

The View from The Bluff August 2020

SISTERS OF CHARITY OF OUR LADY OF MERCY

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

I FOUND IT
IN THE ARCHIVES



*Sister
M. Euphrasia Mullane*



Ellen Mullane, the future Sister M. Euphrasia, was born in 1855 in the Parish Castle Magner in the Diocese of Clyne, County Cork, Ireland. Her parents, John and Nora Mullane, moved the family to America during Ellen's childhood. They settled in Augusta, Georgia, where Ellen attended St. Mary's Academy which was conducted by the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy of Savannah who had separated from the Charleston Community in 1849. Ellen is first mentioned in the OLM Council Minutes of December 22, 1882 which state that the Reverend JC Shannahan of Augusta, Georgia, recommended Miss Mullane for membership in the OLM Community. On January 24, 1883, Ellen entered the OLM Community. At her Reception on November 21, 1883, she received the habit and the name, Sister Mary Euphrasia. She was professed on July 2, 1885. For the next forty-six years she taught and cared for the children at the Orphanage on Queen Street, Charleston. She would have been living there during the earthquake of 1886 which damaged the original building and resulted in the erection of a new building in 1887. The Home was also the Motherhouse of the OLM Community and housed only girls until 1901. In that year the boys' and girls' orphanages were merged in the Queen Street facility, and the Motherhouse moved to the Russell House on Meeting Street. Sister Euphrasia continued to live and care for the children at the Orphanage on Queen Street until the early 1930s.

On February 2, 1933 the OLM Community celebrated Sister Euphrasia's golden jubilee. In the morning a High Mass was celebrated in the Mother House on Legare Street where the jubilarian was then living. The Reverend Eugene Egan, O.S.B., of Greensboro, North Carolina, a relative of Sister Euphrasia, was the celebrant. Friends and relatives visited throughout the day. In the evening the novices presented a program of instrumental and vocal selections. The following day, February 3, the Sisters and children living at the Orphanage on Queen Street gave a program of songs and recitations. The

newspaper account of the celebration stated "Time rests lightly on this veteran Sister, who is still very active and who makes occasional visits to the sick of the city, for she is never happier than when performing some deed of mercy." Sister Euphrasia died on June 21, 1936 at the Convent of Our Lady of Mercy, Legare Street, at age eighty-one. The children of the Orphanage attended the funeral in a body and formed a bodyguard as the remains were taken from the Convent. Sister Euphrasia is buried in St Lawrence Cemetery.

SISTER EUPHRASIA 53 YEARS A NUN

CHARLESTON, S. C. —Sister Mary Euphrasia Mullane died at noon at the Convent of Our Lady of Mercy, June 21 at the age of eighty-one years. She was born in County Cork, Ireland, and was known in the world as Ellen Mullane, the only daughter of John G. and Johanna Ryan Mullane of Augusta, Ga.

Sister Euphrasia was educated in the Catholic schools of Augusta. She entered the Community of the Sisters there in 1883. For over forty years Sister Euphrasia devoted her time and her interests in caring for the orphan girls. Her tender care of these children and her gentle ministrations to the sick endeared her to them and won for her their love and gratitude. When her advancing years made it impossible for her to be on active duty with the little ones at the Orphanage, she was transferred to the Mother House where she spent her closing years.

She celebrated her Golden Jubilee three years ago. The Jubilee Mass was sung by her cousin, the Rev. Father Eugene Egan, O.S.B., of Belmont Abbey. The Bulletin carried an account of the celebration. Sister Euphrasia was widely known in Augusta, where she has many relatives.

Surviving Sister Euphrasia are her sister-in-law, Mrs. M. J. Mullane, one niece, Catherine Mullane, and four nephews, Ryan, Will and Philip Mullane of Birmingham, Ala., John Mullane of Washington, D. C., a niece, Mrs. Eugene Clark of Mobile, and eight grandnieces and nephews.

A High Requiem Mass was celebrated in the Convent Chapel, the Very Rev. John L. Manning, D.D., of the Cathedral being celebrant of the Mass, and the Rev. John Clancy of St. Patrick's Church, deacon with the Rev. Father Guinea of Sacred Heart Church, sub-deacon. The Cathedral choir rendered the music. The Rt. Rev. Magr. James J. May, V.G., was present in the sanctuary, and a number of the clergy of the city were also present at the mass and the services. The children of the Orphanage attended the funeral in a body and formed a bodyguard as the remains were being taken from the Convent. The Chapel was well filled with many friends of Sister Euphrasia who on account of her unselfish thought for others drew many to her. Sister Euphrasia was laid to rest in the Sisters' plot in St. Lawrence Cemetery.

The pallbearers were vestrymen from the various Catholic churches of Charleston, John Riley, William Ehrenhardt, John Rooney, George Spain, William Condon, Thomas O'Brien.



Source: Bulletin of the Catholic Laymen's Association of Georgia, June 25, 1936



Sister M. Celestine Kennedy 1899-1978



Sister M. Celestine, formerly Ruth Elizabeth Kennedy, was born in Charleston on March 5, 1899 and baptized in St. Patrick's Church on March 19, 1899. Her parents, Patrick Henry Kennedy and Susan Cahill Kennedy, both Charlestonians, had another daughter whose name is not recorded, and a son, Henry P. Kennedy. Ruth received her elementary education in the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy which she attended from 1906 to 1915. Two years later, 1917, she graduated from Bishop England High School with a commercial diploma. Ruth entered the OLM Community on December 8, 1919 and was professed on June 23, 1922. For many summers thereafter she studied at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, and Marywood College in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

Sister M. Celestine served most of her life as a classroom teacher. She taught at St. Patrick's School in Charleston, St. Mary's in Greenville, St. William's in Ward, SC, St. Angela's Academy in Aiken, and St.

Andrew's in Myrtle Beach. From 1955 to 1958 she served as the Local Superior of the OLMs living in the Sisters' quarters in the Nursing School at St. Francis Xavier Hospital, Charleston. Her last years were spent at Divine Saviour Nursing Home, York, South Carolina. She died there on August 27, 1978. Funeral services were held at May Forest, the OLM Motherhouse on James Island, SC. Sister M. Celestine is buried at Holy Cross Cemetery.



Greenville, SC. Seated: Srs. Martha Croghan, Genevieve Cross, Catherine Smith, Immaculata Codere, Francis Robb. Standing: Srs. Gerald O'Brien, Ursula Riles, Celestine Kennedy.



Sister Celestine Kennedy



Sister M. Magdalen Bartley 1790-1858

Elizabeth (or Eliza) Bartley, the future Sister M. Magdalen, was born in County Longford, Ireland. She was 42 years old when she entered the OLM Community on August 12, 1832. Our records provide little information about her life in Charleston prior to her entrance. However, other sources note that she was a devoted friend of Mrs. Jane Corcoran, the mother of the Rev. James A. Corcoran, theologian, educator, and editor of the US Catholic Miscellany from 1850 to 1861. Mrs. Corcoran's husband, John Corcoran, died in 1819. Following his death Mrs. Jane Corcoran continued to run a small grocery on King Street and raise her two sons, James and John, with the help of her friend, Elizabeth Bartley. When Jane Corcoran died in 1832, having made arrangements for the boys' care, Elizabeth entered the convent. She was professed in November 1833, the twelfth member of Bishop England's Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. In March of 1835 the Bishop appointed Sr. Magdalen the Assistant to Mother Benedicta Datty. Following Mother Benedicta's death in October 1836, Sister Magdalen served as Mother Superior until 1838. The records state that she was the Infirmarian for the Community in 1841 in their Motherhouse on Queen Street. She also served in the temporary hospital which Bishop England established for working men, members of the Brotherhood of San Marino, and their families during the fever epidemics which visited Charleston. She was among the OLMs chosen for the Savannah Mission in June 1845. However, she returned to Charleston in February 1846 due to poor health. The records for the next twelve years are silent concerning Sister Magdalen until her death on August 24, 1858. However, the September 4, 1858 edition of the United States Catholic Miscellany contained the following obituary. It may have been written by Father James A. Corcoran, who was then the editor of the newspaper.

UNITED STATES CATHOLIC MISCELLANY.

Charleston, Saturday, September 4, 1858.

OBITUARY.

Departed this life on Wednesday, 25th. ult., Sister MARY MAGDALEN, in the 73rd year of her age. The deceased was a native of Longford, Ireland, but has resided in Charleston for upwards of forty years. Twenty-five years ago, the death of a dear friend to whom she was devotedly attached and of whose family she had been an old and cherished inmate, broke the last link that bound her to the world, and enabled her to fulfil the resolution she had long entertained of entering the Religious state. She joined the Sisters of Mercy, a community then in its infancy amongst us, and applied herself with diligence and zeal to the study of that perfection, to the acquisition of which her life was thenceforth to be devoted. She was, as her Rev. Superior remarked in her funeral discourse, a model Religious, an example to all in observance of rule, and fulfillment of all duties of her state. Of late years her infirmities allowed her no share in those active duties of charity, which form the chief occupation of the Sisters of Mercy; but she bore this enforced rest from labour with the same calmness and resignation with which she had met the toilsome, onerous duties of other days. If there be any of her virtues, and she had many, which deserve special mention, we should name first of all her cheerfulness and her charity--charity in thought and word, as well as deed, to all her neighbours. The first an unfailing index of a pure peaceful sou; the other declared by Christ himself to be the best test of true love for Him. For the last seven or eight months, her growing ill-health confined her entirely to her room; yet she complained not of her sufferings. The only privation that she deeply felt, was her inability to assist at the Holy Sacrifice.

For the last two or three months her sufferings have been intense, but she bore them with Christian fortitude; and even that last moment, to which her friends looked hopefully as the release of her innocent soul from its painful bondage, she herself viewed only in the light of God's will--neither wishing nor fearing it, but ready to welcome it, whenever it should please Him to send it. Her death was calm and holy, befitting her life; it was no painful effort, no violent disruption of earthly ties; it was the tranquil sinking to rest of a Christian soul, after three score years and ten of a holy and meritorious life.

The funeral was celebrated in the Cathedral, on Friday, 27th ult., with a large attendance of the faithful. The High Mass was sung by the Rev. J. A. Corcoran, D. D., and a discourse, suitable to the occasion, was delivered by the Rev. T. J. Sullivan, Superior of the Sisters. Amongst the pallbearers and others present, we recognized many, who, like herself, had seen the day when Catholicity here was in its infancy, a poor, despised thing, a "mark for contradiction." Her remains sleep with those of two other Religious of the same community, in the Sisters' lot, at St. Laurence's Cemetery.



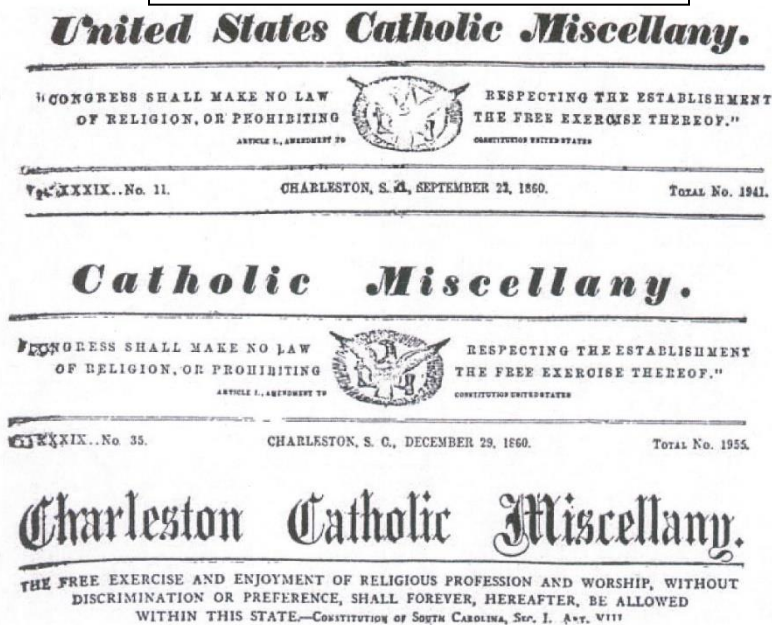
Rev. James Andrew Corcoran, theologian, editor. Corcoran was born in Charleston on March 30, 1820, the fourth child of John Corcoran, a grocer, and his wife Jane O'Farrell. The Corcorans emigrated from Ireland in 1816 and settled in Charleston, where they operated a small grocery on King Street. John Corcoran died in 1819, and James was born five months later.

Corcoran attended the boys' Classical Academy founded in Charleston by John England. England sent him to Rome in 1833 for seminary studies. In 1842 he was ordained. Returning to Charleston in 1843, he did parish work at St. Mary's Church and St. Finbar's Cathedral and taught at St. John the Baptist Seminary and the Catholic English and Classical School.

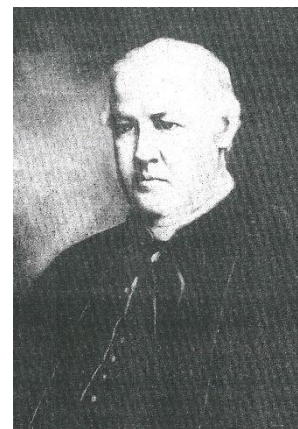
From 1850 to 1861 Corcoran served as editor of the *United States Catholic Miscellany*. When South Carolina seceded from the Union, Corcoran renamed the paper the *Catholic Miscellany*, expunging "those two obnoxious words" "United States." The paper was destroyed in the great Charleston fire of December 1861. From 1861 to 1868 Corcoran was pastor in Wilmington, NC, and distinguished himself by his work to alleviate suffering of both Catholics and non-Catholics. He served as vicar general of the

Diocese of Charleston. Loyal to the Confederacy to the end, he resisted taking the oath of allegiance to the United States. In 1868 he was chosen by the American bishops as representative to Rome to participate in preparatory work for the First Vatican Council. Returning to America after the Vatican Council, Corcoran became professor of theology, scripture, and Hebrew at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, Overbrook, Pennsylvania. Under his leadership, its educational program emphasized modern scholarship and student access to a good library. In

VARIOUS MASTHEADS FOR THE MISCELLANY



1876 he founded the *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, a national journal of Catholic opinion on theology, history, political, and social topics. After a long bout with Bright's disease, Corcoran died in Philadelphia on July 16, 1889. He was buried



in the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul, Philadelphia. (source: South Carolina Encyclopedia)

AN INTERESTING ARTICLE FROM *CATHOLIC EXTENSION MAGAZINE*

All Catholic Extension **chapel cars** were temporarily grounded during the 1918 Spanish Flu.

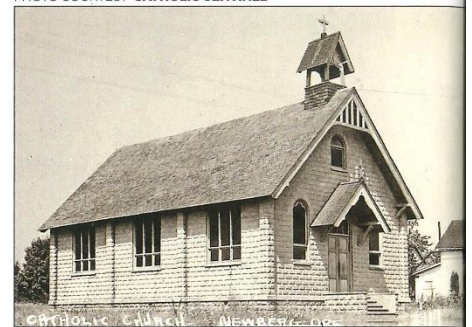


Catholic Extension founder **Father Francis Clement Kelley** protected faith communities during the pandemic and also advocated for religious freedom as World War I was drawing to a close.

ALL CHURCHES ORDERED CLOSED TO STOP SPREAD OF INFLUENZA

All meetings in churches, on week days and Sundays, were prohibited today as the latest move by the department of health against Spanish influenza. Director Davis said that Red Cross auxiliaries will be permitted to maintain work rooms in churches. No funeral services at churches will be permitted.

PHOTO COURTESY CATHOLIC SENTINEL



What we learned about

Response during earlier pandemic is foundation for our action today

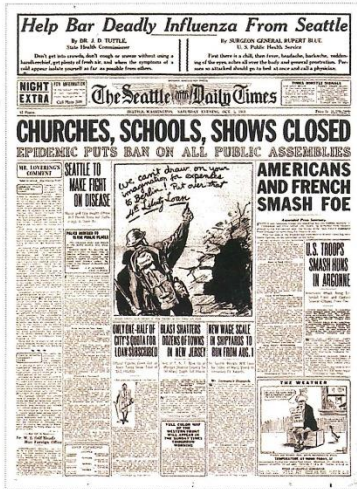
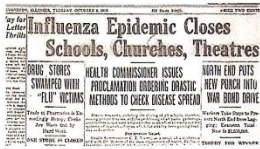
As one of a few organizations that endured the 1918 Spanish Flu and the COVID-19 pandemic, we looked into our archives to learn more about how we responded back then. We learned that our famous “chapel rail cars” were temporarily halted. Theaters, schools and churches along with other public ven-

ues were shuttered much like today. We also learned that an *Extension* magazine staff member, John F. Bankow, a 23-year-old illustrator, died at the peak of the influenza outbreak in October 1918. Interestingly, we learned that many publications were prohibited from talking about the pandemic given that it coincided with the ending of World War I.

At that vital moment of history, our founder, Father Francis Clement Kelley, was not looking back, he was looking forward.

He understood that he was living in a transformative time of history that would shape the future. Speaking to his national audience through *Extension* magazine during the pandemic and just weeks after the end of the war, he pondered how their actions could define who they would become as a society from that point forward.

In his January 1919 editorial, Father Kelley spoke of the dream for lasting peace that was on everyone’s mind after whole nations had been forever scarred by so much



U.S. newspapers reported the closing of churches and public spaces. **St. Peter Church, left, in Newberg, Oregon**, which Catholic Extension helped build in 1908, closed briefly.



Sisters nationwide, including these in **San Francisco**, responded creatively and fearlessly by undertaking new roles to help Americans navigate the crisis. At the time, Catholic Extension was helping to build and repair churches in that area.



For months in 1918, **priests on chapel cars** had to halt services to isolated Catholics.

the 1918 pandemic

death and suffering. He asked a timeless question that still resonates today:

"What will the historian a century hence have to say of us?"

Father Kelley sought to bring peace by sailing to Europe to attend treaty talks among the newly formed League of Nations. His goal was to advocate for those in the Americas experiencing religious persecution, such as Mexican clergy, religious and seminarians caught in the political revolution in Mexico at that time. These religious exiles, who had fled to the U.S., were being supported by Catholic Extension.

In this time, when so much is unknown, we are certain of this: While supporting faith communities among the poor is always important, it is in times like these that their role is never more vital, as is Catholic Extension's mission to walk with them in solidarity. These Catholic faith communities are not only a source of hope, healing and help for the spiritual, psychological and economic victims of this pandemic, but are also a reminder of our universal duty to "flatten the curve" of rampant indifference and abandonment that the poor face in times of pandemics and in all other times.

What will the historian a century hence have to say of us?"

—FATHER KELLEY, regarding the need to consider the future in navigating a current crisis

Our friendship with and support of poor parishes will hopefully help inoculate us against what Pope Francis describes as an even "worse virus" than COVID-19, which is that of "selfish indifference." And, paraphrasing Father Kelley, "What will they say about us a century from now?" 🇺🇸