

LDS Students at Holy Cross Hospital:
Crossing Religious Boundaries in Utah

By

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In the 1930s my mother, Anna Elizabeth Coulson, started her nurses training at Holy Cross Hospital in Salt Lake City, Utah. She grew up a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon or LDS) in Nephi, ninety miles south of Salt Lake City. But she selected Holy Cross Hospital over the Mormon-owned LDS Hospital.

From 1901 to 1973 Holy Cross Hospital in Salt Lake City offered nurses training. It attracted young women like my mother who grew in small and large Mormon communities in Utah and the Intermountain West. Their training introduced them to a new religious tradition and the nuns who devoted their lives to that religion and service to others.

My mother told me a little bit about her training in an oral history interview. Other than that she rarely mentioned it. I went to her sixtieth Holy Cross Alumni Reunion. She enjoyed seeing other members of her class, but they talked about the present and not the past. When my mother passed away in 2003, I decided to study the Holy Cross Nursing Training experience as part of my mourning. But finding information was difficult. There were no records at the mother house here in Notre Dame. There were a few records at the Utah State Historical Society.

So I decided the best way was to talk to graduates. I can do that as part of my work as the oral history program director at the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies at Brigham Young University. I hired some BYU students to conduct interviews with nurses who trained at religious based hospital. All but three of the 30 interviewees went

to Holy Cross. Most attended in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. I do have one from the 1930s besides my mother and one from the 1970s.¹

First, some background on hospitals and nurses' training in Salt Lake City. In 1875 the Sisters of the Holy Cross opened a hospital in the Mormon capital. In 1883 they completed a new hospital. Unlike other religions that started schools and hospitals to convert the Mormons, the Catholic Sisters wanted to provide medical assistance to their church members who lived in the area. Many faced dangerous situations in the mines. The *Salt Lake Tribune*, the non-Mormon newspaper declared when the hospital opened in 1882, "Notre Dame, Indiana, has gained a wondrous reputation, because of the great convent there, which educates and sends Sisters all over the land to establish hospitals. . . . It would be impossible for us to enumerate all the good that is being accomplished by the Sisters."² In 1973 Father David Goddard, the pastor of the St. Joseph of the Worker parish in southern Salt Lake Valley, summarized the hospital's early days, "In the eyes of many people in the Midwest and the East of the United States the Sisters' presence in this Mormon enclave must have seemed foolhardy or daring. Yet they had been made welcome and were esteemed for their good care of the sick."³

In 1901 the Sisters of the Holy Cross opened a school of nursing in connection with the hospital. A centennial history explained, "The difficulty of getting a sufficient number of sisters, today with the fact that the hospital was filled with patients, made it imperative to establish a training school."⁴ This followed a national trend at religious and secular hospitals. Nurse historian Barbra Mann Wall pointed out that Catholic hospitals

¹ The interviews are in the process of being transcribed and edited.

² *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 3, 1883, Centennial Reflections.

³ "Address by Father Goddard presented to nurses at Holy Cross Commencement."

⁴ Marilyn C. Barker, *The Early Holy Cross Hospital and Salt Lake Valley* (Salt Lake City:np, 1975), 19

grew so much that they could no longer rely on the assistance of sister-nurses and a few paid employees. "By the turn of the 20th century, nuns felt compelled to open their hospitals for training of both sisters and secular women."⁵ The program worked well, but looking back, some nurse historians saw a conflict of interest. The superintendent had to meet the needs of patients and students as well which sometimes meant the students got less training.⁶ As you know, the Sisters of the Holy Cross have sold the hospital. It is now Salt Lake Regional Hospital that is owned by a large for-profit organization. This year it is undergoing a massive remodel. Soon almost all that will remain of the old hospital is a remodeled chapel. Last year the class of 1955 donated a portrait of a Holy Cross student nurse. It hangs near the chapel and is the only reminder of the training that took place there.

Holy Cross was not the only religious hospital or nurses' training in Salt Lake City. Mormon women started the Deseret Hospital in 1882. Staff doctors included LDS women who trained in the East. According to one history, "The undertaking proved to be a heavy load for the women of the Relief Society [the LDS organization for women]," so the hospital closed in 1890. Then the Relief Society started a nurse school.

In 1901 the LDS Church opened the Dr. W. H. Grover LDS Hospital using funds that a dentist gave the Church in his will for a hospital. In 1920 the Relief Society School of Obstetrics and Nursing was transferred to LDS Hospital. That training did not continue, maybe because LDS Hospital had offered its own training since 1905. After the

⁵ Barbra Mann Wall, "Definite Lines of Influence: Catholic Sisters and Nurses Training Schools, 1800-1920," *Nursing Research* 59:5(September/October 2001):315.

⁶ Elsie Masaye Shiramizu, "Weber State College Nursing Program: The Graduates' Perception of Curriculum Information" (PhD diss, Brigham Young University, 1982). Her source was Eugenia K. Spalding and Lucille E. Notter, *Professional Nursing: Foundations, Perspectives, and Relationships* (Philadelphia:Lippincott, 1976).

Relief Society training closed, the organization encouraged Mormon women to go to the LDS Hospital Training. The LDS Church continued to expand its hospital operation throughout the Intermountain West. Several including the hospitals in Logan and Idaho Falls also had nurse training programs.

Gradually nurses' trainings moved from hospital based to colleges and universities. Brigham Young University started a School of Nursing in 1952, and in 1955 the LDS Hospital Training Program moved there. As the Church expanded internationally, the leaders decided that only operating local hospitals was not in the organization's best interest. In the 1970s they created a non-profit organization, Intermountain Health Care (in the past referred to as IHC. The name recently changed to Intermountain Healthcare and the organization wishes to be known as Intermountain.) Intermountain dominates health care in Utah.

The Episcopal Church started St. Marks Hospital in Salt Lake City in 1872 and completed a new hospital in 1892. That year the hospital started a training school for nurses. In receive accreditation, the hospital needed to improve its academic program. At first St. Marks worked with the University of Utah. Later the hospital administration had their students take classes at Westminster College, a private liberal arts school initially founded by the Presbyterian Church. In 1970 St. Marks closed its nurses training program. Students could receive all their training at Westminster.⁷

Other nurses' training in Utah included a non-religious based hospital, Salt Lake General. for "indigent people" which started in 1913. It began a nurses' training program

⁷ Kate B. Carter, "Hospitals of Utah," *Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Lessons for March 1938*, Utah State Historical Society; Sarah Walker Barney, "Nursing and Health Care Among Mormon Women: An Analysis of the *Relief Society Magazine*, 1914-1930 (MA thesis, Brigham Young University, 1993), 23-24..

the next year.⁸ At the end of World War II the Sisters of St. Benedict started a hospital in Ogden and also offered nurses' training.

Hospital training was the first nurses' education in the United States. In 1880 there were only 15, but by 1893 there were 225. In 1900 the number increased to 432. By the 1920s and 1930s, there were 2,000 programs. Over the years that number dropped. In 1960 there were about 800, by 1980 only 300, and by 1997 there were only 100 programs left.⁹

That background provides a setting for the Holy Cross Hospital School of Nursing. In 1973 Father Goddard remembered the early years, "It is difficult now to believe that the school could have succeeded. Resources were so limited, staffing so difficult." But the Sisters refused to give up, and their training program benefited the hospital and the young women who trained there.

Father Goddard asked, "Who were these student nurses?" and then answered his own question, "In the early years they were daughters of miners and immigrants, railroad workers and farmers. As Salt Lake City grew they were girls from the City's schools." But he added they also came from ranches in the Intermountain West, from California, and from the Midwest.¹⁰ The same class makeup continued throughout the school's history. There were always students from Salt Lake City, Carbon County, and other places in Utah. There were almost always a few students from Idaho, Wyoming, and Nevada. And there were students from other states.¹¹ The enrollment at the Salt Lake

⁸ Noall, 56.

⁹ Sandra Hawkes Noall, "A History of Nursing Education in Utah" (PhD diss., 1969), 29; Kay Kittrell, Chitty, *Professional Nursing: Concepts & Challenges*, 3rd Ed (Philadelphia: W B. Saunders Co., 2001), 37..

¹⁰ Address by Father Goddard.

¹¹ These numbers are based on the graduating classes. There were students who dropped out or did not pass. This listing does not list all the states in each class, but does give some idea of the size. Utah refers to all those not from Salt Lake City or Carbon County.

hospital matched other Catholic institutions. As historian Wall explained, "While no records on family background could be found, available data show that women from rural areas and small towns overwhelming entered the schools."¹² That was true for the Redd Center interviewees. Most came from small towns. They were often the oldest in their family. And they frequently mentioned that they could not afford to attend college.

Between 1901 and 1973 the school graduated 1,056 nurses.¹³ The beginning classes were very small, ranging from 1 to 16 until 1923. During the rest of the 1920s and 1930s the classes usually graduated about twenty, although graduation dipped to only 14 in 1935 and 11 in 1936. Enrollment picked up in the 1940s; the largest classes were 50 in 1944, 57 in 1946, and 58 in two classes in 1947. During the 1950s enrollment dipped

1904—3 SLC
1908—2 MT, 1 ID, 1 MN, 1 SLC
1909—4 SLC, 11 Park City
1910—2 SLC, 2 ID, 1 OR, 1 WY
1912—3 ID, 1 UT, 1 SLC, 1 MT
1913—6 SLC, 2 ID, 1 CA, 1 UT
1914—2 ID, 1 UT, 1 SLC
1915—2 SLC 2 Provo
1916—3 SLC, 2 UT, 5 ID, 2 NV
1917—4 UT 8 ID
1941—8 UT, 5 SLC, 2 Carbon County
1942—12 UT, 7 Carbon, 8 SLC
1943—11 UT, 8 Carbon, 10 SLC
1946—12 SLC, 15 Utah, 10 Carbon, 2 ID
1947—13 UT, 9 SLC, 5 Carbon, 6 ID
1951—1 Carbon, 9 SLC, 9 UT
1953—7 UT, 7 SLC, 4 WY
1954—5 SLC, 14 UT, 1 Carbon
1955—11 SLC, 6 Carbon
1954—5 SLC, 14 UT, 1 Carbon
1955—11 SLC, 6 Carbon
1956—3 SLC, 4 Carbon, 3 UT, 8 ID
1957—14 UT, 9 WY
1959—9 SLC, 5 UT, 4 NV
1961—4 NV, 7 ID, 5 UT, 6 SLC
1969—10 ID, 9 UT, 4 Carbon
1973—1 Carbon, 14 SLC, 3 UT

¹² Wall, 318.

¹³ Barker, 19.

back to the 20 until 1973 when the final class of 20 graduated. There were some high years; in 1964, for example, 42 graduated.¹⁴

Students admitted to the Holy Cross School of Nursing took a required course load in the sciences, social sciences, and nursing training. During their first two years they took a religion class each quarter as well.¹⁵ From 1931 to 1959 they could take classes at St. Mary's of the Wasatch College, a Catholic school also ran by the Holy Cross Sisters. That was the first college nursing degree offered in Utah. The two Catholic institutions offered an optional five year nursing program.¹⁶ In 1944 Holy Cross required a nine-month basic general education course at St. Mary's. After that college closed, students took general education classes at the University of Utah along with nursing students from LDS, St. Marks, and Salt Lake General hospitals.¹⁷ In the later years students went to Colorado hospitals for TB and mental illness training. Historian Wall explained that this happened throughout the Catholic hospitals where smaller institutions could not provide training in all areas.¹⁸

All nurses training taught science and ethnics and provided practical hands-on training. But there were unique Catholic elements. As historian Wall explained, "What made sisters' classes different was their emphasis on Catholic religious traditions. This included teaching the necessity of baptism and the sanctity of life in every developmental stage." As one Holy Cross graduate explained, "There was a close tie . . . between the

¹⁴ Holy Cross Hospital School of Nursing from Beginning to End, 1901-1973. (Hereinafter cited as HCHSN.)

¹⁵ Holy Cross Hospital School of Nursing, Salt Lake City, Utah, pamphlet, nd, Holy Cross Hospital collection, Folder 9, Box 3, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah.

¹⁶ HCHSN, 14; Tomiye Ishimatsu, "A Study of the Baccalaureate and Diploma Curricula in Nursing" (MS Thesis, University of Utah, 1964), 4..

¹⁷ Ishimatsu, 4-5; Noall, 68.

¹⁸ Wall, 316.

sisters and the nurses, which tended to put our nursing standards on a high plane.”¹⁹

Ignatative Smith defined that standard in a 1950 talk where he explained that “Divine Jesus” was in every department and “faith is kept with God’s rights” at Holy Cross.²⁰

Once the Catholic training schools opened their doors to lay women, the Sisters allowed anyone who met basis requirements to attend. It is difficult to determine religious affiliation since very few records are left from the Holy Cross School of Nursing. Some Irish and Italian names from Carbon County, described by historian Phil Notarrari, as Utah’s Ellis Island, are most likely Catholic. But the other names are difficult to tell. Several interviewers mentioned that there were one-third Catholic, one third Mormon, and one third other religions in their classes. Others said there were only a few Mormons. Mormon Shirley Paxman who attended in the 1940s thought that she was the only practicing Mormon in her class.²¹

This paper is about the LDS students who attended Holy Cross. I hope to learn from you about the Holy Cross tradition. Maybe I can tell you a little about the LDS students since they may have been more open talking to an interviewer from BYU. The women the Redd Center has interviewed so far are Catholic, Mormon, and other religions.

First, why did LDS students attend Holy Cross? The few LDS Hospital graduates that the Redd Center has interviewed so far said they went there because they were Mormons. They talk about very few non-Mormons there. But Holy Cross always had some LDS students. Some interviewees talked about their decision to go to Holy Cross. When my mother looked for a place to attend, she visited LDS and Holy Cross hospitals.

¹⁹ Wall, 317-18.

²⁰ *Register International*, October 29, 1950, Holy Cross Scrapbook, Utah State Historical Society.

²¹ Redd Center Oral Histories.

She recalled that the administrators at LDS said that one-half of the students admitted would fail. At Holy Cross they said that if she was admitted they would do everything that they could to help her graduate. So she went to Holy Cross. My mother became ill during her training, but she was allowed to graduate with her class even though she had to come back for a few months afterwards to complete her training.

Other interviewees explained that Holy Cross failed students who were succeeded or who wanted to marry during their training. Some classes started with over 60 and graduated fewer than 30. So there had to be other reasons why the LDS students went. One of the most important was Holy Cross's reputation. According to a history of the hospital the nursing program "from the beginning . . . the highest of ideals and training as it was rapidly rated one of the finest in the country."²² In 1949 though Holy Cross rated in the top fifty percent of nursing schools in the United States; St. Mark's and LDS rated in the top twenty-five.²³

Clara Brennan, a Catholic who grew in the suburbs of Salt Lake City, was "surprised at the number of LDS students that came to Holy Cross Hospital for nursing." She asked why and then explained, "My impression was that they knew Holy Cross had a good school of nursing." In the 1930s Helen Stevens said, "I surveyed all the schools in Utah and found out that Holy Cross was the best school." In 1939 Shirley Paxman decided to leave BYU and train as a nurse. Her uncle sold uniforms at hospitals and told her that Holy Cross was the best place to go. In the late 1960s Teri Weidman recalled that the doctors in northern Utah told her friend that the best nursing degree was Holy Cross.

²² Barker, 19.

²³ 1949 interim classification of school of nurses offering basic programs 1949, St Mark's Records, Westminster College.

For Janice Evans who grew up in Glenwood, Utah, Holy Cross was her own option. Orphaned at a child, she lived with relatives and worked. When she was in high school in the 1950s, she helped a doctor and his family. That doctor helped Evans complete "papers so I could get a scholarship. My dream was to go to BYU and go to LDS Hospital, but that didn't work out. [The doctor] knew people at Holy Cross Hospital. He was instrumental in getting a scholarship that paid for my entire nursing."

In the 1950s Bessie Witt chose Holy Cross because she would be surrounded by women. She was engaged to a young Mormon man before he went on his mission. She was afraid if she went to BYU she would date a lot. (By then the LDS Hospital School of Nursing had become the BYU School of Nursing.) She chose Holy Cross because the hospital administrator in the Nephi hospital near her home was Catholic and said the Catholic school was good.

In addition, she had a good experience when she went to visit. First she went to St. Mark's. "It was like the coldest feeling that I'd ever had in my life. It was not friendly at all. It just turned me off right at the very beginning. I had no idea what their schooling program was like because that first impression made an indelible impression." Then she went to Moreau Hall, the nurses' home at Holy Cross. "My first introduction there was totally warm. The head nun came forward and talked to my mother and me. That was a person who was the operator who gave us some information. They welcomed us in. It was a warm feeling about the interview and the process. We took the literature and went home. I decided that was what I was going to do."

Witt grew up in Levan, Utah, the center of Utah—navel spelled backwards. Her father was a church leader there and some people told him that she should not go to a

Catholic school. She would lose her testimony. But Bessie and her father believed that it was good way to meet other people. As Bessie explained, "[My father] was always a missionary. He served three missions. He knew that I had grown up in a little town of about 400 people, mostly all Mormons or people that were inactive Mormons. He knew that this would be a great opportunity for me." When people asked why, he said, "If she hasn't gained a testimony by now, she will gain a testimony of the gospel, and she was learn to defend her religion." Witt continued, "That literally was the truth. It was very wise. It taught me about other people and other religions and ethnic backgrounds which I'd never had an opportunity to learn about until that particular time."

Witt recalled, "I can remember being tempted." When she went to Pueblo Colorado, her boyfriend was off his mission and attending BYU. "We were still engaged." However, when she went to Colorado, "I left my engagement ring at home because there was no security there. I was rooming with others. There was no way I would have left a diamond ring. . . I was tempted to date; I was tempted to drink and all of the temptations that could go along. I think that was probably the crowning point in really learning how to stand up for your own values."

Once the LDS students decided to attend Holy Cross, what were their first reactions? Whether they were from urban or rural areas, nearly all had never had contact with Catholic Sisters. Many were a little intimidated and afraid at first. Helen Bland who grew up in Salt Lake City said, "I was scared to death at first. . . . I wasn't used to Catholic nuns, so I felt a little overwhelmed by them. They were really strict." But the Mormons were not the only ones who had a new experience. Ann Libby Peterson who grew up Catholic in Ogden, Utah recalled, "I'd never been around the nuns that much."

Mormon Ruby Hayes who grew up in Green River, Wyoming, explained, "Coming from such a small town, we did have a Catholic hospital, but I had never laid eyes on a nun before. The first two weeks every time they lifted up their arm I looked at all this regalia was that they were wearing."

That was still true in the 1960s. Teri Weidman, who grew up in northern Utah near the Idaho border recalled, "It was really different for me because coming from Cache Valley there wasn't a lot of diversity of races and cultures. They were mostly white LDS people in the town. So it was quite a shock to be there among the nuns. That was our first big shock. I just realized suddenly that they were people and not weird characters because they did the same things we did. They chewed gum, and they ate popcorn. It was kind of scary. They were kind of intimidating just because we hadn't been around them before. Some of them were great, and some of them were onery. But we had a good time down there. It was really fun."

What was the Holy Cross experience like for LDS students? Ruby Hayes said that Sisters told her when she entered what she would be expected to do. For example, they told her that the graduation would be at the Cathedral and a Catholic mass. In addition, she would stand when the Sisters at St. Mary's entered the room. "We were told we had to be respectful while they were saying prayer." While Catholics were expected to participate in the prayers, "there was not really any pressure at all on the girls who were non-Catholic."

The LDS students varied on what Catholic activities they were required to do. Alice Smith Aylett reported her story in the Holy Cross Alumni History. She entered the school in 1923 and graduated in 1926. Her roommates were Catholic, so they "had to get

up a half hour before I did to go to mass.” But that was not the only religious responsibility. Aylett recalled, “We would march into the chapel every morning after breakfast with Sister Elena and say prayers, which was nice and good for us.” All the student nurses were required to attend midnight mass or work for a Catholic so she could go. Aylett recalled, “I went to mass the first year, but after that I relieved.”²⁴

Janice Evans complained that she had to “take catechism classes,” but added, “it didn’t do any good.” Linda Wright enjoyed the religion class because “those of us who were members of the Church got to speak about the Church from first hand knowledge and how it would apply to people who were ill.”

Several interviewees mentioned morning prayers. Helen Bland explained she did not object “because I could say my own prayers. Looking back, I liked that.” Others like Shirlynn Campbell remembered saying Hail Mary.

Janice Evans’ experience was negative though. She recalled that at breakfast “we had to stand and we said prayer which was the rosary before we went [to work]. We didn’t have the beads, but we had to say ‘Hail Marys.’” She continued, “Some of us decided instead of saying all those out loud we would just silently say our own prayer. That was about half the class. The sister called us in and said, ‘You can’t do that. The rule is that we say prayer, and you say it with us.’” When the students complained, “We don’t believe it; it is too repetitive. We want to say our own,” the Sister said, “You say your own before you start. But we say this.” Evans concluded the story, “So we said it.” As senior, a Sister asked Evans to lead the prayer. At first she thought, “I cannot do this.” But she changed her thinking, “I chose to go to a Catholic school, so I should abide by their standards.”

²⁴ HCHSN, 55.

Other activities were special masses. Sherilynn Campbell said, "We had to go to the high mass a couple times a year. We were instructed to go. . . . I had to wear a little hanky on my head and go in there. I did what everybody else did. Later they told us we could just sit. I didn't understand any of that guy that gave the high mass." Janice Evans remembered the times they had to attend were "feast days. They explained it all to us before we went to the school. They told us we all had to go to five or six a year." There were "certain ones that had to do with either the father or the sister who was over the hospital."

The interviewees especially remembered some awkward experiences with Catholic practices. Many recalled when the priest passed communion to the patients. Virginia Baldwin said the students prepared the patients with clean sheets and gowns and cleaned the room before the priest came at 6:00 a.m. She and others tried very hard not to be in the hall when the communion came because they were expected to kneel. That was especially hard if they were holding two full bedpans.

LDS students found it more uncomfortable performing Catholic sacraments. Janice Evans recalled, "They taught us how to baptize infants." A baby came in "that "I just knew that it wasn't going to make it." Those admitted to pediatrics were asked, "have you been baptized?" Since the answer was no, Evans "hurried and called" a Catholic intern and asked, "Can you come and baptize this baby?" She continued, "I really did not want to do it. But we were taught to do it. Those parts were hard."

Two interviewees told about how uncomfortable they felt about baptizing fetuses. Shirlynn Campbell said, "It really bothered me. I took a fetus up to the scary third floor. .

. It was dark in there, and I guess it was the lab. . . . I just laid it down and left. I was coming down the stairs and a nun stood there. She said to me, 'Did you baptize that fetus?' I said, 'No.'" She said, "You get right back up there and do it."

Campbell was with a group of students who decided one Monday evening to visit Mormon Church President David O. McKay. Bessie Witt explained that they went because she often saw President McKay leaving his home. One time she spoke to him and said she was his neighbor. He asked why she had not come to visit him. So she got the group together to see him.

After visiting for awhile, he asked how he could help them, and Witt mentioned the infant baptisms. Campbell said Mrs. McKay asked, "Why are you at Holy Cross?" and President McKay said, "Now dear." Witt continued that President McKay told them to do it just as they did the other things that they learned. But he also told them about his friendship with Catholic Bishop Hunt. Witt and Campbell were not sure what happened, but about a week after that Bishop Hunt announced in an ethics class that Mormons did not have to baptize fetuses. They should find a Catholic student to perform the sacrament.

There were also other concerns. Campbell got in trouble for taking the crucifix down in her room. Sister Theodora sent a note, "You came here to Holy Cross, and you need to abide by our principles. Put the cross back up." Campbell and another LDS student also got in trouble for dressing up as nuns. A sister told them, "I know that it's fun to make fun of people. But you better not do this again or you're out."

Teri Weidman also recalled dressing as a nun. Each day a sister came down the hall to make sure all the students were studying. After she finished, Weidman dressed up as a nun. "We put a pillow cross around my head. Then we cut the fluted thing around a

paper plate and stuck it over my head. . . . Then I put a sheet on, and then we put some other thing around my neck like the nun's big collar. Somebody had a strawberry pin, and I stuck that on the front. We had some beads, and I wound those around my waist." She knocked on the doors and said, "Hi, I'm Sister Mary Teri. I came to see if you were studying." The students all laughed. Then she heard a rattle, and there was a nun. Not sure what to do Weidman simply repeated, "Hi, I'm Sister Mary Teri." Weidman continued, "[The Sister] didn't know whether to laugh or be mad. She was one of the better nuns, and she laughed." But she told her, "If you had been a little Catholic, you would have been expelled, but since you don't know any better, I guess we'll just let you stay."

Graduation was especially a religious experience. The students and graduates walked down South Temple from the nursing home and hospital to the Cathedral of the Madeline. After the ceremony, each one walked up to the altar where they received their diploma and then kissed the bishop's ring. Faye Burns recalled, "We could kiss his ring if we wanted to, but he'd shake hands with us." When Shirlynn Campbell's father heard about kissing the ring, he told her, "When you kiss it, grab it by your teeth and run like hell." She commented that her father was "so funny" but she didn't do it. Linda Wright recalled. "I guess [graduation] was a bigger deal for those who were Catholic because they got to kiss the bishop's ring. Those of us who weren't just kind of knelt in front of him with a little bow. I didn't do any ring kissing." Janice Evans did kiss the ring. She recalled, "Part of the [graduation] ceremony was we had to kiss the bishop's ring. He had a large ring that was at least an inch in diameter." Evans said she and other classmates "decided there was no way we were going to [kiss the ring]. It was not sanitary. But we

were told that this was sacred and we should do it. Secretly I didn't want to do it, but we didn't have any choice. As soon as we knelt his hand was right there. We kiss the bishop's ring."

Most Mormon interviewees felt that the Sisters required more of the Catholic students. The Catholics were supposed to attend mass. Catholic Mary Jo Cannabella recalled if the Catholics missed more than a few masses, the Sisters wanted to know why. Rita Judd said the Sisters "were very good. If you were not Catholic, they were very lenient with you. There were a few things that you had to go to that were religious but on the whole not that many "

The Holy Cross Sisters encouraged the non-Catholic students to participate in their religions. Sunday meetings were not always possible because of work schedules. Sherilyn Campbell said that in the 1950s the students could go to the weekly Mutual meetings at the LDS church nearby. She added, "You do not know how many LDS girls got active just to get out on Tuesdays. That was kind of a nice evening to get out." Janice Evans, however, felt picked on, "We always thought the Catholic students got special privileges. They could do whatever they wanted, but if we wanted to go to Mutual we would have to spend two hours supervised study in the library in the afternoon before we could go out in the evening." In the later years several interviewees including Terri Weidman recalled that the LDS church provided a religion class known as Institute for the LDS Holy Cross students at a nearby church.

For Catholic Ann Peterson going to mass and "the whole religious overtone made a difference in how we practiced medicine because we were encouraged to look at people as representatives of Christ. We would provide the care to that person as if we were doing

it to Jesus." Catholic Carol Imhoff agreed that the hospital was "more person oriented." They referred to patients by name and not room number. Mormon Faye Burns was surprised that there was not more religion.

The Mormon students learned to appreciate the Holy Cross Sisters. Lona Booth had a "cultural shock" at first. But "after all was said and done and I spent three years there, I became very closely attached to the nuns and think very highly of them." She appreciated Sister Theodora who encouraged her not to quit to marry. And when she did marry, Sister Theodora expressed interest in her family and marriage. Ruby Hayes "thought they were wonderful teachers." She went on to describe the impact of each sister on her life. Shirley Paxman, a Mormon from Provo, developed a lifetime friendship with Sister Rayfield. Sister Rayfield often visited Paxman's ocean-side home when she lived in California.

Paxman described a religious change at Holy Cross. "Going to Holy Cross and St. Mary's made me very ecumenical, and I spent my life being ecumenical because I learned so much about other religions. That opened up dimensions to religion and spirituality to me that I've never had in my Mormon upbringing." She enjoyed learning about the role of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. She "learned what reverence in a sacred place means." She continued, "I was introduced to the Christian calendar. Mormons don't observe the Christian calendar. I learned what Ash Wednesday was, I learned what Lent was, and I learned what Advent was. I learned all those magnificent religious holidays that are observed by the Christian community all over the world." She especially enjoyed the Holy Cross hospital and worked to establish one in the IHC hospital in Provo.

Bessie Witt told stories about her interaction with the Holy Cross sisters at the hospital and at the college. She first explained, "I had a great respect for the nuns." Then she told "the most humorous thing that ever happened to me and the most frightening thing were at St. Mary's of the Wasatch." The chemistry teacher was "a little nun that was about 4 feet tall and 4 feet wide." Witt and another Mormon friend from Monticello, Utah "were trying to do a chemistry experiment for the day. We were behind and we were acting silly. We all had to wear dresses. We were so cold. We wore nylons. We wore coats because we were cold and the nuns would walk in. They'd throw the windows up, and here the wind would come down out of Emigration Canyon, They said, "It's so hot in here!" We were just shuddering.

Witt "was to pour something very slowly from one flask to the other. I was behind. I poured it fast, and it blew up. It was acid. It blew all over me and all over. The sister came running. She said, 'Miss Mangleson, Miss Mangleson, what happened? What happened?' I said, 'I don't know, kid. I just poured it in. I'm sorry.' I was so nervous and so excited, and she was so nervous and so excited. She was afraid that I was burned."

Witt continued, "On the way home on the bus all of the Catholic girls were saying 'Bessie, you're going to be walked out of the school tonight.' 'No. I won't get walked out for just blowing up the lab?' 'No, that's not why you're getting to get kicked out. It's because you called Sister So and so 'kid.'" Witt was surprised. "I knew that would be disrespectful."

So "the very first thing the next morning I jumped off the bus, I ran into her class. I apologized all over the place. I said I didn't mean any disrespect. That was just kind of

a slang word that we used. Fortunately for me she was this sweet wonderful nun with a sense of humor. If it had been to this other nun, she would have not been forgiving. She did not care to have Mormons in her class. It could have been a totally different story, but this nun definitely had a sense of humor.”

Witt also remembered that the nuns could not drive and would ask the students to take them in their car to “Walgreen’s for their personal needs. That was a real fun experience.” Another fun time was playing tennis with the Sisters. Witt recalled, “They were excellent. They would take their habit and tie it behind themselves. They had a robe that went around them. They would tie the robe. Could they move! They were fabulous!

I also think that many of the Holy Cross Sisters learned to appreciate the hard work and diligence of the Mormon students. I never discussed the subject with my mother, but I learned a little about those relationships by reading my mother’s yearbook. Students referred to her as “Prof,” so they saw her as an excellent student. The Sisters who signed the yearbook also congratulated who her good work at school and assured her that she would do well as a nurse. Five Sisters just signed under “sincerely yours.” However, Sister M. Staushaus wrote, “Miss Coulson, Keep your sweet disposition as you have kept it during the years of training and you shall have a successful career.” Sister Patricia Maria wrote, “Success in your future profession. Keep your high ideals upmost in mind.” Sister M. Fabian wrote, “God bless you. You were a good nurse to me even as a probie.”²⁵

²⁵ Anna Coulson Yearbook, in possession of author.

The Holy Cross Hospital closed its diploma school in 1973. It was the last of its kind in the Intermountain area.²⁶ Father Goddard reflected on the Holy Cross School of Nursing, While “we close the book and place it now upon the shelf,” the nurses who graduated “spread out in ever-widening influence over the years like rings from a pebble. . . Through your lives, dear graduates, in your service to the sick, as in the lives and service of all Holy Cross graduates of every past year, the love and dedication of the Sisters of Holy Cross and the love of Christ that urged will never be ended.”²⁷

The LDS students that the Redd Center interviewed would agree. Teri Weidman summarized her experience. “Holy Cross was very well known for its excellent training. The nuns were really strict about some of the things that we did. . . . I think we got very good training at Holy Cross. I was glad I went to Holy Cross. I was proud to be a Holy Cross graduate because they had a good reputation.”

²⁶ Barbara Springer, “Lost of Area’s Diploma Schools, Holy Cross Nursing Facility Graduates Final Class June 3,” *Salt lake Tribune*, May 26, 1973.

²⁷ Address by Father Goddard.