

# TREASURE CHEST



THE STORY OF  
A GREAT WORK

*The Holiest Thing on Earth*

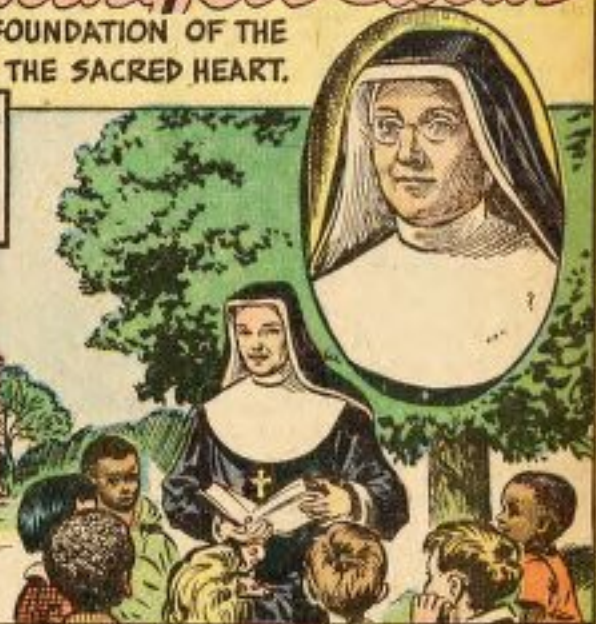
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# The Holiest Thing on Earth

THE STORY OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE MISSION HELPERS OF THE SACRED HEART.

**D**URING THE LAST HALF OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY THE SACRED HEART BEGAN LAYING HIS PLANS FOR THE MISSION HELPERS OF THE SACRED HEART. ACTUALLY, HE BEGAN IN TWO PLACES AT ONCE...



**I**N NEW YORK IN 1888, MRS. ANNA HARTWELL, A CONTRIBUTOR TO THE CHURCH, DECIDED TO MOVE TO BALTIMORE.



YOU HAVE DONE A GREAT DEAL OF CHARITABLE WORK IN THE TWO YEARS SINCE OUR HUSBAND DIED.

I WAS GLAD TO DO IT, FATHER. BUT I'VE DECIDED TO DO SOME WORK AMONG THE COLORED PEOPLE IN BALTIMORE—THEY NEED SO MUCH HELP.

**I**N BALTIMORE, MRS. HARTWELL WORKED WITH THE SOCIETY OF ST. JOSEPH OF THE SACRED HEART.

SINCE YOU'RE TO BE IN CHARGE OF THE GUILD, YOU CAN USE THIS ROOM AS HEADQUARTERS.

VERY WELL, FATHER. I'LL BEGIN TO ORGANIZE THE WORK RIGHT AWAY.

**M**RS. HARTWELL PLUNGED INTO THE WORK OF THE GUILD.



**I**N 1869 THE CUNNINGHAM FAMILY MOVED FROM WASHINGTON, D.C. TO BALTIMORE, MARYLAND.

WELL, MARY—THIS IS OUR NEW HOME. THE HOUSE IS SMALL, BUT IT IS LARGER THAN THE ONE WE HAD IN WASHINGTON.

IT'S FINE, MOTHER—NOW DON'T YOU OR DAD WORRY. I'LL WORK HARD TO FINISH SCHOOL AND GET A JOB.





**B**UT MARY'S HEALTH WAS NOT GOOD. SHE WAS CONFINED TO BED FOR MONTHS, AND FOR TWO LONG YEARS SHE WAS UNABLE TO WORK. EVEN THIS, HOWEVER, WAS PART OF OUR LORD'S PLAN, FOR DURING IT...



MARY, YOU'VE MADE WONDERFUL SPIRITUAL PROGRESS!

DO YOU THINK SO, FATHER? I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT SOMETIMES THESE YEARS HAVE SEEMED LIKE A PERIOD OF PREPARATION.

**W**HEN SHE WAS WELL AGAIN, MARY SECURED A POSITION AS A BOOKKEEPER. ALL HER SPARE TIME, HOWEVER, SHE DEVOTED TO THE COLORED PEOPLE!

MOTHER, DOES MARY HAVE TO BRING HER COLORED PUPILS HOME?

YOU TWO GIRLS HAVE FORTUNATELY GOTTEN YOUR CASCADING CHISM. THERE IS NO REASON THEY SHOULD NOT BE HERE. MARY SAYS THEY ARE HER GUESTS, AND SHE IS RIGHT.



**O**NE DAY, IN THE RECTORY OF ST. PETER'S CHURCH...

GRACE DORSEY WAS A PUPIL OF MINE, FATHER, BUT SHE'S MOVED INTO YOUR PARISH. I THOUGHT I'D DROP IN TO SPEAK WITH YOU ABOUT HER.

I'VE MET HER ALREADY. BUT COME AND MEET MRS. HARTWELL AND THE OTHER LADIES OF THE GUILD. THEY CAN TELL YOU MORE ABOUT HER.



**T**HE SAME DAY, THE GUILD ROOM...

SHOULD WE START A RELIGIOUS GROUP TO WORK IN THIS FIELD?

WOULD IT BE WISE? I'M NOT SURE.

LET'S MAKE SURE. LET'S MAKE A RETREAT TOGETHER AND ASK GOD TO GUIDE US.



LADIES, I WANT YOU TO MEET MARY CUNNINGHAM. SHE DOES THE SAME KIND OF WORK YOU DO.

HOW DO YOU DO, MARY? THIS IS MRS. MILLER AND MISS ELEANOR TREACY.



**T**HE LADIES EXPLAIN THEIR PLAN.

I THINK IT'S A FINE IDEA.

I DO TOO—MAY I PLEASE JOIN YOU IN YOUR RETREAT?

OF COURSE, MARY. I'M SURE THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL GUIDE ALL OF US.





THE RETREAT WAS MADE IN AUGUST, 1890, AT A HOUSE ON WEST BIDDLE STREET WHICH THE LADIES HAD RENTED.

ISN'T IT WONDERFUL THAT CARDINAL GIBBONS WAS ALSO INTERESTED IN OUR WORK!

YES - WHY HE'S EVEN GIVEN US PERMISSION TO HAVE DAILY MASS AND BENEDICTION.

AND TO KEEP THE BLESSED SACRAMENT IN THIS VERY CHAPEL.



THE RETREAT BEGAN ON AUGUST 6. ONE DAY WHILE MARY WAS KNEELING BEFORE THE PICTURE OF OUR LADY, AN UNSEEN FORCE TURNED HER IRRESISTIBLY TOWARD THE ALTAR. FROM THE TABERNACLE CAME A POWER THAT TORE AT HER HEART.



AT THE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION, THE RETREAT CLOSED.

WELL, YES - ARE YOUR THOUGHTS THE SAME AS MINE: SHALL WE FOUNDED THE INSTITUTE?

I DO NOT BELIEVE I AM CALLED TO AID IN FOUNDED AN INSTITUTE DEVOTED TO THE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION OF THE NEGRO.

I BELIEVE GOD WILLS THAT IT BE FOUNDED, AND WILLS THAT WE FOUNDED IT.

AND THE WILL OF GOD IS THE HOLIEST THING ON EARTH.

SO, THE INSTITUTE WAS FOUNDED, WITH MOTHER JOSEPH (MRS. HARTWELL) AS SUPERIOR. BUT FOR MARY THERE WERE OBSTACLES...

FATHER, I'VE COME ONCE AGAIN TO ASK PERMISSION TO ENTER THE INSTITUTE.

NO, MARY - AS YOUR CONFESSOR I DO NOT THINK IT WOULD BE THE BEST THING FOR YOU. WHY NOT ENTER A WELL ESTABLISHED ORDER?



FATHER, FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, LET ME GO!

MARY, I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD, BUT IF CARDINAL GIBBONS CONSENTS - YOU MAY GO.

"LET HER GO," CARDINAL GIBBONS SAID. "SOMETHING MAY COME OF IT." ON PENTECOST SUNDAY, MAY 17, 1891, MARY JOINED THE INSTITUTE.





**D**URING THE FIRST YEARS THE SISTERS DEVOTED THEMSELVES TO THEIR CHOSEN WORK AMONG THE NEGROS. IN 1895, HOWEVER, AN IMPORTANT CHANGE WAS MADE. MARY, NOW SISTER DEMETRIAS, WAS IN CHELTENHAM, MARYLAND.



IT DOESN'T SEEM RIGHT, WASTING EVERY SATURDAY AFTERNOON LIKE THIS.

BUT SISTER, WE FINISH ALL OUR INSTRUCTION CLASSES BY NOON. THERE'S NOTHING ELSE FOR US TO DO AND THERE'S NO TRAIN FOR SEVERAL HOURS.

THEN WE MUST FIND SOMETHING TO DO. I'VE HEARD THAT ROSARYVILLE, THAT LITTLE TOWN NEAR BY, HAS A LARGE CATHOLIC NEGRO POPULATION.



**S**ISTER DEMETRIAS RECEIVED PERMISSION TO INSTRUCT THE ROSARYVILLE CHILDREN ON SATURDAY AFTERNOONS. LATER...

THESE CHILDREN ARE BETTER INSTRUCTED THAN THE WHITE CHILDREN, SISTER. YOU MUST COME AND TEACH THEM.

BUT OUR RULE IS TO WE WORK ONLY FOR THE NEGRO FATHER.



**T**HEN CHANGE THE RULE. THE WHITE PEOPLE HAVE SOULS TO BE SAVED TOO. ALL THE CHILDREN SHOULD BE WELL INSTRUCTED.



**F**ATHER CUNNANE LAID THE SITUATION BEFORE CARDINAL GIBBONS. SHORTLY AFTER, HE HAD GOOD NEWS FOR SISTER DEMETRIAS.

WELL, SISTER, YOU'LL BE GLAD TO KNOW THAT THE CARDINAL WANTS YOU TO INSTRUCT THE WHITE CHILDREN AS WELL.

OH, I'M GLAD! I'VE PRAYED THAT WOULD. THE WHITE CHILDREN NEED JUST AS MUCH AS DO THE COLORED.





THE INSTITUTE GREW...

1892  
INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL  
NEGRO GIRLS OPENED.

1896  
RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION  
OF DEAF BEGAN.

1899  
FIRST CONVENT OUTSIDE  
BALTIMORE OPENED.

1902  
CONVENT IN SAN  
JUAN, P. R. OPENED.

WHILE MOTHER JOSEPH WAS IN SAN JUAN DURING 1903-04, MOTHER DEMETRIAS WAS SUPERIOR OF THE MOTHERHOUSE.

THANK GOD THAT WE HAVE HER, SISTER. I SOMEHOW FEEL THERE WILL BE TROUBLED DAYS AHEAD.

THE WORK THAT MOTHER DEMETRIAS HAS DONE IN THE PAST TWO YEARS IS AMAZING. SHE'S A BORN LEADER.

HERE WERE, INDEED. BUT MEANWHILE MOTHER JOSEPH HAD RETURNED, AND MOTHER DEMETRIAS HERSELF WAS SENT TO PUERTO RICO.

WHAT ARE THE DAYS PLANS, MOTHER DEMETRIAS? WILL THERE BE TIME TO VISIT ANY OF THE FAMILIES?

THE CATECHISM CLASSES WILL TAKE ALL OUR TIME THIS MORNING, BUT I THINK WE CAN VISIT IN THE NEXT VILLAGE BEFORE CLASS THIS AFTERNOON.

MOTHER DEMETRIAS EMBRACED THE DIFFICULT WORK WITH JOY. HER ONLY CONCERN WAS FOR THE INSTITUTE AND FOR SOULS.

WHAT'S THE MATTER, MOTHER DEMETRIAS? IT'S NOT LIKE YOU TO BE SAD.

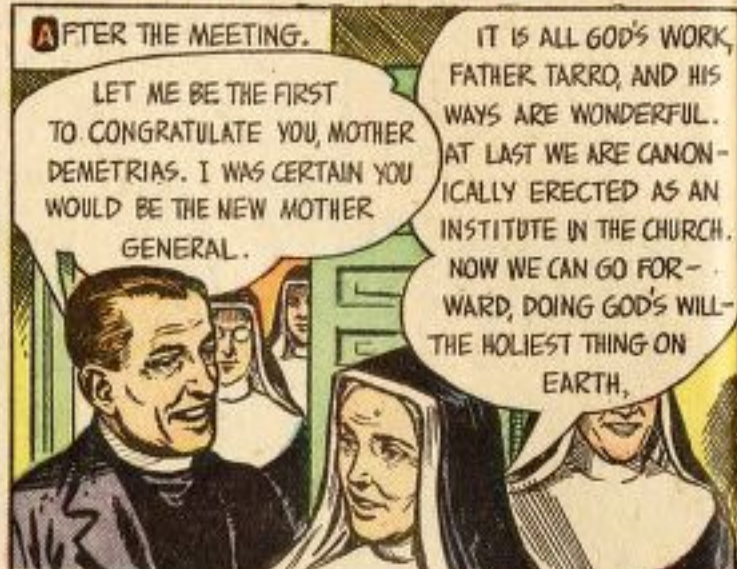
I'M NOT SAD - I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT OUR INSTITUTE...

YOU KNOW HOW WE ALL LONG AND PRAY FOR OUR CONSTITUTIONS TO BE WRITTEN AND APPROVED. WE ARE MUCH IN NEED OF FUNDS TO CARRY ON OUR WORK, BUT OUR GREATEST NEED IS OUR CONSTITUTIONS.





**C**ARDINAL GIBBONS ORDERED THAT THE CONSTITUTIONS OF THE INSTITUTE BE DRAWN UP AND THAT A GENERAL MEETING OF THE SUPERIORS BE HELD. AT THE MEETING, THE GENERAL OFFICERS OF THE INSTITUTE WERE TO BE ELECTED. AT THIS TIME, MRS. HARTWELL DECIDED TO WITHDRAW FROM THE INSTITUTE. THE MEETING WAS HELD ON THE FIFTH OF NOVEMBER, 1906.



**T**HE INSTITUTE DID PROGRESS AND EXPAND. IN 1941, THE YEAR FOLLOWING MOTHER DEMETRIAS'S DEATH, THE INSTITUTE WAS APPROVED BY THE HOLY SEE. "THE HOLIEST THING ON EARTH"—"THY WILL BE DONE"—IS THE FULFILLMENT OF "THY KINGDOM COME."

TODAY 250 MISSION HELPERS LABOR IN 18 CITIES.



THE NEED — 2,050 MISSION HELPERS COULD BE PLACED AT ONCE. A GLORIOUS MISSION INDEED — TO FULFILL THE COMMAND OF CHRIST, "GO... TEACH!"