

302. To Sister Mary Aloysius Scott  
Birr

[Birmingham]  
[September 17, 1841]

My Dearest Sister M. Aloysius

I have been very weak and sick for the last 12 or 14 days. We return on Monday. I did not intend to write till we changed quarters, but your account of poor Father Toohey [Tuohy] has so distressed me.<sup>7</sup> You may be sure we will pray most fervently for him. I hope you will let us know how he goes on—I shall be most anxious to hear—I am delighted you visit him—& have every hope of his recovery. Endless visitors coming in here & I cannot leave the one aired room without coughing violently. God bless & preserve you.

Your ever affectionate

M. C. McAuley

As your note is not dated, I do not know when it was written. It was delivered here—12 o'clock this day, Friday 17th.

*Autograph: Dublin, Mercy*

303. To Sister Mary Aloysius Scott  
Birr

[Baggot Street]  
[September 21, 1841]

My Dearest Sr. M. Aloysius

After writing a few lines to Mother Cecilia to tell her we got safe—I wish to tell you how sincerely I regret the death of dear Father Toohey [Tuohy].<sup>8</sup> May God receive him into everlasting happiness. He was a kind creature to the Poor & I suppose it is a disguised blessing, that God has called him in all his youthful fervor before coldness or indifference towards the poor would render him less acceptable to Almighty God.

Just half an hour before we left Birmingham yesterday, I received your letter, and one from Carlow—Galway & Bermondsey—I could not go there<sup>9</sup>—nor ever go out, even to the Garden.

May God preserve & bless you all.

Your ever affectionate

M. C. M.

*Autograph: Dublin, Mercy*

<sup>7</sup> "Edmund Toohey" is listed as a curate in Birr in the *Irish Catholic Directory* for 1841 (304), as well as in the *Directory* for 1840 (293) and for 1839 (244). However, in the "Clerical Obituary" for 1841, he is listed on September 17 as "Edward Tuohy, C. C. Birr" (*Irish Catholic Directory* [1842] 437). <sup>8</sup> The curate's death occurred on September 17, 1841, the same day as the death, at age sixty-eight, of Catherine McAuley's old friend John McCormick, curate in Blackrock. Father McCormick had welcomed Catherine's sister Mary back into the Catholic church in 1827 (Sullivan, *Catherine McAuley* 41, 47). As Catherine wrote this letter she may have been unaware of John McCormick's death, having just arrived home from Birmingham that morning. <sup>9</sup> That is, to Bermondsey.

304. To Sister Mary Ann Doyle  
Tullamore

Baggot St.  
September 24, 1841<sup>10</sup>

My Dear Sister M. A.

I am now going to give you a little trouble, or rather to beg you to accept it. A dear much valued Sister in a most delicate state thinks she would receive benefit from change of air which has been prescribed for her. Mr. O'Hanlon, our ever dear good Father, would go with her on Monday next, if you can admit her. I need not recommend her to your tenderness, I know she will experience every mark of affection tho' a stranger. All expenses of course will be defrayed. Write me a line immediately, that we may have her ready. She is one of the last professed—Sister M. Justina.<sup>11</sup>

I received your letter in Birmingham and will reply to it soon. I am going to propose myself—as Deputy to Doctor O'Rafferty in the guardianship [*sic*] of your Convent.<sup>12</sup> Your good Bishop was *much* mistaken as to property here—we have ever confided largely in Divine Providence—and shall continue to do so.<sup>13</sup> God bless you.

Your ever affectionate

M. C. McAuley

*Autograph: Tullamore*

305. To Sister M. Frances Warde  
Carlow

Convent [Baggot Street]  
September 25, 1841

My Dearest Sister M. Frances

I received your note about half an hour before we left Birmingham. We had a weary passage from Liverpool—kept 3 hours waiting for water & did not arrive in Kingstown till 9 o'clock.<sup>14</sup> The poor Sisters had comfortable Tea etc. for us. We rested there till 12 o'clock. Sister Xavier is much improved—Sister de Sales just the same poor "skin & bone."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> On the cover of this posted letter addressed to "Mrs. Doyle, Convent, Tullamore" Catherine McAuley wrote "Speed." <sup>11</sup> Mary Justina Fleming, who had just professed her vows on August 19, was now in Booterstown. Catherine hopes to send her—with Redmond O'Hanlon and Mary Vincent Whitty accompanying her—to Tullamore on Monday, September 27. <sup>12</sup> This is a remarkable offer, given what is now known about Catherine McAuley's health at this time. It supports the view that Catherine was not yet aware that she was dying, although two days later (see Letter 306), she will report that she has seen the physician twice. In general, the correspondence of the next seven weeks suggests that very few, possibly excluding Catherine herself, thought that she was in her last illness, until very near her death. <sup>13</sup> Evidently Dr. John Cantwell, bishop of Meath, who resided in Mullingar, was under the false impression that there was considerable money at Baggot Street that could assist the Tullamore convent. <sup>14</sup> On Tuesday morning, September 21, 1841. <sup>15</sup> Mary Xavier O'Connell and Mary de Sales White, who had been helping out in Bermondsey