

SHCJ ARCHIVES ROME

[Letter Book III
Letter 22. pages 31 – 34]

Copy

March 23rd 1876
The Convent St Leonard's on Sea

My dear Mother M. Xavier [Noble]

Perhaps your letters may have miscarried but we have had no acknowledgment of the Telegram I sent to you on the 14th of Feb^y though the letter received yesterday bearing date of the 10th March was written nearly a month later – If you did not receive it then we ought to claim back the payment made. I thought it necessary to relieve your mind as promptly as possible. How you could have thought that I could have sent D^r Danell's Rule to the Archbishop remains to me a mystery not to be solved. I am very thankful that you write freely to Mth Angelica or to any of the Assistants. We are quite united in our decisions and determined to hold together. Our position is most trying under the present circumstances, and we all feel a heavy weight of responsibility, casting aside all personal considerations as we are bound to do. I did not intend to write again so soon myself, but Mth Angelica was about to answer your letter by return of post. She was however obliged to go up to Preston with Mth St John without doing so yet I hope she may find time not to defer answering you. She handed me your letter though I hand the letters to the Assistants as well as to the Monitress sealed always unopened by me that all may feel as free as possible. Do not think for a moment about giving me pain personally. I must make myself happy in having my heart pierced and broken – A broken heart is love's cradle "when our love is crucified" Let us bless and thank God for every stroke.

2nd Now my dear, how can you who knew the spirit of the Preston S^r in 1860 quite as well as I knew it myself, suppose for one instant that I could have acted on D^r

Grant's letter of 1864. What hope could I have entertained when surrounded by young and [in?] experienced Sisters of combating with those who had determined to sustain their own School Mistress spirit, and even this at the cost of becoming Diocesan. Dr Grant's letter gave me advice from Rome of ten years prior to our wants of 1864 so that even if we could have hoped for any union of spirit with Preston we should have been at a great disadvantage in what was advised. Time and patience were needed for prudent action and indeed when I went to Rome in 1869 with commendatory letters from four Bishops and with the aid of the Consultore given to me by Propoganda (F^r Anselmo) and there made the additions required by D^r Grant and in obedience did what I was to do, five years after receiving D^r Grants letter, you reject it or at least put it on your "shelf" and at Preston they sign it and appeal against it!!! What good did my delay of five years do? No other than this, that we have numbers of religious five years older, and more able to combat against the Preston Spirit. Then again you may say why did I not communicate the contents of this letter to all – simply because I should have created a ferment in the minds of all without having the power to act. We should still have been in this state had I not pursued the necessity of an Election of the General and the Assistants which you stormed against. Try to be just in your judgments my dear one and do not fancy that I act without advice, or that I would encourage any one to do so. I shall rejoice in the day when I shall hold no office whatever. Thank God I am not Superior over any house in particular now, and give no orders to any one, and I am personally very happy to have nothing to do but to carry out what is discussed in the Council & with the Assistants, (who all four ought though they do not, live in the house without particular interests) and after these duties to look to my own soul and to help

others and in time I shall regain fresh strength by the blessing of our dear Lord who will always be faithful to us if we are faithful to Him. Thank God the Preston Cabal is at an end, but it will take some years to renew perfectly the old Spirit amongst all who were tainted or rotted by the Cabal.

3rd You are mistaken about our affairs temporal and spiritual in the Diocese of Southwark – the temporals never were so flourishing as now. Our schools never more lauded and never so high in numbers and in reputation as at this moment – in 1874 though we had the epidemic that prevented our having the written papers and consequently the children sent home at Christmas did splendid papers, and these are proofs both to the parents and to all their friends of the actual progress, and besides the high numbers here our preparatory school at Mayfield numbers above 20 - - - The Orphanage is also most flourishing and highly praised.

Again we have never since giving up the Training Schools received so many postulants as this year. Facts are proofs while empty words may go for what they are worth. Our new and beautiful class rooms and extra large Dormitory are no doubt additional attractions added to the great beauty of our new Church and the new building at Mayfield.

If in other Dioceses they had laboured as hard for souls and for the good of the Order, as those in Southwark have done much more might have been attained for the salvation of souls and for the greater glory of God.

4th We certainly have done our very best for America and if for each Sister sent we might hope for the salvation of even one soul we shall not feel sorry to have sent so many supposing there may be no other reward. When we labour for God He alone can be our reward, so we need not feel ourselves robbed unjustly. If a poor peasant is a saint she will soon be sufficiently mortified to behave like a lady, and to “clean her teeth and nails” as an Act of mortification and

to keep her habit clean according to Rule.

You could not expect that we should send the pick and choice of the Order out to places less in need than ourselves!

I will only add that your fate is in your own hands, and if you are faithful to God and your own Order He will be faithful to you, and will protect you to the end.

Let us know as soon as possible what you want to do with Rome & the Bishops.

Ever yours affectionately in J C

C.C.