

**Do We Have Another Saint?
Brother Columba O'Neill, C.S.C. (1848-1923)**

**Presented at
The 2021 Holy Cross History Conference
University of Notre Dame by
Brother Philip R. Smith, C.S.C., Ed. D.
Archivist: Midwest Province**

On Saturday, April 24, 2021

In the Midwest Province Archives there are four large Hollinger boxes of letters; thousands of letters written to Brother Columba O'Neill between 1912-1926, three years after he died. John O'Neill was born in Mackeysburg, Pennsylvania in 1848 and entered the Congregation of Holy Cross as a brother in 1874. For the next forty-two years he labored in the humble capacity of cobbler repairing shoes and fabricating special shoes for people with foot and ankle problems. Columba, himself, had a very dramatic limp because of being born with a foot deformity.

He was remarkable for several things. First, for his devotion to the Blessed Virgin and her Immaculate Heart, and his even greater love for the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Secondly, for the sheer volume of his personal correspondence to almost everyone who wrote to him. And thirdly, most remarkably, for his ability to pray for favors and cures through the intercession of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Sometime around 1900, he began making Sacred Heart badges –over 30,000 of them and giving them to students when they came to pick up their shoes. He told some of them to pray a novena. "Say five times a day, for nine days (or more, if not cured), offering your prayers through the Immaculate Heart of Mary and St. Joseph: 'Sacred Heart of Jesus cure me! St. Joseph, pray for me to the Sacred Heart.'" Cures began to be reported and news of these spread throughout South Bend and beyond. When Brother Columba died in 1923, the

letters to him continued to pour in to the Notre Dame Post Office through the end of 1926.

I estimate that there are about 10 to 12, 000 letters in the collection in the Midwest Province Archives, and I now believe that there are no Columba items in the University of Notre Dame Archives. More about this news later.

Of the nearly 400 letters that I have processed from 1912 midway through 1916, and these have been specifically selected from these years because they are written either by nuns and sisters, or by Father George Giglinger of Keokuk, Iowa or by one of two of Columba's relatives: his only sister, Eliza, living in Keokuk and her daughter Lyda who was living in Burlington, Iowa. In every one of these letters there is a thanks first for Columba's letter and then sending SH badges, and then thanks for prayers and, in many instances, thanks for favors and cures received. Favors and cures ranging from relief from chronic headaches through cures for blindness, deafness, cancer, polio, and the most incredible account of bringing a six-year-old child back to life and this letter was written in 1997. Four letters, right now, contain doctor's reports of what I can only call miracles: what was is not, and what is should not be.

Brother Columba writes in a letter to the father of a young girl cured of a "crippled" leg—a letter contained in a file in his cobbler shop—Brother Columba

states in his diary (I have only four pages of it right now) that he has 1,400 letters thanking him for cures in this file.

On a two-week stay in Joliet, Illinois, Brother Columba saw over 100 persons a day and he reported and so too, a Joliet reporter, that there were many cures each day. Columba's superior asked him to return to Notre Dame, but Brother Columba asked to stay just a while longer because of the many people who begged to speak with him.

In November of 1923, Brother Columba died in the Community House now Columba Hall from the lingering effects of the Spanish Flu he contracted in 1920. Brother Isidore Alderton living in the Community House at the time wrote that "news of his death soon spread to the people of South Bend and dozens of members of the Community, Sisters and strangers were lining up to pass before his casket. For the past two days and nights the parlor in the Community House has become a veritable shrine. People brought cards, medals and trinkets to touch to his hands and face. The high and the low, the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned all became as little children in his presence." It is no wonder that during his life, he was referred to as the Divine Healer and the Miracle Man of Notre Dame.

The Process

- Sorting by date took nearly 6 months.
- Culling out specific letters for detailed reading and analysis:
 - Letters with handwritten Columba commentary on them.
 - Letters from nuns and sisters from scores of congregations including the Sisters of the Holy Cross.
 - Letters from the Rev. George Giglinger, pastor of Saint Paul's parish in Keokuk, Iowa
 - Sixty-seven letters written by Brother Columba to Father Giglinger and returned to the Congregation in 1947
 - Letters from Brother Columba's relatives: his niece Lyda and his only sister, Eliza
 - Letters to Brother Columba from Congregational superiors:
 - Letters from CSC brothers and priests to Brother Columba
- Demarcating letters that express thanks for "favors received" and "cures" and attempting to verify those that have medical persons authenticating cures
- Contacting Mothers Houses of the sister-writers of the many congregations to request biographical information for the many Sisters who wrote letters to thank Columba for SH badges and

novenas and for cures for themselves, other congregational members and their own family members. Sister Evangelist, Sister Agnette and the many CSC sisters.

- Exploring the newspaper articles detailing Brother Columba's movement around the United States for "curing sessions".
- All of this to compile a "complete" chronology for Brother Columba.
- Incredible finds: Father Hope, etc.

Included with the paper is what I call *The Definitive Chronology of Brother Columba*. This is the evolving "casebook" being prepared to establish evidence of his holiness and piety.

Brother Columba O'Neill, C.S.C. Definitive Chronology

Nov. 5, 1848

- Born in Mackeysburg PA to **John and Ellen (McGuire)** Columba O'Neill's father and mother born in Kilkenny, Ireland.
- John is the fifth of six children, one girl and five sons – two were born in Ireland, **Patrick, the oldest, and his sister Eliza. James and Terry were third and fourth, and John was fifth followed by Dennis.**

1862

- "From the age of 14 Brother Columba felt a special call to serve God in the religious state."¹
- Left Pennsylvania for California with **Ted Morgan [Mangan] [sic]**²
- In a letter dated January 8, 1963 from **Mrs. Katherine J. Campbell**, Wilkes-Barre, PA, she states that "he [John O'Neill] left Plymouth, PA³ with a shoemaker by the name of **Mullen**."

1864

- Learns of Holy Cross from **Johnnie O'Brian**⁴.

Ca. 1873

- John leaves California for Notre Dame.

Ca. 1873

- John writes to **Father Augustin Louage, C.S.C.**⁵

1873

- Michael O'Neill dies in Mackeysburg.

July 6, 1874

- John leaves Denver for Notre Dame.

July 9, 1874

- John enters Holy Cross after meeting with Father Louage and Father Sorin.

¹ *The South Bend Tribune*, No. 20, 1923 quoted in *Aiden's Extracts*.

² When [sic] appears after any part of a name, the handwriting is indecipherable.

³ Brother Ernest Ryan states in *These Two Hearts* that John O'Neill left Mackeysburg, PA, not Plymouth, PA.

⁴ A former apprentice in the shoemaker shop of the Manual Labor School on the campus of Notre Dame du Lac.

⁵ Father Augustin Louage, C.S.C. (1829-1894) was ordained in France as a diocesan priest 1853. Upon meeting Father Lemonier, CSC in America, he joined the Congregation of Holy Cross in 1871 and made final profession in 1873. He was immediately recognized as a most capable man, and was made Master of Novices in 1874. In 1880 he was elected the Provincial of Canada. Becoming enamored with the mission of Bengal during his time a provincial, he went there at the end of his term, and in 1891 was appointed its first bishop by Pope Leo XIII. He died from malaria in 1894.

Sept. 8, 1874

- John receives the habit and the name Columba.

1875

- Brother Columba assigned to St. Joseph Orphan Asylum, Lafayette, Indiana⁶.

Aug. 15, 1876

- Brother Columba makes temporary vows (no clear indication for the date of final vows).

Summer 1885

- Brother Columba assigned to Notre Dame.⁷

Ca. 1890

- Brother Columba begins to make images of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (hundreds) and Sacred Heart Badges, 30,000.

1891

- Brother Columba assigned to care for Father Sorin who died **10/31/1893**.

October 7, 1892

- Apostolate of the Sacred Heart, Watertown, WI Rev. John J. Wyme, S.J.⁸

Late in 1893

- Brother Columba was reassigned to the cobbler shop by **Fr. William Corby, Provincial**.
- The exact date is not yet found when the Provincial decided that Brother Columba would go to Chicago to have his disabled foot operated on by the famous Dr. Nicholas Senn⁹.

⁶ In "Brother Columba O'Neill, CSC" by Rev. John VandenBossche, CSC, 2011 p 2 "For seven years he [Columba] was stationed [at St. Joseph Asylum in Lafayette, IN]. He used Lourdes water on the sick boys and says that he had **some cures**. During the winter of his last year in Lafayette, he nursed a number of boys with the flu. He caught the flu and had such a severe case, he was returned to Notre Dame."

⁷ Evidence in VandenBossche that he returned to Notre Dame because of the flu. He would contract Spanish Influenza in 1920 and be weakened so that he could no longer work in his cobbler shop.

⁸ A large "diploma" found in a box in the archives. Archivist for the Jesuits in Chicago identified this artifact as a certificate that was bestowed upon Sacred Heart College in 1893. The college would be allowed to enroll students in the Association of the Sacred Heart. This has nothing to do with Brother Columba's effort,

⁹ **Nicholas Senn** (October 31, 1844 – January 2, 1908) was a Swiss-born American surgeon, instructor, and founder of the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States. He served as the president of the American Medical Association in 1897–98 and as chief surgeon of the Sixth Army Corps in 1898, seeing service in Cuba during the Spanish–American War. He was involved in experimental research, particularly of acute pancreatitis, plastic surgery, head and neck oncology, the intestinal tract, and the treatment of leukemia with x-rays. After 1893, Dr.

- Brother Ernest Ryan states in his book *These Two Hearts* that “Brother [Columba] yielded at once to the Obedience though he cared not a fig whether he limped or not.” And “[h]e dreaded the expense to his Community most of all. But he went and so successful was the operation that it seemed almost a miracle.” (27)

Feb. 7, 1895

- Brother Columba receives a letter responding to his request to minister in a leprosarium in New Orleans. The signature on the letter is indecipherable [Do not have the original but a xerox copy on the back of a xerox of a letter written by **Mrs. Hugh McCaffery, mother of Mrs. Lex Byne¹⁰ in 1925.**]

1898

- Brother Columba assigned to St. Columbkille School in Chicago.¹¹

Ca. 1910

- Brother Columba begins to “work miracles”.

1912-1922

- Brother Columba carries on correspondence with **Father George Giglinger of Keokuk, IA** pastor of St. Paul Church¹².
- Sometime after Brother Columba’s death, Giglinger returns to **Brother Ernest Ryan** 67 letters written to him by Brother Columba.¹³

August 30, 1912

- First letter to Brother Columba in the Midwest Province archive collection from Mr. and Mrs. Anderson, Gary, IN, “No headaches since you were here.”

November 30 1912

- Second letter in the archive collection from **Mrs. Mary M Dorn** [sic] Louisville, KY “begging you to please pray for my daughter as she has been very ill these last three days.” The mother and daughter were making the novena to the Sacred Heart.

Senn was attending surgeon at the Presbyterian Hospital and surgeon-in-chief of Saint Joseph's Hospital, as well as a professor of surgery at the Chicago Polyclinic and a lecturer on military surgery at the University of Chicago.

¹⁰ Mrs. Byne had two twin sons, one of whom was “cured” by Brother Columba. Both boys became Jesuit priests.

¹¹ Brother Columba did not go to this assignment because the school was closed in 1897 by Brother Marcellinus Kinsella, CSC.

¹² St. Paul’s has been subsumed into a grouping of churches call Church of All Saints.

¹³ These letters are preserved in the Midwest Province Archive.

January 12, 1913

- First letter from **Lyda O'Neill**¹⁴, **Columba's niece and his sister Eliza's daughter**. Mother is having spells, the first since August. **John (perhaps Columba's Brother)** is working in North Dakota and coming home for Christmas. She mentions a **Father Galligan** who distributes SH badges to everyone who goes to communion on First Friday and then collects them "all up after Mass." Mentions **Minnie** (not sure who this is) and also mentions **Lawrence** (not sure who this is). Also mentions **Mrs. Meyers and daughter Ada**. Columba writes this note on the letter **Mrs. Myers [sic] daughter was affected [sic] with fits 2 years ago**. Lyda adds that Ada has grown big and tall and hasn't had a fainting spell "since you were here that time."

August 20, 1913

- Letter from **Sister Mary Angela, PC**, Poor Clares, PO Box 833, Victoria, BC.

August 31, 1913

- **First post card from Sister Clementina**¹⁵, **Sister of the Holy Cross**. She asks for headache relief and prayers for her father and prayers for **Sister Edelburga**¹⁶ who is deaf.
- First letter from **Father George Giglinger**, Pastor of Saint Paul's Church in Keokuk, Iowa.¹⁷ In the letter he speaks about a girl with "St. Vitus" dance who has been "cured thanks to the Sacred Heart and to your prayers."
- Brother Columba's sister Eliza¹⁸, was a member of Giglinger's parish. "Your sister had a fainting spell a few days ago, but she is well again."

September 13, 1913

- Empty envelop with the hand-written signature and address **Bernard Murphy, 153 Sydenham, London, Ont** and "leg never gives bother" [appears to be in the hand of Murphy] with a Columba-note "this boy was in crutches 2 years cured".

September 17, 1913

¹⁴ In future letters, she will spell her first as Lida. In one letter, she is addressed as Lydia.

¹⁵ Bridget Hasenbehler or Hasenbohler, Sister Clementina (1877-1961) is buried at St. Mary's, South Bend, IN. She ministered primarily in domestic services: cook, housekeeper, seamstress, in charge of kitchen services. She served in many schools throughout the Midwest: Morris, IL, Columbus, OH, Anderson, IN, South Bend, IN. She carries on a long-term correspondence with Brother Columba [add years].

¹⁶ Information pending.

¹⁷ Giglinger carried on a 10-year correspondence with Brother Columba between 1912-1920.

¹⁸ First time Columba's sister is mentioned.

- Letter from **Bernard Murphy**. “My leg is fine never gives me bother.”

December 20, 1913

- Post card from Bernard Murphy. “Just a note to let you know I am fine. Working every day [cigar roller]. My leg is fine.”

December 1, 1913

- First letter from Lyda, Columba’s niece, no indication of who her parents are, yet her mother is Eliza and **Mike** might be her father.
- Lyda writes from Burlington, IA (about 30 miles north of Keokuk).

December 10, 1913

- Second writing as a **Post card from Giglinger**: “There were two cures in Germany¹⁹ and one little girl is better.” “Those who were cured and their parents write me to tell you that God may reward you a thousand times what you have done for them.”

1914

- Letter from **Sister Edwardine²⁰, Saint Mary’s Hospital, Cairo, IL** She asks for prayers for a young priest (**Father Murphy**) who has an “effected” [sic] arm. She states that her mother is much better and thanks Columba for his prayers. She is praying for Columba along with her “little pupils”.

January 3, 1914

- Post card from the **Very Reverend Gilbert Francais, CSC, Superior General** to Dear Brother Columba, “Many Thanks for your kind wishes—I wish you too a quite happy New Year. Every year of your life, dear Brother Columba, is good and happy, because I know how carefully and piously you use [sic] to spend it for the glory of God, and the benefit of souls. You have full confidence in the Sacred Heart of Our Lord. You are right—more and more be devoted [sic] to this high devotion. Pray for me—my health is always the same—my right eye is always in darkness, and it is great sorrow for me not to be able to recite my office. Pray for me—I pray for you too. Yours sincerely in X”²¹

¹⁹ First cures in Europe (Germany).

²⁰ Information pending

²¹ Rev. Gilbert Francais, CSC was Superior General of the Congregation of Holy Cross from 1893-1926. He lived at St. Joseph Farm in Granger, IN from 1913 until his death 1929. In 1923 he had a debilitating stroke that left him so blind he could no longer recite the office. From 1923 until his death he was nursed by Mother Fulbert, SMP (Sisters of Mary of the Presentation) No superior general served in the position longer than Francais.

January 10, 1914

- **Second post card from Sister Clementina, Sister of the Holy Cross, St. Angela Academy, Morris, IL.** She mentions Father Franciscus, CSC²²

January 12, 1914

- Letter from **Bernard Murphy** 153 Sydenham St., London, Canada. On the back is a note from Brother Columba “this boy age 20 was 2 years on crutches hip desese [sic] is cured 2 years no more trouble Bro. Columba”

February 4, 1914

- Letter from **Mrs. J.B. Blakesley** thanking Brother Columba and the Sacred Heart that she can work again.
- On the back, a Columba note “was in Chicago to see the Bishop’s sister [**Auxiliary Bishop Peter Muldoon (1901–1908)**] bad knee²³ its getting [cannot decipher the word perhaps *better*] got 2 cures people on crutches last week.”

February 8, 1914

- Letter from Sister H. Clare [perhaps Sister of Providence]. She mentions Sister Laurinda, C.S.C.²⁴ and a Poor handmaid, Sister Helena. “Please include them in your good prayers”.

April 9, 1914

- Letter from **Elizabeth Jenniches**, Racine, Wis. On the letter in Brother Columba’s hand he writes “this boy had fits”. From the letter “William sends this card [no card found] to you also. He is the one you are doing so much for. He has great faith in that little prayer. He says it three times after each meal and in the morning and when he goes to bed it is ten times (once on each finger). Whenever anyone is sick he tells them to say this prayer and gets a picture of the Sacred Heart and puts it in front of them. Then he starts telling about you. He is certainly doing fine. He hasn’t had a spell since the first part of December. He will start school next week.”

April 12, 1914

- From **Sister Bibiana, C.S.C.**²⁵ In this letter is the first mention of the term *League* referring, perhaps, to a formalized “apostolate”. “Are you still as successful with your League as you were?” She requests more badges as she has given all of hers away. She wants to give a badge to a girl who suffers from ingrown toenails that have been removed twice and have returned. The doctor

²² Father Franciscus

²³ Unclear if the sister of the bishop or the bishop has a “bad knee”

²⁴ Ellen O’Rourke (1876-1942) English Teacher.

²⁵ Sister Mary Bibiana (Susan) Koppes, CSC born in Luxembourg December 14, 1861. She was an elementary school teacher for most of her ministerial life. Dies on July 29, 1935. Her two sisters in CSC are Wilbert and Willbrod. (Sister Timothea Archives Sister of the Holy Cross, 04/07/2021)

wants to amputate the toes, but the girl refuses. “So, I [Sister Bibiana] told her to make the novena for the first Friday in May, and I would ask you [Columba] to give her an intention too.” She adds at the end of the letter “**Mother Bethlehem** is doing fine this year, we are so glad.” On the back of the letter Columba writes “2 cures of cancer”

May 27, 1914

- From **Elizabeth Smith**, “...and I am still telling people of your help in my cure.” Columba writes on the back of the letter “this girl was [writing indecipherable] in bed for over a year could not walk.”

June 6, 1914

- From Montreal “I haven’t had one of my weak turns all last month. Thanks be to the Sacred Heart and You for all of the prayers you have said for me. I have been able to go to mass and receive holy communion every morning this week, so the Sacred Heart is not forgetting to hear all the prayers you are saying for me, because it is a long time since I was able to do that.” Columba writes on the letter “This girl had fits for years Brother Columba.”

June 27, 1914

- From Adrian, MI. “I am pleased to tell you that **Mr. Hayes** has not shown any signs of diabetes for the last two months and I am so grateful to you for your kind prayers to the Sacred heart” written by **Mrs. Neil Hayes**. Columba writes “this man had kidney trouble for 2 years about to die.”

August 3, 1914

- From **Mrs. Peter Beam, mother of Anna Beam**. “For a long time, I want [sic] to tell you that Anna is feeling fine she is entirely **cured** and is getting so big and strong.” Mrs. Beam would like Columba to come to Chicago, and if “**Mrs. Connor** is not home I will try to make it pleasant for you.”
- This letter contains the first name of someone who would house Columba when he could not return to Notre Dame the same day. On the back of the letter Brother Columba writes “this girl had St. Vitus dance a year ago [1913].”

August 23, 1914

Letter from Sister Agnes Joseph²⁶, Sisters of Saint Martha. She thanks Columba for the prayer and badges. She admits that she has no relief of her “illness”.

²⁶ Sister Agnes Joseph (Jenny) MacDonald (1877-1929) “Eighteen years of a trying illness [not identified] suffered with great patience and resignation prepared her for the end.” It seems that the “illness” began in 1911, and she wrote to Brother Columba in August of 1914 – three years into her suffering. [more letters to come, perhaps 04/10/2021] Information supplied by Sister Florence Kennedy archivist 04/09/2021.

August 25, 1914

- Card from **Sister Fidelis**²⁷, **Mount St. Joseph Ursuline**, telling Columba that she is wearing the badge and saying the novena. She is not well, yet because she has faith, she prays.

August 28, 1914

- **Third Letter from Rev. George Giglinger:** He speaks of an old man [**Mr. Weirather**] who had the sign of the cross made on his eyes with the badge by Brother Columba **“who can see very much better now.”** He then talks about **Professor Joseph Koly** “who is very sick with the dropsy at St. Francis Hospital, Burlington, IA. He is a good man and has a very large family; he can still do much good in the world. I am sending him one of your badges, and I’ll tell him to pray to the Sacred Heart and that I would write to you also to pray for him.”

August 31, 1914

- From **Anna Beam** [cured of St. Vitus dance]²⁸. She states that she would like to see Columba and “be sure the corned beef and cabbage will keep till after the 15th of August.” She thanks him for the badges and assures him that “when mamma [sic] has a few extra ones and some one comes who is sick, she gives them one.”

September 1, 1914

- Letter from **Erin Koester** “I have not had a spell for a month and know with your help and prayers the Sacred Heart will listen to me.” **Columba writes on the letter “fits this girl had”**

September 4, 1914

- Fourth letter from **Giglinger**. In this letter, he lists a number of persons by name with various maladies (asthma, cramps, spells, back aches, a wounded foot and complications of diseases). He asks Columba to pray for them as he has given them badges. “Whilst I have heard of no cures here, I feel certain that you will have some. By the way, the young lady whom we went to see in an automobile after the mass for Pope Pius X was at holy communion this morning and seems to be quite well. I also saw **Mrs. Mac** at holy communion this morning. The old lady of the congregation who is well to do told me that she intends to sell her farm and fix up things all around. She intends to do well by the church. Please pray that her affairs may be straightened out soon so as to be able to do something for the church. She’s about 86 years old and has no closer relatives than nephews. She lives with one of them and his family here in Keokuk.”

²⁷ Information pending.

²⁸ Refer to letter of August 3, 1914

September 11, 1914

- Letter from **Miss M.J. Henderson** from Waveland, Mississippi. “I am writing to tell you some good news. I should like to know when your novena ended, for I think it must have been that day that my brother began to improve. August 31, he made an attempt to walk, and with aid walked about 3 yards. His mind, too, began to clear, and now he can raise his hand about 3 inches off the bed. Every day he is improving. We thank God that above all his mind is clear. Dear brother, won’t you please continue to pray for him that he may rapidly recover so he can offer the holy sacrifice of the mass²⁹. He has promised 10 masses for the poor souls in purgatory. And to establish “League of the Sacred Heart” in his principle mission. We will have thanks printed in the “League of the Sacred Heart” and in the “Morning Star” and in the *Southern Messenger* as soon as he is able to say mass.”

September 20, 1914

- From **Julia (Boland) Mach**. She mentions that her rheumatism is better and she also mentions the death of the Pope [Pius X who died on August 20, 1914]. She thinks the world is coming to an end “and this war [WWI] hastened his [Pius X’s] death. She then cryptically mentions **Mrs. Connor’s** [a woman with whom Columba would stay when he is in Chicago]³⁰ “children getting along with their Step-mother or [sic] do they obey her they [sic] don’t often obey their Step-mother do they [little punctuation here forward] go to church with her yes, I guess it is hard for you to get off to see Eliza [Columba’s older and only sister]. Also mentions “**Mike and the girls**” [Eliza’s husband (?) and daughters, one of whom is identified as Lyda].

September 27, 1914

- **First** Letter from **Sister Benedicta**³¹, **Mount St. Joseph Ursuline**, asking Columba’s pardon because she did not acknowledge his letter: her excuse “not well enough to write”. Can’t teach for 2 months because of her affliction [not described]. Mentions two sisters who are better because they wear the badges [one suffers from “pressure of the blood”, and the other from “lung problems].

October 4, 1914

- Letter from **Sister Immaculata (Agnes) Bowers**³², **Mount St. Joseph Ursuline**. States this is the third letter to Brother Columba. In our collection it is the first. Her first letter was in 1913 when she was a postulant and asked Columba to relieve her “of a long attack of insomnia”. She asks if he remembers her “—Agnes Bowers—”. She is now excited that she is a novice. She continues “I was ill five months and feared I would not receive the holy habit of religion. Your last letter

²⁹ The priest’s name is not mentioned.

³⁰ Refer to Letter August 3, 1914

³¹ Information pending

³² Information pending

told me to continue the prayers, which I have faithfully done. God has answered our petitions. I received the habit of the Ursuline Order, August 8th [1914] and **since then I have been perfectly well.**

October 9, 1914

- **Second** Letter from **Sister Benedicta** Mount St. Joseph Ursuline. She is “truly” much better and is able to teach three hours a day. She mentions **Mother Xavier**³³, who says to Columba that “he may consider my case a miracle.” Sister Benedicta also states that **Sister Baptista**³⁴ grows weak, but she prays. Finally, she introduces to Columba **Sister Columba**³⁵ who is suffering from “head” troubles and who will write to Columba.

October 9, 1914

- Letter from **Mrs. Mach**. She mentions that **Eliza** is getting old and that she hopes that God will “spare her health”. Continues with some information about Mrs. Connor’s children and a step-mother.

October 12, 1914

- **First** Letter from **Sister Columba**, Mount St. Joseph Ursuline. She requests prayer because her “head” cannot be operated on, and her pain is very intense. She has positioned the badge to the side of her face.

October 15, 1914

- Fifth (post card) from **Giglinger**. He reports that his brother’s eyesight continues to improve. Also prays for a lady with asthmas and a little girl in a “weakened” state. And “Mrs. Mach seems to be quite well again [suffered from rheumatism].”

October 21, 1914

- Letter from **Mr. Mrs. William Brennen** from Keokuk, Iowa. Newsy and long [6 pages]. The Brennen’s are friends of Fr. Giglinger and Columba’s sister, Eliza.

October 23, 1914

- Second letter from **Sister Bibiana**. She mentions a **Mrs. Kelly** who has “no life in her limbs whatsoever” and “she is improving right along.” For herself, she still suffers [does not mention from what she suffers]. Mentions that **Sister Bertha**³⁶

³³ Information pending

³⁴ Information pending

³⁵ Information pending

³⁶ Information pending

October 27, 1914

- Sixth letter from **Father Giglinger**. Mentions that **Prof. Klotz** is getting better from his “dopsical [sic] condition” and “is now walking the streets of Burlington” because I sent him a badge and Columba is praying for him. Mentions that his brother’s eyesight in one eye is returning when doctors gave up hope and “the prospect for a perfect cure is very good.” He ends with “to [sic] missionary priest [sic] suggested to me to try to convert the colored people in Keokuk. You know there are enough of them here.” [not sure how to interpret this.]

November 1, 1914

- **Second letter from Sister Columba, Mount St. Joseph Ursuline**
- Thanks Columba for sending a photo and a badge. She is not feeling much better, yet she does sleep better. She feels that she may not be worthy of a cure, yet she puts more hop in the badge and Columba’s prayers than “in the will of doctors”. She mentions that Sister Batista is much improved.

November 8, 1914

- **Third letter from Sister Benedicta, Mount St. Joseph Ursuline**
- She is anxious to write back to Columba after his letter to her and Sister Baptista. Benedicta is not feeling well and could not go to school for a week. She is relying upon Columba’s prayers. She states that all are surprised at the rallying Sister Baptista. A miracle in her case would “give great glory to God”. “Doctors have declared it impossible for her to recover”. Mother Xavier is well. Mentions Sr. Columba. Asks for prayers for **Sister Thomas** ³⁷who has “severe pain in her head”. She does wear the badge.

November 29, 1914

- **Fourth letter from Sister Benedicta, Mount St. Joseph Ursuline**
- She states that the young man for whom she sought prayer and intercession in “my last letter”³⁸ “is now out of danger and doctors say he will soon be entirely well. The sisters at the hospital say that as soon as they put a badge on him, he became conscious and has improved ever since” Mentions Baptista and Xavier and the “young man” [no reference in any past letter that I can find].

December 2, 1914

- **Letter from Sister Alicia³⁹, perhaps a Sister of the Holy Cross**
- Mentions three children “who want to get well” each giving a dollar for a badge. She thanks him for the prayers for her throat—a little better. She signs “in Holy Cross”, and she is working at a sanitarium, no clear indication of a ministry.

³⁷ Information pending

³⁸ I can find no reference to this young man in the three previous letters.

³⁹ Information pending

December 17, 1914

- **Fifth letter from Sister Benedicta, Mount St. Joseph Ursuline**
- Talks about a little boy she “mentioned” in a previous letter [cannot find the reference] he is “one of the best boys of the school”. He wears the “pin” you sent. All others are well for whom she asked for prayers. Asks for prayers for **Sister Clare**⁴⁰, the infirmarian—no strength. She is a valuable person deserving of prayer and a cure.

December 23, 1914

- **Third letter from Sister Columba, Mount St. Joseph Ursuline**
- She is getting much better. Not a lot of pain and sleeps and eats well. She wears two badges all of the time and has taken the ante-toxine [sic] treatment five times yet it is prayer that is curing her.

December 23, 1914

- **Letter from Brother Jarlath O’Brien, CSC, an “indefatigable canvasser for the Ave Maria for decades”**⁴¹
- Send me 50 or 100 post cards of the Grotto

January 17, 1915

- Letter from **Sister Alonzo**⁴², **St. Patrick’s School, Chatsworth, Il.** Asks for the complete cure for a man who has “ten small children” with pneumonia and a collapsed lung. Thanks Columba for assisting her brother with heart trouble. “He is cured.” And she is now recommending two more of her brothers for prayers and cures.

February 8, 1915

- Second Letter to Columba from Sister Angela, OSB, St. Clare’s Convent, Vancouver, BC. She asks for prayers for **Mary Sinerl** [sic] she and her husband are good practicing Catholics “excellent” people, “but the demon of discord is planting his seed in their little home”. “Pray for patience for the good husband and for her to come to her common sense.”

September 20, 1915

- Post card from **Gilbert Francais, Superior General to Brother Columba**, “Dear Brother Columba, I admire and share your devotion to the Sacred Heart of our Lord, but it seems to me it would be difficult and perhaps impossible to establish a shrine in His honor—The place [the Grotto] is taken by Our Lady of Lourdes.

⁴⁰ Information pending

⁴¹ Brother Jarlath (Jeremiah) O’Brien, CSC (1845-1921) born in Cork, Ireland. Entered the juniorate in August 1877 and received the habit in Oct of 1877. Final vows in Oct. 1880. Buried in the Community Cemetery, Notre Dame. [more information might be found in Walter Davenport’s paper on the canvassers for the Ave Maria]

⁴² Information pending

There is no room for two shrines in the same place. Besides that, we have in the big church the finest, the most beautiful chapel in the honor of the Sacred Heart—Look at the stain glasses [sic] behind the main altar – they are all preaching and directing the devotion to the Sacred Heart. But it is necessary to understand and love them—such is my opinion. You would be very kind, dear Brother Columba to send me a pair of shoes and a pair of overshoes adapted to it. You know I have very small feet. Pray for me—I pray for you too.”

Feast of Saint Anthony, 1916

- Letter to Columba from **Sister Evangelist**⁴³, Sister of Mercy of the World from Des Moines, IA, Mercy Hospital. She attests to “the many miracle that has [sic] taken place a[t] the hospital through the Sacred Heart badges made by you.”

April 19, 1917

- Letter from **Rt. Rev. Frank A. O'Brien** to Brother Columba that was sent to the monsignor from Father Ryan, St. Vincent de Paul Rectory, Pontiac, MI where Ryan says, “**I think Brother cured my cough**”.

October 12, 1917

- Post card from **Gilbert Francais, Superior General** “Dear Brother Columba, it has been a joy for me to read your letter—I understand and share your feelings for Bengal Missions—If I was younger, I would like too to be a missionary. Now both for you and for me it is too late. But just as you do, we can pray and help our confreres in many ways, according to our means. Yes indeed, you may send to the bishop the money you are speaking of in your letters—I recommend myself to your prayers and [cannot read the word] I am sincerely yours in X.”

December 5, 1917

- Letter from **Ella Cronin** [sic] to Brother Columba – Brother notes at top “crassey [sic] girl cured this girl was insane cured by SH [Sacred Heart]⁴⁴ The girl named is perhaps Ella yet the letter is unclear about that fact.

December 19, 1917

- Post card to Brother Columba from **Anna Lauion** [sic], Elkhart, IN. Brother Columba note “pains in head 12 years”. She testifies to being cured.

January 2, 1918

- Post card to Brother Columba from **Anna A. Shields**, Kalamazoo, IN. “Please find enclosed a check for \$5.00 for your Sacred Heart Shrine Fund in thanksgiving for favors received”.

⁴³ Information pending

⁴⁴ SH when written by Brother Columba in all letters is his abbreviation for Sacred Heart.

January 4, 1918

- Note to Columba from **Mrs. A. T. Coughlin**, Davenport, IA “Inclosed [sic] find \$1.00 for the Sacred Heart Shrine In [sic] thanks for prayers answered”.

January 26, 1918

- Letter from **“Jim” to his sister “Kate”**. “I am getting heavier and stronger every day. I expect to go home a week from Sunday. I am going to the Messenger and tell them the Sacred Heart of Jesus cured me.

May 1918

- **Sister Amalia, OSF** cured of cancer by Brother Columba was given 8 weeks to live.⁴⁵

May 9, 1918

- Letter from **Mrs. William Fischer, Adrian, MI** who testifies that the “Sacred Heart badge worn during a *tough*⁴⁶ pregnancy allowed the baby to be born with no trouble”.

July 14, 1918

- Note from **John M. Bammel, Marine City, MI**. “Enclosed find Ten Dollars (\$10.00) which is but a small offering for the relief I have obtained through You and Prayers”.

August 21, 1918

- **Miss Elenore Moranietz to Father Morrissey, CSC** “Sometime ago I wrote to Brother Columbia [sic]⁴⁷ asking him if he would be good enough to offer prayer in my intercession, as I have been an inmate of a hospital for the past year and a half. Since writing, my suffering has been greatly relieved, and I feel that I owe a great deal to Brother Columbia’s [sic] prayers for me.” She enclosed \$20.00⁴⁸.

September 27, 1918

- One-year-old South Bend, IN child is the first to die from Spanish Influenza.

September 28, 1918

- Letter to **Father J.C. Kirscher [sic] Kirsch is the true spelling] CSC from Mother Stanislaus Kostka, SSND⁴⁹**, Motherhouse, Milwaukee, WI requesting

⁴⁵ Refer to Aug. 3, 1933 letter written by Sister Amalia to Lydia [her spelling of Lyda?] O’Neill, Brother Columba’s niece.

⁴⁶ My italics.

⁴⁷ There are many letters with variations on the spelling of Columba.

⁴⁸ \$20 in 1918 is worth \$348.36.

⁴⁹ Information pending

the presence of Brother Columba to “come and confer a favor on us”. She wants Brother to cure a Sister who is dying from cancer of the head and face.

October 11, 1918

- **Dr. Emil G. Freyermuth, the South Bend city health officer**, issues an order forbidding all public gatherings until further notice. All schools, theaters, clubs, churches and other religious institutions were closed. Public funerals, meetings, dances and other events were canceled. The University of Notre Dame football team — led by coach Knute Rockne and including star player George Gipp — canceled several football games that month.

October 13, 1918

- The first campus death that autumn was **Robert “Bobby” Corrigan**. Bobby Corrigan was one of the **minims**, young boys attending a boarding school on campus and living in Carroll Hall.

October 20, 1918

- The death of first Sister of the Holy Cross from Spanish flu--**Sister M. Claudine (Marie), Lederle CSC (1882-1920)⁵⁰, a nurse** who had been caring for students in the Notre Dame college infirmary. “Sister Claudine contracted pneumonia, which caused her death, in caring for the sick students. She will be prayerfully remembered by the faculty and students of the University,” *Scholastic*.

November 4, 1918

- Letter from “A friend in the Sacred Heart” **Lillian Nolan, Emmett, MI** “my ears are cured”.

Mid-November 1918

- Notre Dame resumes its football schedule after closing down because of Spanish Influenza.

⁵⁰ Sister M. Claudine (Marie Lederle) CSC, was born in Endingen, Germany on February 2, 1882. Her parents were Franz Lederle and Maria Zwiengard. She entered the congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross from Germany on January 10, 1905; received the Holy Habit on January 12, 1905 and the religious name of Sister M. Claudine. Her first profession was on December 8, 1907 and final profession on August 15, 1911. All these ceremonies took place at Saint Mary’s, Notre Dame, Indiana. Sister’s ministry was at Holy Cross Convent, Notre Dame, Indiana from 1906 to 1918. She served in the laundry and helped with the fluting of the big cap--the headdress of the Sisters of the Holy Cross. She also helped in the kitchen and in the Student Infirmary. Sister Claudine died October 20, 1918 in Holy Cross Convent, Notre Dame, Indiana of pneumonia and, perhaps, was the first of the CSC Congregation to die of Spanish Influenza. She is buried in Our Lady of Peace Cemetery at Saint Mary’s. (Sister Timothea Kingston, Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Cross 03/14/2021).

1918

- *Joliet Evening Herald-News*, **Bruhn, Rev. Carl F.** "Brother Columba Reported to be Making Progress: No Religious Impostor". A report on "many cures...the number of cures is said to be more than 20". Restoring of speech to **Bessie Egan** and sight to **Elizabeth Delaney** and hearing to **Miss McFdden**.

1919-1921

- An undated letter from **Sister Lourdes (Mary) Mullane⁵¹, CSC** on letterhead stationary *Mother House, Sisters of the Holy Cross*, thanking Brother Columba "for feeling better". And thanking him in the name of **Sister Clement (Genevieve) Lawless⁵², CSC** for "your kindness to **Sister Clement and myself**."
- Brother Columba goes to Kankakee, IL and "treats scores".

1920

- Age and illness (Spanish Flu) prevent Brother Columba from working in his cobbler shop.

December 26, 1921

- Letter from **Sister Margaret Mary,⁵³ Sister of Mercy** Thanks for the prayer and the badges and mentions **Sister Berchmans⁵⁴** who needs prayers

November 5, 1922

⁵¹ Sister M. Lourdes (Mary Mullane, CSC) was born 1849, no other information on date of birth. She entered the Novitiate at Saint Mary's 1876; Final Profession 1879; died at Saint Mary's Convent, Notre Dame, Indiana August 25, 1921. Sister Clement Mullane, CSC, was her sister. Sister Lourdes was the Dormitorian for Saint Mary's 1878-79, cared for the sick at Holy Cross Hospital and Saint John's Hospital 1879-1898. She was the infirmarian for the sisters at Saint Mary's Convent, Notre Dame, Indiana 1898-1919 until she became a patient herself and died in 1921. Kingston, CSC, Sister Timothea, Sisters of the Holy Cross Archives, 04/01/2021.

⁵² Sister M. Clement (Mary Genevieve Lawless) was born November 25, 1894 in Chatsworth, Illinois. Genevieve received her elementary education and secondary education at St. Patrick's School, Chatsworth, Illinois. She entered the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross on September 7, 1913, received the Holy Habit December 10, 1913 and the religious name of Sister M. Clement. Sister pronounced her First Vows on December 10, 1915. Sister studied at the American Conservatory of Music, Chicago, Illinois, and received a Bachelor of Music in 1925 with a Major in Violin and a Minor in Theory. In 1926 she received her Masters from the same conservatory with a Major in Violin and a Minor in Piano and Cello. Sister Clement began teaching music at Saint Mary's College in 1914 and continued that assignment until 1931. During that time, on January 6, 1919, Sister Clement made her Final Profession. She was assigned to Saint Mary of the Wasatch, Salt Lake City, Utah, from 1931-1937 as the music teacher and then reassigned to Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame from 1937-1943. In 1962 Sister Clement served as receptionist at Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana and then retired to Saint Mary's Convent in 1968. Sister M. Clement died at Saint Mary's Convent on November 1, 1982 and was buried in Our Lady Queen of Peace Cemetery. Sister was described in this way: "She was an excellent teacher, a fine violinist, and an able administrator." Kingston, CSC, Sister Timothea, Sisters of the Holy Cross Archives, 04/01/2021.

⁵³ Information pending

⁵⁴ Information pending

- Letter from **Brother Peter Claver Hosinski, CSC** from University of Portland. He and **Father Kehoe**⁵⁵ had returned from Bengal, and Brother Peter was to accompany Father Kehoe who has been ill to a sanitarium operated by the Sisters of the Holy Cross in Denning, New Mexico. They are doing the novena for the improvement of Father's health.⁵⁶

December 24, 1922

- Letter from **Sister Maria Louisa Cardenas, CSC**⁵⁷ Thanks for the prayers for my mother who is still in the hospital, but feeling better.

January 16, 1923

- Letter from **Sister Fulbert, SMP (Sisters of Mary of the Presentation)**⁵⁸ stationed at St. Joseph Farm, Granger, IN, to Brother Columba telling him that a "sister in Canada" needs another Sacred Heart badge as she has "worn out" the one she has – she has been "perfectly" cured.

January 28, 1923

- Letter from **Brother Albeus Clark, CSC** requesting a "special intention" to be granted in June of 1923.

March 6, 1923

- Second Letter from Sister Maria Louisa Cardenas Her mother is in Mexico and in a very "Critical condition."

March 7, 1923

- Letter written by **Philip Booz [14 years old]** to "Dear Sister"⁵⁹ He describes being cured of a Tubercular hip. "I had faith...and I am sure nothing cured me except this badge." Booz lived in either Trenton NJ or Yardville NJ.

⁵⁵ Information pending for complete bio

⁵⁶ Father Kehoe would live to see Denning. As he and Hosinski were traveling, Kehoe was taken so ill that he died in Idaho.

⁵⁷ Information pending

⁵⁸ "Sister Fulbert (Sidonie) Rebours, born July 12, 1878, at Ereac, France, made her first profession at Broons, France, September 13, 1900. She stayed at St. Joseph's Farm until 1936 and was the nurse and also Superior of the Sisters. She died in Spring Valley, Illinois on February 10, 1944 in the 66th year of her age and the 44th year of her profession. The Very Reverend Gilbert Francais, Superior General of the Congregation of Holy Cross took up residence at the Farm, and from there he governed the Congregation. In 1926 Father Francais suffered a stroke, which left him quite paralyzed. Sister Fulbert, nurse, cared for him diligently until his death in 1929. The Sisters of Mary of the Presentation closed their mission at the Farm on December 1, 1936, after 33 years of service to the Holy Cross Brothers. Stillings, Catheryn, Sisters of Mary of the Presentation, Archives. 03/30/2021 [I have much more information about this congregation and 17 letters from Mother Fulbert to various CSC members.

⁵⁹ The Sister is yet to be identified.

June 17, 1923

- Letter from **Sister Severina Hosinska** [Polish feminine case], CSC to **Brother Columban** [sic]⁶⁰ asking for prayers for her dying mother, and she encloses a \$1 as an offering⁶¹.

November 20, 1923

- **Brother Columba dies in the Community House Infirmary.**

November 21, 1923

- *Youngstown, Ohio Telegram* "Noted 'Miracle Man' of Notre Dame Dead".

November 23, 1923

- **Brother Isidore Alderton, CSC**⁶² writes a description of the last days, the wake and the funeral of Brother Columba.

Sometime after 1923

- Letter from **Sister Xavier, C.S.C**⁶³.

1924

- "Brother Columba received much acclaim through his devotion to the Sacred Heart. He was known as the 'Miracle Man of Notre Dame'. He, however, never claimed any credit for cures which may have occurred. One who knew him very intimately at the time of his death said: 'Thousands of homes in this country will join in mourning the departure of this saintly Brother. He has made many trips to the cities of the Middle West carrying his message of love and hope. Hundreds and thousands have found him here [cobbler shop at Notre Dame] in his humble retreat and besought his prayers for cures of their maladies, spiritual and physical, and other thousands have sent letters asking for his Sacred Heart badges, and asking him to remember their petitions in his prayers. ... It was just a few years back when about the only outward devotion manifested at Notre Dame to the Sacred Heart was the little red light burning before the statue in the shoe shop. This holy soul kept talking this devotion, kept handing out the Sacred Heart leaflets, kept distributing his badges until this has now become one of the favorite devotions of the congregation and the student body.'"⁶⁴

⁶⁰ It is quite common for writers to address Brother Columba by other variations of the first few letters of his religious name. Among the incorrect monikers are Columbia, Columbus, Columbanus, Columbkille, Colome.

⁶¹ Sister Severina was the first cousin to Brother Peter Claver Hosinski, CSC and Father Stanislaus Hosinski, CSC and the niece of Father Albin Hosinski, CSC.

⁶² Information pending

⁶³ Information pending

⁶⁴ Horton, CSC, Ph. B. E. Brother Gilbert, "The Brothers of the Congregation of Holy Cross" the *Alumnus* (Date needed). The following was written in the *Alumnus* 8:211, 1930. "The Congregation of Holy Cross is mourning the death of Brother Gilbert, Ph. B., Education '24, one of the most able teachers among the Brothers. Brother Gilbert

June 11, 1925

- Letter to “Sacred Heart Shine” from **Mrs. Hugh McCaffrey, mother of Mrs. Lex Byrne**, describing bringing a dead child back to life by forcing Brother Columba-grave-dust in holy water down the boy’s throat.

Jan. 11, 1927

- Letter from **Mrs. L. J. Donohue to Brother [could be Brother Columbanus Murphy]** can she obtain “favours” if she sends names to the Sacred Heart Shrine?

July 22, 1931

- Letter to **Father J.A. Burns, CSC**, Provincial from **Mrs. Anna McAlpine, 1834 Parnell Ave, West Pullman, IL**. She states that her 30-year old son was sent home from with tuberculosis and a high temperature. She had a Sacred Heart badge that had been touched to Brother Columba’s corpse, and she pinned it to his clothing and the day he had no symptoms of the disease. “Several X-ray pictures show his both [sic] lungs in perfect condition. My friend says it was the prayers of Brother Columbia [sic] that cured my son and that I should write to you about it.”⁶⁵

October 11, 1931

- Letter to Father Burns from **Mrs. Anna McAlpine**. “I have not forgotten to write to you about my son’s health. He had one x-ray taken last Tuesday and the doctor told us Friday that he is perfectly well. He will not need another x-ray and he has not taken medicine for a long time. Thanks for the Sacred Heart and Brother Columba.”⁶⁶

February 15, 1933

- Letter to Mrs. Rath from Dr. E.V. Hug, MD testifying to a cure from cystitis and pyelo-nephritis. “Brother Columba became interested in her case and added his prayers to those of her family and friends. She began to improve and for the past twelve years has been in good health and active in doing good for others. She has shown no evidence of the disease which threatened her life twelve years ago.”

August 3, 1933

died in New Orleans on February 28. He was a member of the faculty of Holy Cross College there. He had taught at a number of schools and colleges conducted by the Congregation, and his unusually large figure was familiar to the students at Notre Dame summer schools. Brother Gilbert’s pen was ready in defense of the Faith and Notre Dame. He was a contributor to many magazines and newspapers, and was highly respected by all who knew him. His name before joining the order was James Horton. He was born in Traverse City, Michigan, in 1895 and joined the Congregation of Holy Cross in 1913. Brother Gilbert’s death was caused by high blood pressure with ensuing heart complications. The funeral was held at Notre Dame on Monday, March 3.”

⁶⁵ We have yet to find the original letter-only a Xerox of it with a Xerox for the envelop. [04/12/2021]

⁶⁶ Original not yet found [04/12/2021]

- Letter from **Sister Amalia, OSF to Lyda O'Neill, Brother Columba's niece**, writing of the sister's "cure through the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I have been well ever since and have been working real [sic]hard in the Laundry every day and up to midnight and have not felt the effects of any strain whatsoever." She goes on to speak of the doctor who told her she had cancer and who operated on her. "But I fooled them all and it has been 15 years that I have had the operation."⁶⁷

November 5, 1934

- Article in the *South Bend Tribune* "Notre Dame's Miracle Man Cobbler, born 86 years ago: Steps taken toward canonization of Brother" [I have found nothing yet to indicate the anyone in the Congregation was "taking the steps toward canonization. Refer to footnote 12 Lydia O'Neill.

November 19, 1934

- University of Notre Dame, *Religious Bulletin*, "Brother Columba O'Neill, C.S.C." Describes the spread of his fame and "[Brother Columba] would like to help convince boys of the present generation that to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament they must look for help, encouragement, and strength, in all their sorrows and difficulties."

December 4, 1934

- Letter to **Father O'Hara from Sister Cyriaca, CSC** that contains a letter from **Sister Lybia, CSC**⁶⁸ describing the cure of a child.

December 7, 1934

- Letter to **Sister Cyriaca, CSC**⁶⁹ from **Father O'Donnell, CSC** acknowledging her letter [have yet to find the letter from **Sister Lybia, CSC**].

June 8, 1937

- Article sent to **Brother Fintan (John) Curran**⁷⁰ from "BM [perhaps the initials are of a brother] Community Infirmary, Notre Dame". The article contains several accounts of "cures".

⁶⁷ In this letter to Columba's niece, Sister Amalia writes "Hope this [cure testimony] will give you all the information you want and if I can be of any service to you in regard to Brother Columba [sic] **beatification** [my highlight] I shall do all in my power to help you along." Brother Columba and his niece wrote many letters to each other during his life time. My assumption is that sometime after his death in 1923, Lydia took up the "cause" as the Congregation was reticent to do such.

⁶⁸ Anna McLaughlin (Sister Lybia, CSC) (1865-19270 Secondary Teacher. There is one undated letter from her to Brother Columba requesting Sacred Heart badges and prayers.

⁶⁹ Mary Keating (Sister Cyriaca, CSC) (1859-1941) A teacher and General Stewardess for Saint Mary's Convent. She was known as Mother Cyriaca.

⁷⁰ Brother Fintan took final vows in 1930 and in 1938 was the superior of Dujarié Scholasticate. He left the Congregation in 1940.

1943

- **Hope, CSC, Rev Arthur J. Notre Dame—One Hundred Years** includes a short account of Brother Columba in the book (382-383). Includes the story of the young seminarian who runs up to Columba and says, 'You were with Father Sorin when he died? Columba responds, "Pshaw, Boy! He was no saint!" (383)

November 26, 1947

- Letter from **G. Giglinger to Brother Ernest Ryan** in which Ernest asks the priest if he knows anything about Brother Columba's youth. The priest replies that although Columba's sister, Eliza, was a member of his congregation, she never said a lot about Columba. But Columba said this about his sister: "[S]he is a saint, but she does not know it." Giglinger tells Ernest that "Whenever Brother Columba came to Keokuk to visit his sister, he stayed with me, for which I was very thankful. He said to me that through Saint Joseph very many are cured in Canada⁷¹, just as many and more would be cured through the Sacred Heart. He said in one of his visits that he induced the students at Notre Dame to make the First Friday. It was through him that the First Friday devotions and communions were introduced.⁷²

January 29, 1949

- Typed note glued to a brown envelope: "Cloth that touched the remains of Brother Columba, c.s.c., as he waked at the Community House. **According to Brother Theogene, c.s.c.**⁷³ **Professor Greene**⁷⁴ touched the remains of Brother Columba with this red cloth as he lay in state". It was given to Brother Album [sic]⁷⁵ by Professor Greene. Brother Alban gave it to Brother Theogene who in turn gave it to the Community 1-25-49."

February 15, 1949

- Letter from **Brother Alban (Charles) Flaherty, C.S.C. on Holy Cross College, Washington DC letterhead to Brother Garnier Morin, C.S.C. Archivist**: "It is a pleasure for me to comply with your wishes by certifying that I purchased a piece of RED CLOTH⁷⁶ and personally touched it to the hands of Brother Columba while he lay in state in the parlor at the Community House, at Notre Dame, Indiana. If you desire further information to not hesitate to ask for it."

⁷¹ First indication that Columba knew about St. Andre Bessette.

⁷² There are many Giglinger letters in the collection and they are all written in a tight script and normally quite long. They will contain, I think inestimable information about Columba's work in Keokuk.

⁷³ Brother Theogene (Frederick) Merline (1883-1971) He worked in the Notre Dame Post Office for 29 years beginning in 1916.

⁷⁴ Information pending

⁷⁵ Brother Alban (Charles) Flaherty (1870-1957) died in Washington, DC and buried in Holy Cross Cemetery

⁷⁶ The cloth is housed in the archive and is approximately 35 inches wide and 75 inches long. It is satin and a very faded red. On each end there is a small swath that has been cut away. Perhaps pieces were taken by someone as "relics" of the holy man. Something might be found to give indication of such an event.

1950

- **Brother Columbanus Murphy, CSC** renews the Sacred Heart Apostolate.⁷⁷

February 1951

- Short note in *Brothers of Holy Cross* “The Community House Ensemble, composed of **Brothers Jacob Eppley**, cellist, **Sabinas Herbert** and **Linus Voigt**, violinists, and **Louis Gazagne**, piano.

1953

- **Brother Sabinas Herbert, CSC** takes up the Apostolate after the death of **Brother Columbanus**.

January 17, 1954

- Letter from **Brother John Baptist [Titzer], Asst. Provincial to Brother Sabinas Herbert**. “You are granted permission to print and distribute the leaflet BROTHER COLUMBA O’NEILL, Apostle of the Sacred Heart. You may modify the wording as you see the need.”

January 20, 1954

- **Letter from Brother Ephrem [O’Dwyer] to Brother Sabinas Herbert**. You have permission to distribute Sacred Heart badges and any money received may be spent to continue the work.

April 14, 1954

- Letter to **Father Christopher J. O’Toole, CSC, Superior General from Brother Sabinas Herbert**. A number of items:
 - I am impressed by Brother Columba’s life as told by **Brother Ernest Ryan, CSC**.
 - Two years ago (1952) **Brother Columbanus [Murphy]** was talking to me about reviving the memory of Brother Columba.
 - Since Brother Columbanus’s death, I think I should revive the Apostolate.
 - To the leaflet which he [Columbanus] circulate, I have added a letter and a Sacred Heart badge. The Ave is donating the printing for the Apostolate as was done in the time of Brother Columba.
 - February 2, 1954 was the day set for the reviving. Permission was secured in January.
 - I asked Brother Columba to find the trunkful of letters that “were in this vicinity”. On Feb. 2 Father Hope came to my office to tell me he has the trunkful [*sic*] of letters.
 - I gave them to Brother Ernest to “classify”.
 - Hope had the letters since 1946, and he was glad to give them to the Apostolate.

⁷⁷ No clear indication of when the actual “Apostolate” was established and by whom.

- **Father Gartland**⁷⁸ will do a write up in *The Catholic Boy*
- **The Legion of Mary in South Bend** have included a folder about Brother Columba in their pamphlet racks.
- So far, 1600 leaflets and badges have been distributed all around the US.

May 15, 1954

- Letter from Father O'Toole to Brother Sabinas. "Whatever you can do to encourage devotion to the Sacred Heart is very fine indeed."
- It will be interesting to see what Ernest discovers from the trunk full of letters.
- Once we have Moreau and Andre done, we can add Brother Columba.

May 21, 1954

- Hand-written note **Brother Alban, C.S.C.** "This Sacred Heart Badge was among the hundreds that I touched to Brother Columba's remains and sent to Dujarié in 1934 before I went to Washington, D.C." There are three badges in the envelope that contained the note: each a slightly different color from bright red to orange to "dirty" beige.

August 2, 1954

- Sacred Heart badges sent free to all as a Marian Year tribute by Brother Sabinas.

August 16, 1954

- Letter to Father O'Toole to Brother Sabinas.
 - "I have been receding an average of 50 letters a day for the past 8 days [where are these letters?]
 - The Brother Columbanus prayer is a great prayer.

August 24, 1954

- Letter from **Thomas Diehl, SJ**, Regional Director, The Apostleship of Prayer: The League of the Sacred Heart, Chicago, IL to Brother Sabinas.
 - You must enter the names of all associates into the official register of the Apostleship of Prayer.

1955

- Brother Sabinas dies and **Brother Gerard Fitz, CSC** appointed director by provincial **Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, CSC**.

Jan. 16, 1955

- Letter from **Brother Sabinas to Mrs. Lex Byrne** acknowledging the receipt of three letters written by Brother Columba.

⁷⁸ Information pending

April 9, 1955

- Letter of **Brother Sabinas** to **Rev. Aquinas Crowley, OFM**, Asst. Ed. of the **National Catholic Almanac** thanking him for his desire to include Brother Columba.

1956

- **Brother Leonard Siwierka, CSC** appointed director by Brother Gerard⁷⁹.

1963, Jan. 8

- Letter from **Mrs. Katherine J. Campbell**, Long Island, NY to **Brother Gonzaga Day, C.S.C.**⁸⁰ about her relationship to Brother Columba.⁸¹

1963, Jan. 18

- Letter from **Brother Gonzaga Day**⁸² to **Mrs. Katherine J. Campbell** thanking her for the information sent in Jan. 8 letter.

Jan. 18, 1980

Vol. 13, No. 4 *Midwest News Notes* “Few members [CSC brothers] would even imagine the volume of correspondence on file: thousands of letters from people all over the world asking for his assistance in their illnesses and difficulties. There are even a few records of his journeys. Brother Columba’s correspondence with Rev. George Giglinger, pastor of St. Mary’s Church in Keokuk, Iowa, is very revealing and provides authentic history of his successes with the sick. Fortunately, Father Giglinger preserved all of the correspondence and later gave it to the community.” There is also reference in the article to “a set of hand tools. A box of these, too, have been preserved.” [The tools have yet to be located 03/10/2021 Phil Smith]

2020

Brother Philip Smith, C.S.C. takes up where Sabinas and Leonard left off with the Apostolate. He is building a case to have Columba declared Servant of God.

⁷⁹ I lived with Brother Leonard for six years in the 1970s, and he never mentioned that he was in this position. He mentioned his four years at the Ave very frequently.

⁸⁰ Nothing yet to indicate that Brother Gonzaga Day was officially a director of the apostolate.

⁸¹ **Katherine Campbell** states that she “met Columba many times when he came to Wilkes-Barre.” **Joan Mason** is Katherine’s granddaughter. **Julia Ann McGuire** is “a cousin” [not sure what the relation is to Ellen McGuire, Columba’s mother] “lived in Wyoming Valley, PA [a] coal mining town” and she, “hadn’t heard of John [Columba] in years”. Katherine Campbell’s mother [not named] received a letter stating that he was at Notre Dame. “Brother Columba had a few other cousins in and around Wilkes-Barre.” Finally, Katherine Campbell states: “Outside of 5 granddaughters and a few nieces and nephews, I am the last of the family at age 77.” Because Brother Columba had a single sister, Eliza, Katherine might be her daughter-in-law. No evidence of this as of 03/29/2021.

⁸² Information pending

