

SHCJ ARCHIVES ROME

[Letter Book III.
Pages 16 – 19]CopyRead this please
to M.M.WalburgaThe Convent
St. Leonards-on-Sea
Sussex
Feby 12th 1876 – (Sent on the 17th
The telegram was
sent Feb 14th
St. Valentine's
Day

Letter from our Mother General to America dated as above.

Private

Dear Mother M Xavier [Noble]

I send you the copy of G^r Grant's letter, and the Consultor's report on the Rule which was presented in French in 1854. This was a revision of the Rule approved by Cardinal Wiseman 1850. When we held a Council on it before it was presented, & when to make it more in conformity with the rule of St Ignatius we unitedly decided that the Superior GI should be for life. Our Council was in the latter part of 1853 when Miss Bowles, Miss Woolley & Mth Alphonsa were with us. It was after this revision that I had the small abridgment printed which you have with you, added to which I gave you for guidance the translated manuscript of the Rule of S^t Ignatius. I now send you the copy of the Constitutions approved by Card. Wiseman where you will see that the Superior General is to be elected for the term of six years. It is an exact copy of it. The abridgement which you have understand was from the revision of this I now send. –

We shall never come to anything if you decline studying the facts as they stand. You seemed not to condescend to looking into the copy of these important decisions of the Sacred Congregation & you discarded the idea of a Cardinal Protector which is in the old Rule!! and which is in fact

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our only protection. If you cut yourselves off, you will fall under the sole power of the Bishop of each Diocese that may spring up, & make Sisters of S. Joseph or anything else that the Bishop wishes to make you into. What D^r Danell did here was nothing more than the Canon Law gives him the power to do & what will be done to you if you do not keep yourselves perfectly united to us. We are of one mind no doubt, but these little points are like leakages in a roof that would soon tend to ruin.

The point to work at now is to examine & to object to whatever changes our work by these alterations in the Rule. - To sift them in all their bearings, & to make notes upon them. If you do this the Sacred Congregation will weigh them well, but you must study the book I sent you to know what the Sacred Congregation of Rites will demand – and to obtain that knowledge which every Superior ought to know in order to be safe in her own judgments. I grieve not to have had the book before our Chapter, but Our Lord had not sent it, & we have suffered from our own ignorance as you also will do unless you give due attention to my advice. F^r Cicateri may soothe & console you, but knowledge is of more use to you than useless consolation.

Be quite sure of this that I have never altered the Rule of my own will – We were called to Rome in 1854 on the plea of the Rule being approved & what was then done was by our Council.

I will enclose a copy of Miss Bowles' reasons for wishing the Superior for life.

In the alterations made in the revision at Rome in 1869 I simply obeyed according to D^r Grant's letter & under Padre Anselmo. This was the Rule you put on the shelf. If that had been accepted we should not have tied up as we are by D^r Danell. If we do not act unitedly now after prayer, thought & study you will go to ruin. You know quite well

that the Bishops prefer Diocesan Orders where their power is without any appeal save to Rome & if such an appeal is made, the usual answer is "Obey your Bishop!" If I were with you in America it would be just the same and what work could you hope to accomplish if such a misfortune were to occur? Your only safety is in union, & protection of your own body, & a Card. Protector to help it. Surely you would never be happy in the thought of going on without the final approbation of Rome! – However we love our old Rule & hold to it, we must love still more the approval of the Sacred Congregation, as well as the protection we need to meet the wishes of various Bishops.

If you do not put your mind to the examination of facts as they stand, of course you will act in ignorance. If I had thought earlier of sending you the letter of D^r Grant 1864, it would have shewn you more truly the opinions of those on whom we have to depend. And again if we had known the decisions regarding the late Orders, we should have been greatly helped at the Chapter. Still more I say study Craisson that you may know all that you ought to know & be aware of your danger in time, lest you fall a victim when you least expect it. These are sad troubles, but all Orders have had to go through much the same. The Sisters of Notre Dame were 44 years waiting for their approval, but they were no doubt united.

If we had not suffered from the Preston rebellion, we should never have had such a Visitation as this last. Before we are approved, we shall no doubt have an Apostolic Visitation to go through at head-quarters & with all the Bishops before acting. Even the Convents that are exempt are still subject to the Bishop's Visitation when he wishes to make it. And this according to the Sacred Canons.

Fr – advised me to obey strictly the Rule now given

by D^r Danell & at the end of the three years to ask to be exempt from the Ordinary.

I am quite certain that the new Rule cannot work & as convinced that it will not be approved without change. It is for us to point out our objections & to send them to Rome, but we ought to be very sure of what we are about. And to be very submissive & docile to the decisions of Rome. The humble shall be exalted. If it were God's will to keep us waiting thirty years longer we must still say God's will is sweeter than even the longed for approval of the Holy See.

I do not think we shall ever come to a clear view of the true state of things until we meet. Would you rather I should go to you with M. Angelica or that you should come here?

With love to all

Ever yours affect^{ly} in J.C.

C.C.

Sent with letter, Letter from D^r Grant – 1854 and a [This in
long letter of 1864 containing the substance of the C.C.'s
Report from Rome with the following notice on hand]
enclosure –

The inclosed letters are for M. Mary Xavier & M.M.Walburga to read attentively. They will shew facts as to the real position of the Rule with regard to Rome after the application of 1854.

Our having worked upon a Rule for 30 years successfully will not authorize it as a Rule approved by the Holy See! - We have the approbation of the Institute, not only from the Cardinal, but by the Rescripts from the Holy See in the favours granted, and with these the Archbishop, D^r Wood, accepted us.

The approbation of an Institute with all its Branch Houses is the First Point, & on this we entered into each

diocese. Be full of confidence in God & in humble resignation to these crosses, while we must do all that depends upon us for our safety.