

CATHOLIC RECORD SOCIETY

Diocese of Columbus

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COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215

SISTER MONICA MAGINNIS, O. S. U.

RELIGIOUS AND SCHOLAR

By Herman E. Mattingly

Religious and scholar could well be the designation for Sister Monica Maginnis, O.S.U. of the famed Ursuline Sisters of Brown County, Ohio, and a member of the prominent Maginnis family of Zanesville, Ohio. She died in 1958 after a most fruitful life as a religious and author.

Mary Ida Maginnis, the future Sister Monica, was born December 10, 1869 (1), one of ten children, and baptized in St. Thomas Church, Zanesville, the following December 19. Her parents were Thomas Maginnis and Mary Jackson. Her godparents were James O'Donal and his wife, Clara Jackson.

Mary Ida's father was born in Ireland and came to America with his parents, Hugh and Mary Maginnis, when he was six years of age. The family eventually settled in Perry County near the little village of Rehoboth (2). As Thomas grew to be a young man he studied law and was admitted to the bar. In 1848 he married Miss Mary Jackson.

After some years as a prosperous lawyer in Perry County, Thomas Maginnis decided to move with his family to Zanesville. Here he was most successful in law as well as in real estate.

The first five children of Thomas and Mary Maginnis were born in Perry County. They were Margaret (who died at 13), Florence, Caroline, Lizette, and William. Records of baptism are found at St. Thomas Church, Zanesville, for Thomas Jefferson (who died at the age of 19), Mary, Maude Clara, Mary Ida and Helen Michelle. (Maude Clara married Dr. H. T. Sutton, prominent in the founding of Good Samaritan Hospital in Zanesville.) The two youngest, Mary Ida and Helen Michelle, became Ursuline Sisters at their Motherhouse in Brown County, Ohio. The former was professed as Sister Monica in 1892, and the latter as Sister Josephine in 1902.

The two future religious of the family had talent as singers and were members of a Zanesville opera group. They were much sought after by the young people of the community. But they were sent to the well known academy and boarding school of the Ursuline Sisters in Brown County. There they also distinguished themselves.

A third sister must have attended the academy also, for a history of the convent (3) states that at the commencement in 1875 "The chief attraction was the essays of the graduates, and these were five, Miss Caroline Maginnis of Zanesville, O....." The same history records that Helen Michelle Maginnis of Zanesville was in the graduating class of 1891 (4), and that Sister Monica

Maginnis was professed a choir sister July 25, 1892 (5).

After attending St. Thomas parochial school in Zanesville, Mary Ida Maginnis went to the academy of the Ursuline Sisters in Brown County, Ohio. She entered the convent there in 1887. She taught history and English and had charge of singing and of dramatic work. In the latter field she wrote spectacular pageants, mostly for out of doors production, to replace the five-act plays once in vogue.

Sister was a born organizer. She was responsible for organizing the Brown County Academy Alumnae. She was in charge of the Italian Center, teaching religion. She also taught catechism in the neighboring towns of Vera Cruz and Wilmington.

Besides being an accomplished teacher, Sister Monica was a true scholar. She received her A.B. degree at Catholic University in Washington in 1917. Mediaeval and modern history was her field of study. She specialized in Spanish American literature and history, receiving her M. A. degree from the University of Notre Dame in 1920. Later, in 1926, the same university awarded her a Ph. D. degree in history.

Sister Monica was the author of more than a dozen books. The best known of them are The Cross in the Wilderness, And Then the Storm and Angela Merici and Her Teaching Idea. Her first publication was entitled, The Spirit of St. Angela. Published in 1907, it is still something of a manual for the Ursuline Sisters.

Angela Merici and Her Teaching Idea, which appeared in 1927, was the result of her thesis for the doctoral degree at Notre Dame University the year before. Giving the story of the foundress of the Ursulines, the book is an authoritative work and is still acclaimed by the many congregations of that religious order. A second edition appeared in 1945. A reviewer of the book wrote at the time of its publication:

Angela Merici is one of the great characters of religious and educational history. In sixteenth century Italy, when the education of women as we know it today was still undreamed of, she conceived a plan for the training of girls, from which came the amazing birth of a Teaching Order for girls' education, the first of its kind - an immense sorority numbering today thousands of teachers who care for pupils in every class of society and in every phase of modern, up-to-date pedagogy.

Sister Monica's life of Angela Merici is the first intensive study of this remarkable woman to appear in English. In addition it brings to its readers much interesting material never before published in book form. This is the result of long and careful research. The author has drawn extensively from the work of a noted group of Italian scholars, who, in the last decades of the nineteenth century, made exhaustive researches in the archives of Brescia and Lombardy; such scholars as Battistella, Cassa, Zanelli, Fumi. She had at her disposal valuable monographs in the private library of Dr. Zanelli, and was given personal assistance by Count Greppi, president of the Lombard Historical Society. The Vice-Archivist of the Vatican, Msgr. Ugolini, furnished her with references. Through the kindness of the Patriarch of Venice she managed to trace the rare painting equestrienne of

Angela by the Bolognese artist, Facchino, the original of which is in the country home at Montebello of a nobleman of Pavia. Finally, through the Procurator General of the Holy Cross Order in Rome, she was able to obtain important material from the Biblioteca Queriniana in Brescia.

Sister Monica's next book, Cross in the Wilderness, perhaps the best loved of all her works, appeared in 1930. Its sub-title was A Biography of Pioneer Ohio. A departure in historical research, it is a moving story of pioneer life in the Ohio valley. "It is biography with the sparkle of fiction," wrote one critic. It is an attractive biography of Julia Chatfield, English convert, who brought ten French nuns to America in 1845, and set up their convent at St. Martin, Brown County, in southern Ohio. It was the beginning of the famed Ursulines of Brown County. Chatfield College now occupies the old academy and memorializes its brave foundress.

At the old academy were educated the wives of Admiral Dewey and Major General Hugh A. Drum. The daughters of Generals Rosecrans, Scammon, Piatt, Sherman and Denver attended the academy. Also at the school were Marie Lamy, niece, and Louise Lamy, sister, to John Baptist Lamy, pioneer missionary of Ohio and later Archbishop of Santa Fe.

In 1932 Sister Monica published The Spiritual Autobiography of Venerable Mary of the Incarnation. It was a translation from the French work, Le Temougnage, by her friend Don Albert Janet.

And Then the Storm appeared in 1937. It was described as "a delightful and informal account of three years spent by the author in travel and research in Spain and especially in the Archives of the Indies in Seville. . . . Moving from one center of study to another, Sister Monica visited Madrid, Toledo, the Avila of St. Theresa, and the storied fortress of Simanca at Valladolid where Charles V and Philip II established the royal archives." Sister Monica was researching the life of Francisco de Toledo, fifth viceroy of Peru, and followed him from cradle to grave. Her research took her to the Vatican. She said she was told in Rome that she was the first nun to study in the Vatican archives (6). Her sprightly book, written with delightful humor, gives a picture of Spain before the Civil War. Evidently Sister Monica sensed the unrest which led to that conflict. She left in July 1936 before its eruption.

There followed three small books: Jesus the Silent (1937), translated from the Spanish of Don Manuel Gonzalez Garcia, Bishop of Malaga; Grace of the Way (1940) and Hope of Life (1942). These are spiritual works. In 1948 The Company of St. Angela and the Girellis of Brescia was published.

Four years later Sister Monica's famous and most scholarly Controversia appeared. First published in Spanish, the English version still awaits publication. In English the title is I the King. In Spanish the title is Yo el Rey, la Gran Controversia del Siglo XVI Acerca del Dominio Espanol en America. This work was the result of her research throughout Spain and at the Vatican described in And Then the Storm. The Controversia was pronounced "the best on the subject" shortly after its publication in 1952.

Idol of Gold, still in manuscript, was completed in 1954. That same year Far Horizons was published. It is the life of Madame de la Peltrie, co-

foundress of the Ursulines of Quebec.

Sister Monica wrote two big outdoor plays: Joan of Arc and Angela Merici. She also wrote a number of shorter plays.

The long list of Sister Monica's written works reveals her as a devoted religious, a great scholar, and an inveterate worker. During all of this activity, she was for a time directress of the Brown County Academy.

Helen Michelle Maginnis, Sister Monica's younger sister, was also an author. Known in religion as Sister Josephine, she wrote Tide of the Years (1941) and Peace Grows in My Garden (1944). She also wrote quite a number of short stories for the national Catholic magazine, "St. Anthony Messenger."

Both Mary Ida Maginnis, our Sister Monica, and her sister, Helen Michelle, Sister Josephine, lie buried in the beautiful little convent cemetery at the Brown County Motherhouse of the Ursulines. Sister Monica died Feb. 27, 1958, in her 89th year of age and the 66th of her religious profession. Sister Josephine died June 4, 1964, in her 92nd year of age and the 62nd year of her religious profession.

(Note: Also buried in the Brown County Convent cemetery is Mary Rosecrans, oldest daughter of General William Starke Rosecrans, and a niece of Bishop Rosecrans. She was known in religious life as Sister St. Charles. Bishop Rosecrans preached at her profession. She died March 2, 1878, in the 26th year of her life, and the third of her religious profession. Her uncle, the Bishop, died in October that same year.)

The author of the above is indebted to Sister Bernardine, O.S.U., a niece of Sister Monica, and to Sister Miriam, O.S.U., both at the Brown County Convent, for much help from the archives of their Motherhouse.

- 1) St. Thomas Church, Zanesville, Ohio, Baptism Records, Vol. I, p. 152.
- 2) "The Times Recorder," Zanesville, Ohio, Sept. 30, 1973, p. 7-B, article "T. J. Maginnis Built Downtown Block in Zanesville," by Norris Schneider.
- 3) Fifty Years in Brown County Convent, McDonald & Co., Cincinnati, 1895, page 192.
- 4) Ibid., p. 283.
- 5) Ibid., page 289.
- 6) "The Times Recorder," article by Norris Schneider, Op. cit.

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Quarterly Meeting

The next quarterly meeting of the Catholic Record Society, Diocese of Columbus, will be held at 3 p.m., Sunday, January 29, 1978, at the Catholic Center, 197 East Gay Street, Columbus. Visitors will be welcome.

PRIESTS OF SOUTHEASTERN OHIO
IN THE 19TH CENTURY
(Continued)

Hansen, Rev. Bede H.

Sacred Heart, Pomeroy, and Syracuse, 1884-1889; Fulda, 1890-1894;
Fulda and Archer's Settlement (St. Michael's), 1895-1899; Calmoutier
and Millersburg, 1900+.

Hardy, Rev. Richard B.

St. Mary's, Marietta; St. James', Meig's Creek; St. Joseph's, Union
Township, and Stockport, 1857.

Hartigan, Rev. P.V., O.P.

St. Joseph's, Somerset, 1884-1886.

Hartley, Most Rev. James J., D.D.

St. Peter's, Steubenville, 1883-1885; Holy Name, Steubenville, 1886-
1900+. Afterwards Bishop of Columbus.

Hartnedy, Rev. M.M.A.

Athens, 1876-1877; Athens, Big Run, Canaansville, Coolville and
Nelsonville, 1878; Cathedral, Columbus, 1879; St. Peter's, Steubenville,
1880; St. Peter's, Steubenville, and Sloan's Station, 1881-1882;
St. Peter's, Steubenville, 1883-1900+.

Hasenfuss, Rev. G.B., O.P.

St. Patrick's, Columbus, 1897.

Hawe, Rev. William

St. Vincent's, Mt. Vernon, 1874-1875; Dennison, Glasgow, Urichville,
1876-1880; Sick, 1881-1882.

Hayes, Rev. W. F.

Holy Family, Columbus, 1880-1882; Holy Family, Columbus, and Galloway,
1883; Holy Family, Columbus, 1884; St. Francis de Sales, Newark, 1885-
1892.

Heagan, Rev. M.L., O.P.

St. Joseph's, Somerset, 1896.

Heaney, Rev. J.P., O.P.

St. Joseph's, Somerset, 1861; 1864; St. Patrick's, Jackson Twp., and
St. Dominic's, Clayton Twp., 1871; St. Joseph's, Somerset, 1887-1893.

Hechinger, Rev. Anthony

Deavertown and St. Peter's, Monday Creek, 1860; St. Nicholas', Zanesville,
1861.

Heery, Rev. Patrick H.

St. Mary's, Beaver (Noble Co.), 1874; St. Mary's, Beaver; St. Patrick's,
Leatherwood, and Barnesville, 1875-1876; St. Dominic's, McLuney; St.
Mary's, Beaver; St. Patrick's, Leatherwood, and Barnesville, 1877-1879;

Batesville, Belmont, Barnesville, Cambridge, and St. Patrick's, Guernsey Co., 1880-1881; Batesville, Barnesville, Belmont and St. Patrick's, Guernsey Co., 1882; St. Dominic's, McLuney, 1883; St. Dominic's, McLuney, and South Fork, 1884; St. Rose's, New Lexington, 1885-1895; Dennison, 1896-1900+.

Heimo, Rev. Joseph Anton

Canal Dover, 1864; St. Mary's, Marges; St. Genevieve's, Mt. Eaton, 1865-1868; St. Genevieve's, Mt. Eaton, 1869.

Hemsteger, Rev. John Bernard

Holy Cross, Columbus, 1860-1868; Holy Cross, Columbus, and Vicar General, 1869-1878.

Hengehold, Rev. Bernard

Nativity, Portsmouth, 1853.

Henni, Most Rev. John Martin

Visited Portsmouth, Piketon, Chillicothe, Columbus, 1835; preached German sermon in the Court House, Columbus, 1840. Afterwards Bishop of Milwaukee.

Haranval de Viras, Rev. A.M., O.P.

St. Joseph's, Somerset, 1894-1895.

Herbert, Rev. Joseph

Josephinum Seminary, Columbus, 1898.

Higgins, Rev. Arthur Vincent, O.P.

St. Joseph's, Somerset, 1875-1878; St. Joseph's, Somerset, and Sub-prior, 1879-1883; St. Joseph's, Somerset, and Prior, 1884-1885; St. Joseph's, Somerset, 1886.

Hillebrand, Rev. B.H.

St. Francis' Hospital, Columbus, 1867-1874.

Hegarty, Rev. James B., O.P.

St. Joseph's, Somerset, 1899.

Hinch, Rev. John, O.P.

St. Joseph's, Somerset, 1899.

Hoban, Rev. James, D., O.P.

St. Joseph's, Somerset, 1875-1877; 1889-1891.

Hoch, Rev. Gallus, O.S.B.

St. Mary's, Columbus, 1876-1877.

Hochmuller, Rev. H.

St. Joseph's Orphanage, Columbus, 1890-1891.

Hoffman, Rev. F. de Sales, D.D.

St. Fidelis, Carroll Co., 1838.

Hone, Rev. Charles Francis
St. John's, Logan, 1864-1865

Hormisch, Rev. G.
Sacred Heart, Columbus, 1879-1880; St. Aloysius Academy, New Lexington,
1882-1888.

Horny, Rev. Benjamin P.
St. Mary's, Columbus, 1887-1900+.

Howard, Most Rev. Francis H.
Holy Trinity, Jackson, 1892-1894; Holy Trinity, Jackson and Coalton, 1895;
Columbia College, N.Y., 1896-1898; Rome, Italy, 1899. Afterwards Bishop
of Covington.

Hugenroth, Rev. Bernard
Josephinum Seminary, Columbus, 1899.

Inthoudt, Rev. H.,).S.D.
St. Joseph's, Somerset, 1854.

Irenaeus, Rev. P., O.M.Cap.
St. Joseph's, Canal Dover, 1887.

Jacob, Rev. Christopher, O.M.Cap.
St. Joseph's, Canal Dover, 1890; 1892-1894.

Jacquet, Rev. John Mary
St. Mary's, Belmont Co; St. Patrick's, Washington, Guernsey Co., 1856;
St. Mary's, Noble Co; St. Patrick's, Washington; St. John's, Malaga;
Sts. Peter and Paul and St. Joseph's, 1857; St. Mary's, Noble Co., 1858;
Bellaire, Belmont Co., St. Mary's, Noble Co., 1859; St. Peter's, Belair;
St. Peter's, Cambridge, St. Mary's, Noble Co., 1860; St. Peter's, Belair;
St. Peter's, Cambridge; St. Mary's, Noble Co., and St. Mary's, Temperanceville,
1861; St. Mary's, Belair, and St. Mary's, Noble Co., 1864-1865; St. Mary's,
Belair, 1866-1869; St. George's, Coshocton; Killbuck; St. Mary's
and St. Nicholas', Wills Creek; 1870; St. George's, Coshocton, 1871-1872;
St. George's, Coshocton, and Killbuck; 1873; Coshocton, Killbuck and
Dresden, 1874; Coshocton, Dresden, Killbuck and Mattingly Settlement,
1875-1877; Coshocton, Dresden, Killbuck, Mattingly Settlement; St. Mary's
and St. Nicholas', Wills Creek, 1878-1888; Coshocton, Killbuck and Wills
Creek, 1889-1892; Coshocton, Wills Creek and Spring Mountain, 1893-1896.

James, Rev. John
Sapps Settlement, Mt. Vernon and Newark (occasionally), 1842-1843.

Jarboe, Rev. Joseph T., O.P.
St. John's, Zanesville, 1836; Prior, St. Joseph's, Somerset, 1844-1845;
Holy Trinity, Somerset, and Prioer, St. Joseph's, 1846; St. Joseph's,
Somerset, 1847-1848; St. Thomas', Zanesville, 1861; Holy Trinity,
Somerset, 1864; St. Joseph's, Somerset, 1885-1886.

Jessing, Rt. Rev. Msgr. Joseph J.
Sacred Heart, Pomeroy, 1871-1875; Sacred Heart and St. Joseph Orphanage,
Pomeroy; St. Joseph's Orphanage, Columbus, 1878-1882; St. Mary's,

Columbus, and St. Joseph's Orphanage, 1882-1886; St. Joseph's Orphanage, Columbus, 1887-1899.

Johnson, Rev. Andrew J.

Cathedral, Columbus, 1899; St. Joseph's, Jersey, and Taylorstown, 1900+.

Joseph, Rev. Anastasius, O.M.Cap.

St. Joseph's, Canal Dover, 1889.

Juncker, Most Rev. Henry Damien

St. Mary's, Chillicothe, 1840-1844. Afterwards Bishop of Alton, Ill.

Jungblut, Rev. Charles

Josephinum Seminary, Columbus, and Jackson (locum tenens), 1895.

Kalcher, Rev. Francis X., S.J.

St. Mary's, Chillicothe, 1848; St. Peter's, Chillicothe, 1849-1851.

Kalenberg, Rev. John Francis

Sacred Heart, Pomeroy, and attends St. John the Baptist and other stations, (St. Louis, Gallipolis; St. John's, Athens Co., Long Bottom and Syracuse), 1864-1870.

Karel, Rev. Francis Peter

Holy Cross, Columbus, 1860.

Karge, Rev. Francis

Nativity, Portsmouth, 1854-1871; Nativity, Portsmouth, and St. Peter's, Lick Run, 1872.

Kearney, Rev. James

St. Pius', Steubenville; Wellsville, and Ascension, E. Liverpool, 1846-1849.

Kearney, Rev. L. F., O.P.

St. Joseph's, Somerset, 1891-1895; St. Thomas', Zanesville, 1896-1899; Provincial, 1898-1899.

Keelty, Rev. Joseph T., O.P.

St. Patrick's, Columbus, 1898-1899.

Kehoe, Rev. Paul F.

Cathedral, Columbus, 1886; Holy Family, Columbus, 1887; St. Lawrence's, Ironton, 1888; absent because of sickness, 1889-1893.

Kehoe, Rev. P.V., O.P.

St. Joseph's, Somerset, 1867, 1890.

Kelly, Rev. Augustine, O.P.

St. Joseph's, Somerset, 1851.

Kelly, Rev. David

St. Matthew's, Wilkesville, Vinton Co., and St. Michael's, Raccoon Creek, 1854-1857.

(To be continued)