

THE SISTERS OF ST JOSEPH IN QUEENSLAND BEGINNINGS: 1870 - 1880

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In this talk I intend to examine the life and work of Josephite Communities in Queensland from 1870 until the Sisters' total withdrawal from Queensland in 1880. The reasons for their leaving Queensland, and for their return twenty years later, will gradually become clear.

The Josephite Congregation did not originate in Queensland. It was founded in Penola, a small farming district in South Australia, in 1866⁽¹⁾.

Its Co-Founders were Father Julian Tenison Woods, an English priest, and Mary MacKillop, the eldest daughter of a Scottish migrant family living in Melbourne. Mary was working as governess for her uncle's children on a grazing property near Penola when she met Father Woods.

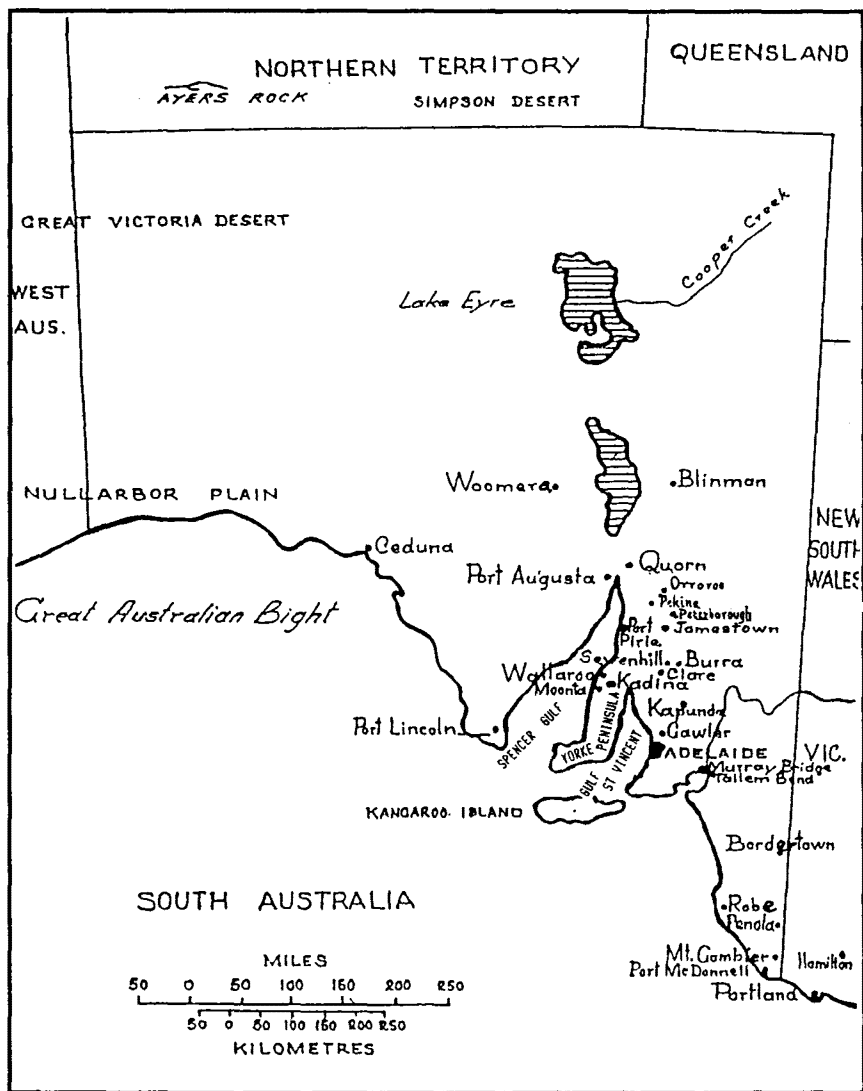
As pastor of a large area of South Australia comprising isolated bush communities, Fr Woods became aware that his people's poverty and isolation were depriving them of the basic education that would enable them to better their lives.

Early colonial governments could help townspeople to a limited degree, but those living at great distances from the towns were left to fend for themselves. In addition, the general tendency of the times was towards a secularized form of instruction in schools, and governments were moving towards directing all educational finances to State schools. Writing to Rome years later about the hostility of secular governments towards the Catholic poor, Mary Mackillop said: "Australia is a dangerous place for Catholics ⁽²⁾."

At Penola Fr Woods outlined for his people an adventurous plan to provide schools for the Catholic education of their children. It seemed only a dream for the future, as he had, as yet, no financial means and no helpers to carry out his scheme.



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 1. TRIBUNE STREET - FIRST CONVENT 2. MONTAGUE STREET - SECOND CONVENT 3. PETRIE TERRACE - ST. JOHN BAPTIST SCHOOL 4. HUBERT STREET - "SWAMP" SCHOOL
ST. JOSEPH'S 5. LEOPOLD STREET - ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. PEEL STREET - ST. MARY'S CHURCH
AND SCHOOL 7. BOUNDARY STREET - AT A HOUSE
IN THIS STREET, MOTHER MARY
WROTE HER CIRCULAR TO THE
SISTERS. 4TH DECEMBER, 1890. |
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A spark of Fr Woods' zeal kindled a flame in the heart of Mary Mackillop, who volunteered to take an active part in the work. By 1866 a beginning had been made in a very humble and unpretentious way, as Mary and two of her own sisters began to teach the Catholic faith and the elements of primary education to the local boys and girls at Penola ⁽⁹⁾.

Their first school building was a disused stable:⁽⁹⁾ which we find significant, as the Son of God began His human venture in a stable.

By the close of the year 1866 four young women had chosen to join the group, and were calling themselves Sisters of St Joseph, though, without as yet, any recognition by Church authorities. That came early in 1867 when Bishop Sheil visited St Joseph's School, Penola, and impressed with the good order, discipline and spirit of piety in the little school, publicly addressed their leader as "Sister Mary ⁽⁹⁾."

In June 1867 Sister Mary and Sister Rose arrived in Adelaide to open St Francis Xavier's School ⁽⁹⁾. On the Feast of the Assumption Sister Mary made her Religious Profession, pronouncing the simple vows of Obedience, Chastity and Poverty ⁽⁷⁾.

About this time Divine Providence took a hand in the venture: Father Woods was appointed Director of Catholic Education for the Adelaide Diocese ⁽⁸⁾, so he was able to send Sisters to both city and country schools.

The Sisters also took care of orphans, neglected children, girls in danger of losing their faith and virtue, the aged poor, the sick, families of prisoners and others in need of help. At first they lived on alms, no payment being asked for services. They lived among the poor as poor people themselves, begging from door to door to sustain the people they were assisting. From the very beginning it had been their practice to visit the families of the children in their care.

The Sisters' first missionary venture outside South Australia was in Queensland. In 1869 at the Synod of Australian Bishops held in Melbourne, Dr James Quinn asked Father Woods to send Sisters to Brisbane. Bishop Quinn was not in a position to pay the Sisters' fare, so they were expected to beg their way to Brisbane, a voyage of two thousand miles.

On 8 December 1869 Sister Mary Mackillop and Sister Clare Wright made perpetual vows and then with Sister Teresa (a novice) and Sisters Francis de Sales and Augustine, they set out on the first stage of their long journey to Brisbane ⁽⁹⁾.

By this time there were seventy-two Sisters of St Joseph, conducting twenty-one schools in South Australia, as well as other institutions named the Refuge, the Orphanage, the Providence and the Solitude ⁽¹⁰⁾.

When the Josephites reached Melbourne, the Good Shepherd Sisters offered them hospitality and the Sisters of Mercy were also kind to them. Since they were forbidden to beg publicly in Melbourne, the travellers collected their fare privately, mainly from Protestant friends, and set sail for Sydney. Here they were helped by the Good Samaritan Sisters, and joined by a new postulant, Sister Gertrude⁽¹¹⁾. (This Sister died four years later on the Queensland mission. Her grave is in Maryborough.)

The pioneer group of Sisters arrived in Brisbane on 31 December 1869⁽¹²⁾. Since Dr Quinn was on his way to Rome for Vatican Council I, the Vicar General, Dr Cani, met the Josephites. The Sisters of Mercy at All Hallows' showed them great kindness during their three weeks' stay⁽¹³⁾, before the Josephites moved into a small house in Montague Road, South Brisbane. Later on they lived in a cottage in Gibbon Street, Woolloongabba. When they were joined by other Sisters, they needed a larger building, so they rented an old, disused hotel at 66 River Terrace. On this site now is a high rise building owned by Jennings Enterprises⁽¹⁴⁾.

Sister Mary was delighted to live in a district where poor families lived. The children who attended the early Josephite schools were invariably bare-footed, a fact which Sister Mary noted with astonishment⁽¹⁵⁾. Fewer than half the children attended regularly. The Sisters visited those parents who were keeping their children at home working, and prevailed on them to take advantage of Catholic schools nearby.

In the early months of 1970 three Josephite schools were opened in Brisbane - St Mary's in South Brisbane; St Joseph's at One Mile Swamp (now Woolloongabba - this school was later moved to Kangaroo Point); and St John the Baptist's at Petrie Terrace⁽¹⁶⁾.

Before long the Josephites had three hundred pupils in their three Brisbane schools, many children living near them having transferred for convenience from a Mercy school farther away. Sister Mary's practical way of handling this situation was to consult the Sisters at All Hallows'. Both Josephites and Sisters of Mercy then visited the families involved to ask them to reconsider their decision. By October the Sisters of Mercy were directing vocations to the Josephites⁽¹⁷⁾.

The Sisters lived very simply and faced real need, especially when it came to finding money for travelling expenses, and they were forbidden to beg for money for themselves and those in their care. However, Dr Cani did organize collections for their support later in the year, and he sent them some money himself from time to time.

The sick, the aged, prisoners and other people in need received visits from the Sisters. They repeatedly requested Dr Cani to authorise the establishment of a Refuge where needy people could find lodging, but their requests were ignored. As a result a

stream of women and children became guests of the Sisters at their poor convents. In some cases the Sisters saved money for steamship tickets to send needy people to the Good Shepherd Convent in Melbourne or to the Josephite refuge in Adelaide.

Meanwhile the Josephite schools in Brisbane followed a routine devised for all their schools. Published in the 1960s, it was entitled "Directory or Order of Discipline". After each day's classes, as well as time to visit families and to do household chores, the Sisters set aside time to prepare the next day's lessons. Sister Mary, herself a teacher, was at hand to help the Queensland Sisters during the first year of their mission.

Their lessons were of three kinds:

- academic: including reading, writing and numeration;
- religious: including catechism, hymns and prayers;
- and vocational: for girls - plain and fancy needlework: for boys - the rudiments of bookkeeping ⁽¹⁸⁾.

This programme of learning essential for life in the nineteenth century Australian colonies did not include the teaching of music. This policy of the early Sisters of St Joseph was fiercely adhered to, in the face of much opposition by Bishops and others in authority.

The Sisters did not object to teaching the children to sing - they were keen to do so, and their daily programme included the singing of hymns and songs. They refused to undertake the instruction in playing musical instruments. The simple reason was that the type of children for whom they were founded could not afford to possess a musical instrument. The idea that the children of very poor families could at that time afford a piano or a violin was ludicrous. The Jesuit adviser to the Congregation, Fr Tappeiner, wrote to Sister Mary in 1873 that other Orders were founded for this purpose. He said that if it is their vocation and the spirit of their institute, then they will also have the necessary means and graces for it ⁽¹⁹⁾. In the twentieth century the economic position of working class families has changed considerably, so the Josephites include music teaching among their apostolates today.

The daily horarium in Josephite schools was strictly adhered to, as a matter of justice to the pupils. Personal interest in the boys and girls was fostered by regular visits to families. Children's needs in the area of play and celebration were catered for by regular celebration of Feasts with both religious and secular activities. After processions and hymns, the children were treated to picnics, games, outings and little surprises that delighted them.

Apart from the school apostolate, the Josephites saw other needs to be met. At weekends the Sisters from Kangaroo Point used to drive in a sulky to Yatala (near

Beenleigh). Here they sat on a log to teach the Kanakas who were cutting cane in the district which was then dense scrubland ⁽²⁰⁾.

In the first year of the Sisters' work in Queensland the matter of Government funding for schools caused dissension with Dr Cani, who acted on the orders of the Bishop who was in Rome for Vatican Council I.

Until 1874 Government money was provided to denominational schools, Catholic as well as Anglican, but acceptance of this money involved restrictions on specifically Catholic instruction on the grounds that it was proselytism. In addition, standard curricula, textbooks, timetables and so on were imposed. Fr Woods, Co-Founder of the Josephites, described what this situation amounted to: "The Government only gives us our own money back again, stacked with most objectionable conditions ⁽²¹⁾".

The Brisbane diocese was poor, and after weighing the gains and losses of such a system, Dr Quinn had made it the policy of his diocese to accept the grants and the limitations that went with them, at least for the time being. When the Josephites arrived, with a Rule against accepting Government grants, they were told that they were to accept the money, and consequently have to function under the General Board of Education, like the other Catholic schools in Queensland.

Fr Woods wrote on 23 August 1870 to the effect that if it came to a choice between taking the grant and leaving, they would have no hesitation in leaving ⁽²²⁾. Sister Mary also was convinced that God was calling the Josephites to a particular form of poverty in His service. It was part of the Rule they had vowed to live by, and she was not prepared to ignore it because of pressure. In a general letter to the Sisters she wrote (in March 1879): "Even granted that free use of our religious principles might be allowed, we must be left free to appoint our own teachers, and adhere strictly to our own system ⁽²³⁾".

The issue came to a head when Dr Cani, hearing that the Board might shortly accept no further registrations, asked again that in deference to the Bishop's desires the Sisters should submit to the Board. Sister Mary stood firm. Her letter to Dr Cani reveals a clear mind and courageous heart, but he considered it rather offensive, and said he would unfortunately have to send it to the Bishop in Rome.

The contest ultimately reduced itself to a matter of authority, which it was implicitly from the start. The early conflict with Bishop Quinn, in his absence, over accepting Government funds and Government control, foreshadows the troubles that were to come later.

In the meantime between 1870 and 1876 the Sisters of St Joseph were invited

to establish communities of two or more Sisters in Queensland towns beyond Brisbane:

1871	-	Maryborough	
1872	-	Gympie (The Monkland)	
	-	Mackay	
		Meadowbank	
	-	Bowen	
1883	-	Copperfield (near Clermont)	
	-	Townsville	
1874	-	Helidon	
	-	Redbank Plains	
	-	Gladstone	
1875	-	Yatala (Beenleigh)	
1876	-	Merara (Mackay)	
	-	Bundaberg	(24)

In all these towns the Sisters worked in conditions of poverty and isolation, but some places had peculiar difficulties. For instance, Father Horan, parish priest of Gympie and nephew of the Bishops Quinn, did not have any confidence in the Sisters' ability to run schools. He stated publicly that they "were only barmaids and cooks... incompetent to teach⁽²⁵⁾". Consequently he sent the Josephites to the Monkland, a poor district at some considerable distance from the town of Gympie. Fr Horan never visited the school⁽²⁶⁾. He called only once a month to offer Mass, even though it was a long way for the Sisters to walk to Mass in Gympie.

Parents at the Monkland regarded education in secular subjects as of little importance, so the Sisters worked hard to make the reception of the Sacraments such as First Communion memorable occasions. They prepared with great care in their teaching, helped to provide special clothing for those who could not afford it, celebrated with great ceremony, and treated the children to a feast of special foods after the ceremony.

Fr Bucas, the parish priest of Mackay, invited the Josephites to open a school there in 1872. They taught over one hundred children in the church. Fr Bucas was also concerned about the children of the workers out at Meadowbank. A school was built there as well as a cottage. At first the Sisters travelled from Mackay daily by buggy, but later arranged to stay in the cottage from Monday to Friday, then return to Mackay. On Sundays they went out to Meadowbank to teach catechism⁽²⁷⁾.

In 1873, Copperfield, about five kilometres south-west of Clermont, was a mining town, described by a local bank manager as "utterly unfit as a place of residence for a lady⁽²⁸⁾". For four years, without the presence of a priest or regular celebration of

the sacraments, the Sisters taught up to one hundred and fifty children there in a shed without a ceiling and without lining to the walls⁽²⁹⁾.

When a community of Sisters arrived in Townsville in 1873 to open a school, their only accommodation was the use of two back rooms of the presbytery, until an unpainted, unlined cottage was built for them. The parish priest effectively cut off their water supply by fencing the well inside the presbytery yard. For a time the Sisters collected water from a friendly Jewish neighbour, but eventually they decided to cut a hole in the presbytery fence to gain access to the well⁽³⁰⁾.

Conditions went from bad to worse when the Sisters were denounced from the pulpit and in the public press for supposedly unorthodox teachings⁽³¹⁾. On account of this and the scandal that ensued, Sister Mary withdrew the Sisters from Townsville in 1878⁽³²⁾.

Sister Mary, had in fact, been aware of problems in Queensland since the Sisters' arrival. Bishop Quinn had invited them on his terms, which they were to find out later were radically different from the conditions which the Sisters understood and expected. Sister Mary was one of the pioneer Sisters in Queensland during 1870 and 1871, so she experienced the problems herself.

In 1871 she returned to duties in South Australia. Then, on the advice of Church authorities there, she went to Rome to seek approval for the Rule of the Sisters of St Joseph⁽³³⁾. On her return to Australia, in 1875 she notified Sisters in the colonies that Rome had ordered a General Chapter of the Congregation to be held in Adelaide⁽³⁴⁾.

This exacerbated the troubles in Queensland. They were not resolved without three more visits of the newly-elected Mother General, in 1878 and 1879.

The Queensland crisis highlighted the distinct personalities of the leaders involved.

James Quinn, Irish-born first Catholic Bishop of Brisbane, was, according to Sister Anne McLay: "Capable of great charm, tact, diplomacy, kindness and tolerance, (yet) he could not handle the men and women of his own household⁽³⁵⁾". Mary Mackillop once described him as both "a terrible man" and "a most winning man"⁽³⁶⁾.

On the other hand, Mary Mackillop was Australian-born, of Scottish parents whose fortunes failed, leaving Mary at quite a tender age to resume responsibilities far beyond her years to support and unite her family. She had become the Co-Founder of an Australian Congregation of Sisters serving the needs of families in isolated areas of the colonies. They were breaking new ground in the Church's missionary endeavour.

On the Queensland scene the divisive issue was that of the central government of the Josephite Congregation, which Bishop Quinn would not tolerate. Writing to Rome on the matter he said: "It was agreed by the persons mentioned that the Sisters should retain their Rules as they were, until application should have been made to Rome for approval⁽³⁷⁾". His interpretation of retaining their Rules differed from the Sisters' understanding of this. He wrote: "The existing Rules placed the Sisters under the authority of the Bishop to be employed as the Bishop saw fit⁽³⁸⁾".

Sister Mary's statement on this point is that the Sisters were at the disposal of the Bishop "so long as it does not interfere with the observance of their Rule⁽³⁹⁾". Dr Quinn's view was that the Superior went to Rome and had the Rule of the Institute changed so that the Sisters were withdrawn from the authority of the Bishop and placed under a Superior General⁽⁴⁰⁾.

Still insisting that the initial position of the Sisters had changed, Dr Quinn wrote to Cardinal Simeoni, Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda, about Sister Mary: "She reclaimed the obedience of the Sisters, and said that, by order of the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda, they were obliged to submit to the Mother House in Adelaide⁽⁴¹⁾". Dr Quinn's view was that the order applied solely to Adelaide, and that she herself possessed no document from the authorities to prove that things were otherwise. The Cardinal knew she did possess such a document as his own signature appeared on it, and he knew it entailed the opposite of what the Bishop was saying.

Sister Mary wrote to Dr Quinn: "I know, My Lord... that you do not like the Central Government of our Institute, but please let me remind you that it always was a fixed point in our Rule... I desire that this should in no way interfere with the particular wishes of any Bishop in his own diocese and where these wishes be just⁽⁴²⁾". Writing to Dr Cani, Bishop Quinn cited with disapproval the phrase: "where these wishes be just", on the grounds that it revealed the sinister nature of this young woman's thinking.

Writing to the Bishop, Sister Mary quoted what were probably his own words to her: "My Lord, you think me an obstinate and ambitious woman⁽⁴⁴⁾". Yet in a letter to her own sister Annie she claimed to have consulted widely before stating her views: "The Jesuit and Marist Fathers, the Archbishop (of Sydney) and the Bishop of Armidale, the Vicar General of Sydney, some of the best priests in Queensland, and many upheld me in what I did. They could not do this if the fault were mine⁽⁴⁵⁾".

James Quinn saw Sister Mary as trying to demand and enforce submission to herself, but she was trying to defend the Sisters' right to live by the terms of their profession. In the Bishop's eyes what Sister Mary was doing was upsetting the peace. He therefore considered he had a right to stop her from seeing her Sisters. Writing to Annie, Mary said "the Bishop ordered me not to enter our own convent, insisted that I should stay with the Sisters of Mercy instead, and finally threatened to remove me

by the police if I attempted to go to my own ⁽⁴⁶⁾".

Sister Mary continues: "I told him I would do my duty, and that unless he agreed to the Sisters' remaining faithful to the Mother House and observing the Constitutions, I would be compelled to withdraw them ⁽⁴⁷⁾".

Five years elapsed from that time (1875) until the Sisters were at last withdrawn, and all this time Sister Mary was struggling to make the arrangement work. The Sisters had agreed not to withdraw until the Bishop could replace them.

After the first General Chapter of the Congregation was held in Adelaide in March 1875, Bishop Quinn wrote to Mary, who had been elected first Superior General: "I hope... that from the receipt of this letter you will cease to exercise any authority over the Sisters in Queensland and from sending them any communication which might tend to disturb or distract them in the discharge of their duties ⁽⁴⁸⁾".

The clue to Dr Quinn's attitude is that he maintained that Mother Mary was not the Queensland Sisters' Superior. He had previously forbidden their Queensland Provincial, Sister Clare, to return after the General Chapter to what he called her "Office as Head Superior of the Institute of St Joseph" in his diocese ⁽⁴⁹⁾, and he seemed confident that he could do the same to the Mother General.

He wrote further: "I will give each of the Sisters who came from Adelaide the option of returning there or remaining with me, but I will request of those who decide on going back to stay till I can supply their place ⁽⁵⁰⁾". In fact, the Sisters were given an option of leaving if they choose to be faithful to the terms of their profession. In the meantime they were to have nothing to do with their legitimate Superior, and they were to have no support, no information, in coming to a decision; on the contrary, they were at the mercy of the Bishop's forceful personality. He was also planning to use the presence and influence of Fr Woods (their Father Founder and former Director of the Institute) to persuade them to accept the Bishop's terms.

The response of the Queensland Sisters' was stated in a letter to Mother Mary signed by thirty-one Sisters in June 1875: "We have all become Sisters of St Joseph in the humble and firm hope of ever remaining in the closest union with our Mother House, and we find it hard to understand how any Bishop could think we would separate from it ⁽⁵¹⁾".

A personal letter from Sister Catherine Kennedy to Sister Clare Wright (former Queensland Provincial) sums up the Bishop's methods in dealing with the Sisters: "... I will tell you what I think of the Bishop. He thinks that if he gives us Father Director (Fr Woods), we will all do as he wants us to do, and then when he gets us under his thumb, he will send Father director away and do what he likes with us. That is truth.

I feel sure that is why he is so sweet and kind... I will not do it for any bishop. I will not change my rule for anyone⁽⁵²⁾".

Mother Mary resolved not to allow her Sisters to remain unprotected so she set out from Adelaide for Brisbane in April 1875. The Bishop's opposition taught her that even good people could use the formula: "pending an appeal to Rome" in defence of their actions while they continued to do the opposite of what Rome had laid down. This somehow made it seem that she was being disloyal to the Holy See when she persevered in doing what Rome had told her to do.

Mother Mary reported on her meeting with the Bishop: "His Lordship... insisted that (the Sisters) should be left entirely to himself, under the Superior he pleased, in no way connected with the Mother House, nor allowed to communicate with it⁽⁵³⁾".

At the same time the training of novices was a problem that caused Mother Mary serious concern. She reported to Rome: "Out of twenty-three novices now here, fourteen are scattered in various small convents throughout the Diocese... There are nine novices in the Central House here and several of these teach daily in schools without having even a Professed Sister to guide or assist them. Too many schools have been opened for the number of Professed Sisters in the Diocese, and the consequence is that these poor young Sisters are forced into situations for which they are quite unfitted⁽⁵⁴⁾".

The Bishop was free to start his own Congregation and accept young women who knew they were joining a diocesan institute. He did set about founding such a Congregation with the help of Fr Woods, but he was acting as if these Josephites belonged to his new institute.

Mother Mary considered that she was defending their rights. She wrote to the Sister Provincial in Queensland in 1875: "If he (the Bishop) tries to make you think Father Director is your Superior, you know how to answer him⁽⁵⁵⁾", and again in 1878: "We cannot have him as our Director, because the Holy See has so arranged⁽⁵⁶⁾". (As a result of an investigation of the Congregation authorised by Rome and held in Adelaide in 1872, Fr Woods had been declared an unsuitable person to direct the Sisters further⁽⁵⁷⁾.)

In September 1879 Mother Mary appealed to Fr Woods, who had been making false statements to the Sisters about Mary in a psychological campaign to win the Sisters away from their Institute. Mary wrote: "I only ask you as a priest to say what you have to say to me, or to those who should bring me to an account, if I have wronged or sought to exclude you from your former position in the Institute, but do not talk to the Sisters against their Constitutions or their Superiors⁽⁵⁸⁾".

Bishop Quinn had become completely confused about the position. He admitted to Mother Mary: "My opinion may not be correct⁽⁵⁹⁾". He insisted that his word should be obeyed until sanction be obtained from the Holy See for acting otherwise. Thus as he saw it Mother Mary had no authority until Rome again said she did. As she observed, the Bishop expected her not even to visit her Sisters while he organised their secession from the Institute. He even wrote to Dr Cani at this time of the danger of having a Superior General: "One effect of it will be that the Adelaide Sisters will create a schism in the congregation⁽⁶⁰⁾".

Dr Quinn believed he had a valid motive for his actions. Both he and Mother Mary were dedicated to the interests of education and faith. The Bishop's real fear was that damage could be done to the school system in his diocese if the Josephites left Queensland. He threatened Mother Mary with these "consequences to Education and Religion⁽⁶¹⁾", but when he realised that she was serious about her "duty to the Institute", he was frightened because those consequences would be likely to follow.

In June 1876 Mother Mary received a letter from Cardinal Franchi assuring her she had acted correctly both in Bathurst and in Brisbane, in spite of the pressure brought to bear by the Bishops Matthew and James Quinn⁽⁶²⁾. She wrote to the Queensland Sisters, showing that she was aware not only of the common good she had to maintain, but also of the daily pressure endured by the Sisters⁽⁶³⁾.

In 1878 the worsening situation in Townsville forced her to set out for Queensland. Apart from the physical hardships, there was the mental anguish of the Sisters, denounced from the pulpit. The situation became a public issue discussed in the newspapers. Mother Mary decided to withdraw the Sisters from Townsville and to ask the Bishop for an investigation. This was promised but none was ever held⁽⁶⁴⁾.

Mother Mary continued to withdraw Sisters as each convent came under intolerable pressure, or as the Bishop told her to make way for others.

On 22 November 1879 a petition appeared in the Catholic journal, *The Australian*, on behalf of the Josephites. A group of men, led by Denis O'Donovan, Queensland Parliamentary Librarian, addressed a letter to the Bishop, deploring his action in dismissing the Sisters and petitioning him to reconsider his action. This brought an immediate reaction of a very negative kind from the Bishop and from the journal, which was in fact, the mouthpiece of the Bishop. *The Australian* published derogatory statements about the Mother General of the Sisters.

A reply to these statements was published a week later. According to the petitioners who interviewed Mother Mary: "She suggested excuses for the Bishop's actions, dwelt particularly on his right to judge whether the services of the Sisters of St Joseph or those of the Sisters of Mercy were best suited to the wants of the diocese;

urged on us by every means in our power to discountenance any attempt to annoy him on the subject, especially to avoid newspaper controversy; and in general sought to make things as pleasant for His Lordship as she possibly could ⁽⁶⁵⁾.

In the midst of all this turmoil, the Josephites found something to laugh about. A concert in aid of the Sisters was advertised in the Brisbane *Courier*, together with a letter from Fr Breen (on behalf of the Bishop) denouncing it. What caused the laughter was an inclusion in the advertisement to the effect that the Bishop and clergy patronised the concert and intended being present at it. This gave the editor of the *Courier* an opportunity to make much of the whole affair ⁽⁶⁶⁾.

The withdrawal of the Sisters was complete by July 1880. As the Josephites were about to leave Queensland, possibilities opened up for them in New South Wales. The Archbishop of Sydney, Dr Vaughan, and the Bishop of Armidale, Dr Torreggiani OSF.Cap., invited the Josephite to their dioceses and guaranteed their Constitutions would be respected.

The conflict between the Josephites and the Bishop of Brisbane seemed on the surface to be a question whether central government was better than diocesan government for a group of Sisters working in the Australian colonies in the nineteenth century. There were two opinions possible about that question in 1875, and two opinions are still possible.

Mother Mary was convinced that a Religious Congregation, once accepted in a diocese, should be respected in its Constitutions, and its members should be allowed to live by their profession under those Constitutions. The duty of the Superior General was to protect these Constitutions and to help the Sisters to live by their vows. Sister Mary did what she would have expected any other Sister to do if she had been elected to the office of Superior General.

There were obstacles in the way of her fulfilling her duty to the Institute, but the resulting tensions were not merely a clash of personalities. It was a question of the understanding of law and authority. Mother Mary was unable to help the Bishop to see the real situation of the Sisters. But she was intent on doing her duty towards the Sisters and of being faithful to the mission entrusted to her by God through the Holy See.

After the Josephites' withdrawal from Queensland it was twenty years before they were invited to return. In 1900 they came to Clermont (not far from Copperfield) at the invitation of Dr Higgins, Bishop of Rockhampton and former Co-adjutor to the Archbishop of Sydney. It would appear that the success of the Josephite Apostolate in New South Wales during those twenty years had encouraged the Bishop to extend an invitation to return to Queensland.

The subsequent ninety years of this century have proved fruitful for the Josephite apostolates in education and welfare in Queensland.

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43. Dr James Quinn to Dr Cani, 2 March 1875.
44. Mother Mary Mackillop to Dr James Quinn, 20 May 1875, MHA.
45. Mother Mary Mackillop to Annie Mackillop, 19 December 1881.
46. *ibid.*
47. *ibid.*
48. Dr James Quinn to Mother Mary Mackillop, 13 April 1875.
49. Dr James Quinn to Sr Clare Wright, 10 February 1875.
50. Dr James Quinn to Mother Mary Mackillop, 13 April 1875.
51. Sisters of St Joseph, Queensland, to Mother Mary Mackillop, June 1875, MHA.
52. Sr Catherine Kennedy to Sr Clare Wright, March 1875, MHA.
53. Mother Mary Mackillop to Cardinal Franchi, 20 May 1875.
54. *ibid.*
55. Mother Mary Mackillop to Sr Josephine McMullen, 25 June 1875, MHA.
56. *ibid.*, 16 November 1878m MHA.
57. Mother Mary Mackillop to Cardinal Franchi, 23 February 1877, MHA.
58. MHA.
59. Dr J.Quinn to Mother Mary Mackillop, 28 May 1875.
60. Dr J.Quinn to Dr Cani, 2 March 1875.
61. Mother Mary Mackillop to Cardinal Franchi, 20 May 1875.
62. Cardinal Franchi to Mother Mary Mackillop, 13 June 1876.
63. Mother Mary Mackillop to Sisters in Queensland, 21 November 1876.
64. Mother Mary Mackillop to Dr Campbell, Rome, 22 March 1878.
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66. Mother Mary Mackillop to Bishop Reynolds, 26 December 1879.

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