

# Archives Vital to Causes of Saints

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*Canonisation depends on evidence of sanctity, a disposition of soul. The article illustrates the importance of both written and unwritten sources of evidence in the cause of Mary MacKillop. There was a mountain of written material in archives, and also vast amounts to be revealed in human memory and popular conviction. The need for discretion is shown by the few occasions when the two sources clashed, and it became clear that we should not assume that the written word is always more reliable than human memory and firm tradition.*

## Early martyrs and saints

When the earliest Christians celebrated the memory of their martyrs they praised Christ for supporting his people in life and death, as he promised, and for giving them models of fidelity. When they realised that a violent death was not the only sign of heroic sanctity, they included other holy people in their commemorations. The Catholic Church has kept up this tradition ever since, addressing God in such words as these:

Around your throne the saints, Lord, our brothers and sisters, sing your praise forever. Their glory fills us with joy, and their communion with us in your Church gives us inspiration and strength as we hasten on our pilgrimage of faith eager to meet them.<sup>1</sup>

### Strict control becomes stricter

As the Christian Faith spread to the ends of the earth, bishops realised that local enthusiasms about saints and miracles had to be controlled, and over the centuries the scrutiny grew ever stricter. When a new saint is canonised it means that the Catholic Church officially agrees with a popular conviction. Miracles are seen as a divine endorsement of this human judgment.

It was in the last years of the tenth century that a canonisation was first performed by a pope,<sup>2</sup> but before papal proclamation became the universal rule many communities maintained their customary local procedures in honouring their holy ones. In the 1620s Urban VIII<sup>3</sup> imposed stringent regulations which, together with those of Benedict XIV in the following century,<sup>4</sup> were enshrined in Canon Law until recent times.

### The modern situation

In the twentieth century there were frequent complaints that these regulations made canonisation too difficult, and that the proclamation of saints did not reflect the global nature of the Catholic Church and its cultural diversity. In response to petitions for a revision of the rules Pope Paul VI established a commission whose work came to fruition in a new constitution for the causes of saints issued by his successor John Paul II in 1983.<sup>5</sup> This pope explained that the reform aimed 'to come to grips with needs of experts and the desires of Our Brother Bishops who have often insisted upon a simpler process while maintaining the soundness of the investigation in a matter of such import.'<sup>6</sup>

The adversarial nature of the old process was abolished. The critical function of the *Promotor Fidei*, commonly known as 'the devil's advocate', has been absorbed into that of new officials called *Relators* whose duty is described by one of them thus:

It is the duty of the *Relator* to follow closely the preparation of the *Positiones* entrusted to his care and to see to it that they correspond fully to the requirements laid down by the Congregation for the causes of Saints.<sup>7</sup>

### Critical historical research now demanded

The main difference between the old and the new procedure is indicated in the paragraph of the papal decree which says 'one may not proceed to the next stage unless the *Position* on virtues or martyrdom has first been prepared under the guidance of the *Relator* of the cause, who is to make use of the critical method after those documents, which in any way pertain to the case, have been gathered and studied.'<sup>8</sup>

As critical historical research now takes centre stage, the importance of archival material should be evident.<sup>9</sup> As the *Relator* always has a number of causes to supervise, it would be out of the question to expect him to undertake the research and the writing himself. He must have collaborators. Whoever does it, the production of a *Position* would be virtually impossible without documents searched out in likely archives.

The Father of English History, the Venerable Bede (d. 735), had a keen sense that there are two doors to our past - written and unwritten tradition (archaeology seems to contribute both). He wrote: 'I, Bede, have with the Lord's help composed ecclesiastical history so far as I could gather it either from ancient documents or from the traditions of our forefathers or from my own knowledge.'<sup>10</sup> He valued documents, traditions, and personal experience, but he was aware that everything had to be carefully scrutinised. Honest misjudgements are always possible, and lies can be told and inaccuracies perpetuated on parchment and paper or on stone as skilfully as by word of mouth.

### The cause of Mary MacKillop

In the cause of Mary MacKillop, Australia's saint, archival material was of vital importance in addition to the evidence of those who knew her personally. When she died in 1909 she had a widespread reputation as an educational pioneer and a tireless social worker, but it was not for this reason that people touched her body with rosaries and took home scoops of earth from around her grave - something rarely seen in Australia before or since. They did it because they wanted a relic of somebody who, they believed, had lived in close union with God, which is the heart and soul of sainthood. In other words, they looked on her as a saint.

The popular demand to take up her cause was answered in the 1920s when Archbishop Kelly of Sydney issued a *Perquisitio Scriptorum*<sup>11</sup> calling for anything she had written and for any other documents relating to her life. The response was added to the vast amount of material already preserved in Josephite archives.

These archives, mainly in North Sydney,<sup>12</sup> house many hundreds of actual letters sent by Mary MacKillop as well as letterbooks in which she kept copies of important ones of which the originals are lost. Letters addressed to her are also numerous, while all documents of an official nature were carefully preserved from the early days of her congregation. The custodians of these archives have always been highly competent.

It is most likely that a man who never set foot in Australia gave the Josephites strong advice about archives. This was the Swiss Jesuit Anton Anderledy,<sup>13</sup> who later became General Superior of his Order, a man who would have been sensitive to the importance of keeping proper records. The diary Mary kept in Rome reveals not only where she went, what churches she visited, and what important consultations she held, but also the fact that Anderledy devoted an incredible amount of his time to advising and reassuring her. The nature and exercise of authority would certainly have been an important topic in their conversations, and the advice he gave Mary about the use of her authority would surely have included a reminder that it is the responsibility of the head of an Order to see that proper attention is paid to archives.

### **A problem is solved and the cause is introduced**

After the *Perquisitio Scriptorum*, a tribunal was set up in 1925 to interrogate people who had known Mother Mary, but its work was suspended in 1931 when an important document could not be produced from the Vatican archives. Through the 1930s and 1940s the case seemed to have no future.

The notary at that tribunal, Father Norman Gilroy, was never happy about the interruption. Twenty years later, as Cardinal Archbishop of Sydney, he sought and promptly obtained the missing document from the Vatican, and re-opened Mary's cause. Researchers, copyists, cataloguers, translators, canon lawyers and others had laboured

tirelessly and unheralded for over fifty years to bring the cause to the point where a massive volume, entitled *Positio Super Causae Introductione*,<sup>14</sup> could be submitted to Rome.

Eventually, the formal *Introduction of the Cause* was declared by papal decree at the Melbourne Eucharistic Congress in 1973. It was an excellent cause, the decree said, and there was no evident obstacle to Mary's canonisation, but a full history, called a *Positio Super Virtutibus*, had yet to be submitted. Moreover, there were some obscurities in the story, such as Mother Mary's 'misunderstandings' with some bishops and the alienation of Julian Tenison Woods, the Father Founder. It was suggested that these and a few other matters might well be clarified by further research.

### **More fruitful research undertaken and a *Position* needed**

Two results followed. Cardinal James Knox, formerly of Melbourne, encouraged Father Aldo Rebeschini, a Melbourne priest now his secretary in Rome, to undertake the research. Ten years later Aldo convinced the Josephite Sisters that he was researching in archives, not writing the *Position*. They had to find somebody else to do this.

In 1983 I was asked to go to Rome to undertake the task and shortly afterwards was appointed *Postulator*. A *Postulator* works on behalf of a cause in tandem with a *Relator* who is the agent of the Holy See. The two are associates, not antagonists in conflict like the district attorney and counsel for the defence. I was to spend many years of collaboration with Father Peter Gumpel, a German Jesuit whose appointment as *Relator* was a most fortunate one for us.

Rebeschini's research was meticulous and very fruitful. As Mother Mary had dealings with the rectors of the Irish College and the Scots College, both in Rome, there was much important matter lodged in the archives of those places. But it was the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide*<sup>15</sup> that housed the richest repository of matter relevant to her history. In the nineteenth century, Catholic Australia was still technically a missionary area, which meant that all its affairs were the concern of this one Vatican department. The hierarchies of other countries had to deal with various congregations according to the nature of the business in hand, and this would have made research like Rebeschini's more complicated.

Of all the documents found in the archives of Congregation de Propaganda Fide, two were of outstanding importance. The one discovered first was the 1884 report of Archbishop Moran (not yet a cardinal) about the incredible events that occurred in the diocese of Adelaide in 1883, culminating in the expulsion of Mother Mary of the Cross from Adelaide in apparent disgrace. This was the document whose non-appearance in 1931 occasioned the suspension of her cause for twenty years. It will be discussed later in this article.

### **The Tappeiner report**

The other important Vatican document, discovered by Rebeschini in the 1970s, was a lengthy account of Adelaide affairs written for the Holy See in October 1872 by Father Joseph Tappeiner, one of the Austrian Jesuits in South Australia. He supported the Josephite Sisters when they were overwhelmed by the nasty troubles associated with the farcical and invalid excommunication of Mary MacKillop. The General Superior of the Jesuits in Rome had been approached by bewildered Vatican officials to ask one of his men in Australia for a coherent account of what had been going on in Adelaide in those past fifteen months. Tappeiner's report threw valuable light on the 'obscurities' referred to in 1973. What he had to say in his 1872 report to Rome is supplemented by his evidence at the commission that enquired into the events of 1871. Referring to the Josephite Institute he gave this vital analysis of all the situations in which tension developed between its Mother General, Mary MacKillop, and bishops:

The bishop has power to dispense from vows, so if he does dispense the Sisters from their present vows they can make new vows and become part of another Institute approved by him. But they cannot be obliged to do this in virtue of the vows they have already taken, since these vows bind them only to the rule under which they were taken. And although the bishop can change the rule that he has himself approved, he cannot substitute for vows already taken others different from what was intended by the one who took them.<sup>16</sup>

In short, a vow binds you to whatever you intend by it, no more, no less. Mary MacKillop was an intelligent woman and understood this well. She was also clear about the nature of law and authority. She was therefore unable to cooperate with the bishops – four in all – who acted as if a sister's vows bind her to whatever a bishop says they bind her to, and as if an institute's constitution is whatever a bishop says it is.

Tappeiner made it clear that Mary's differences with bishops were not about policy but about law and existing obligation. Though some bishops acted as though it were otherwise, she knew that a vow binds you to whatever you intend by it, not to what any bishop, even a pope, says it does. It is unhistorical to attribute these episodes of tension to some mythical flair she had to be a maverick, destined to become a patron for those bent on ignoring authority. On the contrary, it would be hard to find a character in the history of Australia who had greater respect for law and authority than Mary MacKillop.

Tappeiner also had many revealing things to say about the character and behaviour of those who directed the pseudo-excommunication, especially of Father Francis Horan, the malicious puppeteer of the whole show. It became clear that there was a far more sinister background to that event than was commonly supposed.

The Tappeiner report enabled the officials of the Holy See to make sense of all the Adelaide confusion, and they learned to take little notice of what Mother Mary's adversaries had to say about her in the future. Later on, when Bishop Reynolds also had become very bitter, he wrote to the Congregation de Propaganda Fide, apparently believing that what Kirby, the Rector of the Irish College, had written was true, namely that 'her rules as she took them from Rome had not an atom of Papal or Propaganda authority.'<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately for Reynolds, Cardinal Giovanni Simeoni, to whom the letter was addressed, had as Archbishop Secretary of the Congregation de Propaganda Fide known Mary personally during her time in Rome, and had furnished her with a document (still preserved) signed 'Ioannes Simeoni' (himself) directing her to do exactly what Reynolds was complaining about.

## Moran's vital report

The importance of Moran's report, the other vital document found in the Congregation de Propaganda Fide archives, can hardly be exaggerated. In 1883 Christopher Reynolds, the Bishop of Adelaide, had claimed papal authority to conduct an enquiry into Josephite affairs at the end of which he expelled Mother Mary from his diocese, never to return, and declared her forthwith deprived of all authority in her congregation. The Josephite archives in North Sydney possess a document, signed by Reynolds, 12 April 1883, which runs thus:

Last mail brought me despatches from Rome which necessitate my calling you back to Mother House Adelaide as soon as possible. Do not therefore go to New Zealand or send any Sisters there until we have had an interview and carried out the instructions given me.

This was followed by another document in the bishop's handwriting, signed by him and by his Vicar General, Archdeacon Patrick Russell:

In virtue of our letters of instruction from the Holy See we are to hold visitation of the convents and examine into all matters spiritual and temporal either by ourselves or by our officials.

It was an iniquitous business both in its origin and in the manner in which it was conducted. While completely exonerating Mother Mary, Moran made some devastating reflections on some other people. He reported that the bishop had had no authority at all for what he did, and that he had never possessed any document whatever that could be construed as 'letters of instruction from the Holy See'.

Mother Mary wrote later: 'I had not for a moment allowed myself to doubt but that the Bishop had received some power from Rome ere he would have acted as he did. The whole affair is a mystery to me.' But there was more to this Adelaide affair than the selection of a word to describe it. Referring to the manner in which the 1883 tribunal was conducted, Moran said he had to proceed very discreetly in carrying out his mandate to investigate it because if what the Bishop of Adelaide had done had been known by the civil authorities he would probably have ended up in gaol.<sup>18</sup>



The discovery of Moran's report was crucial for Mary's cause. This was because vicious untruths about her character and behaviour were contained in three documents found in the Sydney diocesan archives during the sittings of the tribunal investigating her life in the 1920s. These were written by Reynolds and two of his henchmen<sup>19</sup> when they were eventually constrained to put something on paper a year after the 1883 enquiry for which they claimed to have papal authority and about which they had not written a word to Rome. Though these three documents were not regarded as reliable, it was thought that there was need for a document of equal status (after all, one of the authors was a bishop, and another his Vicar General) to counterbalance or destroy their effect. Moran's report destroyed the calumnies, and his successor Gilroy, the man who had brought that 'non-existent' report into the light of day, put it all in the higher context of heroic sanctity thus:

The more we consider the accusations against her the deeper becomes the certainty that everything was prepared by the sweet and merciful goodness of God, who so willed to prove more luminously the merits and virtues of his most faithful Spouse and Servant.<sup>20</sup>

### **Why was Moran's report not found earlier?**

It was for a long time a puzzle to me that the custodians of the Congregation de Propaganda Fide archives in Rome could not produce Moran's report in 1931, saying instead that they had no document corresponding to what was asked for. Could they really not find it, or were they handling the truth diplomatically?<sup>21</sup> So one day I asked the official there how long the reports from Oceania had been sitting on his shelves, 'for example, this one of 1884'. 'Since the date on the back,' he told me, 'allowing for time to have it bound.' I took it down and found Moran's report at once. That explained how Norman Gilroy, now with the rank of cardinal, was able to have it delivered into his hands in Sydney in less than a fortnight when he asked for it in 1951. Moreover, a perusal of its contents helps to explain why it could not be produced in 1931. At that time the Congregation de Propaganda Fide evidently did not think enough time had elapsed to allow them to release a document so damning to the reputation of a bishop.

## The archives of the Irish College reveal the Ascension Day letter

The Irish College archives were a happy hunting ground for Rebeschini. Monsignor Tobias Kirby, the rector there during Sister Mary's time in Rome in 1873 and 1874, was a great help to her personally and continued as a correspondent for some time after her return to Australia. Rebeschini unearthed a precious document in her handwriting, dated Ascension Day 1873, giving Kirby an account of her own spiritual journey. It is a unique and precious revelation of the soul of a saint. Details about her early life, hitherto unknown and sometimes surprising, reveal how she had learnt to bear the Cross of Christ long before she had assumed the name 'Mary of the Cross'. 'My home, when I had it,' she wrote, 'was a most unhappy one.'

This Ascension Day letter achieved what might be called pontifical status when an extract from it was selected to introduce the papal decree issued on 13 June 1992 declaring that Mary MacKillop had led a life of heroic sanctity and was therefore deemed worthy of canonisation. The decree began with this citation:

To me the will of God is a dear book which I am never tired of reading, which has always some new charm for me. Oh Father, I cannot tell you what a beautiful thing the will of God seems to me.

As Kirby knew many Vatican officials personally, Irish bishops in Australia often confided in him as an intermediary in their dealings with the Holy See, so the correspondence preserved in his archives reveals not only what was going on in that far country but the dispositions of the men who were behind every move. The Gospel<sup>22</sup> says that nothing hidden will escape revelation, and some of the bishops and priests in Australia in those days would have been embarrassed to know that a century and a half later we would be privy to their innermost thoughts and emotions and the spirit in which they expressed them.

## The Scots College

Dr Grant and Dr Campbell, successive rectors of the Scots College, had supported Sister Mary from the start, and kept in touch with her after her return to Australia. Kirby of the Irish College had been her confidant when

she was in Rome but she lost confidence in him later when he was being influenced by correspondents in Australia bitterly antagonistic to her. She then turned to Dr Campbell as her confidant, with the result that their letters now reveal much about her turbulent years as Mother General.

### **The value of a casual discovery**

Casual discoveries can sometimes throw light on puzzling questions. One came to light in the Melbourne diocesan archives in the form of the dating of a letter. The Josephites had long been awaiting the final approbation of their institute, and there was great joy when it eventually came in 1888. But there was an unexpected clause in the document that has puzzled people ever since. The Josephite Superior General, Mother Bernard, was far from being suitable for that office. She had never been elected but was occupying her position at Rome's behest. It would be hard to deny that Rome's behest was organised by Cardinal Moran. He had lived among influential people in Rome since boyhood, and he knew how things were done there and who did them. Whereas other bishops in Australia simply went ahead and tried to do what they wanted, regardless of law, Moran respected law and was careful to see that what he wanted was enshrined in legitimate directives.

What evidence is there for this kind of speculation? When Moran returned to Australia from Rome in December 1888 he brought with him the long-awaited approbation of the Josephite Institute. But there was an unexpected clause, declaring that Mother Bernard, the Superior General, should continue in office for ten years, after which the chapter was to see to the election of a successor. The document is dated 25 July 1888. The curious thing is that there is in the Roman archives an earlier draft of the decree, subscribed 26 June, bearing the later note that it had received papal approval on 15 July. But that was not the version Moran took back to Sydney, as it contained no mention of the tenure of the Mother General. Something for which there is no documentary evidence available led to the insertion by 25 July of the clause extending it. It is most improbable that this would have been done without Moran's intervention, and it is a fact that he was in Rome just at that time. There is in the Melbourne diocesan archives a letter he wrote to Archbishop Goold from Rome dated 19 July 1888.

## The importance of written and unwritten evidence

While working on Mary MacKillop's cause I became aware of the debt owed to the various archivists who had made the *Position* possible. I also learnt that the intelligence and discretion archivists bring to their work need to be matched by intelligence on the part of those who consult their documents. It is not enough to find a document to be certain of the truth about some puzzling affair. People can lie and express prejudice on paper or in inscriptions on stone as blithely as by word of mouth. It is not intelligent to believe something somebody has written down in spite of the fact there is very strong evidence from other sources to the contrary. The three letters containing damning accusations against Mary MacKillop from the pens of Bishop Reynolds and his two associates were not regarded as reliable by most of the members of the tribunal to whom they were submitted. But because no other document brought evidence of equal authority to counterbalance the calumnies, and such was the awe in which written documents were held by some, that the cause was suspended. As a result, it was the general conviction for twenty years that the MacKillop cause had no future.

But the young notary, Norman Gilroy, was always indignant that suspension of the cause was accepted as a justifiable reaction to the documents. It was providential that later on with the status of cardinal he was able to have the 'missing' counter evidence delivered to him so promptly. He appreciated the fact that a strong living tradition can outweigh what is written on a piece of paper or a sheet of parchment or sculpted on a marble monument. The reliability of each source has to be scrutinised if the truth is to emerge.

It has already been made clear in this article that the contents of Moran's report completely demolished what Reynolds and his friends had written against Mother Mary. But I have often wondered, 'What if Moran's report had not been forthcoming?' We do not know what would have happened in that hypothetical situation, but we may surmise that Gilroy would have found ways of re-establishing the value of human tradition so as to clear the good name of Mary MacKillop and re-open the way to her canonisation.

In the course of my work as *Postulator* I received letters warning me that Mary's cause could never succeed because her difficulties with

some bishops were an insuperable obstacle. Crossing swords with the hierarchy was far from the perfection expected of a saint. Church officials could not possibly approve of such lack of respect. I put the problem to the *Relator* and he told me an interesting thing. When the representatives of some order of nuns propose their foundress for canonisation he always asks, 'Now tell us, Sisters, about the trouble your Foundress had with bishops.' So far from being an impediment, it almost seems to be a *sine qua non*. The conflicts become public knowledge, disgrace becomes notorious, but the truth hidden in archival material can be strong evidence of heroic virtue.

People who insist that some person they admire deserves to be proposed together with somebody already under consideration are often ignorant of the Catholic Church's procedure and know little of the character of their candidate. Initiative and dedicated social service is praiseworthy, but canonisation is not about that. It is about union with God, the heart of holiness. This often expresses itself in notable achievement, but it is not identical with it. Mother Teresa will not be canonised for the same reason that won her the Nobel Prize. Mary MacKillop was just as much a saint in those last long years of inactivity, paralysed in her wheelchair,<sup>23</sup> as she was in her years that made her historically noteworthy. Public records may give an account of achievement, but evidence of somebody's spiritual life – the vital issue – has to be sought elsewhere.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Preface of the Mass for the celebration of All Saints on the first day of November.
- <sup>2</sup> The first documented case of a canonisation by a pope is that of Ulric, Bishop of Augsburg, by John XV (985–996) in 993. For a discussion of papal control of canonisation within archival literature, see Michelle Light, 'Evidence of Sanctity: Record-keeping and Canonization at the Turn of the 13th Century', *Archivaria*, no. 60, Winter 2005, available at <<http://journals.sfu.ca/archivar/index.php/archivaria/article/view/12517/13648>>, accessed 25 October 2010.
- <sup>3</sup> Various decrees of Urban VIII (1623–1644) issued in 1626 and 1634 to eradicate abuses and establish new norms were printed and published in 1647 as *Pontificis Optimi Maximi Decreta servanda in Canonizatione et Beatificatione Sanctorum*.
- <sup>4</sup> Benedict XIV (1740–1758) Apostolic Constitution *Ad Sepulchra*, 23 November 1741.
- <sup>5</sup> A 'cause' is the procedure leading to the canonisation of a person as a saint.

<sup>6</sup> John Paul II (1978–2005) Apostolic Constitution *Divinus Perfectionis Magister*, 25 January 1983.

<sup>7</sup> From the report by the *Relator*, Kurt Peter Gumpel SJ, on the *Position* of Mary MacKillop, dated 27 December 1989.

<sup>8</sup> John Paul II *Divinus Perfectionis Magister*.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.* 'Si Congressus iudicaverit causam instructam fuisse ad legis normas statuet cuinam ex Relatoribus committenda sit; Relator vero una cum cooperatore externo Positionem super virtutibus vel super martyrio conficiet iuxta regulas artis criticae in hagiographia servandas.' In English, that is: 'If the meeting judges that the cause was conducted according to the norms of law, it decides to which relator the cause is to be assigned; the relator then, together with a collaborator from outside the Congregation, will prepare the position on virtues or martyrdom according to the rules of critical hagiography.'

<sup>10</sup> 'Haec de Historia Ecclesiastica . . . prout vel ex litteris antiquorum, vel ex traditione maiorum vel ex mea ipsa cognitione scire potui digessi Baeda famulus Christi.' Loeb Classical Library L248, Bede, *Historical Works* vol. II, p. 382.

The full paragraph appears in English in the Folio Society edition of Bede's *History of the English Church and People*, 2010, p. 286: 'With God's help, I, Bede, the servant of Christ and priest of the monastery of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul at Wearmouth and Jarrow have assembled these facts about the history of the Church in Britain, and of the Church of the English in particular, so far as I have been able to ascertain them from ancient writings, from the traditions of our forebears, and from my own personal knowledge.'

<sup>11</sup> A search for written matter.

<sup>12</sup> This is at the Josephite Mother House, Mount Street, North Sydney. Other archival material can be found in Adelaide at the Josephite convent in Kensington.

<sup>13</sup> Anderledy came from Berisal, a remote Alpine village, and gained a reputation as a prudent spiritual adviser. When Mary MacKillop was in Rome in 1873 he was living there as Assistant to the General Superior of the Jesuits. Because he spoke English he was asked to help her in her mission on behalf of her nascent Josephite Order.

<sup>14</sup> This massive volume contained the depositions of the witnesses interrogated about Mother Mary. There were also many 'postulatory' letters of support from persons prominent in ecclesiastical and civil life, theological judgments on her writings, and a vote of acceptance by the Promoter of the Faith. This introduction was an acknowledgement that the cause had a fair chance of ultimate success.

<sup>15</sup> The word propaganda is a perfectly respectable Latin word that has come into English. It means something like 'needing to be propagated', like seedlings. Christians have always believed that their faith is the truth about human life and that its growth should be encouraged. That is what is meant by the title of the department of the Catholic Church's administration that deals specifically with that matter, the one concerned with propagating the faith, or in Latin *de propaganda fide*. Documents concerning Australian affairs in the nineteenth century are found in this congregation's archives under 'Oceania'.

<sup>16</sup> Archives of Propaganda Fide, Rome, SOCG 1873, vol. 1000, 1426–1435, original in Latin.

<sup>17</sup> Kirby wrote to Reynolds 18 July 1884: 'Hence it is clear that her rule as she took them from Rome had not an atom of Propaganda or Papal authority. You should feel yourself more and more possessed of your full Episcopal jurisdiction over all the houses of the said Sisters in your Diocese and the individual Sisters belonging to them.'

To re-establish the truth of the matter the Secretary of Propaganda wrote to Moran in Sydney on 8 May 1885: 'I have to inform Your Grace that the Constitutions that were revised and given to the Sisters ad experimentum by this Sacred Congregation . . . are for a general Institute, not a diocesan one. Hence the government of the Institute is exempt from the jurisdiction of the Ordinary [that is, the bishop] and is immediately subject to the Holy See.' *Lettere e Decreti della S.C., Biglietti di Mons. Segretario 1885, vol. 361, folio 259r.*

<sup>18</sup> Moreover, when Mary left Rome in 1874 she carried with her two letters, one addressed to herself and the other to Reynolds, both signed by Cardinal Franchi, the Prefect, and by Archbishop Simeoni, the Secretary of Propaganda, declaring that she had full papal approval to live by the new constitutions, and that any changes could only be made by the Holy See. Simeoni was the man being told ten years later that the very opposite was true. *Lettere e Decreti della S.C., 1874, vol. 370, 164rv.*

Moran's Italian ran thus: '... bisogna tenere in mente che l'impore un tale giuramento è una violazione della lege inglese, e in caso di un qualche delatore innanzi ai Tribunali il Vescovo avrebbe incorso una gravissima pena.' This letter, dated 7 March 1885, is found in Propaganda under 4 April 1887, *Scritture Referite nelle Congregazioni Generali.*

<sup>19</sup> These were Archdeacon Patrick Russell and Dean William Kennedy. Russell had added his signature to that of the bishop on the document falsely claiming papal authority for the Commission of Enquiry of 1883. In a report to the Postulator Monsignor. A Fideicicchi, Uditore di Rota, 12 November 1954, Cardinal Gilroy wrote about Russell, the President of the Commission: 'Now this priest seems to have had a hatred of Mother Mary amounting almost to an obsession.'

<sup>20</sup> Cardinal Gilroy in a letter of 4 November 1970 to the Postulator Monsignor Emidio Federici.

<sup>21</sup> 'In questo Archivio tuttavia, non si conserva alcun rapporto dettagliato di Mons. Moran, nel quale si vagliano le accuse dell'inchiesta di Mons. Reynolds specialmente nei riguardi della Rev. Madre Maria della Croce, e si esprima il proprio parere in merite alle medesime.' Propaganda to Dr Kelly 27 July 1929.

The writer of this probably imagined he could reconcile it with the truth by means of some subtle distinctions he could spin out of some of its phrasing. At all events, he concealed not only the existence of Moran's report but also the fact that he was concealing it.

<sup>22</sup> Matthew 10:26, Luke 12:2.

<sup>23</sup> Mother Mary wrote in her last days: 'As for my own health, dear child, my sufferings are increasing gradually, the nerves are giving me a great deal of trouble. I scarcely know any rest from them now at all. It is just seven years since the hand of God was laid so heavily upon me, and I often wonder how long more I shall be left in this weary world, but a thousand times welcome be His most holy will.' Letter to Sister Monica on 20 May 1909. Mary suffered her stroke in 1902 and died on 8 August 1909.