

Letters - Mary Potter to her Family

Mary Potter to her mother (Letters 1 - 49)

No.1

Cupola House,
New Kent Road,
4 December 1857.

My dear Mamma,

I gladly avail myself of this opportunity of tendering you my most heartfelt thanks for your incessant anxiety to promote my present and future welfare by the culture of my mind and parental care of my person. May I hope that the efforts I have made to improve will gain your approbation when the vacation, which commences the 16th inst., and ceases the 18th of January 1858 affords me an opportunity of submitting to an examination.

Soliciting your indulgence for my involuntary deficiencies, I remain, my dear Mamma, your affectionate daughter,

Mary Cecily Potter

PS. The Misses Brennan present their compliments to you and family.

No. 2

Bow Road,

3 July 1860.

My dear Mamma,

I daresay you were very surprised at my not coming home on Monday evening with my brothers. I am going to stop with Aunt Saul till Saturday, and then Aunt will bring me home. I sleep in the front room by myself. It is next to Aunt's and opens into it by a door which Aunt leaves open. Aunt took me to the Zoological Gardens yesterday and I enjoyed myself very much. Aunt Saul is so kind. She has given me a pretty little box of Dominoes made of brass, I think, which Aunt said she had when she was only a year older than me.

Aunt has gone out today to dinner and Uncle is going to take me on the water this afternoon. I am so happy Mamma, only George I think, will be dull without me. You must ask my brothers to take him out.

Dear Mamma I would write you a longer letter and I intended to do so, only I am now going out for a walk with a friend of Aunt's, Mr. Church.

With love to all my brothers, I am dear Mamma, your very affectionate daughter,

Mary Potter

PS. You will not be dull without me, as you have George with you.

No. 3_

Cupola House

11 December 1860

My dear Mamma,

Each revolving year impresses upon me more fervently the great obligation I am under to you for your unremitting care and solicitude for me. I trust my application to my studies and by my general good conduct I shall convince you that I am anxious to acknowledge the debt of gratitude I owe you.

The Misses Brennan desire me to present their compliments and to inform you that the vacation commences on Dec.20th and will terminate Jan 21st 1861. They unite with me in wishing you many happy returns of the season.

Believe me, my dear Mamma, to be your affectionate daughter,

Mary Potter

No. 4

Cupola House
December 1861

My dear Mamma,

It always gives me great pleasure to address you and more particularly at this season of the year, as it affords me the opportunity of announcing to you the Vacation, which commences dec.18th inst. and will terminate Jan. 20th., when I shall have the happiness of enjoying your society and convincing you that I have endeavoured to gain your approbation by the progress I have made in my various studies, and I hope by my affection and obedience to make a small return for the many favours you have conferred upon me.

Believe me to be, dear Mamma, your affectionate daughter,

Mary Potter

PS. The Misses Brennan desire me to present their compliments and to wish you many happy returns of the season.

No. 5

Cupola House
December 2nd. 1862

My dear Mamma,

It is with great pleasure that I again avail myself of the opportunity afforded by the forthcoming season to thank you for the means you have so kindly taken for my improvement during the past year, and at the same time to inform you that the vacation commences December 17th. 1862 and terminates January 19th. 1863. Trusting that the progress I have made in my studies will merit a renewal of your kindness, and wishing you all the compliments of the season, I remain dear Mamma, your affectionate daughter,

Mary Potter

PS. The Misses Brennan desire their compliments to you and family.

No. 6

(In an envelope marked "For my dear Mother after I am dead.")

Probable date December 1876.

Dear, dear Mother,

Do not trouble. Offer your grief and pray, and cease not to shorten my time of suffering. Do not reproach yourself and forgive me all unkindness or sorrow I have caused you. I did feel for you, but I could not understand how there could be anything we would not give to God. My own regret that I have nothing more to give Him. I have longed for years to be with God. It was that made me weak and ill. Two years ago and more I offered to live even if I could have gone to be with Him then, when I was so ill. It seemed like Our Blessed Lord to come from Heaven to live on earth and suffer.

I would pray to live now if he wished me, but now I may offer my life, my death, for the work He made known to me to save souls. I do so gladly.

The Holy Father probably believes me now, though I have not heard from him. I thank God I may die now and not live to be honoured. Tell him I felt his blessing and it strengthened and comforted me. I hope it may take me sooner to Heaven where I can pray better for him than on earth where I have prayed very much for him and his intentions.

I kneel and ask forgiveness of anyone I have been unkind to or grieved. I will pray for them hereafter please God; allow me to pray also for those who have grieved me. I have prayed earnestly for them. I ask all who would wish now to make me happy to help this work. Each souls saved will make me happier. Tell my Bishop I always knew how good he was, and never felt the least want of charity or respect.

I ask now his blessing and yours, my mother, and am ever your loving daughter in the Precious Blood of Jesus,

Mary, S.M.

Please send all letters, MSS., scraps of paper to Mrs. Elizabeth Bryan, Thurloe Square, S.W. Please let her have everything. I particularly wish this. I would collect them but may not have time.

I wish my money and all that belongs to me besides letters, manuscripts etc. to be sent to Mrs. Elizabeth Bryan, 11 Alfred Place, Thurloe Square, London, s.a.g. I owe Tom or Geordie a pound, please give and likewise give Tom another pound, all the rest of Papa's money to be sent to Mrs. Bryan.

I do not want you, dear Mamma to be scrupulous if you would like to keep anything. I die so happy. You will see it has not been unknown for some weeks. You did not notice anything particular, but I knew the best preparation was to go on simply doing my duties. If I had known for certain God meant to call me any time I was doing a duty, I would have gone on doing it. I have been very happy in this disposition.

Thank you very much for all your goodness, particularly keeping so good whilst I

was with you before I was born. I feel so grateful to you for that. You might have brought me into the world with strong passions to which I might have given way.

Your loving daughter,

Mary, S.M.

Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Please give the crucifix with the Holy Father's blessing and picture Mrs. Knill gave me of Our Lady's Heart to the Company of Mary and tell them how you asked me to pray that whatever was asked there might be granted.

Let all who wish a favour ask with confidence. Though I did not like to make that prayer, it almost seeming presumption, I did so at your wish. Please likewise give the crucifix you held at my birth, that the Holy Father's blessing may be obtained for it, and it may be used for the visitation of the dying.

Please let all who wish come and see my body and pray for the repose of my soul. I specially desire that no one be denied. I do not wish to be washed. Only take off my outer clothes.

Give my love to all. Please God I will think of all.

Owe Herr Bohr music. Owe Mrs. Fulker. In case Tom owes me anything, ask him have some Masses said for the dying and in thanksgiving, put the money in my purse to it.

The large crucifix on my altar belongs to Mary Hanlon, 6 Osterley Road, Stoke Newington. Please send the altar Geordie sent, to the Little Company of Mary to be used for the dying.

No. 7_

The following notes were written in pencil by the Servant of God in a conversation with her mother who was deaf. Probable date – January 1877

I should like to have a little talk with you if you will consider in confidence. A strange occurrence happened. Perhaps you will say with me it is Divine Providence.

Before Christmas a letter was sent to Washbourne's by a very good Catholic gentleman who had done a deal of good in the Church. It was about the authoress of the Path. The letter was written to the Reviser of the book. It was to the effect that the gentleman was devoted to Our Lady and wished Her to be loved and venerated again in his native place, hoping I would pray it might be so etc. I wrote I did not see what I could do but pray in some future time I might bring a little Company of Mary's own. An answer came, the gentleman was old. He would give a free gift, house, lands etc., provided his Bishop would allow us to commence in that Diocese, but that being old he could not allow long delays. This gentleman has devoted himself to doing good, building and buying for priests and nuns. All that I want is your permission to leave and go and see into it. I must see the Bishop.

Why? I have done my duty, I have treated you as a daughter. Do you treat me as a good mother and not make me regret my confidence. "If a man love father or mother better than Me, he is not worthy of Me."

Dear Mamma, I must ask you again what I have asked you before – leave to go to London. I want you to think quietly whether you are justified in what you do and if you are not causing me grief, that your parents caused you in similar circumstances.

Suppose for argument's sake I am wrong, you are not the judge. Can you consider you are? Again, if I am wrong, you are preventing its being shown to me.

Recollect neither Bishop or Cardinal have told me I am wrong. I have told you before, you brought me home just as the matter was to have been examined into. Under the present circumstances priest will not examine. I have tried again and again to procure a Director or some examination of the matter, but I receive the same answer – they do not like to interfere or do not like to compromise their Order.

I am sure dear Mamma, that neither your own Director or any other priest would

think you right in your present conduct in hindering me even obtaining examination and direction, much less if I have received a call from God as I believe, and tell you so, in the Name of Jesus that I consider I have.

Do, dear Mamma, for God's sake, for your children's, for your own, pray and consider.

Have you nothing to say?

But besides, in a matter of doubt you are bound to take advice, because where our inclinations are strong, we are blinded, we cannot be judges in our own cause.

I do not see I may be able to wait till Saturday week now you have delayed so long. I have heard someone will be in London this week whom I wish to see and consult.

I am sorry to cause you pain. I love you better than I ever did in my life. You have grown so much gentler and loveable in many ways.

Ask your Director. I can assure you Mamma, it is a case of sin, not in my opinion but in theologians' – a mortal sin. The penny book Fr. Burke told me to get, says so.

When will you give me an answer? If I were disobedient I should not be asking you at all. All your children I feel sure, will or do think you wrong in this present case.

My mother repeated that I "never had a heart, so could have no confidence in me. She did not know it was my fault, but I might cultivate it etc." Poor dear Mamma, if Dr. Grant were alive again, all right.

The Bishop told me long ago he did not hinder me – I could go to Kensington after. Do you think it waste to give a child to God? I ask you to forgive me giving you pain. You know I would not do it but that I wish to do God's Will.

"Ingratitude, disobedience, cruelty – 3 things most displeasing to God, no good can

come of it.” (My mother’s words.)

How am I disobedient?

No person could possibly think you wrong in letting me go to have advice. I say again if you consider me wrong, how is it you hinder it being shown to me. I simply want to go and see if the Bishop will examine papers etc. and interest himself in (the) matter. I ask you again, will you let me go? We won’t talk about because what you say is painful to me. Give me an answer by tomorrow.

I have made arrangements to go, have written to remain a night or two at a convent in the place. I may go with a grieved heart, but go I must. May God accept the pain my Mother gives me – pain I would with the help of Jesus endure myself than give to anyone.

If you made a sacrifice of me to God it might bring a great blessing on the family. I am sure it is needed – poor Willie and Geordie too in a dangerous state. Do dear Mamma recollect you are a mother and be generous for your children’s good.

It’s because the Bishop can’t understand the matter and I must go and explain. It is not Dr. Danell. Do please Mamma. It is an important time. Do let me go with your permission. There is not a Priest would say but that you are wrong and very wrong. You certainly are if you do not take advice.

I myself have taken advice and been told to go by a Priest down here.

St. Jane Frances Chantal.

I have not told you whose Diocese or what Bishop. I would rather not speak any more about it. You do not look to God's Will. You cannot decide or understand. I can't leave home. You have the terrible responsibility.

That is a mistake. He wants it prudently looked into to see if arrangements can be made as mentioned. The school and schoolmistresses salary help the community. You are talking of what you do not understand, so dear Mamma, until you know you cannot bring forward such

God did not give me to you for yourself but for Himself. Recollect Dr. Grant's words.

It would not be so great a parting. I could come and see you and be very different to what I was in the convent. – at any rate for some time. Why did you not think me ungrateful, undutiful before. The Bishop must have known you would want me when you got old. Many at your age are far worse.

My mother reproached me with having a cold heart and callous – prayed God would forgive me and said what would she have done if she had known when I was a child I should have grown up and wanted to leave her like this. I should not have her leave, or blessing and the work would not prosper. She would do her part to prevent such a work coming in the Church

No. 8

Dear Mamma,

Thank you so much for your kind loving letter received on the Assumption. We were intending to return home but had to remain with a sick man. I went Friday

night and have remained ever since. The wife was taken ill too. They are both better, my sick man not yet up, says he should have died if I had not come.

Hope you are keeping well. No time, you may imagine. Have been up every night since.

Your loving Trotty.

I wrote to Aunt Saul some of the enclosed "little man's" letter.

No. 9

Via della Purificazione 54
16 September (?1883)

Dearest little Mother,

Forgive not writing sooner, but you know my right hand has been ill with Fever and frightened us all, but thank God now better, but weak. It makes me behind-hand with my letters etc. for it was not to be expected I could get strength whilst the intense perspirations lasted, but please God soon, shall as the weather is changing beautifully. It seems to me there is however a great deal of exaggeration about the Roman heats – if a person were strong and could stand the loss in the system of these perspirations and make it up with food, I do not see why they should not pass a summer in Rome.

There has been an earthquake at Frascati after we left, but no one hurt, but only frightened after the terrible affair of Ischia. Well, it has done good, for the people have returned to some good customs they had in the Holy Father's times, viz. shutting up the shops Sundays – I hope they will keep to it.

How are you all at home? The Patriarch, Rita and the little ones. She never said if she received the picture of St. Rita I sent her. I do pray for all at the Holy Places.

It is a wonderful sight to see an incorrupt body after hundreds of years. I have seen three Saints, the flesh and everything just as though asleep. Is it not wonderful? They have in Rome, but I have not seen it, the arm of St. Francis Xavier. His body was discovered long after his death, buried in the sand under a burning sun, quite incorrupt. They cut the flesh and it dropped fresh blood. But, is it not remarkable, they cut off the arm to bring to Europe, and since then the body began to decay. Does it not look that Almighty God was not pleased with thus acting with a body which He had thus preserved so miraculously entire and intact, but however perhaps this is criticising on my part. I think that travelling has that effect upon the mind, to criticise ways and things

I hope you will make your promised visit to Aunt Saul. I did want to write to her whilst at Leamington, and kept intending to because there is a family there named Glesley (Meridan Lodge) near Leamington. They were here last winter and were most kind to us and I should have liked either they to call upon Aunt or Aunt upon them. They are not Catholics, but that made no difference in their kindness to us. Those young ladies would walk through the Rome streets with a dinner for us, and scarcely a day passed without some nice little thing coming that would tempt anyone to eat, and it was done in such a nice way. And then seeing we had no carpet and were on the bricks, going and buying some. I cannot tell you how grateful I felt.

Our own people in Rome have not given us altogether in the whole year ten pounds, but still I do not complain. There are so many poor religious on account of Government measures that they would not think it right perhaps to give to strangers, but God reward this good family who month after month, were so generous, so good to us.

I think they will be in London during the winter. Do you think you could ask Aunt if they might call on her? They are such a nice family and I think her curiosities would please them. How do I wish Aunt Saul would come out here. I am sure the thorough change would do her good. Rome is quite an English place in the winter. It is literally crowded – English, Americans and even Australians. A foreign country, when you first land, has rather a repulsive air, people jabbering away whom you cannot understand and so. But Rome has English all about it, and is such a

small compact place you meet the same people everywhere.

We have such privileges. The other day the Treasures of St. Peter's unlocked to us. Of course the Religious Treasures were what I valued most, but there were many curious things to see – one, Charlemagne's royal robes etc. Curious things can be had here without payment, and almost without asking – stones from the Palaces of the Caesars, mosaics which you can pick off the columns for your self. They are not particular about those things as people in England. When I took out my scissors to get a bit of St. Cecilia's bath the man showing us only smiled.

Well now, dear little mother, I should like to write you many things I know would interest you, but it is difficult and this must be my excuse for this bad writing. Do not be uneasy about me. I feel little doubt I shall get stronger in the next house. There is much business and some anxieties at present. Pray dear Jesus send us some good friends. I am sure if Aunt Saul's kind heart only knew what a charity it would be she would send us if only a little tea, but we have not used what we have got so don't be sending any yourself. God bless you.

Love to all from your loving daughter,

Mary

M.M. Philip will write when in the next house, have more sisters coming out. It is a real charity. You know people forget other languages when sick, especially with Fever.

To her Brother Thomas and his wife Marguerite Faveraux - Letters 10 - 28

No. 10

Dear Tom,

Thank you so much for your kind letter. I told M.M. Philip to tell you that it was the

first present I had received, because the little lady had written me Aunt Saul had said she thought I had rich friends and that it would be right to contradict that. Contrary to my expectations I find there is nothing to be expected in that way.

The convents here have their property taken from them; 4d a day allowed each professed no novices allowed to enter; inventory of all Church goods and many other sad things' poor priests etc., so that those who have money have many ways of disposing of it, but however, if I have not temporals, I have received other gifts – have seen the Holy Father twice; spoken with him once, have received his blessing many times. He gave me all I asked, except some special Indulgences that he could not give me verbally, that will have to be written. He gave me, mine and all our works a special benediction. We received Holy Communion in his private chapel, a great favour. Indeed Cardinals and all are most kind to us, but there is the long work to come of translating rules and the Propaganda examination yet to come, which is very slow work.

Love to dear Rita, am so glad she looks the same as ever. Pray for all at the Holy Places, blessing for the little ones too.

Your loving sister,

Mary

Little Lady will tell you more news.

(Little Lady was the family's pet name for their mother.)

No. 11

Dear Tom,

Thank you very much for kind letter and the beautiful likeness – what a fine boy and how like Rita. God bless all, and keep all from evil. I must get you the Holy Father's Blessing some day, but you have it in the little lady's. I have just been getting Harry one so must not ask too much at once.

I cannot think why you do not come out to Rome, as to Harry, I am sure he would make a fortune. There is only one shop called "Old England" but it is not much and really Rome is full of English speaking people; Americans etc., who want to deal off English people and get English goods. As it is, if he would have bills printed saying he supplied people abroad; so many people get their goods from England. Since the days of the so called King, the prices of things are terrible – 5d. for three quarters of a lb. Of moist sugar, salt, coffee etc. and all the groceries are the same.

We have such nice letters from our children at Adelaide. They have had such a beautiful voyage. Love to all.

Your loving sister, Mary.

No. 12

My Darling Sister,

Whom circumstances have separated from her adopted sister, but who have their hearts one I know, I must send you a few lines of greeting for the New Year and a little book I want you to read. God bless you and yours and make you always a real holy family.

What a Providence we have been to one another, have we not? You helping me fulfil my vocation and I yours, though really when I asked you home and threw you and the dear old Patriarch together, I had no thought but for both your happiness, as I never thought the little mother would live with any of her children after they were married. God has shown His love to us both. You had no idea had you, as I laid on the sofa hemming sheets for your wedding, what my thoughts were upon. I could never speak of it to anyone though I loved you so much. Well, well, God be praised and may we ever honour our dear Mother Mary whose children we both are, in our different works.

Will you give enclosed letter to the young lady and invite her to see you. She is the niece of one of our Sisters whose mother (a Protestant) lately died. Our good

Sister would not enter the convent until she had seen these children properly instructed, took them to her house in Dublin and had them prepared for First Communion etc. It would be an act of charity to be kind to the motherless girl.

Kiss dear little mother and all, for your loving
Mary

No. 13

God bless you, dear Tom. Thank you for your kind letter and present. I want to know what you think. I have an offer from Count Moore to pay my way to Limerick if I will go and open the Hospital he is installing us in there. I did not think I could travel so far and told him so, but now feeling better and everyone being agreed I should not stay the summer in Rome, and as I could not afford to go to the Lakes or mountains, and if I could the journey might be just as fatiguing as to England, we have written to accept his offer on condition I travel First Class.

Well my difficulty is this. I should love to see the little Mother and give her pleasure, but am not now as strong as when I went to England last. Where shall I meet her? It is such a journey to London and then back to Southsea, and I do not mean to stay anywhere, even at our Convent in Florence. I always find getting out, stopping about, getting into cabs the worst part of the journey. (Our Bishop left here Sunday night and we got a telegram from him in London, Tuesday.) I shall of course go on to Nottingham and stay some weeks before going on to Limerick. If you were at Folkestone or Dover it would be so easy and I really should like to stay a week with you. I enjoyed it much. It was the only real rest I had had for years. We both enjoyed it.

As regards staying in London, we have no place exactly where one would feel at home. Bessie is kind, but I always feel it might make uncomfortable ness between Harry and her, stopping at her house, though I would on no account hurt the little man's feelings by telling him so. I do not feel like that with Phoebe or dear Rita, you know.

When you write let me know the best route also to go by and all the particulars, what stations etc. I do not propose starting for some weeks but thought I had better write in time.

Give love to Rita. I hope she takes care of herself just now.

Your loving sister,

Mary

No. 14

Dear Tom,

Thank you for kind letter, and for all the trouble you are taking. You see by enclosed copy taken from Cook's own books, they are supposed to return the money for unused coupons. The book would be too heavy to send you to read for yourself.

Would it be any use my writing and saying we were a poor Community? I think Cook is a Catholic.

Love to all. Which is the best printing machine or copying to buy? I had one that was very useful but do not now know the name and hope some day to have another like your addresses.

God bless all. Still keep well. Your loving

Mary

No. 15

Monday.

Dear Tom and Rita,

It scarcely seems possible I shall see you so soon. We think it will probably be today week. I want you to write me out clearly all about the trains that I may know where to make a stop. I have quarters at Lugano in a convent. Between Southsea and Lugano, where should we make a break, or could we go direct or would we be well to stay at Folkestone or Boulogne? Will you give me a list of trains to choose from? 2. Also do we change at Guildford?

You must excuse this short note. Have upwards of a 100 letters these last two or three days and cannot get time to read them.

Love the little mother for me. Am afraid it will be exciting for her, but in my state of health the sisters would reproach themselves if I could not return again to England. I am afraid of the expense for you, also of three sisters, but it is really necessary to have always two. Sometimes I have to be carried. We intend going to "Harley House" Convent, Marie Reparatrice Sisters Saturday next and stay till Monday and then start for Southsea.

God bless you both prays ever your loving sister

Mary

You might go to H. Communion both of you for me next Sunday.

No. 16

God bless the holy little family at Southsea. God's greeting to the Patriarch, to Rita so faithful and the olive branches round the table. You scarcely know how often I am with you in Spirit and how I thank God that you are so blessed with good children. You have done a work in the world and have brought forth fruit that will remain.... (finished by Sr. M. Hilda.)

No. 17

God bless you dear Rita, Patriarch and all. You will be thinking me unkind, but this is the first letter I have written for weeks, and it must be short. The inflammation begins when I move.

I do feel for the anxious time you have had, and poor Tom still so weak, but our loved one will know how to reward all your loving kindness. God will visit Saxenholme. You will all soon rejoice after your time of trial.

Am so glad Marie and Gertie are at Isleworth. They can stay as long as you like. Could you not get a change yourself?

I have no doubt the little mother told you her wish that I should have the little white crucifix in black frame. Leave it in one of the London Houses, it will be brought to me safe.

I shall claim Marie now. How I wish I had her in this lovely spot. I cannot get to Rome so have brought a nice band with me here; four will be clothed on the Purification.

Must finish. Love to all. Poor boys, I do feel for them, tell them, prays for them.
Mary.

No. 18

Sunday 19th.

Dear Tom,

I will gladly accept what you offer, viz. 55 pounds as my share of dear Willie's will and should be glad if I could have 20 pounds by next Saturday 25th. A telegram with the word "twenty" would do, if a letter could not come in time. I cannot tell you our expenses or what it is to have to do with Italian workmen.

We have put a second ceiling, and then it was found they must put iron "travis" in, so our so our second ceiling was lost. We have been living in our unsafe house for some time. They have supported it, but when the workmen will be out I know not. If we could have afforded to have put columns it would have been safer and better, but the Landlord said he only let it as a stable. However "all things work together for good to those who love God" and it may set some thinking of the old building project. One of the committee almost reproached me about it (a Monsignor of some importance), but in all our houses I have forbidden debt and
Excuse this to catch post.

No. 19

God bless you, dear Patriarch and Rita who has again shown herself such a noble mother by parting so generously with her child. I only wish she could take her herself and inhale the oxygen for a few weeks. I know travelling upsets you, but it would do Rita good and that dear little Gerty to make her First Communion if you could get free passes as you used.

It is just the place for Marie at this time of age and it is an exceptionally happy Novitiate – it is a school for the Novices. They have a part to themselves under a very holy and learned mother, who is trying to bring out their minds, as is so necessary in our work and in these days. Let Marie bring all the books, music, maps or anything of that kind you have for we are very short of these things. The Jesuits were very good leaving us all they could, but they took away their library. Marie will write you grand letters.

If you could only have seen the vintage last year, nuns, contadini and all. The Contadini work the place by the curious Tuscan custom. They have a nice house in the grounds and a fine old man with his sons do everything, and share half the produce for their trouble. We have no trouble with the vineyard or anything. We have half the milk, wine and so on. I think they are gathering the olives now. One of the men Raffaele, belongs to us and is the most handy man you could find. He is the only one we pay anything to – because he is in the house with us.

Where the double row of cypresses are, the Indulged steps are between, and artists come to draw it, it is so beautiful, but the whole view is considered the second most beautiful in the world. But the spiritual part is the most wonderful- the Beatis cells, the old oratory of St. Jerome etc. It was a monastery before it was the Generalate of the Jesuits. They built the present Novitiate part – but Marie must write more – I have not time or would mark some of the rooms. If I had time I could tell such funny incidents. One of the “intelligenti” novices, wishing to see if they recollected their morning’s lecture, whilst out for a walk, were for seizing hold a leg of mutton a boy was carrying, to see something or other they had learnt theoretically.

As for the Rip van Winkles who come from distant parts of the world to see the Fr. General, it is most amusing. One grand ceremony day one gentleman, almost in a dream, was led into the Church where, startled as he was at seeing a Blue Veil open the door to him – he was still more startled at seeing a grand Procession of nuns, acolytes etc. all slowly wending their way up the aisle.

Now with love all round ever your loving sister

Mary

(Written on photograph enclosed – “New Church – Noviciate – Indulged steps – Beati cells – old Oratory – my rooms.”)

No. 20

God bless the dear old Patriarch and the faithful “Ruth”. I seem to have been watching you both in your patient suffering and what God has in store for you in this world and the next, He alone knows.

How God has blessed your mission in this world, dear Tom and Rita. With all that we see in our mission, it is refreshing to think of such a good Christian home.

I am so sorry for your poor little flower Diddy being so afflicted. Please God she will be restored soon. Thank God Winnie keeps well and Rita so much better.

Please thank Pauline for kind notes, I was grateful for them.

Now Goodbye, God bless. The Angel's Greeting – Peace! May the New Year find you free from pain and anxiety prays

No. 21

San Girolamo, Fiesole

God bless you, so glad of letter showing you and dear Rita are not disappointing God this time of trial. I really was afraid you might not be resigned and think if she had not come to us it might not have been etc., and not see Providence in it.

We do hope and there is every hope, she may recover, but if Our dear Lord is going to pluck a flower for Himself, how much more beautiful will you gift be, a lovely work of God's Spirit, fruit of the Passion, that nothing of this world has tarnished.

It is strange the devotion Marie has for the boy Martyr whose body with the phial of his own blood is under the High Altar in our Church here. She wants his name "Floridus". It is certainly a beautiful body – face perfect, offering his blood, such a calm lovely expression – the hands and feet, sandaled, left exposed.

I am glad to say that Marie seems much better, cough less and fever. Do not worry about money, it will be alright. Excuse these hasty lines.

Love Rita for Mary. Thanks for P. Order.

No. 22

San Girolamo, Fiesole,

Toscana.

God bless the good old Patriarch and faithful Rita. You must think me unkind not writing to you in this time when dear Jesus has pressed you both close to His Cross (that you may not forget Him.) You are however, constantly both in my thoughts and I do pray God to comfort you.

I do not enter into particulars regarding our Angel-child. Mother Mary Philip will tell you and if you are in Isleworth next Sunday, Dr. Brock will tell you. It is strange she does not know how ill she is, and yet she is begging for the Habit. She told Sister last night that the Vicar told her she should have it – he would give it to her in a few days, and the dear old priest came and begged me, and the Sisters also say she would have more grace.

Do you, as her mother, approve and bless. If you are coming out would you like, if she has it, that she wait till you come? You know if you come alone or with Uncle George or her Uncle you could be in the convent, but we cannot take married people. You might then look about for a cheap Villa or apartment and Tom come on after. What do you say to this plan? If you found a nice furnished Villa cheap, which is easy here, could Tom follow on with Gerty. How I would love to see the little flower of grace and goodness running about these hills, and we have some clever sisters who would give her lessons. One Postulant has been accustomed to prepare boys for Harrow and could help little Gerty finish.

Forgive this disconnected letter. I do not want another Post to go, with a line from your loving sister,

Mary

No. 23

Have a few minutes and think I cannot do better than give some details to an anxious father and mother of a loved child. Well, she is no worse and able to enjoy life and loves a bit of fun. Just imagine this old Monastery built against a rock so that each floor has a garden. Sr. Mary Florida is being wheeled out in a lovely chair

that makes a sofa as well, and Gutta Percha to make the wheels go easy etc. I have my door open and see along the corridor and beckon them to bring her. She rolls along delighted, two arms outspread, to jump out if she was let, passes the sweet Oratory near my door where Jesus is, and where she was clothed, and the scroll made and put up for her still remaining "Jesu Coronam Virginum", finally is wheeled to my sofa.

" Well, Florida, what do you mean, impersonating me in the garden and having priests and students after you?" Merry laugh. "What do you think happened in Church in the morning. Sr. Laurence fainted and fell, and the two new sisters from Australia rushed to the rescue and led her away and as we were telling the tale at recreation, a novice cried out, "Oh, Mother, she made such a noise when she fell, she woke us all up." Sr. Florida clapped her hands at this, "Oh, that was letting the cat out of the bag." Well, I said, another little sister, distracting attention from this, warbled softly, "I saw her but a moment, me thinks I see her now, led off by two policeman for kicking up a row."

Commenced this days ago, no change, but still she is not emaciated. Her hands quite plump. Did I tell you I got permission from the Holy Father for her, for Holy Communion without fasting. You might like the rescript, will ask them to send it to you.

Wish I could write more, but time is wanting for all. God love you both and the Angels bring messages from your loving sister,

Mary.

Sr. Florida looks so pretty in white. She has a long thin dressing gown, lined with flannelette. She has the old Jesuit Infirmary. One came to see her the other day and walked in saying, "Happy child, the Lord knew whom He could trust with His Cross." Another old Franciscan (who clothed her privately to save fatigue for her) said "I could talk all day to that child." You are indeed happy parents.

October, Rome 1901

My own loved Brother and Sister,

What can I say? Simply there is a reverence in my soul as though I was approaching something sacred – as indeed you are, set apart by God in your present sanctuary of sorrow, pressed close to Jesus on the Cross. Yes, but I also revere you as the parents of one of the “Beati” in Heaven. Blessed is Sister Mary Florida, the child of Thomas and Marguerite. This is the chant of the Angels, “Joy be with you always” – the salutation of the day (St. Raphael’s) has been said to her. Happy, happy child – but you, my poor brother and sister, how my heart has ached these days.

I wanted to write and yet know not how much dear Rita knew, and I thought to the last she might last longer than those around thought. It is useless to say Be Comforted and weep not. I say – let your poor hearts give vent to your sorrow, for there is One who well understands the human heart – its Creator. “And Jesus wept.” I have a hope that Our Lady will let her fresh fair flower from earth, your Florida, hover near you bringing peace and perfect resignation, but not to sorrow would be impossible. God does not expect it. Indeed, I think you will not cease until you meet her in that haven of peace who flew into it, so young, but your souls are linked to God now as never before, for part of yourselves, the life you brought into the world is now united, for ever, to the Eternal Life. She came from God and has gone to Him. Blessed be His Holy Name. May His Sweet Will be praised and adored for ever and ever.

Mother, she speaks, Mother and father beloved. Much as I loved you on earth, still more, far, far beyond your knowledge do I love you now. How shall I welcome you to Heaven to whom under God I owe my eternal happiness.

God asked you for a gift. He asked not in vain and I praise Him for His grace in you, in whom His Grace has not been void. “Cantate Domino canticum novum.” If you heard her singing that “new song,” you would not wish to hear her sing the songs of earth. If you saw that lit-up look of love you would not wish the sorrows of earth to ever cloud that face of joy. If you saw the Bridegroom rejoicing over his

little bride would you wish to unlock that embrace. Ah no. She has heard His Voice – passing sweet – and the words thrilled the immortal soul – Come! Come, you Blessed!

No more. I leave you with God in your sanctuary of sorrow. My Angel must whisper to you some of the love and compassion of this heart of your loving sister,
Mary

No. 25

God bless the holy family, Patriarch, Ruth (Rita). You have indeed been with Jesus on the Way of the Cross. Pax. God bless my loved brother and sister, those whom God has not waited to bless in the next world. He has pronounced them so here – “Blessed are those who mourn” (finished by Sr. M. Hilda.)

No. 26_

God bless my dear brother and sister, blessed and watched over from Heaven by the Angel-child you gave to God. I sympathise with poor Rita about her loved country but she must remember “The hour that is darkest is nearest the dawn.” We would have gone and taken possession of one of the many deserted Convents and have done our little best, if we were allowed

No. 27

Dear old Patriarch and Rita,

Thanks for the trouble you are taking. It will be such a boon if we can get a loan. Re: the land, people say it was a gift. There are mutual matters between us and the Jesuits. We are great friends and the taking this property was a friendly arrangement.

Re: good Pauline we see much in our lives that we class under the name (Influenza). People with such good wills under some strange influence. Re Diddy – what is she doing. I did not understand the Elocution affair.

At St. John's Hospital we have trained many young ladies who have taken up good positions after – up to 100 pounds a year. We take them in, give board and lodging and the Committee I think, give 12 pounds a year to commence with. They have to be three years to obtain their certificate and then they have a living for life. If you would like this for your little Diddy tell me, and I will arrange.

I do not write, but constantly think and thank God for you and like to hear from you. Geordie never writes. Give him my love and accept it, dear Tom and Rita and the children from your loving

Mary

For my loved brother and sister, Southsea. s.a.g.

No. 28

God bless and be with my beloved brother and sister. It is late at night. Most in bed but the night sisters with their sick etc., yet, though a long day of fatiguing work is ended, I must write a few lines to say how I pray all good things come to you, how I love you more than ever and am so happy Pauline is better. Gaston will be well. Do not trouble – and yet though I say I am writing, it is the darling Florida, your Marie and mine, urging me.

How much you have done for God in that lovely "Beata" you have given Him. One of the most lovely souls I ever knew. Cannot write more – arm gives way.

One in the Heart of Mary our Mother,

Mary.

Tell Diddy courage – all will be well. Do you remember Florida's voice? Then it was taken, but she is singing now in Paradise.

To the Patriarch and Rita from their loving sister, Mary.

Letters to her brother Henry

No. 29

(probable date 1876)

Dear Harry,

Whilst thanking you for your energy in this affair, I want to explain a little. I do not know where I have been to blame. I do not deny it, but would be glad if you would tell me, because I want you to understand the matter well, because though I rely upon God's help alone, and owing to His Goodness, my trust daily increase, yet it would be presumption rather than hope not to be glad of a friend where I can find one, not that I feel sure however of the promises of even the best, for it seems to be God's Will that those who are for me today, are against me tomorrow.

This thought is a very old one in my mind and dates back about 6 years. It arose during a Mission and was sent away. The year before last it came again. Under obedience I put it away, but it was no use. Do what I do, it came. At last, though not encouraging me, my Director told me to go to Fr. Horan and do what he said. He sent me to the Bishop.

I laid my plan before the Bishop, which was the following. It was to keep my school with other assistance, likewise put by one room in the house for a Chapel, which the Southsea people would gladly pay for. Fr. Horan had been mentioning how to get a room – told one lady if she would procure a room Mass should be said. Thus the rent of the house would be partly paid, teachers and servants without charge, there was a good chance of success. A little boys' school would have answered well.

I had leave from the Bishop to induce others to join me in devotion to the dying. I, with my companions, might live under a certain rule, have no new prayers, pointed

out some prayers we might use; we might commence thus, visit cases pointed out, and see him again.

I gave Mamma her choice to have her own rooms in the house, as lady boarder, or be with Tom and Rita. She would do neither. I can assure dear Harry, I thought I might have saved you and Tom expense in the future for the little one's schooling. This was frustrated.

As regards my journey to London. I went up to see Fr. Selle and at his wish made a Retreat under his direction (doing my writing at the same time). I do not know what you all objected to. I had Mamma's leave to be there. I wrote and said it would save me going up and down from your house (I did not know then you could not accommodate me. I wrote directly I got to London), received a kind letter in reply from Mamma consenting, saying the priests were always our friends etc. After, in a few days time, without another word, she wrote to George Saul to go and send me home by train. Fr. Selle did not consider I ought to break off in the middle of the Retreat, without any reason, so I did not go home when Uncle Saul came. If it had been considered right, I should of course have done so.

When the Archbishop told me to go and begin, I intended to do so. When he said I was to go home to my Mother, I have obeyed. If I am told to start this very next coming week to the other end of the world, I should certainly, by God's grace, obey at once. There is only one thing to be done in this world – the Will of God. There is only one way of knowing His Holy Will, and that is by obedience. My thought regarding the Bishop (and I should like him to know this) is, that as my Bishop he set me to work, and then his opposition is simply God showing me I am not to work in his diocese. If I had commenced my work here I should have had what I hope to have elsewhere, religious Priests to direct it.

Regarding my book – it will be the same. If not published, time will prove it was for the best. "All things work together for good to those who love God." I love Him with every part of my being, and will show my love as He wishes it shown by my love for others. I will save souls for whom Jesus shed His Blood. Yes, for Eternity, there will be souls in Heaven, beautiful souls reflecting gloriously and praising the

Blessed Trinity to endless ages and ages, who would not have been there if I and mine had not “worked and prayed and suffered” to save them at the last moment of the time appointed by God in His Wisdom to show Mercy – and obtained mercy for them ere it was too late and they had entered that region where God exercises His Justice with inexorable severity.

If we think of that eternity of woe separated from God, and the eternity of happiness we look forward to with Him, we shall not think much of our own sufferings if we can obtain for souls – sinners – the grace of contrition on their deathbed, so that hereafter they, with ourselves, “may live within the arms of God and lie upon His Breast where the wicked cease from trembling and the weary are at rest.”

That we may both have this happiness and likewise obtain it for others is the earnest prayer of your loving sister in the Heart of Jesus and Mary,

Mary, S.J.M.

I intended “True Devotion” should form the spirit of our “Little Society” so that we might all have one spirit amongst us, the spirit of Mary, and that anyone who did not like that devotion and would not adopt it, should not remain. It would be a test of vocation.

You wrote to the Bishop I was pained at certain things said against me, that was not quite correct. I have felt pain sometimes when people have been very unkind.

No. 30

Mary,

Little Company of

Via S. Stefano Rotondo,
Rome.

God be with you, dear little man. I hear from my devoted sister, Lily, that you are

not well. May Our Lady strengthen you and send Holy Angels to your help prays
your loving sister,

Mary

Have you one of our Mother's Books of Hymns and the Divinity of Jesus.

No. 31

On envelope – Uncle Henry, be a true uncle to your orphan nieces.

God bless dear Harry.

Remember your inspiration regarding our old house at Southsea. Truly God has
been there.

No. 32

(To her brother Thomas)

God bless the dear old Patriarch and Rita (the true Ruth), "thy people shall be my
people," she said in her heart when she said as you were united at the Altar, "It is a
Sacrament." I wonder does she remember? It is one of the very happy
remembrances of my life to have had a little to do with the fulfilling of God's Will in
your regard. You can truly say, "What God decreed, so we agreed"

To her brother George

No. 33_

G. S. Potter Esq.,
Ratcliffe College,
Near Leicester, England.
INGHILTERRA

Dear Geordie,

Am glad to hear always from you. Wish I could do something for you, but I feel sure Our Lady will know you are working for her, bringing out little books which have been waiting so long. I know for certain they do good to souls. Have just received Little book for St. Joseph, send you another little book for Our Lady, which please send to Richardson. You need not trouble about proof sheets after. They as a rule, have to go to the Bishop for Imprimatur and he corrects printers' mistakes, but of course would not trouble to revise MSS. particularly mine, but proof sheets are no trouble.

I know Fr. Walker died through my MSS. and Our Lady took him straight to heaven. He used to sit up at night reading such awful scribble. The Doctor said he had overworked his brain.

We live anticipating being swallowed up. Extraordinary feeling an earthquake is. Have been in one a year or two ago, and it was difficult to believe there was not someone at the top of my bed violently shaking it – then such an extraordinary cracking sound, *craw, craw, craw*. Looking up I saw such a white face peered in at the door and then came and buried her head on my bed. I knew then from the Italian girl it was the dreaded terra-mota. I got up and dressed. The bells of our house did not ring, but some did.

We have had Father Lockhart and Hurst here, the latter looking very ill. How is he now. Fr. Bevan I hear, has preached a sermon. If you see him will you thank him for me. Fr. Hurst said he was glad I was pleased with the Retreat he gave us. I must say I find no one like the Jesuits. Their principle and their practice is they must look to God's Glory before even their own Community. They are grand men of God, truly great, though I do not wish to animadvert on any other Order. I have little doubt but there are Saints in all.

Please excuse this, I am sitting on the top of our house, for the sun and air, but the old boxes and the breeze are not calculated to make good writing. Opposite are St. Peter's Chains; a stone's throw another way, the Column of the Flagellation. The Parish Church of the whole world (St. John's) is within sight, St. Mary Major's close at hand with its lovely bells; Benedict Labre's body, hosts of saints and martyrs all round. Wish you were here.

No. 34

Dear Geordie,

I will be very grateful if you give your opinion upon these statements as they stand. There is the chance of them having been copied wrong. I do not know even the writer of the "Letters", but the letters are humble and good, but it is a tax on me reading them. I only read the Italian papers and little of that. So glad you are well. I wish the family could make up something for Hilda. I cannot pay her fare, and it would do her good to come out. Pleased to see Brother Coulton.

God bless you prays your loving sister,
Mary.

No. 35_

God bless you, dear Geordie, must write you a few lines for I know you are suffering for our dear Willie. God bless him. I think he has. Have just been praying so happily for him and then you came into my mind, and your vocation and Willie's faith got mixed in my mind and I came away, having asked all round the Throne of God to thank for me, but even Our Lady's Heart was not enough, the Sacred Heart alone could thank the Holy God.

I do feel Our Lady has Willie like a mother her Baby, and he or you will be a monk of Jesuit, or both. So what do you think of my day dreaming? God be praised, what should we do without prayer. I remind you by enclosed of our Confraternity of

Calvary. Last week received a brief of rich Indulgences for it from the Holy Father, so we are joining the whole world to send a cry – the emanations of the Heart of Jesus in Agony, loving souls echoing those Last Words.

God bless you and make you faithful to the end. Die having fulfilled your mission
prays your loving sister,
Mary.

No. 36

Annunciation, Feast of the
45 Via Castelfidardo, Roma.

God Bless you dear Geordie,

When you have read the enclosed, would you send it, or copy for the little mother. I think it will comfort her, though I believe you have suffered more.

I am sorry now I did not write more to him that I see how illogical his views are. He wrote in answer to a letter I wrote that my letter “was written in a highly intellectual manner and had given rise to much thought.” This was years ago. Ah, if poor Willie had met such a Priest as the Jesuit who wrote enclosed – a dry old lawyer-like priest, God bless him – no sentiment, no sympathy in the letter. Sympathy would have ruffled me, just practical thought.

I do thank God for making Jesuits and could imagine a soul glad to leave Heaven to become a Jesuit if they could have their time over again. With the power to be a Jesuit like you Geordie, what a pity not to be. A Jesuit once told me vocation was not born in a soul, they choose the better part. (Of course, I do believe there

are special souls born with vocations – “Some are born eunuchs and some have made themselves etc.”)

You cannot think how you came into my mind, your vocation, whilst praying for poor Willie. We have only one time given us to do the best we can for God in, and it is not for time, it is for eternity. I want to be forever one of the Little Company of Mary. You could be that glorious being – one who bears the Name above all names, Jesus. I cannot believe you are in your post in God’s Church and you cannot feel easy until you are, any more than a member of a body out of place.

The true Jesuit is to me a man alone. I cannot define what I mean. Is it that they always seem to recollect that they are but instruments? Is it that they do not speak from their own feelings? What is it? It is here in Rome one sees what a work of God a perfect Jesuit.

God bless you, dear Geordie. Pray for your loving sister,

Mary.

No. 37

Via Castelfidardo 45,

22 April

Dear Geordie,

Your last letter was a puzzle to me, viz. “I think it a narrow view, indeed a dangerous and discouraging view to think that sanctity and a religious life are commensurate with one another.” I have never thought that or said such a thing and I have not found other religious – I have heard such humble statements made

– such as “So and so does not need religion.” Or “God brought us into religion or we might not have saved our souls,” etc. etc. I think for some its wholesome restrictions are very necessary. Poor Willie, for instance. For some souls I think religion positively injurious. They must have a light from God on the beauty of Obedience. Many talk of Jesus’ Obedience, saying “He was subject to them,” but it seems to me Our Lord’s every movement was a model of the religious life. The God Omnipresent bound to the laws of a body.

We are drawn towards Charity. It is an Attribute we love to copy, but the obedience of Jesus does not attract. It is a more hidden virtue, and is the great virtue it is (together with poverty) because Our dear Lord practiced it. They were not such virtues in the old Law.

If you do not think well to send the good Patriarch the letter enclosed, do not. I thought Aunt Saul would advance my share. What difference could it make? I want money badly. I order goods very cheap, and an extraordinary tax has been put on, and I do not have the money. Then our ceiling fell in, and we are in much confusion, necessitating law and terrible expense. We have had a series of trials. A (unfinished.)

No. 38

Via Castelfidardo

45,

Rome.

November

1895

God bless you dear Geordie,

I felt I must write a few lines. You have I suppose, heard that the verdict has been again given regarding your sister. There is every probability that I shall soon have

my heart's desire, and it occurred to me whether you would like to see me once more. Mind I do not ask it, only it came into my mind to tell you that this was said to be the critical month, and you know we would be glad to give you hospitality. The "Home" is separated from the Convent by a garden. Do not think I am asking you to come. I am only writing, dear Geordie, for your sake and to say God bless you if I do not see you again.

I cannot speak of my happiness, it is too much. I do feel I have finished my work and shall soon see dear Jesus. How good God has been to me all my life, and what a joy to know "our works follow us." In God's Church Triumphant we still work with the Church Militant. What a joy too, to have a power of prayer we have not here. One of the earnest prayers I shall make in Heaven will be for you. May it be granted in Heaven what was not on earth to your loving sister,

Mary.

I do not think it well to alarm little mother beforehand. When the time comes she will have grace to bear. I wish I could tell everyone how happy it is to die.

The little pictures are to take.

No. 39

Dear Geordie,

I hear you are accusing me of not writing for two years – is it really so? Well I do pray for you and hope some day to have a letter of good news from you. What a store of learning you must have acquired will all these years of study and teaching. We glorify God by thoughts as well as acts.

I was so struck in the body of St. Charles Borromeo (not incorrupt) at the thinking powers – the forehead still seemed planning for the good of his people, thereby mirroring God's never ceasing thought of us.

How I wish you could travel out of that land where the very air breathes of this world – though the Holy Spirit does seem a little more active. We have a house offered us at Isleworth which we hope to turn into a Convalescent Home and I hope a Home for sick and aged Priests. What do you think of that?

What a wonderful little woman is our Mother, so well at her age, and always delicate. For myself, I have been much relieved by the good surgeon Dentist, Dr. Fenchelle. He has given me so much of his valuable time and by extracting bone etc. has put me in a better state of health. I should have been much better if the other Doctors had done what he has. You could scarcely believe the relief.

Do hope you are well and happy, Happy Easter as I may not write again from

Mary

No. 40

God bless you dear Geordie. How strange how little we know of one another's lives. Do you not know that our Rule is based on the highest form of monastic discipline? We have a very strict Noviciate etc. Many Orders have had ours given them as a model and take it. The Novice must have five years Noviciate from the day she takes the Habit, but some have eight or nine years.

The Postulantship is a preparation for the Act of Consecration to Our Lady that they make the day they receive the White Veil. They then begin a new life with the Infant Jesus and in the years that follow walk gradually from the crib to the Cross – the Hidden Life, the Public Life etc. and after the First Vows made for three years, they walk the Way of the Cross. On Calvary the ring is given which binds them for time and eternity and they are made Spouses of Jesus Crucified. Our little book "The Affiliated" would show you somewhat, though it is only for seculars. It was one of our first Rules that before vows, Novices must be under other Superiors and see the working of Branch Houses. When we have Our Lady's own Priests (Calvary Priests) whom so many are looking forward to – such

a need, I knew not the need when I first wrote about them – they are needed for countries where the Faith is dying out and where the State hampers them so. I said to Cardinal Vaughan, “Oh, for Cardinal Wolsley these days. He would never have submitted to what is going on.”

Cardinal Vaughan is very interested in Our Lady’s own Priests and will found them in his Diocese. That it is much better to be an English Order is evident. They could go, do, say what is difficult for the Italians and I believe the French and others in their own country, but a certain license is given I believe to the English all over the world. Ah, there is a need of priests who have had a Noviciate, who know and practice a little of ascetic life, who are not shut up in themselves but know what is going on all over the world and can But what am I writing on so for.

Your loving sister,

Mary.

No. 41

Via Castelfidardo 45,

Rome. 1900

Dear Geordie,

I write so seldom but do not forget my brother. How I wish you could bring your godchild, Marie, out. Are you glad she is coming to the ideal spot, Fiesole. The Noviciate seems the most perfect that can be imagined. The Novice-mother over fifty, holy, a lady, and learned, so loving and thoughtful. It is quite a school and Mother Mary Joseph has a power of imparting. If you have any books, maps etc. you do not want, they would be useful. The Jesuits only left their furniture took

away their books. Rita has shown herself the noble woman she is in making such a sacrifice. Marie will want a watch and a desk. Do you know if she has them? I would not mind asking Mrs. Edward's if not.

What kind of life are you living? You seem so out of the arena. The Battle of Life grows so engrossing, it urges one on to be up and fighting. I expect I know more about it than you but it seems to me that the extraordinary age we live in must come to a climax. History will tell its tale – the City with its two Kings, two sets of Ambassadors etc. etc.

Marie will not come to Rome yet. The beautiful air of Fiesole and its supernatural air will do wonders for soul and body.

God live in you and may your life make harmony to the sweet melody of His Will prays

Mary.

We have Priests apartments in both Rome and Fiesole where you could stop. Cook makes reductions.

No. 42

Dear Geordie,

I have often heard that God cannot refuse the prayer of a suffering heart, and am sure your prayer for your godchild ascended to heaven straight. You know I cannot write much, but enclose letters that will interest you. Will send you a photograph whether good or bad, but regarding this am rather in a difficulty. I have no idea what the expense will be. Fiesole is a most awkward place, up a steep hill. We could have had a Doctor free everywhere else, but there the Dr. will charge though the Consultation; the Dr. from Rome and the Dr. from Florence did not charge a penny even for the journey.

Tom said send the Drs. Bill to him but I am sure they will not, so if anything can be given towards this fresh expense I shall be glad, but on no account would I trouble Tom. He would send a pound or so as he could. Poor Patriarch, but I know their means are straitened and of course we have had a great expense in many ways that will never be known, the flannels everything. I begged a flannel dressing gown of Mrs. Edwards – but the showy common thing, they would not let her wear it, but made her a beauty.

I have already received graces from her. She had three distinct agonies. In one of them she said, “He is a long time driving in the third nail.” She will pray for you.

I have meant to write and ask you to pray about Bishop Bourne, has asked us to Southwark diocese, and a saintly Priest (Fr. Amigo) wishes us to be in his parish (Walworth). He and Bp. Bourne eighteen years ago went into Retreat to see if they had a vocation to Religious Life. They are both possessed with a beautiful idea of devoting themselves to Priests – as it were the bringing up of Priests with a more spiritual training than is generally given, with a better knowledge of the interior life.

They will take boys wanting to be priests, who are still in the world – clerks and so on, and they will live in the house a regular life and be watched as regards their signs of vocation, and after two years be allowed to enter the College and so on. I cannot tell you half, but it is one of the works my heart is set on. It is such a need. There is a want of a kind of Noviciate for Church students. You may or may not know the need. Fr. Amigo and Bp. Bourne went abroad some time ago again, and Father Amigo remained in solitude, praying and I scarcely like to say planning, but he has begun quietly with one companion, a holy young Priest. Perhaps many do not know his designs. I know one of the Rules is that any money received in their mission duties is to be in common. I do not know if they give it up or not, or whether in these troublous times they will be a religious body or what?

God bless you Geordie, pray for your loving sister

Mary.

If you send money register it

(On a copy of an Act of Consecration to Our Lady)

Everything about that flower of the Holy Ghost, Sr. M. Florida, seems remarkable. I find these two pictures of hers with her Clothing "Act." The Angel and she left us on St. Raphael's Day. When she entered the Convent a sister took her to the Church and Office was going on and the Antiphon "Benedicta filia tua."

(On a picture of Our Lady of Sorrows) This was also Florida's.

No. 43

Feast of St. Cecilia.

God bless you dear Geordie, were you thanked for the pound. Am afraid not. I think it must be the little mother urging me to write to you. I have been thinking so much of her today. Something you said in your note has been in my mind, viz. the preaching to the people. That is one of Fr. Amigo's works. He has done it with great success in the East End, God bless him. He would go out at night in some wretched court, get on a chair, put his hands up telling them he wanted to speak to them. "I am your Priest," he would say, "Your best friend, come down to me," and so on, and when he had a goodly number he would have the Rosary said, while they were marched to Church where some Mission father would at times be already preaching, and would wait until this horde of "unwashed" would be seated. It is the only way to get at the mass of the people.

Shall be glad when we have a house in Southwark. Bp. Bourne is waiting for us. We are going to be in Fr. Amigo's district when we find a house. I would like our old house in West Square. Have you any knowledge if Miss Allingham is alive still? If

so where she lives? I would write to her.

I wish you could see Fr. Amigo, so simple, so humble, so anxious for Priests after God's Heart. I was asking Bp. Bourne about what Fr. Amigo was doing, and would he do so and so etc. "He can do whatever he pleases," said Bp. Bourne, I have such confidence in him, I give him full power."

God bless you, Geordie. Let your life harmonize with the melody of life – God's Will. Take your post in God's Church, be faithful to it prays

Mary

Sr. M. Florida seems to have power. We feel her intercession.

No.44

God bless you Geordie. God's greeting – Peace. Why do I never hear from you? I think of you oftener than you credit and always with the feeling that you are not yet in your post in God's Church. We choose on earth what we want to be for all eternity. You should be the "Priest for ever." There is nothing to hinder you but – it seems to me – a child-like simplicity, child-like faith and hope.

May the Maternal heart receive you, anchor your soul to that safe harbour where you will find your loving sister

Mary.

(On an envelope – Do you remember the little Mother's love of saying B.A. George Stephen.

s.a.g.

**LETTERS TO HER NIECES WINIFRED AND MARIE POTTER
(Daughters of her brother Thomas)**

No.45

My dear little niece Winifred,

God bless and keep her always a little child after His Own heart. This is the grand time for little ones – Christmas. Everyone is thinking of little baby Jesus and dear Jesus is thinking of us and trying to please us if we will let Him.

If little Winnie were here I could give her many pleasures. How would she like to see oranges growing in hundreds. They are just below my window. A month ago they were green instead of yellow as they are now. How I should like to give you some. I daresay you would like to give them to Grandma or mama or the good sisters. You must ask the good nuns to pray for Aunt Mary and tell them if they would like anything from Rome blessed and indulgenced, or anything from the Tombs of the Saints, I will be happy to do anything for them.

Now, God bless little Winny, and may she ever love Jesus and Mary and dread to sin. Say a Hail Mary daily for your loving

Aunt Mary

No. 46_

Miss Winefride Potter, Saxenholme, Hereford Road, Southsea, Hants. England.

God bless you, dear Winnie,

My dear sister Rita said in her letter to me that in writing to the Marchesa Incisa, she had not mentioned your relationship with me, and so I write childie Winnie to tell you that the child of such prayers, example and care, I do not believe will ever do anything to make her relations ashamed to own her or disappoint the Good God.

Why I could not encourage your coming out before was one reason – I did not wish to do for my relations what I cannot for the Sisters. So many would be looking for situations, and then I did think how Grannie would miss you. But now I believe Providence has arranged for you to come, you need not fear, but that you will receive a warm welcome from Auntie.

You had better study the etiquette abroad to bring up your protégée. For instance I was in a school some time ago and the children were all going to dinner with gloves on. Also no well brought up girl of even ordinary middle class people would go out alone. There are some minute points of etiquette well to know as to after the Ave – I mean after sunset – even with a companion the good old Romans hurry to be home by the “Ave” but of course, the foreign element is gradually breaking this strictness down with some.

Come my child to Rome in a spirit of Pilgrimage. Trust yourself to Divine Providence and make acts of hope. God’s Holy Angels will surround you everywhere. Keep in their company and let God’s child reflect their joy. This is real glory to our Good God. To be joyous and to know that He wishes us to be happy both here and hereafter.

Now I must finish. How many times I have commenced this I could not say. Oh, one thing – you will need a Director (I do not exactly mean a confessor) as to how you are to teach your child the present history of the Church. The Jesuits know best and I should advise your consulting one as soon as you arrive. They have the sons of the members of Parliament to bring up. I do not know how they do it, but they are so wise. One of them told me I could do what they told me at the Quirinal, ask for a house, but I felt I could not ask Umberto to give what was not his.

Poor Margarita also said she would like to come to our Convent. I sent to the Cardinal Vicar to know what I should do. He said, receive her as any other great lady, but however the etiquette under present circumstances is, after notifying this desire an invitation has to be sent, which I did not do, so the royal visit has not been paid. But they are most kind to us.

God must give Winnie wisdom combined with simplicity. If she does her part, God will do His and Winnie lead a good noble life. God bless he. Love Grannie and all for

Auntie.

No. 47

God bless little Marie and may His Holy Spirit so fill her soul that the day Jesus visits her may be indeed one which will repay a little Our dear Lord for all he suffered to make little Marie His own. Great as may be your joy little one, it is nothing to the joy of Jesus and can we wonder that God should love us so, when He created us.

You must ask our dear Lord whilst He is with you, to make known to you in the course of time what is to be your "post" in God's Church – what is your mission in this world – which also means what particular glory you are to give him for all eternity, for the state we choose in the Church Militant is what we shall be crowned for in the Church Triumphant in Heaven if we are faithful to the mission given us on earth to do.

You know Mamma's state and Grannie's is the ordinary mission God has appointed for women. Cousin Hilda's is the supernatural state not given to all. God's whisper will come to little Marie, and then will the response echo from her soul to whatever is God's Will – "Ecce."

In whatever state of life you have to live, my childie, you will find that a generous "Ecce" to all that God permits will keep you near and dear to Jesus. It is even better, higher, holier than Fiat. Fiat means a simple submission. Ecce means a generous offering. Keep close to Our dear Mother's heart, and repeat your Ecce Ancilla with her is the prayer of your loving

Auntie Mary.

No. 48

Sr. Mary Florida (Marie Potter's name in Religion)

God bless my child whom I am holding up day and night to Jesus Who has shown such special favour to her in bringing her so young into His House, and telling the Sweet Mother of fair Love, "This is your child, your very own." Our lady pressed you to her Breast and told you how favoured you were to be Jesus' Bride, and that there was nothing on earth so precious, so desirable.

It is nearly forty years my child, since God's Habit of religion was given me, and I value my religious vocation far far more than when it first dawned on me I had one, and realize more every year its preciousness and am more grateful.

Please tell Sr. Mary Hilda that she must take this letter for herself as well. God has been equally good to her and she is a favoured child.

Asking Our Lady to bless you both and keep you close anchored to Her Mother's Heart. Ever your (and ever to be found there),

Mother

No. 49

(To her brother Thomas)

God bless you both. Easter greetings. Do trust that dear Pauline is better. Do not know if enclosed makes you understand that we must borrow money. I have tried to avoid mortgage as the whole place is blessed, but we do want a few thousands and they say I must mortgage. We have borrowed £1000, 6 per cent and am promised another loan of £1000 at the interest in May, but I want money now and do not know how to raise it without a mortgage, though we are safer than

the Banks for all the Houses are bound by Rule to support the Mother House, and the Colonies have in great part built the place and send regularly.

I would pay the interest in advance if I could borrow. The House etc. in Via Castelfidardo was between 500 and 600 pounds a year, so that stands for interest for a deal. We have no more rent to pay there – we leave it in August. The two Houses have been a great expense, but we have now opened this, which promises to be a great success and will soon be full when we can furnish it.

It is a lovely spot. I know you cannot travel, but Rita might someday come out with a pilgrimage or some Sister returning. What about my little (letter unfinished/ lost)

(End of Mary Potter Letters to her family)