

Cork when I had left it—exactly the same fever which was sent by God to take the pious valued Bishop—Dr. Nolan—came, I trust, from the Divine hand for her. She had quite a saintly death—continually repeating aloud—“My God, I love you—forgive me and take me to yourself.” The Physicians were astonished.

I have not been able to write or do much since I returned. On the second day I went to Kingstown—to condole with them on the loss of their lively dear companion. When the Angelus Bell rang, I was hastening to the choir from the Community room, missed the first step of the stairs, fell forward and in endeavoring to save my head from the window, broke my left arm across the wrist—and injured the sinews in the back of the hand so much that I am not likely to have the use of it for months—if ever.⁸⁸

My Dear Sister M. Angela, the Charleville foundation has been a source of great anxiety to me. One of the Curates called on me in Cork, asking in a kind of disguised way—but like as if called on to do so—would any of the Sisters be sent to Limerick—would Sister Delaney. I felt quite distressed, as if we were like persons in the world, changing our House or lodgings on trifling occasions. Since I left Cork, Mr. Reardon, the Monk, made some such enquiry.⁸⁹

What could excuse us before God—for casting off any charge which we had freely undertaken, except compelled by necessity to do so. Are not the poor of Charleville as dear to him as elsewhere—and while one pound of Miss Clanchy's five hundred lasts, ought we not to persevere and confide in his Providence. The Sisters of Charity in Cork have been but 5 in number & a Lay Sister for 10 years. It is wonderful all they do—and they are not all in good health, and live in most confined bad air. I am grieved to find such feint-hearted symptoms amongst us.

I had a letter from Mrs. French.⁹⁰ She says that £50 per an[um] will be paid. Your 30 & the interest will make 97. Surely that will do.

I cannot hope to see you till May. Perhaps it would be well to get the 2 Sisters received as Mr. Croke has power from the Bishop.⁹¹ Let us not forget that you and Community are subject to Dr. Crotty, who surely would not approve of any such change—and I really feel that God would not grant his blessing—while we can avoid it.

I am sorry to hear such an account of Jane Taaffe.⁹² The sooner she leaves, the better. I write with difficulty, not having the second hand to hold my paper.

88 This is Catherine McAuley's only extensive reference to her broken arm in an extant autograph letter, although, as noted earlier, some references to it appear in fragments of transcriptions of other letters (see Letters 61, 62, and 64). 89 Brother Michael Paul Riordan was a member of the Christian Brothers living in the North Monastery, Cork. Edmund Rice was at the time still superior general of the Christian Brothers, and Riordan was part of “the anti-Rice faction” (Rushe 130–31). 90 The former Miss Mary Clanchy, a benefactor of the Charleville community. 91 Dr. Bartholomew Crotty was bishop of Cloyne and Ross, and former president of the Royal College of St. Patrick, Maynooth. Thomas Croke was parish priest of Charleville [*Irish Catholic Directory* [1837] 278). 92 Jane Taaffe was received as a novice in the Charleville community on June 30, 1837. However, she did not persevere.

I will venture the 2 half notes. Write when you receive this. Remember me most affectionately to my dear Sr. M. Joseph, Sister Ann & Sister Lawless,⁹³ whom I hope you continue to like. Remember me to Mary and the children.

Present my respectful remembrance to Mr. Croke. Remember me to the Mrs. Clanchys, etc., etc. Tell me all the news you have about your school & sick poor—your little collection, etc., etc.

Put your whole confidence in God. He never will let you want necessities for yourself or children. It would afflict me and it would be a disgrace to our order to have a break up.

Believe me, my Dear Sister Mary Angela, your ever affectionate
Mary C. McAuley

All unite in fondest love.

Remember you are to charge Jane Taaffe £20 per year from the time she went to you—and anything expended for her. I request you will do this exactly. [*illegible words*]⁹⁴

Autograph: Charleville

68. To Sister M. Frances Warde
Carlow
Convent, Baggot Street
December 23, 1837⁹⁵

My Dear Sister Mary Frances

It is no wonder I should take a fancy to my adopted son⁹⁶—for he is a real rogue, according to my own taste. I must let you into the plot. We had sent to buy franks⁹⁷—and of course your name was on the list. They came when Father

93 Mary Joseph (Alicia) Delaney came to Charleville from Baggot Street as a novice; she professed her vows in Charleville in May 1837, but returned to Baggot Street in 1839. “Sister Ann” is presumably Anne Kent who entered the Charleville community in 1837, received the habit on March 2, 1838, but apparently left before professing vows. Miss Lawless is evidently Margaret Lawless who entered the Charleville community in 1837 and professed her vows there on August 5, 1840; in 1845 she transferred to a Ursuline community in Ennis. Evidently, Mary Agnes Hynes, the second novice who had come from Baggot Street on the Charleville foundation in October 1836, had by now left the community. Thus, in 1837, and particularly in 1839, Mary Angela Dunne, the superior, had some reason to anticipate that the Charleville community would not take hold, although the rumors of its closing that reached Catherine McAuley in 1837 may have been clerical speculation that did not originate with Angela Dunne. Actually, in the ensuing decades the community developed and by 1866 was able to send a new foundation to Bathurst (New South Wales), Australia. 94 Catherine's second closing is tantalizingly illegible; it may be an abbreviated “Affectionately yours.” 95 Previous editors have dated this letter December 29, 1837. However, the number in the autograph is clearly 23 or possibly 27, not 29. Moreover, December 23 or December 27 makes more sense, given the content of the letter. Each Mercy convent, including Baggot Street, observed a year-end spiritual retreat of three days, December 29, 30, and 31, and the retreat would seem to rule out Catherine's taking the time on the 29th to write an interesting, even playful, but not really necessary letter. 96 Daniel Nolan, curate in Killeslin, Co. Carlow. 97 Envelopes or cover sheets

After this I had another note from Doctor Meyler—rejecting the proposal—to which he added: "I think I feel your friend Mr. Armstrong⁸² urging me in this decision."

Sunday was let to pass in the same disorder, our poor persons did not return home till it was late.⁸³ When I missed them from their Sunday School, my heart became sore and bitter, and I wrote a letter which is proclaimed a threatening one. I will write you every word of it:

Very Reverend Sir—When I read in your last note that you felt as if my dear respected Mr. Armstrong⁸⁴ was urging you to your decision, I thought that in gratitude for the affectionate friendship with which he so long honored me, I ought to mention how he acted towards a religious community. The Revd. Mr. Wall, his predecessor in Ann Street, had been contending with the Sisters in Georges Hill about some temporal matters.⁸⁴ When Mr. A. was appointed he immediately visited the convent, gave his most cordial sanction to their two public Masses and a Charity Sermon if they required it—not all this world could give would induce him to harass or annoy a society of women devoted to the service of God and the poor.

We were happily at home today in time for all our different duties, hence for ourselves we ask for nothing—but our poor young women are still about the streets, taking advantage, to be sure, of the irregularity which has been introduced among them. I will make one effort more in their regard. I will endeavour to prevail on the Sisters to accompany me to their Bishop—representing that the Chapel and Institute which he blessed in all the ceremonial form, carrying his Benediction to its outer walls,⁸⁵ is now under some kind of condemnation, that even a friendly priest is not permitted to celebrate Mass, that the Blessed Eucharist has not been renewed for near three months, that the poor inmates are deprived of the Holy Sacraments. We will shew what is lost by the change that has been made, and that far from withholding the necessary compensation, we are promising more than we possess. This sad alteration in

identified. Dr. Meyler had asked for an annual salary of £50. Catherine had proposed that the community could afford only £40. However, she is here offering a compromise of £45. ⁸² Father Edward Armstrong died in 1828. Catherine McAuley had attended her good friend constantly in his last illness. ⁸³ By depriving the House of Mercy of a chaplain, Walter Meyler had, in effect, removed the possibility of daily, and even Sunday, Mass at Baggot Street. This meant that the forty or more servant women and girls living there had to go out to a parish church on Sundays, with the consequent freedom to dally in the city and delay their return to the House—the very shelter created to protect them from the sexual and other dangers lying in wait for them on the city streets. ⁸⁴ Catherine refers to the Presentation convent on George's Hill where she had made her novitiate and professed her vows as the first Sister of Mercy. Christopher Wall was parish priest of the neighboring parish of St. Michan's on North Anne Street from 1804 until his death in 1826. Edward Armstrong succeeded him (Donnelly 11: 60). ⁸⁵ On June 4, 1829, Dr. Daniel Murray had dedicated the chapel of the House of Mercy on Baggot Street and blessed the building and gardens. On the same day he had appointed Daniel Burke, OSF, as chaplain of the House of Mercy and Redmond O'Hanlon, ODC, as confessor.

our once orderly Establishment cannot fail to excite pity in a mind like his. If we have incurred displeasure and drawn this heavy malediction on our House, we will on our knees beg his pardon and implore a renewal of his Paternal protection. I remain, etc., etc.

At eight o'clock on Sunday evening, a letter was handed me from Doctor Meyler. It began thus: "When is your procession to take place? I should like to see the Theatrical exhibition—the Bishop must be apprised—perhaps you may not admire the reception you will meet, for he is too strait forward [*sic*] a person to be caught by your Juggle."

I read no more and put it out of my power ever to do so by burning the letter. I must now be done with the matter entirely. I will attempt nothing more. The means that contributed to pay a Chaplain is taken from us, and we are to be forced to promise what we cannot be sure of having. We will shew you our accounts, and you will find there is no prevarication in the statement made. I have no one to appeal to.

Begging you to forgive all this trouble, I remain, Very Reverend Sir, with lively gratitude for the kind interest you have manifested,

Very respectfully, etc., etc.

Mary C. McAuley
Mr. Lynch⁸⁶ was sent on Monday to say Mass, but not since. You told me, Revd. Sir, we were to have Mr. Farrelly entirely, except his last Masses. Dr. Meyler said we were to have two.⁸⁷ Of course, we could not know who to call on as a friend—but even to this we assented, distressing as it is.

It is said that we all dislike the Parish Clergy—God forbid—and that we give freely elsewhere. Indeed, Reverend Sir, I should fear that God would be displeased at my ingratitude, did I not declare that Mr. O'Hanlon has been the most generous friend—and that all he ever received for his nine years constant attendance—often every day for a week preparing for Profession—was thirty two pounds in different sums from the Sisters—to get Mass for them etc., etc.—in all, the entire sum—£32—in nine years.

The only apology I can offer for all this writing is that it comforts and relieves my mind to declare the truth where I trust I am not suspected of insincerity.

Autograph: Dublin Diocese, Murray Papers AB3/34/15, no. 10

67. To Sister M. Angela Dunne
Charleville [Baggot Street]
December 20, 1837

My dear Sister Angela

I confided, that Sister Mary Clare had written to inform you of the death of our innocent dear Sister de Chantal, as the letter announcing it to me arrived in

⁸⁶ Gregory Lynch, a curate at St. Andrew's. ⁸⁷ That is, two curates from St. Andrew's alternating as chaplain.