

INSTITUTE HISTORY WORKSHEET

TOPIC: Mère Marie Aloyse (1908-1912) & Mère Maria Julienne (1912-1934)

Biographical Information & Impact of changes of Canon Law

		
	Mère Marie Aloyse	Mère Maria Julienne
Born:	Georgina Van Laere, b. January 22, 1848 at Avelghem, West Flanders	Clotilde Goffin, b. March 25, 1858 at Landen, Flemish Brabant
Entered:	1872	December 8, 1882
Elected:	January 9, 1908	March 28, 1912 (resigned May, 1934)
Places:	United States Visitation: August 1910-May 1911 Foundations: Dumbarton	Cuvilly, China, Japan, Rome, Africa (9) Belgium (3), Britain (4), Ohio (12 – Including Chicago!!!), New England (12), California (3), Maryland (9)
Died:	February 23, 1912	January 25, 1938

People & Relationships between them:

- Bishop Heylen: Bishop of Namur from 23 October 1899 – 18 October 1941
- Sister Marie des Saints Anges: Maria Julienne's postulant mistress; runs English affairs from 1886 until her death in 1922; starts novitiate at Ashdown; 1st English Provincial
- Sister Thérèse de St. François: Superior at Motherhouse from 1912-1922; Assistant to Mother General from 1912 until her death in 1933
- Sister Francis of the Sacred Heart: "Provincial of Cincinnati" 1920-1922, Provincial of Waltham
- Sister Adèle du Sacré Coeur: one of last Belgian Missionaries to the United States; appointed Provincial of Ohio in 1922; elected General Councilor in 1928; helps found Rome; cousin of Mère Maria Julienne

Dates & Events:

1907: Sister Maria Julienne called to Namur to serve as assistant to Superior of Community

1908: January 9 – Mère Marie Aloyse elected, she turns 60 on January 22nd, Sister Maria Julienne appointed Superior of Namur community

1910: August through May 1911 – visitation to America; Sister Marie des Saints Anges accompanies Mère Marie Aloyse on visitation to America

1912: February 23 – Mère Marie Aloyse dies

1912: March 28 – Mère Maria Julienne elected – she is 44 years old

1912: Sister Thérèse de St. François appointed Superior of Namur community

1913: re-institutes retreats at Namur for Sisters from England and around Belgium

1913: May – new superior general of Amersfoort Sisters welcomed at Namur
 1914: March – Maria Julienne and Thérèse de St. François visit Cuvilly
 1914: “Boys Question” settled for SNDdeN in United States
 1914: Sister Marie des Saints Anges visits missions in Africa – gets back before WWI breaks out; with secretary watches attack of Namur with field glasses from Novitiate attics
 1914: August 25 – Namur falls to Germans
 1915 & 1917: horrible flooding in Namur
 1918: Pentecost – New Code of Canon Law finalized & Sacred Congregation of Religious decrees all approved Congregations correct their constitutions immediately to bring them into accordance
 1918: November 11 – World War I ends
 1919: Opening of English Novitiate at Ashdown
 1919: May – new code of Canon Law goes into effect
 1919: Opening of Emmanuel College in Boston
 1920: Provincials of California, Cincinnati, England and Belgian formalized
 1920: October - Mère Maria Julienne and Sister Thérèse de St. François visit U.S.
 1921: November 27 - Rome approves revised constitutions
 1922: March – Sister Marie des Saints Anges dies
 1922: French & English translations of new Constitutions printed and distributed
 1922: celebration of 100th anniversary of Julie’s death (delayed because of War)
 1922: May – 1st General Chapter elects councilors (Thérèse de St. François 1st coucillor); petitions Rome for division of Cincinnati province into east and west
 1922: September - Mère Maria Julienne begins 2nd visitation of United States
 1926 & 1927: visitation of United States
 1928: May - 2nd General Chapter decides to make international foundation in Rome & found House of Studies at Louvain
 1929: Cornerstone laid for Public Chapel to St. Julie in Namur – dedicated October 30, 1931
 1933: May 31 – Sister Thérèse de St. François dies
 1934: May - Mère Maria Julienne resigns as Mother General– she had laid the groundwork for creating the Maryland Province

Impact of War/Political Unrest: Huge! World War I will be covered in the next session

- Sister Agnes Mary: Superior of everything east of Rockies – centered in Philadelphia
- Sister Mary Borgia: Superior of everything east of Rockies – Marie Aloyse has her base herself at Waltham
- Sister Adèle du Sacré Coeur: when provinces are officially created, she makes the Summit the Provincial House and is a good dose of TLC for the Sisters in the Cincinnati Province

Relationship with Hierarchy & Clergy:

- Relationship with Bishop Heylen is very positive, as is relationship with many other prelates
- Growing Clericalism and centralization in the Church

Primitive Spirit:

- Charity: Maria Julienne towards Sisters when she needs to challenge them; toward Sister who slandered her to Aimée de Jésus resulting in her being pulled from Superior of Visé and put back to teaching – kindness
- Dissonance – poverty of community – end of 1 year only a tenth of a cent remained in the account
- Professional preparation of Sisters: Maria Julienne shows keen interest in studies of young Sisters – followed their progress and made sure they had time for rest and recreation

- Participation of Sisters in decisions – role of electresses before 1922; focus was participation not representation
- Unity – how well Sisters knew superior of Motherhouse before 1922 – letters, visits, etc.
- Unity – Maria Julienne re-institutes retreats at Namur for English Sisters, invites Sisters for educational workshops;
- Unity – I sign myself in the Sacred Heart of Jesus; Union of prayers (Life of MJ 34-5,)
- Cloches de Notre Dame started after WWI to help build unity – published 4 times a year
- Education: involves Sisters in looking at how to improve methods of teaching in Belgium;
- Devotion to Julie: Maria Julienne’s words at end of 1913 retreat “Let us study her life, meditate on her teachings, become penetrated by her sayings and follow her example. All that we read in the life and writings of our Foundress has been said for us as Sisters of Notre Dame. As a souvenir of your retreat, my dear Sisters, I quote for you one of her sayings: ‘My dear daughters, animate all your actions with the holy Presence of God; purify all your intentions so that they may go straight to God, for Him alone. Nothing, nothing, nothing for yourselves nor for creatures.’”, builds the public chapel at Namur in 1929, 1932 4 oil paintings inserted into window spaces of Public Chapel (depict cure in 1804, vows in 1805, Feb. 2 1806 vision, vision of Jesus carrying cross away from Amiens); 1934 rebuilds Julie’s house with the Oratory on site of Julie’s room
- Commitment to the poor – during WWI – they were to be educated 1st; dresses for the poor schools in 1916

Spirituality underpinning everything:

- Mère Marie Aloyse’s devotion to the Sacred Heart
- Mère Maria Julienne’s devotion to the Blessed Virgin (all significant dates are feasts of Mary) & love for the Blessed Sacrament – asks for name “Julienne” in honor of St. Juliana of Liege (Cornillon) who spread devotion to Corpus Christi in Liege in 1200s
- Story of pilgrimage to Lourdes
- Maria Julienne’s dependence on God – writing word “Jesus” on blackboard; taking letter to chapel, holding it before the Tabernacle and saying “My Jesus, You know very well that I am unable to settle this matter myself. Help me!”
- Maria Julienne accepts superiorship as manifestation of God’s Will – it is also God’s will when it is taken away – root of calmness in face of difficulties and blows to ego
- Devotion to the Sacred Heart: statue commissioned in 1920 that still survives: “My beloved daughters are surrounded by my continuous protection”

What touched your heart?

- The time Mère Marie Aloyse gives to the American visitation
- Sisters’ description of Mère Maria Julienne: “what goodness! What simplicity was hers! And she was good to everybody without exception (Life of MJ p. 10,)
- When appointed superior at Ensival in 1888, Maria Julienne asked advice and had recourse to more experienced superiors – nothing was ever about her (Life of MJ pg. 19 – look back at 18 as well)
- Words to former student: “It is agreed, isn’t it, that each day we shall pray for each other. Our meeting place will be at the feet of Mary. You remember how much we loved to talk together of our good Mother.” (Life of MJ pg. 20) & “It is good to meet each other close to Jesus.” (pg. 22)

New insights?

1919 Canon Law Changes – Revised Constitutions of 1922

In August, 1918 Mère Maria Julienne has conference with Sisters explaining revision in Canon Law to go into effect in May 1919

Impact of changes in Constitution in 1922:

- Sisters had easier access to Mother General before 1922; general government was less formal & seemed like a large family; no provincial superiors (even in Belgium)
- Mother General participated in community meetings at Namur (presided at them), gave weekly instructions on the Rule & fortnightly conferences to the Professed Sisters; (many of these were shared with rest of congregation)
- Mother General personally interviewed candidates from Britain and Belgium before receiving habit/making vows;
- Sisters from secondary houses returned regularly to Namur and had access to Mother General: more intimate relationships (Life of M.J. pg 1)
- **Formation impact:**
 - Postulate requires 6 months before anyone can receive the habit – before that it varied considerably, rarely exceeded 3 months and was seen as adjusting to religious life
 - 1st year Novitiate strictly reserved spiritual training – only 1 hour a day can be used for other studies; before that Novices spent time on other subjects and could even be sent to other houses
 - 2nd year Novitiate much stricter – novices had to stay at Novitiate (before they were usually sent to secondary houses for experience and to help with teaching); only 4 hours could be spent on secular study
 - Pros & Cons: Before 1922 there was no sense of the Novitiate as a “fish bowl”, even as novices there was a chance to build cross-generational relationships, learn from wisdom figures (other than Novice Mistress), discern if your gifts were for teaching, etc. After 1922 – it eventually grows to almost 8 years of fishbowl with little interaction with professed community.
 - Makes it much harder to get teachers prepared to teach – Mère Maria Julienne gets an indult to give her until 1926 to pull all the 2nd year novices back to the novitiate in Belgium.
 - Focus on formation changes from life-long to initial
 - These changes coincide with increased demands for professional training of teachers
 - At least in US there seems to have been the practice of a 30 day retreat before final vows- that is done away with;
 - Rationale for changes in formation: changes in modern life deprived young people of the discipline and training which formerly they had received at home and consequently a stronger spiritual formation was needed before they could be assigned to active work as religious
- **Impact on Vows:**
 - Perpetual vows become obligatory and should be pronounced publically within six years of temporary profession (before that Sisters who desired to make final vows would ask permission and Superiors would give it if they felt the Sister was capable of living it; no public announcement of it)
 - Temporary vows: had to state the time for which one was making the vows (before that they were simply renewed annually at end of retreat)
- Changed system of elections (before 1922 no province delegates, so many more electresses were allowed; see Life of MJ pg 29-30) – election of 1912 there were 123 electresses present, 210 absent who sent their votes in writing – Maria Julienne received 250 votes on 1st ballot
- Role of Superiors: changes took out 12 articles that made Superior mentor, formator, concerned about happiness and welfare of Sisters and turned her into administrator
- **Governance:**
 - Before 1922 superior of Motherhouse served in Mother General’s absence on matters that needed decisions for all houses in Belgium
 - Imposed provinces – and each one had to have a named provincial, a novitiate house and adequate finances

- Cons: moved most of power from Generalate level to Province level, slowly moved identity from congregation to province level; created distance between Sisters (language became an issue, lost sense of Sisters in different places knowing each other, limited sharing Sisters for ministry in different part of the Notre Dame world, complicates starting missions in new places)
- Six year term limits for provincials, superiors, councilors at all levels
- General Chapter every six years
- General council formalized
- Role of Superior at Namur and Assistant to Mother General separated
- New law says permission is to be asked for the tiniest things
- Pro: started good record keeping: entrances, vows, charge lists, etc.
- Pro: supposedly would allow for more adaptation at local level and take care of problem of lack of communication if there is another war

(It might be good to revisit Session 8 and compare what changed in 1922 to elements of the Primitive Spirit included in our Rule from 1818-1922.)