916; John Boland to Morrissey, Sept. 12, 1916; Morrissey to Nicholas Gallagher, July 14, (1916).
- 13 Clancy, pp. 26-27.
- 14 Except as otherwise noted, the following material on St. Mary's Academy in Austin is based on the house chronicles of the Academy in the community archives at St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana.
- 15 Southern Messenger IX,2 (March 8, 1900).
- 16 Ibid XV,16 (June 14, 1906), p.5.
- 17 Unidentified clipping with house chronicles.

18 Unidentified clipping with house chronicles.

19 Except as otherwise noted the following material on St. Mary's Academy in Marshall is based on the house chronicles of the Academy in the community archives at St. Mary's College, Notre Dame.

20 Southern Messenger , XX, 40 (Nov. 16, 1911), p.1.

21 Unidentified clipping with the house chronicles of the Academy.

22 This account of the Hispanic ministry relies heavily on the centennial publication Holy Cross One Hundred Years in Texas 1874-1974 and on Father Christopher J. O'Toole's The Southern Province issued at New Orleans in 1983, Patrick J. O'Reilly to Morrissey, Dec. 18, 1906.

23 Timothy Murphy to Morrissey, July 4, 1916, Sister Ursula to Morrissey, Feb. 2, 1914.

24 Morrissey to DeWulf, July 31, 1917.

25 O'Donnell to Morrissey, Nove. 3, 1916; Murphy to Morrissey, May 11, 1917.

26 Holy Cross One Hundred Years in Texas , p. 10; O'Reilly to Morrissey, Aug. 16, 1916; O'Donnell to Morrissey, Nov. 3, 1916; Sister M. Inez Bress. "A History of Our Lady of Guadalupe School," ??? 1964.

27 Archives of St. Mary's Academy, Austin; archives of Our Lady of Guadalupe School, Austin.

28 Archives of Our Lady of Guadalupe School.

29 Joseph Burke to James Burns, Oct. 27, 1927; Holy Cross One Hundred Years in Texas , p. 11; Archives of Our Lady of Guadalupe School.

30 Archives of Our Lady of Guadalupe School.

31 Personal notes of author on these callers.

32 See catalogues of St. Edward's College for this period.

33 These points are elaborated in the draft of a forthcoming centennial history of the institution.

34 The Austin Statesman , April 12, 1903.

35 Gilbert Francais to John Zahm.

36 The Sothern Messenger , XII, 32 (Oct. 1, 1903), p. 4 Horwarth to Morrissey, Sept. 9, 1909; De Launay to Morrissey, June 6, 1915.

37 Catalogues of the period.

38 Alfred J. Brown, "This I Remember," ??? 1961.

39 O'Brien to Morrissey, April 7, 1917; MacNamara to Morrissey, April 23, 1917; DeWulf to Morrissey, Jan 31. 1918; MacNamara to Morrissey, Aug. 22, 1917.

40 All documented in forthcoming centennial history.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.