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OUR LADY OF LIGHT ACADEMY, SANTA FÉ

By SISTER M. LILLIANA OWENS, S.L., PH.D.

SANTA FÉ has long been the seat of civil, military and ecclesiastical government. Church and state were planted there when America was *El Nuevo Mundo*. The faith was first brought to the Indians of New Mexico by the Franciscans of the sixteenth century, but the early missionaries were put to death by the savages whom they had come to save, and no lasting work was accomplished by them.

Before Columbus landed on this continent the site of Santa Fé had had an existence as an Indian pueblo and it will probably be the pilgrim's mecca long after the present generation and generations yet unborn are forgotten. The old government building, the churches, the tombs and bones of her heroes, all make Santa Fé a city of fascination for tourists throughout the land. In 1846 General Stephen W. Kearny took possession of Santa Fé and hoisted there the American flag. The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo confirmed the title of the United States to that territory and New Mexico was organized as a Territory, with Santa Fé continuing, as under Spanish and Mexican rule, to serve as the capital. The first railroad projected for New Mexico had the name Santa Fé in its charter, but if it had not been that this charter contained a condition that the old city was to be connected by iron bands with the cities of the East, it is doubtful whether a railroad would so soon have penetrated beyond the Ratón mountains. The building of that

railroad in 1880 to Santa Fé and beyond made East Las Vegas and New Albuquerque and the many towns along its line.

In Santa Fé there are no imposing sights such as one finds in the larger cities. Many of the buildings still are plain adobe, and for the most part they are but one story in height. Yet the old government building called the *Palace of the Governors* has a much richer history than many finer buildings elsewhere in the United States. Bandelier gives us an interesting account of this old land mark. He tells us, among other things, that General Kearny, after his long weary march of a thousand miles, slept on the carpeted floors of the *Palace*. It was here, while governor of New Mexico, that General Lew Wallace is said to have written at least a part of his magnificent *Ben Hur*.

By the decree of July 19, 1850, Pope Pius IX, made New Mexico a Vicariate-Apostolic, and on the 23rd of the some month appointed the Reverend John B. Lamy, a priest of the Diocese of Cincinnati, Bishop *in partibus* of Agthonica and Vicar Apostolic of New Mexico. When Bishop Lamy arrived at Santa Fé in 1851 he found that the educational work¹ in New Mexico had fallen to the zero mark, and being ever anxious for the good of souls he desired to establish, in his diocese, sisters devoted to the teaching of the young. Early in the spring of 1852 the missionary bishop left Santa Fé to attend the First Plenary Council of Baltimore. He determined to look for a community of sisters to return with him and undertake this great work of bringing education and culture into the Southwest. His determination in regard to this is expressed in a letter written by Father Joseph Machebeuf to his sister from Peña Blanca under date of 1852:²

. . . As the source of evil here is the profound ignorance of the people, the first necessity must be instruction, and for this we need Christian schools

1. See Lansing B. Bloom, *Old Santa Fé*, I (Jan. 1914), p. 258 and footnotes.

2. Ms. (French) *apud* Archives, Denver Diocese.

for the youth of both sexes, but especially for young girls. The means of forming them to virtue, and to good example, which is rare in New Mexico, is the establishment of religious houses conducted by persons devoted to their calling, and filled with the spirit of self-sacrifice. To this end the Bishop has already opened a school for boys in our house, and he has knocked at many doors in the United States to secure sisters for the girls. I do not know whether his Lordship will succeed in this while he is away . . .

At one time Bishop Lamy had served as pastor of a church in Covington, Kentucky. He remembered that at that time he had heard of the self-denial of a community of religious in Kentucky under the direction of the Reverend Charles Nerinckx. He knew that they had given a sympathetic ear to the pleadings of Reverend John Schoenmakers, S. J., in 1847 and had sent a colony of sisters to labor among the Osage Indians.³ Inspired with hope that they would turn a favorable ear to his petition he called on the Bishop of Bardstown on his return from the Provincial Council of Baltimore. The plea of Bishop Lamy was repeated to the assembled community, and as justice demanded that the prospective volunteers should know the actual condition of things prevailing in his poor vicariate, the bishop told them of the arduous work and the many hardships that awaited them. Those who know, or who have read of the scrupulous sincerity of Bishop Lamy and the condition of the country to which he was inviting the sisters realize that the picture he drew for them could not have been a very attractive one for those not filled with the spirit of self-abnegation. But the Loretines were not appalled, and the response for volunteers was characteristic of the spirit of their founder, the Reverend Charles Nerinckx. Faithful to the injunction of Father Nerinckx and true to the meaning

3. For a complete account of the work of the Sisters of Loretto among the Osage Indians at Osage Mission, Kansas, see *The History of the Sisters of Loretto in the Trans-Mississippi West* by Sister M. Lilliana Owens, S.L., Ch. VI "Work Done by the Loretines in Southeastern Kansas," *apud* St. Louis University Library, St. Louis, Missouri.

of the title—*Friends of Mary at the Foot of the Cross*—they listened to Bishop Lamy's pleadings. Out of the number who volunteered six were designated by the General Council at the Mother House for the founding of the school at Santa Fé: Mother Matilda Mills, Sisters Magdalen Hayden, Catharine Mahoney, Rosanna Dant, Monica Bailey and Roberta Brown.⁴ These six valiant women bade *adieu* to their companions and to the Mother House on June 26, 1852, after they had assisted at Holy Mass. They were filled with a natural grief at this separation but were strengthened and sustained by the thought of the Master in whose cause they were enlisted. They set forth not knowing that death was very close at hand.

Bishop Lamy had planned to go to New Orleans to visit his niece⁵ who was at that time attending school at the Ursuline Convent, before returning to Santa Fé. He arranged that the sisters were to make the journey by the *Traders' Trail* and meet him in St. Louis. In St. Louis the sisters were kindly received by Bishop Kenrick. They visited the convent of St. Ferdinand at Florissant, and spent a few days with the sisters. As soon as Bishop Lamy returned to St. Louis they joined him and on July 10 boarded the steamer *Kansas* which was to take them up the Missouri river as far as Independence.

The spirit of self-sacrifice had prompted the sisters to accept the new mission, yet they little dreamed how soon their virtue was to be put to a test. There had already been some cases of cholera on board when, on Friday the sixteenth at two o'clock in the morning, Mother Matilda Mills was attacked. Her suffering lasted until about two o'clock in the afternoon of the same day when she died, after having received the Sacraments of Penance and Extreme Unction at the hands of Bishop Lamy, who was deeply affected by the circumstances. Two hours later the steamer landed

4. *Council Record*, apud Archives, Loretto Mother House, Nerinx P.O., Ky. Hereinafter this archive will be cited as A. L. M.

5. Later Mother Francisca Lamy, S. L., who labored for many years at Our Lady of Light Academy in Santa Fé.

at Todd's Warehouse, six miles from Independence. In the meantime Sister Monica Bailey also contracted the disease and the landing was a truly sad one. One sister was in a dying condition and one was dead. The inhabitants stood in such dread of the disease that the sisters were not allowed to enter their houses, and were therefore obliged to remain in the warehouse.

The next morning, July 17, three sisters, with Bishop Lamy and a few other persons, accompanied the carriage which conveyed the body of Mother Matilda Mills to its last resting place in the graveyard of Independence, but on the way they met the sheriff who had been appointed by the authorities to forbid entrance into the town for fear of contagion. The funeral cortège continued on its way to the graveyard, however, for the bishop's firm attitude and, perhaps, too, compassion for the sad spectacle caused the official to relent.⁶

Mother Magdalen tells us in her annals ⁷ that the bishop now took the three sisters, Sister Catherine Mahoney, Rosanna Dant, Roberta Brown to the town which was six miles distant, while Sister Magdalen Hayden remained in the warehouse to care for the apparently dying Sister Monica. On the night of the following Monday, July 19, Sister Magdalen, herself, was attacked with the cholera, and made what she believed to be her last confession. Now Bishop Lamy found himself with two dying religious to be cared for. The place was ill suited for these religious sick unto death and Bishop Lamy, unable to make better arrangements, had the two sisters removed to tents about two miles from the town. Here the sisters suffered many inconveniences but they were better off than in the warehouse. After a few days Sister Magdalen began to improve. On Sunday, July 25, the three sisters came from Independence, and heard Mass said by Bishop Lamy in a tent erected for that purpose. Sister Monica Bailey was unable to proceed fur-

6. *Annales de Nuestra Señora de la Luz* (hereinafter cited as *An. de N. S. de la L.*) by Hermana Maria Magdalena Hayden, S. L., *apud* A. L. M.

7. *Apud* A.L.M.

ther and as her recovery was doubtful it was decided that she was to return to Independence until her health would be sufficiently restored for her to return to Florissant, Missouri. Sister Monica Bailey gave an account of her experience in a letter written at Liberty, Missouri on September 20, 1852 and directed to Mother Berlindes Downs.⁸

After the death of Mother Matilda Mills, Sister Magdalen Hayden was chosen to fill the office of superior, and this choice was promptly approved and confirmed at the Mother House in Kentucky. Thus was Mother Magdalen Hayden chosen in the designs of God to guide the colony of Sisters of Loretto into Santa Fé; to protect them against the storms and difficulties they would encounter; to build the material and spiritual edifice of the Society of the Sisters of Loretto in the Southwest and particularly in the city of the "Holy Faith." In a letter written to one of her school-mates on July 12, 1854 she gives an account of this interesting journey.⁹

On the evening of August 1 they reached Willow Springs, a fine watering place a few miles from Westport, and there found the party ready to start.¹⁰ They lost no time, and started at once, but they had proceeded only a few miles when one of the wagons broke down, and they were obliged to encamp in order to repair the wagon. That was a terrible night for the travellers. A fearful storm arose; the wind blew with violence, the rain fell in torrents; the tents could not be pitched and all the sisters and the ladies in the party had to remain in the wagons to protect themselves as well as they could against the beating storm. It lasted the whole night through. Mother Magdalen says that the sisters were much terrified at the fury of the storm which at times seemed ready to shatter to pieces their frail tenement, and they sought protection in prayer.¹¹

8. See Owens, *op. cit.*, Chapter IX "Missionary Work in New Mexico, California and Arizona." Document *apud* A. L. M.

9. Owens, *op. cit.*, Documentary Appendix for Chapter IX.

10. With them travelled a family and some other persons belonging to the bishop's suite. See Defouri, *Historical Sketch of the Catholic Church in New Mexico*, p. 37.

11. *A. de N. S. de la L.*, *apud* A. L. M.

Sometime was spent the next day in repairing the damage of the storm. On Sunday, August 8, the bishop said mass near an Indian hut on the banks of the Hundred and Ten Creek. On the evening of the Assumption they reached Council Grove.¹² The next day they resumed their march, and the following Sunday mass was said at Pawnee Fork, on the spot where now stands Larned, Kansas, at the junction of the Pawnee and the Arkansas. For the first time buffalo were killed by the party and fresh meat was enjoyed. They arrived at Fort Atkinson on September seventh and were encamped some miles beyond, but still in Kansas, when a party of Indian warriors, four hundred strong, surrounded them. All were terrified, particularly the women. This was the Indians' camping ground, and whenever they could do so with impunity they would attack the caravans. On this occasion they seemed peaceable; still as their intentions were not known, and the Indian is often treacherous, the bishop thought it prudent not to make any move, hoping they would retire; but as they seemed disposed to remain, he ordered his company to march in the evening, and the caravan travelled all night. September 12, Sunday, found them at Cimarrón, having crossed the Arkansas and two days later they were rejoiced by the appearance of the Very Reverend Vicar-General Machebeuf, who with a party of men and horses met the oncomers at Red River. Near Fort Union they were supplied with fresh meat and fresh bread, a most welcome food after the hard tack of their journey, which was frequently rationed. On September seventeenth they reached Fort Bartley, where for the first time in nearly two months they slept under a roof. Las Vegas, their first New Mexican town, was reached on September eighteenth. The next morning the bishop said mass in a private dwelling not far from the town. There he stopped to rest, and sent Father Machebeuf with the sisters to what was then called the "Bishop's Rancho" or farm, a little over fifteen miles from Santa Fé.¹³

12. The fifteenth of August.

13. This *rancho* was subsequently sold to the Hon. F. A. Manzanares, delegate to congress in 1882-84. The A. T. and S. F. R. R. has established here a station named Lamy after Bishop Lamy. See Defouri, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

On Wednesday, September twenty-second, the bishop set out from Las Vegas and quietly entered the episcopal city on Thursday, September twenty-third, to prepare the way for the caravan. On September twenty-sixth the party left the ranch and arrived at Santa Fé at four p. m. The people, led by Father Juan Felipe Ortiz¹⁴ and other Mexican priests, went several miles to meet them. As they approached the city, the crowd increased so much that the carriages could scarcely pass through the streets of the famous old city. Triumphal arches had been erected and the bells of the different churches were pealing forth a welcome as the sisters made their first entrance into Santa Fé. They were received at the door of the cathedral, presented with holy water, and led to the foot of the altar. The *Te Deum* was sung, accompanied by Mexican music, and the ceremony terminated with the episcopal blessing. From here the sisters were conducted by the bishop, vicar-general and the clergy to the house prepared for them. How happy this little band of pioneer religious must have felt to know that they were welcome in the City of Holy Faith, where they had come to labor for the good of souls. In the convent annals Mother Magdalen Hayden has recorded the kindness and generosity of the people of Santa Fé.¹⁵

The school was not opened immediately as the sisters needed some time to apply themselves to the study of the language of the country. In November they received their first boarders, two children who had lost their mother. When these were admitted Bishop Lamy remarked to Mother Hayden "It is well to begin with an act of charity."

The school opened under the title of *Our Lady of Light*¹⁶ Academy in January 1853, with ten boarders and

14. Father Ortiz had been vicar-general for New Mexico under Bishop Zubiria of Durango and was then residing at the cathedral.

15. A. L. M.

16. The title *Nuestra Señora de la Luz* was very much loved by the Mexicans. This no doubt was the reason why Bishop Lamy called Loretto's first foundation in Santa Fé, "Our Lady of Light Academy." See also A. Von Wuthenau, "The Spanish Military Chapels in Santa Fé and the Reredos of Our Lady of Light," *NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW* (July 1935), Vol. X., No. 3, pp. 175-194.

three day scholars, and by the following August the number had increased to twenty boarders and twenty day scholars.¹⁷ The house which the sisters occupied had been ceded to them by Bishop Lamy. As their enrollment grew the house became too small and in October 1853 the bishop donated the complete *plazita* to the sisters for the use of the school. In 1855 it became necessary to secure even larger grounds, and the sisters obtained at a very reasonable price a piece of property in a secluded part of the city.¹⁸ From the very first, success attended the efforts of the Sisters of Loretto in Santa Fé. While not without hardships and privations they easily adapted themselves to the new country, and the spirit of the society was happily in accord with the free and undaunted spirit of the West. Today when one reflects upon the educational progress of the Southwest, secular or religious, he thinks of the Lorettes, their schools and their academies.

The spring of Santa Fé's activity had constantly to be supplied by the Loretto Mother House in Kentucky. Many bands have made the journey across the vast country to the City of Holy Faith, but the memory of one little group that set forth to join the sisters of New Mexico is forever sacred in the annals of Loretto, and for one nameless grave Loretto's heart forever yearns. In 1867 three Sisters of Loretto and two Sisters of Charity¹⁹ from Cincinnati started for Santa Fé with Bishop Lamy who had just returned from Europe. In the bishop's suite were fifteen missionaries and five sisters. His lordship had longed ardently to secure the

17. *A. de N. S. de la L.*, apud A. L. M.

18. In 1855 another group of sisters left Louisville on May 12 in the company of Reverend Joseph Machebeuf and reached Santa Fé on July 24. An account of this trip was written for the Reverend William J. Howlett by Mother Ann Joseph Mattingly, a member of the caravan from the Loretto Convent, Florissant, Missouri. This Ms. is on file in the Archives of the Denver Diocese. There are copies of it apud A. L. M. and in the Historical Files at the St. Mary's Academy, Denver, Colorado.

19. The Sisters of Charity from Cincinnati were Sisters Augustine and Louise. These names are on record apud A. L. M. Sister Mary Buchner, S. C. L. in *The History of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth*, p. 102, gives the names as Louise and Seraphine. The sisters of Loretto were Sisters Isabella Treller, Mary Kotska and Alphonsa Thompson. The last was not yet twenty years of age.

invaluable services of the fathers of the Society of Jesus in his diocese, and now he was accompanied by three sons of St. Ignatius, Fathers L. Vigilante, superior, Rafael Bianchi and Donato M. Gasparri, and two Jesuit brothers, Prisco Caso and Rafael Xezza.²⁰ There were also some secular priests in the party, two brothers of the Christian Schools, Paul Beaubien, a young Mexican from St. Louis University, enroute for New Mexico, Jules Masset, the bishop's business agent, some relatives of the secular clergy and two Mexican servants, Antonio and Antonito, the whole party consisting of twenty-six members.

On June 10, 1867, they left St. Louis and went west to Leavenworth, Kansas.²¹ Twenty-one of the party were entertained during the week of their stay in Leavenworth at the residence of Bishop Miége. The sisters were lodged at St. John's Hospital, but they were also considered the guests of the Academy of the Sisters of Charity. The little group left Leavenworth on June 14 and travelled eight miles that evening. They had pitched their tent and retired for the night when a terrible rain accompanied by the blustering winds of Kansas, drenched them through the tent. In spite of the trying time the sisters were all very cheerful except the young Sister Alphonsa. She seemed preoccupied and worried. The caravans could not continue as rapidly as they wished because of the rumors that travellers on the plains were being murdered and scalped by the Indians. These stories left a great impression on the mind of the young religious.

Bishop Lamy and his party reached St. Mary of the Pottowatomie on the eighteenth of June. The Jesuit fathers of the mission, with all the boys came to meet the party several miles from the school. They greeted the bishop and preceded him with banners and music to the gates of the

20. Defouri, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 108. There is a letter written by Sister Mary Kotska, S. L., *apud* A. L. M., in which she gives the date as June 10. Father Defouri gives it as June 6. Sister Kotska was a member of the caravan and her account is no doubt the accurate one.

hospitable old mission. Sunday was spent at St. Mary's. On June twenty-fourth, with renewed courage the bishop and his party left St. Mary's on the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul and encamped a few miles from Junction City. Towards noon four peaceable Indians, perhaps spies, came to visit them, and remained awhile. When the missionary party had crossed the Smoky River they felt that they had bid *adieu* to civilization and were indeed on *The Plains*. Now began their severe apprenticeship in western mission life.

On the first of July they came to a Mexican caravan, eighty wagons strong, and the men who were well armed received the Bishop of Santa Fé with demonstrations of joy and veneration. Some days after meeting this caravan scouts were sent out by the captain of the caravan, Don Francisco Baca, to see how the land lay, for as they were going farther and farther away from civilization they thought it well to be cautious. The scouts hurried back with the report that there were a thousand Indians in the neighborhood ready for massacre and pillage.

So far the health of the bishop's party had been excellent, but cholera had broken out among the Mexicans, and for several days it was feared that few would be spared. On Sunday, July 14, the bishop celebrated mass and delivered a touching sermon which impressed upon them the necessity of bearing with fortitude the hardships they might encounter, and of strict obedience to orders. On July 16 they encamped about three miles below Fort Dodge. Several times they had sighted little bands of Indians, but the first attack was made on the caravan at dusk on July 17, while the men were unharnessing the tired animals from the wagons. They had attacked a train from New Mexico a few miles further west the day before. Everyone knows the tactics of the Indian in war. He never fought in regular battle, but rather tried to surprise the enemy. This was the plan of attack against the bishop's party. Fifty mounted Indians suddenly appeared upon a hill a short distance

away, and rushed madly upon the party, shouting and discharging their firearms. The Mexicans of the caravan turned upon them and chased them some distance without loss. On July 22 at ten o'clock in the morning, Jules Masset, the bishop's business agent was seized with cholera, and much to the bishop's dismay was dead that afternoon. While he was dying they camped nearer to the Arkansas River at a place called Cimarrón Crossing. About this time fifteen men who had been sent out to ascertain the whereabouts of the Indians returned at full gallop, pursued by more than four hundred Indians. They were frightful to behold in their war paint and feathers. A stockade was hastily made by the wagons bound together, with the animals in the center. The men stood inside and a furious fight ensued for three hours. The bishop and the caravan gave strict orders that no one should go outside the stockade. Bishop Lamy was everywhere encouraging the men to fight bravely and defend themselves if necessary. He held a gun in his hand, and gave orders with great coolness and deliberation, showing to all an example of courage and calmness. Everyone was at his post behind the wagons, and when the Indians passed before the caravan returned their fire, and observed that several of them fell dead or wounded, and were immediately surrounded by their companions, placed on their horses and taken away. Father Brun states in his journal:²²

We could hear the bullets whizzing over our heads, several imbedded in the wheels of the wagons, but fortunately none of us were wounded. Father Coudert distinguished himself among all by his coolness and valor. After more than three hours of such fight the Indians went off in small bands, separating from one another in order to avoid our bullets . . .

We learned, sometime after, that three of the principal chiefs were killed and one severely wounded. As for us we were protected in a visible manner by Divine Providence . . .

22. Defouri, *op. cit.*, p. 113, *et seq.*

The five sisters remained in the tent, tortured by fears more agonizing than their defenders could dream of, and fervently did they pray for death rather than that they should fall into the hands of the maddened savages. It was noticed that the youngest sister, Sister Alphonsa, was extremely pale and that during the whole terrible time she had remained silent, seemingly absorbed in deep thought. The saddest part of the journey was to follow on July twenty-fourth. The shock had been too great for the innocent soul of this young religious. Father Gasparri, S. J. leaves us an account of her death:²³

On the twenty-third we continued our journey, and toward evening, Sister Alphonsa Thompson, a native of Kentucky, fell sick. Night settling we camped, and she being very ill received the last Sacraments. The other sisters waited on her all night, and the next day we had to continue our journey. She was put into a wagon with four other sisters, and when we had halted, she died at ten o'clock, July 24, being not quite twenty years old. We all felt most sensibly the death of that sister, so much more as no remedies could be procured in those desert plains to relieve her. On the other hand the Indians would not let her die in peace. She was buried in the evening near the road, in a place well marked and known to the Mexicans. A coffin, the best that could be had under the circumstances, was made for her, and all accompanied the body in procession, a Jesuit father performing the ceremony, and the bishop assisting. Before leaving the place a cross was planted over the grave. The poor sister had expressed a desire not to have her body left there, but to have it taken on with us to New Mexico, fearing, perhaps, that the wild Indians, finding it, perhaps, would desecrate it. But this was not done, above all because it is said that Indians always respect dead bodies. God, moreover, would protect in a special manner that body, in which had dwelt a soul as pure and innocent as Sister Alphonsa's.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115. See Sister Blandina Segale, *At the End of the Santa Fe Trail*, p. 101 *et seq.*

Bishop Lamy referring to the sad death of this young religious wrote: "The youngest Sister of Loretto died on July 24 from fright, as I consider it, caused by the attack of the savages. She was eighteen years of age, well educated and a model of virtue."²⁴

After the interment²⁵ the caravan continued on its journey until Friday the twenty-sixth when the bishop thought it prudent to leave the caravan behind because it was so slow, and also to free themselves from cholera, which continued to rage among the Mexicans. It was a touching separation. The chiefs of the caravan came to the missionaries, and together they recited the Litany of the Saints in thanksgiving for their wonderful preservation. All knelt on the ground, and the bishop gave them Benediction which they received with great faith and devotion. At four o'clock in the evening, they left the caravan and travelled that whole night for fear of attracting the attention of the Indians. The travellers were looked upon by all who met them as ghosts from the other world as the news had spread abroad that they had all been massacred.

On August 15, from the hills they beheld Santa Fé. More than two hundred horsemen came out to meet the bishop's caravan as an escort. At the entrance of the city they were first met by the Christian Brothers with their band, and other bands of music followed; the bishop entered the cathedral, at the door of which the vicar-general welcomed him in the name of the clergy, after which the bishop solemnly gave Benediction to the people. His heart was full.

24. Father Defouri tells us that three years afterwards, while he was pastor at Topeka, Kansas, the bishop requested him to find the grave of Sister Alphonsa. Accompanied by two men employed by the railroad near Cimarrón Crossing, he forded the river and followed the old track, and saw, or at least thought he saw, the grave by the roadside. The spot was marked by a tuft of grass. The cross, however, was missing. The evening was advancing and he and his party could not delay because of the Indians. They had received strict orders to return as soon as possible.

25. Some lines in memory of the death of Sister Alphonsa were published by an unknown author in the *Ave Maria*. See Owens, *op. cit.*, Documentary Appendix for Ch. IX. Miss Eleanor Donnelly also made her death the subject of a beautiful poem, which may be found in *Loretto: Annals of a Century* by Anna C. Minogue, and in Owens, *op. cit.*, Documentary Appendix Ch. IX.

He had brought with him a new and powerful element of education for the people whom he loved so much. He had enriched his diocese with a religious Order of women and now he was bringing with him those who had done so much for education—the Jesuits. From his heart must have re-echoed the feelings of St. Paul “How beautiful the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, of them that bring glad tidings of good things.”²⁶

The unique chapel of Our Lady of Light Academy is a charming edifice built entirely by the efforts of Mother Magdalen Hayden and the sisters under her charge, who not infrequently stinted themselves in order that they might be able to erect a fit dwelling place for the Blessed Sacrament. From Mother Magdalen’s letters we obtain the following information:²⁷

We were in great need of a chapel, as the one we had was of adobe and very small. It was a one story room, besides it was old and not considered very safe. We had almost abandoned the idea of building one, but happily we placed its erection under the protection of St. Joseph, in whose honor we communicated every Wednesday that he might assist us. Of his powerful help we have been witnesses on several occasions. Our new chapel we commenced on July 26, 1873, and finished in 1878.

This chapel has become one of the architectural ornaments of the quaint old city.²⁸ A beautiful statue of the Mother of Christ adorns the pinnacle, and when the crescent of electric lights at her feet and those of her crown are lighted, it can be seen from all parts of the city. The structure is built of stone and is of the purest Gothic style.

Few who remain can recall the first primitive adobe buildings with flat roofs, for each year that has passed since 1852 has seen improvements at Our Lady of Light Academy. The academy was incorporated in 1874 and in 1881 a build-

26. Rom. X:15.

27. Originals *apud* A. L. M.

28. See Sister Blandina Segale, *op. cit.*, pp. 34, 132, 133.

ing equipped with modern conveniences was erected. During the eighty-some years of its existence Our Lady of Light has had but ten superiors.²⁹ One fashioned the premises, and beautified the grounds; another perfected the domestic equipment; a third built a new addition to the academy; a fourth enlarged the library, until nothing has been left undone to make the academy a healthy, happy and a holy place for the religious and the student.

Successful from the beginning in the work of education, the school continued to grow until in 1920, during the superiorship of Mother Albertina Riordan, a new building was erected in response to urgent demands for more classrooms. This building relieved the congestion for nearly eight years, but with the steady growth of the population and the ever-increasing demand for high school education, the accommodations again became inadequate. The sisters did not know how to meet this demand, but again Providence came to their assistance. The Diamond Jubilee celebration was to be held in May 1927. Michael Chávez, prominent real estate owner in Santa Fé, realized the urgent necessity of enlarging the building. He had received a part of his education in Santa Fé and now in appreciation he donated \$75,000 to Our Lady of Light Academy in order that the new building, so much needed, might be possible. Mr. Chávez in making this gift explained that he wished to aid the work of Catholic education in Santa Fé and to encourage the pioneer religious who had braved the terrors of the plains, Indians, and wild animals back in the early fifties to light the torch of learning in the Southwest. The news of the donation soon spread over the city and the state, and caused great rejoicing among the hundreds of alumnae of Our Lady of Light Academy. The Diamond Jubilee celebration extended over four days. The exercises were formally opened in the cathedral with vespers sung by the Christian Brothers. A sermon followed, preached by the

29. For a complete list of the superiors who have presided over Our Lady of Light Academy, see Owens, *op. cit.*, pp. 286-87. Record *apud* A. L. M.

archbishop, Most Reverend Albert T. Daeger, O. F. M., his theme being "The Pioneer Days of the Order." In the course of the celebration Reverend Roger Aull paid a glowing tribute to the spiritual life of the Sisters of Loretto. Many visiting priests and religious women came from various parts of the Southwest to show their esteem and appreciation of an Order which, from 1852 to 1927, had done so much for the cultural improvement of the Southwest.