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Alexis Dominic Granger: Sorin's Softer Self

by Brother George Klawitter, CSC

Born in Daon (Mayenne), France, June 19, 1817, to André and Marie (Bourdelet) Granger, Alexis Dominic Granger was home-schooled until the age of fifteen. Daon, a small village, today has a population of about five hundred so we can presume it was considerably smaller in 1817. Located thirty-two kilometers from Angers and ten from Solemnes, the town is not a tourist attraction. With some Latin already to his credit at age fifteen (Lyons 80), Alexis Granger entered school ten kilometers distant at Chateau-Gontier, a secondary school that had already trained Basil Moreau and Edward Sorin. It was Sorin who was instrumental in getting Alexis into Holy Cross.[1] After five years, Alexis went to the major seminary at Le Mans, and on December 19, 1840, he was ordained by Bishop Bouvier and assigned to parish work in Le Mans. Encouraged by his classmate Edward Sorin, however, Granger came to Basil Moreau's religious community of Holy Cross in early October, 1843, and began his novitiate training there a month later.[2] He had initially hesitated taking this step out of concern for his sister Marie, who was apparently planning to be his housekeeper, and he had some reservations about being sent by Moreau out of the country. It was Sorin who allayed his fears in a letter dated August 31, 1840:

> You can rest assured that you will not be sent out of France during the lifetime of your relatives or indeed during the whole of your own life

> except at the will of the Superior coupled with your own request. Nobody is ever obliged to go. (qtd. O'Connell 47)

How ironic, therefore, that Granger was chosen within one month of his profession (August 15, 1844)[3] to leave for Indiana under Brother Vincent Pieau's leadership. They boarded the steamship *Zurich* on September 10, 1844.

From a rhapsodic letter that Granger posted in New York City to Moreau in October, we learn that the crossing took a month and was quiet until they reached Newfoundland. There all hell broke loose:

> The whistling of the wind and the roar of the waves struck terror into my soul. I imagined that the waves were going to wash over the ship...That very night I had quite a narrow escape when I fell headlong near the opening of a trap-door some ten feet deep.

That terror happened on October 3. On the next day a strong wind started to rock the ship:

> At noon, the main mast was broken into three pieces, along with the main yard...At two o'clock we were getting ready for dinner when a strong wind pitched the vessel on her side for a full minute. The rebound hurled a heap of copper against one of the partitions, and the copper rolled up against it with a great crash and shattered it. For a moment we thought we were lost. We feared the ship had been ripped open.

As bad as these moments were, worse were to come on the following Sunday night and lasting all of Monday:

> About six in the evening a storm broke. We got up at nine when the rocking of the ship threatened to throw us out of bed...We were dreadfully frightened; at times we rolled about the ship with the objects we grasped to steady ourselves. The ship, riding now on one side, now on the other, seemed at every moment on the point of being swallowed up by the waves. An entire row of beds was thrown out into the middle of the ship and all those in the upper berths were pitched out...The storm abated about six in the morning, after lasting twelve hours. (qtd. Moreau, *Circular Letters* 1.94-95).

With the ship damaged, the voyage took eight days more than anticipated. Thereafter, the trip overland to Notre Dame, Granger thought, would take one week. October would have been a pleasant time to travel to Indiana. Sorin, of course, was anxious to have Granger settle into the work at the little college in its first year, although Granger's personality had none of the vitality and drive of the Notre Dame superior. In fact, Granger was a somewhat laid-back missionary: O'Connell on several occasions refers to him as "diffident" (e.g., 623). Nonetheless, Granger would have found in the first brick building a welcoming community of young and middle-aged Holy Cross personnel, along with a half-dozen or more American novices.[4] Granger became Sorin's right-hand man, named assistant superior and vice-president of the college soon after his arrival. He also was master of novices off and on (more on than off!) from 1847 to 1867 and pastor of the campus church. In 1868 when Sorin was elected Superior General, Granger was elected provincial of

the American Province. At those times where Sorin was in France or Rome, Granger was in charge of all religious.

The tendency to dismiss Granger as a useful but unimpressive administrator began early.[5] Victor Drouelle, in a letter to Basil Moreau, characterizes Granger as "good little Father Granger" (qtd. Catta 1.929). But Granger was a man who held an important position as American Provincial for a generation, passed judgment on scores of religious personnel, and enjoyed the confidence of important churchmen, including prelates. Even Stephen Badin, original owner of the Notre Dame property, characterized by Sorin as a man "who never agrees with anybody, began now to criticize and condemn everything that he himself had approved and admired at Notre Dame du Lac" (Sorin, *Chronicles* 55), wrote a rather strong letter to Granger in 1846 that bears quoting in full:

> The road leading to Niles from Mr. Metzsger's Tavern is now blocked up, by the ploughing lately done by Br. Laurence greatly to his injury and to that of his family and property. In as much as the road now destroyed, naturally throws the custom of Niles and S. Bend, on the other road, leading to the other tavern, owned by a violent anti-catholic.
>
> The sooner your orders and instructions are given to repair these acts of ingratitude and violence to his rights, the better, because the road runs upon a piece of land which does not belong to you, and for which you have no legal title, nor even a Bond. The proprietor of it

is resolved to prevent any further trespass whatever, and he cannot possibly fail in the fact.

To prevent scandal and to save this worthy and charitable catholic man "who does good to all men especially to the household of the Faith," whose house has been open at all times to visitors from the Lake, priests, brothers, postulants, and even students, and who, besides has been the largest donor of the Church here, to prevent the continuation of such an act of ingratitude and injustice, the usual road should be left open in a way suitable for travelers, immediately and without one day's delay...

I beg you to send this letter to Fr. Sorin that he may be aware of the blunders of that great and sapient Brother Laurence who is the laughing stock of the Country, and consequently no credit, but rather a great injury to your Institution, for people through him think they can cheat you as they please. (Badin to Granger, April 18, 1846)

The sentiments in this letter are not only phrased in a bullying manner to a man who apparently could withstand bullying by Badin, but the requests are made in such a way that the author (Badin) fully expects Granger to be capable of carrying through on the demands to rectify the road situation. At this time, Granger was not yet provincial, but he was expected to be a strong replacement for Sorin in Sorin's absence.

While Sorin was in Europe in 1846, Granger was left in charge. On returning to Indiana, Sorin found that three of the five seminarians had left and the Sisters

were suffering a public relations crisis as a result of their not having a Sister-leader for fifteen months. Yet Sorin did not blame Granger for the Notre Dame disasters:

> Not that Fr. Granger, who took his place, was negligent or spared himself in any way, but being overburdened with duties and having daily to fight against bad will, which took advantage of the superior's absence to heap difficulties in the way, he could not oppose a sufficiently strong resistance to the passions of others which had become more exacting, nor maintain everywhere the spirit of submission and of peace. (*Chronicles* 59)

We should remember that in 1846 Granger had been a professed member of Holy Cross only two years, had been in America fewer years than that, was still learning English, and had been ordained a priest only six years. In 1846, he was actually doing a remarkably fine job, given his lack of experience. From his own Brothers, out serving in various grade schools around the country, Granger also enjoyed respect and inspired confidence. From Brother Boniface in Cincinnati, Granger received a confidential update on the teaching men:

> Bro. Damasas has caused me a great deal of trouble and anxiety. Ten days ago he seemed to make up his mind for the best, but yesterday morning he left for good. However, before dinner already he returned, when I gave him to understand that I would have no more to do with him. This rude treatment on my part broke the poor man's heart; it was the right treatment for him. Broken hearted he went to the Rev. Supr. of the Franciscans, who at last brought him

> back, after humbling him a great deal. I consented to admit him again under conditions that he, Br. Damasas, would give public satisfaction, which he did, by asking publicly pardon of the Bros. The Bro. has a good lust for governing children and gives full satisfaction in school, otherwise I would have shown no indulgence to him. He is now determined to hold out for good. I hope for the best. Please, tell Rev. Fath. Ruthmane to write to him some times. I too will do for him what I can. Bro. Constantine is now teaching Br. Leo's class. Poor Bro. Leo cannot get along at all. I am fully convinced that he will make no teacher. With all his learning he can keep no order, and it would be better if the poor brother move again to Notre Dame, since he is of no service to us here. He has great ideas in his head but cannot carry out his plans. He wants to be a Priest—and this keeps the poor man divided; he dislikes the school. (Boniface to Granger, Sept. 29, 1868)

Not a micro-manager, Granger has invested responsibility in his Brother-superiors and counted on informed reports to help him stay aware of conduct out in the schools.

Similarly with Holy Cross priests out on assignment, Granger used "visitors" to report on his men in the parishes. Of the "reporters" none was more dramatic than Peter Cooney. In one twenty-page report from 1874, Cooney feeds Granger information on an alcoholic priest. The language is so vivid Cooney could almost be writing a short story:

> The pastor put wine on the table—Father Spillard was present. I remarked that as long as we were hearing Confessions "we should drink no wine or the people could not help smelling it." Father O'Mahony commenced immediately to pour wine into his tumbler saying, "O pshaw"! When he had half the tumbler full poured out, I said in a firm tone without excitement, "do not drink it." He pushed the tumbler away from him saying, "Very well—just as you say." He told me that they accused him of drinking in Canada. He does not know that V. Rev. S. General knows it. At any rate, this knowledge, together with the reason given above, make me anxious to protect him. (Cooney to Granger 1874)

A reader will not soon forget the details of this wine encounter, and we can imagine the effect they had on Alexis Granger.

As far as the local Indiana ordinary is concerned, Granger developed so fine a relationship with Maurice de St. Palais (successor to Celestine de la Hailandière) that the prelate could write openly to Granger:

> I believe that if Mr. Sorin had limited his efforts to the founding of Brothers schools in Indiana & if he had sent out only well-formed Religious & had often visited these, the work would have succeeded admirably. By sending them to a distance, he lost many subjects, & if he continues as he begun he will lose many more. (St. Palais to Granger February 12, 1854)

The St. Palais comments are so incisive one can see that he was close to the on-going problem of the poor training young Brothers received before being shipped to grade schools in order to make money to support Sorin's main institution.

Another churchman, the vicar general of Alton, Illinois, wrote to Granger in confidence about the abusive punishments some Brothers were using in one of the schools:

> Please excuse me for troubling you, but I think it my duty to give some information concerning the Brothers. Br. Edmund, our second Brother, had the habit to whip the children very severely. The parents commenced to complain bitterly and consequently the Pastor went to speak to Brother Edmund. He did not deny the charge and mentioned that he had learned this habit from Brother Gregory, with whom he was at Springfield last year. For a little while the Brother did do better, but then he fell back into his old habit. I have seen myself a boy that had yet the marks of the whip on his hands and legs six days after the whipping took place. At the time Brother Gregory was here, many times parents came to me complaining of the severe whipping their children received from the Brother. Several times I heard myself from our garden that the Brother was whipping the boys and looking up I could see through the open windows that the boys standing in a long line had to come, one by one, before Brother Gregory and then receive one slap on each hand. I am not opposed to it, that the boys be punished if they deserve it, but I do not like it, that they be whipped

> too severely, and that they be whipped too often and get a slap or two for every fault they commit. Besides there are other kinds of punishment. (Janssen to Granger, November 10, 1873)

It is obvious that Janssen looked to Granger as the man who would do something to control the teachers. How anyone could characterize Granger as an ineffective administrator is belied by letter after letter sent to him about conditions in the schools.

Bishops treated Granger with the same decorum they afforded Sorin. Luers of Detroit was particularly forthright with Granger over the matter of separating the Bertrand Sisters from the Le Mans motherhouse, and he is withering in his comments on Basil Moreau, the Superior General:

> Father General in his circular or letter acts in a rather highhanded manner, but before he is through, I think, he will find that if he had acted more conciliatory he would have done better. Religious Communities never gain anything by quarrelling with the Bps in whose dioceses their institutions exist; or when they throw difficulties into their way.
>
> Has he ever reflected upon the consequences of withdrawing jurisdiction immediately from his Priests over the Sisters—or of refusing their services? Will not the world, who cannot understand those things, come to the conclusion, that there is some awful immorality existing between the Priests, Brothers & Sisters of your

community & that therefore the General, or Rome, or I myself were obliged to put a stop to it?

I have no desire to separate the Sisters from France, all I desire is: that they have peace, so that they may live as religious should & pay off the debts upon their different establishments...

Please tell Father Sorin to send me the letter to which your Supr General refers, "*I will answer it.*" (Luers to Granger March 2, 1863)

The sentiments against Father Moreau are particularly pronounced in this letter as Luers has obviously chosen which side of the Sorin-Moreau struggle he is going to support. Two weeks later he writes a follow-up: "There can be no lasting peace & union for the Sisters with France, but that in this Country they should form one body...it appears your Supr General knows neither prudence nor conciliation" (Luers to Granger March 19, 1863). Luers considers Granger to be of one mind with Sorin and treats him, in Sorin's absence, with the same steely will against Moreau that he would have used with Sorin. It was, of course, to Luers' advantage to have the Bertrand Sisters out from under Moreau's jurisdiction—the bishop would have more influence over a local religious community when it would not have ties to a superior in a foreign country on the other side of the Atlantic.

Alexis Granger rarely left Indiana once he arrived. In September, 1847, however, he had to relocate with his novices to Indianapolis at Bishop Halandière's insistence. They all returned to Notre Dame in June, 1848. When Father Cointet was appointed master of seminarian novices, Granger remained master of novices

for the Brothers in the building on St. Mary's "Island," today part of Columba Hall. In 1849 Granger accompanied the Brooklyn Brothers to New Orleans but returned quickly to Notre Dame. He was apparently a man who was quietly devoted to both Notre Dame and Edward Sorin. He traveled when told to, but he did not like being separated from either home or superior for very long.

A smudge in Granger's life surfaces in June, 1852, when Moreau wanted him to go as superior to Bengal. Sorin protested vigorously in a letter to Moreau dated July 14, 1852, claiming that to transfer Granger would be a death-blow to Notre Dame. At the same time Moreau and his Council wanted Sorin also to go to Bengal as bishop-elect, ordering the move in a letter to Sorin dated September 13, 1852. In this battle of two giants, Sorin won, Moreau retreated, Granger stayed at Notre Dame. There is no evidence that Granger reacted as violently as Sorin did at the prospect of transfer to Bengal, but the effect was the same: he got his own way.

Sorin's own turmoil continued to seethe and by 1868 in a letter to Bishop Fillion (December 13, 1868), his vituperation was manic. The upshot was Moreau's removal by the General Chapter from the office of Superior General, eventually supplanted by his nemesis Edward Sorin. Granger then, on being elected Provincial in 1869, proved to be an "ineffective administrator" (O'Connell 567) and was replaced by William Corby in March, 1870. But Granger was again provincial two years later when Corby was assigned to a new foundation in Watertown, Wisconsin.

There were four Sorin crises in which Granger played a role: in 1852, Sorin's being ordered to Bengal; in 1862, Sorin's threat of autonomy for Indiana; in 1863, the movement toward separation of the Sisters away from France; and in 1868,

Sorin's role in the resignation of Moreau. In a letter to Moreau dated October 9, 1852, Sorin refused Moreau's directive to move to Bengal to become bishop-elect there. Granger supported Sorin in the matter and received a letter from Moreau on June 22, 1852, months before Sorin's adamant refusal. In 1862, Granger made a special trip to Le Mans to argue for autonomy of the American province. The following year (by April, 1863), Granger had organized the opposition to keeping the Notre Dame Sisters tied to the Marianites in France. He was abetted in this regard by a staunch Sorin ally, Bishop Luers of Ft. Wayne. Finally for the 1868 chapter, Granger stayed faithful to Sorin as Sorin orchestrated (with Drouelle and Champeau) the resignation of Moreau as Superior General, a move calculated by Sorin to save Notre Dame at the expense of Moreau's school adjacent to the motherhouse church in Le Mans.

In late October, 1852, Granger writes to Moreau saying he has neither the energy, intelligence, or aptitude to be a superior. He prefers to stay novice master, a position in which he feels a good degree of success. Moreover, he is confessor to almost everyone at Notre Dame, including the students. He suggests Moreau choose Father Cointet instead. Turning his attention then to Father Grouesse, the man named by Moreau to be superior in New Orleans over Sorin's objections, Granger says he has no confidence in the man whom he considers a hypocrite, and he pitied any young priest who would have to live with Gouesse because that young priest would lose his religious spirit. This is an unusually harsh judgment on Gouesse, but it shows that Granger not only feels strongly about the priest but also has the courage to raise a sensitive issue with Moreau. He is, of course, doing all he can to

abet Sorin's preventing Gouesse from being named superior in New Orleans. Granger suggests that Moreau have Gouesse stay at the Motherhouse in France so he could see for himself Gouesse's true nature.

Early in November, 1852, Granger writes again to Moreau, this time strongly condemning the actions of Father Baroux, whom he names a Judas for defaming Notre Dame from the pulpit in Pokegan. He wants Moreau to do something quickly with Baroux. Again he turns to the impending removal of Sorin from Notre Dame and the disastrous consequences it would have on the institution. Propaganda Fidei, Granger says, would be horrified at the loss of a place like Notre Dame, sure to go under should Sorin leave it. Again, Granger begs that Moreau not consider him as a replacement for Sorin because the position would be too much for him.

Less than a month lager, Granger writes to Moreau in early December, asking forgiveness for the frequency of his letters. He assures Moreau that his vocation is solid and has indeed grown stronger over the years. But he says he must repeat things he has already stressed—notably that Gouesse is not suitable for the Congregation, at least not in America, a statement he reiterates at the end of the letter. Throughout, Granger is very subservient to Moreau, using language that shows he has a great reverence for the Superior General. He makes his points about Gouesse and about his own (Granger's) good work with the Notre Dame novices, letting Moreau infer that Granger is the right man in the right place. The letter is a testament to Granger's confidence in and love for Moreau.

So already by the early 1850's, Granger was supporting Sorin in his quest for separation from France, but Granger argued his case more often than not with a

gentleness quite contrastive to the steely bombast of his Indiana superior. One example will help show the difference. On February 13, 1853, Granger wrote the following letter to Bishop Lefevere in Detroit:

> Thank you sincerely for the response your Grace deigned to give my last consultation. It appropriately calmed some qualms of conscience that circumstances had heightened because it was necessary to make a definite decision according to the sense you suggested in your letter. These steps are extremely important and ought to be made with total maturity in order to leave me no scruple in my spirit and leave everyone the energy and vigor that future circumstances will demand. Here is what made me submit to you all the pieces that concern this important act before it came to fruition. We sincerely wish separation as a reality and a true necessity, and we have finally determined to do so by the enclosed letter from Father Rector [Moreau] dated January 13. The subject it concerns is one of my priests who sadly cannot merit our confidence. It's the same one whom Father Sorin told you about some years ago when your Grace first visited N D du Lac. In your response you express the desire that the Motherhouse declare our emancipation as the best way, but we shouldn't wait around to do it. You were inclined to counsel us to ask him for this declaration. This would work if it had a chance of success, but you easily will understand the thing is not feasible in present circumstances and that the response to a similar demand would be a command in virtue of

holy obedience either to remain submissive or to leave the Society immediately. We have therefore believed we ought to take a common ground and declare independence in at least five years, leaving either reunion or perpetual separation to arbitration from a wise and holy canon in Le Mans who has our total confidence, so that experience would show either side the advantages or disadvantages of separation.

As this formal separation, demanded by circumstances, would seem opposed to our vows of obedience that many among us made at the hands of Father Rector [Moreau] and that serious scruples would probably arise in many, if the Father Rector commanded something by virtue by obedience after receiving these pieces, I would be infinitely obliged to you if you would 1) deign to respond with your customary frankness, 2) if you think our approach is licit and if we can act in good conscience independently of the Motherhouse, 3) if it would be necessary to obtain dispensation of our vow of obedience to Rev. Father Rector and to whom we would owe obedience. Here simply the formula of our vows: [vow formula included in Latin]. This last promise was, I believe, fulfilled by our long patience.

I know, Monseignor, I'm asking much of you, more than you are obliged to do, but the glory of God so dear to you and the peace of the community which doesn't want to beg a favor through a sin makes me hope from your Grace a satisfying response. (U.S. Province Archives,

trans Klawitter. The typescript in the General Archives names Bishop Purcell of Cincinnati as the recipient.)

There is a graciousness in this letter, an almost obsequious graciousness, that indicates a writer capable of fine sentiments of diplomacy. The situation of the priest in question was Francis Gouesse, whom Moreau had appointed superior of the orphanage in New Orleans. Sorin opposed the appointment. This disagreement is simply the catalyst for Sorin to pursue his real goal: emancipation from le Mans. Of course, the local bishop would be only too happy to have the separation effected because he would then have tighter control over the Notre Dame foundations. Perhaps Granger's gracious language can be ascribed to the fact that he is not the major player in the tug-of-war, but he is Sorin's softer side in the drama, which is all too evident in the letter.

The troubles between Notre Dame and Le Mans were not recent to 1853. Granger, in an August, 1853, letter to Father Champeau says that the problems have been going on for five years, which timetable would put their origin around 1846 or 1847, nascent years for Notre Dame. By 1853, the embers were still smoldering in spite of Sorin's visits to Le Mans. Therefore, the Gouesse matter was not the spark that ignited the fire—it merely fed the existent flames.

Writing to Moreau on October 2, 1853, Granger tells Moreau that visits to Le Mans are fruitless. Rather, he wants Moreau to visit Notre Dame to see for himself the work going on there, in a land so different in climate and customs from those in France. He accuses the Motherhouse Council of thinking the Notre Dame men are sitting around doing little when in actual fact each Indiana missionary is doing the

work of three or four men. He argues for new foundations in America being undertaken without prior approval from the Motherhouse. Granger concludes this rather long letter by itemizing the steps necessary for a reconciliation: 1) Moreau must visit Indiana, 2) the Indiana superior must be free to start new foundations, 3) Moreau should reserve judgment on Indiana, 4) rules should not be changed as often as they are, 5) Moreau must visit Indiana. This last point is a simple repetition of the first point as, apparently, a way of emphasizing its importance.

Throughout the Granger-Moreau correspondence, Granger writes respectfully to Moreau, and if he has to make strong points, he backs up his assertions with good reasons, e.g., the differences in cultures between France and America. He never loses his temper (unlike Moreau in a letter to Granger dated September 9, 1863, as the separation of the Indiana Sisters was moving forward). Granger never compromises his role as a religious subject.

Granger was a man of the people, a man, in fact, not afraid to get his hands dirty. In 1853 when he was assigned to be novice master of the seminarians, he himself cut the underbrush away on the north side of St. Mary's Lake for St. Aloysius' Novitiate, a building of fourteen private rooms and a chapel (Hope 73). After the Main Building burned, Granger helped clean away the rubble, although the *Scholastic* noted, "Regard for historical accuracy compels us to state that Father Granger would scarcely command a large salary among the horny-handed sons of toil" (1878-79, 561, qtd. Hope 187). The same campus magazine had noted years earlier that when Sorin's newfangled two-wheeled velocipede showed up on campus mid-January in 1869, students took turns riding it as Granger shouted,

"Watch out! You break zumpsing!" (1868-69, 68, qtd. Hope 149). He was a man among men, much beloved.

Granger's supervision of the Sacred Heart parish at Notre Dame is best felt today in the great church that started to go up in 1871 to accommodate a huge bell Sorin was bringing to the campus. The church actually never attained its final form until 1892, one year before Granger's death. The six apsidal chapels were added in 1879, the Lady Chapel was added in 1888, the steeple in 1892. Granger did say the first High Mass on August 15, 1875, in his church, officially known at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In that same year the old church, sitting behind the new church, was demolished. To fund the building (O'Connell calls him a "reluctant fund raiser" [623]), Granger advertized in June 1869 that daily Mass would be said for fifty years for anyone who donated fifty dollars. Such a scheme does not seem out of the ordinary even today, but unfortunately Granger added that "any offering less than $50 will entitle the giver to the fruits of the daily Mass *pro rata* of the amount contributed" (Schlereth 20). One can imagine little angels in heaven with their pocket calculators trying to figure out what percentage of the merits would be divvied up for what percentage of the fifty dollars contributed. Granger noted one could also contribute on an installment plan.

Sacred Heart Church was Alexis Granger's last great act. He died at Notre Dame on July 26, 1893, aged 76, and rests with the American provincials in the Community cemetery on St. Mary's Road at Notre Dame. At news of Granger's death, Sorin wept and said, "Mon cher Alexis! Who next?" (Hope 254). Twenty-five years before his death, Granger was characterized in the following way:

> Father Granger is of a very retiring disposition, never coming forward into notice unless when duty strictly obliges him to do so; and hence his merit and real worth are not known except to those whose occupation or spiritual wants bring them in contact with him. We would be glad here to speak of his excellent qualities, especially as a priest, but we refrain from doing so, through respect for his wishes to remain unknown, except in the field of his duty. When he has gone to his reward, his virtues will be appreciated and praised by men. (Lyons 82)

Everyone seemed to like the man. Even Victor Drouelle, who was quoted earlier as condescending in his description of Granger, had this to say to Moreau of the Indiana priest in a letter dated November 1, 1848:

> Do not form an idea of his sacrifices or of his mortification by the expression on his face. To look at him you would think he were living in the midst of all the pleasures and satisfactions of life. But you would be very much mistaken. His bed is nothing but a very poor cot, and his furniture consists of a small table, one chair, and three boards with a few books on them" (qtd. Catta 1.929).

Granger had the bad luck to die within a week after Thomas Walsh, the president of Notre Dame. Thus the Notre Dame Scholastic devoted most of its July 29, 1893, issue to Walsh, who had died on July 17. A short article on Granger appears on pages 10 and 11, but it says little about the man beyond a sketch of his life. Perhaps it is best that Granger left Notre Dame without much fanfare since he served Holy

Cross and Notre Dame most of his life without much spotlight. Sorin's prop, he lived his life quietly but effectively, leaving a gentle mark where Sorin left a crater.

The finest evaluation of Granger's character comes from Arthur Hope, CSC:

> Alexis Granger was strictly a students' priest. For nearly fifty years he had been identified with the college, and when he died the thousands of boys who had been to Notre Dame exclaimed with one voice: "What a saintly priest!" For fifty years he had been the confessor to the boys. He was amiable and understanding: a bit timid, with none of Father Sorin's daring: retiring, strictly honest, devoted. He rarely made a speech, could not bear to appear on public platforms, made no journeys, except the one Father Sorin forced on him. His peculiar powers in the confessional were ascribed to his genuine humility...Fifty years in the confessional, listening to the faults and sins of Notre Dame boys, might have tended to break his gracious spirit. His kindness was not soft. Rather, it inspired true penance. (253)

Hope then quotes from a letter from an alumnus who arrived at Notre Dame in 1887, just six years before Granger's death:

> I went to confession to Father Granger in the chapel in the basement of the church. He gave me as a penance, a decade or so, of the Rosary. He asked me if I had a Rosary and I told him I had lost mine in a fire which consumed our home two months before. He immediately reached in his pocket and handed, around the outside of the

> confessional, a rosary and told me to keep it with me always. Whether he handed me his own rosary or not, I do not know. I always obeyed his injunction to keep the rosary with me. (Hope 253)

Hope ends his remarks on Granger by saying, "When anyone lay dangerously sick, it was for Father Granger they always asked" (254). A priest could not ask for any better testament to his life and work. No matter how embroiled Granger became in Sorin's intrigues, he remained faithful to his pastoral calling: Sorin's softer side was a priest par excellence before he was anything else. Or so Hope would have us believe. Hope ignores Granger's important role as Sorin's right-hand man in four crises because Hope wants to read Granger as a pious projection of priesthood. It is time at last to appreciate Granger the way Sorin appreciated him—as a worthy assistant and administrator able to take Sorin's place when Sorin was out of the country. He was not a mousey man hiding out in a confessional or avoiding his administrative duties. He made decisions. He was confidant to his Brothers and priests on assignment at Notre Dame and outside of Notre Dame. He had the ear of bishops. He was an effective religious who used his talents well to help build Holy Cross in America. The strength of Notre Dame remains today a testament to his hard work and good will.

Notes

1 See Sorin's letter to Granger, August 31, 1840. All quotations from Granger correspondence in this paper are reprinted with the kind permission of the United States Province Archives and the General Archives at the University of Notre Dame.

2 From his novitiate days we have a twenty-seven page document of his notes on the religious conferences given by the Le Mans novice master. Even more interesting, however, is a list of "Recommendations" given by Moreau:

> Keep strict silence in common areas.
>
> Don't look from one side to the other.
>
> Don't move chairs noisily.
>
> Put everything back in its place...
>
> Pray according to the method of St. Ignatius.
>
> Confess every week...
>
> Get spiritual direction every other week...
>
> Kiss the floor if you are late for an exercise...
>
> Never go into anyone else's bedroom. (20)

Anyone professed in Holy Cross for over forty years will recognize the injunctions as standard novitiate routine. Granger also includes the daily schedule from 5 AM to bedtime. (See Appendix I)

3 Granger's vow formula is extant in the United States Province Archives, Notre Dame. It is written in Latin in his own distinct hand. We also have the certificate of his ordination to the diaconate and the certificate of his ordination to

priesthood, but those two documents are printed with relevant dates penned in. The vow formula is the earliest piece of his writing available.

4 In addition to Edward Sorin, living in what today is the "Old College" building would have been Brother Vincent Pieau, Brother Lawrence Ménage, Brother Joachim André, Brother Marie (Francis Xavier) Patois, and Brother Gatian Monsimer. Some of the novices in October, 1844, might have been living in the original log cabin found when the first colony arrived in November, 1842. Granger was made novice master as soon as he "could make himself understood in English" (Sorin, *Chronicles* 43).

5 The Sisters in Indiana grew so tired of Granger's refusing all their requests when Sorin was out of the country that they stopped holding council meetings (Costin 51).

Appendix I Order of the Day in the Sainte-Croix Novitiate

[in Granger's own hand from his novitiate notes]

1. 5 AM Recitation of Little Hours.
2. 5:30 AM Prayer for an hour, the last half-hour in the chapel for Holy Mass, or after Mass thanksgiving for those who say the Mass at 6 PM.
3. 7:30 AM Breakfast.
4. Study or classes until Particular Examen.
5. 11:45 AM Particular Examen on the Savior's five wounds.
6. Lunch followed by recreation until 1:30.
7. 1:30 PM Singing class until 2 PM.
8. Vespers in common.
9. Study or classes until 4 PM.
10. Matins and Lauds in common.
11. Visit to the Blessed Sacrament in common for quarter of an hour.
12. Conference until 6 PM.
13. 6:15 PM Spiritual reading for half an hour, followed by rosary.
14. Supper followed by recreation until 8:30.
15. Prayer.
16. Bed at the designated time.

Sunday: Rising at 6 AM. Recreation until 2 PM.

Monday: Conference on dogma.

Tuesday: Conference on morals.

Wednesday: Conference on liturgy in place of spiritual reading.

Walk at 1 PM. Return at 5 PM. Reciting as much as possible Vespers going and Matins/Lauds coming back with the rosary. Taking care starting out together from the chapel and meeting there on the return. The usual route of the walk will be visiting Catholic places.

Thursday: Conference on the Constitutions. Prayers at spiritual reading time.

Friday: Sermon. Chapter on spiritual reading.

Confession if possible every week at a fixed time.

Spiritual direction every two weeks.

See your monitor every month on the retreat day, usually the last Sunday of the month.

Appendix II (Sermon by Alexis Granger, August 18, 1848)

I have been commissioned by Father Superior to take his place this morning. In compliance therefore with his request I will continue the series of instructions he has delivered you till now. Please grant me all your attention and think rather of the ideas and considerations I will suggest you than of the form under which they might be presented. The Christian soul has then departed from the world and has already made her appearance before the awful tribunal of God. A sentence has been pronounced that eternity is fixed forever, an eternity of happiness or of eternal misery. Shall I speak of the eternal glory and joy of the Blessed. How could I express what according to St. Paul the eyes of man has not seen nor his ear heard, neither his mind understood! And besides the consideration of heaven is rather fitt for the last days of a retreat, when the soul purified by a salutary confession is less heavy and able in consequence to appraise the delights of heaven.

Shall I speak then of the everlasting punishment of the damned, of the horrors of hell? Should I to speak to worldly men. To common Christians such matter would be fitt for them, but before you, before religious men who once perhaps were sinners given to criminal habits, but are no longer the laves of sin, before men who I hope are now strangers to mortal sins, before such men a more suitable matter ought to be treated. I mean the punishment of the venial sins in Purgatory. yes, the punishment of venial sins in the other world is a matter which ought to be frequently meditated upon by religious men who too often committed venial sins without any remorse almost because its punishment is not eternal illusion. Illusion! May God make you understand what I intend to tell you on the

subject. I will repeat what the saints have said before. Hear St. Catherine of Genoa speaking of this matter. I will quote but a few of her words. God, she says, kindles the sol with a love so burning, and so strongly draws it towards him that were it not immortal there would be enough to annihilate it. The soul then sees that the stains of sin are as a bond which hinders it from following this attraction in opposition to the perfect union with God. It conceives also perfectly how great a loss is the least delay of the intuitive desire, the most ardent possible to see the obstacle vanish which hinders God from drawing it to himself. But, adds the saint, from the furnace of the Divine love I see rays of fire dart like burning lamps which penetrate the soul in purgatory with so much violence and impetuosity that had they their bodies they would be consumed and that they would destroy their very souls, were they not indestructive. These rays have a double effect for they purify and they annihilate. Consider how a material which melted repeatedly becomes always more pure, may be so often melted that there remains at length no mixture of dross. This is what fire works in material things. Now this operation produces in the soul the same results. Kept a long time in a state of fusion, so to speak, in the crucible of Purgatory, it is so disengaged from all impure alloy that it at length becomes as it was at its coming forth from the hands of God. It is said that gold may be purified to such a degree that fire has no longer any action upon it because it has nothing to sonsume but foreign substances which dim its purity. This is precisely what the Divine fire works in the soul for God keeps it in the fire till all its imperfections, all its impurities are destroyed. Afterwards, when it is perfectly pure, love transforms it entirely so that there remains to it no more of itself and that its being is God. Then,

having nothing more that can be consumed becomes impossible; so that should it continue to swell in the fire instead of causing it suffering would become for it the fire of Divine love, which would make a heaven of this of punishment. So far St. Catherine. Now do you conceive an idea of the punishment of Purgatory? What an awful transformation ought to take place in the place of purgation! The soul ought to be restored to its primitive purity, to the life it received in Baptism, ere as a single venial sin made it to depart from the state of perfect innocence, removed it in as much from God, it follows that the torment of Purgatory ught to be proportional with the number of its sins and imperfections, and since the soul shall be kept in the fire till all its imperfections are destroyed. Oh! How long then, how painful, how violent the fire reserved by divine justice to those worldly Christians whose life is but a series of negligence, omission, and sins without any penance and mortification! We live in an age where fervor and mortification are almost unknown so for that the Church not to expose her children to transgress her precepts and so compromise that eternal salvation has deemed proper to relax that discipline in many points. Do not rejoice at it. The condition of the Christian is no better under another point. Ah! What an awful purgatory is reserved for them. How violent ought to be the fire which would transform into God those [ ] souls departing from this life absolved, it is true, from eternal death, but overcharged with the immense debt they have contracted by so many sins they have never try to make atonement for: but how awful also the fire reserved to the religious tepid, negligent in his duties. Alas! We performed many actions good in themselves, but melted with numberless imperfections. His meditations were of all of willful distractions, his

attendance to the holy sacrifice of Mass cool, indifferent, his confession unprepared, his communion without fervor, his obedience deficient, all his exercises without a true spirit of piety, his study, his work melted with vanity and idleness, without speaking of his immortification, his infidelities to the grace of God, his numberless omissions. Ah! let everyone excite his fervor, let the consideration of the necessary satisfaction we have to pay for our sins, even after they have been forgiven, and influence each one with a real and ardent desire of mortification and penance. Let us anticipate here below this transformation of our being into God which has necessarily to take place before e should be admitted into heaven. Ah! Let us be more zealous to go benefit ourselves with the indulgence of the Church, a means so simple and [ ] to shorten our purification in Purgatory, and yet so little appreciated and valued among Christians and even religious. Ah! This leads me to recall a thing quite consoling for those who have already made their profession. It is that by this very fact, according to St. Thomas and after him to the generality of theologians that a full remission of the temporary punishment is remitted, so that it is as a second Baptism. What a consolation! You will have to expiate in Purgatory the debts contracted only since your profession provided it was made in a true spirit of love, with pure intention, and with fervor!

Our resolution then is never to commit willfully a single venial sin, and to practice mortification as far as possible.

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