

CHAPTER 11

SISTERS

MOBILE

AND UNITED

At Somerset, Ohio, on May 9, 1851, the driver of a stagecoach waited before the beautiful Gothic chapel of St. Mary's convent for two passengers. One was the novice Aloysia O'Neill who was making her religious profession before the wondering eyes of her family, the academy students and Dominican sisters and friars. Among the silent participants was a second awaited traveler, Sister Frances Stafford. When the ceremony ended and farewells were reluctantly completed, the two women, dressed for travel, mounted the waiting coach to begin the longest and most uncertain journey of their lives. They were on the way to a new mission in California!

Sister Aloysia O'Neill, at home in California



These travelers would not be joining a caravan of covered wagons going west. They were going east over the mountains to New York, then south by schooner along the Atlantic coast to the Isthmus of Panama. To cross that dangerous and mosquito-infested isthmus from the Caribbean to the Pacific, they would journey over its mountainous terrain by foot and muleback. If they survived, a ship would take them up the Pacific coast to San Francisco, the mecca of Americans seeking gold and adventure.

Among the passengers traveling with the two Dominican women were four Sisters of Notre Dame of Namur from Belgium. One of them, Sister Alenie, kept a chronicle of their journey, describing its incredible dangers and hardships. When their schooner finally neared San

Francisco, Alenie recorded the event in these words:

On Tuesday July 1st the fog was so dense that the Pilot steered towards Oregon, but at mid-day perceiving his mistake, retraced the route to California. We entered the grand "Golden Gate," so appropriately named and so majestic to behold.[\[1\]](#)

When they sailed into the harbor the passengers could see nothing majestic in the city. However, that did not matter when the sisters found waiting at the wharf the three Dominican missionaries who had survived the perils of Panama and arrived in December 1850. They were the new Bishop of California, Joseph Alemany; his fellow missionary in the United States, Sadoc Vilarrasa; and a Belgian nun from the Paris monastery of Holy Cross, Marie Goemaere, who had answered Alemany's call to establish a community of sisters in California.[\[2\]](#)

The journey to California was only one of the dramatic and purposeful travels of American women that began to multiply at mid-century. Many wives traveled far to reach their husbands who were working in the mines, on the railroads or on the open prairies. The women and their children joined them to "settle in." Most of the mobile Americans were seeking stability for their families.

The Dominican sisters as well as the friars saw the need for increasing mobility to reach and serve the people of Church and society. They were asked to leave established communities in the nation's heartland to answer calls near and far. The friars who first founded the communities of sisters in Kentucky and Ohio were now calling them from one place to another. But what of their need for stability? Until this time that had been assured for women of all religious orders in the life of cloistered monastery. How could it be found in moving from place to place?

The American sisters, like the friars, even when "on the move," could find stability in three essential realities of their Dominican vocation: the unchanging mission of the Order to proclaim the Word of God; their lifelong commitment to that mission by vow; and the life of each local community to which they were sent.

The guide offered to each community by Dominic and his first followers was the Rule of St. Augustine, based on the **Acts of the Apostles**. Dominic believed with Augustine that the "the first purpose for which you have been formed into one community is to dwell peacefully in the convent and to be of one heart and mind in God." Augustine once described from his own experience the life and interaction of such a community in this way:

To talk and jest together, to do kind offices by turns; to read together honied books; to play the fool or be earnest together; to dissent at times without discontent, as one might with one's own self; . . . sometimes to teach and sometimes learn; to long for the absent ones with impatience and welcome their coming with joy. These and like expressions, proceeding out of hearts of those that loved and were loved again . . . were so much fuel to melt our souls together, and out of many make but one.[\[3\]](#)

Until mid-century the Sisters traveled only between the two communities of Kentucky and Ohio to meet the needs in each place. Their longer mission journeys began late in 1850 with the one to California and the teaming of sisters from Ohio and Kentucky to open St. Agnes convent and academy in Memphis. In 1854 four sisters from Somerset traveled to Wisconsin to join the new Dominican community founded at Sinsinawa by Samuel Mazzuchelli. Wisconsin sisters in turn crossed the state line into Illinois to open St. Rose Academy at Galena near the Mississippi. There was the first Dominican establishment in the young Diocese of Chicago. So the mobility and multiplication continued.

Like other women on the frontier, the sisters "settled in" without delay on arrival at a new place. The center of their life and mission was the local community in each convent, in which they established a simple form of government. Members of each local community elected their prioress and other needed officials for brief terms. They could elect a sister of their own community to be prioress, or one from another community.

An example of the latter choice was Sister Ann Hanlon of Somerset who was called to be prioress at Memphis and later at Nashville. At her death she was honored by members of all three places for her life "rich in charity."[\[4\]](#)

Each community took responsibility for guiding young women who applied for membership in the Order, directing them as novices and admitting them to membership at profession. For that purpose each house had its own novitiate. After profession they were ready to be called to any place where the sisters collaborated with the friars. Each local community was financially independent. When the members established a local community, they had to build and maintain the convent, school or orphanage with tuition or another source of earned services. Debts were no small source of worry.

There were no congregations of Dominican Sisters, no grouping of communities with a central government and motherhouse. All functioned within the provincial jurisdiction of the friars who founded them, and moved freely to any mission in that province. Some women who made profession in one community spent many years, and even the remainder of their lives, in another. Angela Sansbury, the first American Dominican sister, made her profession in Kentucky and died in Ohio. Teresa Kevelahan, born in a Wisconsin village named for St. Rose, entered the Sinsinawa community, went on to Kentucky, then to Nashville and then to St. Dominic's parish in Washington, D.C., where at her death sisters and parishioners testified to her sanctity.

Although the American Dominican missions of the sisters were vital and successful, the members were deeply concerned about their status in the Church and in the Order. The only religious women fully approved by the Church were cloistered and took solemn vows. Their lives were given to contemplation and liturgical prayer, helping those in any kind of need by their intercession.

When the American friars invited women to an active apostolate, they instructed them in the ways of Dominican life and gave them the Constitutions of the cloistered nuns. The friar provincial dispensed them from such impossible obligations as rising at midnight for the office of Matins. But the new communities of Dominican women had to cross and recross the line of distinction between a contemplative, cloistered life and that of active sisters in the apostolate. To their formula of profession, they added these words:

From the beginning, then, the Dominican sisters had to deal continually with ambiguity.

So it happened that in 1848, two years before members began to venture forth to distant missions, every Dominican Sister in Kentucky and Ohio joined in sending a request to Pope Pius IX. They asked him to approve their modified way of Dominican life, explaining that as teachers

Sister Teresa Kevelahan in 1857



they could not sustain the full liturgical prayer of the Divine Office or the strict cloister of contemplative nuns. The letter read

Whereas, for want of proper inclosure, I cannot make my solemn Vows, but only simple Ones, my wish and intention as soon as proper inclosure can be procured, is to join in petitioning His Holiness to allow us to make the same Solemn vows as the Nuns of St. Dominic and the Religious Men of his Order usually make.[\[5\]](#)

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Most Holy Father

Opp^d the undersigned professed members of the third Order of St. Dominic in the United States of America, humbly lay before your Holiness a document which we have been cherishing within our bosom, and for which we humbly supplicate your gracious favor.

It is now 26 years since our first establishment in this Country. During this time we have been employed in instructing young females after the manner of other literary institutions. The manifold advantages of such institutions have long been acknowledged, as well by religious government as by the Catholic population. Maxims of solid piety are impressed on the tender minds of those who have the happiness to agree with us in faith. Protestants too, gradually forget their false notions and prejudices, not ungenerously they abandon their arms and submit to the sweet yoke of Christ. In a word the rapid increase of these institutions, and the great improvement they are every where welcomed, spread joyfully in their favor, so that it is needless for us to enlarge.

In our professed we add a clause, to embrace the Rule of St. Augustine and Constitutions of the Order of Preachers as the Charter of the second Order of St. Dominic, we would do, we know we may judge it proper to do so.

After deliberation, it has seemed to us that the present time is favorable for this end. But on account of the particular circumstances we wished we were enabled it is impossible under the above to be enclosed

The enclosed with the Divine Office, because the number of those who are capable of teaching being very small, it would be almost more than they could possibly devote to it. We can no longer enclose - unless our convents are not built in a suitable manner, and we do not sufficient resources to change their present form. Hence, as we wished, we should lose our graceful Catholicism with no profit, and would thus be deprived of the means of support. Wherefore, in meeting these considerations to the wisdom of our Holiness, we join our common prayer for a dispensation of being enclosed, and allow us to receive the office of the B. V. Mary, instead of the Divine and to assist in the work of making the solemn profession as the Nuns of the second Order of our Holy Father St. Dominic.

We humbly present ourselves at the feet of your Holiness.

Mrs. Sisters of St. Magdalen Ky	The Sisters of St. Mary
Sister Angela Smith	Sister Maria Weston Place
Sister Margaretta Helen and princess	Sister Catharine Cook
Sister Elizabeth Montgomery	Sister Ann Pambon
Spce of Nurses	Mrs. of St. Sigla Bonarion
Sister Jerome Child	Sister Agnes O'Keefe
Sister Rose Fenally	Sister Rose Ly
Sister Annice Child	Sister Emily Sharp
Sister Rebecca Walsh	Sister Francis Clarke
Sister Catharine Child	Sister Antonia
Sister Joanna Thompson	Sister Mary Jane
Sister Mary Anne Lynch	Sister Veronica Day
Sister Mary Conway	Sister Josephine
Sister Margaret Connor	Sister Ann
Sister Anne Montgomery	Sister Helena
Sister Ann Thompson	Sister Frances
Sister St. Barbara	Sister Elizabeth
Sister Lucy Harp	Sister Mary
Sister Ann	Sister
Sister Theresa	Sister
Sister Ann	Sister
Sister	Sister
Sister	Sister

Autographed letter, U.S. Dominican sisters to Pope Pius IX, July 4, 1848

The language was direct and dignified, and the request was clear. The letter was also historic, not only in content, but because it was signed by every professed Dominican sister of the United States and dated the 4th of July, 1848.[\[6\]](#) There was no reply. Before the letter could reach

Vatican, Pope Pius IX had left Rome for the town of Gaeta in the south, where he remained two years while the movements for a united Italy grew stronger.

The cloud of uncertain status remained, while successive provincials sought stability for the sisters in the adaptation of their Constitutions, which were adopted or studied in this order:

1. In the early years the sisters used portions of the Constitutions of the Nuns of the Second Order of Saint Dominic, with needed adaptations and dispensations.
2. In 1857, with the encouragement of the provincial James Whelan, the sisters omitted from their formula of profession the clause concerning the intended adoption of enclosure and making solemn vows.
3. In 1858 the provincial Joseph Kelly adapted the Constitutions of the Sisters of Stone, England, for the use of the American sisters. It was often referred to as the "Kelly Rule."

The years of uncertainty about their status did not hinder the ministry of teaching which the sisters undertook as part of their Dominican call to proclaim the Word of God. Just as they joined other 19th-century women in setting out for new homes and places of service, they also moved with other women into the teaching profession. However, in the early decades of the 19th century the term "profession" was not used. Like nursing, teaching was not thought to be respectable for women. Most teachers, even of young children, were men. In 1837 a convention for teachers invited to Cincinnati "gentlemen from all parts of the Union."

The entrance of women into the teaching profession in the United States in the 1830s was stimulated by Protestant women who saw the teacher primarily as a missionary. Mary Lyon, an early leader in the movement, founded Mount Holyoke "to cultivate the missionary spirit of its pupils; the feeling that they should live for God and do something as teachers, or in such other ways as Providence may direct."^[7] Women began to open schools of several kinds, ranging from classes around a kitchen table to endowed academies for young women. Early American schools owed their existence chiefly to the initiative of individuals or of churches. The idea of **common** schools financed by public funds was accepted very slowly, after being promoted by such reformers as Horace Mann. There was no broad school system, public or private, nor any strong desire for one. But there was an urgent need for the education which many families, whether immigrant or native-born, yearned to offer their children.

To that desire American Dominican women and men responded eagerly. The schools the women opened initially were academies; those of the friars were colleges. Both lacked any endowment except the gifts of those who conducted them. At that time young children were admitted to both academies and colleges along with the mature students.

Before 1865 parish schools were few. Many of them were conducted by a single schoolmaster, on the initiative of an individual parish. In fact, one of the first free schools was opened at St. Peter's Parish in New York in 1800 by the Dominican pastor William O'Brien.^[8] Prompted by anti-Catholic movements in the 1850s and the growth of the Catholic population, the American bishops became increasingly concerned about Catholic education. Following the First Plenary Council in 1852, bishops exhorted Catholics to action in these words:

Encourage the establishment and support of Catholic schools; make every sacrifice which may be necessary for this object; spare our hearts the pain of beholding the youth whom, after the example of our Master, we so much love, involved in all the evils of an uncatholic education.[\[9\]](#)

This impetus ultimately led the bishops in the Plenary Council of 1884 to direct that a school be opened as soon as possible in every Catholic parish.

From the start, Dominican sisters established a school wherever they formed a community. Ordinarily this was an academy for young women, but there were exceptions. At St. Magdalen's in Kentucky the sisters first opened a girls' academy, then an elementary school for boys, and later a school for black children that was short-lived. At Memphis in 1858 the sisters opened a "poor school" under the direction of Thomas Langdon Grace, O.P., to help "such Catholics as had no means of education for their families " Two sisters at St. Agnes Academy were their teachers, one teaching the girls and the other the boys. At first the Academy assumed all expenses, including those for the carriage used "to take [the sisters] to the city port... and to feed the horse."[\[10\]](#)

Few parish schools were conducted by Dominican Sisters before the Civil War. Among them were those opened for immigrants from Germany and Ireland, conducted by nuns from those countries. The women from Holy Cross monastery in Bavaria had hardly arrived before they opened the parish school of Holy Trinity in Williamsburg, New York, in 1853. In 1859 they sent teachers to form a new community at Second Street in Manhattan to conduct the parish school of St. Nicholas.[\[11\]](#) Irish nuns from a Cabra monastery came to New Orleans in 1860 to staff the parish school of St. John the Baptist for children of Irish immigrants. In 1861 Maria Benedicta Bauer opened a parish school for German children in Green Bay, Wisconsin. To her surprise it was attended by pupils ranging in age from five to twenty-five years. Two sisters from Somerset in 1855 "opened a school of about 80 girls, of all sizes and shapes."[\[12\]](#)It was a parish school called St. Columba's Academy.

The Sinsinawa Sisters taught in district schools in the lead-mine region of southwestern Wisconsin. One of those, Borromeo Stevens, was from a Presbyterian family of Beacon Hill in Boston. As a young Dominican teacher in a rural public school of the 1860s she described her experience:

I got my certificate, and went forth to do my patriotic and religious best in a small mining town of one short street and a wide prairie full of mineral holes. Did you ever see mineral holes? Well we didn't see the holes, but we saw the piles of yellow clay that encircles the opening to these well-like excavations, and for utter desolation and despairful dreariness nothing could compare with the scenery in the lead regions. . .

A fervent zeal and an enthusiasm, carried me through the first three months of the school year [teach term was for three months] and then I had to summon up all the courage I had inherited from my Puritan forefathers, for from the farms around... there came to me the stalwart youths who worked in summer and went to school in winter. . . How big and strong and invincible they seemed, but how gentle, simple and submissive they proved to be. How

eager they were to learn, and how respectful they were, because I was a woman, but more, because I wore the religious garb.[\[13\]](#)

Many children were in need of more than schooling. Among them were the orphans who had lost their parents during the recurring epidemics of cholera and yellow fever. They were left to roam city streets unless they could be taken in by relatives or placed in institutions. For such children the Dominican Sisters from Kentucky and Ohio went to Memphis in 1852 to conduct St. Peter's Orphanage, which the Dominican pastor Thomas Langdon Grace opened in 1853. The number of orphans grew so rapidly that the pastor bought a farm for them in 1855 called Gracewood, and asked Sister Benven Sansbury and two others to come from Somerset to direct it. In Nashville a lay group called St. Mary's Orphanage Association financed a home which Joseph Kelly opened in 1864. He asked for Sisters from Ohio and Kentucky to staff the home. The veteran Sister Benven came from Somerset once more to bring her "benevolent compassion and the wisdom of her seventy-two years."[\[14\]](#)

The major educational ministry of American Dominican Sisters before 1865 was to conduct academies for young women. These included the following:

1823 Springfield, Kentucky, St. Magdalen's, renamed St. Catharine's in 1851	1854 Benton, Wisconsin, St. Clara
1832 Somerset, Ohio, St. Mary's	1855 Zanesville, Ohio, St. Columba
1851 Monterey, California, Sta. Catalina	1860 Nashville, Tennessee, St. Cecilia
1851 Memphis, Tennessee, St. Agnes	1861 New Orleans, Louisiana, St. Mary's
	1864 Racine, Wisconsin, St. Catherine

The first academies, like the first colleges, were realistic about the range of students to be enrolled and studies offered. In many cases, along with adolescents they welcomed younger girls who would enroll in elementary classes and move on to the secondary level in the same institution. On receiving incorporation by the state, each academy could boast a legal existence important to the sisters and to their patrons. Families who enrolled their daughters helped to advertise their school. Newspapers gave them generous publicity and the United States Catholic Directory did so as well. Advertisements described the curriculum and regulations, costs and sponsorship, and even included illustrations.

Few catalogues are available from pre-Civil War academies, but a generous press provided evidence of their curriculum and scholarly achievements in coverage of commencements or "exhibitions." These were daylong reviews of the year's studies, often including public examinations. The commencement program at Sta. Catalina Academy in Benicia, California, in 1859 was similar to many of the time, as seen in this description:

Not only were artistic accomplishments exhibited at commencement, but public examinations in reading, grammar, and word analysis, geography, astronomy and maps, arithmetic, philosophy, and general science. The examinations were interspersed with musical selections, for example, arias from Bellini's *Norma*, Donizetti's *Fille du Regine*. . In the afternoon the exercises were, with the exception of three short dialogues and the

valedictory, entirely musical.... There was one dialogue in French by two young ladies and a French chorus by all the pupils in the French class.[\[15\]](#)

Graduates of Dominican academies often chose to follow a call to religious life. Young women thus increased the sisters' membership and broadened the scope of their ministry. They brought from the academies a high level of scholarship which as teachers they would convey to other young women.



St. Cecilia's Academy, Nashville, 1860. Left: Nuns from Regensburg. Center: Founding sisters from Somerset; Right: Francisco Cubero, O.P., Chaplain. Inset: S. Frances Walsh, one of the four founding sisters.

The success of the sisters' academies aroused the latent anti-Catholic antagonism which increased in the 1830s and the following decades. Bigotry reached a peak in the nation with the increase of Catholic immigration, the fiery preaching of Lyman Beecher,[\[16\]](#) and the rise of the Know-Nothing Party, which ran on a platform of open hostility to Catholics and immigrants. In 1852 the arrival from Rome of an emissary from the Pope, Archbishop Gaetano Bedini, fanned the flames of antagonism which had been aroused by the impassioned oratory of the anti-Catholics.

Beecher's warning to Americans about "Romish" connivings were matched by those of his zealous and gifted daughter Catharine. While she benefited countless Americans in calling young women to the teaching profession, Miss Beecher implored Americans to offset the baneful effects of education offered by Catholics. Addressing the Protestant ministers of the nation, she pleaded with them to help her establish schools, and especially academies, like those of the

Catholics. Although she stated that such academies could "in no respect claim to surpass ours," she confessed her admiration for the "system" of education sponsored by the Church. She believed that Catholic education was controlled entirely by the Jesuits, men of "rigid method" who worked with the bishop in Cincinnati and other cities to plan "well-devised schemes to extend their church by the influence of education."[\[17\]](#) The truth was that no system of Catholic education yet existed in the country.



The Beechers: Lyman, seated center; Catharine to his right; Harriet Beecher Stowe, far right

Catharine Beecher made a thorough study of the Catholic academies in Ohio and Kentucky. She believed that the sisters found in their Church the support which she could not obtain in the Protestant churches, either for women or for their education. She wrote of the difference between the churches, The grand cause of this difference is, that the clergy and leaders of the Catholic church understand the importance and efficiency of employing female talent and benevolence in promoting their aims, while the protestant churches have yet to learn this path of wisdom. The Catholic clergy exert their entire influence in creating a **public sentiment** that sustains, and even stimulates women to consecrate their time and talents to benevolent enterprises.[\[18\]](#)

Beecher was mistaken in thinking that there was an ecclesiastical system behind the founding of academies by religious women. There was none. All of them, including the Dominicans, acted on their own initiative, matching that of their brothers in the Order. Although bishops and priests usually encouraged the women's initiative, they did not impose their ideas on the academies. Beecher's insistence on their powerful "system" was intended to arouse the interest of the Protestant ministers and stir them to action.

Despite the warnings of Beecher and others, Protestant parents enrolled their daughters in the academies of sisters across the land. In fact, Catholic institutions welcomed Protestant pupils and pledged to respect their freedom of religion. An example of that pledge was given in one Dominican Academy prospectus:

Pupils of every religious denomination will be admitted, and no undue influence will be used to bias the religious principles of the young ladies; nor will any of them be permitted to embrace the Catholic faith, without the verbal or written consent of the parents or guardians. Uniformity and good order, however, require the attendance of all at morning and evening prayers, and at the religious services on Sunday.[\[19\]](#)

Late in 1864 Vincent Jandel settled the longstanding question of ambiguous status. The American sisters, he stated, were not nuns of the Second Order but sisters of the Third Order with simple vows. And because they were engaged in the apostolate of the Church, each community was accountable to the bishop of the diocese in which they were serving. Although they were members of the Order of Preachers they were in no way under the jurisdiction of the Province of St. Joseph or any other province friars. There was consternation in every community of sisters. They, like the friars, assumed that they belonged to that province. The provincial of the friars was their provincial as well. Their reaction was recorded by the Council of St. Mary's, Somerset in these words:

November, 1864. The General's pamphlet was received in which he hands the Third Order over to the Bishops. Mother Rose [Lynch] proposed going to Kentucky to meet the Sisters from other houses. They met, and petitioned Most Rev. A.V. Jandel to allow them their former privileges or to receive them as members of the Second Order.[\[20\]](#)

Every house involved in this serious question sent their superior to the meeting in Kentucky. Each one was willing to take the long, difficult journey even in wartime, from two places in Confederate Tennessee as well as from Somerset, Ohio, in order to convene at St. Catharine's in 1864. After that intercommunity meeting, as after the meeting of July 4, 1848, they sent their plea with one voice, not to the pope as they had before, but to the Master General of the Order. Their letter was signed individually by all the participating sisters:

Rose Lynch of Somerset
Imelda Montgomery of St. Catharine's, KY
Osanna Powell of St. Catharine's KY
Benven Sansbury of St. Mary's, Memphis
Philomena McDonough of St. Cecilia's, Nashville [\[21\]](#)

Their anguished protest arose from fear. If they were not members of the friars, under the jurisdiction of the provincial, how could they be Dominicans? To avoid the catastrophe of losing their membership in the Order of Preachers, they were willing to become cloistered nuns, even if this meant giving up their schools. But this was not to be. Four months later came Jandel's candid and courteous reply to the "united letter" of the American women. He wrote,

I was pained at the thought of being obliged to refuse your desires so ardently expressed. But in truth I have no option in the matter of your jurisdiction but to obey the laws like yourselves. I could not assume such jurisdiction without usurping the rights of others and violating the Church's laws. You will perceive, therefore, that if I refuse your request, it is simply because I have no power to grant it.[\[22\]](#)

Jandel was correct about the place of the sisters in the Order. However, their active ministry was a new reality in both the Order and the Church. Many years would pass before their ecclesiastical status was clearly defined by papal decree.^[23] Meanwhile, the adjustment mandated by Jandel was very difficult for the American Dominican sisters founded within the Province of St. Joseph. It took a long time for the sisters, and some of the friars, to fully implement or even accept the change of status.

The change of jurisdiction from the friars to the bishops soon ended the exchange of sisters among the various communities. They began to form congregations which established a motherhouse in a particular diocese, with branch communities in one or more other dioceses. By 1865 the increasing numbers of American Dominican sisters were augmented by newcomers from Germany and Ireland. The total number of professed sisters of the Order of Preachers in 1865 exceeded 350. At the close of the Civil War Dominican women and men were ready, with other Americans, to enter a new era in the nation and the Church.

The development of the Order in the United States was furthered immeasurably by the definition of the status of the sisters. Very soon they were called to dioceses throughout the country, where the clergy were not Dominicans. Nevertheless, their love for the Order did not decrease and they brought thousands of youth into Dominican congregations and the provinces of the friars. Seventy years after the decree of Jandel, the sisters initiated a move toward unity that has grown throughout the remainder of the twentieth century. In 1935 the major superiors of the Dominican congregations formed a conference which later became the Dominican Leadership Conference, of which both friars and sisters are members. More recently, some congregations have united with others, and many have undertaken new means of collaboration for their common mission. In the year 1999 a new kind of coming together was formed as the Federation of Dominican Sisters USA.

By the year 2000, the movement for closer union and collaboration led to an action in Kentucky of historic significance to the whole nation. The Dominican Sisters of St. Catharine, founded in 1822, joined the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth and the Sisters of Loretto, both founded in 1812, in a public act of contrition for their use of slaves. They invited African-Americans to participate in the ceremony. Sister Joan Scanlon, president of the Dominican Sisters, spoke for all in these words:

**We come before you, our African-American brothers and sisters
to ask for your forgiveness.**

**We have a shared history with you. Our fore-sisters, our people, hurt
your people. Our people held your people in the bondage of slavery.**

**We deeply regret this. We are deeply pained by our sins of the past.
We seek your forgiveness. We seek God's forgiveness.**

NOTES

1. Sister Mary Alenie, "Journal: Account of Journey from Antwerp to San Jose, California, 1851, entry for July 1st. Copy from Archives of Dominican Sisters of San Rafael, California.
2. See Chapter 12, "On To California!"
3. "The Confessions", **Augustine**, (Chicago: The University of Chicago, The Great Books, Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952) 22.
4. When the Nashville community became the Congregation of St. Cecilia, Sister Ann became the Prioress General. See her Profile by Sister Rose Marie Masserano.
5. Quoted in Mary Patricia Green, OP, **The Third Order Dominican Sisters of the Congregation of Saint Catharine of Siena** (St. Catharine Kentucky: 1978) 32.
6. Dominican Sisters to Pope Pius IX, July 4, 1848, Somerset, Ohio. AGOP XIII, 03150, 253, p.1..
7. Mary Lyon, quoted in Carol Ruth Berkin and Mary Beth Norton, **Women of America** (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1979) 199.
8. See James Roosevelt Bayley, **A Brief Sketch of the Early History of the Catholic Church on the Island of New York** (New York: Catholic Publication Society, 2nd edition, 1870) 66. The writer was a nephew of Elizabeth Bayley Seton, who became a Catholic in St. Peter's parish. She may have been encouraged in her later establishment of schools by the success of the one at St. Peter's.
9. First Plenary Council of Bishops, "The Pastoral Letter of 1852" in Peter Guilday, **The National Pastorals of the American Hierarchy, 1792- 1919** (Washington D.C., 1923) 191.
10. "Annals of St. Agnes Academy," Oct. 1, 1858, 5, KDS.
11. Records of Dominican Sisters of Amityville, New York, AMS.
12. Records of St. Mary of the Springs, Dominican Archives.
13. Carol Milanis, **Little Essays for Friendly Readers** (Dubuque, Iowa: M.S. Hardie, 1909) 207-210.
14. Account from community records given by Monica Kiefer, OP, **In the Greenwood** (Columbus, Ohio: Springs Press, n.d.) 37.
15. **The Dominicans of San Rafael. . . A Tribute from Many Hands** (Dominican Convent of San Rafael, 1941) 37.
16. Some claimed that the burning of the Ursuline Academy in 1834 was influenced by the provocative speeches of Beecher against Catholics. For a fair report of anti-Catholic movements see Ray Allen Billington, **The Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860** (Chicago: Quadrangle Paperbacks, 1964).
17. Catharine Beecher, **An Address to the Protestant Clergy of the United States** (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1846) 33. For other Beecher sources and a splendid study of her life and work see Kathryn Kish Sklar, **Catharine Beecher** (New Haven: Yale University Press,1973).
18. Catharine Beecher, **An Address to the Protestant Clergy**.
19. Announcement of Opening of St. Catherine's Female Academy in Racine in 1864, RDA.
20. Council of St. Mary's Congregation, Council Book, 4, CDS.
21. Original in archives of CDS.
22. Vincent Jandel to Mother Rose Lynch, Rome, n.d., 1865, CDS.
23. Pope Leo XIII, with the Bull **Conditae a Christo**, issued December 8, 1900, recognized as religious all men and women who made simple vows, and clarified their role in the Church. See James R. Cain, **The Influence of the Cloister on the Apostolate of Congregations of Religious Women** (Rome: Pontifical University of the Lateran, 1965).