

PART II

JESUIT GROWTH IN THE MIDDLE WEST THE
THIRTIES AND FORTIES

CHAPTER X

THE VISITATION OF 1831-1832

§ I THE INDEPENDENT MISSION OF MISSOURI

In the evolution of the Missouri Mission into a fully organized province of the Society of Jesus the first decisive step was its release from the jurisdiction of Maryland and its setting-up as a self-governing unit in direct relations with the Father General.¹ This transformation was contemporary with the presence in the United States of Father Peter Kenney, a member of the province of Ireland, charged twice with the duty of visiting on the part of the Father General the few scattered houses of the Society of Jesus then existing in North America. As an orphan-boy running about uncared for in the streets of Dublin he had attracted the notice of an eighteenth-century Jesuit, Father Betagh, who provided for his education and otherwise put him in the way of utilizing for the Church the unusual gifts of mind and heart with which he was endowed.

Father Kenney himself was conspicuous as an administrator in Ireland, for his one year of service in the direction of the National College of Maynooth left a double imprint on ecclesiastical education and spiritual life. He was the leading adviser of Edmund Ignatius Rice in the development of the first Christian Brothers, he had great influence in the early direction of the Irish Sisters of Charity. He preached the first jubilee in Dublin since the sixteenth century, that of 1825, and rendered signal service as a witness for Catholic Ireland before both the Royal Commission on Education and the House of Lords Inquiry of 1825-1826. His fame as a speaker brought Henry Grattan, though practically a free-thinker, to the little chapel at Hardwicke Street, which preceded the opening of St Francis Xavier's church close by, and if another hearer on occasion, Thomas Moore, did not relish Father Kenney's periods, it was because the preacher availed himself of the poet's presence to point out the dangers of evil literature in the plainest terms.²

¹ In the Jesuit administrative system the unit known as a mission is generally attached to a province, being an integral part of the same and subject to the jurisdiction of its provincial, only in exceptional cases do missions of the Society stand unattached to any province and in immediate dependence on the Father General

² T. Corcoran, S. J., *The Clongowes Record, 1814 to 1832, with introductory*

In 1819 Father Kenney arrived in America as Visitor of the Maryland Mission. His engaging personality made an impression in Jesuit circles and outside of them. Testimonies on this head are numerous in the correspondence of the period. "Never was there a clergyman in this country more universally esteemed, particularly by the native Americans and indeed by foreigners," wrote Father John McElroy to the former superior of the Maryland Mission, Father John Grassi, then resident in Rome. "His perfect knowledge of the English language, his peculiar talent for government, his amiable and unassuming manners, has endeared him to all persons to whom he has been introduced."³ In a letter also to Grassi, the actual superior of Maryland, Father Anthony Kohlmann, had likewise words of eulogy.

He [Father Kenney] is a great man indeed, and has, I think, a wonderful talent for governing and [for] the pulpit. He preached on the occasion of the tradition of the pallium to our Archbishop and in Washington at the funeral services for the Duke of Berry. In both places he was generally declared to be the best orator that ever was heard in this country. On the latter occasion the audience was perhaps the most respectable that was ever assembled in Washington City. All the foreign ministers, the heads of our government, Quincy Adams and most members of our two houses of the legislature were present and highly pleased. R. F. [ather] Visitor, I know, will do much good, wherever he may happen to be, but I doubt whether his presence can be anywhere else as useful as here, were he to do nothing else but to preach at Washington in time of Congress. He would bring much honor on the Catholic religion all over the Union.⁴

In 1820 Bishop Du Bourg, then resident in St. Louis, was petitioning Rome to appoint Father Kenney to the see of New York, at the

Chapters on Irish Educators (Dublin, 1932), p. 107. Peter Kenney, born in Dublin July 7, 1779, entered the Society of Jesus September 20, 1804, died in Rome November 19, 1841.

³ McElroy to Grassi, June 7, 1820 (AA).

⁴ Kohlmann to Grassi, Georgetown, April 8, 1820 (AA). Father Nerinckx in an account of his journey to Europe in 1820 has this reference to Father Kenney: "Whilst here [Washington] we went to see St. Patrick's Catholic Church which, upon my first arrival in America, consisted of a square frame building in very poor condition, it is now a handsome church of free-stone, accommodating three thousand people. The funeral services for the Duke de Berry had just been held in the presence of all the foreign ambassadors and the most prominent members of the United States Congress, which was just then holding its sessions. Rev. Father Kenney, Visitor of the Jesuits, and an Irishman of uncommon eloquence, preached the funeral oration to the admiration and delight of all present." Maes, *Life of Rev. Charles Nerinckx*, p. 428. Bishop Spalding, referring to a retreat conducted by Father Kenney for the clergy of the Bardstown diocese (1832) wrote: "The impression made by this truly eloquent man of God was deep and lasting." Spalding, *Life of Bishop Flaget*, p. 271.



Peter Kenney, S J (1779-1841), Visitor of the Jesuit houses in the United States
From a contemporary portrait

Nov, a. 15 Nov 1830

Reverende in Christo Patri

66

Adm^o d^o Patris Notis per suum Secretarium mihi significavit. Rex vestrum
 venturum esse ut visitatorem. Sic d^o Patrem Verhaagen Collegii Leidensis Rectorem
 iam certis diebus de vobis cum d^o Patre Gysel, ex litteris Supremis vobis propediem
 Georgipoli expectari de felice vestro adventu confidens in Domino cum vobis fili
 cupimus accipere, Deumque ego opto ut res ex voto, ad Majorem Dei gloriam, vobis
 succedant. Ne non importunum per litteras ad venire sperans, tempore libere saltem qua
 dam de rebus vestris huius generationis dicta desidero. Ita cum omnes animo constanti
 ut obediens in omnibus esse quam maxime optemus et cum Deo gratia tales futuri
 nos esse confidimus & vobiscum. Non solum bonum in vobis oblatum ad
 etiam numerum vestrum augendum speramus. In Collegio Leidensi sunt jam
 tres agrorum subul. Nunc d^o Henry Walsh et Peter Yates. In ultimis omnium genera
 -one ad docendum multum profectus est, et docet de hoc tam numerosam quam
 nullus ex vobiscum in Hispania docere potest. Numerus catholicorum vero saltem
 in parte ita crescit ut sacerdotum praesentium sufficere non possunt et opto mederi
 culus sunt famulus ad praedictos non solum in ad agros eos manere cupio. Planum
 (the plan) ex quo res ea facienda est a fratre Henrico vobiscum & ab adm^o d^o Patre
 vestro approbatum fuit, et hic ad illud exequendum me hortatur quare in
 Solemni conventu praedictorum /village/ in duabus eorum villis /village/ pro
 -one me venturum ad planum illud, quod maxime applausu ab ipsis fuit
 acceptum, exequendum quemadmodum desiderat. Locus ad fontes aquarum
 ita desiderat te videre animam meam vobis per felicem vestrum foveri subdit.

Amicus in Christo humillimus

Of Van Quickenborne

Rev^o Patre Kenney
 Georgipoli



A letter of Van Quickenborne to Kenney, November 15, 1830, welcoming him on his arrival as Visitor in the United States Archives of the Maryland-New York Province, S J

same time requesting Bishop Plessis of Quebec to support his petition. To the latter he wrote "I find all the qualities which so difficult a commission requires united in Father Kenney, provincial or visitor of the Jesuits in Maryland. He is an Irishman, a thing essential to turn aside national jealousies, and, if I am to believe all the reports about him, he is a man of rare talent, vigor and prudence. Your Lordship must surely have heard him spoken of. I have had the assurance to write about him to Rome." Already in Ireland attempts had been made to secure Father Kenney for the coadjutorship of Kerry and the see of Dromore, and now, following upon Du Bourg's petition to the Holy See, Archbishop Maréchal of Baltimore was making efforts, so it was reported, to have the Jesuit appointed to the vacant see of Philadelphia. Fear that this ecclesiastical dignity might be fastened upon him was among the reasons, as he explained to the General, which led him to bring his visitation of Maryland somewhat abruptly to an end and return in 1820 to Ireland. Father Kohlmann and his consultors, as also Archbishop Maréchal, were thus disappointed in their expectations, for all had petitioned the General that Father Kenney be directed to remain in America as regularly constituted superior of the Mission of Maryland.⁵

Eight years later Kenney arrived in America for the second time, again as Visitor of the Jesuits in the United States. His commission from the General, Father Roothaan, was dated May 29, 1830, and he was formally installed in his new charge at the community dinner of Georgetown College on November 14 of the same year. The Polish Jesuit, Father Dzierzynski, for seven years the devoted superior of the Maryland Mission, had not been notified from Rome that he was to be superseded in that post by the Jesuit from Ireland. The two offices of superior of the mission and Visitor, not being identical, were not necessarily merged in the same individual, and a doubt was accordingly raised as to whether Father Kenney came as Visitor only or also as superior of the Maryland Mission, but meeting his consultors, Dzierzynski impressed upon them his own belief that he was succeeded in office by the Visitor and announcement to this effect was accordingly made at the ceremony of installation. In Father Kenney's letters-patent from the General were to be read the words, "we make choice of you as Visitor of the American Mission with the powers of superior of the same mission."⁶

On the day following that on which Father Kenney took up at Georgetown his duties of Visitor, Father Van Quickenborne indited

⁵ Des Bourg à Plessis, August 26, 1820. Quebec Archdiocesan Archives. Kohlmann ad Fortis, April 10, 1822 (?) (AA)

⁶ Memorandum (B)

to him from distant Florissant a cordial letter of welcome. Briefly, but pointedly he laid before the new superior the pressing needs of the Missouri Mission and his own vehement desire to be sent among the Indians. "We are all of that disposition of mind," he is speaking of the western Jesuits generally, "that we desire to be obedient in all things and in the fullest possible measure and we trust that by God's grace we shall continue always to be of that mind. We are hoping that the visitation will result not only in a more than ordinary measure of good but also in an increase in our numbers. . . . As the hart pants after the fountains of waters, so does my soul long to look upon you" ⁷ About a year later Kenney arrived in the West to pursue there his work of visitation. Meantime Van Quickenborne had been superseded as superior by Father De Theux and the Mission of Missouri had been separated from that of Maryland.

The withdrawal of the western Jesuits from the jurisdiction of the Maryland superior and the erection of Missouri into an independent mission, having its own superior and through him direct relations with the General, had been contemplated even in the time of Father Fortis. The distance between East and West and the resulting difficulty in epistolary and other communication between the two sections of the country created problems of administration which would presumably disappear with Missouri looking after its own affairs. Almost within a year, accordingly, of his election as General, Father Roothaan put the proposed change into effect. On September 23, 1830, he made official announcement by letter both to Father Kenney and Father Van Quickenborne of the separation of the two missions and five days later, September 28, he communicated to Father De Theux the same news as also the latter's appointment to be superior in the West. The General's letter to Van Quickenborne has much of the formality of a decree. "Taking counsel with myself how I might dispose of your portion of the American missions with a view to more ready administration and greater growth, I have decided to separate this mission (bounded namely by the limits of Missouri and including the houses of St. Louis, St. Charles and Florissant) from the rest of the missions and to place it, after being thus withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the Superior of the latter, under a superior of its own, immediately dependent on the General, as I have this very day written to the Visitor of America, Father Kenney" ⁸ Father Roothaan's communication to De Theux, after announcing the division of East from West, continues

⁷ Van Quickenborne ad Kenney, November 15, 1830 (B)

⁸ Roothaan ad Van Quickenborne, September 23, 1830 (AA)

It seemed incumbent on us to consult in this manner the good of the Mission, which, on account of distance and what resulted therefrom, the long-continued absence of the Superior and the difficulties of correspondence, has suffered inconveniences of no small degree. I appoint you the Reverend Father Superior of your Mission, having in the Lord a very great confidence in your probity and prudence. The rules which your Reverence must follow in his office are those which are prescribed for Provincials, although the Mission has not as yet all the elements that are required for a regular Province. You shall choose from among the graver of the Fathers four consultors, who, as your Reverence also, will have to correspond with the General, as the rule prescribes. If candidates present themselves, the appointment of a competent master of novices must first be looked to.⁹

Finally, Father Roothaan made known to De Theux that he had instructed the Visitor to transfer to Missouri certain subjects of Belgian birth employed at the time in the Mission of Maryland. These were five in number, Fathers Lekeu, Peeters, Van de Velde, Van Lommel and Mr. Van Sweevelt, a scholastic. Moreover, the expediency of extending his visitation to Missouri, if circumstances so permitted, was suggested to the Visitor by the Father General.¹⁰

Father Roothaan's letter of September 28, 1830, to Father De Theux was delayed an unaccountably long time on its way to St. Louis, having come into the latter's hands only on February 24 of the following year. Two days later, February 26, 1831, the announcement it contained of the erection of Missouri into an independent mission was communicated by the newly-appointed superior to the fifteen members that made up the Society of Jesus in the West.¹¹ By the latter the news was received with satisfaction, relieving them as it did of the awkward situation involved in dependence on the East. "This new arrangement of our affairs," so Father Verhagen, rector of St. Louis College, expressed himself to the General, "is a source of great consolation to all of us, and as it seems to me, will make not a little for the greater glory of God."¹² The installation of Father De Theux as superior of the independent Mission of Missouri is officially dated February 27, 1831.

To the Maryland Jesuits, on the other hand, the news of the separation of Missouri from the East came as an unpleasant surprise. Only a few years before the feeling was widespread among them that the recruits arriving from Belgium and other countries of continental

⁹ Roothaan ad De Theux, September 28, 1830 (AA)

¹⁰ Roothaan ad Kenney, September 23, 1830 (AA)

¹¹ De Theux ad Roothaan, March 17, 1831 (AA)

¹² Verhaegen ad Roothaan, April 4, 1831 (AA)

Europe were unfitted for service in the East but might be usefully employed in the less meticulous West. But now, with a complete reversal of feeling on this head, the prospect of losing their Belgian fellow-workers, whether in the East or the West, was alarming. The Father Visitor consenting, letters of protest against the detaching of Missouri from the East were written at once to the Father General by the Maryland consultors. The reasons alleged against the measure were, among others, that fraternal charity might be jeopardized, that a spirit of nationality might develop, presumably if the Belgians were to be grouped together in a mission of their own, and that Maryland could not dispense with the services of the few Belgians at that time employed in its houses. Writing in Italian, Father Mulledy, rector of Georgetown College, laid particular stress on the last of these points. "Van de Velde is very useful and almost necessary in this college as teacher of French and calligraphy, things highly esteemed in this country. Further, he is an excellent preacher in English. . . . In fine, I don't see what we shall do if we are to lose these four very fine subjects" ¹³

Father Roothaan on his part was not minded to rescind the measure he had carried out. "There are Belgians who have gone to America," he explained to Father Dubuisson of Georgetown College, "to work in Missouri and sums of money have been spent on the same object. It is said that men and money have been detained in Maryland. What I have had in view is that care be taken to fulfil all justice. If you wish to keep the Belgians for Maryland, well and good, but then let Americans be sent to Missouri. It is all the same, it is even better." ¹⁴ And to Father de Grivel the General wrote "As to what concerns Missouri, it would be a great mistake for anyone to suppose that the Fathers in that region asked for their separation. They never gave evidence that they had even the least idea of it. In that matter I have done nothing else but follow out the plan which the Father Assistants had already suggested to Father Fortis with a view to greater convenience in the government of Missouri." ¹⁵ Father Roothaan was especially anxious to dispel the suspicion that the separation of the mission had been decreed at the instance of the Missourians, as he made clear to Father Kenney "Lest, then, such surmise be the occasion of even the slightest cooling off of charity, I will say, what is the actual fact, that nothing was ever either said or done by the fathers of Missouri to bring about this arrangement or even indicate that they wanted it, it came rather as a surprise as well to them as to the fathers

¹³ Mulledy a Roothaan, January 28, 1831 (AA)

¹⁴ Roothaan ad Dubuisson, May 3, 1831 (AA)

¹⁵ Roothaan ad Grivel, December 22, 1831 (AA)

of Maryland, nor were there any other reasons for it than that the mission in question might be administered with greater convenience" ¹⁶

In accordance with Father Roothaan's instructions that certain Belgian members be transferred from Maryland to Missouri as "properly belonging" to the latter mission, Father Van Lommel and Mr Van Sweevelt were sent by Father Kenney to St Louis, where they arrived on October 24, 1831 ¹⁷ The departure of Van Lommel was keenly felt by the Catholic residents of Washington After a residence of only a few years in the United States he spoke and wrote English with remarkable ease and was a ready preacher in the language of his adopted country, but he was in declining health, with consumption rapidly gaining upon him, and he survived only by two years his arrival in the West The Visitor lavished encomiums on him in a letter to the General, at the same time indicating the impression which his transfer to Missouri was making upon the public

A lovable man, a sterling religious, a most zealous pastor, Father Van Lommel has carried the hearts of all away with him All the Catholics of this city, who number about two thousand, lament his departure bitterly, and I know that it is not at all pleasing to the Archbishop The complaint is made that we are running off to Missouri, and abandoning Virginia, of which he has the administration I have placated the prelate in the most respectful terms, saying it is not in my power to detain any longer the Fathers sent to Missouri, that many of them have come here with the express purpose of passing on to the West and that the Bishops of those parts are anxious for the coming of the fathers and have even written to Rome to obtain others ¹⁸

§ 2 FATHER KENNEY, VISITOR OF MISSOURI

Within a week of the arrival in St Louis of Father Van Lommel and Mr Van Sweevelt, these two Belgians were followed October 24, 1831, by a third, Father Van de Velde, of Georgetown College, together with Father Kenney himself and his socius or assistant, Father William McSherry. On the eve of their departure from the East Kenney and his companion had the pleasant experience of being entertained by the venerable Charles Carroll of Carrollton at his mansion, Doughoregan Manor, Howard County, Maryland The incidents that

¹⁶ Roothaan ad Kenney, June 2, 1831 (AA) Roothaan's statement has been borne out by a careful examination of the correspondence of the Missouri Jesuits with the Father General during the period 1823-1830 No instance has been discovered of any petition on their part for the separation of the missions

¹⁷ "*Proprie pertinent ad Missouri*" Roothaan ad Kenney, January 18, 1831 (AA)

¹⁸ Kenney ad Roothaan, September 15, 1831 (AA)

befell the party on the way were put on record by Father Van de Velde in a series of letters that make a contribution of interest to the literature of early western travel.¹⁹ From Florissant, whence "there is post only once in the week," the Visitor some months after his arrival there informed Father McElroy of Fredericktown that the long journey from the East had been a most unpleasant one, warning him at the same time against exaggerated accounts of the glories of the West

The very recent information sent us by F[ather] V Lommel was quite incorrect and we came the worse way of the two after all We should have gone to Pittsburg, where there was water enough for the smaller boats and we found no other at Wheeling —Most miserable, dirty, crowded, dangerous boats they were There is less danger in going to Ireland than in coming to St Louis Pray for us and make every one pray that we may get safe to Gtown [Georgetown] and do not believe the 10th part of what you hear of the glories of the western waters or the richness of the soil or the beauty of the scenery of the western states There is no doubt something of all this, but the 10th of what is said exceeds the truth of what is found But of all this we give a better account in talking than in writing.²⁰

During his stay of half a year with the Jesuits of the West Father Kenney had every opportunity to study thoroughly the conditions that obtained among them, and he was able in consequence to frame various wise regulations looking to the better government and general welfare of the newly organized mission He arranged for the transfer from Father Van Quickenborne to a board of trustees consisting of Fathers Verhaegen, De Theux and Walsh, of the few parcels of real-estate which the Society of Jesus was then holding in Missouri. He ordained, in this matter carrying out the express wishes of the Father General, that the Jesuits should lend their devoted friend, Bishop Rosati of St. Louis (*praesuli Societatis amantissimo*), every possible assistance in his solemn services at the cathedral, that as often as he pontificated some of their number should be in attendance, and that twice a month one of the fathers should be sent to the cathedral to preach in English. He ordered the transfer to the Bishop of a new residence projected by Father De Theux in the neighborhood of Louisiana in Pike County, Missouri, both because the mission was pitifully short-handed in men and because the proposed residence lay outside the territory assigned the Jesuits by Bishop Du Bourg's Concordat.²¹ One regulation of Father Kenney's was after a brief trial found to be impracticable and in deference to the wishes of Bishop Rosati and the laity was allowed

¹⁹ *WL*, X

²⁰ Kenney to McElroy, St Ferdinand, February 9, 1832 (B)

²¹ Brief report (Latin) on Kenney's visitation of the Missouri Mission (AA)

to lapse. This was that High Mass was to be sung not oftener than twelve Sundays in the year in the churches of Florissant and St. Charles, the only parish-churches then served by resident Jesuit pastors. In framing the regulation the Visitor had said with characteristic vigor of phrase "We are repeatedly admonished in the Institute that High Masses and similar functions which occupy the time and distress the chests of our priests and scholastics are no duty of our vocation. The circumstances of this country alone could justify us in thus employing our missionaries and therefore the frequency of these functions is to be limited strictly to the necessity of the place. High Mass 10 or 12 times a year is as much as this necessity requires and therefore in no church must it be oftener allowed." Though Bishop Rosati did not interfere with this arrangement, he looked upon it, so it became known, with disfavor. The practice of High Mass on all Sundays of the year was accordingly renewed at Florissant and St. Charles.²²

From the beginning of the mission it had been customary for the Jesuits of Missouri to wear the cassock or religious garb not merely within their own houses, but also whenever they left them to appear in public. "A white drab great coat is used in winter, in summer nothing over the habit." When Father Verreydt, garbed in soutane, entered Columbia, Missouri, the people, so he recalled in later years, "wondered and stared at him." "One old lady took me for the head-man of the Freemasons." At a meeting of Father De Theux and his consultors, November 29, 1831, presided over by the Visitor, it was decided that this practice of wearing the cassock in public should be discontinued. The sentiment among the fathers was decidedly in favor of the change, only Fathers Van Quickenborne and De Theux stood for a continuance of the existing custom. To Van Quickenborne especially the innovation was most unwelcome and he is reported to have said that he would have died rather than permit it had the matter rested with him alone. As for Father Kenney, with the discernment that came to him from a wide acquaintance with men and things, he was quick to sense the disadvantages of maintaining in a non-Catholic country a usage that might be adhered to with advantage in countries that had long known the Faith. Even before the Visitor left the East, Father Verhaegen had written to him pleading that the wearing of the cassock outside the cloister be abandoned, and now that he was in St. Louis, the reasons that militated against the custom were earnestly laid before him. The fathers were subject to discourtesies, not to say physical molestation at times on the streets of St. Louis, the leading lay Catholics of the city looked with disfavor on the practice, the student-boarders were reluctant to

²² *Idem* (AA)

accompany the cassocked prefects through the public streets, in fine, the ministry and the educational prestige of the fathers were being daily compromised. Father Kenney, in his report to the General, pictures the grotesqueness of the figure cut by a Jesuit missionary in Missouri as, mounted on horse-back, he wore a Roman soutane tucked around his body and an American hat, a manner of dress neither strictly clerical nor strictly lay, but only a luckless attempt to meet the exigencies of both. Curiously enough, the wearing of the cassock was inevitably associated in the minds of the Indians with the beloved black robe and Father De Smet and his generation of missionaries made it a point never to appear among the red men except so garbed. The ordinance of Father Kenney regulating the use of the cassock ran as follows:

The Visitor having considered the weighty reasons proposed to him by almost all the Fathers, enacts that in future none of our Religious shall wear the cassock or any part of the dress which has eventually become peculiar to the Society, in the public roads or streets of towns or cities, or in general outside of the precincts of our own habitations. The priests and scholastics will in this point conform to the 27th decree of the Provincial Council of Baltimore as practiced in the Diocese of St. Louis. In actual circumstances to dress like Secular Priests appears more conformable to our Institute than to wear that form which is used in countries where the Society is acknowledged as a religious body by the laws of the country. The Institute lays it down as a principle that we have no peculiar dress and admonishes the Provincials that their duty is only to see that in our dress the three following conditions be observed: 1° That it be respectable, 2° that it follow the style in common and approved use among the clergy of good standing of the locality in which one lives, that it be not at variance with the profession of poverty which we make. The lay-brothers and novices are not to dress like priests, but, whatever dress they wear, it must realize the first and third conditions: when the novices are Priests, of course they dress as Priests do.²³

The principal service which Father Kenney rendered to the Missouri Mission was the uniformity of daily routine which he introduced into its houses. He succeeded indeed in placing the details of domestic economy and internal discipline on a working-basis that stood the test of time and has endured more or less unchanged to the present day. His ordinances in this connection were embodied by him in a memorial dated May 8, 1832, the day on which he departed from St. Louis for the East. Filling about sixty pages of an octavo-sized note book and written in clear and forceful English, this document enters into almost

²³ *Memorial left with the Superior of the Mission in Missouri by Rev. Father Peter Kenney, Visitor of the Missions of the Society in the United States, 1832 (A)*

every detail of Jesuit domestic life. Some extracts from it will serve to indicate its character.

The rules of the Prepositus and Rector establish only three points as certain and fixed in the daily distinction of time: 1st—That seven hours intervene between the time of going to bed and the hour of rising, 2^o that an hour be given to recreation every day after dinner and supper. The 4th, 7th and 9th Congregations have also respectively decided, that besides Mass and two examens of conscience daily, all should make an hour's prayer, and should spend the quarter of an hour before the night examen in preparation for the next morning's meditation, and spiritual reading. The 9th Congregation also approved the custom already established of reading every day the litany of the Saints, and ordered that the *Ave Maris Stella, sub tuum praesidium et defende, quaesumus*, should be added to them. The 10th Congregation made the further addition of the prayer, *Deus, qui glorificantes etc* and more recently the Litanies of the Blessed Virgin were prefixed to those of the Saints and the prayer of St. Joseph annexed. To this, General Brzozowski added the prayer of the Sacred Heart. Provided these duties are daily performed and the time allotted given to them, all the details of the daily distribution are left to the Provincials and local Superiors to be arranged according to the customs of the countries and the exigencies of the duties to be performed and of the persons who are to perform them. When, however, conformity to the general usage of the country can exist without any serious disadvantage, it should always be preferred. And therefore the following distribution shall be observed in the Mission of Missouri, as being the more general usage of the Society at present, and the only one adapted to places where the days and nights are much about the same length as in Missouri:

5	Rising	7½	Supper and Recreation
5½	Meditation	9	Litanies
6½	Mass	9¼	Preparation for Meditation
7	Breakfast		
12¼	Examen	9½	Examen
12½	Dinner	9¾	Bed
2	End of Recreation		

The Superiors of the Residences are bound to have great care of the Missioners who are liable to be called out at night to travel great distances in bad weather. They should be furnished with good, safe, strong and swift horses, strong, warm clothing and a good watch which is really necessary to direct them in their lonely journeys, to arrange their stations, spiritual duties etc.

On the sacred duty of charity to the sick who are under our care but especially to those of the Society, the Superior ought to have ever present to his mind the words which the Institute uses on this subject, "*pro repa-*

randa valetudine laxantur spatia charitatis in Societate” With them the Epitome commences p 4 6 8 Sect 2, which contains the substance of what is ordered in the rules of the infirmary and prefect of health The local Superior will consider the practice of every iota therein prescribed as a sacred duty imposed on his conscience

When a physician is called in, the infirmary should carry with him to the chamber of the sick his book with pen and ink and cause every prescription and direction of the physician to be therein noted by the infirmary that no mistake may ever occur, or be supposed to have occurred Greater attention to cleanliness, neatness and ventilation should not be found even in the Sanctuary than the infirmary, and when the sick person is able to take food, no care is too great which can be given to the food which he eats, to the delicate manner of preparing it, and the neatness and regularity with which it should be served, a napkin should be given him and another spread before him, or one used large enough for both purposes, such condiments given him as are allowed and such changes of plate etc as the diversity of food may require On this subject it is impossible here to enter into details the rules already quoted are sufficient direction, but more powerful than any laws will be that charity which for the sake of a suffering brother in Xt “*omnia suffert, omnia sustinet Charitas patiens est, benigna est*” Wo to the Superior through whose fault the life of any member of the Society is shortened, his health diminished or its recovery retarded That the Visitor may not have any share in so awful a malediction, he orders that an infirmary, on the limited plan proposed to him by Father Verhagen, Rector of St Louis College, be immediately built, that it may be in a state to be occupied before the return of the sickly season ²⁴

§ 3 THE VISITOR AND ST. LOUIS COLLEGE

At the time of Father Kenney’s arrival in the West St Louis College had scarcely rounded out its second year as a Jesuit institution It was now, as from the beginning, making a painful uphill fight for bare existence and, inevitably perhaps, made an unfavorable impression on the cultured inspector from overseas. Educational conditions are largely a reflex of social and economic conditions and St Louis at this period had all the earmarks of a crude frontier-town, being in fact America’s last considerable outpost of civilized life towards the setting sun The recorded impressions of the Father Visitor, the impressions, one might say, of an educational expert, are not without interest to the historian of college education west of the Mississippi The Jesuit father, John McElroy, was at this time making the experiment of a classical school for boys in Fredericktown, Maryland, and for his information Father Kenney put on paper a rather realistic account of conditions in the sister institution in St Louis. He noted that religious instruction was receiv-

²⁴ *Idem* (A)

ing a due measure of attention, even the non-Catholic students, who numbered fifty-one out of a total registration of one hundred and fifty-two, not being neglected on this score "But," he continued, "I am sorry to say that the object next in importance, which is that of a classical education, is very far from being realized, nor is there any immediate prospect of this department being more flourishing" He deprecated the "great flourishing in the Prospectus about Rhetoric, Philosophy, classics etc" and "the glowing hopes and brilliant course of studies found in the pages of a Prospectus or in the reports of an Exhibition, but for which we seek in vain *a parte rei!* It is said that high sounds and a little boasting does much in this country. If it do, it will not last long Such mists disappear as the sun rises" The rather ambitious program of studies announced in the first prospectus of St. Louis College was, it is clear, an ideal to be worked up to rather than a goal actually achieved. "To teach 12 boys is Mr. Van de Velde's sole occupation¹ with the exception of Mathematics 3 times in the week, which, however, is included in his 5 hours per day, the limit now fixed to the Master's labours . . . There is a class of French taught by Mr. Verhaegen the rector 3 times a week and good F. V. Quickenborne spends his 2 hours every day with 8 Latin scholars, who, being also half-rhetoricians and therefore give [*sic*] only 1 hour to Latin, threaten to revive the Augustan age with their proficiency in Cornelius Nepos" ²⁵

Passing from the topic of the classics and the unpromising outlook before them in St. Louis College, the Visitor in a report to the Father General broached the larger question whether after all it was worth while for the members of the order to conduct institutions of a type such as the one he had come to know on the banks of the Mississippi. The presence of the Belgian fathers in St. Louis was admittedly a source of great satisfaction to the Bishop. Moreover with an industry and success beyond all praise they had learned to understand, speak and write the English language and had endeared themselves to the English-speaking Catholics of the city. After the completion of the cathedral, then in process of erection, they were to have a church of their own and from this as a center, even should the college collapse (*quod Deus avertat*), they could minister with the greatest fruit to the spiritual needs of the English-speaking residents of St. Louis. On the other hand, there was the disconcerting fact that the education of one hundred and fifty boys, fifty-one of them non-Catholics, was engaging the energies, well nigh to the point of exhaustion, of a staff of seven fathers, one scholastic and three brothers. Of the entire number of

²⁵ Kenney to McElroy, February 9, 1832 (B)

students, moreover, only eight were taking Latin. It was open to doubt whether the results measured up to the energy expended, a consideration all the more urgent "in these United States where, turn where a man will, he finds Catholic families scattered here and there in very great numbers, who have neither Mass nor sacraments, sometimes not even baptism itself. How many non-Catholics, too, would not seven priests of the calibre we have here bring to our holy faith, were they to occupy themselves in serving missions. The excellent Father Peeters, whom I cannot mention without tears, learned English and in the space of two years, in one of two missions which he attended, converted 30 non-Catholics. In what length of time shall 30 be brought over to the faith out of the 50 non-Catholic students in whose instruction 7 priests are every day employed?" The situation would indeed offer no ground of complaint if circumstances of time and place only permitted the faculty to impart a more serious type of education. But "the young men go forth superficially educated in every way. They speak proudly of eloquence, rhetoric, and of its figures, but of the Greek and Latin authors there is ignorance profound. . . . To my mind, then, the greatest drawback of all results from the nature of the education which is demanded in the day-schools of small towns and even in the boarding-schools, where any better training does not commend itself to the parents. In these western parts everything is in the cradle. A fairly large registration, more populous cities and material resources are required for the cultivation of letters and the sciences, but I don't know what fatality has so far driven the Jesuits to avoid the better-known cities and take in hand the cultivation of this stubborn soil. I should not readily advise that colleges of this kind be opened by Ours in similar localities, for I doubt whether the results would answer to the labor entailed. Is it in the interest of the common good that our priests wear out their strength and spend their days in the management of colleges such as this?"²⁶

In the same letter from which quotation has just been made the Visitor requested the Father General to impress upon the St. Louis Jesuits the necessity of promoting the study of Latin and Greek. This they were not doing for fear that parents as a result of solicitations in this direction might withdraw their sons from college altogether. Reacting to the representations made by the Visitor, Father Roothaan, as in his letter of October 25, 1832, to Father Verhaegen, made a strong plea for classical education as a practical ideal even in the uncongenial environment of the American West. "I should wish, however, that the

²⁶ Kenney ad Roothaan, April 25, 1832 (AA). Father John Peeters, a Belgian, died at Frederick, Md., in 1831 at the age of thirty-one.

education and instruction imparted be brought into closer alignment with the standards of the Society and that the Latin and Greek languages be better cultivated. For to give the majority of the students only those subjects which are everywhere given equally well by junior clergymen and even laymen is not an affair of such great moment that so many of our priests should spend their time and strength in occupation of this sort, especially when the scarcity of apostolic men is so great and the harvest so vast. You ought to see whether persons cannot be found among you willing and able to teach schools of this kind under our direction." To the Visitor, Father Roothaan was revealing at the same time (October 23, 1832) his disappointment over the unpromising outlook at St. Louis. "The College of St. Louis! What is to be done! It certainly cannot now be abolished and so must be tolerated. Meantime the Fathers there are to be urged to come nearer by degrees to our system of studies and especially to give more attention to Latin."

The St. Louis Jesuits were, as a matter of fact, merely facing a situation which for the moment they had no means of bettering. The classics have never been a marketable commodity in a frontier settlement. The education based upon them simply had to bide its time. The time came and with it St. Louis College made of the classics of the ancient world the staple of the education which it offered to the public. Meantime, Father Verhaegen was careful to acquaint the General with the difficulties that beset for the moment any insistence on high educational ideals. "We are placing on the pursuit of letters just that degree of emphasis which the state of our infant country allows. Things here, Reverend Father, are all new and must be moulded into shape. The study of languages, if you except English and French, has no great attraction for the young. This defect will be remedied only in the course of time, namely, when the family affairs of the inhabitants become more settled and an end be put to all these changes and shiftings of residence." At the beginning of the session 1833-1834 the students taking Latin numbered thirty as compared with eight in January, 1832, while the Greek class showed a membership of eight. By July, 1834, the Greek class had ceased to be, the students previously in attendance having withdrawn from the class or perhaps from college altogether, while other students could not obtain permission from their parents to take up the study. Three years was the average term of a boy at college, and so, Verhaegen observes, "since they know scarcely anything when they come to college, few are permitted to finish the classical course, as it is called." Only at a subsequent period did circumstances allow of a more respectable position for the classics and a more satisfactory organization of the entire scheme of studies as shall be seen at a later stage of this history.

§ 4 CLOSE OF THE VISITATION

The winter of 1831-1832 was of exceptional severity, greatly to the discomfort of Father Kenney, who suffered from chronic asthma and seemed peculiarly sensitive to the idiosyncrasies of Missouri weather "Was it a friend or an enemy," he puts the question to Father Dzierozynski, "who counselled us to come here in the winter-time?" Writing from Florissant to the Father General, he enlarges on the same topic of Missouri weather or climate, which, to judge from the prevailing good health of the western Jesuits, seemed to be of a rather wholesome sort after all

I am living in a solitude I have it on hearsay that the world goes on as usual, but outside our domestic walls I see nothing at all but the sky, which is very often clouded, or the snow or the earth, sometimes frozen, sometimes drenched with rain, such have been the fluctuations of weather from the beginning of December to this very day A brisk wind is almost constantly blowing from the Northwest and it nearly freezes one's blood At St Louis the great Mississippi River, which flows with a swift current of 3[?] miles an hour, was so thoroughly frozen over for almost two months that whatever came to market from the opposite or Illinois shore, (all commodities for the provisioning of the town come from that quarter), was carried across in wagons drawn by horses or oxen And these things happen at 30 degrees North Latitude, the same to wit, as that of Palermo, where it is ever pleasant, where winter is only another placid summer and where even the Sirocco is scarcely felt And yet all our men here, 21 in number and grouped in three houses, enjoy good health, though subject to bilious fever, all except Brother Henry Reiselman, who, I fear, is wearing out with slow disease and work ²⁷

During Father Kenney's stay in the West his services as a preacher were in frequent requisition, "Father Visitor has preached often in our mission especially in St Louis," we read in a contemporary letter, "the people are in rapture when they speak of him" ²⁸ Bishop Rosati was especially drawn to Kenney, in whom he recognized one who might render great services to the Church in the United States A present of a set of breviaries made by the prelate to the Jesuit elicited a note of acknowledgment

I embrace the opportunity offered by the visit of Father Rector to acknowledge the receipt of your kind note accompanying your most esteemed gift of a new set of breviaries They would have been under any

²⁷ Kenney ad Roothaan, February 22, 1832 (AA) Father Kenney had made his seminary studies in the Jesuit scholasticate at Palermo in Sicily

²⁸ Van Lommel to Dzierozynski, April 30, 1832 (B)

circumstances a most acceptable present, but the donation is rendered truly invaluable by the hand that offers it and the motive in which the beneficent deed originated. Be pleased, then, Rt Rev and very dear Sir, to accept my most grateful thanks for this Vade Mecum with which you have supplied me for the remainder of my days. My poor eyes shall begin with this Spring Quarter to enjoy the charity of your valuable consideration and therefore I shall have in my hands thrice a day this pleasing memento of my many obligations of praying for so respected a friend and so kind a benefactor. The consolation and edification which I have received at witnessing the progress of Religion in this diocese have interested me very much in everything connected with this grand object which you have so much at heart. I deeply participate in the gratitude which, I am sure, the whole flock feel to the Holy Father for his munificent donation to the Cathedral, and already on that account I have celebrated many Masses for the long and happy pontificate of Gregory 16th in spite of all the Carbonari and philosophers that Italy or France can produce.²⁹

On May 8, 1832, Father Kenney, having finished his visitation of the Missouri Mission, departed from St Louis for the East. That same day Father Verhaegen wrote to Dzierozynski: "We are all doing finely, but alas! in losing today our excellent Father Visitor, we lose a treasure."³⁰ And some months later he informed the General: "The visitation of Rev. Father Kenney was of the greatest utility to our mission. He taught us a number of things which concern the spirit of our Institute and left with us a memorial of regulations. As long as we loyally keep to it as we are doing now, everything here will go on well."³¹

Some months later than the departure of Father Kenney the question of advancing the mission of Maryland to the status of a vice-province came under discussion. At a meeting at Georgetown College, August 28, 1832, attended by the consultors as well of the college as of the mission, and presided over by the Visitor, it was agreed to petition the Father General that Maryland be erected into a province rather than a vice-province and that at the same time the Missouri Mission be made an integral part of the new province, which was to cover territorially the entire Union and to be known accordingly as the

²⁹ Kenney to Rosati, May, 1832 (C) "You will allow me to discharge the pleasing duty of manifesting the very grateful feeling which I entertain for the kindness and attention which on so many occasions I experienced from you during my stay in the Missouri. Were there no other benefit derived from my visit to that part of these states than the advantage of a personal acquaintance with the Bishop of St Louis and of extending a due and cordial cooperation with him from every member of the Society in his diocese, I should not esteem time lost or labour useless." Kenney to Rosati, June 29, 1832 (C)

³⁰ Verhaegen to Dzierozynski, St Louis, May 8, 1832 (B)

³¹ Verhaegen ad Roothaan, August 25, 1832 (AA)

province of North America or of the United States of North America. Further, request was made that, if Missouri was not to come in, the proposed province be extended west at least as far as to take in Ohio and Michigan Territory and even Kentucky, in case the French Jesuits settled in the last-named state should withdraw to another field. Kenney, while forwarding the petition of the Maryland Jesuits to Rome, declared to the Father General that his duty as Visitor of the Missouri Mission, of which office he had not yet been relieved, did not permit him to indorse so important a step as the reunion of Missouri with Maryland before the superior and consultors of the western mission had been sounded out concerning it. Moreover, he was personally of the opinion that the proposed reunion was not the expedient thing under the circumstances and would not promote the Jesuit objective of God's greater glory.³² The protest voiced by the Father Visitor had effect, and when in 1833 the province of Maryland was erected, with Father William McSherry as first provincial superior, the status of Missouri as an unattached and independent mission remained unchanged.

An episode growing out of Father Kenney's visit to the West finds place here. Passing through Cincinnati in September, 1831, on his way to St. Louis, he was there entertained by the Dominican, Bishop Edward Fenwick, who was so favorably impressed by him that he made efforts to obtain his appointment as Coadjutor of Cincinnati. From Detroit August 23, 1832, he communicated to Bishop Rosati his desire in this regard:

I have solicited the holy Father to grant me Father Kenney, Superior of the Society of Jesus in the United States of America for coadjutor at Cincinnati—his talents, piety, experience and other eminent qualities are well known and sufficiently recommend him. If stationed at Cincinnati as Bp, he would no doubt much promote the cause of our h[oly] religion in the western countries, the honour and propagation of the Society of Jesus which I respect and admire much as one of the most meritorious and useful religious Societies to the church and the world at large. In case I can obtain him for the above purpose I would make a very sensible or trying and great sacrifice of my very best and affectionate Vicar Gen'l Reze for Detroit in Michigan, where he is much esteemed and venerated—possessing the full confidence and respect of all the clergy of Michigan—more so than in this. But to part with him before he is replaced by Father Kenney at Cincinnati would occasion my death, perhaps immediately, and the ruin of my diocese. You will please to weigh these reflections and be so kind as to second my petition to the H[oly] Father and Cardinal Pedicini in the *manner* I have expressed myself. I do not know the baptismal name of Fr

³² Kenney ad Roothaan, August 28, September 9, 1832 (AA)

Kenney, you will please to express it in your letter to Rome Write soon, favor me with an answer about 1st of October, endorse on the letter *Soli* after my name in order that my Vcr [Vicar] G[enera]l may not open it in my absence

With this request of Bishop Fenwick the Bishop of St. Louis promptly complied, recommending to the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda the appointment of Kenney as Coadjutor of Cincinnati "He needs no commendation for it is clear enough and even abundantly so, to judge from the office assigned him by the superiors of his Society, that he must be a man of no ordinary mark For the rest, I had ample enough opportunity to become acquainted with his learning, piety, prudence, singular eloquence and suavity of manner when during the past year, while visiting the houses of his Society, he spent several months with us to the very great edification of all Eligible, therefore, as he is in every respect, I deem him most worthy of being raised to the episcopal dignity."³³

Within a few weeks of this correspondence Bishop Fenwick, suddenly stricken with cholera while making a visitation of his diocese, was carried off from the scene of his ever-growing usefulness to the Church in the West Meantime, Bishop Rosati had taken up with the Propaganda and with Archbishop Whitfield of Baltimore the matter of Kenney's appointment to the see of Cincinnati The Archbishop showed himself unfavorable to the proposal, preferring an American-born bishop to fill the vacancy Moreover, having conferred with Father Mulledy, rector of Georgetown College, he was informed that Kenney had already declined the coadjutorship of Dublin and, moreover, being a professed Jesuit, could not accept the appointment unless so ordered by the Holy See.³⁴ Still, Kenney's nomination to Cincinnati was sub-

³³ E Fenwick to Rosati, Detroit, August 23, 1832 (C) *Soli*, a Latin term signifying that the letter is for the addressee *alone* Rosati ad Pedicini, September 5, 1831 Kenrick Seminary Archives

³⁴ Whitfield to Rosati, December 12, 1832 (C) Somewhat later Archbishop Whitfield proposed Father Stephen Dubuisson, a French Jesuit of Georgetown, as *dignissimus* in a terna for Cincinnati which he sent to Rome "The Superior, Father Kenney, has written to the General at Rome and desired me to do all in my power to prevent his election And indeed I have mentioned his reluctance and his asthma, as he desired, and expressed my opinion to be conformable to his, that his health might be a good reason to excuse him" Whitfield to Rosati, March 19, 1833 (B) Kenney had written to Archbishop Whitfield, December 30, 1832, expressing his "utter repugnance and insurmountable dread of the episcopal charge

My age, infirmity, my want of knowledge of everything in the diocese, clergy, laity, and country, etc If the case be thus exposed to them I am confident that they will not advise the pope to force me by a precept of obedience to accept of such a charge"

mitted to Rome and would have been acted upon favorably were it not for the earnest intervention of Father Roothaan. It was a happy circumstance for the nominee that Father McSherry, who had been Kenney's assistant or socius in the visitation of Missouri, chanced just then to be in Rome, whence he was shortly to return as the first provincial of the newly erected province of Maryland. Writing to McSherry, Kenney urged among other objections to the appointment the condition of his health: "When I think of all that you could suggest to the General to oppose this measure, it appears to me quite improbable that the Pope would be induced to force me by a precept of obedience into this new, arduous and most responsible situation in my 54th year, afflicted with an asthma which in the winter of this cold climate is very annoying and must prevent that exertion which such a charge in this country will ever require."³⁵

A note of keen satisfaction over the issue of the affair runs through the lines in which Father Roothaan advised Kenney that he had been spared the threatened dignity.

After celebrating Mass today as also yesterday in thanksgiving for the escape of your Reverence and of the Society from the danger of the Cincinnati bishopric, I begin this letter by congratulating your Reverence and ourselves and especially your own Ireland, which certainly would have taken it very hard to be deprived of your Reverence forever. The danger was certainly very serious and quite imminent, and although, when I first came to hear, in November, if I mistake not, that something was going on, I did not fail in my duty under the circumstances, still in these last days the matter was pressed more earnestly than before and the Holy Father left me little hope. But finally, in the Congregation held before his Holiness on the 25th of this month, the reasons which I had presented shortly before in writing had their effect, namely, about your Reverence's health and Ireland's longing for you, for it never ceases to call your Reverence back. Thanks be to God, Who has rescued us and in Whom is our hope that He will rescue us still again.³⁶

Father Kenney survived this incident eight years, dying November 18, 1841, in Rome where he was attending a congregation of Jesuit procurators as a representative of the vice-province of Ireland. A cold taken on the way to Rome complicated with the ailment that had stood successfully between him and the see of Cincinnati hastened his death, which came with suddenness. He had assisted at a session of the congregation in the morning and on the evening of the same day was dead.

³⁵ Kenney to McSherry, January 14, 1833 (AA)

³⁶ Roothaan ad Kenney, February 28, 1833 (AA)