



MULHALL: (1851 – 1923)

Barbara Mulhall, one of thirteen children, was born in Dublin in 1851. At the age of 12 she attended Loreto's Gorey Convent school (where M. Gonzaga Barry was Mistress of Novices and then Superior). She became a nun in 1868, receiving her religious name of Mary Stanislaus.

Mother Stanislaus Mulhall was one of the early members of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or Loreto Sisters, to come to Australia and make her contribution to education. She joined Mother Gonzaga Barry and the founding Loreto Sisters in Ballarat in 1883 and established Mary's Mount's first orchestra and taught the violin and harp.

Mother Stanislaus was to develop the training of novices in the role of Novice Mistress and to become the second Provincial, or leader, of the Loreto Sisters

in 1915.

On becoming Novice Mistress in 1885, a position which she held for 30 years, Mother Stanislaus was the spiritual guide for novices who went on to give their lives in the service of God in the form of educating the girls of Ballarat and throughout Australia. She cared for the novices with the belief that "The good novice eats well, sleeps well, and prays well". She imparted a love for Mary Ward to the young women who entered the Institute.

Mother Stanislaus taught and undertook the spiritual direction of the Countess Elizabeth Wolff-Metternich during her time at Mary's Mount. The Countess had been travelling for her health and fortuitously found her way to the Convent in Ballarat in 1898, spending a year there before deciding to join the Institute. Mother Stanislaus was deeply saddened when her protégé died on a journey back to Germany to settle family affairs. The Countess Elizabeth bequeathed a large sum of money which was used to complete the building of the Loreto Chapel.

Mother Stanislaus' deep spirituality combined with her passion for teaching led her to prepare teaching exercises, write spiritual books and give retreats for members of Loreto and the wider community of Ballarat. M. Stanislaus was one the authors of the First IBVM Constitutions printed in 1914.

On the death of M. Gonzaga Barry, M. Stanislaus Mulhall was elected Provincial Superior in 1916. As Provincial, Mother Stanislaus founded the University of Melbourne's St. Mary's Hall in 1918. This College was a long dreamt of achievement, providing education and accommodation for the young women of Victoria pursuing a University education. It offered the means for the girls of rural areas in particular to continue their education in a safe and secure environment with the spiritual and physical support of the Loreto Sisters.

In 1920 she enabled the purchase and establishment of Loreto College Marryatville at 'The Acacias' property. She also initiated investigations in the purchase of a property in Toorak for the establishment of Loreto Mandeville Hall which took place after her death.

Mother Stanislaus died in Ballarat in her favourite month of May, 1923, after spending her life fostering the spirituality of her community.

