"FOR A SPLENDID CAUSE": IRISH MISSIONARY NUNS AT HOME AND ON THE MISSION FIELD, 1921-1962

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Abstract

In the years following Ireland's political independence in 1922 the popularity of its missionary movement was unprecedented. This most Catholic of endeavours helped to assert Ireland's difference from Britain. Religious women actively participated in this process. Their medical work and subsequent representations of the mission fields contributed to a rhetoric of Irish nationalism that served to define postcolonial Ireland within a universal, Catholic discourse. However, the location of their missionary spaces, largely in British colonial Africa, brought the sisters into contact with the empire from which Ireland had recently withdrawn. In their encounters with local people, the sisters perpetuated a form of colonialism that will be studied as a seeming contradiction to the Catholic Church's stance against British rule in Ireland. This is conducted through the lens of gender, and exposes the variation in Catholic-informed ideals of femininity in this postcolonial period of Ireland's history. To study these nuns is to explore the gendered and uneven power relations within the Church, their contribution to the expansion of Catholicism and their ambiguous role in empire. By drawing on the scalar connections between varied missionary spaces including the body, convent and domestic home, in both Ireland and Tanganyika, this thesis contributes to broader debates in historical geography and postcolonial theory.

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1 Introduction

Ireland and Her Missionaries

"Art thou not sad of heart, O mother Ireland?
And weary always of saying Farewell?
To many gallant sons and fair young daughters
Who FROM thy sheltering arms would dwell?

Does thy grief augment when at each parting
Love takes anew one last embrace?
Won'dring how long will be the years of exile?
Perchance some will ne'er more see thy face...

Yet! Still they go for so the Master urgeth,
Pass the sunset, 'cross the might seas:
No banners wave for them, no sound of trumpet,
They preach a Kingdom that's not of these."[1]

Sister Andrew, O.L.A.

This poem, published in 1955, shows Ireland's support for missionary activity in its post-independence era. In the fledging years of the Irish Free State, Ireland increased its devotion to the Catholic missions (Hogan, 1979, 1990). During this time Irish religious women assumed a prominent role, training as teachers, nurses and doctors to work on the mission fields of British colonial Africa and South East Asia. Representations of their endeavours were widely

[1] *Tidings*, January – March 1955, p 4.

distributed throughout Ireland in magazines, pamphlets and films produced by their orders. This poem is such an example. The author Sister Andrew, herself a missionary nun, presented participation in the missions as a national endeavour, hence the title: "Ireland and Her Missionaries." This implies that the missionaries were born out of a religiously fervent Irish nation. To participate was an endorsement of a national identity, made even more explicit by the poem's personification of Mother Ireland. Although the poem establishes the difference between the gender roles of the "gallant" males and "fair young" women, the maternal creation of Ireland takes equal pride in both her missionary daughters and their masculine kin. The poem, with its emphasis on youth, particularly regarding the nuns, captured the energy of this missionary moment.

In the poem, the missionaries leave the maternal safety of Ireland's "sheltering arms" and "Cross the seas" to faraway mission fields. By describing this journey as an "exile", the poem evokes distance in quite emotive language that plainly mirrored the mass economic migration that was simultaneously occurring in Ireland at this time (Foster, 1988). Yet Mother Ireland accepts the departure of her missionary children, despite the dangers of this journey, because of their religious vocation: "Yet! Still they go, for so the Master urgeth." This implies that Mother Ireland was under the subjugation of a masculine master, as articulated by the Catholic Church, which called these missionaries to enact their faith in distant places. By using this language the poem places Ireland's commitment to the missions within a larger, Catholic project and cannot be understood as solely confined within the nation. The poem is one of several examples that strove to represent and connect the missions to the Irish people. When considered collectively these cultural productions expose Ireland's missionary ideal from this time. Some of the themes of this poem, Irish identity, transnational mobility, Catholicism and gender are considered in more depth in the chapters that follow.

From the foundation of the Irish Free State in 1922, several congregations of nuns were either established for this missionary purpose or adapted their

existing work accordingly. This thesis is specifically concerned with four of these orders. Firstly, the Missionary Sisters of St Columban (SSC). The SSC was established in County Clare in 1921 to provide both educational and medical services to the people of China. Secondly, the Medical Missionaries of Mary (MMM) founded in 1937 by a Dublin woman, Marie Martin, who later became known as Mother Mary. Her experiences as a secular nurse in Nigeria convinced her to establish a congregation of sisters solely devoted to this missionary cause. Next, the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles (OLA). This order was founded in France in 1876 and established a Motherhouse for the order in Ardfoyle, Co. Cork in 1913. It was from Ardfoyle that the OLA Sisters departed to mission fields in Nigeria and Ghana. Finally the Institute of the Sisters of St. Louis. These sisters were also French in origin and began their overseas missionary work from their convent in County Monaghan in 1948. From there they arrived in Kano, Nigeria on the 27th June of that year. Over the next ten years the sisters continued to expand their mission posts in both Nigeria and Ghana.

In studying these congregations this introduction outlines three key themes. The first is the complication in the adoption of a Catholic, transnational religion to define the Irish nation. Secondly, the contradictions of postcolonial Ireland's engagement, through its missionaries, in imperial spaces. Finally, the considerations of conducting research into Catholicism in contemporary Ireland.

Firstly, the Irish missionary movement was born out of the exceptional historical relationship between the Catholic Church and Ireland. Catholicism has long been a major tenet of Irish life but from the time of the great famine (1845-49), the Church came into greater prominence in society (Foster, 1988, Kinealy, 1994, Kinealy, 1999). The Church strengthened its ties to Irish identity by offering its support for Ireland's nationalist cause (Inglis, 2005). During the build up to independence, Catholicism in Ireland was often less about theology and more about the politics of identity, the practice of which

served to assert the newly independent Ireland as different from Protestant Britain (Foster, 1988, Mahon, 1994).

The support the Church offered Ireland towards its independence from the British Empire ensured it a prominent position in the Free State and explains why Ireland alone reversed the trend for secularization across twentieth-century Europe (Inglis, 2005). The close relationship between Irishness and Catholicism resulted in a specific culture where the Church, with its scepticism towards the modern world (Donnelly, 2000) focused its power upon the condemnation of sexual and moral impurity within the state (Kearney, 1988). This crusade emphasised an 'Irishness' within Catholicism and the Church condemned immoral aspects of Irish society as alien and unwanted (Kearney, 1988). Such was the extent of its power that Inglis argues the Church occupied a moral monopoly within Irish society (Inglis, 1987).

This religious moralising was both legitimised and enforced by State legislation (Mahon, 1994), much of which focused upon women. This was never more evident than in the 1937 Constitution. In this document, Catholic moral teaching was used in great abundance to define the nation and it became the cornerstone of the Irish Republic, declared in 1949 (Lee, 1989). The Catholic character of the Constitution had a disproportionate effect on women, for it dictated their status as mother and wife, effectively defining them as belonging in the home (Lee, 1989, Mahon, 1994, Beaumont, 1997). During the same time the Church attempted to preserve characteristically large Irish families by condemning any use of birth control, including that which was advocated by clergy in other Catholic countries (Daly, 2006). It also vocally disapproved of the immigration of single Catholic women, for fear that this was denying Ireland its future wives and mothers (Redmond, 2008).

The Church, therefore, advocated that independent Ireland could be distinguished from Britain and also safeguarded from immoral foreign culture by the adoption of a Catholic informed morality. Nonetheless, there was a geographical contradiction in using the Church to define the nation because Catholicism appeals to a universal scale rather than a national identity. Dennis

Cosgrove wrote that Christianity is mobile and not grounded in a specific space:

> *"The Christian view of humanity is potentially uncoupled from essential ties to a place-bound community. Christian community comes explicitly through communion, which although it is practiced in specific places, is not locationally restricted" (Cosgrove, 2001 p 57).*

Christianity as an identity has historically transcended the nation state rather then defined it. The medieval origin of Europe was associated with the spread of Christianity, which served to unite the territory as a realm of Christendom rather than a succession of individual states (Hay 1957, Heffernan, 1998). This Catholic transnationalism was the result of a universal perspective, adopted by the Vatican, and mirrored the all-encompassing world-view of God (Wintle, 1999, Cosgrove, 2001). This universalist ideal can seem at odds with an interpretation of Catholicism used to define the nation of Ireland. However this placelessness does explain why the Catholic Church had its own impulse to evangelize across the entire world and why missionary expansion has a long lineage within the Church (Hay, 1957, Wintle, 1999 and Cosgrove, 2001).

The Irish missions have been studied as evidence of Ireland's enthusiasm for Catholicism in its post-independence period and Hogan (1979, 1990) argues that to participate in the missions was an act of "cultural idealism" (p 97). The opening poem hints at Ireland's fervour for the missions, however this contribution cannot be seen as simply a national endeavour but rather as an universal one too. It was through its participation in a Catholic imperialism that Ireland renegotiated its relationship with the British Empire and colonial territories. Catholicism then did not just define the nation, but also allowed Ireland to represent itself on an international scale.

The second key theme is to approach Irish missionary zeal as the product of a Church and nation that positioned itself against British imperialism, however this is complicated by the colonial destinations its missionaries travelled to. Many Irish missionaries journeyed to British-controlled Africa. At the beginning of the twentieth-century Ireland had 200 missionaries in Africa and

Asia but by 1935 this had increased to approximately 2000 (Hogan, 1990). This thesis examines, through the encounters and representations by nuns, the complexities of a Church willing to oppose imperialism in Ireland, yet would subsequently work within this same empire to propagate the faith in colonial Africa.

It would be an overgeneralization to understand all missionaries who worked in imperial spaces to be agents of empire, for this ignores the complexity surrounding the variations of territory, time and religious denominations. However, the relationship between missionaries and imperial networks was often closely intertwined. Missionaries have been active in the creation of colonial subjectivities and the reproduction of unequal discourses of power (Cooper and Stoler, 1997). A strand of this thesis is how the missionaries' Catholicism and Irishness influenced their colonial encounters with local people. It also examines the relationship between the missionaries and the British colonial authorities, to assess if this was one of mutual cooperation or perhaps resistance. Etherington (2005) suggests that missionary work ought to be studied to see how it related to wider imperial projects (Etherington, 2005b). In considering these wider relations, it is essential to understand that Irish missionaries, when working within imperial spaces, were also part of a transnational Catholic framework with its own hierarchies of power. Therefore this thesis examines how the mission field and Ireland were understood as part of the same, Catholic network and how the missionaries themselves related, understood and represented their experiences.

The ambiguous role occupied by the Irish missionaries in colonial space is further considered through the medical work that they were engaged in. The study of medical practices in the colonies has been used as a way to explore the intricacies of the wider imperial project (Vaughan, 1991). As David Arnold writes, this was a "relationship of power and authority between rulers and ruled and between colonialism's constituent parts" (1988 p 2). Central to this work is a concern with the power of medicine and the idea that medical practice is socially constructed and therefore closely connected to the political

ideologies and colonial subjectivities of the imperial regime (Arnold, 1988). Etherington (2005a) argues that missionaries in particular used medicine to convert local people. Medical missionaries were focused on the body, through medical practices but also by performing baptism. These acts can perhaps be seen as a Catholic colonisation of the body and will be studied in this thesis as examples of Irish missionaries acting on behalf of a Catholic imperialism.

The literature on colonial medicine serves to draw attention to the myriad practices of colonisation that occur on an intimate scale. As Etherington notes: "when they are considered on a micro-level, [missionaries] often appear to enact or mimic the operations of political and economic imperialism at the macro level" (Etherington, 2005b p 4). Indeed scale is used to study many aspects of the missionary movement, including variations in gender, Irishness and the practices of Catholicism. As briefly outlined above, the Irish state exerted particular demands on women and emphasised a maternal role within the domestic home. However medical missionary nuns defied this narrow identity of gendered Irishness for they were able to traverse across vast imperial and religious networks beyond Ireland. An exploration of the connections and contradictions of Irishness across multiple spaces and vast distances, including the body, home, nation, imperial scales is one of the central features of this thesis. Sallie Marston (2002) in studying the history of the St. Patrick's Day parade in New York, explored the variations of Irishness on display and how the parade constructed a boundary of difference, in this case on the grounds of sexuality, within the Irish-American community. Marston used the example of the St Patrick's Day parade to demonstrate the differences that exist within Irishness as an identity. Crucially she argued that these tensions and complexities are played out at different scales:

> *"The parade must be viewed at different spatial scales from the scale of the bodies that are acceptable/unacceptable inscriptions of 'Irishness' to the street, the city, the region and the globe. And at each of those scales identities are produced and understood in different ways" (Marston, 2002 p 386).*

This quote establishes various sizes, distance yet relatedness between different scales in the consideration of identity performance. Marston (2000) has also shown the scalar separation of gender, for example in the home, to be socially constructed and in so doing she demonstrated a "rejection of scale as an ontologically given category" (Marston, 2000 p 220). This allows for the pursuit of the processes through which scales are constructed. Marston has since furthered the scalar debate quite significantly, including a critique about the inevitability of vertical scalar theorizing (Marston et al., 2005). Brenner (2001) has noted the potential to over-extend the scalar metaphor when other spatial terms would suffice. Furthermore Leitner and Miller (2007) warn that: "any single master concept can only impoverish analysis, by offering a partial viewpoint into how geography matters" (p 158). Therefore it is necessary to look at the connections between scale and other sociospatial relations, such as network (Jessop et al., 2008). The congregations in this thesis are understood to have worked in imperial and religious networks, yet these networks traversed a variety of related and interconnected scales (Leitner et al., 2008). For instance, Stephen Legg (2009) argues that "Scales are the effects of networked practice" (p 234). With this consideration in mind this thesis explores Catholic missionary networks to reveal, both the compliance and resistance to the uneven power relations (Leitner et al., 2008, Legg, 2009), present in the masculine hierarchies of the Church.

The final key consideration of this thesis relates to the sensitivities of researching Catholicism at this very emotive time in the history of the Irish Church. Irish attitudes to the Church have been changing since the 1960s and there has been a gradual shift away from Catholic moral teachings (Hug, 2001). However from the 1980s, fuelled by a succession of scandals, many of which were sexual in nature (Donnelly, 2000 p 14), a critical voice against the Church has become increasingly vocal. One of the most potent blows to the credibility of the Church came in the midst of my research period with the publication of two reports by the Ministry of Justice and Equality: the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (CICA), commonly known as the

Ryan Report (2009);[2] and the Report by the Commission of the Investigation into the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin, also known as the Murphy Report (2009)[3]. The Ryan Report was highly critical of religious orders in the abuse of children entrusted to the care of their social and educational institutions from 1936 onwards. Upon publication its findings were heavily reported on in both Ireland and throughout the world. Certainly these scandals have contributed to the diminished role of the Church in Irish society. The sexual nature of the perpetrations made a specific mockery of the moral campaigns that it once fought. These reports have brought with them more reflection on Ireland's historic relationship to Catholicism. The Ryan Report in particular highlighted the neglect and abuse of vulnerable children by certain orders of nuns. For many this is perhaps the most shocking aspect because abuse by women seems to defy a natural, maternal instinct. The widespread outrage, from which the Church has yet to recover can be evidenced in falling mass attendance and a dramatic decline in religious vocations (Donnelly, 2000 p 14).

In the wake of these devastating revelations, any reflection on Ireland's complex relationship to the Church may become a passionate defamation. To be overwhelmed by contemporary anger, although understandable, could simplify the Church as a single, vilified institution when actually it is composed of many different orders and people of different gender and class. The difficulties of writing history without prejudice from the present exist in every project, but as Diarmaid Ferriter (2004) remarks, this is particularly poignant in Ireland because its past still seems to wield excessive influence today. Ferriter has written of the complexity of writing the history of Ireland's twentieth-century with work being afflicted by "corrosive cynicism" (Ferriter, 2004 p 5), due to a scandal-ridden Church and an often oppressive and insular Irish society. This thesis does not reflect on the endeavours of female Irish missionaries in order to celebrate the Church. Rather, it studies the sisters' exploits with a critical lens, so that all the complexities of their project can be

[2] Full report available at: http://www.childabusecommission.com/rpt/

[3] Full report available at: http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/PB09000504

unveiled. Nonetheless, contemporary issues have penetrated this historical study and the methodology chapter offers some of my reflections on the research process and my navigation through this sensitive topic. I acknowledge how my own position as a woman from an Irish-Catholic family, living in Britain, may have influenced my engagement with the material.

This thesis is not intended to be an exhaustive account of either the Catholic missionary movement or Ireland's participation within it, for there were many other missionary orders active at this time. Rather the following five chapters provide a scalar exploration of the Irish missionary movement as conducted by four congregations of religious women in post-independent Ireland. It begins with a literature review in chapter two, which expands some of key themes that have been outlined above. It examines the missionary impulse behind Catholic imperialism and how this led to its missionaries working in colonial spaces. It considers the critiques of missionaries in empire and in particular the role of medicine and the gendered encounters in these colonial spaces. The literature review highlights Ireland's complicated position in empire and the consequences of religious discourses on female and Irish identity.

Chapter three, the methodology, explores some of the issues relevant to researching Irish Catholicism today. This includes my experiences of conducting archival work and oral history interviews, as well as establishing close working relations with the nuns who form the subject of my research. I also conducted fieldwork in Tanzania. These insights into the research process are offered because they show the issues of power that inform the interpretation of material, made even more poignant by the recent controversy in the Irish Catholic Church.

Chapter four is the first empirical chapter. It focuses upon the beginnings of the missionary movement, the creation of missionary spaces by the sisters in Ireland and their gendered, subordinate relationship with the Irish Bishops. The chapter explores the simultaneous existence of both insular conservatism and the international perspective of the Irish Catholic Church as well the connections forged between these Irish spaces and the mission field. This is

done with particular attention on how physical distance was circumvented by a transnational religion.

Chapter five looks at the 'Irishness' of the missionary movement and how a narrative of a Catholic identity was articulated through their cultural productions. There are specific gendered and scalar implications to this, namely the construction of home, both domestic and national, which will be studied in relevance to Ireland's use of Catholicism to define the nation. This chapter explores how the Church's universalism was articulated to the public through maps, diary extracts and cartoons which combined to present Ireland as occupying a prominent place on an international scale. It demonstrates also the moral voice of the Catholic Church within Ireland and how Catholic behaviour on the mission fields was presented as vital to the sustenance of the newly independent Irish nation.

Chapter six explores the MMM sisters on the mission field of Tanganyika from 1947 to 1962. In 1946, guided by the United Nations, Tanganyika's status changed from a League of Nations mandate to a trust territory but nonetheless remained under British control (Yeager, 1982). When in the territory the sisters had to negotiate a position for themselves under the British. The medical work of the sisters facilitated the spread of Catholicism in Tanganyika. This close contact with local people allowed the sisters to facilitate the sacrament of baptism but they were also engaged in a project of imparting Catholic moral behaviour to the local populations. This chapter will show how this was particularly focused on the construction of ideal Catholic femininity. It compares the interactions between the sisters and the bishop in Tanganyika to that which existed in Ireland, as well as examining the mobility of Catholicism through the internationalisation of the MMM congregation.

These five chapters draw out the broader, geographical themes of the thesis and in particular the relationship between geography, religion and identity. This complex interaction can be explored through the transnational scalar interactions of the missionaries. The religious motivation that foreshadows the missionaries meant that even when working in colonial spaces these

missionaries were operating within an international Catholic Church and therefore took on a somewhat ambiguous role in the spaces of the British Empire. It looks at how the missionaries were also reliant on constructing ideals of home within Ireland and how strong connections, both physical and imaginative, were forged between the domestic, the nation and the mission fields through religion. Finally all of this work is infused with a strong gendered theme. The construction of a religious femininity and how this was articulated on the body, the home and the mission field reveal the connections between identity, gender and religion and the consequences of this relationship in the historical-geography of post-independent Ireland.

2 Literature Review

The function of this literature review is to reconcile debates surrounding Catholicism in Irish identity alongside the territorial perspectives and universal ambitions of the Church. In studying Irish identity during its post-independent period this review pays specific attention to gender relations. It also assesses Ireland's ambiguous relationship to empire, which is further complicated by its missionary activities.

Irish identity has attracted much scholarship. Often this has focused on the search for an identity that would distinguish Ireland from Britain. Geographers in particular have studied Irish identity and landscape. Nuala Johnson (1995) has noted that memorials to nineteenth-century British war heroes in Dublin: "further reinscribed Dublin as a provincial capital within a Union whose centre was London" (p. 59). In the postcolonial period Whelan (2002) has written of projects to cleanse the Dublin landscape of a colonial, British and Protestant presence so that after independence:

> *"Those [statutes] which did not conform to a notion of the Irish Free State as a Catholic nationalist nation were wilfully destroyed or officially removed, a testimony to their symbolic potency"* (Whelan, 2002 p 528).

Connolly has explored how the beauty and ruggedness of Ireland's rural West coast was used in poetry and landscape art as a space to ground identity upon (Connolly, 1997). To use the landscape of the West allowed the construction of an inclusive Irishness that would transcend the fractions within the nationalist cause (ibid). The rural ideal of the West vividly contrasted to the stereotype of industrial English and was used as a way to assert Irish difference from Britain (Duffy, 1997). These representations of Irishness often involved processes of invention and in particular the idealised imagining of Gaelic, rural life (Connolly, 1997). As discussed in the introduction, these attempts to assert Ireland as independent of the British Empire have also been explored in the relationship between the Irish state and the Catholic Church. This literature review treats this marriage of Catholicism and Irishness as a starting point to

explore how the discipline of geography has theorised religious space. This leads to a discussion of the territorial perspectives of the Church, how it has operated as an imperial institution and the role of missionaries in its expansion. The review considers the tension between missionaries as theologically motivated but simultaneously aligned to imperial projects, a tension further complicated by the role of missionaries in colonial spaces. The review considers Ireland's ambiguous role in empire and how its complicated position can be studied through imperial networks. It concludes by exploring how gender relations in postcolonial Ireland were informed by the teachings of a morally conservative Church, which also provided women an alternative to marriage in the form of becoming a nun.

2.1 Geography and Religion

Much of geography's initial engagement with religion builds upon the work of the seminal author Mircea Eliade (1957). He sought to theorise religious space by defining sacred space as separate from the profane:

> *"When the sacred manifests itself as hierophany, there is not only a break in the homogeneity of space; there is also revelation of an absolute reality, opposed to the nonreality of the vast surrounding expanse.... the hierophany reveals an absolute fixed point, a center"* (ibid, p 21).

By hierophany, Eliade refers to the way that the sacred reveals itself in the material world (Kornfeld, 2003). So therefore, as Holloway explains, the appearance of a "hierophany is thus at the heart of the sacred/profane dualism" (Holloway, 2003 p 1962). Eliade describes a church as "the threshold that separates the two spaces" (1957 p 25). Geographers have approached churches as simultaneously made of bricks and mortar but also containing ideological and social dimensions (Knott, 2008). In doing so geographers of religion have borrowed techniques from cultural geography to 'read' these spaces and to interpret their multiple and often-contested meanings (Ley, 2000). This process of theorizing sacred space requires a broad understanding of theology in order to understand the many meanings ascribed to representations of sacred space (ibid). This theoretical approach has been informed by phenomenology

and allows the meanings behind religious signs, symbols and rituals to be seen as socially constructed (Levine, 1986, Ley, 2000). To consider the cultural elements that combine to form the space of a church implies that religious signs and symbols are significant to the believer's experience of religion (Levine, 1986) as well as the construction of sacred space.

Lily Kong (2001) has studied the importance of rituals in constructing sacred space. She writes that if "sacredness is not inherent, attention must be paid to how place is sacralised" (p 213) and in answering she considers "sacred place [as] ritual place" (ibid, p 220). Holloway and Valins (2002) have also advocated that geographers explore the role of ritual in sacred space. They write:

> "*Religious and spiritual geographies are (re)produced through a variety of embodied acts and bodily practices. Thus the corporeal enactment and performances involved in, for example, prayer, ritual and pilgrimage...are central to the maintenance and development of religious spaces and landscapes*" (Holloway and Valins, 2002 p 8).

To introduce ritual to a study of religion introduces "body and bodily practices as central to the enactment of sacred space" (Holloway, 2003 p 1963). Holloway poses an essentially geographical question by asking us to think of how "the sacred is corporeally sensed in space and place" (p 1964). It is important to consider the body as essential to the construction and experience of sacred space, which hints at the usefulness of scalar terminology when studying religion and geography.

In a more recent engagement with religion, geographers have criticized Eliade for devaluing the profane and reducing this to a homogenous space (Holloway, 2003). It has been argued that to focus only on places of worship as sacred spaces may be at the risk of ignoring how "religious meaning seeps past both institutional and intellectual constructs" (Nelson, 2006 p 2). Rather than simply focusing upon specific religious sites, Kong (2001) advocates studying the construction of religious moral geographies. DeRogatis (2003) in her work on Protestant missionaries living on the American frontier notes the "moral

implications of power struggles on a religiously constructed landscape" (p 7). This work moves beyond a rigid demarcation of sacred space and instead acknowledges the role of embodied practices on shaping religious landscapes. Thus religion can become fundamental to the identity construction of whole communities (ibid). Knott (2008) writes that just like any other landscape, religious spaces can be approached as "thoroughly enmeshed in embodiment and everyday practices, knowledge and discourse" (p 1111). By approaching religious landscape as constructed and full of meanings (Nelson, 2006) geographers have shown spiritual practices to occur in the everyday and not just in designated sacred places (Holloway, 2003). Through this focus on the influence of religion on everyday practices, geographers are beginning to look at the role of religion in the "construction and maintenance of boundaries which sustain religious identities" (Kong, 2001 p 223). Geography of religion can therefore allow for "investigations into the production, transformation and function of 'everyday' religious built and imagined landscapes" (Holloway and Valins, 2002 p 6) and the consequence of this on identity construction (ibid). In considering religious geographies beyond sacred space, the body has also been considered as a site for the display of religious identity (Knott, 2008). This fulfils the call raised by Kong (2001) when she advocated the need for geographers to analyse religion at all scales, ranging from the global to the site of the body.

2.1.1 Geography and the Catholic Church

Geography's specific engagement with Catholicism has often focused on the spatial operations of the Catholic Church and in particular its distribution of churches, parishes, and dioceses (Park, 1994). Kevin Whelan (1983), in his work on the history of Catholic parishes in Ireland, notes that Catholicism, to a much greater degree than other Christian denominations is "organised rigidly on a territorial basis" (Whelan, 1983 p 3). This derives from the hierarchical organisation of the Church into spatial units of churches, parishes and dioceses (Bowen, 1967). Whelan (1983) explored the demarcation of parishes and the construction of chapels in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Ireland as crucial to the formation of many features of Irish village life, such as the school, the

pub and handball alley. In the nineteenth-century these parishes demarcated communities therefore closely interlinking local identity and religious practice. Furthermore, Whelan notes this network of parishes combined to allow people to participate in political activities on a national scale, which can be evidenced during the move towards Catholic emancipation and Irish independence. Whelan's paper, published in 1983, advocated further engagement in geography with the Catholic Church.

Geographers have also looked at the role of the Catholic parish in immigrant communities and its role in forging ethnic identities. The work of Busteed and Hodgson (1996) explored the role of the Catholic parish in nineteenth-century Manchester and specifically how the local church facilitated a shared sense of cohesion within migrant communities. Trigger (2001) explored the Irish-Catholic populations of nineteenth-century Montreal to note how the creation of separate parishes to the French-Catholic majority was part of the formation of a distinct Irish-Catholic ethnicity for this emigrant population. Trigger treats the parish and other Church institutions as crucial in facilitating the daily interactions between people, which contributes to the construction of a shared identity. The work of Olson and Thornton (2002) explores the economic and social mobility of Irish-Catholic communities in nineteenth-century Montreal. Again, in this context religion served as a marker to distinguish this group as different from the Protestant population. However the Irishness of this group made them distinct from the French Catholics (Olson and Thornton, 2002). Religion is only one group identifier and works alongside other factors, such as affiliation with a national identity, to ensure the social distinction of an ethnic group (ibid). Furthermore Busteed (1998) examined the close relationship between anti-Irish and anti-Catholic sentiments in nineteenth-century Manchester. Trigger (2004) has also explored the St. Patrick's Day parades that took place in nineteenth-century Montreal and Toronto to conclude that these were displays of Irishness that were a simultaneous display of a Catholic identity and therefore involved connections to this international religious network (Trigger, 2004). To introduce Catholicism to debates surrounding

national identity is to complicate this identity by introducing an international scale.

In reviewing this literature it would seem that much consideration has been given to the role of religion in personal, group and national identity. These geographers have highlighted the everyday aspects of religion, the consequence of faith on bodily practices and the construction of religious spaces and landscape. In more recent scholarship this has allowed for a consideration of the pervasive aspects of moral landscapes and the scalar interactions of religion. However, absent from this brief review is geography's attempts to examine the complex operations of the Catholic Church as directed by the Vatican and distributed across the world. Indeed this reflects a more general neglect of the research topic in geography and will be discussed below.

2.2 The Territorial Perspectives of the Catholic Church

The Catholic Church is an international institution that has profound geographic properties in the way it operates over vast physical distances. To review this literature is to present a historical lineage of the Church's claims over territory. This is vitally important to the research aims of this thesis because it allows the Catholic Church to be considered as a political and imperial institution, one that has a transnational influence but whose expansion has been motivated by its theologically-informed universal world-view. This section considers the use of cartography and other geographic metaphors as necessary for an in-depth understanding of the Church's missionary expansion.

An early example of the relationship between the Church and its claims over territory can be seen in the medieval period. Hay (1957) refers to the Cross as a unifying symbol over the territory that is now thought of as Europe. Indeed this space was referred to as Christendom and reflected the territoriality of medieval Christianity (ibid). During this time the territorial perspective of the Church was centred on Rome for it was from here that the papacy viewed the rest of the world (Cosgrove, 2001). In this period Christianity acted as a powerful unifying identity and the Church considered the known-world in two

categories, either Christian or not (Hay, 1957). Therefore beyond the boundary of Christendom the construction of a non-Christian 'other' could occur. This was essential in confirming the limits of Christendom (Cosgrove, 2001). Indeed the threat of Islam served to unite this space:

> *"Thus in the face of a common enemy, the term 'Christianitas', which for some time had indicated the Christian faith, began to take on a geographical or spatial sense, meaning the areas occupied by Latin Christianity, to 'Christendom'"* (Wintle, 2009 p 157).

Thus Christendom was understood as a specific place, populated by people who had a shared adherence to a common faith. Hay (1957) argues that eventually Christendom and Europe became interchangeable terms and: "The association between Christianity and Europe remained strong throughout the early modern period" (Heffernan, 1998 p 13). Evident here is that adherence to a Christian faith could transcend the nation state and that the Church has long-held transnational aspirations.

Despite the overlaying of Christianity upon Europe, ultimately the notion of limits to the Christian territory, the existence of boundaries and the construction of 'other,' runs counter to the universal nature of the religion. Cosgrove writes of the mobility to the practice of Christianity which is centred around the ritual of the Eucharist and therefore not tied to place (Cosgrove, 2001). Hay (1957) concurs and notes that the overwhelming distribution of Christians in 'Europe' serves to mark the boundaries of a faith that by its very own definition was actually ecumenical. Therefore, during the Middle-Ages a universalist understanding of the world prevailed (Wintle, 1999, Cosgrove, 2001). Indeed in Brian Moore's novel *Catholics*, a character jokes:

> *"A few hundred years ago, no place in Christendom was the back of beyond. The Pope in those days had a very long arm indeed"* (1972 p 35).

This territorial understanding was based on the belief that God's perspective of the world spanned the entire globe and all people and places were equal within his sight. The desire to reconcile this universal vision with the physical

reach of the Church was strong and consequently implied that the limits to the Church's expansion mirror the very limits of the globe (Hay, 1957, Wintle, 1999, Cosgrove, 2001).

Throughout its history the Church has used maps and geographical metaphors to present this universalist view. Cosgrove (2001) argues that studying the maps and images produced by religious orders, and in particular the Jesuits, can reveal the importance of the visual in attaining an understanding of a Catholic world-view. He argues that the *mappae mundi* can be interpreted as a "public sermon on the order of creation and the global reach of Christian redemption" (ibid p 69). Likewise Headley (2000) has explored the cartographic advancements of the Renaissance period and how this made the expansion of the Church over the entire world seem possible. For example, Headley argues that a Jeusit-produced map of Japan in 1585: "amounted to being a geographical proclamation of an advancing Christian empire throughout the globe" (p 1150). In a further example the Jesuit, Heinrich Scherer (1628 – 1704) who was a professor of geography at Munich, produced a world map where:

> *"Scherer peppered his world with radiant 'IHS' monograms of the name Jesus, a symbol of the society... Each monogram represents a Jesuit mission, and the total effect suggests purpose, progress, and unflattering growth" (Clossey, 2008 p 76).*

Clossey (2008) notes that in the period following the expeditions of Columbus: "globes, orbs, and spheres came to represent the world and thus to play a role in expressing missionary zeal" (Clossey, 2008 p 78). Clossey and Cosgrove argue that the image of the globe become central to a universal understanding of the missionary expansion of the Church. Indeed Brockey (2007) notes that the Jesuit priests who went to China tapped into a widespread desire of the Church to spread across the world:

> *"From vantage points such as Macau that the men of the society looked out beyond the boundaries of empire and*

> *completed expanding Catholic Christendom by claiming conversion*" (Brockey, 2007 p 6).

Brockey states that it was this expansion of the Jesuits into China that literally and metaphorically increased their vantage point over the world and accordingly extended the potential boundaries of Christianity.

The "close relationship between cartography and religion" (Fiorani, 2005 p 249) can be further explored through the maps of Pope Gregory XIII. These were commissioned and subsequently displayed in awe-inspiring rooms such as the Gallery of Maps in the Vatican (ibid). In this gallery cartography was deployed as a way to visualise Catholic control, including over spaces where the Church had no jurisdiction. Consequently the boundaries of papal control were not depicted. Crucially these maps were commissioned at a time when the papacy was losing power in Europe yet was gaining ground in the mission territories. Therefore the intention behind the *Terza Loggia* was to affirm the possibility of papal supremacy at a time of its political uncertainty. Thus Fiorani writes:

> *"Cartography expressed the optimistic view that the geographical boundaries of the Christian empire would coincide with the earth's globe, where Catholic liturgy would dominate"* (Fiorani, 2005 p 244).

Through cartographic commissions Gregory XIII envisioned a universal Church with the papacy and Rome at the centre. As Fiorani writes:

> *"In the Terza Loggia geography organized the new global mission of the papacy, a mission that could be expressed only cartographically*" (Fiorani, 2005 p 254).

As these examples show, Catholic cartographic depictions were vital in presenting how the Church viewed the territories of the world. Indeed maps were the most suitable medium to convey the territorial expansion, both real and imagined, of the Church.

2.2.1 The Church's engagement with politics

The Church's belief in its own universalism can also be evidenced in its political engagements. From the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries the Church desired to wield greater political influence over an international scale. This section explores how the Vatican's engagement with politics was an attempt to position itself as a unifying force that transcended national boundaries.

The nineteenth-century saw a wider dissemination of Papal political views throughout Europe (Woods, 2004). Conway writes that Pope Pius XI sought to "bring about a recatholicization of modern life" (Conway, 1996 p 22) and by the twentieth-century the Vatican attempted to mobilise ordinary Catholics to actively resist secular and un-Catholic forces. The Vatican encouraged moral campaigns, the rise of Catholic political parties and the formation of the lay organisation Catholic Action (Conway, 1997). This organisation acted as a Catholic voice to comment on society and its foundation demonstrates the encroachment of Catholic morality into political matters. It is interesting to note that while Catholic Action had national aims Conway also argues:

> "*The undoubted existence of different subsidiary trends within political Catholicism should not therefore be allowed to disguise the countervailing forces which worked in favour of political unity among Catholics*" (Conway, 1996 p 11).

Conway (1996) argues that the centrality of the papacy was crucial to maintain a sense of solidarity between Catholics. The Vatican was responsible for the publication of papal encyclicals. These letters were intended to provide a "world view for the masses" (Kertzer, 1980 p 114). The encyclicals can be seen as an attempt to craft a unified Catholic identity that could transcend the nation-state. In some ways this ambition mirrors the territorial unity of Catholicism in Europe that was present during the era of 'Christendom'.

The increased attempts at Vatican-led universalism can further be evidenced in the Church's engagement with politics on an international scale. Nichols (1968) notes that the rise of international organisations such as the League of

Nations and the United Nations were potential opportunities for the Church to embrace politics at this international scale (Nichols, 1968). During World War I Pope Benedict XV was supportive of the establishment of an international organisation that would be responsible for arbitration, arms reduction and could safe-guard the world (Atkin and Tallett, 2003). His encyclical *Pacem, dei Munus Pulcherrium* published in 1920 outlined the Church's support for international cooperation between nation states, while also outlining a potential role for the Church in this process (Ruotsila, 2008). Although the Church was not granted a significant role in the League of Nations (Atkin and Tallett, 2003, Ruotsila, 2008) it did however praise the organisation for its humanitarian efforts (Kuehl and Dunn, 1997). Furthermore the post World-War I enthusiasm for internationalism also saw the rise of philanthropic agencies such as the Rockefeller, Carnegie and Ford Foundation which operated with a "spatial reach extending beyond national boundaries" (Bell, 1999). These were complimented by the notion of "international citizenship" (ibid, p 289). Indeed the idea of the world governed by international law, where the democracy of individual states would be guided by an "external framework of legal order" (Navari, 2000 p 8) began to flourish and replaced the previously held idea of evolution through wartime expansion (ibid). The Church seems to have been supportive of the optimistic internationalism that prevailed in the 1920s (Kuehl and Dunn, 1997). Thus the League of Nations and other such organisations appealed to the Catholic Church due to their encouragement of peace and international cooperation.

After World War II Pope Pius XII sought to establish a legal position for the Church within the United Nations (Nichols, 1968). Again the Church was supportive of the UN as a peace-keeping agency, particularly due to the support offered by the USA for the fledging organisation (Nichols, 1968, Legro, 2003). Although the Church was not to be involved in the establishment of the UN, Pope John XXIII came to see the "UN as the mirror image of what the Catholic Church intends to be in the spiritual order: one and universal" (Wolff, 1999). While the Church may not have been an active participant in

these organisations, the support it showed towards the rise of international cooperation reveals the Church's political intentions during this era.

Perhaps the Church's most significant political position of the twentieth-century was its stance against communism. Indeed Catholic opposition to communism is one of the most remarked upon features of the Church in that century (Higginson, 1980, Coppa, 2003, Atkin and Tallett, 2003, Crosby, 1978). The first Pope to denounce communism was Pius IX in his 1848 encyclical *Qui Pluribus* (Higginson, 1980). This is not to say that the Church fully embraced laissez-fair capitalism and the publication of *Rerum novarum* in 1891 by Leo XIII outlined the Church's stance against the social consequences of increased industrialisation in Europe (Nichols, 1968, Aubert and Boileau, 2003). The force of the Church's critique of communism largely revolved around the atheistic aspect of this ideology (Crosby, 1978). This anti-communist stance was later reinforced by the religious repression in USSR, which was condemned by Pope Pius XI in his encyclical *Divini Redemptoris* in 1937 (Rhodes, 1973). Indeed during the Cold War the Church consistently projected its fears about communism onto the USSR (Kent, 2002, Coppa, 2003). This had the consequence of drawing the Church closer to the USA (Rhodes, 1992, Kent, 2002, Kirby, 2003b, Kirby, 2003a) and can be demonstrated by Pope Pius XII welcoming the financial implication of the Marshall Plan in Italy (Coppa, 2003). Prior to the Cold War, the Church and USA had distant, cool relations (Rhodes, 1992, Sittser, 1997). Communism became a territorial definable enemy to the Church in the twentieth-century. The political voice of the Church again demonstrates its desire to have a moral role in the world.

The Church's theologically-informed claims over territory and its increased internationalism reveal a Church that by the twentieth-century emphasised a unity amongst its members that centred on the Vatican and transcended the nation state. Its more recent political engagement was a continuation of a much longer held belief that the Church had a God-given claim over the international.

2.3 Missionaries and the Expansion of the Church

To study the Church's physical expansion over space it is necessary to consider a long lineage of Catholic evangelisation and the role of missionaries in this process. It was with the European arrival into the Americas that the Church first established missions beyond the continent. The Pope granted the Spanish and Portuguese monarchs responsibility over the evangelisation of this territory. The expansion into the New World by the Catholic monarchs of Portugal and Spain "offered the opportunity for its imaginative extensions across oceanic space" (Cosgrove, 2001 p 83). The papacy had control over how this new land was understood and the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) was issued by the papacy to divide sovereignty between Portuguese and Spanish over the conquered territories. In 1481 and 1493 Pope Alexander VI subsequently divided the world into known and unknown parts (Ucerler, 2008). The dividing line was set down in the middle of the Atlantic and demarcated the East from the West Indies (Ucerler, 2008). The Treaty of Tordesillas "sought to determine the spatial order of Christian empire" (Cosgrove, 2001 p 84) and it was described by Cosgrove as a "geopolitical instrument of global imperialism" (ibid p 84). Further expansion of the Church into South America was fuelled by both the money and the will of Spanish and Portuguese sovereign powers through a system called *Patronanato Real* (Da Silvo Rego, 2003). Through this system the papacy granted the European sovereigns the power to expand the Church within their overseas territories (Boxer, 1969). After Spanish control was asserted in Mexico many missionary orders arrived, including the Franciscans, the Dominicans and Augustinians (Bireley, 1999, Nemer, 2003). These religious institutions were dominated by Spanish and Portuguese men and systematically kept the growth of local clergy down (Boxer, 1970). Those local who did join up were seen as occupying a subordinate position to the Europeans (ibid). As can be seen in the New World, the actual task of evangelising largely fell on specific missionary organisations, each with their own hierarchies of power and each engaged in different types of missionary work, in different territories of the world.

In 1622 the Vatican established the *Congregation of Propaganda Fide* within the Roman Curia of the Vatican (Da Silvo Rego, 2003). *Propaganda Fide* was conceived to narrow the widening gulf between the universal values of the Church and the imperialist aims of the Spanish (Headley, 2000). It was intended to centralise missionary activity within the Vatican so that missionaries were called to be loyal to the papacy rather than to any sovereign (Hoffman, 2003). By the twentieth-century *Propaganda Fide* was granted responsibility for dividing all new mission lands into dioceses of the Church (Lynch, 2003 and Collins and Farrugia, 2003). This territorial division of land was crucial to the spreading of the Church's power because its hierarchy is composed of a network of strictly bounded spatial units called dioceses (Bowen, 1967, O'Collins and Farrugia, 2003, Dulles, 2007). Although a bishop is appointed to oversee the running of a diocese, each diocese operates within the Church's hierarchy (Coleman, 2007). Through its network of dioceses the Church possesses an internationalism and power that makes it almost unique amongst other institutions (Rhodes, 1992). The Little Atlas of Catholic Missions describes this universality of the Church:

> *"The inhabitants of every square mile of the land area of the globe are recognised on the Word of Christ as having a right to the Gospel. The Bishop of Rome, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, has the universal responsibility; each bishop of a diocese has a local responsibility. Where a diocese is established the bishop bears the burden, where a diocese is not established the Pope bears the burden. Every portion of the globe is either under a bishop or under the pope."*[4]

When considering the Church as an institution that claims power over territory it is perhaps useful to reflect on the power of the papacy. After the first Vatican Council (1869-1870) the role of the papacy within the Church became increasingly centralised (Conway, 1996) for the Council recognised the "infallible supreme episcopacy of the Pope" (Lynch, 2003 p 2003). Indeed Conway remarks that during this time the: "Papacy became the absolute monarchy of the Catholic faith" (Conway, 1996 p 13). As these dioceses

[4] *Little Atlas of Catholic Missions,* 1926 p. 1.

increased through the work of missionaries, the Catholic network expanded and so did the power of the pope. In this central capacity, the pope becomes a representation of the universalism of the Church.

2.3.1 Missionaries and colonialism

Geographers have critically explored the role of missionaries who worked within the spaces of empire. Cooper and Stoler (1997) have written that postcolonial scholarship has largely been focused upon the harshness of empire. Within this literature there has been much debate on the role of missionaries in either supporting or challenging the injustices of imperial spaces. It is undeniable that missions and colonial authorities were closely interlinked but the challenge is to explore the myriad ways missionaries cooperated but also resisted colonial authority (Etherington, 1999, Porter, 2005, Etherington, 2005). In reflecting on their ambiguous status, Lester (2005) has written that missionaries were often instrumental in opposing the militaristic aspects of colonialism. In the early to mid nineteenth-century British protestant missionaries advocated a "Christian-humanitarian model of colonization" (ibid p 80). The most notable movement of this was the anti-slavery campaign (ibid). Nonetheless, Lester also notes that missionaries were engaged in their own specific aspect of colonisation by "striving to acquire authority over indigenous people" (p 64). It is these close encounters with local people that will be examined in this section.

The nineteenth-century revival of Catholic missionary activity saw increased attention upon Africa and China that coincided with European imperial expansion into these territories (Nemer, 2003). Despite calls from the Vatican for missionaries to maintain their commitment to universalism, Nemer argues that the Catholic missionaries of the nineteenth-century were actually "highly nationalistic and concerned about the imperial interests of their home government" (p 693). The inevitable tensions of working under the direction of *propaganda fide* while at the same time operating under the auspices of the imperial ambitions of their own nation state shows how the Catholic missionary movement consistently: "juxtaposed elements of nationalism and

universalism" (Stanley, 2003 p 3). The Vatican however maintained that the work of its missionaries was separate from that of the colonisers because of the universal nature of the Catholic Church (Hastings, 1996). In 1919, Pope Benedict XV published the encyclical *Maximum Illud* which preached against any nationalist tendencies of missionaries, while also encouraging the growth of local clergy in the mission fields (Tan, 2003). Benedict XV also reaffirmed the transnational nature of the Church by stating that: "God's Church is Catholic and is not foreign to any people or nation" (Claude, 1992 p 173).

However the control of *propaganda fide* over its missionaries was complicated by the role of individual missionary societies. Pope Pius XI (1922 – 1939), who was posthumously known as the Missionary Pope, (Sundkler and Steed, 2000) issued the papal encyclical *Rerum ecclesia* in 1926. This outlined that it was the Church and not national missionary societies that was responsible for the missions (Tan, 2003). Pius XI condemned any mission society who laid total claims over territories and he advocated that control of missionary spaces should reside entirely with the Vatican (Hastings, 2003). However, despite the Vatican deliberately instructing its missionaries to engage with the universalism of the Church, Kenny notes: "at the heart of Catholic evangelical work in Africa lay an uneasy tension between liberation and cultural imperialism" (Kenny, 2004b p 120). Indeed the first attempt by the Vatican to appoint an African bishop in 1938 met with widespread disapproval by European missionaries and ultimately failed (ibid).

The Church was broadly supportive of African independence on the condition that emerging countries avoided nationalist tendencies. Since the end of World War II the Vatican publically advocated the international growth of democracy; however, it also remained largely wary of African nationalism (Hastings, 2003). Maxwell argues that this was because the Vatican held a sceptical attitude towards aspects of African culture that were deemed un-Catholic. This position was outlined by a Christmas radio broadcast made by Pius XII in 1955 (Claude, 1993). The Church's hostility to nationalism reflects its instinct towards self-preservation and universalism. However Pius XII

although publically supporting independence also issued the encyclical letter *Fidei Donum* in 1957. In this he continued to appeal to Europe to supply missionary workers to Africa (Claude, 1992). Thus when Africa was on the cusp of achieving its political independence from Europe, the Catholic Church continued to be composed of a largely European clergy (ibid). Serapiao (1981) argues that the Church did encourage the uptake of African vocations during the era leading up to independence. Indeed between 1951 and 1958 the Catholic Church appointed 20 African Bishops (Maxwell, 2005). However, Serapiao interprets this increase in local clergy as a pre-emptive move by the Vatican to ensure the Church's survival in independent Africa.

Despite the ambiguous role of the Catholic Church in colonialism, the independence of Africa did not result in the ejection of the Church and the reasons for this ought to be explored (Maxwell, 2005). Indeed Stanley (2003) notes scant academic attention has been paid to the ability of the Church to survive amongst the nationalist sentiments of postcolonial Africa. On achieving independence almost all African nations received a letter of congratulations from the Vatican and the Church proclaimed its social teachings were expressly at odds with the ideology of colonialism (Serapiao, 1981). Hastings (2003) argues though that the Church seemed pragmatic, rather than enthusiastic, about political change. While the papacy remained constant in its objection to violence, nonetheless as an institution the Catholic Church appears to have done little to actively aid the transition from colony to independent state (ibid). It can be seen that the Vatican however did work to ensure that the members of the Church in Africa remained loyal to Rome by allowing for more local and personal freedom when worshiping within the Church (Hastings, 1996).

2.3.2 Missionary encounters

Missionaries participated in multiple encounters with local people that were infused with cultural, gendered and racial dynamics, interactions that have been studied through a postcolonial critique (Clayton, 2003). The work of Cooper and Stoler (1997) has looked at the constructions of unstable categories

of difference and the creation of both colonizer and the colonized subjectivities that were forged through many intimate imperial connections. To pursue the multiplicity and consequences of these encounters it is necessary to review some of the wider literature written about non-Catholic missionaries. Much of this literature argues to the importance of considering the connections forged by missionaries between their home country and the mission field. To study this it is necessary to: "treat metropole and colony in a single analytic field" (Cooper and Stoler, 1997 p 4). During the nineteenth-century, Protestant missionaries were "characterised by authorship as much as by daring deeds" (Johnson, 2003 p 2003). Therefore missionaries working within colonies of the Empire contributed to the circulation of representations about these places back in Britain. These circulations contributed to the British peoples understanding of the colonies and potentially contributed to a racial discourse of local people. In particular, missionaries' assertion of the climatic difference between Africa and Europe led to the growth of a discourse of tropicality (Endfield and Nash, 2007). This ensured that the continent was figuratively populated by a race that was different from white Europeans. Many authors have studied how the written descriptions of local people by missionaries provides an insight into Euro-centric creations of "white" and "colonial other" as distinct, juxtaposed identities (Allen, 2000). Missionary representations therefore helped to create the identity of the "racially-susceptible African in a hostile, disease-ridden environment, the very antithesis of our vision of ourselves" (Bell, 1993 p 328). The construction of a racial hierarchy, with the white race positioned as superior (Allen, 2000) was concurrently supported by scientific ideas about race that emerged in the nineteeth-century (Bell, 1993).

Indeed this process of colonial 'othering' was also facilitated through the practice of colonial medicine. Many authors have argued that medicine should not be exempt from postcolonial critique because of any perceived scientific and possibly objective status (Macleod, 1988, Arnold, 1988, Vaughan, 1991, Arnold, 1993). Megan Vaughan (1991, 1994) argues that to study the creation of a colonial medical discourse allows for a thorough examination of the

pervasive power of colonialism, the spread of colonial ideas as well as the limits to this power:

> "*In British colonial Africa, medicine and its associated disciplines played an important part in constructing 'the Africa' as an object of knowledge, and elaborated classification systems and practices which have to be seen as intrinsic to the operation of colonial power*" (Vaughan, 1991 p 8).

The spread of medical practices was also used by the colonial power to demonstrate Western superiority over local people (Macleod, 1988). David Arnold (1993) has argued that medicine was a very specific part of imperial expansion because it treated "the body as a site for the construction of its own authority, legitimacy, and control" (p. 8). This work argues towards the importance of studying medical encounters as an integral part of the colonising process. However much of this literature has centred on the interactions between the metropole and the colony to the detriment of studying traditional medicine. This also ignores those international healthcare movements that were not overtly connected to the imperial regime, but nonetheless worked within networks of empire (Ernst and Mukharji, 2009).

2.3.3 Gender and missionaries

Much of the work conducted on missionaries has often taken onboard a postcolonial critique on gender. Of particular interest is work that has explored how the production of knowledge about the colonies was profoundly gendered (Mills, 1994 p 29, Kenny, 2004b, Kenny, 2004a). Indeed as Doreen Massey has written:

> *"Geography in its various guises influences the cultural formation of particular genders and gender relations; gender has been deeply influential in the production of 'the geographical'"* (Massey, 1994 p 186).

Gillian Rose also writes of the essential need to consider the gendered aspects of geographical knowledge (1993). It is therefore particularly interesting to see how female accounts from the colonies were considered and how this

knowledge was understood (McEwan, 2000). This is done with an understanding that knowledge produced about colonized countries will always be infused with knowledge about the home country. Therefore factors like class and gender are always relevant (Mills, 1994). Furthermore, to introduce gender to a study of empire challenges any notions that the colonies were a homogenous masculine space (Levine, 2004). Levine argues that the adoption of a gendered perspective is absolutely essential when studying empire. She argues that the colonial project was rife with metaphors that described both space and local people in gendered terms. For example the representation of a feminised colonial subject was commonplace (ibid). McEwan (2000) also advocates the use of both postcolonialism and feminist approaches in order to understand how imperialism "constructed narratives of geography and gender" (p 3).

Alongside this literature on gender and empire, much work has been done to explore the role of missionary women. In particular the work by Elizabeth Prevost (2009) on female missionaries has demonstrated the need to explore how gender relations fitted into a wider role of empire. Grimshaw (2008) highlights that missionary work was concerned with the promotion of gendered and cultural ideas of Britain. Much of the work conducted on missionary women shows how in the nineteenth-century mission fields gender roles were constructed to reflect identities that were recognisable back home in Britain (Johnson, 2003). On the mission fields there was an emphasis on missionary wives residing in the domestic realm and the continuity of her role as wife and mother. The missionary wife was to be the idealized female who was middle-class, educated and compassionate (Grimshaw, 2004). Furthermore she would be a living demonstration of Christian ideals of "sexuality and marriage, of gender division of labour, parenthood and childrearing" (Grimshaw, 2008). This was because British, Protestant culture deemed women to be essential to the success of the missionaries due to the perceived innate civilising and reproduction qualities believed to be embodied by woman (Bell, 1993). Missionary wives were therefore an important part of the moral agenda of the missions (Twells, 2009). To the missionaries it would seem that the promotion

of 'civilisation' depended on rigidly defined gender roles which could be imparted to the local populations by the missionary wife (Johnson, 2003, Grimshaw, 2004).

Female missionaries perpetuated their image of civility through their writings (Rowbotham, 1998). Therefore the construction of the Missionary Wife, a subjectivity that was the embodiment of British middle-class ideals of femininity, was circulated in missionary representations of this time. There was a class element to this identity as well. The norms of the British middle-class were adopted by missionary projects as an important convention to convey to the colonized population. Thus clothes, food, use of servants and accent, continued to exist as markers of distinction between different women in the missionary sphere (Semple, 2008). The work of Semple (2008) has demonstrated how hierarchical demarcation within the missionary sphere was conducted with categories of race, gender and class. Scholarly attention on female missionaries has shown how they were able to use representations of themselves to "influence and moderate their external image" (Morin and Guelke, 1998 p 437). Through the use of stereotypes and genre conventions, female missionaries constructed an idealised feminine identity for consumption back home in Britain (Rowbotham, 1998). These writings by missionary women, published in British magazines, demonstrates a willingness to comply with and help maintain racial but also gendered hierarchies throughout the British empire (Allen, 2000). Such writings ensured the perpetuation of imperialist stereotypes, which positioned white women below white males but above local people (ibid). Therefore it was women on the missions who maintained these distinctions because it granted them authority in a precarious location (Semple, 2008). The racial hierarchy on the mission field created a space of superiority in relation to local people that white British women, by virtue of their race could occupy (Prevost, 2009). Prevost argues that in asserting their whiteness these missionary women were complicit in producing an identity for themselves in the mission field that was also dependent on a racial hierarchy. The "intimate connection between white woman's agency and

subaltern subjectivity" (Prevost, 2009 p 772) can be revealed in representations of missionary encounters.

Furthermore, Mills advocates a study of gender on the mission field because this reveals the complexity of these spaces and counters the perceived existence of a single, monolithic colonial space (Mills, 1994). For example when considering how the female missionaries, in interactions with local people, "deployed their femininity" (Morin and Guelke, 1998 p 458) complicates these encounters because multiple differences can be observed. Morin and Guelke (1998) conclude that the relationship between missionary women and local people is much more complex relationship than that of colonised-colonizer. Rather Morin and Berg (1999) show how it is these very interactions that produced gendered differences and gendered identities. Indeed we must consider the "productive capacity of the mission field" (Prevost, 2009 p 780) for the identity formation of the missionary women and how this contributed to their own unique experiences on the mission field. It is therefore the variation in the experiences, the influences that these spaces had on the lives and attitudes the missionary women who lived there, that must be pursued in order to understand the missionary process.

To study the construction of gendered, class and racial identities on the mission field demonstrates that such identities cannot be understood without knowledge of British society at that time (Semple, 2008). Indeed academic work on missionary women, that has examined their letters home and magazine articles demonstrates that the missionary movement was not one directional. Johnson has written of the "importance of [the] colonial experience in the self-fashioning of British individuals and culture" (Johnson, 2003 p 4). Indeed to study gender relations on the mission field reveals the complex yet reliant: "inter-relationship between the metropole and the colony" (Allen, 2000 p 92). The work of Twells (2009) examines how the missionary movement overseas was also related to missionary action at home. In particular she looks at places in Britain such as the Sunday School that acted as "missionary sites" (Twells, 2009 p 7), that were formed in relation to the work on the colonies.

Twells work looks at both Britain and the colonies in the "same analytic frame" (2009 p 7). This allows her to situate "domestic and overseas philanthropy as part of the same movement for national and global change" (ibid). These studies of missionaries show how the mission fields and the home were actually in constant interaction with each other (Grimshaw, 2004). These connections allow for a consideration of the complexities of empire and avoids considering it as a monolithic space.

2.4 Ireland and Empire

This thesis is interested in considering the Catholic missionaries of Ireland as a specific but important aspect of Irish identity during the period following on from independence. Kenny asserts that the Irish missionary movement "assumed considerable prominence in Ireland's self-definition as a postcolonial society from 1920s onwards" (2004b p 112) exactly because it married together Irishness and Catholicism in an obvious, dramatic and practical way. Yet the destination of the postcolonial Irish missionaries was often located within the British Empire.

To consider Irish missionaries operating in these colonial spaces furthers the long standing debate of Ireland's position in empire and whether it can be considered as a colony and subsequently as a postcolonial space (Howe, 2000, Lloyd, 2005, Kinealy, 2006). This debate can be further explored by considering the role that Irish people had in Empire. Crosbie (2009) argues that the role of the Irish in expanding empire during the nineteenth-century has been neglected because of a nationalist dominance of Irish historians. Kenny argues that throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth-century the Irish were "both subjects and agents of imperialism" (Kenny, 2004b p 93). This implies that Ireland was a unique space in Empire as it held "an important middle place in terms of metropole and empire" (Kinealy, 2006 p 97). Both Kenny and Kinealy state that the complexities of Ireland's colonial past serves a wider point, because to study this is to challenge any simple definitions of the terms metropole and colony within the whole postcolonial project. To argue strongly either way for Ireland's imperial status is to accept that there is a singular

colonial form for which Ireland can be compared to (Kenny, 2004a). Rather Kenny recommends an acceptance of Ireland's colonial status as somewhat ambiguous and considers: "Ireland [as] an imperial possession of a particular sort" (ibid p 4).

To truly explore Ireland's role in Empire it is necessary to review work that moves beyond treating empire as composed of homogenous space. In considering Ireland's status, Lloyd (2005) has written of that: "There are no identical colonial situations" (p 348), but rather we should look for the "multiple and different social imaginaries at work in colonized cultures" (Lloyd, 2005 p 348) Likewise Crosbie (2009), when considering Ireland's place in empire, also avoids the employment of simple terms such as coloniser-colonised but rather advocates an approach to Ireland's position in Empire that reflects the work conducted in new imperial history. This means a shift from focusing on colonial elites but rather attention ought to be paid to "reciprocal encounters between empire and culture" (Crosbie, 2009 p 995). Hall and Rose (2006) also reveal the complexities of empire and the heterogeneity of colonial space. They argue that to truly study these spaces one must explore "the importance of connections across empires, the webs and networks operated between colonisers" (Hall and Rose, 2006p 6). They advocate the multiple ways that the colonies were brought back to the home and visa versa (ibid). The concepts of networks has often been used in geography to understand the processes of colonisation (Lester, 2006). Networks have emerged as a potentially useful tool in this thesis for it allows consideration to the circulation of "meanings, projects, material practices, performances and experiences" (ibid p 131) and the consequences of these circulations in place-making and connectivity of place. Indeed Lester advocates "imperial interconnectedness" (2006 p 133), to avoid the privileging of one space other another.

In searching for these connections, the work of Cooper and Stoler suggests any study that focuses uniquely on the nation-state's interaction with the colonies will perhaps miss those "circuits of knowledge" (Cooper and Stoler, 1997 p 28) that do not pass through the metropole. It is, therefore, advisable to treat

the nation as part of an imperial network rather than as an isolated and definitive space (Burton, 2006). Indeed the concept of the nation has undergone a deconstruction, revealing it to be a "sovereign ontological subject" (Burton, 2006 p 5). The work of Stoler (2001) has approached the colonial nation as a space that only comes into existence in relation to other spaces and specifically within networks of empire (ibid). Such reassessment of empire challenges the notion that imperialism is a "force with directional vectors" (Burton, 2006 p 5), emanating from the central metropole reaching outward towards a colonial periphery.

Instead empire can be approached as a "spatialized terrain of power" (Burton, 2006). This work, which has studied the processes of decolonisation, has therefore led to a reassessment of the "connection between the metropole and colony" (ibid p 2). This also has consequences for colonial identity formation (ibid). By approaching the nation as a concept created to sustain identities and relational locations of 'home' and 'away' we expose traditional historical approaches used to understand the imperial past (ibid). Thus the challenge is set to approach the history of imperialism without becoming dependent upon or confined by, the nation as a definite unit of space. This has potentially useful consequences for considering the role of Irish missionaries in empire because it allows for an exploration of the connections and the consequences in this transnational movement. Stoler's (2001) work outlines the possibilities for "broader comparisons" (p 837) between imperial spaces and subjects in order to reveal the prevailing discourses that are implicit in their construction. By freeing our studies from the geographical limitations of the nation, Stoler asks for comparison across both varying space and varying time. Although this focus on "multidimensional movement rather than with one-dimensional clarity" (Stoler and McGranaham, 2007) can complicate an historical study, it also serves to enrich the texture of the work. Therefore, Stoler and McGranaham advocate attention to be paid to those "untidy connections" (p 4), which when explored can reveal the intimate details of empire formations.

When studying the Irish missionaries, attention should, therefore, be paid to circuits of people, knowledge or products, for it is these circuits that cross the formal boundaries of empire that create colonial identities and spaces (Stoler, 2001). This approach requires attention to be paid at an intimate scale for the creation of distinct categories of race or gender to be revealed (ibid). Stoler therefore discourages the search for a metanarrative but instead prioritises, through comparison, the study of the intimate practices through which empires could operate. The essence of this theoretical approach is therefore to reveal imperial discourses through their subscription to "universalist principles and particularistic practices" (ibid p 846). Lester (2006) writes: "places are not so much bounded entities, but rather specific juxtapositions of multiple trajectories" (Lester, 2006 P 135). The fluidity of place is something that might be fruitful to pursue when seeking a fuller understanding of the role of Irish people in imperialism, for it enables a critique of empire and exposes the unequal power relations, including the role of missionaries, throughout these spaces.

2.5 Gender in postcolonial Ireland

Insights from Protestant missionaries of the nineteenth-century can be of use when studying Catholic missionaries of the twentieth-century because there are many similarities to draw upon, including; variations in gendered interactions, the productive capacity of the mission field and the interaction between 'home' and the colonies. This thesis will explore the variations of Irish, female identity on the mission field and their subsequent encounters with local people. To achieve this it is necessary to review the gendered aspects of Irish identity during this period.

Catherine Nash has explored the relationship between identity and place in postcolonial Ireland with particular attention paid to gender (Nash, 1994a). Nash has shown how Irish landscape art in the nineteenth-century fused together nationalism with a particular gendered identity (Nash, 1994b). Nash examined how both colonial and nationalist feminized representations of Ireland related to the construction of gendered identities in the postcolonial

state (Nash, 1997 p 108). Feminized and passive colonial representations of the nation were subsequently transposed onto the bodies of women during independence (Nash, 1994b). Nash argues that this gendering of identity was socially important in Ireland (Nash, 1996, Nash, 1997). Other authors have explored similar gendered themes. Martin (2003) has looked at how artistic depictions of life and landscape on the west coast of Ireland assigned women to recognisable gender roles. In these representations women were idealised in the role of mother which held them up as essential to the perpetuation of post-independent Irish society (Martin, 2003). Kearns (2004) has explored gender and Irish identity by looking at how Irish nationalists used representations of mythical Gaelic women as symbols of femininity. These representations of women relied on narratives of an idealised Irish past that equated femininity with nature. Kearns argues that the use of gendered symbols resulted in the veneration of women as mythical representations and served to deny them of their voice as citizens in the emerging state.

Upon the foundation of the Irish Free State there was a shift of focus from a mythical Celtic past to identity informed by Catholic morality and can be evidenced in the 1937 Constitution (Collins and Hanagin, 2001). The Consitution has been described as an attempt to assert and construct an identifiable Irishness in the years following on from Independence (Crawley and Kitchin, 2008). Of particular poignancy is how the Constitution married together traditional Irish gender roles with a Catholic discourse of idealised femininity (Bhreathnach-Lynch, 2000). The Constitution served to give political significance to the mythical and Catholic constructions of women that had previous been denied official standing (Collins and Hanagin, 2001). Thus the Constitution elevated women's role as mother and subsequently made the family home the centre of Irish life (Crawley and Kitchin, 2008). Through the Constitution motherhood came to symbolize hope and future for the new Irish nation (Grey and Ryan, 1998). In this construction of mother as a female identity the Constitution heavily relied on the sexual behaviour espoused by the Church (Kilfeather, 2005, Crawley and Kitchin, 2008). The Constitution, therefore, ensured that Catholic teachings, for example the prohibition of

divorce and contraception, were protected by law (ibid). This era also saw the rise of institutions that regulated female sexual behaviour such as the Magdalene laundries (Crawley and Kitchin, 2008).

The Constitution, by emphasising the role of mother, has been interpreted as an attempt to ensure that women remained in the domestic sphere and were thus invisible in the political and social arenas of Irish society (Valiulis, 1995, Grey and Ryan, 1998). Valiulis argue that this was an attempt by the Church to establish a Catholic gendered identity that had been destabilised during the years that Ireland sought independence. However, it is also worth considering that perhaps the Church provided liberation for some women. The 1941 Irish census shows that one in every 400 women was entering a convent (MacCurtain, 1997). Many have argued that in postcolonial Ireland, religious life was a notable exception to married life because sisters had a visibility that was denied their secular counterparts (Luddy, 1992, McKenna, 2006a, McKenna, 2006b). For as Magray (1998) writes, to be a nun was to consciously choose not to marry and, therefore, a potentially liberating choice that was still within the Church.

Both the Constitution and the use of idealised landscape in constructing Irish identity were concerned with the reproducion of 'Irishness' within the island of Ireland. There is an insularity here, with the Constitution focusing on the scale of the domestic home as a site for Irish identity to be condensed upon. It is important though to consider how this space interacted with other scales, in ways that complicated and potentially challenged this gendered Irish identity.

2.6 Conclusion

Geography has productively theorized the power of religion in constructing spaces and landscapes. By considering work from other disciplines, this literature review has demonstrated how the Church relied upon geographical perspectives to fulfil its ambition to span the entire globe. Therefore to explore the women who composed the Irish missionary movement is to situate them within an international Catholic network that was directed by the Vatican. This

implies that the work of these sisters can be situated within a long history of missionary expansion of the Church and requires an understanding of the Church's views on universality, its political engagements and its representations of its territorial expansion. How the Catholic Church operates as an institution warrants further study from geographers.

To approach the Church as an institution it is also vital to understand how it operates at a more intimate scale and the multiple encounters between missionaries and local people. Reviewing the literature about Protestant missionaries in empire has shown the complexities of colonial interactions and how these interactions are filtered through racial, medical and gendered discourses. The interactions and representations by missionaries demonstrate the circulations and connections forged by the missionary movement across vast physical distances. Crucially this is not a one-directional movement, nor is it confined to a simple metropole–colony interaction. With this understanding of empire this thesis will also explore how Irish missionaries traversed across colonial spaces as potential agents of colonialism. To study this further complicates Ireland precarious and ambiguous status as colony.

Finally this literature review has also revealed the importance of the mission field in the fashioning of identities for consumption back at home. This is particularly relevant when studying Ireland's missionary movement because of the many debates surrounding the construction of an Irish and specifically female identity in its post-independence era. The mission fields are thus understood as providing a relational space for an Irish-Catholic, but also gendered identity, to be performed.

3 Methodology

This methodology concerns the problematic but also rewarding process of researching Catholicism. My research period spanned March 2009 and October 2010 and involved archival and oral history work in Ireland as well as archival and ethnographic research in Tanzania. Since completion of my research I am now able to reflect on some of the key methodological themes of this thesis. Firstly the variety of public and private archives that I visited has prompted me to consider the importance of archival space in the creation of geographical and historical knowledge. This is not to imply a preference for archival work but rather that the imaginary connections that one can form with the past vary according to the archive.

My second key theme explores the rewarding but precarious relationship between researcher and the gatekeepers of archives. My research was greatly enriched by contact with the subjects of my research, yet I acknowledge that this can raise questions regarding the objectivity of findings. The forging of these contacts and the use of my personal biography in facilitating these relationships cannot be ignored for these interactions are laden with exchanges of power. However I believe this does not invalidate this work but rather has resulted in a complex set of findings.

Thirdly, during my research period two important and emotive reports, the Ryan Report (2009) and the Murphy Report (2009), were published by the Ministry of Justice and Equality. Even though the findings of these reports did not implicate the congregations I was studying, I encountered the repercussions of these scandals on many occasions. Indeed I noted a reflective culture in Ireland that was willing to regard difficult aspects of its own Catholic past. Consequently I saw many attempts to reassess Ireland's recent religious and social history.

Finally the experience of doing both ethnographic and archival work in Tanzania enhanced the writing of this thesis. The importance of understanding people and place is central to this work and this research trip was a vital in contributing to my understandings of the intimacies of Catholicism.

3.1 Researching in Ireland

Archives have been essential in researching this thesis. Geographers have frequently interrogated archives as sites of power, for example Charles Withers (2002) writes:

> *"Issues of place, of power, of political classificatory authority are thus central to an understanding of what an archive is as both topographical site and nomological space" (p 304).*

The power of the archive is partly derived from its ability to order and classify and this space is considered capable of producing knowledge about the history of places. My initial archival research occurred in the National Library of Ireland. It was in the Reading Room there where I first read the magazines produced by the four orders. These congregations would form the central core of my research interests. The participation of Irish nuns in missionary work was not confined to these four orders yet it was these orders that published their work in a manner that is most accessible today. Although some of these magazines only ceased publication very recently, nonetheless I decided to end my research period in 1961. This would allow an exploration of the processes of independence in Africa before the repercussions stemming from the Second Vatican Council (1962 – 1965) would take effect.

When in Dublin I also conducted research at the Irish Architectural Archive in order to study the plans of the International Missionary Training Hospital, a medical centre that was commissioned and operated by the MMM sisters. Each hospital plan was branded with the architect's name, Mr. D. Martin. Further research confirmed that he was indeed the brother of Mother Mary Martin, the foundress of the MMM sisters. To pursue these connections between people

and places maintained the momentum of my research, for constantly there has been the invitation to get closer to the material.

To pursue the historical geography of the missionary orders in Ireland it was necessary to conduct work in some of the diocesan archives of Ireland. This was led by a desire to ground these congregations in the ecclesiastical historical-geography of Ireland. I sent letters and emails to the dioceses that hosted the congregations and I received positive replies from Dublin and Killaloe archive. The central role of Dublin in the economic, cultural and religious history of Ireland deemed a visit to the archive of the Archdiocese of Dublin absolutely essential. This archive is housed in the Archbishop's Palace in Drumcondra, Dublin. It is a large, grey-stoned and imposing building. The palace also functions as a religious college and continues to be recognisable feature of the once working-class suburb of Dublin. Indeed casual observations on my daily walk to the archive easily revealed the once ubiquitous presence of Catholic institutions in this area. Ex-convents complete with their crosses and stain-glass windows are now converted into flats while grand neo-classical churches continue to be found nestled amongst terraced housing. The complex relationship between the physical spaces of the archive and power has been pursued by Ruth Craggs (2008) who explores the archive as a place where imaginative geographies are constructed. Craggs work takes the geography of this archival and the practices that occur there to consider the consequences of this space on producing knowledges. This echoes the work of Withers who advocates that: "thinking about the archive as itself geographical may be rewarding" (Withers, 2002 p 305). It is, therefore, important to consider how, as researchers, we engage with both the space of the archive and the material that can be found there.

In conversations with the diocesan archivist I learnt that she recently completed her MA in archival studies. In her capacity as archivist she has overseen the transfer of the archive from its home in the basement of the college to a prominent position on the first floor of the house. I sensed that this

move was part of a gradual opening-up of the history of the diocese to the scrutiny of secular people. Indeed I could not help but notice that the archive itself was located on the same corridor as Diocesan Child Protection Services. In conversations with staff it was clear that the repercussions of the Murphy Report were still reverberating in their work place. This report had been published in November 2009. Although I had conducted work there that summer I returned to the archive in January 2010. During that visit I was told that after the report's publication the press had descended on the Bishop's house. There was a palpable sense that the report had angered the mostly female staff who now work in the administration of the diocese. Yet there was also a willingness to ensure this past would not repeated. The archivist also oversaw the re-organisation of the archive and I suspect that the files I consulted had only recently been re-categorised for ease of referencing. I also predict that much more research will be conducted there in the future, for the reports hint at a dark, under-explored history of the Church, to which the archive may reveal more. Indeed much of the public outrage in Ireland was not just about the abuse but the subsequent cover-up by the Church and, therefore, accessible religious archives serve a potential remedy to this anger.

The materials I consulted were mainly correspondence between the religious orders and John Charles McQuaid, who was Archbishop of Dublin between 1940 and 1972. To see the handwriting, the ink and the stylised letterheads sent by the sisters was my first 'personal' encounter with the nuns. The materiality of the letters, which often had the meticulous notes of Archbishop McQuaid written in the margins, brought an intimacy to this process of historical research. Extensively reading this material in chronological order allowed multiple personalities to emerge from the archive. Furthermore these letters often referred to places in Dublin that I was familiar with. This fed my 'imaginative' reconstruction of the landscape of Catholic Dublin in the 1950s. Indeed during this research I first became conscious of the once prominent, but now faded, presence of the missionary societies in the city.

In January 2010 I travelled to Ennis, County Clare to visit the archive of the Killaloe Diocese. I wanted to visit there because the initial motherhouse of the Columban Sisters was in Cahiracon, a town-land in this diocese. This archive was also located in the Bishop's house. The archivist was a retired schoolteacher who had also recently completed a MA in archivist studies. The archivist worked on a voluntary basis and during his tenure had re-catalogued the material. This included the papers of the previous bishops and items of national significance, such as correspondence from Michael Collins. The recent cataloguing of the archive was necessary because the archivist had personally discovered forgotten papers stored behind a disused dresser in the basement of the bishop's house. These papers include the ones I was there to consult. It was exciting to be working with material so rarely, if ever, used by external researchers. Lorimer (2010) explores how the space of the archive can influence the work of the researcher. This feeling is perhaps heightened when the archive is at the location of the 'history' being pursued. Lorimer notes how the contents of these private and selective archives will inevitably be approached in different ways than that employed in conventional archives:

> "*Though the source material for much historical research remains squarely located in the great national archives of the world, a vein of inquiry finds its home in family archives, lodged in out-of-the-way places and according to private conditions of storage and unexpected forms of cataloguing or display. The work of locating previously unheralded or informal archives is, in itself, a task worthy of note. To be granted permission to consult personal papers, handle precious keepsakes, heirlooms and forget-me-knots, or leaf through family photograph albums is to come to appreciate the emotional charge, vulnerability and tactility of the archive, and the significance of reliquaries*" (Lorimer, 2010 p 264).

Lorimer writes that the experience of doing archival work is perhaps more palpable when done in little known archives. This feeling was repeated when I worked in the MMM archive, as will be discussed in more detail below. Lorimer's work is an acknowledgment of the subjectivity of archival work and

the centrality of the researcher, perhaps influenced by the actual space and location of the archive, contributes to the knowledge produced. I was glad to see that under the current archivist the Killaloe archive is now fully catalogued and housed in a temperature and humidity controlled converted-stable block in the yard of the house, thus ensuring its preservation for future study.

During my days there I worked in the dining room of the Bishop's house. I was invited to have my tea breaks with the small staff that worked there. Indeed on one of these breaks the Bishop joined us. All the staff expressed surprise at my research but seemed to share a genuine interest and perhaps were even flattered that someone had travelled from England to explore this history. I remember quite clearly the Bishop telling me he was soon leaving the post, which prompted a remark from one of the staff that he was of compulsory retirement age and jested that the Bishop should clarify this when talking to strangers in light of the recent spate of resignations of some Bishops because their role in the scandals. Albeit in a light-hearted way, the Bishop's staff wanted to ensure that I saw a distinction between him and the scandals in the Church.

While in Ennis I was fortunate to tap into the local knowledge of the archivist who was familiar with original convent occupied by the Columban sisters. He informed me that it was once a Big House, owned by a landowning family. Out of mutual curiosity we drove together to visit the house. Its exact location was made quite apparent by the presence of the now dilapidated pillars on the roadside. The house itself was located at the end of a long drive. Its abandoned, neglected status was obvious from the weeds that grew from its chimney. I understood from the archivist that the house is currently owned by a quarry company and there are plans to mine the surrounding landscape. The many histories of this place, from grand landowner's house, to missionary convent, to secondary school were all apparent at this site. I took a photograph of the house (figure 3.1) and later sent it to one of the Sisters of St. Columban who could remember when it was still used by the congregation. Although I intended this as a kind gesture and indeed it was appreciated as such, the sister expressed her sadness at the neglected state of the house. I realised then the

close intimacies between these spaces, the histories of the orders and the people involved. To visit this site was to bear witness to the multiple stories and overlapping layers of this historical project.

Figure 3.1 - Cahiracon House

Source: Taken by author, January 2010

It became apparent to me that to rely solely on correspondence sent between the sisters and the bishops would serve to reproduce a relationship that was highly gendered, uneven and unrepresentative of the many other facets of the sister's lives. I attempted to challenge this through actual encounters with the MMM and SSC sisters and by conducting extensive research in the archive of the MMM sisters. Archival work relies on the individual researcher because: "knowledge gained in the archive often stems from a unique document… depends more upon interpretation, implication and trust" (Withers, 2002 p 305). Steedman affectionately writes that the archives are simply places filled with stuff:

> *"And nothing happens to this stuff, in the archive. It is indexed, and catalogued, and some of it is not indexed and catalogued, and some of it is lost. But as stuff, it just sits there until it is read, and used, and narrativised"* (Steedman, 2001 p 68).

Steedman argues that the presence and work of the researcher in these spaces elevates it in importance and many who conduct archival work experience a thrill in this process. Steedman takes seriously the role of the scholar in interpreting the archive and how the act of going to the archives implies that it is possible to reconstruct the past. Steedman thus concludes that the archive is:

> *"To do with longing and appropriation. It is to do with wanting things that are put together, collected, collated, and in lists... a place where a whole word, a social order, may be imagined"* (Steedman, 2001 p 81).

Through the material offered by the archive the scholar believes that the past can be 'visited,' even though to actually reconstruct the past is impossible and this must be acknowledged. One impediment to 'visiting the past' is that the archive is always full of absences and it can never be a complete record of material (Steedman, 2001). Nonetheless I wanted to gain closer proximity to this history, but I knowledge this may be for personal reasons and I must consider my own role in this process.

Although born and raised in England I have strong family ties to Ireland. My childhood holidays were always spent visiting relations in County Cavan where both sides of my large extended family continue to live. The practice, perhaps more then the belief in Catholicism, has been an integral part of my identity. When in Britain mass was a regular part of my childhood and I spent many happy years attending Catholic school. I was brought up within a large community of Catholics, many of whom shared a similar Irish background. To a certain extent I understand the claims of religion on identity. The bond I have with my Irish-Catholic background feels all the stronger during my regular visits 'home'. All of my extended family live in the same parish and attending

mass at local Church was a significant part of my childhood summer and Christmas. Indeed as I have grown the same chapel shares a different relevance as I have attended funerals, weddings and baptisms of family members and through this I have experienced the comforts of Catholic ritual.

My family history has a deeper relationship with the Church then the habitual mass going that is common in rural Ireland. On my paternal grandmothers side were many priests but of particular relevance is the life of my grandmother's sister, Kate Comey, later Sister Virginia, who herself was an Irish missionary sister. I never met Sr. Virginia, as she spent the majority of her life as a midwife in India and upon her death in 2009 was buried in Bangalore. Despite her physical absence from my family she was often reflected upon, both at home in England and in Ireland. The most notable example of which is that I was named after her. As far as I am aware this did not represent my parent's ambition for me to join the convent but rather out of respect to our family lineage. I also clearly remember receiving the occasional letter from her that was read out at the dinner table.

I do not offer these personal reflections to be self-indulgent but rather to demonstrate my own unique relationship with the material I discovered and the people I met. I intimately know the stronghold of childhood memories and the longevity of these attachments. Perhaps in some ways these attachments explain the success of the Church in infiltrating culture and family life. I am concerned about the power of nostalgia, which I think resonates particularly strongly due to my English distance from the Irish 'home' and I acknowledge that the English aspect of my identity ensures a different relationship to Ireland than perhaps that shared by those who remain there. I therefore pay heed to Ferriter's (2004) warning of the potential for Irish history to be genteel and idealised. But Ferriter also argued, as mentioned in the introduction, against a reactionary critique in Irish historiography. I can also understand how this could happen. I clearly recall sitting down in my office in Nottingham, a day or two before I embarked on a research trip to Ireland to read the recently published Ryan Report. It is quite simply horrific reading. I was already aware

of the Magdelene laundries but I was still unprepared for the level or frequency of abuse detailed in the report. I read the report before I had any contact with nuns and I was particularly interested in the testimonies of those sisters whose actions were under investigation. I was relieved that the orders I had already earmarked to study, those whose magazines that I had read in the National Library, were not implicated in the report. Nonetheless when I would initially talk to my Irish friends about my research, a common reaction would be to ask if I was specifically studying the abuse. It would seem that many in society had taken the sisters abuse as the most disturbing aspect of the report because its was perpetrated by women. In response, I would outline my project and inform people of the distinction between orders. However, I did not want to simplify this as a dualism between 'good' and 'bad' congregations, but to highlight the complexity of the Church and the dangers of over-generalising.

It was in August 2009, shortly after reading the Ryan Report, that I encountered nuns for the first time. I had been working in Dublin and took a weeklong holiday to see some of my family in Cavan. Due to the proximity from there to the MMM motherhouse in Drogheda I decided to call over unannounced. The motherhouse is a grand building on the outskirts of the town and adjacent to the hospital whose plans I had studied in the Irish Architectural Archive. On ringing the doorbell I was greeted by a housekeeper and taken to the parlour where I was introduced to the superior of the convent. During this initial meeting I outlined my research project because I quite quickly wished to quell any suspicion that the intention of my project was to investigate abuse. But also, particularly considering my gender, I did not want to give the impression that I wished to join the congregation. Tea and scones were provided and I had a lengthy discussion with the convent superior. I received a warm and gracious welcome in the convent accompanied by a sense of interest in my research project.

In hindsight I think there was a politics of recognition at play that was repeated during subsequent encounters. By this I mean there was an exchange of ideas and negotiations over power and issues of trust. During the initial meeting I

peppered my introduction with some anecdotes from my own biography and to a certain extent I relied on family history to make a favourable impression. There is of course comfort to be found in similarities and through these conversations my Irishness was made apparent and could put others at ease. But I also presented a specifically rural, Catholic identity as well. In these interactions my Irish surname was often commented upon as a testament to my Irish roots and sometimes it was referred to as a common Cavan name. I found my knowledge of rural Ireland to be highly beneficial. Many of the sisters I interviewed were from rural backgrounds and continued to follow county-level Gaelic football, my working knowledge of the sport was sometimes used to begin a conversation. These connections were made despite my pronounced English accent. In some ways perhaps the mixture of these two cultures was beneficial, for intricacies of Irish life were explained to me in greater detail. There was clearly a deliberate aspect to how I presented myself to the sister, however I am also interested in the aspects of this encounter that provoked feelings of trust that I was not conscious of. This could have been in the manner of greeting, conversational style or turn of phrase. I admit that I am not fully aware of the extent to which my identity is apparent to those around me. What I am clearer on though is the feelings of trust that result from shared similarities and the opportunities this presented for research that was enjoyable. I do question, but cannot answer, what access would have been granted to a researcher from a completely different ethnicity, religion, gender or age.

After my initial meeting I was then taken on a tour of the motherhouse. As a space it surprised me. At its centre is an old, nineteenth-century building but the majority of the motherhouse was constructed in the 1960s and its architecture reflected this era. There was one particularly long corridor that connected the motherhouse to the hospital. On this route I was shown the old shower and locker rooms that were used by the sisters when returning from the convent after a hospital shift. Through glass walls I could glimpse concrete courtyards with dried-up fountains. During my first visit, I noticed that occasionally the once advanced intercom system would sound out throughout

the house, requesting the presence of a sister. I must admit I was a little saddened by the faded modernity of the sister's home and how closely this resonated with ageing population of the congregation. I had a sense that it was a version of Irishness that would not last much longer. On reflection this is sad for me because I see the passing of a generational version of Irishness that I had been exposed to through my family. I acknowledge that many people would adopt a cynical response to this reaction and would perhaps celebrate the passing of Catholic institutions in Ireland or indeed argue that they never should have existed or should long ago have been replaced by a secular equivalent. I therefore acknowledge that these feelings of sadness may not be reciprocated in other researchers. Regardless of my thoughts on this I was lucky to have had a tour of the motherhouse for a few weeks later much of this was demolished to make way for a brand-new nursing home

During this first visit to the motherhouse I was introduced to Sr. Catherine Dwyer who had recently been appointed as archivist of the order. During that summer she was in the process of completing her MA in archival studies. It was perhaps on my third visit to the convent that I first conducted archival research. At the time of conducting my research the MMM archive was the only congregational archive available to work in. Therefore any conclusion drawn from this material is not intended to be generalised upon all the missionary congregations but rather it is hoped to reveal the particularities of this one order. The MMM archive is housed within their Drogheda Motherhouse. It is located on the top floor of the guest block of the convent. At one stage this building was conceived to be a flat for secular visitors and from its windows is an unrivalled view of the hills that surround Drogheda, its North suburbs and the hospital itself. When working there one is surrounded by domestic familiarity such as sinks and wardrobes and it is quite separate from the daily life of the convent.

The archival materials have their own temperature-controlled room and are in good condition. When I praised the highly ordered archive, Sr. Catherine told me that in the past sisters in the novitiate were assigned the task of managing

the archive and would be kept busy by typing up correspondence and filing material. The archive itself is arranged according to the specific MMM mission territories so that correspondence is organised geographically. There was a palpable sense that this material, sent from the various mission stations, was vital to the operations of this transnational order. MacCurtain argues that studying the role of nuns in twentieth-century Ireland is an important part of both the religious and gender history of Ireland. In pursuing this she advocates the religious archive:

> *"We need to hear the voices of women religious, the self which is no longer chronicler but the subject of the testimony. The journals of nuns exist and the voices of religious women released into familiar speech with their families and friends need to be heard. There are letters in family collections that nuns have written which are records of private feelings and thoughts" (MacCurtain, 1995 p 59).*

I was granted access to correspondence, reports, maps and photographs, all produced by the sisters themselves. During my several weeks of work in the archive a daily routine was established. I would travel from Dublin, conduct work in the archive in the morning then join Sr. Catherine and the rest of the congregation for mass at 11:45. This would be followed by lunch with the sisters. Although I now rarely attend mass, except for perhaps at Christmas and Easter, I was happy to share in this ritual, as it is still not a particularly unusual experience for me. My presence did attract much friendly curiosity amongst the sisters and these lunch times were a good opportunity to hear stories from the nuns. I got the impression that these are stories that they do not often share amongst each other and that my presence facilitated enjoyable reminisces between sisters. My daily interactions with the people who are gatekeepers of the archive ensured that this was quite a different experience from archival work conducted in the national library.

To have made myself known to the community was vital in conducting oral history interviews with the sisters. On my behalf Sr. Catherine recruited sisters who had been at various mission fields and were happy to talk about their

experiences. In total I interviewed 16 sisters in October 2009. I made a voice recording and transcript of each interview and made a copy for the MMM archive. During the interview process I was struck by the thought that these are voices not often heard. The interviewees were all elderly and many expressed their pleasure that someone was researching their missionary order, particularly in light of the Ryan Report. There is of course a gendered interaction as well. I was about the same age as many of the nuns were when they entered the convent and many of the sisters would remark on this similarity.

From visiting the motherhouse and conducting these interviews, it became overwhelmingly clear to me that the history of the congregation and the biographies of the individual nuns were intimately connected to this space. For many it was the first place they lived after leaving home and it is here where many will die. Indeed the graveyard for deceased MMM sisters is located within view of the motherhouse. I reached a similar conclusion on the occasions that I visited the motherhouse of the Columban Sisters in Magheramore. Set in the Wicklow Mountains this once grand house has been the congregational centre since the 1950s. It has an infirmary attached to it and part of it now serves as a nursing home for many of the sisters. Evident in both of these places is that while they are both institutions they are also homes. I experienced my time there as guest yet unlike most guests I had invited myself into this space and thus was grateful to be treated with the courtesy that I was. In some ways this generous reception mirrors the embrace of the Church, in welcoming members and providing a sense of membership. Spending time in these spaces allowed me to take in some of the aspects that make these places important to those that live there. From these encounters I acquired a feeling of change, loss and the inevitability of ageing. These experiences supplemented my archival research and have permeated into my writings, perhaps in ways unbeknownst even to myself.

3.2 Researching in Tanzania

I was always conscious of the transnational nature of the missionary project and therefore I did not want my research to be restricted solely to Ireland. Rather I wanted to grapple with the multiple spaces that the missionaries were engaged in and in particular colonial territories. Due to the many contacts and cordial relations that I had established with MMM in Ireland I soon decided it would be most suitable to visit MMM missionary spaces. The order has projects in many Africa countries but Tanzania emerged as the most suitable country to conduct research. This was because the sisters have had a continued presence there since 1947 and throughout this time the order has been responsible for maintaining hospitals and clinics in many parts of the country. Furthermore, from conversations with the MMM sisters in Drogheda, Tanzania emerged as safest place for a lone woman to travel to.

If my research in Ireland prompted feelings of nostalgia, then travelling to Tanzania was all about new experiences and indeed this was the intention of embarking on the trip. I wanted, in some way, to recreate the missionary experience of my research subjects and to be immersed in a culture completely different from my own. Like those missionaries who went before me, I embarked on this trip after researching the country but also with an open mind about what to expect. I particularly wished to explore the MMM congregation as an active missionary organisation, to experience the contrast from their retirement home in Ireland. Therefore, I wanted to conduct an exercise in ethnographic research. It is true that these representations derived from ethnography are highly personalized accounts of one white woman's experiences in Tanzania. Indeed as Katz (1992) notes, it is impossible for the ethnographer to entirely remove themselves from their own work. Thus in a similar manner to my experiences in Ireland my personal biography has inevitability infiltrated this research (Cook and Crang, 1995). To attempt to combat the dominance of researcher's representations Katz advocates a "conscious awareness of the situatedness of our knowledge" (1992 p 498) that must permeate throughout the work.

I arrived in Dar-es-Salaam on 3rd September 2010 and spent my first days there as a guest of an MMM sister who lectures in psychology at Muhimbili University Hospital. During my week in the city I was able to visit the National Archives of Tanzania on five occasions. For the majority of the time I spent in the archive I was the sole researcher and could easily consult with the archivists in finding material. I adopted a postcolonial critique of this archive and understood it as crucial to sustaining the auspices of colonisation (Duncan, 1999). To quote Ann Stoler (2002) colonial archives are "intricate technologies of rule in themselves" (p 87). This awareness of power of archive encouraged me to think of it not as a passive space of storage but rather as a component of power and control. When working in colonial archives the relationship between the researcher and the material can become politically precarious. Duncan has argued that postcolonial engagement with archives can result in "continuity with colonist practices of power/knowledge" (Duncan, 1999 p 119) because the written archive continues to ignore those unable to contribute textual material (ibid). Therefore the colonial archive, due to the nature of the material it contains, will forever only reflect the dominant voices (Bastian, 2006). To rely on the colonial archive and to not employ other methods to study local people may mean one acquires material that does not complicate but rather conforms to expectations. I therefore must acknowledge that what was learnt from this archive can never be a comprehensive account of the past and rather we must take note of whose voices are forever absent (ibid). The files that I consulted were from the British rule in Tanganyika. Within this time frame the majority of papers that I consulted were dated from the 1930s and 1940s, a period of much missionary activity. I wanted to ascertain the medical provisions implemented in the territory during this time and the role of Catholic, and specifically MMM missionaries within this. I noted that the period I was researching was composed of documents produced entirely by the British and they were categorised according to specific government departments. The presence of local people was notably missing from these papers.

After a week in Dar-es-Salaam I travelled to Singida, a small town in the centre of the country. I was very fortunate to be able to make this ten-hour coach journey with an American born MMM sister-doctor. My travelling companion works in an MMM clinic for HIV/AIDS. Like all active MMM sisters she spends two years on the mission before having a few months break back in Ireland. It is a very rare occasion that she leaves Singida during this working period, but fortunately during my time in Dar-es-Salaam she was also in the city to attend a conference of Catholic medical missionaries. This coincidence meant we were able to travel to Singida together. I was grateful for this because the journey, although punctuated with beautiful scenery, was long and unfamiliar. I must admit this gratitude to acquiring a knowledgeable guide reveals a very different dynamic between the sisters and myself than what I had been used to in Ireland. I am completely unfamiliar with life in a developing country, this was my first trip to Africa and I speak not a word of Swahili. Thus the sense of familiarity that my research prompted in Ireland was replaced with a sense of dependence in Tanzania. I found the sister very easy to converse with and learnt much about her life and experiences on this journey. In a similar manner to my experiences in Ireland I relied on my biography and similarities to talk about things. This meant that we shared a conversation rather then an 'interview.'

Upon arrival in Singida I was taken to the house that the sister shares with two other MMMs, one was Irish and the other was from Nigeria. This house was large, modern and beautifully situated on the banks of a lake. I was struck by the idea that for me the isolated location of their home was negated by the familiar, Western comforts of the house. There were hot showers, wireless internet and western furniture. In Singida I spent four days watching the work of sisters in their medical clinic, known as the Faraja Centre. This centre, also recently built, offers counselling services, medical check-ups and social services provision for local people who have been diagnosed with the HIV or AIDS. As well as the three MMM sisters, the staff is composed of a centre manager, who was British, and about seven local people. During my time there I spoke to the staff and observed their daily interactions. I also accompanied

the sisters on home-visits to people with AIDS. Ethnography has been associated with the practice of participant observation (Hart, 2009) but this was a highly moving experience made the notion of being a 'participant' seem almost ridiculous. I think it is actually very difficult to truly participate when unable to offer any useful, and in this case medical, knowledge. It has been noted that participant observation is an "oxymoronic title" (Cook and Crang, 1995 p 21) and my sense of helplessness in the face of great human suffering rendered me a useless participant. Nonetheless, I would still argue the purpose of this exercise, because it granted me exposure to an array of experiences that would otherwise have been unfathomable.

After four days in Singida I then made the hour-long journey to Makiungu. This village is the site of a hospital that was originally founded by the MMMs in 1954. Although today the diocese and health authority manages the hospital, the congregation continues to have a convent on the site. Here MMM sisters continue to live and work in a variety of jobs in the hospital. These roles range from doctor to midwife, pharmacist and bursar. I stayed with this community for three nights. Till and Watson (2010) argue that participant observation is a "process of collaboration rather than appropriation" (p. 132) and the larger community size in Makiungu makes this both a challenging but also a rewarding experience. This community reflects the internationalisation of the order and is composed of MMM sisters from Tanzania, Nigeria, Kenya, Malta, USA and the UK. Also of note was the age-range of the sisters from late 20s to 80s. The variety of life experiences that each sister had made conversation fascinating. To achieve a certain level of integration in the community I was open to the MMM sisters about my research. I found the dinner table an invaluable opportunity to exchange stories to participate in the community, albeit in small gestures such as clearing the table:

Figure 3.2 - Dining room in Makiungu Convent

Source: Taken by author, September 2010

Unlike in Ireland, when I would share lunch with the sisters in Drogheda then return to Dublin in the evenings, in Tanzania my research became my life for this period. Yet this saturation was essential to what Katz (1996) argues is a vital part of ethnography research, that is to "uncover common bonds and recognize differences" (p 177). To be able to spend a longer period of time with the nuns allowed trust to form. In this way the people being studied do not become merely objects of research.

After five days in Makiungu I then travelled to Arusha where I spent six days in two different MMM convents. This was to see the work the sisters do in

mental health care there. I experienced a similar level of cooperation. The night before I left Arusha I wrote in my diary: "I cannot stress how welcoming the sisters have been... but still one is not a participant here, one is an observer." I wrote the above because of the problems in the participant/observer dichotomy. For example I learnt that it is quite difficult to conduct taped interviews with subjects whose home you are living in. The idea of sitting around the dinner table, or helping with the washing up, activities that are an attempt to aid in integration would be lost with the introduction of a voice-recorder, for that would establish a different dynamic within the community.

Undoubtedly my experiences in Tanzania, both archival and ethnographic, have influenced this thesis and furthered my understandings of the Irish missionary movement. However I do not attempt to over-generalise my ethnographic findings (Adams et al., 2001). My collective experiences on this research trip have infiltrated into the thesis. I, therefore, do not use my particular experiences with ethnography as a way to write culture that I was there to observe (Hart, 2009, Till and Watson, 2010). My overall aim for this research trip was more restrained and rather I simply sought to place the human subject at the centre of my inquiry (Cloke et al., 2004). I embarked on my research trip to Tanzania with the intention of gaining insights into the life of missionary sisters through close proximity. Indeed it could be noted that researching this thesis has been a process of fluctuating between distance and proximity to the subjects, both historical and present, that I have been researching. Perhaps this is a process that ends with the acceptance of unanswered questions and undiscovered material but yet also with an acknowledgement of the unique value of what has been uncovered.

4 "To keep the body subject to the spirit": The Spaces of the Female Missionary Congregations in Ireland

To commence their missionary endeavours the four congregations of sisters were dependent on specific spaces in Ireland. The most significant of which were the bodies of the missionary nuns, the motherhouse, novitiate and hostel. Both the Sisters of St Columban (SSC) and the Medical Missionaries of Mary (MMM) were conceived to be missionary orders and their development will be explored through the creation of their motherhouses. This space had multiple functions, for it is an administrative centre but also a material and an imagined home for the sisters. Both of these orders needed to find a Bishop willing to admit a motherhouse into his diocese before they could be recognised as an official religious congregation. Although religious institutions were a common feature of the rural and urban landscapes of the country (McKenna, 2006a), as noted by Margaret MacCurtain (1997), little is known about their distribution. This chapter considers the foundation of the religious institutions as a way to assess the relationship between these female orders and the patriarchal hierarchy of Bishops (Luddy, 1992). It explores their complex position for: "women religious were both privileged and subordinate" (Magray, 1998 p 11). Furthermore the complications of establishing the congregations in Ireland must also be understood within the context of an international Catholic Church. This is to assess how the hierarchy of the Irish Church interpreted the power of the Vatican. The negotiations orchestrated by the sisters with the diocesan Bishops reveals the complete absence of women from this power structure of the Church. This is further evidenced in the establishment of hostels for student-sisters in Dublin.

It was in the novitiate and the motherhouse that secular women received the requisite religious and professional training to become missionary sisters. Yvonne McKenna notes: "religious life was specifically designed to facilitate the transformation of women into nuns" (McKenna, 2003 p 301). To assist in

this transformation, Maria Luddy has written how the Irish convent was "rigid and institutionalised" (Luddy, 1992 p 22). Therefore, this chapter explores how the disciplinary routines served to construct ideal religious women and is particularly focused on the novitiate of the MMM and SSC, an enclosed space within the motherhouse, where trainee nuns, or postulants, prepared to take their vows (New Catholic Encyclopedia, 1967). Although the novitiate was common to all religious orders this space has unique significance to a missionary congregation because these sisters would spend the majority of their religious life on the missions where they were still expected to maintain their religiosity. In examining the implementation of discipline within these religious spaces, this chapter reveals the complexity of religious identity and the tensions involved in cultivating a community while sustaining the character of the individual (Luddy, 1992, McKenna, 2006a). However, while exploring the segregation of religious from secular space, this chapter also considers how the motherhouse and International Missionary Training Hospital (IMTH), a hospital commissioned by the MMMs, was understood in relation to the distant mission-fields. It considers how the presence of the mission field permeated into these spaces and the connections between the various scales of congregations that existed over vast physical distances.

4.1 Locating the MMM Motherhouse within in an Irish Diocese

As new religious congregations the MMMs and SSC needed to establish a motherhouse before they could be recognized as legitimate religious societies. The motherhouse would operate as the emotional, administrative and legal centre of the congregation. Yet before this could be constructed, the sisters required the approval of a diocesan Bishop (Bowen, 1967, O'Collins and Farrugia, 2003, Dulles, 2007). Specifically the MMM congregation needed permission from a diocesan Bishop who supported the formation of a female missionary order devoted to medical work. For the newly formed MMMs this was a challenge, yet one that had to be overcome. Bishop Shanahan, an adviser to MMM, wrote to Marie Martin of the urgent need to acquire:

> *"The approval of the Bishops in whose Dioceses this new grand work would be established...that God through the voice of the Holy See, and the voice of the Hierarchy in Ireland, may bless it in its inception."*[5]

Marie Martin herself wrote that the "erection of M.M.M. into a religious society is absolutely requisite."[6] She was urged to pursue this legitimacy by a senior member of the Church: "[Mons. Riberi] said the vital thing was that I and my companions should have a definite status in the Church."[7] Marie Martin feared that an "indeterminate status"[8] would mean that:

> *"We cannot give any public account of ourselves, and there is the very real danger that an attitude may be adopted towards us that will be misinformed and perhaps unsympathetic."*[9]

During this quest for "a good benefactor"[10] Marie Martin was initially confident of success because her congregation had the approval of Pascal Robinson who was the *Nunico Apostolic* to Ireland. In 1933 she wrote to him expressing her gratitude for his support:

> *"To know that you as Father of all Religious Orders in Ireland know of the plans for the humble beginnings of this infant society and that the work meets with your approval, gives me great happiness and will fortify me to overcome all difficulties which may be met with."*[11]

Marie Martin had hoped that by having Robinson's support she would also have his influence over the hierarchy of diocesan Bishops in Ireland and this

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[5] Letter from Bishop Shanahan to Marie Martin, 23rd March, 1936, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(c)/2.

[6] Letter from Marie Martin to Monsignor Moynagh, 24th May, 1936, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(c)/18.

[7] Letter from Marie Martin to Monsignor Moynagh, 22nd October 1936, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(a)/61.

[8] Letter from Marie Martin to Monsignor Moynagh, 24th May 1936, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(c)/18.

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] Letter from Sister Mary to Most. Rev. Dr. Paschal Robinson, 6th February, 1938, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(a)/110.

[11] Letter from Marie Martin to Most Rev. Pascal Robinson, Nunico Apostolic, 15th December 1933, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(a)/1.

would be a necessary step in securing the future of the congregation. She later wrote to him saying: "I always think that it will be you and you alone with God's help that will be able to procure for me the approbation of a Bishop."[12] Marie Martin felt that through Pascal Robinson her congregation would gain acceptance by a Bishop into an Irish diocese. However, despite his support, Marie Martin actually found it very difficult to gain this permission and she received many rejections. Monsignor Moynagh, another adviser to MMM, offered an explanation as to why she was experiencing resistance from the Irish Bishops:

> "*Miss Martin sought therefore to obtain the necessary approval from a Bishop in Ireland. However, because there were already many religious congregations in the dioceses and because the need of a religious institute for Medical Mission work was not fully grasped, and also because the idea of religious undertaking branches of Medical works was new, Miss Martin found it impossible to obtain the approval of a Bishop in Ireland.*"[13]

The rejection of MMM reveals the potential tension between the wishes of Rome and the power of the diocesan Bishops. Indeed it reveals the complex geographic operations of the Church and how its direction, as dictated from the Vatican, was not always enacted at the diocesan level. Marie Martin noted this when she described the wishes of *Propaganda Fide* in Rome and the hierarchy in the Irish Catholic Church as "two things which for so long have seemed incompatible."[14] The support she felt she had from Rome was not reciprocated in the Irish Catholic Church and conscious of her inferiority to the male hierarchy, she wrote how she wished: "no clash with... the [Irish Catholic] hierarchy."[15]

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[12] Letter from Marie Martin to Most Rev. Pascal Robinson, Nunico Apostolic, 25th June 1936, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(a)/33.

[13] Letter from Prefect Apostle Moynagh to Cardinal Biondi, 2nd March, 1937, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(e)/ 7.

[14] Letter from Marie Martin to Most Rev. Dr. Paschal Robinson, 13th October 1936, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(a)/59.

[15] *Ibid.*

The complications of establishing MMM in a diocese demonstrates the tensions that can exist in the hierarchy of the Catholic Church as it tries to maintain control over vast physical distances. The divisions of land into dioceses with each one overseen by a Bishop can result in conflicting interests between the local and the universal Catholic Church. Although the individual power of the bishop is granted through Rome, the priority of each is to respond to local issues. Furthermore within the etiquette of the Catholic Church it was inappropriate to overrule or influence those in the hierarchy whose authority was related to the governing of physical spaces. Thus Riberi, a titular Bishop of Dara as well as an Apostolic Delegate to the African Missions, was reluctant to represent MMMs to the Irish Bishops on behalf of Marie Martin, stating that:

> *"It would be presumptuous on my part to approach Their Excellencies the Bishops of Ireland in your favour, I feel that it would be at the same time quite superfluous, as it will be enough for their well known generosity and catholic spirit to know of the needs of these missions in order to give you all the help and support you need."*[16]

As this quote reveals, relations between members of the Church's hierarchy demonstrates a strict adherence to protocol. The reluctance of the Irish Bishops to admit the MMMs into their dioceses also reveals how the Catholic missionary movement, often written about as fervently embraced in Ireland (Hogan, 1979), was initially met with some resistance in the Irish catholic hierarchy.

To circumvent the difficulties she encountered in establishing a congregational house in Ireland Marie Martin did pursue the idea of having the first MMM house in Nigeria instead. In 1936, she wrote to Pascal Robinson to outline this change of tactics: "we are seeking the Bishops in Africa instead of Ireland for the success of the work."[17] Marie Martin justified this shift in location as a

[16] Letter from Riberi, Archbishop of Dara, Nigeria Apostolic Delegate to Mother Mary Martin, 3rd May 1937, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(b)/6).

[17] Letter from Marie Martin to Most Rev. Pascal Robinson, Nunico Apostolic, 16th July 1936, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(a)/39.

desire for MMM: "to be erected into a Religious Society on the mission-field and among the souls destined to work among."[18] In particular, Marie Martin thought it would be advantageous to be under the protection of Monsignor Moynagh an Irish Prefect Apostle based in Nigeria. Moynagh unlike his peers in the Irish Catholic hierarchy provisionally granted permission for a MMM novitiate house to be established under his authority in Nigeria. In granting this permission Moynagh was simultaneously responding to the direction of the Church as dictated by the Vatican but also to his local needs as diocesan Bishop in Nigeria. However, while eventually MMM would forge many strong links with Moynagh and indeed Nigeria, the motherhouse was never constructed there. This was because Moynagh's initial enthusiasm for the establishment of MMM in his vicariate was eventually hampered by the reality of having an order dependent on Irish resources based so far from home:

> *"My acceptance of the grave responsibility of founding the Institute here was an emergency and temporary measure to meet what was considered the grave danger to the existence of the whole work at home. It was stated that the existence of the work was at stake and that in order that the work might go ahead it was necessary to have a legal standing in the Church. Only out here could that be done quickly.*
>
> *I never intended that the novitiate house here should be the regular way for entering the Institute, because knowing the country as I do I considered it too much of a risk to continue to send girls to a novitiate here. Besides we all know that to have the training necessary for this special work a house at home is a necessity - a house in the neighbourhood of a hospital... In founding the Institute therefore I done so trusting that it will be possible to find a Bishop at home willing to have a house erected in his Diocese and from which propaganda work may be done to find the necessary financial assistance."*[19]

[18] Letter from Mother Mary Martin to Monsignor Moynagh, 26th August 1936, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(c)/10).

[19] Letter from Monsignor Moynagh to Archbishop Riberi, 17th June, 1937, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(c)/26(a).

Moynagh outlines the necessity for locating a novitiate house in the best geographical location. He is quite convinced that Ireland is a far more suitable location for the centre of the congregation then upon the mission field itself. In this quote he cites close proximity to training facilities in Ireland as an essential requisite for the location of a motherhouse. In another letter to Riberi, Moynagh further argues against the unsuitability of Nigeria for the initial MMM novitiate: "My reluctance was because of the great risk in having European girls come to do a novitiate in a climate like this."[20] To Moynagh it was thus imperative that MMM should have their novitiate in Ireland. This further reaffirms the very grounded and local aspects that compose the Catholic Church. The universalism espoused by the Church appears to be tempered by local conditions. It would seem that Moynagh's concern for MMM in Nigeria were shared by Riberi, who responded him saying that he was urging the Archbishop of Dublin to grant MMM a house and his assistance.[21] It would appear Marie Martin never intended MMM to necessarily be a national, Irish endeavour, yet the importance of Ireland as a location was deemed absolutely necessary for the success of this new congregation. The process of locating the congregational house of the order thus highlights the scalar elements of power within the Catholic Church. The power of the Bishops over their dioceses combined with a lack of understanding about the new female missionary congregations meant that the realisation of MMM, although sanctioned by the Vatican, could not be made a reality until successful negotiations at the level of the diocese had occurred.

4.1.1 The gendered relationship between MMM sisters and bishops

The reluctance of the Irish Bishops to support the MMM was compounded by gender. Monsignor Moynagh reflected on this:

[20] Letter from Monsignor Moynagh to Archbishop Riberi, 23rd June 1937, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/ 1(c)/29.

[21] Letter from Archbishop Riberi to Monsignor Moynagh, 30th June1937, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/ 1(c)/27.

> *"An Institute of nuns doing medical work is altogether new, and I can easily foresee that the Bishops in Ireland might be extremely reluctant to admit such a Congregation."*[22]

The establishment of an order of nuns completely devoted to medical missionary work, although formed with the approval of the Vatican, was actually met with some degree of suspicion from a conservative Irish church. Of particular interest is the difficulty for ideas that are projected from the Vatican to actually filter down to the diocesan and local scale. Eventually Marie Martin's desire "to consolidate M.M.M. in Ireland"[23] succeeded in 1938 when Cardinal McRory consented to allow the MMMs to have their novitiate in his archdiocese of Armagh. This was news that was greeted with great relief by *propaganda fide*:

> *"The news that, with the paternal interest of His Eminence Card. McRory, you have succeeded in opening in Ireland the Novitiate for your Institute, has given me much consolation, as it shows that God, with a manifest mark of his help, is blessing your endeavours for the good of our missions."*[24]

Revealed in the language of this quote is the gendered relationship between religious women and the Church's hierarchy. Cardinal McRory's support is described here as paternalistic. This choice of language aptly reflects the complete dependence that Marie Martin, subsequently known as Mother Mary, had on the Irish clergy. The necessity of establishing a congregational house in a diocese meant that from its very origins MMM was subject to the power relations of the Irish and masculine hierarchy. By obtaining the approval of Cardinal McRory, MMM acquired the support of the most powerful member of the domestic Irish clergy, the usefulness of this was reflected in a letter from Moynagh:

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[22] Letter from Monsignor Moynagh to Archbishop Riberi, 23rd June 1937, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/ 1(c)/29.

[23] Letter from Sister Mary to Monsignor Bearzotti, 19th July, 1937, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(a)/90.

[24] Letter from Propaganda Fide to Mother Mary Martin, 15th December 1938. MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(e)/34.

> *"The fact of having the whole-hearted approval of the cardinal – a great national figure and a home in his archdiocese puts you at once right in the forefront of the societies that depend on the charity of the Irish people... I know your gratitude to him will equal your childlike trust and make up for the trepidation with which some of us asserted at the beginning."*[25]

This quote further reveals the gendered relationship between nuns and priests in the hierarchy of the Catholic Church that appears to have been endemic in the whole process of locating the novitiate. The 'childlike trust' that Mother Mary possessed demonstrated the inequality of women in the Church as the language used to describe them relegates them to an infantile state, who therefore must exist in a subordinate, dependent position to the bishops. To reside in a diocese was to be placed under the patronage of a bishop and the language used to describe this relationship further reinforces the inequality in this relationship. This gendered use of language can also be demonstrated in SSC. In a letter from Mother Mary Vianney, the Mother General of the SSC thanks Archbishop McQuaid: "you have always shown a fatherly interest in our affairs."[26] This language again presents the sisters as young, innocent and dependent on the good will and guidance of the male Bishop.

The patriarchal power that the bishops had over the sisters demonstrates the complete absence of women in the hierarchical power structure of the Catholic Church. There was no possible way that MMM could be established outside of this hierarchy and when residing in a diocese they were always subjected to the rule of a bishop. Even within the relatively progressive MMMs little was done to challenge this hierarchy but rather great efforts were made to work successfully within it.

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[25] Letter from Monsignor Moynagh to Mother Mary, 11th April 1940, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(c)/50.

[26] Letter from Mother Mary Vianney to Archbishop McQuaid, 15th May 1956, Archdiocese of Dublin Archive, McQuaid Papers, Columban File 2, AB 8/B.

4.2 The Novitiate

While the creation of the motherhouse served to legitimize the congregation, it also provided a space where the novitiate of the order could be located. A novitiate is a carefully controlled space where sisters are trained for their spiritual life. The importance of the novitiate to a female religious order shall be explored through the MMM novitiate building. In a letter written in the early establishment of MMM Mother Mary remarked that: "The Novitiate is the all important matter."[27] This was the space where future MMMs would spend their two-year novitiate period, necessary to become a full member of the congregation. Mother Mary was very clear that to be an MMM Sister was a religious vocation:

> "*From the outset our little Society has strived, not only that its members should be fully qualified as doctors and nurses, but also that they should be thoroughly imbued with the spirit of their holy vocation.*"[28]

The novitiate period was deemed essential to instilling this inner spirituality and Mother Mary wrote that the novitiate was a time for individuals to be "spiritually formed and tested."[29] Thus the first MMM constitutions included a section on the necessity of the novitiate period:

> "*Art. 61. -The object to the Novitiate is the formation of the minds and of the characters of the Novices in the principles and requirements of religious life.*"[30]

Of particular interest here is that the individual could indeed be moulded into the ideal religious woman.[31] To create this personal spirituality the novitiate was composed of strict community routines, regulations over the body and periods of solitude. To study the intimacies of life within the novitiate it is clear that this space, how it was written of and subsequently lived in, was

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[27] Letter from Marie Martin to Archbishop Ribieri, 2nd January 1938, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(b)/11.

[28] Letter from Marie Martin to Cardinal Fumasoni-Biondi of Propaganda Fide, 25th March 1936, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(e)/24.

[29] *Ibid.*

[30] *Constitutions of the Medical Missionaries of Mary*, First edition, 1940 p. 29.

[31] *Ibid.*, art. 55, p.27.

essential in this transformation of the individual (McKenna, 2006b). The following section shall explore some of the techniques of discipline employed in the novitiate that, once learned, the individual would be expected to maintain for the rest of her life.

4.2.1 Entrance to the novitiate

The importance of the location of the novitiate was acknowledged in the constitutions of the MMMs:

> *"Art. 67. – No Novitiate can be established anywhere nor can the Novitiate be translated from one house of the Congregation to another, without the deliberate vote of the Council and the permission of the proper authority."*[32]

It was thus a constitutionally recognized space where the disciplining of the body and transformation of secular women into religious sisters could occur. Although the MMM novitiate was part of their motherhouse in Drogheda it occupied a separate part of convent:

> *"Art. 66. – The Novitiate shall be as far as possible, separated from that part of the house inhabited by professed religious, so that, without a special cause, and the permission of the Superiors or the Novice Mistress, the Novices may not have communication with the professed sisters, nor these latter with the Novices."*[33]

Thus the novitiate was a unique, segregated space within the already enclosed space of the convent. The existence of this division was echoed during an oral history interview:

> *Sr. P.: "Two years in the Novitiate, the first year was a very serious year, we weren't supposed to have any communication with the professed sisters. We were separate... I mean like there was 40 of us, you would run the house really."*

[32] *Constitutions of the Medical Missionaries of Mary*, first edition, 1940, p. 32.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

> *Kate: "So that training year, the Novitiate year is a very solemn year?"*
>
> *Sr. P. and Sr. D.: "Yes."*[34]

The separation and specific demarcation of the novitiate implies that the novitiate building can be understood as different from the space that surrounded it. The transformation of the individual was to be achieved entirely within the enclosed space of the novitiate building. Therefore, it was written that: "The first year shall be spent in the Novitiate House without interruption."[35] For one entire year the novices of MMM would be required to remain within the confines of the novitiate. Within both the MMM and the SSC congregations there was an acknowledgement about the influence that individuals have in the novitiate and subsequent community life. In regards to the SSC the establishment of the first convent for this congregation was reliant upon the character of those women initially drawn into the order:

> *"To start this Convent, five or six of the best Nuns available and many of those who have volunteered are excellent, could be drafted to form the nucleus of the Congregation. These, no matter whence they might be drawn, would adopt the new Constitutions, and would train novices. The aim would be to develop the natural talents of each admitted in so far as her particular qualifications would be of use in China."*[36]

This quote demonstrates an awareness that within the space of the convent individuals had the ability to disrupt or enhance how the community functioned. To create and preserve the novitiate, the MMM hierarchy controlled who could enter by vetting women who wanted to join the congregation. Prospective candidates for admission to the MMMs had to be interviewed before they could enter. This was recalled in an oral history interview:

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[34] Sr. P. and Sr. D. Personal interview, 17th November 2009.

[35] *Constitutions of the Medical Missionaries of Mary*, first edition, 1940, p. 28.

[36] Letter from Patrick Cleary of Maynooth Mission to China to Bishop Fogarty, 3rd May 1920, Killaloe Diocesan Archive, Fogarty Collection, Maynooth Mission to China, file F/11/D1.

> *"Mother Mary gave me a very sensible interview, she asked me all the reasonable questions and it all seemed very positive."*[37]

The necessity of this procedure was written about in the MMM Constitutions;

> *"Art. 71. – As the future welfare of the Congregation depends very much on the admission of the Novices to profession, a prudent strictness should be exercised in this matter."*[38]

The congregation functioned through harmonious relations between each member. Within the MMM, part of the screening of potential missionaries was based upon the perceived ability of the individual to uphold Catholic values. Thus the superiors of the order were permitted to search the applicants' past for any undesirable aspects, as this extract from the MMM Constitutions demonstrates:

> *"Art 24. The Superiors shall obtain, either directly or indirectly by every means within their power, information as to birth, parents, character, life, circumstances past and present, and mental sanity of the aspirant."*[39]

Furthermore Article 25 stated: "A Candidate for admission ought to have been born of legitimate and respectable parents, and ought to be of good reputation."[40] To control the entrance to the novitiate can be seen an attempt to ensure that this was a homogenous space, where the sisters could learn from each other and copy their idealised behaviour. The process of vetting the candidates would also include a search of their medical history, to ascertain their physical suitability for missionary work. Thus they would also:

> *"Ascertain whether the aspirant has any hidden infirmity, and whether any hereditary malady exists in the parents or family."*[41]

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[37] Sr. B. Personal inteview, 27th August 2009.
[38] *Constitutions of the Medical Missionaries of Mary*, first edition, 1940, p. 33.
[39] Ibid., p. 14
[40] *Ibid.*, p. 15
[41] Ibid., p. 14

There appears to be certain characteristics that were deemed to be suitable for missionary life and were sought in potential candidates. The MMM congregation hoped to recruit young women whose presence in the novitiate would enhance rather than disrupt community life. As such the following question could be asked in interviews with perspective candidates:

> "*Are you ready to submit with docility to the formation religious life requires, and to serve God in any occupation and part of the world assigned you by your superior?*"[42]

Furthermore the following extract from the Constitutions outlines the specific characteristics that the congregation sought for in potential members:

> "*Art. 25 She ought to have a special liking and aptitude for the particular spirit and work of the Congregation. She ought to be of a docile, patient and respectful disposition.*"[43]

From these quotes the ability to submit oneself to the commands of their superiors was deemed vital to harmonious community life. Once in the novitiate, it was entirely possible that a woman could later be rejected from this space as each individual was observed by the superiors to ensure their continued suitability to the order:

> "*The Mistress shall watch over all the postulants, in order to obtain as far as possible an exact knowledge of their character, their capabilities, their defects, and their general fitness for religious life.*"[44]

To be subject to observation within the novitiate further ensured the individuals' compliance to the spirit of the community and the possible ejection of those perceived not to be suited. This was noted in an oral history interview:

> *"I never got over the novelty, really, of being allowed to stay... I saw quite a number of people leave during the novitiate. And some people advised to leave and they were*

[42] *Questions to be answer by Candidates*, no date, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/2/5/94
[43] *Constitutions of the Medical Missionaries of Mary*, first edition, 1940, p. 15.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 18

> *very disappointed really. But they wrote to me afterwards and they said yeah, now we see."*[45]

This process of observation would ensure that the novitiate would produce and reproduce idealised nuns and dismiss, or not admit, those that did not conform. The intensity of the novitiate period served as an introduction to religious life and one would be expected to uphold this rigidity in environments where they would be less strictly observed. The novitiate period of the missionary congregations were vital in creating an exportable ethos within each individual that they would bring with them to wherever they were stationed. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter six.

4.2.2 The constitutions and the novitiate

Life in the novitiate was governed over by the Constitutions of the order. It is important to highlight that although sharing many similarities, each religious congregation has a specific, unique ethos to impart on its members and this was outlined in their Constitutions. During the establishment of the SSC an outpouring of support for the missionary cause in Ireland manifested itself with the recruitment of many volunteers for the order. For the Priests of the Maynooth Mission to China, this posed a problem of how these individuals could be consolidated to form a coherent community:

> *"Very many of our volunteers are nuns drawn from different Orders, and it was felt that difficulties would arise if all were drafted into a house of one of the existing Orders."*[46]

There was a perceived need to create and have control over the novitiate where these potential recruits could learn the rule of the new congregation. Each religious order is different and this difference is fostered through the control of the individuals in the spaces that they occupy. To create a novitiate suitable to the purpose of the congregation, a constitution had to be drafted which would govern how this unique space would operate. The relationship between the

[45] Sr. G. Personal interview, 17th November 2009.
[46] Letter from Patrick Cleary of Maynooth Mission to China to Bishop Fogarty, 3rd May 1920, Killaloe Diocesan Archive, Fogarty Collection, Maynooth Mission to China, file F/11/D1.

constitution and the space of the convent is alluded to in the early establishment of SSC:

> *"It seemed then that sooner or later, we should be forced to provide a new Convent and establish a Congregation of our own – a congregation for which we might draft a set of Constitutions, best calculated for the formation of Missionaries."*[47]

The idea mooted in this excerpt is that the ethos of this new missionary congregation was different from other existing religious congregations and that through the constitution the ideal missionary could be created within the space of the novitiate. Mother Mary also wrote of the importance of writing the constitutions when establishing a congregation: "The work of [MMM] is so new it is better to draw up the constitutions slowly and with experience."[48] The constitution was written to outline the ethos of the congregation that could then be learnt and practiced within the space of the novitiate. Thus the novitiate period was deemed extremely necessary in the formation period of the sister's religious life:

> *"The Postulency must be made either in the Novitiate house, or in another house of the Institute where the discipline prescribed by the constitutions is faithfully observed, under the care of an experienced religious."*[49]

The space of the novitiate was bounded by the rule outlined in the congregation's constitutions. Thus the constitutions guided the individual during the novitiate and each perspective sister was issued with their own personal copy:

> *"Art. 70. – Every Novice shall receive a copy of these constitutions at the beginning of the novitiate and shall*

[47] *Ibid.*

[48] Letter from Marie Martin to Father Clarke, 9th May 1936, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(e)/17.

[49] *Constitutions of the Medical Missionaries of Mary*, first edition, 1940, p. 18.

> *diligently apply herself to the study of them with the help of explanatory lessons from the Novice Mistress."*[50]

To have read the constitutions allowed for a form of self-discipline to be exercised in the novitiate. By remaining aware of the rules prescribed in the text, the individual could check and monitor their own behaviour. Article 62 of the constitutions highlighted that spiritual "formation is to be accomplished by the study and practice of the constitutions."[51]By reading them one could learn the idealized behaviour of the congregation and put this into practice within the space of the novitiate. However, the success of the constitutions in actually governing behaviour in this space can perhaps be called into question. During an oral history interview one sister admitted that not only was the novitiate period an arduous one but that the constitutions were confusing:

> *Kate: "And what did your religious training involve?"*
>
> *Sr. M.: "Well a lot of hard work. Too much I think. So I did something about it later when I was in a position to do so. Well we, every month we had a day of prayer. A Jesuit priest came down and gave us a day of prayer, and then we had the sacrements. What else? And we had the constitutions, the new constitutions, but nobody understood much about them."*[52]

This interview provides an insight into the complex role of the constitutions and serves as a reminder that how the novitiate was written of, was not necessarily how the individual experienced it. The constitutions were an ideal of governance, but it is vital to be aware that the actual experience of the novitiate could deviate from its intended purpose.

4.2.3 The religious body

It is also upon the body, at this intimate scale, that religious identity is evident (Knott, 2008). To commit oneself to the novitiate was to submit ones body to the rules and regulations of the congregation's constitutions. The wearing of

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 33
[51] *Ibid.*, p. 30
[52] Sr. M. Personal interview, 17th November 2009.

the habit and veil is an obvious signifier of religious life (Arthur, 1999) and enables the three perpetual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience to be enacted upon the intimate space of the individual's body. Upon initially entering the MMM congregation all personal possessions, including clothing, were symbolically relinquished:

> *"A person should be appointed to take a note of, and keep carefully, the money, clothing, and any other property brought by the Postulants, in order that everything may be returned to them should they leave the Novitiate."*[53]

The abandoning of personal possessions was symbolic of the surrender of individuality upon joining an order (Michelman, 1999). Furthermore, the rejection of the material trappings of modern femininity was accompanied with the re-clothing of oneself in the modest attire of the order. Indeed before joining MMM each woman was issued with a list of clothing they had to purchase. Each item had received the approval of the congregation. The list is comprehensive, practical and thorough. Examples include:

> *"1 Dark coat and Hat (Black and Navy).*
>
> *1 Rain coat*
>
> *1 Pr. Dark Gloves*
>
> *2 Pr. Black outdoor shoes."*[54]

To follow this list ensured homogeneity between the wearers. The constitutions made it clear that within the congregation "care should be taken to preserve uniformity in the clothing"[55] and the rigours of the trousseau maintained. Thus the issuing of a trousseau to perspective postulants before they entered ensured that every woman in the congregation would be dressed the same, for example: "3 grey coats (to be got at Switzers 7/11 each)."[56] The women would even have been expected to purchase the items at the same shop, thereby ensuring total uniformity in even the most minute of details. To

[53] *Constitutions of the Medical Missionaries of Mary*, first edition, 1940, art. 41, p. 21
[54] *Trousseaux for M.M.M.* date unknown, MMM Archive, file 1/cong/2/4
[55] *Constitutions of the Medical Missionaries of Mary*, first edition, 1940, art. 47, p. 23
[56] *Ibid.*

purchase these items of clothing was the first act of conformity towards the order. In one oral history interview, a sister recalled on her first day in the convent, being disciplined for deviating from this uniformity:

> *"I had a lovely [dress] with a nice collar and an open neck. It wasn't allowed, it was removed right away. And I had my hair done just before I came in and I had a big quiff out, sticking out in front of this black veil, and somebody pulled me in off a corridor and, oh where the chapel is now, you know that chapel, and pulled me in through a little door and she said that won't do."*[57]

This sister's appearance was not acceptable because her personal attire did not conform to the congregation. The importance of uniformity in establishing a community was obviously deemed to be vital (Michelman, 1999) for this tested both the individual's obedience and their suitability to religious life. Significantly by relinquishing personal belongings one substitutes their own identity to the collective identity of the congregation. For this symbolism to be complete the wearing of the habit and veil was essential. Chapter VI in the First Constitutions of MMM was entitled 'The Habit.' This refers to the garment that would clothe the body of the nun. The habit was bestowed upon the individual after the completion of six months trial called the postulancy and marked the beginning of the novitiate period.[58] The MMM constitutions refer to the start of the novitiate period as 'receiving the habit':

> *"The Novitiate begins with the reception of the habit. The habit prescribed for the Novices must be worn throughout the whole period of Canonical Novitiate."*[59]

The novitiate was thus synonymous with the uptake of the habit. During the ceremony of first profession the postulant received the veil of the order, a garment that symbolically represented their bodily commitment to religious life. In the MMM congregation the habit was expected to be worn "inside and

[57] Sr. R. Personal interview, 18th November 2009.
[58] *Constitutions of the Medical Missionaries of Mary,* first edition, 1940, art. 36, p. 19.
[59] *Ibid.*, art. 51, p. 26

outside of the house"[60] for it was to become an extension of the individual's body. To wear the habit meant that one is not just a nun in the space of the convent, but rather one is a nun in *all* spaces, *all* of the time. Once received, never again would one be without it for even in death "the sisters shall be buried in the full habit of the Congregation."[61] The simplicity of the habit was a symbol of the vow of poverty taken by the sister and the constitutions were mindful of the potential physical discomfort that wearing the habit might cause to the body:

> *"The sisters should not complain of the colour or the coarseness of their clothing, which should be got in the country where they live, and can be bought most cheaply, in the judgement of their superiors."*[62]

To accept the discomfort of the habit, to physically suffer when wearing it, was a reminder of the poverty that one embraced in religious life. Variations in style and colour served to distinguish different religious congregations from each other. The MMMs embrace of modernity is evident through the design of their habit:

> *"The habit of the Medical Missionaries of Mary will be that of a modest professional nurse's dress, in accordance with the accepted style of the times. For the present the religious habit will be grey uniform, with white collar, a gray veil or felt hat. When in the mission field everything will be white."*[63]

The MMMs were a new religious order and their adoption of this modern habit was partly to distinguish their congregation from more traditional orders.

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[60] *Ibid.*, art. 46, p. 23

[61] *Ibid.*, art. 199, p. 87

[62] *Constitutions of the Medical Missionaries of Mary*, first edition, 1940, art. 48, p. 23 – 24

[63] *Ibid.*, art. 43, p. 22

Figure 4.1 - MMM Group Photograph

Source: 17th March, 1939, MMM Photographic Archive.

This photograph is of some of the very first MMM sisters. Mother Mary is seated on the left-hand side of the front row. The grey habit and white collar and veil adopted by the recently professed sisters is clearly visible. The unique style of the MMM dress was noted in a letter sent to Mother Mary from Monsignor Moynagh:

> "*The different style will be a sufficient distinguishing mark from other nuns, and the fact that it closely resembles the dress of lay nurses would be all the better for you.*"[64]

The professional role of the sisters dictated what the MMM habit looked like. It was designed for ease of movement and comfort in the climates of the mission field, as such the habit of the MMMs did not restrict the body in the way that more traditional religious garb did:

[64] Letter from Moynagh to Marie Martin, 4th September 1932. MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(c)/32

> *Kate: "May I ask, when you were out on the mission, did you wear the full habit?"*
>
> *Sr. D: "Well, we had, our habit was really a nurses uniform, it wasn't – we weren't covered up. We had a veil alright on our heads but it was like a dress, a uniform dress."*
>
> *Kate: "I understand that Mother Mary Martin was quite insistent that what the sisters wore was quite practical."*
>
> *Sr. D: "Practical, yeah because we had short sleeves and anything like that ... I don't know how the other sisters wore what they wore. There must have been full of prickly heat."*[65]

Or:

> *"It was very simple really. An ordinary white dress and an ordinary white veil, kind of thing. It was very simple really in those days, we never had anything like those big things, you know."*[66]

An appreciation of the simplicity of the habit and the practical reasons for its design were recalled by the sisters years later. The design and symbolism of the MMM habit was thus deliberately intended to reflect the progressive ethos of the order in a way that lay-people would recognize. In another interview, one MMM recalls how before she joined the order she witnessed MMM sisters playing on the beach in Donegal:

> *"And when I met them I just thought that they were full of life and they were funny and they were light hearted and they were simply dressed. They didn't have a big, elaborate habit. And even then they had their stockings off and their skirts rolled up and they were in the water paddling."*[67]

By rolling up their skirts the sister's habits did not restrict their movements. This public display of fun and joviality was remembered by the sister as a pivotal moment in deciding that the Medical Missionaries of Mary were the correct order for her to join. Thus the MMM habit, intended to be consistently

[65] Sr. D. Personal interview, 17th November 2009.
[66] Sr. R. Personal inteview, 18th November 2009.
[67] Sr. M. Personal interview, 17th November 2009.

worn, was designed to be both a professional and religious uniform. Its display of modernity reflected the ethos of the congregation and the behaviour and manipulation of the garment by the wearer further compounded the relative modernity of the congregation.

The body of a religious sister was also intended to symbolize feminine purity and a rejection of sexuality (McKenna, 2006a). The designated clothing for the postulants was intended to be that of modest femininity and the MMM trousseau included items such as slips, dresses, aprons and night-dresses. The gendered identity of the sisters was further evidenced during the profession of perpetual vows. During this ceremony each sister received a ring on their wedding-ring finger.[68] Wearing the ring in such a manner meant that the sisters conformed to a gendered relationship with the Church, where woman can exist as wife, but not as sexual being (Arthur, 1999, McKenna, 2006a). This will be discussed in more detail in chapter five. The gendered identity of the missionary sisters was further echoed in the reception ceremony of the SSC where the ring was blessed and given to the recipient by the Bishop:

> *"The novice then kneels at the Celebrant's feet who is seated. He takes the blessed ring and puts it on her bridal finger, saying:-*
>
> *I espouse thee to Christ Jesus, Son of the Almighty God. May He keep thee pure. Receive thou the ring of faith, the seal of the Holy Ghost, that thou mayest be called the spouse of God, and if thou serve him faithfully be crowned for all eternity."*[69]

The receiving of a wedding ring equates the status of wife, synonymous with purity, as an acceptable identity for these religious women to adopt. Likewise the MMM constitutions ensured that the body of a MMM sister was to be a rejection of their sexuality:

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[68] *Constitutions of the Medical Missionaries of Mary*, first edition, 1940, art. 45, p. 22.

[69] *Order of the Ceremony of Profession of the Religious Congregation of the Sisters of St. Columban for the Missions to the Chinese.* Date Unknown. Killaloe Diocesan Archives, Fogarty Papers, file F/11/D1.

> *"The Sisters will avoid all vain delicacy in the treatment of the body and all affection in their words, dress or manner. They will make no use of perfumery or anything that savours of vanity or of sensuality."*[70]

Through the congregation's regulations, the sister's body became a display of their vow of chastity. Nonetheless the sisters were expected to look presentable and in the trousseau items they were requested to bring included brush, comb, nail brush.[71] From this it can be assumed that bodily hygiene was emphasised.

Both symbolically and materially the habit and veil was crucial to the rejection of sexual identity. Indeed the MMM constitutions described the wearing of the habit and veil as essential "To keep the body subject to the spirit."[72] Likewise during the profession ceremony for the SSC, the Bishop called the veil a holy "emblem of chastity and modesty."[73] In the ceremony the role of the veil was further outlined:

> *"Thy servant is about to put on her head, and may she, by Thy protection, always with equal purity of body and mind preserve what is mystically signified thereby."*[74]

In this solemn ceremony the veil is understood as deeply symbolic of feminine purity and virginity. However the veil and habit did not just operate on a symbolic level. By covering the hair and body this garment was designed to discourage sexual attention towards the body (Michelman, 1999). Indeed the MMM habit was intended to act as "an armour of salvation"[75] for the wearer. The veils and habits of MMM were subdued in colour, in order to avoid attention when in public spaces. When Mother Mary toyed with the idea of using blue habits for members of her congregation she was advised against it by Monsignor Moynagh:

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[70] *Constitutions of the Medical Missionaries of Mary*, first edition, 1940, art. 109, p. 50.

[71] *Trousseaux*, date unknown, MMM archive, file 1/cong/2/4.

[72] *Constitutions of the Medical Missionaries of Mary*, first edition, 1940, art. 109, p. 50.

[73] Order of the Ceremony of Profession of the Religious Congregation of the Sisters of St. Columban for the Missions to the Chinese. Date Unknown. Killaloe Diocesan Archives, Forgarty papers, file F/11/D1.

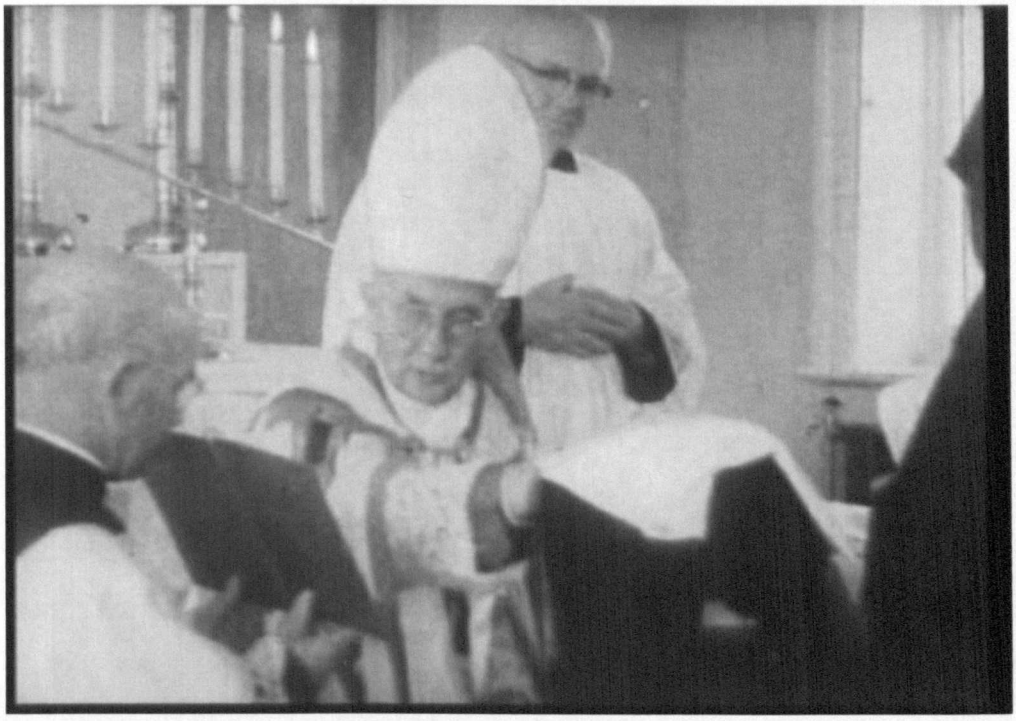
[74] *Ibid.*

[75] *MMM Magazine*, September 1949, Vol. X, no. VIII, p 6.

> *"While the blue colour is certainly lovely something less striking would be more suitable ... if you will excuse this 'slangy' expression I fear that when there are a number of sisters in a Community that blue habit may seem a bit 'loud' for nuns."*[76]

The avoidance of garish colours, lest they should draw attention, was encouraged. It would appear that the choice of gray and white habits eventually adopted by MMMs was thus intended to help them be inconspicuous. In the SSC film *"For a Splendid Cause"* the profession ceremony is recreated for the camera:

Figure 4.2 - Profession Ceremony in "For a Splendid Cause"



Source: No date, Irish Film Archive, Missionary Sisters of St Columban, (20m 51sec)

In this film clip the Bishop blesses the white veil of the congregation and places it upon the head of the postulant with these words:

[76] Letter from Moynagh to Marie Martin, 4th September 1932, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(c)/32.

> *"My child receive this veil, an emblem of modesty which henceforth shall withdraw you from the notice of the world that your life may be hidden with Christ, in God."*[77]

The veil was thus worn so that the sisters could avoid attention when in public spaces. The wearing of the habit and veil protected the body from the sexualized stare of the public. However despite these efforts to control sexuality through clothing, the MMM constitutions still advocated the segregation of genders:

> *"The Sisters should be especially circumspect in their dealings with persons of the other sex and avoid as much as possible remaining alone with them."*[78]

To enforce segregation implied that both the female and male body is weak and liable to succumb to temptation. And indeed this weakness of the body is further acknowledged in the constitutions:

> *"To keep the body subject to the spirit, they will avoid idleness, all intemperance in eating and drinking, and will bear all the trails and humiliations which beset their path."*[79]

To control the body was an important aspect of life in a missionary congregation. This was done with a presumption that for the spiritual development of the soul the sinful body needed to be disciplined. By stipulating controls upon the body, for example through clothing, these missionary congregations were testing the obedience of those members that comprised the order. Therefore, to wear the habit was to comply with the rule of the congregation and supplanted individual identity with the collective identity of the order.

4.2.4 Implementing routine in the novitiate

One of the fundamental aspects of the novitiate period was to prepare the individual for their religious life and their subsequent time on the missions.

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[77] *For a Splendid Cause*. Date unknown, Irish Film Archive, Missionary Sisters of St Columban, 20m 51sec.

[78] *Constitutions of the Medical Missionaries of Mary*, first edition, 1940, art. 111, p. 51.

[79] *Ibid.*, art. 109, p. 50.

The novitiate was intended to solidify the individual's relationship to God and this personal spirituality was to be the bedrock that united members of the MMM congregation. For example the constitutions stated: "The foundation and spirit of the society will be based on a very intense and solid interior life of love and union with God."[80] It is clear from this quote that one's individual relationship with God was central to the functioning of the congregation. However, what emerges from a reading of archival texts was how this personal relationship to God could be cultivated by routines implemented through the spaces of the congregation. In the MMM archives there are many references to the development of an interior life within the individual sister:

> *"To maintain and develop in themselves the spirit of their vocation, the Sisters will have the greatest esteem and reverence for the Exercise of the Interior life."*[81]

The development of one's interior life could be strengthened through external practices and the congregation would provide the space for this to occur. The ways and methods to cultivate an interior life was a preoccupation of Mother Mary during the foundation of MMM. To pursue this she correspondened with a priest Fr. Hugh Kelly, who wrote a letter to Mother Mary entitled Hints and Tips:

> *"5) Interior Life – the greatest attention must be given to the formation of an intense, solid, interior life of union with God... The society aims at a special and new type of Religious: a type that will combine their greatest professional efficiency and freedom, with the greatest love for God and intensest [sic] interior life."*[82]

To develop this interior life, Fr. Hugh Kelly sent Mother Mary a series of queries which he felt she should consider:

> *"6) How is this interior life – intense, solid, reliable etc – to be maintained? i.e. what will be the usual spiritual duties...*

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[80] *Early constitutions*, date unknown, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/2/4/ 42.

[81] *Ibid.*

[82] Letter from Fr. Hugh Kelly, SJ to Marie Martin, date unknown, MMM archive, file I/Cong/2/5.

> *Mediation an hour or ½ hour? 2 Exameas of ¼ hour? Spiritual Reading? Rosary? Retreat-annual?"*[83]

In a series of hand-written, messy notes Fr. Hugh Kelly suggested that an interior life could be fostered through the repeated performance of religious exercises. Accordingly, the novitiate period of MMM was composed of daily religious routines conducted with the intention of forming the ideal missionary. The constitutions included an article that stressed the intentions behind the routines and rhythms that comprised the novitiate:

> *"Formation is to be accomplished by... exercises designed to root out the germs of vice, to regulate the motions of the soul, and to assist in acquiring virtues."*[84]

Through religious routine the soul could become purer and one's interior life solidified. Perhaps the most banal but frequent form of routine experienced by the sisters was the daily timetable. This asserted the religious rituals that had to be performed each day. Of particular interest here is the specific times that religious exercises had to occur. The sisters began their day with a prayer: "On rising immediately kneel down and make morning offering of the [Apostolic] Prayer."[85] Throughout the rest of their day the toll of the bell would signal the time for prayer:

> *"As near to mid-day as possible... take a glance over the morning... to see how far we have strayed from the path of perfection."*[86]

The following quote refers to the Angelus prayer, which should be recited daily at six pm: "Be very faithful to the angelus it should remind us of the special spirit and attitude of mind and heart we should aim at living."[87] By praying at these regular intervals and at the same set times of each day the individual sisters were engaged in a near-constant exercise in self-reflection. Their day could thus be divided into a predictable routine of religious

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[83] *Ibid.*

[84] *Constitutions of the Medical Missionaries of Mary,* first edition, 1940, p. 30.

[85] *Spiritual Life*, date unknown, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/2/5/92.

[86] *Ibid.*

[87] *Ibid.*

devotion. Thus Mother Mary wished for religious duties to dominate all of the time spent in the novitiate, as the following extract shows:

> *"5 pm. Five mysteries of the Rosary (these can be said out of doors if convenient).*
>
> *Half an hour Spiritual Reading. The subject and the books used are to be for each individual according to the direction of the religious superior. it is an exercise of obedience and self-denial, as well as being an important exercise for the growth in the spiritual life. – As food for the body so is spiritual reading for the soul.*
>
> *Half an hour mental prayer in the evening.*
>
> *Half an hours study.*
>
> *Night prayers.*
>
> *Before retiring, recall the subject of Mediation for the following day. When in bed renew the consecration of your heart and mind to god and say:-*
>
> *"Into your heart O Lord I commend my Spirit. Keep us O Lord as the Apple of thy Eye. Protect us under the shadow of thy wing."*[88]

What is particularly noteworthy in this timetable is the mixture of individual and communal activities. The exercises in the morning and evening were certainly designed to be conducted alone, thus fostering the development of one's interior life. Yet even if one did their religious exercise alone, the shared timings of which meant that they conducted this ritual simultaneously with the others members of the community. Some religious duties were devised to be conducted by the community as a whole:

> *"9. Before retiring, the Sisters will all assemble in the Church for night prayers, consisting of vespers and Compline and examination of conscience, after which they will spend ten minutes before the Blessed Sacrament."*[89]

Thus this religious routine that permeated into every aspect of life in the novitiate not only increased ones inner spiritually but also served to solidify

[88] *Spiritual Duties*, date unknown, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/2/5/90.
[89] *Early Constitutions*, no date, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/2/4/ 42.

the community through the solidarity of routine. Meal times were also intended to be a communal activity. In a set of instruction written to the sisters, Mother Mary wrote that: "No Sister shall eat anything between meals."[90] This rule avoided the development of individual behaviour that deviated from the communal spirit. Certainly within both the MMM and SSC motherhouses today meal times are at regular hours with lunchtime, in particular, being a communal activity.

In between religious activities time in the novitiate was filled will the completion of difficult, manual tasks:

> *Sr. P: "Well there'd be various duties in the kitchen and that. There was a lot of different work to be done then."*
>
> *Kate: "So you'd actually be involved in the day-to-day running of the convent?"*
>
> *Sr. P: "Yes, of the Convent. In the kitchen, or whatever food was prepared. And the washing up in the scullery."*[91]

A lack of money in the early days of the congregation meant that the novitiate relied upon the manual labour of the sisters:

> *Sr. R: "Yes, oh yes. Hard work! I never had hard work before, but certainly learned to scrub and wash dishes, pots and pans... we didn't have much time for prayer I tell you. It was strange you know, because those years were supposed to be very special, you know. But the work was very hard, we did everything, we didn't have like we have today. We had sisters in the kitchen, and they might not be the best humored people at all. So they had the food to do, and it was scarce and we were poor and you were all coming in and you brought in what you had, toilet rolls or anything that you had. Newspaper and we weren't allowed to read it you know. It was very strict."*
>
> *Kate: "But you would say the humour and the friendships..."*

---

[90] *Details of Obedience and a Few Directions During My Absence,* date unknown, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/2/5/87.

[91] Sr. P. Personal interview, 17th November 2009.

Sr. R: "You see that kept you."[92]

The duties of the SSC were displayed in their film "For a Splendid cause:"[93]

Figure 4.3 - Domestic Duties in "For a Splendid Cause"

Source: No date, Irish Film Archive, Missionary Sisters of St. Columban

In this scene a young postulant is baking bread for the community in their motherhouse in Magheramore. This scene was accompanied by the following narration:

> *"The religious community is a family and a large one at that so the work of household management looms large in the daily life of the convent. Meals have to be cooked, floors polished and the numerous daily chores seen to."*[94]

[92] Sr. R. Personal interview, 18th November 2009.

[93] *For A Splendid Cause*, no date, Irish Film Archive, Missionary Sisters of St. Columban.

[94] *For a Splendid Cause*. date unknown, Irish Film Archive, Missionary Sisters of St Columban, 9mins 07secs.

This combination of hard work for the body and spiritual exercises that preoccupied the mind resulted in a novitiate period that would cultivate the soul the individual. Thus the novitiate period did not just provide an environment where one's spirituality could be tested but also it challenged the individual's adherence to authority. By committing oneself to the rigorous and often labourious novitiate period the individuals commenced their religious life in humility and compliance to their superiors. It was these traits that were deemed necessary for life on the missions and for this reason the novitiate period were designed to prepare and cultivate the individual for the challenges that lay beyond the novitiate walls. The following is a quote from a SSC film that revealed what life was like in the novitiate:

> *"The daily routine of prayer, work and study is designed to form in her that attitude of mind which will enable her to be first and foremost a religious no matter what our work or surroundings."*[95]

To forge a congregation that was united by the experience of the novitiate period was an essential part of the life of the missionary sister. Particularly noteworthy in these quotes from the MMM constitutions was how a desirable characteristic for the successful completion of the novitiate was the ability to obey orders. However through oral history interviews there is evidence that the congregation simultaneously allowed the emergence of independent thinking, for the MMMs also had to produce leaders from within its own membership. I noted that many of the sisters actually possessed an independence of spirit and, therefore, how the novitiate actually operated was much more complex than a reading of the constitutions implies. In interviews with the sisters it appears that there were often chances to subvert the strictness of the novitiate, and also to display individuality:

> *"I entered the following year, and I was just 18. And of course we hadn't a bit of sense, we didn't know what we were in for. We were very structured in one sense... And it was hard work it was very, very hard work. But we all did it...*

[95] *Ibid.*, 7mins 38secs

> *You were together and you got good laughs, you know and enjoyed it, and we do things behind their backs."*[96]

And:

> *Sr. Dy: "Well, yes there was prayer and work and relaxation, you know, all these things, you know, I enjoyed it."*
>
> *Kate: "I imagine there must have been a nice sense of community spirit?"*
>
> *Sr. Dy: "We were young you know. It was like, for those who were boarders at school, it was a bit like a boarding school you know, the continuation of different, camaraderie and friendship and that."*[97]

It is therefore important to stress that it is perhaps difficult to understand life in the convent by relying solely on the text of the constitution. Life in these spaces was far more complex and filled with intimate details, the majority of which cannot be ascertained from the archive. Therefore, the novitiate cannot be understood as functioning simply as a religious space, for it was also where young women lived, grew-up and crafted friendships with each other. Nonetheless, the routines and discipline exerted in this space hint at the vital importance of the novitiate to the functioning of a congregation whose members would subsequently go forth to various places across the world.

4.3 Separation between the Convent and the Secular World

Life within both the novitiate and the motherhouse was demarcated and considered separate from the secular world beyond. The novitiate period in particular allowed for little interaction with the outside world. During an oral history interview I asked one sister about the separateness of the novitiate period:

> *Kate: "And would you go into the town much, into Drogheda town?"*

[96] Sr. D. Personal interview, 17th November 2009.
[97] Sr. Dy. Personal interview, 18th November 2009.

> *Sr. Dy: "No, up here we were up in the country, we didn't, well as a first year novice you didn't go into town, but you used to go walks, walks up the country and bring picnics out and things like that."*
>
> *Kate: "But you wouldn't necessarily be walking around town, interacting with the local people?"*
>
> *Sr. Dy: "We were more enclosed for the spiritual year, but after that then you worked in the hospital and you met the people."*[98]

For the novitiate building to be so closed for the novices implies that the world beyond the novitiate had the potential to disrupt ones individual relationship to God. The space of the novitiate was understood in the MMM constitutions as different from those secular spaces that lay beyond. During the second and final year of the novitiate, novices were allowed to leave for courses and training but they had to "come back to the Novitiate House at least two months before, in order to prepare for first Profession."[99] The months immediately preceding their official commitment to the congregation had to be spent in the novitiate. This space was deemed uniquely appropriate to cultivating ones spiritual development.

The separation from the outside world could be strictly enforced. For example, in the SSC novitiate there was a case where a novice sister was sick and needed medical treatment. Yet her superior had to seek specific permission from the diocesan Bishop to allow her to leave the convent:

> *"I am very sorry to have to report to you that another Novice is threatened with appendicitis, and we are anxious to send her to Limerick for operation on Monday...As we are anxious to have your Lordship's permission for Sister M. Damien to go to hospital, I will ask Frank Kenny to call for a reply when in Ennis tomorrow."*[100]

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[98] *Ibid.*

[99] *Constitutions of the Medical Missionaries of Mary*, first edition, 1940, art. 60.

[100] Letter from Sister M. Patrick to Bishop of Kilalloe, 30th May 1941, Killaloe Diocesan Archives, Fogarty Papers, file 539

The need to request permission to seek medical attention beyond the convent demonstrates the seriousness with which the nun's access to public space was regulated. It is also clear that this permission was not just a formality but something which the Bishop of Killaloe was keen to enforce.

The spirituality fostered during the novitiate years was associated with the physical location of the religious houses. The two motherhouses of SSC, firstly in Cahiracon in Co. Clare and later in Magheramore, Co. Wicklow were both located in remote areas, far from local communities and with extensive, private grounds. The sisters acquired their house in Cahiracon because Fr. Cleary of the Maynooth Mission to China wrote to the Bishops of Killaloe asking if he would "be prepared to admit the congregation"[101] into his diocese. The Cahiracon estate was previously owned by Lieutenant-Colonel William Whyte but by the 1920s was in the possession of the priests of the Maynooth Mission to China. The Bishop granted permission for the sisters to establish a convent there because these sisters would eventually aid with the priests missionary work. The house the sisters occupied offered stunning but secluded views of the river Shannon and the very tranquillity of Cahiracon was described in the sister's missionary magazine, *The Eastern Star*, as essential in offering the nun, returned from the missions, a peaceful respite:

> *"The exiles absorbed the peace that seems part of Ireland. The roar and rush of the pagan world has not yet got here. Planes to Rineanna pass swiftly by now and then, only accentuating the calm by their passing. We sat and read, or met at the picking of the gooseberries and currants in the garden beyond the pines."*[102]

The very rurality and seclusion of Cahiracon, written of here as possessing an inherent Irishness, was part of the recuperation process of the returned missionary sister. The location and 'Irishness' of Cahiracon almost aids in a process of repatriation for the missionary. Interestingly this estate would have once been seen as a 'Big House', the preserve of the British and protestant

[101] Letter from Patrick Cleary of Maynooth Mission to China to Bishop Fogarty, 3rd May 1920, Killaloe Diocesan Archive, Fogarty Collection, Maynooth Mission to China, file F/11/D1.
[102] *The Eastern Star*, October – November 1952, p. 3.

elite. Nuala Johnson remarks that many of these houses fell into disrepair following the establishment of the Irish Free State because these spaces embodied the dominance of British rule and protestant landownership (Johnson, 1996). The re-appropriation of this space for this most Catholic of endeavours is therefore highly symbolic of Ireland's postcolonial era and the elevated position of the Church within the State at this time.

The rural location of Cahiracon although valued for its peacefulness, was not a suitable location from which to organize an international missionary congregation from. Some early dissatisfaction with Cahiracon was expressed in 1941 by the then Mother Superior: "None of the Sisters can be said to enjoy robust health. This is probably due to the low-lying situation of Cahiracon."[103] In 1953 the SSC wished to move their motherhouse from their "present isolated position in Cahiracon"[104] to the Archdiocese of Dublin. The reasons for this included: "the difficulties of having a Missionary Community so remote from populous centres."[105] The Archbishop of Dublin, John Charles McQuaid expressed his theoretical support for the relocation of the SSC motherhouse to Dublin:

> *"I have taken much interest in this congregation [Missionary Sisters of St. Columban], and because I felt that it could not possibly develop in its apostolate, if it remained in the remote and distinctly inaccessible area of the western sea-coast... I have suggested the transfer [of the motherhouse] if and when it is possible, solely because I can see a very restricted future for this Congregation, if the motherhouse remains in a remote area of the country."*[106]

McQuaid tentatively granted permission for the motherhouse of the order to be transferred to Dublin. Still, in sanctioning this move he wished for the

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[103] Letter from Sister M. Patrick to Bishop of Killaloe, 30th May 1941, Killaloe Diocesan Archives, Forgarty Papers, Cahiracon Convent, File 1/8/A1.

[104] Letter from Sister Mary Vianney to Archbishop McQuaid, 12th January 1953, Archive of the Archdiocese of Dublin, McQuaid papers, Columban File 2, AB 8/B.

[105] Letter from Mother Mary Vianney to Archbishop McQuaid, 15th May 1956, Archive of the Archdiocese of Dublin., McQuaid papers, Columban File 2, AB 8/B.

[106] Letter from Archbishop McQuaid to Cardinal Secretary of the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Church, 13th November, 1949, Archive of Archdiocese of Dublin, McQuaid papers, Columban File 2, AB 8/B.

motherhouse to remain in a rural area of the Dublin Archdiocese and his secretary wrote to SSC to ensure this was understood: "[His Grace] again wishes to emphasis the serious necessity; if you enter this diocese, of seeking a property well out from the city."[107] The need to locate the motherhouse in a rural location hints at a divide between the ultilisation of urban and the rural spaces by religious congregations. To situate the motherhouse in a rural area removed the nuns from the encroachments of the modern world and replaced this with the implied spiritual strength of the rural. Therefore, a suitable motherhouse required an extensive amount of internal and external space. In searching for prospective properties near Dublin the sisters found a house called Edenmore. This property comprised of:

> *"27 acres including a good fruit and vegetable garden, which would help support us. As well as our student-sisters we would propose to transfer the administration and offices to Edenmore, making it the motherhouse of the Congregation."*[108]

As a young, growing order, SSC envisioned many sisters would reside in the motherhouse. To have a significant amount of space would allow the sisters to be relatively self-sufficient and, therefore, not dependent on those beyond the space of the convent. Eventually the sisters purchased a house at Magheramore in County Wicklow. They continue to occupy this house today. It was Archbishop McQuaid who drew the sister's attention to this house. He was informed about its availability though a letter from the previous owner who advised McQuaid of the property's suitability for a religious congregation.[109] The owner described Magheramore as having:

> *"About 30 acres of grounds which can be increased or decreased if desired, as I am the owner of the adjoining*

[107] Letter from Secretary to Archbishop McQuaid to Mother Vianney, 31st October 1947, Archdiocese of Dublin Archive, Columban File 1, AB 8/B.

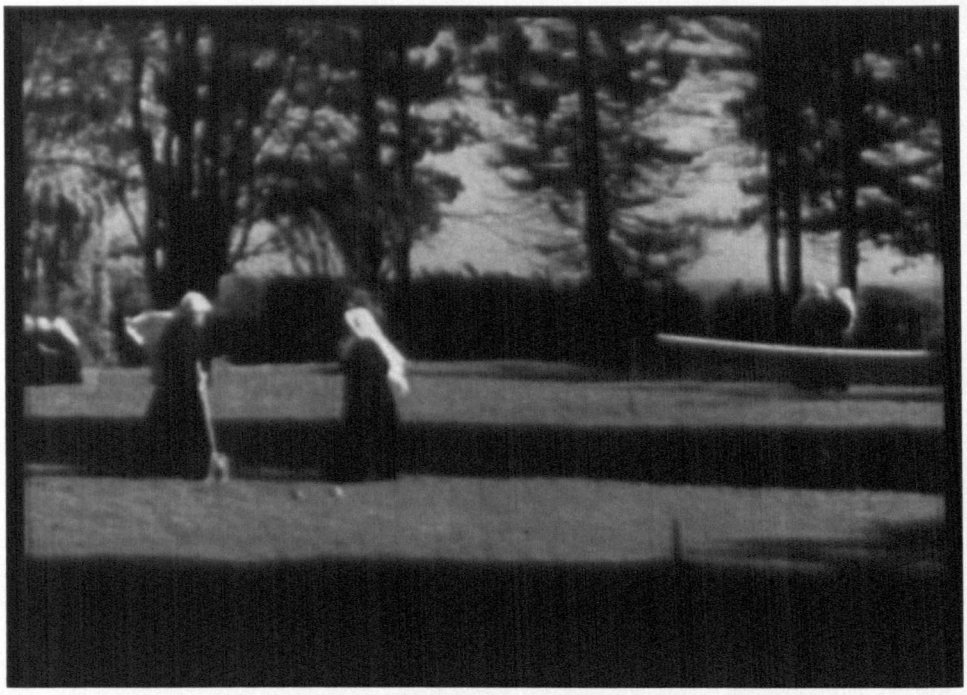
[108] Letter from Sister M Patrick to Archbishop McQuaid, 1948, Archive of the Archdiocese of Dublin, McQuaid papers, Columban file 1, AB 8/B.

[109] Letter from Mr. Christopher Cooney to Archbishop McQuaid, 30th April, 1956, Archive of the Archdiocese of Dublin. McQuaid papers, Columban File 2, AB 8/B.

> *lands. The grounds are beautifully wooded and well maintained, with an air of seclusion."*[110]

The owner's suspicion that Magheramore was suitable for a religious congregation proved correct for McQuaid approved of the house and the sisters would go on to purchase the property. The need for outdoor recreational space was also deemed important, as this scene from the SSC film *"For a Splendid Cause"* demonstrates:[111]

Figure 4.4 - Outside Recreation in "For a Splendid Cause"



Source: No date, Irish Film Archive, Missionary Sisters of St Columban, 10mins 16secs.

The sisters in the foreground are playing a game of croquet while badminton is being played in the background. This scene is set in the grounds of Magehramore and highlights the isolated setting of the motherhouse. The rurality of Magheramore provided the sisters with the means to relax beyond the gaze of the public and the convent's grounds could become a gendered space for the order.

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[110] *Ibid.*

[111] *For a Splendid Cause*, no date, Irish Film Archive, Missionary Sisters of St Columban, 10mins 16secs.

Once they occupied Magheramore the safeguarding of the sister's privacy was actively pursued. A few years after moving the motherhouse to Wicklow, two small houses with two yards and out buildings close to their motherhouse were put on the market. The order requested permission from McQuaid to buy them on the justification that:

> *"We feel that it would be a mistake to allow these buildings and yards to pass into other hands as the use of them by other parties might diminish our privacy."*[112]

This quote demonstrates the need to protect the convent from external influences. In moving the convent from Cahiracon to Magheramore the SSC were seeking closer proximity to Dublin but not at the expense of having to sacrifice the privacy and sanctity of their motherhouse. Their secluded yet isolated location in Magheramore, that was nonetheless an hour's journey to Dublin, served to fulfil the dual purpose of the motherhouse as administration centre and spiritual base.

In both the MMM and SSC novitiate and motherhouse, lay-people were generally excluded from entering this space. The seclusion of the convent was enforced both by the congregation and by the diocescan Bishops. Mother Mary Francis Xavier of SSC wrote to Bishop Fogarty of Killaloe to request permission to use the grounds of Cahiracon for a fund-raising fete. The fete would consist of Irish dancing competitions, a children's race and a fancy goods stall all within the ground of Cahricon, yet it was planned in such a way that:

> *"This would mean that <u>nothing</u> would be in the convent building nor on the lawns round the house. If you approve, we would like to have Clock golf on the lawn near the white gate opposite the laundry section. This is out of sight of the house. We would not have any chairs or seats on lawns near*

[112] Letter to Archbishop McQuaid from Mother M. Eucharia, 18th May 1959, Archive of Archdiocese of Dublin, McQuaid Papers, Columban file 3, AB 8/B.

> *the convent as there should be no reason for people to come round the house."*[113]

The fete was thus organised so that there would remain a fundamental difference between the fun outside and the order imposed within the convent, so that even during this exceptional day of festivities, lay-people would still not be allowed to enter the convent. In another example, the Mother Superior of SSC had to request special permission from the Bishop before non-religious men were allowed to enter the cell of a sick sister:

> *"As it may not be possible to accommodate her in the ground floor, I was wondering whether His Lordship would allow a couple of our men to come upstairs on Sunday morning to carry Sister down to Mass."*[114]

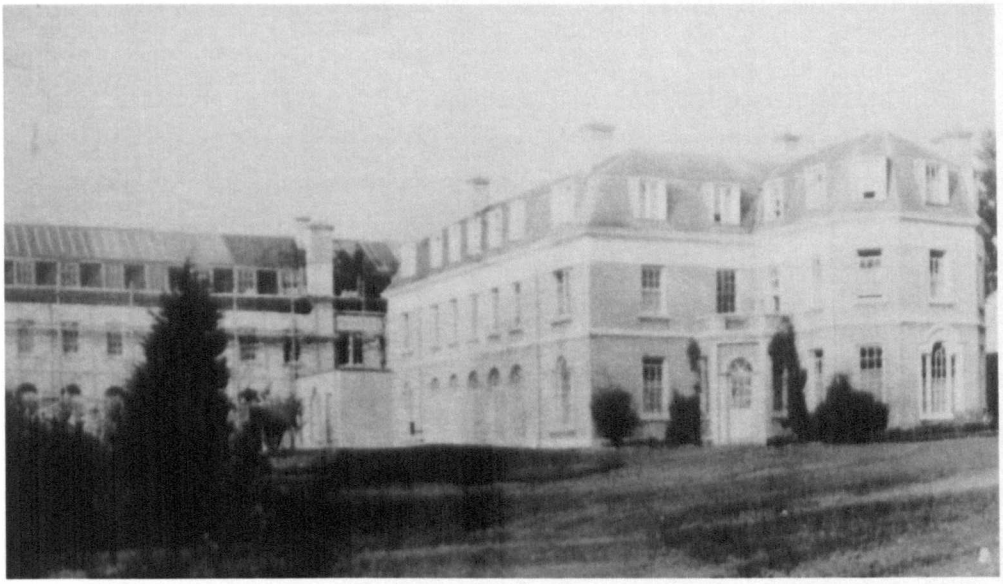
This quote demonstrates that the Bishop had considerable control over who could enter the space of the convent. There certainly appears to be a gendered element to this and for men to enter the female space of the congregation was a particular breech of the seclusion of the convent.

Unlike the rural setting of the SSC motherhouse the MMM motherhouse was perched on the edge of Drogheda town. It was officially opened on January 25th 1940:

[113] Letter from Sister M. Francis Xavier to Bishop Fogarty, 1st April 1938, Killaloe Diocesan Archive, Fogarty papers, Cahiracon Convent file, 1/8/A1/511.

[114] Letter from Sister M. Patrick to Father Hamilton, 22nd August 1938, Killaloe Diocesan Archives, Fogarty papers, Cahiracon Convent file, 1/8/A1/532.

Figure 4.5 - MMM Motherhouse and Novitiate



Source: *Medical Missionaries of Mary: Covering the First Twenty-Five Years,* (Nolan, 1962).

Within the MMM convent the parlour was designated as the primary space where lay people were able to enter:

> *"Art. 152. – In every Convent there shall be at least one parlour to receive visitors. The Sisters shall never go to the parlour without permission, except when the Superior has disposed otherwise. They shall remain there only for a reasonable time, and shall remember that they should edify their neighbour in all things, and guard their own soul against dissipation and worldliness."*[115]

Only the parlour could function as a place to receive secular guests because this room was not included in the daily routine of the sister. Although the parlour was still part of the convent, the sisters still had to fortify themselves from the secular influences of the world: "Art. 153. – In their conversations in the parlour the Sisters shall avoid all vain curiosity, and shall act with dignity, prudence and courtesy."[116] This attempt to regulate the behaviour of the sisters with seculars again implies that the external world was filled with corruptible influences and that through association one could become tarnished by it. It

[115] *Constitutions of the Medical Missionaries of Mary*, first edition, 1940, p. 67.
[116] *Ibid.*

would also appear that in certain parts of the convent absolutely no secular people could visit:

> *"Art. 149. – Though the Sisters of the Medical Missionaries of Mary on account of their special works are not bound by the law of enclosure, nevertheless, in every house of the congregation there shall be certain parts reserved exclusively for the use of the Sisters, and into these parts no externs may be admitted."*[117]

This restriction again reinforces the idea that the seclusion of the convent must be preserved and a perceived division between religious and lay-people was intimately acted out through access to the convent. Due to these regulations the motherhouses of both congregations were spaces where the presence of lay-people was rare. This allowed the congregation to create the convent as a space where religiosity and community could thrive without external influences encroaching on this space.

Even the nuns who had undergone their novitiate but were resident in the motherhouse were rarely seen outside this space. The SSC had to seek the permission of the Bishop of Killaloe if they wished to leave the convent. This included in personal matters as this letter requesting such permission demonstrates:

> *"Could you, in the Bishop's absence, grant permission for Sister Mary Paul, who has returned after seven years in China, to spend a week or so with her family in Co. Kerry?"*[118]

Bishop Fogarty once wrote a letter complaining of the behaviour of Mother Patrick:

> *"According to the Regulations that I have made and of which she must be aware, she was entitled to go to Dalgan without getting my permission, but she is not allowed without special permission from me to go to Foxford. I refuse her that*

[117] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

[118] Letter from Sister M. Patrick to Father Hamilton, 22nd August 1938, Killaloe Diocesan Archives, Fogarty papers, Cahricon Convent, file 1/8/A1/532.

> *permission and expect her, when her business at Dalgan is transacted, to return directly to her convent at Cahiracon...her system of doing what is irregular first and then after to ask my permission must henceforth stop once and for all."*[119]

The necessity of requiring the Bishop's permission to complete tasks beyond the convent strongly implies that a nun's place was within the convent and not in public space. The strictness to which the Bishop imposed the enclosure of nuns is particularly poignant considering the missionary nature of these orders. These same sisters would soon be embarking, or had just returned from the missions. Indeed because of the missionary nature of these orders it is inaccurate to write of the motherhouse as a closed-space. While these spaces may have existed quite separately from the local interactions that surrounded them, the motherhouse were nonetheless connected to and understood in relation to the mission fields. In oral history interviews the motherhouse emerges as place of arrivals and departures:

> *Kate: "Would the sisters coming back from the missions, would they tell you what to expect, exchange stories?"*
>
> *Sr. M: "Yes, and up until very recently. I mean I'm home three years now from the missions and up until very recently even all the old sisters here would have to get me or whoever it was to come out in the auditorium and talk about the missions, what you were doing, what you weren't doing, what was, so on and so on."*[120]

The sharing and exchange of stories between sisters within the motherhouse served to connect this space to the mission field beyond. In a similar manner, the SSC magazine wrote of Cahiracon not as an isolated space but rather one that is connected to the rest of the world through the missionaries that depart from this point:

> *"Starting in that little farmhouse on the banks of the Shannon... the Sisterhood of St. Columban has now circled*

[119] Letter from Bishop Fogarty to Fr. Blowick, 5th January, 1941, Killaloe Diocesan Archives, Fogarty papers.

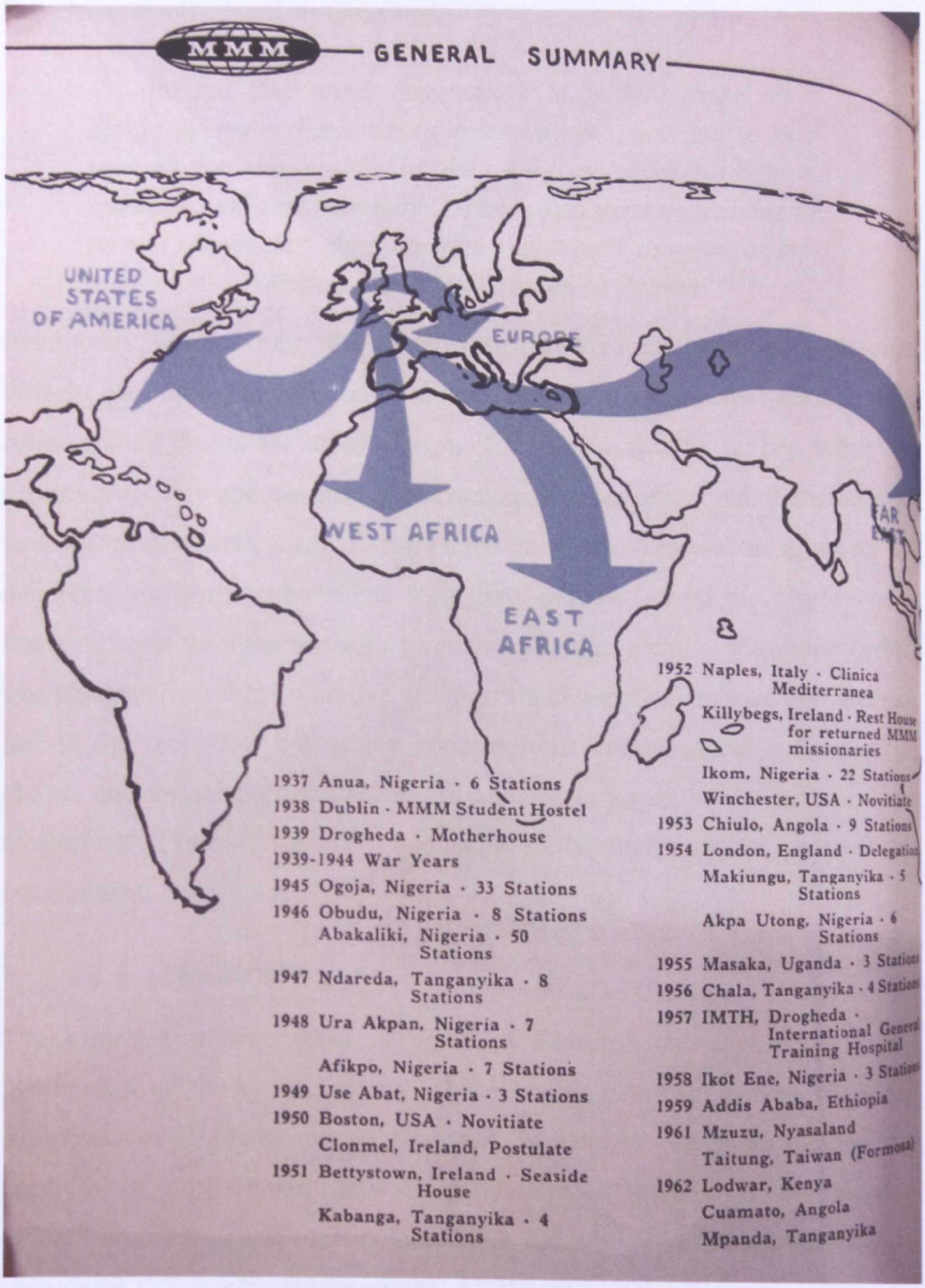
[120] Sr. M. Personal interview, 17th November 2009.

> *the globe, emulating the swiftest of planes that crowd the sky above its tranquil waters.*"[121]

The SSC house in Cahricon although quite separate and closed-off from the local spaces that surrounded it was, through personal contacts, connected to their distant mission fields. Furthermore, below is a map taken from their book *Medical Missionaries of Mary: Covering the first Twenty-five years of the Medical Missionaires of Mary, 1937-1962.* The maps serves as a visual depiction of the connectedness of MMM spaces in Ireland to MMM spaces throughout the world:

[121] *The Eastern Star.* Vol. 1 No.1, August – September, 1947. p. 2.

Figure 4.6 - "MMM General Summary"



Source : *Medical Missionaries of Mary : Covering the first twenty-five years of The Medical Missionaries of Mary*, 1937-1962 (Nolan, 1962)

The outward flow of arrows to represent nuns leaving Drogheda, aids in an understanding of the motherhouse as one that was connected to other spaces throughout the world. It depicts the universalist sentiment that was the essence

of the Church's missionary idea. For example, a visitor to the MMMs in Drogheda remarked in their magazine:

> *"It did not take much imagination to picture those other Sisters, so many thousands of miles way in space, but so very near in for the healing of the souls and bodies of poor, ignorant, suffering humanity.... How often must their thoughts turn to Drogheda? And how often must their prayers for still more Medical Missionaries of Mary go up to Heaven?"*[122]

Even today when visiting these motherhouses its rooms are filled with gifts brought back from the mission-field and consequently they are adorned with memories of places far away. Divya Tolia-Kelly (2004) in her work on exploring identity and memory in the homes of migrant women, demonstrates how material objects, such as mementos and souvenirs, act as enablers of memories and forge connections with these places. Indeed the display of a litany of items from the missions forges a collective identity within the order. The objects allow those who live amongst them access memories that are not just of the individual but of the congregation. These myriad collection of objects and the memories attached are allowed to permeate the space of the motherhouse (Tolia-Kelly, 2004) and testify to the many spatial aspects of the congregation.

4.4 The Hostels

The hostels that the orders occupied in Dublin were also vital in the functioning of the congregations. These hostels were conceived to allow student-sisters to pursue higher education in the city. Although lacking the canonical or constitutional status of the novitiate or motherhouse the function of each hostel was essential in facilitating the realization of the missionary aspirations of each congregation. McKenna (2006b) argues that the professionalism of Irish religious women may have been a significant draw to join a religious congregation. *Propaganda Fide* was insistent that female missionaries acquire professional training for medical work and it issued a decree, which stated: "Some Governments dent admissions to Sisters who have

[122] MMM, September 1949, p 6.

not the requisite diploma for caring the sick."[123] Within MMM the ability to undertake professional training was central to many of the sister's early experiences within the congregation and would dictate the role that they would go on to have on the missions. It is certainly true that the congregation encouraged the education of its members:

> *Sr. D: "I think another comment that I would make is that most sisters made advancement when they came into MMM, you know? Many of us came in with very little, some were older perhaps but didn't have the ability or hadn't the education behind them to push them on. But most got training for something, and I ended up as the medical administrator over in that hospital, its just how you can progress."*[124]

This section will explore how the space of the hostel was necessary in educating the sisters of the missionary congregations.

4.4.1 Locating the hostels in Dublin

All four missionary congregations wanted a presence in Dublin and had to request permission from Archbishop McQuaid to do so. The congregation of Our Lady of Apostles (OLA), who were based in Cork, wanted to expand their order into missionary work. Accordingly they wrote to Archbishop McQuaid requesting permission to reside in his diocese citing these reasons:

> *"That the council may also keep better informed of the changes and developments in the Irish Church which affect us as Religious and Missionaries. Proximity to the Nigerian Embassy would also facilitate the obtaining of our Sisters, Entry visas to Nigeria."*[125]

There were obvious political advantages to the location of Dublin. The city was also the location of Ireland's most prestigious universities and to train in a professional capacity was central to the success of the missionary congregations. An emphasis on professional training for the missionaries is

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[123] *Decree from Scared Congregation of Propagation of the Faith*, 11th February 1936, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(e)/1c.

[124] Sr. D. Personal interview, 17th November 2009.

[125] Letter to Archbishop McQuaid, 6th May 1971, Archive of Archdiocese of Dublin, McQuaid papers, Our Lady of Apostles file.

evidenced in this quote from the St Louis Sisters who were writing to Archbishop McQuaid to request the use of a house in Dublin:

> *"At our recent Chapter it was seceded that we would accept work on the Foreign Missions and in order to prepare for this work and also in view of the demands of various educational authorities we need to send a greater number of Sisters to the University."*[126]

This quote is an acknowledgement of the added academic necessities of missionary work and how this must lead the St. Louis Sisters to expand into Dublin. The need for professional training was considered from the very origins of the MMMs and when their Irish network was being planned, Dublin was highlighted as a significant location:

> *"For the success of our work it will be essential to have a house in either Dublin or Cork, Dublin should be the centre of activity for such a big and important move in, having the University and such splendid training schools for the nursing profession."*[127]

Dublin was heralded as potentially the 'centre' of MMM activity because the city was unrivalled in Ireland in its ability to offer educational institutions. Of particular benefit was that many of these medical institutions were infused with Catholic morality. Indeed between 1902 and 1940 the Holy Office released many publications regarding the practice of medicine within Catholic moral teaching, often these ethical issues were focused upon birth control, sterilization and ectopic pregnancies (Walters and Moraczewski, 2003). Inglis notes that during the twentieth-century in Ireland: "departments of medicine within the universities became dominated by the catholic code of medical ethics" (Inglis, 1987 p 59) and as such "religious and medical discourse became interlinked" (ibid). This was obviously important to Mother Mary and in the MMM archive there is a dateless piece of paper written in her

[126] Letter from Sister Columbanus to Archbishop McQuaid, 11th September 1944, Archive of Archdiocese of Dublin, McQuaid papers, St. Louis File.

[127] Letter from Mother Mary Martin to Father Clarke, 9th May 1936, MMM archive, file I/Cong/1(e)/17.

handwriting entitled: "Reasons why we should have a foundation in Dublin"[128] One of these reasons is that in Dublin the sisters could have access to education: "in apologetic matters in medical ethics etc."[129] The medical work conducted by the MMMs, therefore, had to be infused with Catholic teaching. During the initial establishment of MMM Mother Mary wrote that: "It is clearly necessary that the Sister should attend Catholic Hospitals and Universities to obtain the requisite qualifications."[130] The distinction of Catholic centres of education was particularly important in regards to the ethics of midwifery. Upon acquiring a hostel in Dublin, Mother Mary would reflect:

> *"How I thank God for having a house of studies in the Dublin Diocese it would be very serious for our midwifes and doctors to attend anything but a catholic training school."*[131]

Catholic morality that pervaded the practice of medicine was particularly apparent in the field of midwifery. Mother Mary once wrote: "A very nice girl applied to me the other day had been trained at a London Maternity hospital so many things were contrary to the catholic teaching."[132] One of the central purposes of MMM was to administer to births on the mission field and as Mother Mary's quote demonstrates, an MMM nurse or doctor had to fulfil this role within the teachings of the Catholic Church. From these quotes it is clear that the city of Dublin was a place where Catholic ideals on morality were evidenced in its educational institutions. Dublin was thus perceived as a place where the sisters could learn medicine as well as theology and ethics and would provide them with the most suitable education, which could subsequently be circulated onto the mission fields.

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[128] Reasons why we should have a foundation in Dublin, date unknown, MMM Archive, file 1/Cong/1(b)/8.
[129] *Ibid.*
[130] Letter from Marie Martin to Society of the Propagation of the Faith, 11 February 1936. MMM Archive, file 1/Cong/1(e).
[131] Letter from Mary Martin to Monsignor Moynagh, 24th February 1938, MMM Archive, file 1/Cong/1(c) /37.
[132] *Ibid.*

4.4.2 The power of Archbishop McQuaid in Dublin

The control that Archbishop McQuaid exercised over the sisters in the Dublin Archdiocese serves as a useful example of the subordinate relationship between the religious sisters and the male hierarchy of the Church. McQuaid was appointed to the role of the Archbishop in November 1940. His rule over Dublin was lengthy and his rigid control and conservative beliefs were to be his legacies (Whyte, 1971). Each hostel that the missionary sisters wished to establish had to receive the consent of the Dublin Archbishop before it could become occupied by the congregation. Consequently, the religious landscape of Dublin was directly controlled by the Archbishop. During his time in this role, McQuaid refused many requests by the orders to open a house of studies. In response to the request from the Mother General of the OLA to reside in Dublin, McQuaid wrote: "We are overwhelmed with such requests and it must occur to you that Dublin is only one of many dioceses in Ireland."[133] McQuaid appeared to harbour some reluctance towards missionary congregations residing in his Archdiocese. It is perhaps the case that he disliked missionary orders siphoning off funds from congregations that offered their charitable services within Dublin. Indeed during his time as Archbishop he oversaw the expansion of many Catholic welfare institutions (Whyte, 1971). When he did grant permission for a hostel this was to be under the condition that: "the sisters shall not collect any money in this diocese without the express, written permission of the Archbishop."[134] He once wrote to Mother Mary explaining his refusal to allow her to collect funds in Dublin:

> "*You will understand that Dublin is already overwhelmed with every manner of missionary collection. My Council will scarcely favour the Diocese being opened up to still another, and a very active-agency of collection.*"[135]

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[133] Letter from Archbishop McQuaid to Reverend Mother Fachanan, 2nd August 1961, Archive of Archdiocese of Dublin, McQuaid papers, Our Lady of Apostles file.

[134] *Agreement between Archbishop and Missionary Sisters of St. Columban*, 16th September 1942, Archdiocese of Dublin Archive, McQuaid papers, Columban file 1, AB 8/B.

[135] Letter from Archbishop McQuaid to Marie Martin, 12th August 1961, Archive of Archdiocese of Dublin, McQuaid papers, MMM file 3.

Missionary congregations offered no services to Dublin and potentially they could direct money away from the institutions that would. Perhaps for this reason McQuaid was reluctant to sanction the establishment of the female religious orders in his diocese. In his position as Archbishop he was focused on the issues that fell within the jurisdiction of his diocese. Indeed this reflects the Irishness of much of the clergy, for as Brown notes: "it was a national church in the sense that it drew its bishops from its priesthood and its priesthood in the main from the people" (Brown, 2004 p 30). The inability for McQuaid to place his diocese within the desires of the Vatican again demonstrates the complexities of the Catholic Church and the tensions between national and international needs.

If McQuaid did grant permission for a hostel this was not necessarily a permanent arrangement. The sisters could only reside in the diocese "for the time that it may please the Archbishop of Dublin."[136] If the permission to reside in the diocese was revoked then the sisters would have to leave the diocese. McQuaid and his council also had the power to veto the specific locations with which the sisters could establish their missionary houses. The OLA Sisters were requested to "be good enough before purchasing or renting a property to submit to His Grace the name and location of the property."[137] In a similar manner, permission for the SSC to occupy a hostel was issued on the condition "that the site of the Residence be approved by the Archbishop, before the lease or purchase of the property be concluded."[138] In stipulating this clause it would appear that McQuaid wanted to have ultimate control over the locations of the congregations and thus he dictated the religious landscape of his diocese.

McQuaid could also regulate how these female missionary congregations used the hostels they occupied. When the SSC established their hostel they had to

[136] Letter from Archbishop McQuaid to Rev. Mother M. Patrick, SSC, 12th May, 1942, Archive of Archdiocese of Dublin, McQuaid Papers, Columban file 1, AB 8/B.

[137] Letter from Secretary of Archbishop McQuaid to Reverend Mother of OLA, 20th April 1968. Archive of Archdiocese of Dublin, McQuaid papers, Our Lady of Apostles file.

[138] Letter from Archbishop McQuaid to Mother M. Patrick, 12th May, 1942, Archive of Archdiocese of Dublin, McQuaid papers, Columban file 1, AB 8/B.

sign an agreement with the Archbishop that they would abide by: "All such Regulations as the Ordinary of this Diocese has made or may make for the good order of Religious residing in the Diocese."[139] Of particular note McQuaid dictated that the hostel was to be used for the purpose of education only. He made clear the canonical status of the hostel in granting the SSC the use of a House of Studies: "1. That the permission for such Residence be not regarded as implying the foundation of a Religious House, in the canonical sense."[140] By only granting permission for a hostel, McQuaid avoided the responsibility towards the order that would have been his had the motherhouse been in his diocese. When the SSC were establishing a hostel in Dublin, Sister Mary Patrick wrote to the Bishop of Killaloe to explain the status of the house:

> *"To ask your Lordship's consent and blessing for the opening of a little house in Dublin as the Archbishop [McQuaid] explained, it would not be a regular foundation, but in the nature of a hostel."*[141]

McQuaid granted the SSC permission to buy 56 Merrion Square as a hostel but he stipulated that:

> *"Student Sisters may reside at 56 Merrion Square in this diocese, for the duration only of the time necessary or useful for the pursuit of their studies, due exception being made for the Sisters holding office."*[142]

In this letter McQuaid firmly dictates that the use of the hostel was restricted to those members of the congregation who were studying in the city.

The MMMs were able to acquire a house named Rosemount in Booterstown, Dublin to function as their hostel. Yet upon purchase Marie Martin wrote to

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[139] Letter from Archbishop McQuaid to Rev. Mother M. Patrick, 12th May, 1942, Archive of Archdiocese of Dublin, McQuaid papers, Columban file 1, AB 8/B.

[140] *Ibid.*

[141] Letter from Sister M. Patrick to Bishop of Killaloe, 9th May 1942, Killaloe Diocese Archives, Fogarty papers, Cahiracon Convent File, 1/8/A1/547.

[142] *Agreement between SSC and Diocese, 16th September, 1942.* Archive of Archdiocese of Dublin, McQuaid papers, Columban File 1/AB 8/B.

Riberi to say that she was "disappointed we did not get a freer hand"[143] in how the house could be used by the order. Moynagh in Nigeria wrote to Marie Martin: "Thank God that at least you have been able to obtain a house which will serve as a house of studies"[144] but he also acknowledged that: "The conditions are as you say very harsh."[145] In stipulating that Rosemount was only to be utilised by student-sisters the hostel existed without the religious significance of the motherhouse or the novitiate. Thus it could not be used to house postulants or sisters who were yet to take their profession. This distinction over the use of space for religious purposes was important for it reflected the intimacies of the geography of the Catholic Church. Upon receiving permission to purchase and use Rosemount as a house of studies, Marie Martin made it clear that she had to abide by these regulations over the space of the house:

> *"We propose nothing at "Rosemount" that will give rise to any of the delicate questions which His Grace, the Archbishop of Dublin is reluctant to have raised."*[146]

Marie Martin was assuring Dr. Paschal Robinson that Rosemount was to be used solely as a hostel. These 'delicate questions' relate to the role that McQuaid was to have in the congregation. The control McQuaid had over the localised space of Rosemount did not relate to his power over the entire congregation as their motherhouse and novitiate resided in another diocese. Nonetheless to dictate the canonical status of the sister's house was a reminder of the wider hierarchy of the Catholic Church that these orders were operating within. The status of their houses in Dublin had to comply both with Vatican and diocesan regulations. In this relationship McQuaid could be a tough benefactor. He once wrote to SSC stating:

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[143] Letter from Marie Martin to Archbishop Riberi, 2nd January 1938, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(b)/11.

[144] Letter from Monsignor Moynagh to Marie Martin, 20th January 1938, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(c)/36.

[145] *Ibid.*

[146] Letter from Marie Martin to Most Rev. Dr. Paschal Robinson, 13th October 1936, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(a)/59.

> *"I would advise that your Congregation try to settle into the landscape very quietly, after the manner of other Congregations who have been given by me the privilege of being admitted to my Diocese"*[147]

The subordinate relationship between the sisters and their Bishops is again highlighted in this quote, for to be resident in a diocese was to be under the constant vigilance of the Bishop.

4.4.3 Maintaining community and spiritual life in Dublin

Those sisters resident in the hostels had to be able to preserve their religious life without interruption from external influences. Yet due to their urban location specific threats lay beyond the hostels that the sisters had to negotiate. Thus creating and maintaining the spiritual space of the Dublin hostel was a priority. Within the MMM order there appears to have been some concern that the work of the missionary sisters and their inevitable interactions with lay people would disturb their interior life that was cultivated in the novitiate. Fr. Hugh Kelly, SJ in a letter to Marie Martin entitled, Hints and Tips, highlighted this concern:

> *"The danger that the work and freedom will be to the spiritual life: how to guard against it: what kind of spiritual formation to aim at? What are to be the particular virtues of the society? What kind of training in the noviceship [sic] to be?"*[148]

Sisters could be granted permission to participate in professional training once the novitiate period was complete and their first profession had been taken. To transfer to the hostels in Dublin was perhaps the first test of the durability of the routine and discipline instilled in the individual in the novitiate. There is a sense that if the sisters were working in Dublin and away from their motherhouses they may lose the religiosity that was pervasive in this space. Therefore, the SSC wanted their student sisters: "to be united in one

[147] Letter From McQuaid to Mother Vianney, 5th June 1957, Archive of Archdiocese of Dublin, McQuaid papers, Columban Sisters file 2, AB 8/B.

[148] Letter from Fr. Hugh Kelly, SJ to Marie Martin, date unknown, MMM archive, file I/Cong/2/5.

community"[149] when living and studying in Dublin. When writing to Archbishop McQuaid to request the space of a hostel for this purpose, Sr. Mary Patrick of the SSC wrote: "Our principal motive, apart from the economy obligatory to us, is to enable our Student Sisters to follow their own Rule and perform their Religious Exercises in common"[150] Thus during their professional training it was deemed imperative that the sisters would not lose the religious values associated with their community. The hostels would exist as a continuation of the space of religious practice and community life as experienced in the motherhouse or novitiate. Likewise in MMM, Mother Mary stated that a house of studies should exist "for their spiritual life."[151]

When the Mother General of the St. Louis Sisters requested a hostel in Dublin she reasoned to McQuaid that when her sisters stayed in secular accommodation this was a: "great inconvenience and no little disturbance to the normal routine of religious life in the convent."[152] The fear that religious routines may be broken was a motivating factor in the establishment of the hostels. In another example this time from the OLA Sisters: "[the Mother Provincial] would like it much better, to have them together under the supervision of their own Superiors in a little place of their own."[153] Therefore to establish hostels in Dublin allowed the rhythm of community life to be transferred from the novitiate to these urban locations. This was particularly relevant in Dublin as the sisters would be attending university away from their community. The welding together of personal spirituality, professional training and responsibility to the congregation was a new challenge to the recently established MMMs:

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[149] Letter from Sister Mary Patrick to Archbishop McQuaid, 9th May 1942, Archive of Archdiocese of Dublin, McQuaid papers, Columban Sisters file 1, AB 8/B.

[150] Letter from Sister Mary Patrick to Archbishop McQuaid, 9th May 1942, Archive of the Archbishop of Dublin, Columban Sisters file 1, AB 8/B.

[151] Letter from Mary Martin to Most Rev. Paschal Robinson. 16th July 1936, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(a)/39.

[152] Letter from Mother Columbanus to Monsignor Boylan, 6th November 1958, Archive of the Archdiocese of Dublin, McQuaid Papers, St Louis Sisters file.

[153] Letter from Mother Edna to Archbishop McQuaid, 3rd November 1947, Archdiocese of Dublin Archive, McQuaid papers, Our Lady of Apostles file.

> *"Thus the two sides of the Medical Missionary of Mary's life must go hand in hand: the religious life is the root, the active life the blossom. The religious is formed in the Novitiate years, but after that time, during the post-graduate years, the religious and medical life must be blended together."*[154]

To manage a religious as well as a professional life, the hostel was created to prevent the individual from neglecting their spiritual development. In another example, a St. Louis Sister wrote to McQuaid stating that due to an increase in the numbers in Dublin that "We have had to be content with a house outside the Convent grounds"[155] while acknowledging that "outside the convent grounds is most unsuitable."[156] To counter this they requested permission from McQuaid to purchase 7 Grosvenor Road. This address was located next to convent that they already occupied in Dublin. In a letter explaining the desired purchase of 7 Grosvenor Road Mother Raphael wrote:

> *"For it can be reached at the back, without our having to go out on the street or road from our own grounds... this road is very badly lighted and besides is often the favourite walk of rowdy, and I regret to say, drunken young soldiers."*[157]

This is a clear example of the concern within the order that the sisters ought to be kept away from such behaviour. The convent, therefore, serves as protection from these influences. In responding to the matter, McQuaid sought the opinion of Fr. Patrick Dunne, who wrote explaining that the sisters "desire to have all the nuns living as near as possible to the convent."[158] Due to this report McQuaid sanctioned the purchase of the house and the consolidation of the St Louis convent on the same grounds would: "make for the more strict

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[154] *Medical Missionaries of Mary: Covering the First Twenty-Five years of the Medical Missionaries of Mary*, 1937 – 1962, p. 76.

[155] Letter from Mother Francis Assisi to Archbishop McQuaid, 18 February 1942, Archive of Archdiocese of Dublin, McQuaid papers, St. Louis Sisters file.

[156] *Ibid.*

[157] Letter from Mother Raphael to Archbishop McQuaid, 22nd February 1942, Archive of Archdiocese of Dublin, McQuaid papers, St. Louis Sisters file.

[158] Letter from Fr. Dunne to Archbishop McQuaid, 8th December 1943, Archive of Archdiocese of Dublin. McQuaid papers, St. Louis Sisters File.

observance of community life."[159] Both the St. Louis Sisters and McQuaid thus shared the view that community life was best preserved within the confines of houses that the sisters could control and where interaction with lay-people could be minimized.

The perceived threats of the urban environment were noted in McQuaid's insistence upon "regulations concerning the presence of religious on the city street after 8 p.m. must be safeguarded."[160] To reside in the Archdiocese of Dublin the sisters were expressly prohibited from venturing outdoors beyond this time, except for attendance at university class. If the sisters did need to attend university later than this, for example, for evening classes at University College Dublin, the St. Louis Sisters stated that: "we would arrange for the Sisters to come home by taxi on late evenings."[161] In a similar manner, when requesting permission to speak at a late-evening Legion of Mary meeting Sr. Vianney asked McQuaid: "Would we be considered off the streets if we travelled there and back in a car?"[162] A hand–written response on the letter by McQuaid replies: "I approve. In a car, you are not 'on the streets.'"[163] The regulations that confined the sisters to their hostel after 8 o'clock again serve to remove the presence of the sisters from the nighttime landscape of the city of Dublin. Their position in a car was acceptable to McQuaid for in this state they would not be interacting with the urban environment.

McQuaid displayed similar controlling tendencies in his dealings with the MMMs. Mother Mary described Rosemount as:

> *"A well built house, compact, secluded with a good profitable kitchen garden and room for expansion if*

[159] Letter from to Mother M. Gonzaga, 9th July 1943, Archive of Archdiocese of Dublin, McQuaid papers, St. Louis Sisters file.
[160] Letter from the Secretary to the Archbishop to Reverend Mother of St. Louis Sisters, 27th September 1951, Archdiocese of Dublin, McQuaid papers, St Louis Sisters file.
[161] Letter from M. Columbanus to McQuaid, 12th October 1960, Archdiocese of Dublin Archive, McQuaid Papers, St Louis Sisters file.
[162] Letter from Sr. Mary Vianney to McQuaid, 27th October 1952, Archdiocese of Dublin Archive, McQuaid Papers, St Columban Sisters file 1, AB 8/B.
[163] *Ibid.*

> *necessary. Ten minutes by bus and fifteen minutes by tram to the city."*[164]

The sisters sought permission to purchase a house near their grounds at Rosemount. McQuaid granted this request:

> *"I am glad to sanction your purchase of the bungalow and one acre adjoining Rosemount, Booterstown. This property will safeguard Rosemount and enable you to build a hostel for the sisters."*[165]

The term 'safeguard' implies that the MMM house was potentially under threat if other undesirable elements physically encroached on the space of Rosemount. In a similar set of circumstances McQuaid agreed to allow the St. Louis Sisters to buy a house near their convent for it would be "undesirable if it were bought by strangers and turned into flats or bed-sitters' like its neighbours."[166] Of course, the sisters still had to leave the hostel in order to attend their lectures. Many current MMMs recall seeing sisters at the same university lectures that they attended as young, secular women:

> *"I got in to Jervis Street, one of the hospitals in Dublin and I did my nursing. And when I was doing my nursing there, to my surprise, there were 5 MMMs. Because at that time the hospital here didn't finish the training, it started as far as pre-lim. So they were, I was very impressed by them. They were really very, very good in their spirit of generosity, more then anything spiritual, they were really so good... I was really very impressed by the spirit, they were really very good, they'd go off and say their prayers they were and very, very, very good to us. You'd see if you'd like to go off someplace, I was very impressed by them, they were really lovely women, very human."*[167]

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[164] Letter from Marie Martin to Most Rev. Paschal Robinson, 11th September 1936. MMM Archive, file I/Cong/1(a)/49.

[165] Letter from Archbishop McQuaid to Marie Martin, 22nd July1960, Archive of Archdiocese of Dublin, McQuaid papers, Medical Missionaries of Mary file 2

[166] Letter to Archbishop McQuaid from Archbishop Michael O'Connell, 13th October 1969, Archive of Archdiocese of Dublin, McQuaid papers, St Louis Sisters file

[167] Sr. C. Personal interview, 18th November 2009.

The presence of MMM nuns on her nursing course inspired this sister to eventually join the order. Likewise, in another interview, a sister stated seeing some MMMs attend her local church in Dublin:

> *"I was staying in Booterstown and I used to go from Booterstown up to Mount Merrion because I had a job there because I had to pay my digs you see. And um, one morning I was going into that, I always went to mass and holy communion every morning. And I went in and I was going into mass there was two going in before me, they were flying like me, because I was late. And when we were arriving into the church I noticed that there were eight, about eight altogether of these people all dressed in grey or whatever they were."*[168]

This first encounter with the sisters filled this sister with curiosity and prompted her to make enquires into the order. Thus when in Dublin it was impossible for the sisters to reside completely within the confines of the hostel. In the life of the missionary sister, even in Dublin, it was inevitable that they had to face interactions with lay people and the world beyond the convent. Yet this was only allowed after the novitiate period had been completed and the sister was familiar with the demands of religious life.

The justification for the existence of the hostels was very much reliant upon the argument that these sisters needed professional training, yet this was not to be achieved at the detriment of their spirituality. Religious life had to be maintained in Dublin, for it was a place that was seen as a threat to spirituality. Therefore, the religious routines established in the novitiate had to be mirrored in the hostel, to safeguard the inner religiosity of the sister.

4.5 The International Missionary Training Hospital

Perhaps the most prominent space of the MMM congregation was the International Missionary Training Hospital (IMTH). This hospital was located adjacent to the MMM motherhouse in Drogheda. Opened in September 1957, the hospital was described as "dominating Drogheda, on a height above the

[168] Sr. B. Personal interview, 27th August 2009.

town."[169] The IMTH was the largest building any of these female missionary orders were responsible for and many Irish Bishops and political figures such as Eamon de Valera, the once Taoiseach and future President of Ireland, attended its opening ceremony. The opening of the hospital signified the significant strides that MMM had made from its difficult early years to acceptance by Ireland's political and religious elite. *The Irish Independent,* reporting from the opening ceremony stated that: "Everyone was alive to the significance in the development in one of Ireland's great missionary enterprises"[170] and indeed the hospital was the most visible achievement of the Irish missionary movement.

4.5.1 IMTH and the practice of Christian medicine

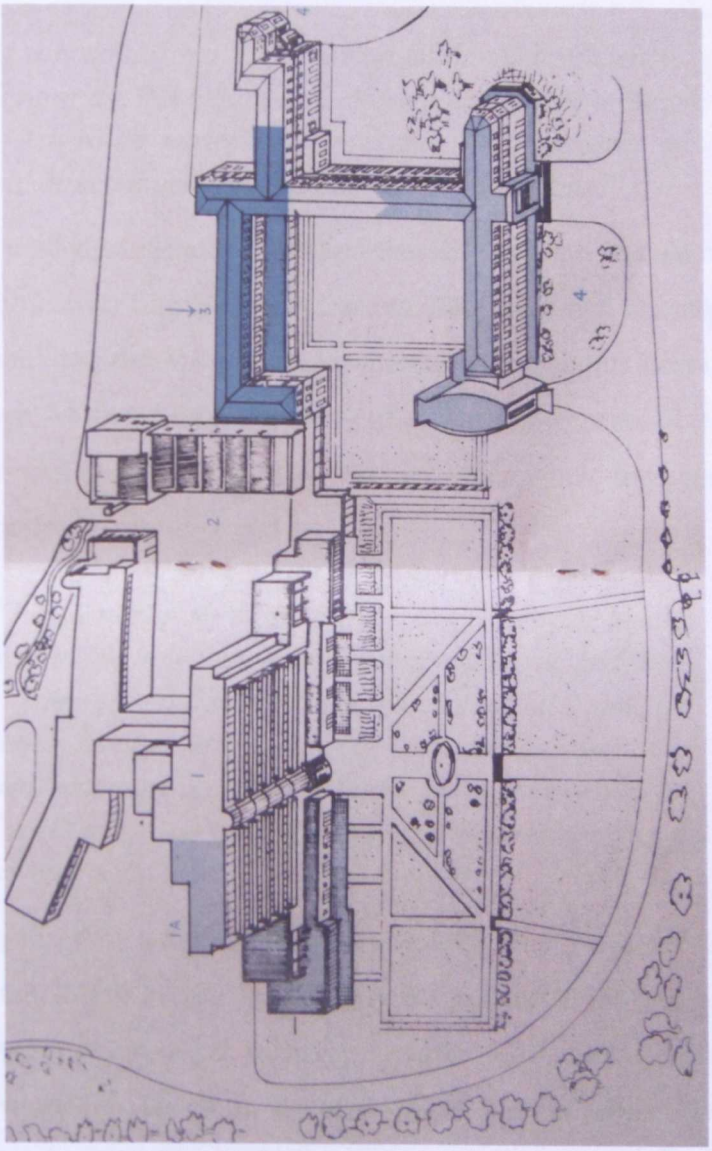
The IMTH was a 200 bed general hospital and infused medical practice with a Catholic morality. This is made particularly apparent when studying the intentions behind its construction. In an article featured in the MMM magazine Mother Mary's reasons behind the commissioning of the building was outlined:

> *"Her mental vision contemplates its value to the Community enabling Sisters to acquire their complete religious and professional training without losing daily contact with the Mother House, the source and fountain head at which they must imbibe the spirit of the Congregation."*[171]

As this quote highlights the work of the MMMs cannot be neatly separated into religious and professional parts. This can be demonstrated in the location of the IMTH for it was physically connected to the Motherhouse through a corridor:

[169] *Irish Independent*, 27 October 1953 p. 6
[170] *Irish Independent*, 4th October 1956 p. 4
[171] *Medical Missionaries of Mary Magazine*, January- February 1953, Vol. XIV, no. 1, p 10

Figure 4.7 - Plan of the International Missionary Training Centre



Source: *Medical Missionaries of Mary: Twenty-First Anniversary* (1958), p 32 – 33

The Motherhouse is despicted on the right of this picture while the IMTH is situated on the left. This corridor, which has only recently been demolished, allowed easy access between the convent and the hospital. It was intended that the MMM sisters could work shifts in the IMTH but eat meals, attend mass and sleep in the convent. This drawing depicts the marrying together of the religious and professional life of the MMM sister and the IMTH was envisioned to be the ideal place for this training to occur. MMM sisters who

recently qualified as doctors would train for a year in IMTH before embarking on their missionary service overseas. It was:

> *"Not only a hospital that excels in professional proficiency, for that it must do, but before and above all, it strives to be a school of Christian perfection, animated with the spirit of Christ, and directed and informed by missionary ideals."*[172]

The IMTH was created to embody Christian morality and this in turn could be imparted onto those who trained there. Because the order had commissioned and owned the building the MMMs could, therefore, infuse this hospital with Catholic teachings. Mother Mary and many of the sisters were involved in the design of the hospital to ensure that it would be a place where medicine could be efficiently practiced:

> *Sr. Dy: "I used to slip up to the fittings everyday after lunch, I'd run over to see how things were going you know, and then one day I came into the sluice room. No first of all I saw the theatre rooms, they were two very big ones, and I thought the sluice room was very small so I said I thought it would be better of they took a few feet off one of the theatres and put it into the sluice room."*[173]

This advice, dispensed by a sister who was a trained nurse, was subsequently acted upon. Mother Mary herself took a very active role in the design of the hospital. She was no doubt aided in this process by the fact that the architect who she commissioned to design the hospital was in fact her brother, Desmond Martin. The following picture is of Mother Mary studying the plans for the IMTH:

[172] *Medical Missionaries of Mary*, November 1957, p. 17.
[173] Sr. Dy. Personal interview, 17th November 2009.

Figure 4.8 - Mother Mary with plans for the IMTH

Source: *Medical Missionaries of Mary: Twenty-First Anniversary* (1958)

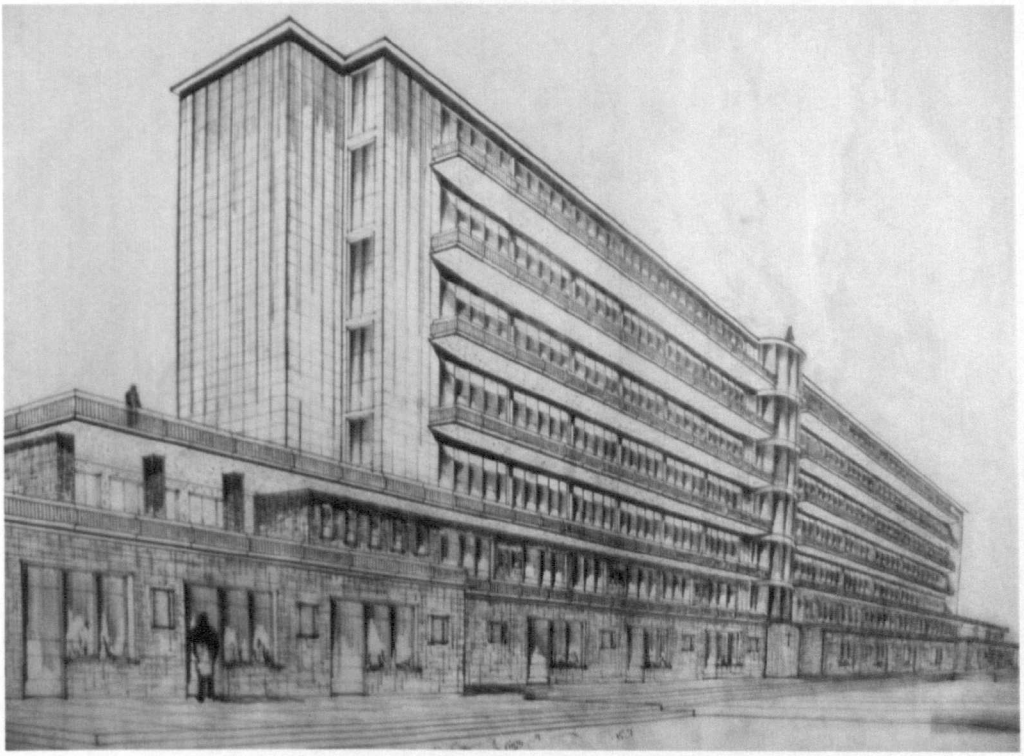
The hospital was also kitted out with state-of-the-art medical equipment and in doing so reflected the progressive ethos of the MMM congregation. An article in MMM magazine described the equipment within IMTH as "a marvel of modern methods,"[174] examples of which include television equipment to relay theatre operations to trainees and electronic paging equipment. The use of technological modernity in IMTH alongside Catholic medical ethics reflects two noticable factors behind the creation of the MMM congregation; the spread of Catholicism alongside the embrace of modern medicine.

[174] *Medical Missionaries of Mary*, August –September 1961, p. 19

4.5.2 The iconography of the IMTH

To study the iconography incorporated into the design of the IMTH is to explore the apparent contradictions between the use of secular modernist architecture alongside religious symbolism. The building design utilized recognizable features of modernist architecture for example its use of clean lines, concrete and glass and there is a clear internationalist element to its design:

Figure 4.9 - Plans for the IMTH

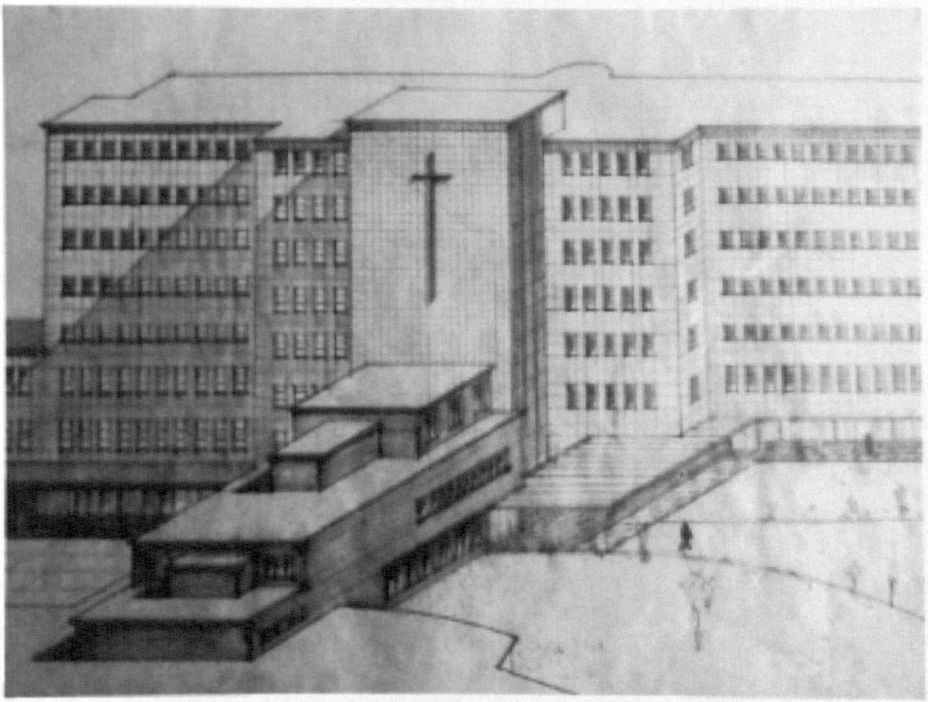


Source: Irish Architectural Archive

The twentieth-century and particularly after Vatican II saw an increased use of modern architectural styles in churches and ecclesiastical buildings throughout Europe (Heathcote and Moffatt, 2007). The functional aspects of modern architecture lent itself to a fundamental, basic interpretation of religious liturgy that was consolidated during Vatican II (Heathcote and Moffatt, 2007). A trend for concrete, glass, open spaces in churches allowed for a freer rituals of worship that reflected changing attitudes of worship (ibid). The appropriation of a modernist architectural style in the IMTH in some ways encompasses the

outward-looking, progressive nature of the order, for MMM was a congregation that looked beyond the island of Ireland for its work but also for its inspiration. Yet alongside its modernist design, with its connotations of secularism, the building incorporated recognisability Christian iconography. Emblazoned on the North side of the hospital was a significantly sized crucifix:

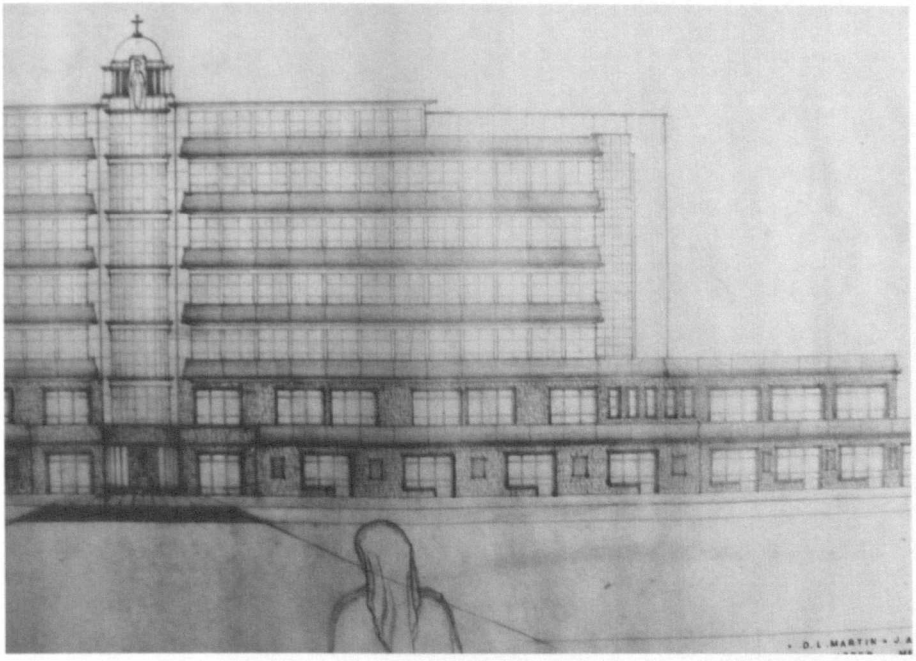
Figure 4.10 - Plans for the IMTH, North Elevation



Source: Irish Architectural Archive

Furthermore on the south elevation there was a large statue of the Virgin Mary on the roof of the building. The prominent location of the hospital meant that this statue of Mary looked over the town of Drogheda and served as a reminder of the presence of MMM in the locality:

Figure 4.11 - Plans for the IMTH, South Elevation



Source: Irish Architectural Archive

Viewed from every angle the IMTH projected easily recognizable Christian iconography. As Marina Warner (1976) writes, Mary is often considered as the mediator between people as sinners and the divinity of Jesus. The elevated position of her statute on the IMTH reminds the viewer of Mary's proximity to heaven (ibid). Mary is a symbol of healing but also she is called upon to aid in a favourable judgement of one's soul when they die (Warner, 1976). Therefore her association with a hospital seems doubly relevant. Indeed the congregation deliberately chose the symbolism of the building to be an outward projection of religious fervour:

> "*The religious significance behind all the work of the Medical Missionaries of Mary is symbolized in the very structure of the International Missionary Training Hospital.*"[175]

The IMTH design was intended to reflect the Catholic ethos of the order. This included the "strikeningly beautiful Chapel done in a very modern style"[176]

[175] *Medical Missionaries of Mary Magazine*, August –September 1961, p. 19.
[176] *Medical Missionaries of Mary*, August –September 1961, p 9.

which was symbolically placed at the centre of the hospital.[177] The positioning of the chapel on the ground floor, at the heart of the building, ensured that this space was to be a focal point of the entire hospital. The appropriation of a progressive, forward-looking architectural style used alongside Catholic iconography sat comfortably with the MMMs. The IMTH was to be the centerpiece of the MMM congregation and the design of the building can indeed be seen to represent a progressive, optimistic world-view held by the order that nonetheless was informed through Catholic teachings. There is an obvious contrast here to the inward-looking Irish clergy, for example McQuaid, who was only focused upon Dublin.

4.5.3 IMTH and Ireland

The ability of MMM to afford the construction of the IMTH demonstrates the success of the congregation in attracting funds to the missionary cause. The total cost was £550,000[178] of which the government gave a grant of £150,000. A further £10,000 was donated from the Vatican.[179] A significant proportion of the remaining money was received through donations made from the Irish public and the MMM devoted much of their publicity material to the raising of funds. This was something that McQuaid was very sceptical of and he once wrote that: "She [Mother Mary] wants to crack open Dublin for her Drogheda project."[180] Mother Mary was issued with a warning of McQuaid's attitude to raising funds in Dublin that would be spent elsewhere: "[His Grace] will not tolerate the direction of any appeal activities in the Diocese of Dublin by any committee external to the diocese of Dublin."[181] However Mother Mary did not view the IMTH as a local project confined to Drogheda or even Ireland. If

[177] *Ibid.*

[178] *Irish Independent*, 4th October 1956, p. 4.

[179] *Ibid.*

[180] Letter from Archbishop McQuaid to Right Rev. Mgr. O'Reilly, 9th February 1962, Archive of Archdiocese of Dublin, McQuaid papers, Medical Missionaries of Mary file 3.

[181] Letter from Secretary to the Archbishop to Mother Mary, 20th February 1962, Archive of Archdiocese of Dublin, McQuaid papers, Medical Missionaries of Mary file 3 .

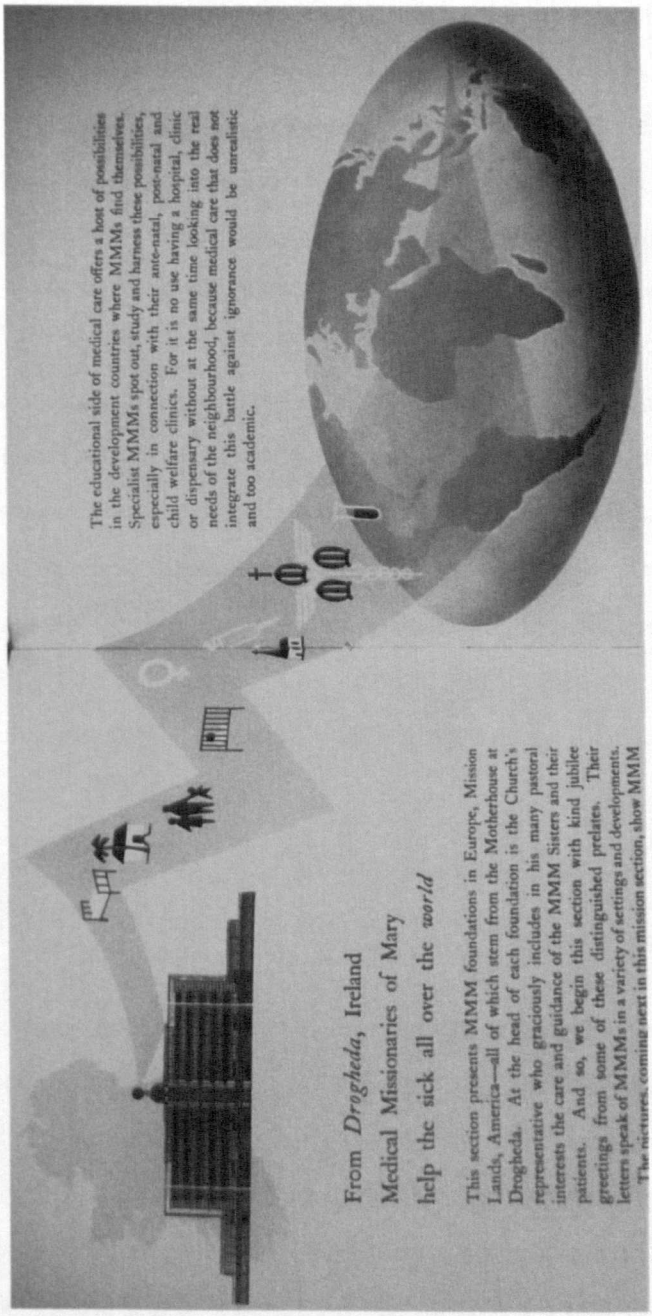
anything the very opposite was envisioned as the following extract from their magazines reveals:

> *"[The IMTH] is in Ireland, and practically all its patients are Irish, its main purpose – its raison d'etre- is not primarily for the benefit of the Irish people... For whom then was it built? One might reasonably ask. The answer is – for the benefit of the people of Africa."*[182]

For the MMM congregation the hospital was in an "anomalous situation."[183] This can be deduced from its very name, the International Missionary Training Hospital, for the hosptial was intended by the MMM to connect Ireland to Africa. The photo below further demonstrates this:

[182] *Medical Missionaries of Mary*, August –September 1961, p 3.
[183] *Ibid.*

Figure 4.12 - From Drogheda



Source: *Medical Missionaries of Mary: Covering the First Twenty-Five years of the Medical Missionaries of Mary*, 1937 – 1962. (Nolan, 1962) p. 66 – 67

As this picture illustrates, projected outwards from the IMTH in Ireland would go medical knowledge. Indeed in September 1962, on the top floor of the hospital, a unit specializing in the treatment of tropical disease was opened[184].

[184] *Irish Independent*, 24 September 1961.

From here research was conducted into malaria and other illnesses that impacted on the lives of those living in the MMM mission fields. Alongside its use as a training and research centre targeted towards healthcare in Africa, the "MMM International Missionary Training Hospital in Drogheda is playing its part in the world-wide spread of the Church."[185] The medical-work of the MMM can never be far removed from the religious motivation behind it, which was to spread Catholicism to Africa. The MMM congregation deliberately represented and utilized the IMTH as a fundamental part of Ireland's missionary endeavours. For this reason MMM sought to raise funds for its hospital all over Ireland and not just from the people of Drogheda. In the MMM magazine advertisements would appear asking for fairly nominal sums to aid in the construction. In these appeals, the benefit to Africa was always stated as the primary purpose of the hospital and a task that the people of Ireland could assist with. The success of this fundraising campaign was highlighted by the *Irish Independent* during the opening ceremony, where the IMTH was described as:

> *"[A] monument built by the pennies of the poor and the pounds of the rich to the charity that fills their hearts and inspires their giving."*[186]

The use of fundraising demonstrates the growing momentum in Ireland for the missions. In a short space of time MMM had evolved from a congregation which had difficulty in finding a supportive Irish Bishop, to an order capable of commissioning the IMTH, a hospital that was built with the support of politicians, national newspapers, the church hierarchy and ordinary Irish people. An exploration of Ireland's growing appetite to support the missionary causes will be developed in the following chapter.

4.6 Conclusion

To explore the establishment of the MMM novitiate and the hostels of all four of the congregations in Dublin reveal the complete dependence that the sisters

[185] *Medical Missionaries of Mary*, October 1961, p. 25.
[186] *Irish Independent*, 27th October 1953, p. 6.

had on the bishops of Ireland. Not only could these bishops dictate the location of these spaces but also how these spaces were to be used. The control allotted to the diocesan bishops reveals the way that power, originating in the Vatican, was disseminated throughout the international Catholic Church. This resulted in the perceived needs of the diocese being prioritised over the direction of the Church as a whole.

The control of the body and the creation of routines within the novitiate was essential to religious life. Discipline was intended to create a unified community where all were equally committed to the aspirations of the order. Religious life for these sisters was, therefore, synonymous with community life and these spaces were of fundamental importance to the operations of the orders. Indeed the congregation perhaps gave an identity to the nuns that was denied to non-religious women in Ireland at this time (McKenna, 2006a). Instilling discipline and loyalty through routine was especially vital for a missionary order as their professed sisters would spend the majority of their religious life away from these spaces. The novitiate, motherhouse and hostels were supervised to ensure the separation of the nuns from secular influences. This control of space was enforced on a presumption that the secular world could corrupt the religious ethos that was cultivated by the congregation. However, despite a rejection of the secular world, the MMM congregation did embrace certain aspects of modernity. Indeed the congregation repeatedly looked beyond the island of Ireland and was not preoccupied with local issues. Thus the MMM motherhouse and IMTH also existed in relation to the far-off mission field. The internationalist outlook of the MMMs seems in stark contrast to the localism demonstrated by the bishop's reluctance to admit female missionary congregations into their dioceses. The filtering and censoring of a suitable modernity for the MMM order was infused with Catholic teachings and allowed the women of the MMM congregation to achieve significant progress in Ireland in a relatively short period of time.

5 "A religious war is on, and we are or should be the crusaders": Representations of the Irish Missionary Movement

The missionary congregations studied in this thesis were prolific producers of promotional material. Magazines, films and pamphlets were produced by the orders and distributed throughout Ireland from the 1940s onwards. This chapter looks at some of the promotional materials produced by the missionary congregations, with particular emphasis on their magazines, a summary of these titles is shown in the table below:

Magazine	Order	Date of first publication
Eastern Star	St. Columban Sisters	August 1947
Medical Missionaries of Mary	Medical Missionaries of Mary	January 1940
Oriflamme	St. Louis Sisters	March 1952
Tidings	Our Lady of Apostles	January 1951

This chapter explores the presence of a Catholic moral discourse in the magazines that was circulated throughout post-independent Ireland. During the build-up to Ireland's independence Catholicism became closer and closer intertwined with Irishness (Foster, 1988). This further increased once independence had been granted (Brown, 2004) to the extent that the government of the Irish Free State became involved in the regulation of Catholic moral teachings. Kearney (1988) argues that for the Catholic Church

after independence: "the former political threat to our national integrity was now replaced by a moral threat" (p 245). And this threat, like the colonial master of before, came from places beyond Ireland (ibid). The content of the missionary magazines is examined in the context of the "cultural chauvinism and insularity of the Free State" (Foster, 1988 p 535).

The post-independence era in Ireland saw the government enforce a Catholic morality through a variety of legal means, many of whch were specifically focused on women, examples of which include the 1937 Constitution and the system of reform enacted in the Magdalene asylums (Crawley and Kitchin, 2008). Howell (2003) through his exploration of the Irish government's attitudes to the regulation of prostitution, argues that: "social purity... was the indispensible adjunct to the Irish post-colonial state" (p 341). The Catholic morality projected by the Free State was also evident with the creation of the Censorship Board in 1929. The board worked to ban literary material such as pornography and contraceptive advice, its work can be seen as part of a concerted attempt to purify Ireland from external influences (Lee, 1989, Townshend, 1998, Brown, 2004).

The practice of censorship was not unique to Ireland. The work of Deana Heath (2006, 2010) has explored the of implementation of an imperial censorship system. Heath argues how this system strove to purify spaces of British Empire from unsavoury influences. This process depended on demarcating the boundaries that needed to be protected and then identifying the elements deemed and unsuitable within this space (Heath, 2006, Heath, 2010). In a similar manner, censorship in Ireland can be seen as protecting the island from non-Catholic influences. This process relied upon a simultaneous presentation of Irish and Catholic history as vital, in the formation of an ideal future for Ireland. The missionary magazines provided an alternative to what was perceived to be vulgar literature infiltrating the nation. Thus an early issue of *Eastern Star* stated: "It is our earnest endeavour to provide wholesome reading to offset to some extent the amount of pagan literature with which our

country is flooded."[187] This chapter sees the magazines as part of this wider attempt to purify the island and was done by presenting to its readers an essential Irishness that was consistent with Catholic and State-endorsed morality. Of particular interest is how Catholicism was intended to be reproduced within the home and how the magazines presented this scale as related to the construction of Irish identity. The consequence of this domestic discourse on women is given particular attention.

At the same time the magazines, while attempting to segregate Ireland from corruptible influences, also sought to connect the nation, and in particular the domestic home, with the mission field beyond. For example through the establishment of auxiliary guilds and the 1961 Irish Missionary Exhibition, an event that presented a specifically Catholic worldview for the Irish public to consume. This Catholic worldview meant that Africa was considered in terms of Catholic or non-Catholic spaces. In this dualistic persepctive Irish missionaries were seen as traversing across these spaces and bringing the faith to these places. This chapter therefore looks at the universalism and equality espoused by the Church as articulated in the context of post-independent Ireland and how the missionary magazines showed that Ireland and its mission-fields, although physically distant, were spiritually connected within the Catholic Church. A Catholic understanding of the world and the fervour with which this was embraced by the Irish missionaries, challenges the notion of the insularity of Ireland and demonstrates the complex and multiple connections between the country and the world beyond.

5.1 The Construction of an Irish and Catholic Identity

Many of the articles featured in the magazines contributed to a geographical construction of Ireland as a land in possession of an inherent Catholic morality. The magazines explicitly or implicitly refer to Ireland as a place where one was able to forge a close relationship to God. For example, the magazine *Tidings* quoted Dr. Hedley, a Bishop of Newport who wrote:

[187] *Eastern Star*, August – September 1949, vol. III, no. 1, p. 3.

> *"It is impossible for any Catholic to set foot on the soil of Ireland, much less to mix with her people and learn to know them, without feeling a strange sense of the nearness and protection of God."*[188]

In this quote, the island of Ireland is understood as being special to God. The missionary magazines presented Ireland's privileged relationship to God as evidence of the strong faith of its people. In *Eastern Star* one article declared that Ireland's greatest virtue is its religious fervour: "Let other countries be renowned for their Art, Literature, Music, Science, but how wonderful that Ireland is renowned for its Faith."[189] The magazines argued that this strength of faith was tested during colonial opposition. For example an article that featured in *Oriflamme* explained Ireland's attachment to the Rosary as part of its history. The following extract featured in the children's page of the magazine and stated that:

> *"[The Irish] have a great devotion to the Rosary as it is Our Mother's special prayer and it has come down to us through the centuries in spite of persecution. When our forefathers were denied the Mass and their priests were exiled, they clung to the Rosary, so it is a prayer we should treasure and be proud to recite."*[190]

Irish people's active engagement with the Rosary was positioned as an act of rebellion against the colonial oppressor. The magazines convey that Catholic rituals have been 'passed down' from generation to generation:

> *"God rewarded our forefathers by increasing and strengthening [the faith], and He has been pleased to hand it on to their children."*[191]

By evoking a long lineage of Catholic struggle, the quote positions Ireland as rich in faith and favour with God. The survival of Catholicism throughout the colonial era is therefore a testament to the Irish people themselves. In another example the survival of the Catholic faith is attributed to "the merits and the

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[188] *Tidings*, October – December 1953, p. 7.
[189] *Eastern Star*, February – March, 1953, Vol. VI, no. 4, p. 3.
[190] *Oriflamme*, December 1954, p. 34.
[191] *Eastern Star*, February – March 1953, vol. VI, no. 4, p. 3.

intercession of the Saints of Ireland."[192] However, the article makes it clear that this is not a reference to the well-known saints of Ireland's history but rather this includes a wider spectrum of people:

> *"When we speak of the Saints of Ireland and of their intercession, their office of guarding and protecting the Irish race, we do not merely intend that glorious choir which the nations honours upon her alters; we mean the countless hosts that are known only to God."*[193]

Again this quote pays tribute to ordinary Irish people whose dedication to their faith ensured its survival in Ireland. The celebration of the individual was a fundamental feature of all missionary magazines for they attributed its readers as capable of instigating great change in the world through small, committed acts of faith. In another excerpt, Dr. Hedley, Bishop of Newport also cites the role of the individual in the continued existence of the Irish faith:

> *"Here is a people who have kept the Irish faith in the face of every human attempt to make them give it up, and who keep it to this day in spite of every temptation to abandon it."*[194]

In this series of quotes Catholicism is deliberately placed as a central tenant of Irish history and a post-independence identity (Foster, 1988, Brown, 2004). The article celebrated Catholicism as part of the resistance to British rule and presents to the reader the intertwining of a Catholic and Irish identity. It can, therefore, be deduced that the magazines, when evoking the colonial era of Ireland, deliberately framed this period in religious terms. Indeed Sr. Winifride in *Eastern Star* wrote: "the history of Ireland shows one, long, glorious struggle to keep the Faith."[195] The country was presented as having emerged, triumphantly, from this era of occupation and has now won its freedom to practice Catholicism. However, once the construction of Catholic Ireland was complete, it became necessary to preserve this space from any threatening encroachments.

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[192] *Tidings*, October – December 1953, p.7.
[193] *Ibid.*
[194] *Tidings*, October – December 1953, p. 7.
[195] *Eastern Star*, February – March 1953, vol. VI, no. 4, p. 3.

5.1.1 The infiltration of external influences to Ireland

Concurrent to celebrating the successful survival of Catholicism, the magazines presented Ireland as under continual threat from external forces. The magazines identified the flow of information into the country from non-Catholic countries as a moral problem for Ireland:

> *"We in Ireland cannot remain aloof... times have changed so rapidly, even within the last quarter century, that no country can remain aloof and isolated. "The Emerald Isle lost in the Atlantic Ocean," as a description of our country, must be cast into the lumber-room with the blackthorns and shillelaghs and leprechauns of the American tourist. Radio, newspapers, the cinema, air travel –all these influences are there and we cannot shut them out. Ideas from the West, and the East too, crowd in upon us."*[196]

The geography of Ireland is identified as once sufficient to ensure the island remained a haven for Catholicism. However this extract also acknowledges that in the inter-connected, modern world Ireland's occupies a potentially precarious place. It recognises the transnational fluidity of ideas in the modern world and how Ireland was no longer protected by its geographic isolation. Implicit in all the magazines was the idea that immoral, un-Catholic behaviour was imported into Ireland rather than being conceived within it. Therefore a common argument within them was that any unsavoury aspects of modernity were foreign to the country. *Eastern Star* writes:

> *"The presence of evil is at our very doors, and souls are being slowly poisoned by the materialistic films with which their minds are fed."*[197]

The magazines present the argument that morally dubious products were imported to Ireland through the media:

> *"In modern society the press, radio, cinema, magazines, pastimes and pleasures are almost completely non-Christian or pagan in their content; and slick, immoral slogans and*

[196] *Oriflamme*, September 1952, p. 27.

[197] *Eastern Star*, February – March 1953, vol. VI, no. 4, p. 3.

> *catchwords set the pace where Catholics are either in the minority or not interested.*"[198]

By arguing that these cultural products were imported into Ireland implied that immorality was alien and constituted an unwanted addition to the country. In particular the magazines took seriously those elements of popular culture that ran counter to ideal Catholic behaviour:

> "*It is distressing to see so many magazines in the hands of young people which pander entirely to the senses, with scandalous and sensational tales, fortune telling and astrology, or which concentrate entirely on the culture of the body with never a word about the soul and its Maker.*"[199]

As this quote reveals, un-Catholic activities such as fortune-telling and the exaltation of celebrity were perceived by the magazines to have been introduced into the country by the media. This article laments the lack of spiritual consideration for the soul in these secular forms of entertainment and argues that they favour attention on the body and other material pastimes. Many articles in the magazines feared for the corruption of the soul if this secular culture was consumed:

> "*We live in an era of extreme heresy – the complete denial of God. This is so well organised the world over that it is now producing a tremendous impact in the form of fear of the utter destruction of the human race. Radio, T.V. and Films are doing quite a lot with programmes of futile entertainment and brutal violence which exert a debasing influence wherever broadcast. Not many media in these fields cater for the cultural, educational and informational needs of men, or help to impart a meaningful philosophy of life.*"[200]

This quote highlights the fear of the influence of modern culture on the spiritual life of those that consume them. Much of the concern espoused by the magazines was centred upon the young and in particular the potential loss of innocence in Irish youth:

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[198] *Tidings*, July-September 1960, p. 60.

[199] *Eastern Star*, August – September 1949, vol. III, no. 1, p. 3.

[200] *Tidings*, January – March 1961, p.11.

> *"St Patrick can see that his flock have not altogether escaped the world-wide assault of depraved vested interests, bent on ensnaring inexperience youth, on fostering wrong habits and wrong outlooks when they can scarcely understand what is being done to them; on doing it with a lot of the right sort of insinuation and propaganda."*[201]

The article deliberately evokes St. Patrick to juxtapose the purity of pre-colonial Catholic Ireland with the modern world. In their preoccupation with corruption the magazines included many references to children and childhood and would feature puzzles and competition pages. In appealing to Irish youth the magazines often relied on a Christian narrative of the innocence of childhood (Heywood, 2001). The above article goes on to comment on the negative consequences that these cultural infiltrations had on Irish youth and in particular argues that feature films were counter to Catholic values:

> *"To-day's Irish youth therefore, are not without their false gods and goddesses – the film stars – many of them indifferent, in their significance and influence, from the pagan gods and goddesses of ancient Greece and Rome. Because a vast percentage of those from whom the film industry caters are indifferent to religion, the sons and daughter of St. Patrick have to accept the films and literary products of men who have no hope, who resent the discipline and assurance flowing from the hope that is in the Catholic Faith. Hence the growing tendency to excessive indulgence in doubtful amusements, an adoption of moral standards at variance with the Christian spirit, in the foolish belief that keeping pace with the pagans means progress."*[202]

This article presents a concern that these secular forces, as evidenced in the film industry, would erode the moral fabric of Ireland. This argument suggested that young people, seen as the future of a Catholic Ireland, were the most susceptible. Much of this concern centred on the sexuality of youths. For example one article wrote: "Sex is flaunted in magazines and periodicals, on

[201] *Tidings*, April – June, 1961, p. 2 – 3.
[202] *Ibid.*

the films and in our modern beauty competitions."[203]Another argued that the "philosophy inculcated by Hollywood"[204] was "detrimental to the chastity of youth."[205] This article again portrays a fear of the sexual corruption of young people. There is also an emphasis on vulgarity and loss of innocence. One article, addressed to mothers, argues that parents are responsible for the reading materials that their children to consume:

> *"In many cases, questionable comics were handed uncensored to youngsters merely to keep them quiet or amused, by parents who would go to the ends of the earth to provide for their children! It is a fact – a lamentable fact – that many a parent who would shudder at the sight of a child with a sharp-edged tool has just nodded complacently at the youngster poring over poisonous and vitiating 'literature.'"*[206]

These articles regularly featured in the magazines and presented the censoring of information into Ireland as necessary for the preservation of the nation.

The magazines positioned themselves as able to dispense advice as they were the mouthpiece of an explicitly Irish and Catholic endeavour. Secular influences were subjected to a collective attack by the magazines because they had the potential to infiltrate Ireland, erode the defining Catholic identity of the nation, through the corruption of innocent bodies. Much of their content was focused upon constructing and defining Ireland as a Catholic nation whose boundaries must be made impenetrable. Simultaneous to this, as shall be explored below, was the encouragement of ideal behaviour within Ireland. Only by promoting these two actions would the future of Catholic, Holy Ireland be assured.

5.1.2 The domestic home in the magazines

Many of the magazine articles encouraged the cultivation of the domestic home as a space able to counter the effects of negative infiltrations into

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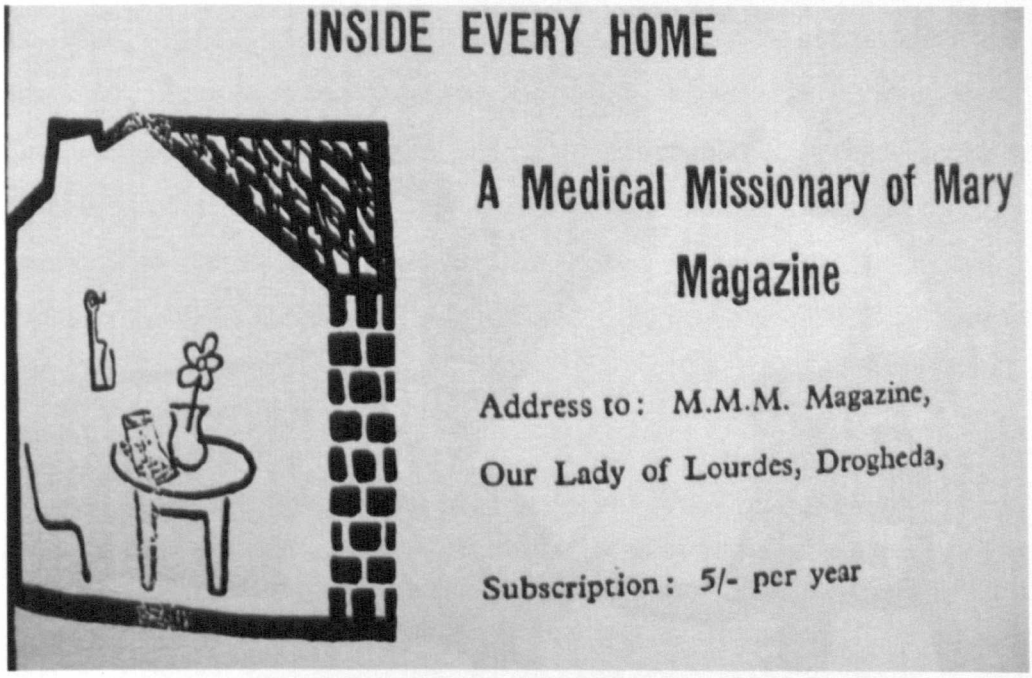
[203] *Tidings*, October – December 1955, p. 3 .
[204] *Eastern Star*, February- March, 1955, vol. VIII, no. 4.
[205] *Ibid.*
[206] *Oriflamme*, September 1954, p. 18.

Ireland. Indeed the missionary magazines provided a Catholic morality that was specifically intended for consumption inside the Irish home. Below is an advertisement for the MMM magazine:

Figure 5.1 - "Inside Every Home"



Source: *Medical Missionaries of Mary*, July-August 1960 vol. XXI, no. 6, p. 23

In this drawing the MMM magazine rests on the coffee table, safely inside a reader's home. This section looks at how the domestic home interacted with a multiple number of other spaces and scales (Blunt and Dowling, 2006). Indeed the interaction between home and other spaces has been noted by geographers and in particular Alison Blunt (Blunt, 2003), who argues that concepts of national identity and homeland can be articulated and evidenced in the domestic sphere. This section explores how the magazines depicted the maintenance of the domestic home as fundamental to the construction of an ideal home-land of post-independent Ireland (Blunt and Dowling, 2006). In this construction, the home also became a space relevant to the mission field.

Repeatedly throughout the missionary magazines the home becomes the battleground from which to fight the infiltration of secular culture into Ireland. This resonates with the work of Chatterjee (2001) who wrote, that the creation

of nationalist narratives in India involved a distancing from imperialist culture. This discourse encouraged a turn towards an interior, spiritual life as a way to restore the pre-colonial culture (ibid), resulting in certain spaces, for example the home, being constructed as a way to restore original culture and spirituality. Subsequently the home becomes distanced and separated from the modernity of the world beyond. This process can also be evidenced in the missionary magazines, for example one article stated: "To preserve good Catholic families from the present day corruption of morals, so much depends on a happy home life."[207] This implies that it was within the home that children learn how to interact with the world. The article goes on to encourage parents to ensure that their home-life is able to counter the negative cultural influences that pervade in the world beyond:

> "*Parents acting in mutual accord, raise up their children to be well instructed in the principals and duties of Christian life. And in the cultural arts which elevate the mind, youth can be trained with a cheerful discipline that enables them to be content with simple foods, clothing and amusements.*"[208]

This article requests parents to reject some of the material trappings offered by the secular world and raise humble children, who have benefitted from a solid foundation in Catholic teaching. In another example the following quote again reveals that it is within the home that children learn morality: "It is such a dangerous world for the young people of the present day; all the influences outside the home tend to lower the standards of culture and virtue."[209] The implication being that the domestic home could be fortified in order to protect its occupants from sexualised, foreign imports. The magazines would also give advice to how the home may be maintained. The following article argues that to participate in the ritual of the rosary when residing in the home would mean:

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[207] *Eastern Star*, February – March 1954, vol. III, no. 4, p. 4,

[208] *Ibid.*

[209] *Eastern Star*, April – May 1951, vol. IV, no. 5, p. 3.

> *"There would be less perturbation and distress in the world at present if all Catholics made it their duty to promote and attend the family rosary."*[210]

To advocate the performance of religious rituals within the home connected this space to the world beyond. This advice was further repeated in the following article:

> *"I have no fear to say that the Family Rosary, said daily in any home, puts into the sons and daughters of such a home strength, conviction and stamina. Out of the Rosary homes come men who become powerful priests; women who become great sisters; young men and women who become great husbands and wives, fathers and mothers. This is not just an opinion. The story of the ages is proof that Rosary homes make great men and women."*[211]

The ritual of the rosary, said within the home, could foster good Catholics and perhaps even future missionaries. The intimate space of the home was therefore connected to other scales through the enactment of Catholic behaviour. A key component of this discourse was therefore that it was within the home that future moral citizens of Ireland could be moulded.

5.1.3 Construction of mother

When considering the domestic home it is vital to also consider gender in this space (Blunt and Dowling, 2006). Indeed as Duncan and Lambert write: "home should be central to the study of the history of gender relations" (Duncan and Lambert, 2004 p 385). In all of the magazines the mother was depicted as vital to maintaining the home. This was a sphere where the mother had great influence over the raising of the children but also over the men who resided in this space. This article from *Tidings* understands the role of women in society to be that of mother. In this maternal capacity, women are able to

[210] *Eastern Star*, October – November 1954, vol. VII, no.2, p. 3.
[211] *MMM*, May 1957, vol. XVIII, no. 4, p. 11.

"fulfil their noble role among men. A nation is what its women are."[212] Indeed mothers were understood as vital to sustaining Ireland:

> *"All our Irish women have the power to remake much of the world of to-day as they ponder and practice those most poignant lines in all literature; 'There stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother!'*[213]

From this article women forge their place in the world when they fulfil their role of mother and in no uncertain terms this article understands the role of mother as vital to Catholic Ireland. It builds on the idea that Ireland is a special country whose virtues are preserved by its women. By elevating mother as the pinnacle of female achievement, women can become the bastion of Catholic morality.

Alison Blunt (1999) has written of the publication of household guides for second-generation middle-class British women who resided in colonial India. The encouragement of ideal domestic behaviour for these women had racial, gendered and class connotations, all of which were intended to reflect imperial hierarchies. Blunt uses this example to demonstrate how difficult it is to separate the domestic realm from larger-scale discourses. In a similar manner, in an attempt to appeal to its female readership, the magazines included a section on tips for housewives. These columns issued advice over how the space of the home was maintained. For example in *Tidings* there was a regular column on household tips called '*The Queen's Apostolate in Our Homes.*' This took the form of a letter addressed "Dear Home Makers." In the first letter of this column series the housewife and mother is positioned as central to the running of the home. For example: "Dear Home Makers ... To a great extent home happiness depends on the Mother. Hers is surely a labour of love in doing the household duties the livelong day."[214] In this letter, mother is placed as central to the operation of the home and the work she does in this space is

[212] *Tidings*, April – June 1961, p. 16.
[213] *Ibid.*
[214] *Tidings*, July – September 1951, p. 6.

celebrated as vital to the family. Many other articles were written to support and encourage mother to remain in the home and adopt the work of housewife:

> *"Mother may be washing dishes to the ordinary observer, but she is not. She is making a haven for her family; she is holding a fortress; she is the heart and centre of a sort of atomic energy drawing to her aid the grace of God and the gentlest things of earth. At least, the best mothers are like that. And they want nothing in return except to see grace flowering in their children's souls."*[215]

In this quote the everyday tasks done by the mother are celebrated as vital to sustaining the Catholic home and family life. For this reason, an article in *Eastern Star* encouraged men to look for wifely and maternal characteristics when looking for a spouse:

> *"And to you, young man, I would say, do not seek your helpmate in the glamour of a dancing hall, or in the twilight of the cinema; if you can, visit her in her own home; note her conduct towards her parents, and towards her brothers and sisters... if you find that she busies herself in household affairs, and that the nice superior tea was cooked by herself – she has certainly scored a good mark in her favour."*[216]

Inferred in these quotes was that the correctly managed home could protect its occupants from the outside world. Accordingly, the magazines discouraged women from taking a professional role. For example: "what is sometimes considered the most uninspiring of all careers is that of staying at home. But surely if circumstances necessitate it this is the most noble career of all."[217] Evident here is an acknowledgement that women are increasingly being tempted away from the home by the lure of paid employment. This sentiment strongly echoes the Constitution of 1937, as discussed in the literature review. In the magazines, female employment was a deviation from their ideal role as mother because it would severely jeopardize the effectiveness of the home in perpetuating Catholicism. In a sterner article, a priest, Rev. R. Cremins, wrote

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[215] *Ibid.*
[216] *Eastern Star*, October – November 1948, p. 12.
[217] *Tidings*, April – June 1957, p.16.

in no uncertain terms of the limitations of women working beyond the domestic sphere. He starts off by writing:

> *"It is wrong to imagine that men and women are fundamentally homogenous, that if we could strip them of their physical and psychological difference we would arrive at one thing which they both are."*[218]

The priest concludes that the physiological differences between the sexes means that women and men cannot compete in the same spheres for their have natural, indeed God-given, differences which lend themselves to specific tasks. He warns that:

> "*Modern woman is becoming more and more assimilated to man. She works with him in office, factory and field. She fights beside him, carrying her gun like the rest... And this is done in the name of liberating women from a position of inferiority, of delivering her from the slavery of the home. Yet it is precisely when she behaves as another kind of man that she reveals herself as inferior to him.*"[219]

The priest advocates that women should thus remain in the sphere to which they are best suited to reside in:

> *"On the other hand when woman remains in the home she is in a sphere where her superiority goes undisputed. As a home-maker she reigns supreme. She is unrivalled as a mother, an educator of children and a comforter of men between the ages of six months and sixty. We only have to enter a home which has been deprived of her to realise how vital her presence there is. No man would dare pretend that he could take his wife's place in the home, nor would he regard himself as 'liberated' if obliged to do so. Neither is woman 'emancipated' when she is forced to abdicate her throne and harness herself to her husband's plough, male and female each have a realm in which they are supreme. Each is inferior in the role allotted by nature to the other."*[220]

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[218] *Oriflamme*, June 1957 p. 4.
[219] *Ibid.*
[220] *Ibid.*

This article appears to be written in reaction to changes that were happening throughout the world in regards to the education and subsequent employment of women. This is presented as fulfilling a Catholic ideal and in the magazines women were particularly encouraged to adopt the Virgin Mary as their role model of Catholic feminine perfection. Chatterjee (2001) also writes of the consequences on woman that resulted from the exhalation of the domestic space in India and in particular how women were expected to reside in this sphere and embody the characteristics of traditional Indian femininity. In Ireland there was a similar gender narrative, where the Virgin Mary, with her characteristics of femininity and maternity became the ideal female (Warner, 1976, McKenna, 2006a). Marina Warner writes that because Mary mediates to Jesus on behalf of humanity, her revered position in the Church is therefore constructed as that of mother (Beaumont, 1997). Therefore, one article stated:

> "*Since the days of the Reformation two paths have been opened to women – the path of Mary and the path of Eve, Divine Providence decreed that Mary should be at once Virgin, Spouse and Mother, to serve as model in every state of life... from her, our young girls must learn to preserve that purity which was once Ireland's proudest boast.*"[221]

This quote deliberately parallels the purity of the Virgin Mary with the purity of Ireland. In this comparison Irish women are the embodiment of Catholic morality. The magazines advocate duty, purity and of course maternity as the ideal Marian characteristics for young Irish wives and mothers to adopt:

> "*Our Lady's days were so like those of every mother as She did perfectly, cheerfully and generously the duties of Her calling. Indeed one day the greatest beauty and charm and achievements of human mind and will fade into insignificance before the goodness and virtue of many an unknown and unappreciated mother. Yes, devoted wives and mothers have here below fitted into God's plan for them, and by their lives of labour will, in a timeless eternity render themselves fit company for angels and saints!*"[222]

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[221] *Eastern Star*, June – July 1948, vol. 1 no. 6, p. 12.

[222] *Tidings*, July – September 1951, p 6.

By situating the Virgin Mary in the modern Irish home presented a model for readers to aspire to. The female reader is told to accept their role as housewife because this is comparable to the example set to all womankind by the Virgin Mary. This quote resonates with the argument of the frivolity of the modern world and the meaningful alternative provided by religion. The article also argues that it is within the home that God intended women to reside, a sentiment which is echoed in the following extract from *Eastern Star*, taken from a section entitled 'Home Sweet Home' written by Sister Mary Thaddeus: "It pleased God that His Mother should live the hidden life, and she, as the handmaid of the Lord, was truly great in doing small things well."[223] The use of religious imagery to justify women's place as residing within the home can be seen here. A Marian model of femininity is highlighted as a desirable choice for a prospective bride:

> *"In a man's living memory, his own mother stands out as the ideal woman and the most Marylike. For him she is the apex of all womanly virtues – in his mind she is, and always was, perfect... When it comes to seeking a wife and a guiding star through life, a man comes face to face with the mightiest problem of life... his wife must resemble [Mary] in as many ways as humanly possible. He would like her to have value and dignity and virtue."*[224]

To utilize the Virgin Mary as a role model advocated women to be serene, kind and patient. The following example is from *"Queen's Apostolate for the Sick and Lonely"*, a column that featured in *Tidings*: "Mary possesses all human and angelic perfections. Her unique and God-given gift-sinlessness was complete since her conception."[225] The adoption of these traditionally feminine characteristics was particularly poignant to ensure that the Catholic home would be a quiet, calm place crafted as such by an ideal mother. These preferred characteristics of motherhood were often presented to the magazine's

[223] *Eastern Star*, August- September 1947, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 8.
[224] Tidings, April – June, 1957 p 1.
[225] *Tidings*, October – December 1957, p.11.

readership in a seemingly trivial way. For example, in this poem called "A 'Homely' Reminder":

"Would you heed the cause I'm pleading? Namely,

Poise and gentle breeding,

Then the place for you to practice, and for

competence to strive

is not yonder at the 'local' but your living room-

that's focal-

Of activity domestic, both the vortex and the hive.

And folks you owed the most to, viz, the ones

That you are close to

Are to ones deserve your thoughtfulness, regards

and equipoise;

So you'll neither be aggressive, highly-strung, nor

Too possessive,

But relaxed, polite and – get along without

The noise!"[226]

It is women who are responsible for the emotional wellbeing of all in the home and in their role of mother and wife they must therefore conform to the demands and expectations of this role. To do this humbly and without complaining is, again, to conform to the example set by the Virgin Mary. The creation of the home as a serene place was further repeated in other magazines. For example:

> *"Dear Women Folk... Advice on marriage that the nun once heard "Her words were terse and to the point 'You go back and make your home a restful place to return to, and prepare a meal to tempt a weary man. Make yourself and your child*

[226] *Oriflamme*, June 1961, p. 8.

> *fair to see. If you see him in a temper say nothing – when anger is passed speak soft words.' I could not but admire this sage and practical advice. It holds good everywhere, though the circumstances calling for it are practically unknown in Eire."*[227]

The article above places the women as responsible for pacifying the mood of her husband and again this implies that the home is a feminine sphere. Likewise another article from *Eastern Star* offered this advice to wives and mothers:

> *"Perhaps for Lent, the best penance we womenfolk can practice is restraint of the tongue – refraining from sharp words and criticism of our neighbour."*[228]

Or indeed:

> *"Be very careful, oh ye young mothers that baby does not interfere with your care of his daddy! As, strange to say, many daddies develop a certain amount of jealousy (not always unfounded) of their young offspring. In most cases, it is best to have Baby bathed, fed and in his cot before father's arrival, except perhaps as a special treat at week-end, when daddy may be allowed to assist at toilet! Also, another important point: if your husband likes you to go to the pictures –or for a walk occasionally in the evenings, do arrange to get a neighbour or friend to 'sit in'.... Finally, never let 'himself' imagine, for one moment, that he is not the main object in your thoughts and affections, or that he has been supplanted!"*[229]

The advice dispensed to the female readership for managing their home centres upon the women's relationship to their husbands as well as to their children. In encouraging ideal gendered behaviour, the magazines present the home as essential for the continued propagation of the Catholic faith. This in turn relates to the perpetuation of Catholicism throughout the Irish nation and

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[227] *Eastern Star*, August- September 1947, vol. 1, no.1, p. 8.

[228] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

[229] *Eastern Star*, August – September 1949, vol. III, no.1, p.12.

demonstrates the interconnectedness between the domestic home and the nation-as-home.

5.2 Presenting an International Catholic network

It may appear that this discourse on the ideal home was centred solely upon the relationship between the domestic sphere and the construction of an ideal Irish nation. However, the home could also interact with a larger scale. For example, Duncan and Lambert consider the myriad interactions between home and empire and remarked that there is a: "complex interplay between notions of home and the experience of transnationalism" (2004 p 389). Therefore, it is perhaps to be expected that the magazines also presented a Catholic world-view to its readership. The magazines featured representations of the multiple interactions and connections between the domestic home, the nation state and the mission fields. The magazines argued that to participate in the missionary movement was in itself an act of Irishness and therefore crucial to the maintenance of the Irish state. Therefore on the pages of the magazines the mission fields were utilised as a space where ideal Irish and Catholic behaviour could be cultivated.

5.2.1 Irish history and obligation to the missions

In order to present participation in missionary work as an aspect of Irish identity, the magazines repeatedly referred to Ireland's struggle to maintain its Catholic faith during its colonial past. Referral to the past was used to motivate the Irish people to become missionaries. The following article was written by the President of University College Cork and reveals this postcolonial understanding of Irish Catholicism:

> *"Coincident with our attainment of cultural and political freedom, at least for most of our country, after centuries of struggle, there was a revival of our old missionary spirit... We are a small country without territorial ambitions; but God has destined us not only to preserve the Faith for ourselves and our children but to carry its message to far-off lands... Our new found freedom is to be justified on the*

> *ground that we have a religious and cultural message for other people."*[230]

The article uses Ireland's colonial past to present the nation as an ideal place from where missionaries could be recruited. Indeed the suffering that was experienced in the past is positioned as part of an intended destiny of the country that must continue into its missionary work. Thus it was argued:

> *"Ireland can, better than most countries, engender the Christ-loving spirit that is ready for the self-immolation and sacrifice which our saintly Holy Father describes."*[231]

This article goes on to appeal to the young generation of Irish people, free to participate in the missions. In a similar manner the following article specifically laments: "If only there were more Irish Catholics to live [the faith], more Irish Missionaries to spread it."[232] In these articles Ireland and the faith of the Irish people was positioned as unique because of its experiences of colonialism.

The magazines challenged their readers to ponder this history and use it as a motivation of how to act in the present. This often involved references to the influences of modern society: "Surely our Irish boys and girls will not allow themselves to be engulfed in the modern whirlpool of corruption which is spreading over the world by means of sordid films and bad literature."[233] This quote reveals an element of postcolonial pride and the magazines present young Irish people as being in possession of a strong faith and are thus able to withstand a secular onslaught. Therefore to contribute to the missions becomes a demonstration of a postcolonial Catholic and Irish identity. One article argued that in a modern society:

> *"Ideals diminish or are cast aside, and noble hearts which once dreamt of following high ideals and doing something*

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[230] *Eastern Star*, August – September 1947, vol. 1, no.1, p. 3.
[231] *Eastern Star*, February – March 1953, vol. VI, no. 4, p. 3.
[232] *Ibid.*
[233] *Eastern Star*, April – May 1951, vol. IV, no. 5, p. 3.

> *great for God and the human race seem drugged into apathy and indifference."*[234]

This article goes on to state that Irish people are better than this:

> *"Rouse yourselves, young people of Ireland. You are worthy of a higher destiny, and must exert yourselves to attain the purpose for which you were created."*[235]

The magazines convey a message of Irish pride that implies it is the fate of the nation to be involved in missionary work. The missionary movement is written of as an ideal way to counter the negative effects of modernity. Therefore to participate in the missions was a remedy to the influx of secular media into the country. Furthermore to participate in missionary activities could contribute to the preservation of a Catholic Ireland that was perceived to be under threat. For example:

> *"Feet which have danced through the night can find nobler paths awaiting them – paths that lead up and down mountains and through jungles. Hands now so adept with lipstick or hurley can reach out to the pagans, to sinners and suffers, joyfully conducting them to our Divine Lord and His Blessed Mother."*[236]

Presented here is a contrast between modern culture and the noble cause of the missions. In this juxtaposition between modernity and religion, the magazines constantly refer to the missions as an alternative to modern society. This can further be demonstrated in the following quote:

> *"Year after year, month after month, hosts of cultured Irish girls abandon forever home and family to help in spreading the light of the Gospel amongst a people who "sit in darkness and the shadow of death." The belle of the ball, whose horizon was once bounded by dances and dresses; You may see her now under a tropical sun or amid towering snow*

[234] *Eastern Star*, February – March 1953, vol. VI, no. 4, p. 3.
[235] *Ibid.*
[236] *Eastern Star*, October – December 1955, vol. X, No. 2, p. 3.

> *drifts, instructing the ignorant, nursing the sick, consoling the sorrowful, encouraging the despairing.*"[237]

In this quote the young Irish missionary sacrifices the temporal joy of Ireland for the testing mission field. It demonstrates a dualism between frivolous modernity and spiritual Catholicism. This was a narrative common in all of the missionary magazines, which collectively served to present participation in missionary work as an act of Irishness.

5.2.2 Presence of the mission fields in Ireland

The work of Hall and Rose (2006) consider the pervasive nature of empire in nineteenth-century Britain. They note that imperial spaces became part of the ordinariness of everyday life during this period and could even infiltrate into the domestic sphere. In a similar manner the magazines deliberately sought to connect Ireland to the mission fields by consistently prioritising Catholic universalism over geographic proximity. This was done to encourage its readers to consistently reflect on the mission spaces not as distant nation states but rather as spiritually united with Ireland. Thus as one magazine stated:

> *"It is not right for Catholics to shut themselves up in their own little circle. As followers of Christ we are bound to have a universal out-look and be concerned, such informative publications as the Irish Catholic, The Standard, and missionary magazines should find place.*"[238]

The missionary magazines saw their work as part of a wider Catholic project, to participate in which, enabled its readership to fulfil their religious obligation. Often this could be achieved in quite mundane ways and the missionary magazines would often put in requests for its readership to donate stamps. In doing so the mission field would become part of the everyday life of the readership. For example, this advertisement called: 'Used stamps help our missions' appeared in *Eastern Star*:

> *"If you work in an office, bank or indeed anywhere, you can help our Missions by collecting each day every stamp that*

[237] *Tidings*, April – June 1951, p. 14.

[238] *Eastern Star*, August – September 1949, vol. III, no. 1, p. 3.

comes in, and making a parcel of them and send in each month to us."[239]

Likewise, this poem called 'Advise for Stamps' appeared in *MMM*:

"Each day you see now with your stamps torn off neat,

Collected and saved for the Missions;

You send them in parcels each months as a treat,

To a Sister who sorts all editions.

And clothing and fares and medicines rare,

Are brought from the Stamp income too,

And Sisters have gone to help to save souls

Because of Stamps saved by YOU."[240]

These poems encouraged the reader to engage with the mission field even when going about their normal life. Collecting stamps linked life in Ireland with the needs of the missions beyond the island. When the magazines would request money from its readers they would do this by alluding to the mission fields. For example, below is a poem that requested its young reader to donate small change:

I am only a poor little penny,

Maybe not of much value to you;

But, if you send me around to the

Missions,

You'll be surprised at the things I

Can do.

Although I'm unloved and unnoticed,

[239] *Eastern Star*, February – March 1949, vol. 1, no. 4, p. 4.

[240] *MMM*, February, vol. XV, no. 2, p. 27.

And sometimes feel rather forlorn;
I'm willing to go where they send me
Even tho' I am small, brown and
Worn.

I would travel to faraway countries
(Where the natives all think I'm a
gem).
And am still trying hard to be useful
Though I'm thrown again and
again."[241]

In this poem the mission field remains a non-specific place, but nonetheless one that the readership was assumed to have some knowledge of. The poem stirs the imagination of the reader but also the circulation of money, reinforces the connections between Ireland and the mission fields. The magazines presented Ireland and the mission fields as connected in an international Catholic network and to act within this was an example of Irishness. This interconnection was particularly evident in the pages addressed to children. For example, the following is a prayer that featured in *MMM* and was intended for children to recite:

"Our daily life we offer too, for the Mission far away,
Make us kind and thoughtful, prayerful, bright and gay,
Help us to do the work you plan, who art our Mother true
So that each day we all may be, in virtue more like you."[242]

In this prayer the missions are to be reflected upon and considered as part of the daily life of an Irish child. Even though the mission field was geographically far away, its presence was evoked to reinforce Catholic

[241] *Tidings*, April – June, 1959, p. 1.
[242] *MMM*, January 1954, vol. XV, no. 1, p. 28.

behaviour in Ireland. Below is another example from the Christmas addition of Tidings:

> *"The Queen's Apostolate for Juveniles... Don't make yourselves ill with all the good things, and in the midst of all your merriment remember that there are little black children in Africa with no homes of their own and no one to care for them."*[243]

In this request the child is asked to reflect on those less fortunate than themselves. By considering the missions, the article reminded its young readers to sacrifice some of the frivolous trappings of modernity. Consciousness of the missions was, therefore, intended to reinforce Catholic behaviour that was synonymous with the idealized Irish identity that the magazines also portrayed. Thus through the magazines the presence of the mission was brought into the consciousness of the young readership:

> *"My Dear Children ... You cannot go out to Africa like the priests and nuns you know of and have read about, but you can fight on the home front. Yes, you can fight Satan by your prayers which obtain peace for some hardened pagan should, who otherwise would not listen to priests or nuns. You can save your pennies which help to send Senior Missionaries into God's vineyard."*[244]

In this letter to children, Africa is evoked to encourage the child to reject Satan in Ireland. This use of language again demonstrates the many scalar and interrelated aspects of the missionary movement as presented in the magazines. The magazines would often invoke a spiritual connection to present a Catholic worldview of universality through a child's understanding of the simplicity of the world:

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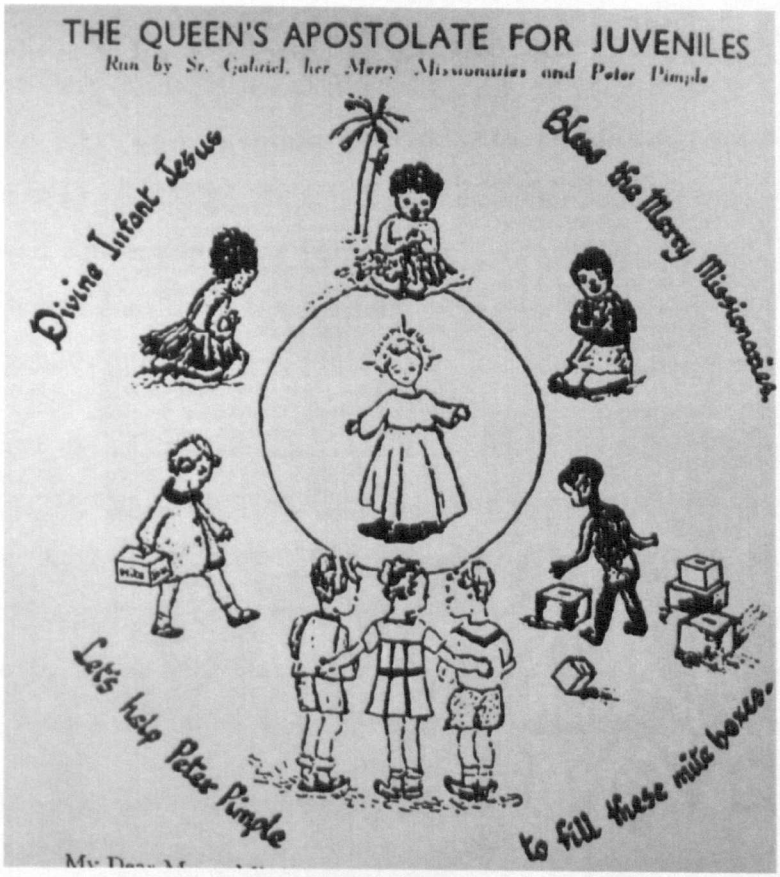
[243] *Tidings*, October – December 1952, p. 19.

[244] *Oriflamme*, March 1955, p. 33.

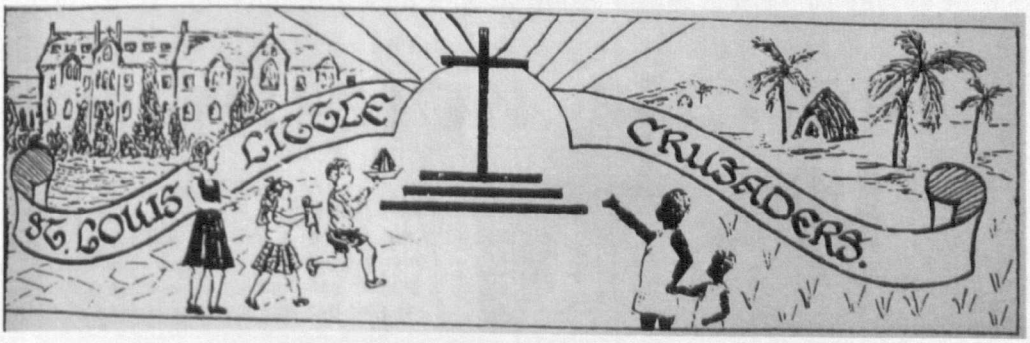
Figure 5.2 - The Queen's Apostolate for Juveniles



Source: Tidings, October – December, 1952

In this picture the young Irish children, shown at the bottom of the drawing, are collecting 'mite boxes' that will benefit the African children shown on the right and top of the diagram. The connectivity between all the children is centred around the angel-like figure in the middle of the page. A similar drawing featured on the children pages of *Oriflamme*:

Figure 5.3 - St Louis Little Crusaders



Source: Oriflamme, March 1952, p 33

In this cartoon the picture of the St. Louis Convent in Ireland, on the left and the mission field on the right, are connected and brought close to each other through the presence of the cross. Both of these pictures show a young generation of Irish children, without adult supervision, closely interacting with their African counterparts. The pictures suggest to the reader the similarities between the children for it is a Catholic presentation of people and therefore depicts a shared equality amongst them.

The presence of this interconnected Catholic network, populated by people and specifically children, is further evident in a short story called 'The Snow-White Gift' which appeared in *Eastern Star*. The protagonist of the story was an Irish girl called Mary Ryan. The story begins with Mary being given a rare gift of two-pence by her uncle. She decides to spend this money on ice cream. However, when she is in the shop she experiences a spiritual epiphany:

> *"Mary's eyes travelled longingly towards the refrigerator. On the way they were arrested by a familiar object: a little box pleading "Help the Missions." When on messages Mary often wished she had a penny to drop in. It would be such a precious gift for some Yellow Baby (or grown up, for that matter) in the East...a penny in this box, she knew, was a golden one, because a sacrifice went with it."*[245]

Mary Ryan duly gives her money to the mission box. The narrative then moves to an unnamed country where an old woman named Konda is dying in a mission hospital run by the Columban sisters. The night before she dies Konda tells a sister caring for her that she dreamt she saw the Virgin Mary who eased her fever by providing her with a cool, milky drink. Konda, to the joy of the sisters then asks to be baptised amd she dies shortly after. The story ends with the sister who tended to Konda pondering over her choice of baptismal name:

> *"I knew Konda would be glad to get the name 'Mary' in honour of her Lady.... But she also mumbled something about*

[245] *Eastern Star*, Vol. III, no. 6, p. 9.

> *another Mary who had sent the snow-white gift that the Lady brought. What could she have meant?"*[246]

In the story the act of kindness offered by Mary Ryan in Ireland had direct and indeed spiritual consequences across the world. The story ends by again reminding the reader of the connections between the missions and Ireland:

> *"About the same time Mary Ryan, far way in Ireland, was passing by Murphy's Café. As she remembered her sacrifice of the ice-cream, a feeling of joy stole over her. 'I know it has helped some soul,' she thought, 'and I'm so glad.'"*[247]

This story brings the missions into Irish life and presents these spaces as an ever-present constant to life in Ireland. The central emotion driving the story is the interconnections between Ireland and missionary space. In this fictional account the emotion is dramatized by individual connections but nonetheless the story serves as an example for other young Irish people to follow.

An issue of *MMM Magazine* featured a story called "Just One Penny." This tale focused on an Irish girl who doesn't put money into the mission box at school. When sitting in her bedroom later that night, Penelope regrets this decision:

> *"She was sitting alone opposite the window learning English poetry. The curtain blew up and caught on the knob of the wireless. Penelope lifted her head and looked out into the inky black night. 'I'd hate to be out there alone' she thought, 'it's so dark and cold.' Suddenly the thought struck her, that little black babies were out in the dark away from God's grace and love and only her Hail Mary's and pennies could bring them to Heaven... she walked over to the window and looked across the lawn. In the ray of light from the window she saw to her great surprise, a host of tiny black babies. Some were holding hands, some running around, and others just sitting on the grass gazing at her."*[248]

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[246] *Ibid.*

[247] *Ibid.*

[248] *MMM*, June 1953, vol. XIV, no. 5, p. 13.

The presence of the suffering African children prompts Penelope into action. The next day at school she donates a penny to the cause. This is used by a nun on the mission to buy a catechism, which in turn is then read by a dying child in Africa. From this experience the child's mother first hears the word of God. Often the magazines would focus on the fragility of African children as a strong emotive argument to justify the missions. In the above story the presence of the mission field is directly imported to Ireland. The vision of the African children moves Penelope to help the missions and the story concludes that from then on she never failed to put a penny in the mite box. Again, in this story the mission field is directly connected to Ireland and this close proximity inspires sacrifice and compassion in the Irish individual.

5.2.3 Auxiliary Guilds

Alongside the magazine's representations, there were also practical examples of Ireland's connection to the missions. A notable, pervasive aspect of Ireland's missionary movement was the establishment of auxiliary guilds and apostolic work groups for women. These guilds allowed ordinary Irish women to collectivity raise money for the missions. In 1931, before she established MMM, Marie Martin founded the Dublin Apostolic Branch after she arrived back from Nigeria:

> *"She, knowing personally the greats needs of the Missions in pagan countries, and of the number of Irish women who only wait for the call to work, determined to start a branch of Apostolic Work in Dublin."*[249]

Upon its establishment the Dublin Branch sought other willing women to join in its efforts:

> *"In order to make it possible to respond to appeals, the Committee now earnestly requests women living in the parish areas of the different branches to co-operate so as to procure*

[249] *The Apostolic Work – Dublin Centre First Annual Report 1931.* Archdiocese of Dublin Archive, file Ab7/Lay ORGS.

> *the largest possible number of active and honouary members for each branch."*[250]

Each branch would be located in a parish and would draw its membership from local women. The guilds were intended to be a nation-wide organization, composed of parish-level branches. The promotional material for the Dublin branch acknowledges that its establishment was part of a wider participation of the missions in Ireland:

> *"[In Ireland] we see rising a reserve of missionary personnel and equipment ready for instant release that will restore nourishment and life to the parched and deserted fields of foreign missions. In this nation-wide response to the Blessing of God the Apostolic Work is endeavouring to play a humble part."*[251]

In this quote the fervent engagement by Irish people with the missionary project is acknowledged and the guilds sought to allow women who resided in the domestic sphere the opportunity to participate in this movement. Exploring the work of the guilds demonstrates the connections between the domestic home, Ireland and the mission field. Advertisements for the guilds utilized the term home to mean both the domestic sphere and Irish nation. The quote below is taken from an MMM advertisement to recruit women to its auxiliary guild:

> *"You at home can have a big share in this work by joining our Auxiliary Guild. Your prayers will help to obtain God's Graces for our Sister's work and your contributions will assist in providing the material medical requirements which are the big essentials to the spiritual and temporal success of our Missions."*[252]

This advertisement draws on the universality of the church as a powerful way to participate in the missions. The following poem, intended to recruit potential guild members, featured in *MMM* and directly addressed a 'black baby' in Africa:

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[250] *Ibid.*

[251] *The Apostolic Work – Dublin Centre Twelfth Annual Report 1943*. Archdiocese of Dublin Archive, file Ab7/Lay ORGS XXI/7/1-17.

[252] *MMM*, May 1953, vol. XIV, no. 5, p. 19.

"Now listen to me, you fellows there,
Pray do not look so blue!
This general meeting I have called
To tell you some pleasing news to you.

Of the Auxiliary Guild of M.M.M.
I know you've never heard;
Or else you would not cry so much
As if, for you, no-body cared.

These members of the Auxiliary Guild
Are friends of ours in no small way;
For, every prayer and work they do
is offered up for us each day.

And though they never leave their homes-
The members of this Guild;
They help to save poor pagan souls
And do the work of God has willed.

Now everyone who joins this guild
All indirectly share
In every work the sisters do
And also every prayer

Now think of this, dear little brothers,
Dry up those great big tears;
And for members of the Auxiliary Guild

Let's give three hearty cheers!"[253]

This poem was written to recruit potential members to the MMM Auxiliary Guilds. It highlights how women could participate in the missionary movement without having to either leave Ireland or indeed their own domestic sphere. In this promotional pamphlet for the Dublin Apostolic work, the specific role conducted by the women is also reflected upon:

> *"All of us are not asked to experience the sadness of leaving home and crossing the seas to bury ourselves in the jungle and the wilderness for the cause of Christ in Mission lands. We are merely asked to furnish the sinews for their holy warfare, prayer and her material means to clothe and house the devoted man and women and enable them to build churches, schools and hospitals for the millions who are sunk in the seas of unbelief and irreligion."*[254]

It appears that women who do not want to become missionaries still have a role to play in the nation's missionary movement. The following is a quote from Dublin's Apostolic Work:

> *"[Women have] been to the forefront in those activities at home which are indispensible to the maintenance and development of the Missions abroad."*[255]

In this quote it is the nation of Ireland that is considered as home yet this is intimately connected to both the domestic home and the mission field. The emphasis on the domestic reflected the nature of the work that women were expected to participate in:

> *"[Apostolic work was] founded specifically for women and girls. Following the example of the Holy Women of the*

[253] *MMM*, October 1951, vol. XII, no. 8.

[254] *The Apostolic Work – Dublin Centre sixteenth Annual Report 1947*, Archdiocese of Dublin Archive, file Ab7/Lay ORGS, XXI/7/1-17.

[255] *The Apostolic Work – Dublin Centre Eighteenth Annual Report 1949*, Archdiocese of Dublin Archive, file Ab7/Lay, XXI/7/1-17.

> *Gospel women have always been prominent in the work of evangelisation."*[256]

Apostolic work was a way for women to participate in the international missionary movement by contributing skills seen as traditionally feminine. Women could participate in these scalar connections by contributing their talents to facilitate the success of the missions:

> *"It's a form of activity which makes a particular appeal to women because of its combination of prayer on common, according to prescribed rule, with skilled hand and craft work for the aid of the Mission Fathers and Sisters."*[257]

Thus members of the apostolic guild would gather together and sew and knit in order to produce goods that could be sent to the missions or sold in support. For example: "The members are engaged in the making of vestments, copes, humeral veils, altar linens, albs, surplices, soutanes, children's clothes, etc."[258] Participating in this activity was intended to be a social affair and would not interfere with ones domestic commitments:

> *"Our members are recruited from all sources, some, who are not bound by professional or other duties, meet for two hours' sewing class once a week in the afternoons; others, who are so bound, come together for the same purpose one evening in the week. Perhaps the best proof of the enthusiasm aroused by this privileged work... is that, of the seven branches which now exist, four have evening meetings - the members being either busy mothers engaged during the entire day or women tied to time by their various avocations."*[259]

The nature of apostolic work meant that women could participate without sacrificing their maternal and wifely duties. Thus the work of the apostolic guild conformed to a stereotypical gendered occupation. To contribute to the

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[256] *Ibid.*

[257] *The Apostolic Work – Dublin Centre Third Annual Report 1933*, Archdiocese of Dublin Archive, file Ab7/Lay ORGS.

[258] *The Apostolic Work – Dublin, Eight Annual Report 1938*, Archdiocese of Dublin Archive, file AB7/Lay Orgs.

[259] *The Apostolic Work – Dublin Centre Third Annual Report 1933*, Archdiocese of Dublin Archive, file Ab7/Lay ORGS.

Irish missionary movement in this way reflected the image of women that was presented on the pages of the missionary magazines and allowed an ideal Irish identity for women to be performed. Furthermore promotional literature for apostolic work often stressed that this was a Catholic endeavour and appropriate, religious behaviour was expected from each member:

> *"[Apostolic work] acts on the principle of first things first. Realising that barren soil can yield no fruit its first object is the sanctification of its own members."*[260]

Therefore alongside contributing their needle skills, members of the auxiliary guilds were required to participate in certain religious rituals. This emphasis on the routine of prayer during the meetings was vitally important:

> *"However necessary external works may be and however important the two hours' weekly attendance at sewing classes it is not these alone that Apostolic Work places its trust. Holiness of life, without which nothing can be accomplished in the spiritual order, is the primary aim of it members."*[261]

It was crucial that the Association was:

> *"Composed of members who endeavour to follow the example of the Holy Women of the Gospel who ministered to the material needs of Our Lord and His Apostles."*[262]

And indeed it was seen as vitally important that the Association was there to "promote the sanctification of its members."[263] Thereby the primary reason for existence was to benefit the spiritual wellbeing of its members. This emphasis on religious practice implies that to participate in the missionary movement was actually important to shaping Catholic behaviour within Ireland. The auxiliary guilds are therefore another example of how the missions became

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[260] *The Apostolic Work – Dublin Centre Sixteenth Annual Report 1947*, Archdiocese of Dublin Archive, file Ab7/Lay ORGS, XXI/7/1-17.
[261] *The Apostolic Work – Dublin Centre First Seventeenth Report 1941*, Archdiocese of Dublin Archive, file Ab7/Lay ORGS, XXI/7/1-17.
[262] *The Apostolic Work – Dublin, Eight Annual Report, 1938*, Archdiocese of Dublin Archive, file AB7/Lay Orgs.
[263] *Ibid.*

part of Irish life and in this way the mission field was a useful metaphor to achieving ideal Catholic behaviour within the nation.

5.3 Evoking Ireland in Representations of the Mission Field

The magazines also sought to evoke Ireland in missionary space. Drawing these spaces into close proximity with each other further contributed to the construction of an international Catholic network. The magazines presented to its readership pictures, photographs, diary-extracts, maps and accounts from the mission field. These representations will be explored to demonstrate that the magazines sought to establish an interconnected, transnational Catholic network with Ireland positioned at the centre. Through the presentation of this network the mission fields were constructed as an acceptable location for Irish identity to be enacted. The connectivity between African and Ireland can be seen in this visual depiction that featured on the title-head of *Tidings*:

Figure 5.4 - Tidings' Title-head

Source: Tidings, January – March, 1951, vol. III, no. 3 p. 1

Through this map the reader is presented with an Ireland that existed within the continent of Africa. Although wildly out of proportion, this picture depicts the two spaces as brought into close geographic proximity to each other, indeed Ireland is physically drawn into the mission field. The connection between Ireland and the missions was further reinforced by the detailed descriptions of

the mission fields presented to the Irish reader. Thus one sister recently arrived at St. Luke's Hospital in Anua, wrote:

> *"Africa is not at all what one would expect; no matter what anyone tells you, you find it quite different when you arrive here, and the difference is an agreeable one in our case anyhow. It is not too hot at the moment, the nights are quite cool, but they all tell us how we will fry around Christmas. This is the wet season and the rain at the moment would frighten you, not to mention the thunder, but we have some glorious sunshine too."*[264]

The sister conveys to the reader the differences between Africa and Ireland, but she goes on to remark that:

> *"There are grassy lawns in Africa too, not altogether as nice and soft as Irish grass, but nevertheless it is green and looks quite nice when it is kept cut. And the flowers – I wish you could see them, they are so beautiful. Fruit is in abundance, we have it for breakfast, dinner and tea; some of those who are here for a long time say you can get tired of it, but that day won't come for a long time for me."*[265]

The sister expresses surprise at the lush landscapes of Africa. The readership is expected to join in her surprise. In her account, Ireland is used to understand the foreign landscape. Indeed the references to Irish landscapes prominently feature in accounts from the missions. For example another sister reflects on the similarities between the Irish and the Nigerian landscape:

> *"Zonkwa : First letter home: I am here almost a fortnight now and I love it. Zonkwa is really the Killarney of Nigeria – there is a real treat in store for you when you come. The hills around here would remind one of Donegal, and these days the weather is most refreshing."*[266]

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[264] *MMM*, December 1953, vol. XIV, no. 10, p. 25.
[265] *Ibid.*
[266] *Oriflamme*, December 1958, p. 14.

For this sister the landscape resonates with the country she left behind. The reader is thus drawn into this comparison between the two places. Below is an extract from an article called *My First Impressions of Africa* by an OLA sister:

> *"I must admit that even yet I find it difficult to realise at times that I am in Africa. We speak of the Emerald Isle and the green fields of Holy Ireland, yet even now as I write I can look out on green fields and trees and hedges. That too impressed me on my way here by car from Lagos a distance of over one hundred miles. But that the trees were tropical, it would have been easy to imagine that I was travelling through a country road in Ireland. That made me happy as I had not expected such greenness, and it was hard to believe I was a few thousand miles from home."*[267]

For this sister the similarity between this landscape and Ireland strikes a deeper chord because she also sees a similarity with the people as well:

> *"I can truthfully say that the reality – I mean life in Africa – far surpassed my expectations. A Missionary's life is not a bed of roses, but I honestly had not expected such greenness, coolness, such friendliness and cordiality... the natives make one realize that they appreciate what the Sisters do for them."*[268]

The kindness of the people caused the sister to reflect and share these thoughts with the readership:

> *"That makes me think 'why not help them? Are we not all children of the same Good Father in Heaven, to Whom colour or education makes no difference, provided we love Him?"*[269]

In this letter the familiarities of the landscape was ultimately echoed in the local people that she met. This conclusion meant that the nun, by acknowledging the equality of all people, perpetuated the universalism espoused by the Catholic Church. She then presented these views to the people of Ireland.

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[267] *Tidings*, October – December 1951, p. 12 – 13.
[268] *Ibid.*
[269] *Tidings*, October – December 1951, p. 12 – 13.

Further connections between Ireland the mission field were forged through the shared experiences of Catholic ritual. These connections existed despite the vast physical and cultural differences between the places. For example *Oriflamme* published a letter from a sister in Ondo, which detailed her first Christmas in Nigeria:

> *"December here is so unlike December at home and yet Christmas is in the air, and it is just goes to show it is a spiritual feast, indeed, transcending boundaries and weather conditions."*[270]

The Catholic rituals of Christmas evoke in the sister the universality of the Catholic Church that traverses vast distances. It is hinted that through this universality the connections between 'home,' be it the domestic or the Irish nation, and the mission field could be foreshortened by Catholicism. There are many references to Ireland being evoked in the mission field through the ritual of prayer:

> *"We feel the prayers of all at home; our difficulties seem to solve themselves and we look forward to a continuance of graces won for us by these same prayers."*[271]

The magazines deliberately condensed the distance between these places by evoking Ireland on the mission field. When writing of the first children to be born in their hospital in Kabanga these children are referred to as 'Home Front Babies:'

> *"We want to help these women, so that one day, the country may be as full as Ireland of happy Christian families. As usual we turn to the Home Front for support. We were, of course, very proud of our two babies, but it may surprise you all to know that without your help they would scarcely have been able to face the world... they are real "Home Front" babies, and they thank you all very much for your goodness."*[272]

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[270] *Oriflamme*, March 1961, p. 28.

[271] *Oriflamme*, March 1956, p. 25.

[272] *MMM*, October 1951, vol. XII, no. 8, p. 15.

In these depictions of the mission field Ireland, described here using a familiar discourse of 'home,' is interwoven into these spaces so that its presence resonates on the mission field. Again this serves to remind the reader of the connections, forged by Catholic practice, between spaces of home and the mission field. The reader is presented with a connected, rather than insular, understanding of home as a space that exists in relation to the mission field and within an international Catholic network.

5.3.1 Representations of Irish sisters on the mission field

The magazines and films further demonstrate the interconnectedness between Ireland and the mission fields by presenting these spaces as an acceptable place for a feminine, Irish and Catholic identity to be enacted. For example this poem locates the Irish sister within the mission field:

> *"You find her in deserts enduring*
> *The tormented hunger and thirst,*
> *Sustained by the hope of procuring*
> *For outcasts the good that comes first."*[273]

In this poem the reader is presented with a very different location of idealised Irish femininity then that of the domestic sphere. However, although the gendered identity of the missionary sisters is one that is performed far from the home, it still conforms to an idealised Irish and Catholic identity. The picture below is a still taken from SSC film *Beyond the Horizon*:

[273] *Tidings*, January-March 1951, vol. III, no. 3, p. 1.

Figure 5.5 - "Beyond the Horizon"

Source: Beyond the Horizon, no date, Irish Film Archive, Missionary Sisters of St. Columban, 10 minutes 23 seconds

In this picture two Columban sisters are depicted in the rural landscape of The Philippines. They are shown going on visitation to conduct medical work and impart Catholicism. Throughout this film, the mission field is a place where Irish Catholic fervour was enacted by women who were not confined to the domestic sphere. Below is a further example from the MMMs:

Figure 5.6 - MMM Sister on the Mission Field

Source: *Medical Missionaries of Mary: Covering the First Twenty-Five Years,* (Nolan, 1962).

In this photograph the MMM sister is traversing a rickety bridge in a mission field in Nigeria. Again the mission field is presented as an acceptable location for the performance of a specific kind of Irish and Catholic identity. In these representations the habit remains a constant identifier, therefore these depictions of Irish women in this unfamiliar landscape is an acceptable performance of identity because of the obvious religious aspects to this. These representations were intended to be circulated throughout Ireland to add an international element to Irish identity. It is particularly interesting to note that through these pictures the missionary sisters were presented to the Irish public

in a way that was in marked contrast to their life in the motherhouse or hostel, as discussed in chapter four.

5.3.2 The Dublin missionary exhibition

Perhaps the pinnacle example of the mission fields being presented as interconnected to Ireland was during the Dublin Missionary Exhibition, held between 19th and 25th June 1961. The exhibition was part of a Patrician Congress, a weeklong festival of Irish faith centred upon a celebration of St. Patrick. Promotional material for the event envisioned it to be a "Missionary Exhibition on the largest scale ever seen in Ireland."[274] The Papal Legate, Cardinal Agagianian, opened the exhibition and the relevance of his attendance as the Pope's representative was noted as highly significant as noted in promotional material:

> "*The universal scope and importance of the Dublin Exhibition is greatly emphasized by the recent nomination by the Holy Father of his Eminence Cardinal Agagianian, as Papal Legate to the Dublin Congress of the Patrician Year.*"[275]

Agagianian was the Cardinal Prefect of the *Propaganda Fide* and in this role: "He is thus directly responsible for all missionary activity."[276] The choice of Cardinal Agagianian to be the Papal Legate reflected the internationalist outlook the Irish Catholic Church at this time. The exhibition itself was held in Dublin Mansion House. Geographers have studied imperial exhibitions and encourage a critique of how the location of an exhibition will influence the interpretation of the exhibits and the connections forged between this site an other places (Fletcher, 1999, Driver and Gilbert, 1999). This exhibition presented the existence of an international Catholic network while it simultaneously strove to locate and celebrate Ireland's role within it. This can be evidenced in the promotional brochure that was published as a guide to the event:

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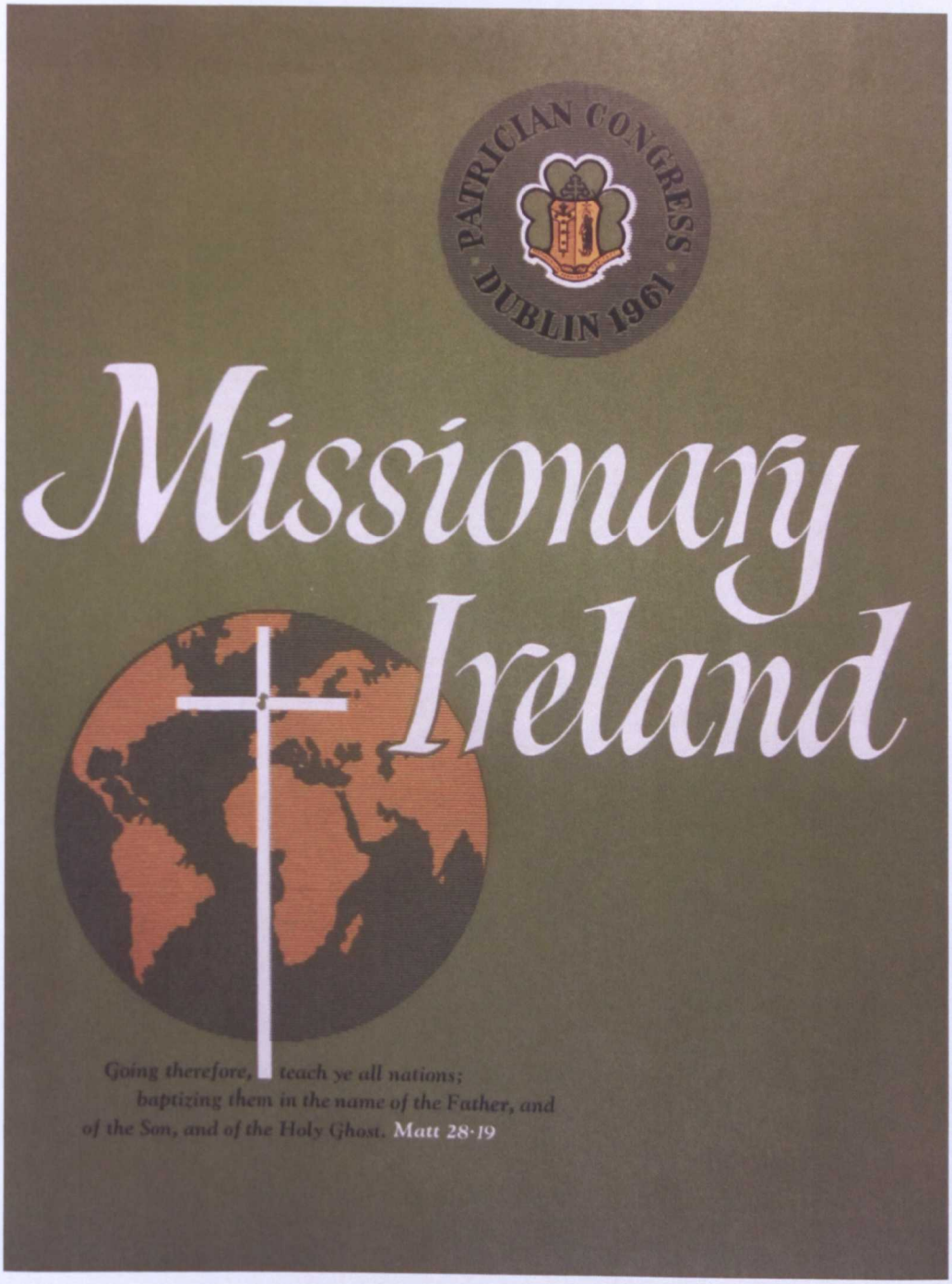
[274] *Untitled Pamphlet*, 1961. Archdiocese of Dublin Archive, Patrician Congress, box 2.
[275] *Dublin Patrician Congress, Missionary Exhibition*, Archdiocese of Dublin Archive, Patrician Congress, box 2.
[276] *Ibid.*

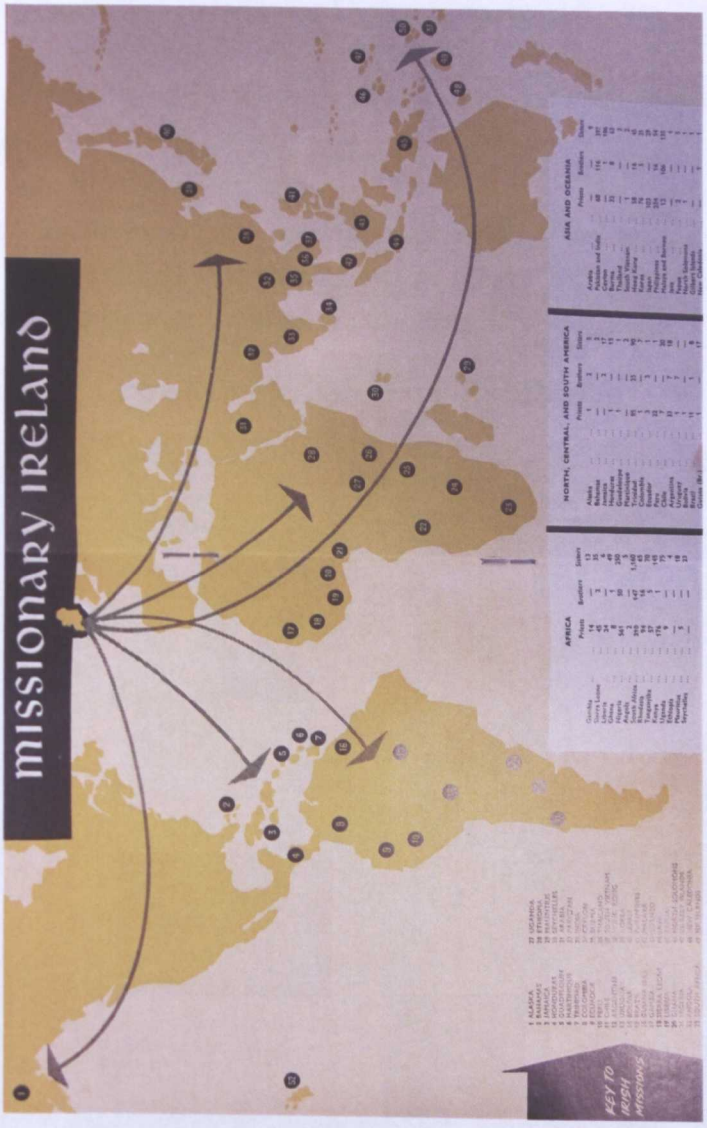
Figure 5.7 - Missionary Ireland



Source: *Missionary Ireland Pamphlet*, 1961, Dublin Archdiocese Archive, Patrician Congress, Box 2

In this picture, the cross is depicted as spanning the entire world but yet its centre rests upon Ireland. Furthermore the centre image of the booklet was to be a depiction of Ireland's vital role in constructing missionary networks:

Figure 5.8 - Missionary Ireland Map



Source: *Missionary Ireland Pamphlet*, 1961, Dublin Archdiocese Archive, Patrician Congress, Box 2

This map places Ireland at the centre of the Catholic missionary movement. Speaking at the opening ceremony Archbishop McQuaid wrote that the missionary exhibition was "symbolic of the apostolate of our nation"[277] for through the "exhibition we are chiefly conscious of the presence of the apostles

[277] *Archbishop Address at the Missionary Exhibition*, 18th June 1961, Archdiocese of Dublin Archive, Patrician Congress, box 2.

who themselves go forth unto the ends of the earth."[278] In this speech it was through its missionaries that Ireland was known in the world.

The exhibition appears to have been very popular with the Irish people, for one newspaper remarked:

> *"Most of Dublin must have seen that exhibition. They waited in sinuous queues. They straggled along in school parties... They talked, asked questions, studied the statistics."*[279]

Figure 5.9 - Crowds at Missionary Exhibition

Source: Dublin Archdiocese Archive, Patrician Congress (1961), photograph album

Driver and Gilbert (1998) write that it is important to consider the performative aspect of exhibitions and the role of the visiting public, whose varied interpretations bring meaning to this space. Indeed the exhibition brought the missionary world right into central Dublin, as the *Irish Independent* reported:

> *"This week [the Mansion House] held a world in miniature when the Irish missionary congregations of priests, nuns and*

[278] *Ibid.*

[279] *Irish Independent*, 23rd June 1961, p. 13.

> *brothers set their exhibition stands... and names that flash across the news headlines become small intimate places, seen through the eyes of the boys and girls from the next house, the next street, the next parish."*[280]

In this description the intention of the exhibition was to connect Ireland to the mission field of the world beyond and in this endeavour the article believes it to have been successful. The exhibition presented a Catholic worldview to the visitor while locating Ireland at the centre of an international, missionary network. According to promotional literature this exhibition was intended to "provide a graphic and detailed picture of Irish missionary endeavour throughout the world."[281] The exhibition of mission fields was to be an impressive display of the extent and varied locations that the Irish missionaries had come to occupy. MacKenzie (1999) has noted that imperial exhibitions held in Glasgow often presented the contribution of the city to empire, therefore carving out a Scottish identity in relation to imperial places. In a similar manner the Dublin Missionary Exhibition sought to show the expanse of Irish missionaries throughout the world and each mission territory that its missionaries were present in was represented at the exhibition. Thus: "Thirty-five specially designed stands will be used to present the achievements of Irish missionaries." [282] These stands were:

> *"Arranged in order to present clearly Irish missionary activity in each great region, country or section of the world. The work of the Irish missionaries in lands under Moslem influence, in the Asiactic countries and in the great lands of Africa, South America and Oceania, will be vividly presented."* [283]

The presentation of the stands in geographically sequential order was to ensure that the visitor to the exhibition would experience the world one region at a time. Therefore, to attend the exhibition became almost a trip around the world

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[280] *Irish Independent*, 23rd June 1961, p. 13.

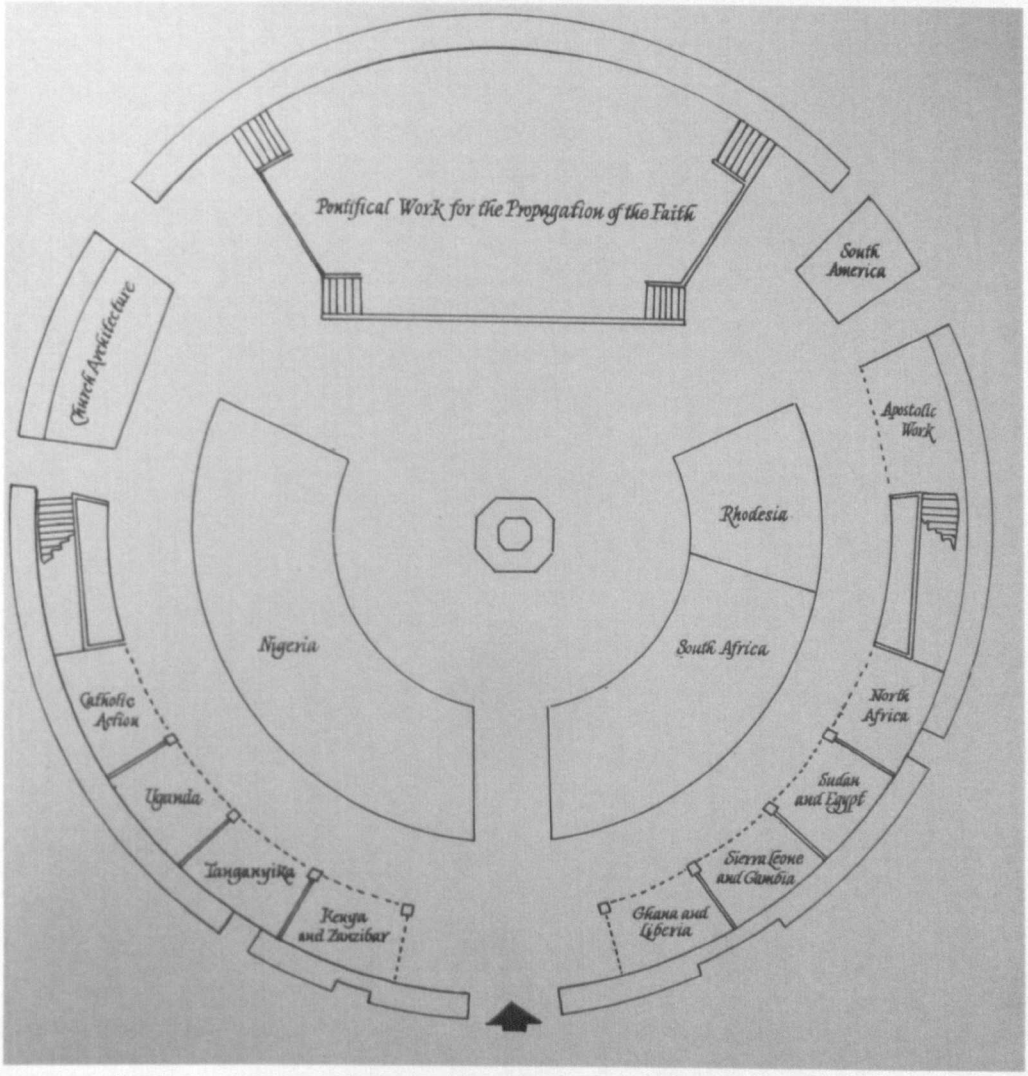
[281] *Dublin Patrician Congress, Missionary Exhibition*, Archdiocese of Dublin Archive, Patrician Congress, box 2.

[282] *Ibid.*

[283] *Ibid.*

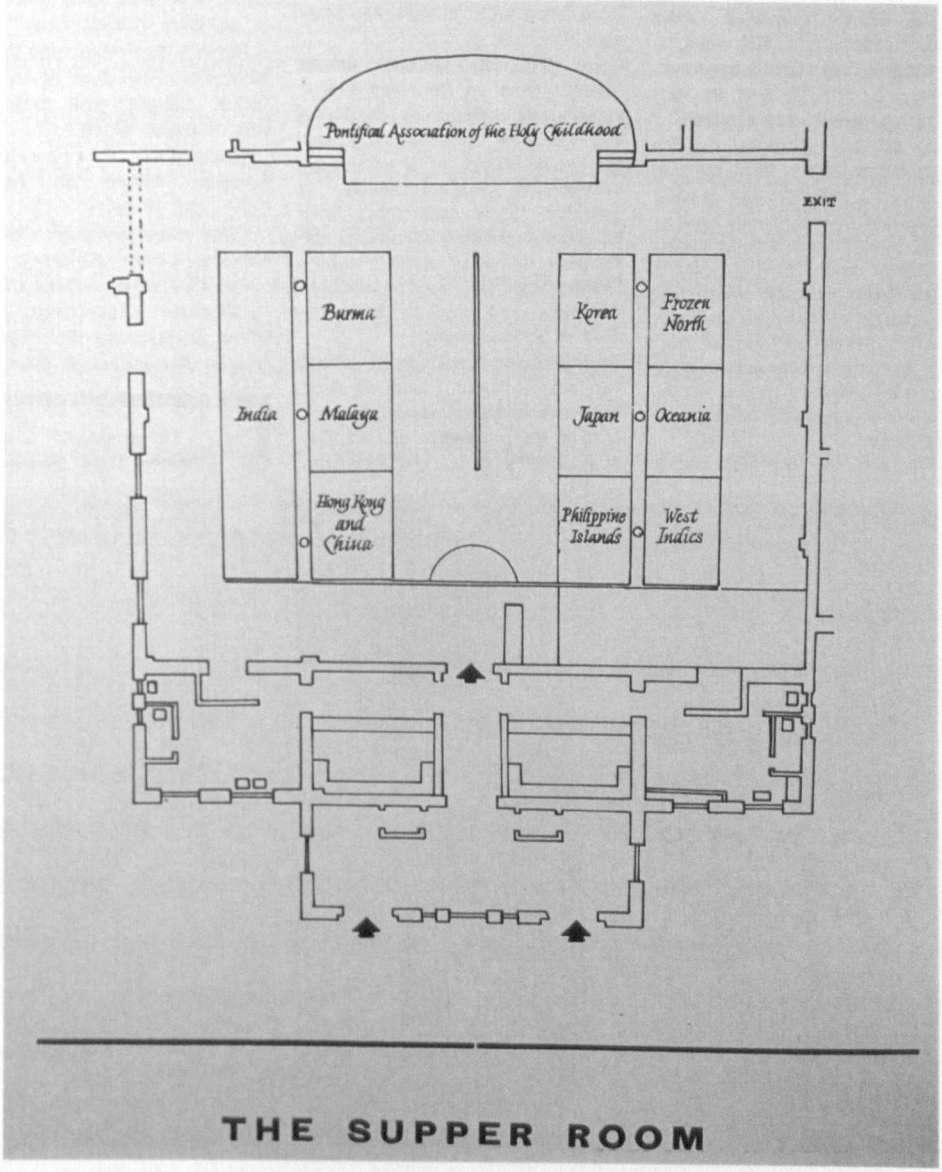
in itself, or as Mitchell has termed, "world-as-exhibition" (Mitchell, 1989 p 222) where the spectator is shown a series of representations of various far-off places. The following picture is a diagram of the exhibition's lay-out:

Figure 5.10 - The Round Room



Source: *Missionary Ireland Pamphlet*, 1961, Archdiocese of Dublin Archive, Patrician Congress, Box 2

Figure 5.11 - The Supper Room



Source: *Missionary Ireland Pamphlet*, 1961, Archdiocese of Dublin Archive, Patrician Congress, Box 2

For each territory, a missionary order that worked there was asked to arrange a display on a stall. This was decided by the organizing committee, composed of Irish missionary societies and the national branch of the Propagation of the Faith:

> "*The basis of the division of the stalls is geographical, i.e. according to the countries in which Irish Missionaries are working... In each country a particular society was asked to*

> *accept the responsibility of managing and organizing the stall in question."*[284]

Therefore the group responsible for organizing a stall was the one who had the most intimate knowledge of that territory. This was to lend legitimacy to what was being displayed. The organising committee decided that the MMM sisters would be responsible for the stall of South East Nigeria, the OLA was Nigeria West and the SSC were assigned the Philippines. The committee instructed:

> *"To ensure maximum of variety, each stall holder should try to make his or her stall specifically evocative of the country represented. Native costumes, customs, draperies, unique or highly characteristics features of ordinary life should help towards achieving this objective."*[285]

The stalls were intended to be eye-catching and interesting. They contained photographs, maps and objects from the country on display. Therefore visitors to the exhibition were encouraged to experience a very specific interpretation of the spaces being represented (Ryan, 1999). The purpose of the exhibition was to educate the viewer of the expanse of Irish missionaries, all within an overarching Catholic interpretation of the world. At the opening of the exhibition, Cardinal Agagianian told the visiting people how to appreciate what they were presented with and he spoke of the Catholic world-view of the missions:

> *"Others may think of life in terms of colour or race, they may speak of backward countries and advanced ones, of the civilized and the primitive, of East and West for us these words have only a superficial meaning. The Church speaks of 'souls', as if to declare that here is the essential underlying factor of mankind. Men begin to live – in terms of divine life – with Baptism and this life never ends but is meant to continue in eternity with God. To-day as whole continents are coming into a new and more transparent development, the small view of things must go and we must put in its place that genuine*

[284] *Dublin Missionary Exhibition from Pontifical Work of the propagation of the Faith*, Archdiocese of Dublin Archive, Patrician Congress, box 1.
[285] *Ibid.*

> *universality that our common origin and our common destiny demand.*"[286]

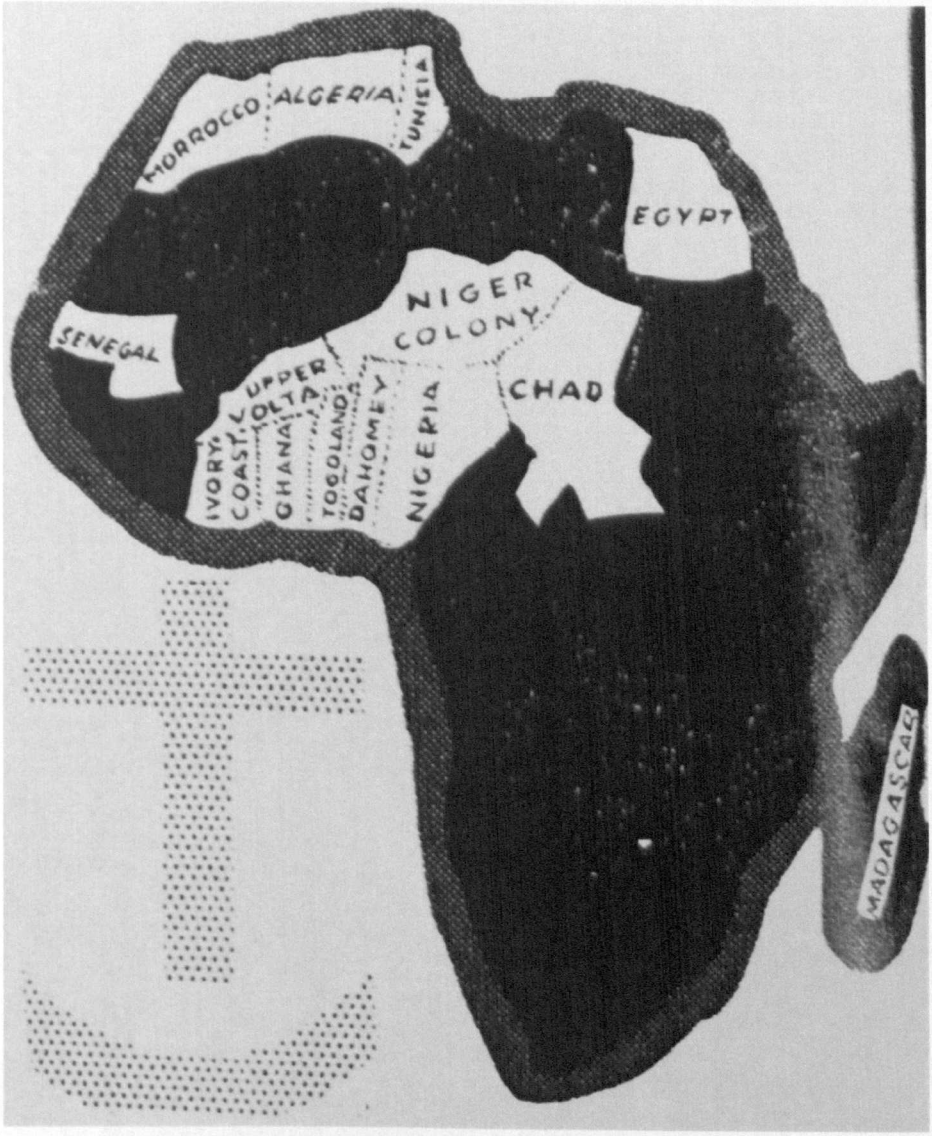
The speech again demonstrates the attempt to impart a Catholic understanding of the world to the people of Ireland. The exhibition, by being a microcosm of Ireland's missionary achievements, indeed set out in the heart of Dublin, became the visual accompaniment to these sentiments of universality and connectivity that the Catholic Church espoused.

5.4 Representations of Catholic Territorial Expansion

The Church's contribution to the missions and its territorial expansion was particularly shown through maps (Cosgrove, 2001). In the magazines cartographical representations demonstrated Ireland's contribution to the wider missionary movement by depicting opposing Catholic and non-Catholic areas of the world. The following map depicted the spaces of Africa that had yet to receive any OLA Sisters as the dark places of the continent:

[286] *Cardinal Legate's Address at Missionary Exhibition*, Archdiocese of Dublin Archive, Patrician Congress, box 2.

Figure 5.12 - Missionary Territory of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles in Africa

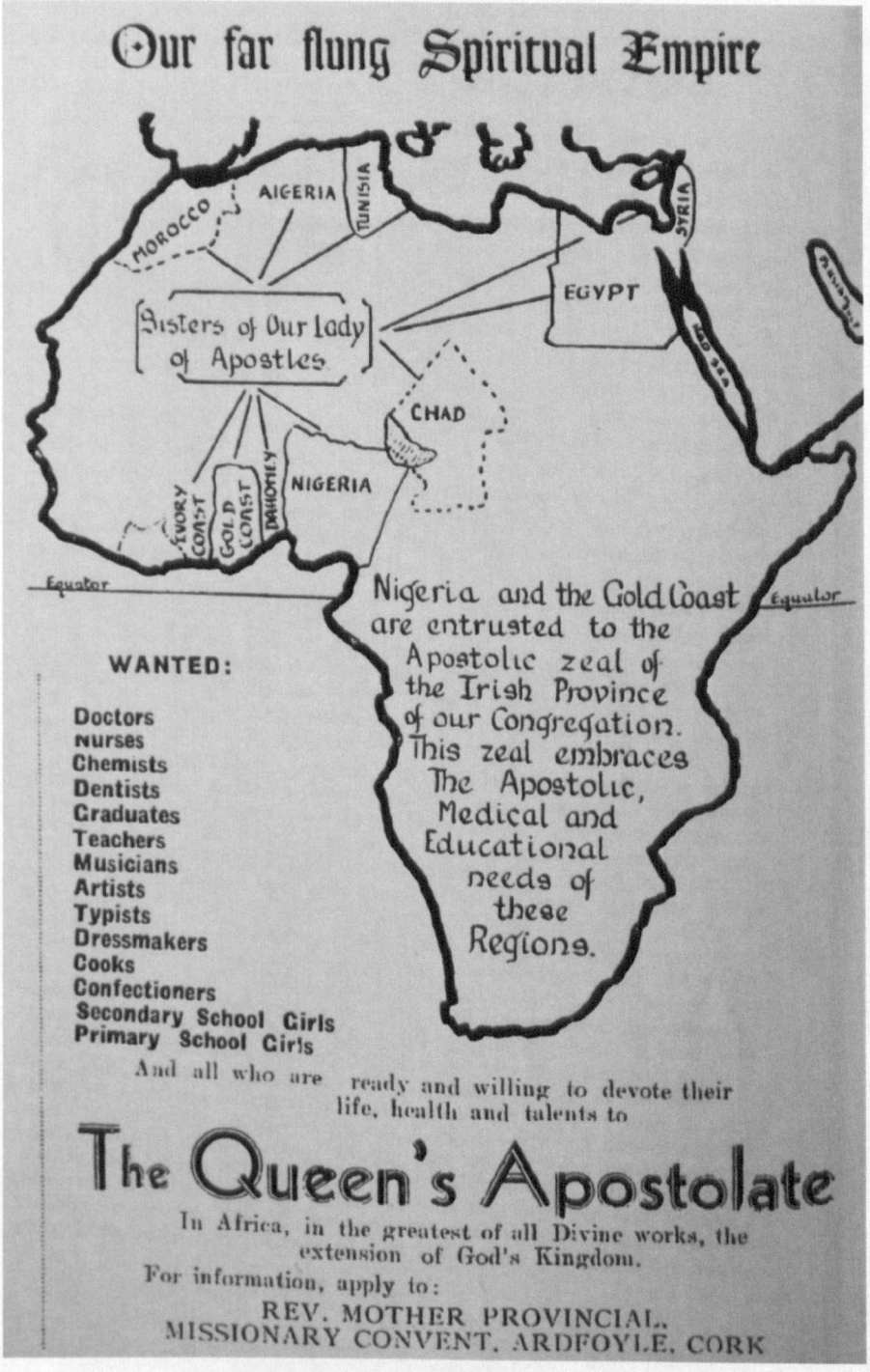


Source: *Tidings*, July – September 1957.

In this map the black spaces of Africa are those where the OLA Sisters have yet to establish a mission. The stark use of contrasting colour demonstrates to the reader the strict juxtaposition between these two spaces. Of particular note is the oppressive use of black to represent the non-Christian spaces. In all of the magazines this dualistic understanding of space went alongside such terms as 'pagan' and 'native'. These labels refer to people who were yet to be

converted to Catholicism. Indeed in another issue of *Tidings*, the work of the OLA sisters is referred to as their spiritual empire:

Figure 5.13 - "Our Far Flung Spiritual Empire"



Source: *Tidings*, April – June 1953

The use of the term 'spiritual' reveals the Catholic project that the sisters were engaged in. The physical expansion of the OLA Sisters across Africa was represented in religious terms and their 'empire' refered to the spreading of the Catholic faith across vast swathes of Africa. In a similar manner the MMM also used maps to convey to their readership the work of their missionaries. Below is a map taken of the territory surrounding Ogoja, Nigeria:

Figure 5.14 - MMM Mission in Ogoja, Nigeria

Source: *Medical Missionaries of Mary: Covering the First Twenty-Five Years of the Medical Missionaries of Mary, 1937- 1962* (Nolan, 1962).

In this visual depiction of missionary work, the space beyond Ogoja is shown as a mass of blue. Or, in the top map, the space beyond the MMM mission was shown as a black abyss. The centre of MMM activity in this region is depicted using the three Ms of the congregation. In this map the whole landscape of Ogoja is now considered as occupied by the Catholic MMM. This depiction of the mission field shows an almost Catholic colonisation, where space is depicted as either under the jurisdiction of the missionaries or not. These representations of the mission field present the world to the reader as either Catholic or awaiting evangelisation. Crucially these maps place the Irish contribution to the Catholic endeavour as a vital component to the Church's international movement for conversions.

5.4.1 Souls on the mission field

Fundamental to representating this territorial division of space was a Catholic understanding of the soul. The Church understands all people to be in possession of a spiritual and thus immortal soul (Royce and Furton, 2003, Brady, 2003). When outlining their work the *MMM Magazine* simply wrote: "the Catholic Faith has to be brought to the notice of every soul."[287] The MMM considered that all local people they encountered must be converted to Catholicism to save their immortal soul from eternal damnation (Eminyan, 2003, Jungmann and Stasiak, 2003). Many accounts from the mission field focused on baptism. The following was recalled from the mission field of Ado-Ekiti:

> *"Last night Sr. M. Aquin was called to attend a baby who was very ill – so ill was the little one that she baptised him and named him Patrick. Half an hour later he was off Home, the waters of baptism scarcely dry."*[288]

The sister informs the readership that: "Isn't it lovely to be able to administer so wonderful a sacrament that ensures eternal life to those whose span of time is so short?"[289] The use of the term 'home' is an emotive one, used to present

[287] *MMM*, November 1957, vol. XVIII, no. 9, p. 11.
[288] *Oriflamme*, December 1954, p. 21.
[289] *Ibid.*

equality between all Catholics. Referring to heaven as home definitively reinforces the importance of the missionary work. Due to this spiritual understanding, a common narrative in the magazines was that after the failure of medicine to save the body, consolation could be sought in the reception of the soul into heaven through baptism. In an article that featured in *Eastern Star*, a Columban Sister in Hanyang, China wrote that in their busy hospital they received an adult male who was very ill with typhoid fever:

> *"Sister Catherine told him we could do nothing for his body, but could do a great deal for his soul. A few days later, on the Feast of Ascension, Mark, with the waters of Baptism still wet on his brow, went to heaven."*[290]

The newly baptised Mark sadly perished from his illness but the sisters and indeed the readers in Ireland could take comfort that his soul went to heaven. All the magazines contained similar accounts of baptism occurring in the hospital, in doing so these sites of healing were presented to the readers as also places of evangelisation. The role of medical care on the missions was thus relayed to the readership in terms of baptism and the conversion of the soul:

> *"Through the medical apostolate all classes are reached, from the illiterate purdah woman and the bush-man to the highly educated university graduate of either sex. While they are ill in hospital, or when Sisters are sick visiting in their homes, they can see Christian charity in action."*[291]

Clearly the work of the sisters is understood through their ability to reach the souls on the mission field. In the following story a sick man, described as pagan, first went to the government hospital for treatment but because it was closed, he reluctantly went to the OLA sisters instead:

> *"The poor man could hardly believe that all this kindness was really being done to him. The fact that a white nursing Sister would care for him was beyond belief. After the Doctor's visit the new patient was instructed in the principal mysteries of our religion... He was quite resigned when told*

[290] *Eastern Star*, October – November 1947, vol. 1, no. 2, p. 4.
[291] *MMM*, November 1957, vol. XVIII, no. 9, p. 11.

> *he was going to die, and most anxious for Baptism. He died that night, one hour after His Baptism and Anointing, and another soul from the Dark Continent found its way to the Great White Throne.*"[292]

In this story it is implied that the kindness of the sisters was fundamental to the conversion of the dying man. Baptism is seen as a comfort to the medical sisters when the worst happens. Thus one sister wrote that when death comes to their patients:

> *"The only remaining consolation is that of sending their souls aloft by the saving waters of Baptism, and this consideration lightens the failure in many otherwise frustrating cases.*"[293]

These accounts convey to the readership the great importance allotted to the religious aspects of their missionary work. Indeed it was this spiritual work that was presented in the magazine of utmost importance, as this account from Asankrangwa reveals:

> *"These consolations make one forget the heat and burdens of the day and remind us to thank God for making us poor creatures instruments through which He takes up His abode in others.*"[294]

In this quote the sisters become a vital aspect of the Church's desire to be known to all the souls of the earth.

5.4.2 Medical practices and local customs

The magazines further reinforced the importance of missionary work by conveying what local life was like before the arrival of the sisters. This often focused on a critique of local or 'pagan' beliefs relating to healthcare. In the following account, a young tribal wife finally gives birth to triplets after experiencing many miscarriages. The father is so pleased that he had them baptised that day and named them Paulina, Philomena and Catherine:

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[292] *Tidings*, October – December 1956.

[293] *Tidings*, October – December 1959, p. 11.

[294] *Oriflamme*, June 1956, p. 17.

> *"Some years ago this tribe would send away both mother and babies, for mother and twins, not to mention triplets, were supposed to be evil omens and no harbingers for good. Urgent then is the need for zealous missionaries, for how can this African tribe change superstitious practices of the past into something higher and nobler if the Gospel is not preached and they are not taught the beauty of the Christian Religion?"*[295]

The magazine depicts the spread of Catholicism alongside the bringing of modern ideas to the local people and the condoning of traditional medical practices. One sister in Owo wrote how a native doctor of Bada Iowo was accused of giving out poisonous medicine. To prove that it was safe the native doctor took a portion for himself:

> *"The result was that a few hours later he was admitted to St. Louis Hospital with great pain and suffering. It was impossible to render satisfactory medical treatment, as there are no known antidotes for the native medicines. We called Reverend Father to give him spiritual assistance before he died in the early hours of the morning... The patients on the ward have learned a salutary lesson, I hope."*[296]

In this account the reader is shown how local people's religious belief in the medicine man were intimately tied to their experiences of medicine. The work of the sisters is therefore shown as an attempt to establish a relationship between modern medicine and Catholicism. The magazines thus celebrate the rejection of local religious customs in favour of the uptake of Catholicism. The following quote is called "*Mission Round-up – Memories of a Pioneer,*" and recounts the story of a dying woman and her sick child who are taken to the sister's hospital:

> *"Knowing the mother had not long to live, I began to instruct her in truths of our holy religion. The poor women had juju amulets hanging all over her, and was very reluctant to part with them. I explained to her that she would not be with her child in heaven if she did not give them up. One by one they*

[295] *Tidings*, July – September 1959, p. 23.
[296] *Oriflamme*, September 1959, p. 16.

> *were taken off, and soon she was repeating the prayers after me."*[297]

This story ends with the death of the mother and her child: "In a short time she was baptised and died peacefully soon after. Her child followed her in a few days."[298] In this account the rejection of local religious practices is symbolised through the removal of the ju-ju jewellery associated with her belief. The following account from *Oriflamme* carried a similar message. A sick child is suspected of being possessed by the devil and consequently some local people have threatened to kill the child, yet the sister-nurse wrote to say that she could confidently diagnose the illness through medicine: "It looks as if the child has meningitis or some brain trouble – or the trouble again may be native medicine."[299] The sister goes on to remark that: "She had all sorts of Ju-Ju charms about her neck. These we released and put on a miraculous medal instead."[300] The medal, a Christian symbol of faith, becomes symbolic of the new Catholic life of the child. The central message of these stories was that local beliefs were not only detrimental to the soul but also for the body. Likewise the spread of Catholicism through medical practices was beneficial to both.

These accounts, that celebrate the success of western medical practices over local customs, can be understood as the perpetuation of a colonial medical discourse (Arnold, 1993). These representations championed the superiority of Catholicism and European knowledge over that of local customs. This contributed to a Catholic colonisation, evident through medicine and baptism and focused upon control over the body. The medical practices of missionaries will be pursued in more detail in the following chapter.

5.4.3 Depicting the scale of missionary activity

The understanding that each person is in possession of an immortal, spiritual soul means that every person is a potential member of the Church. Therefore

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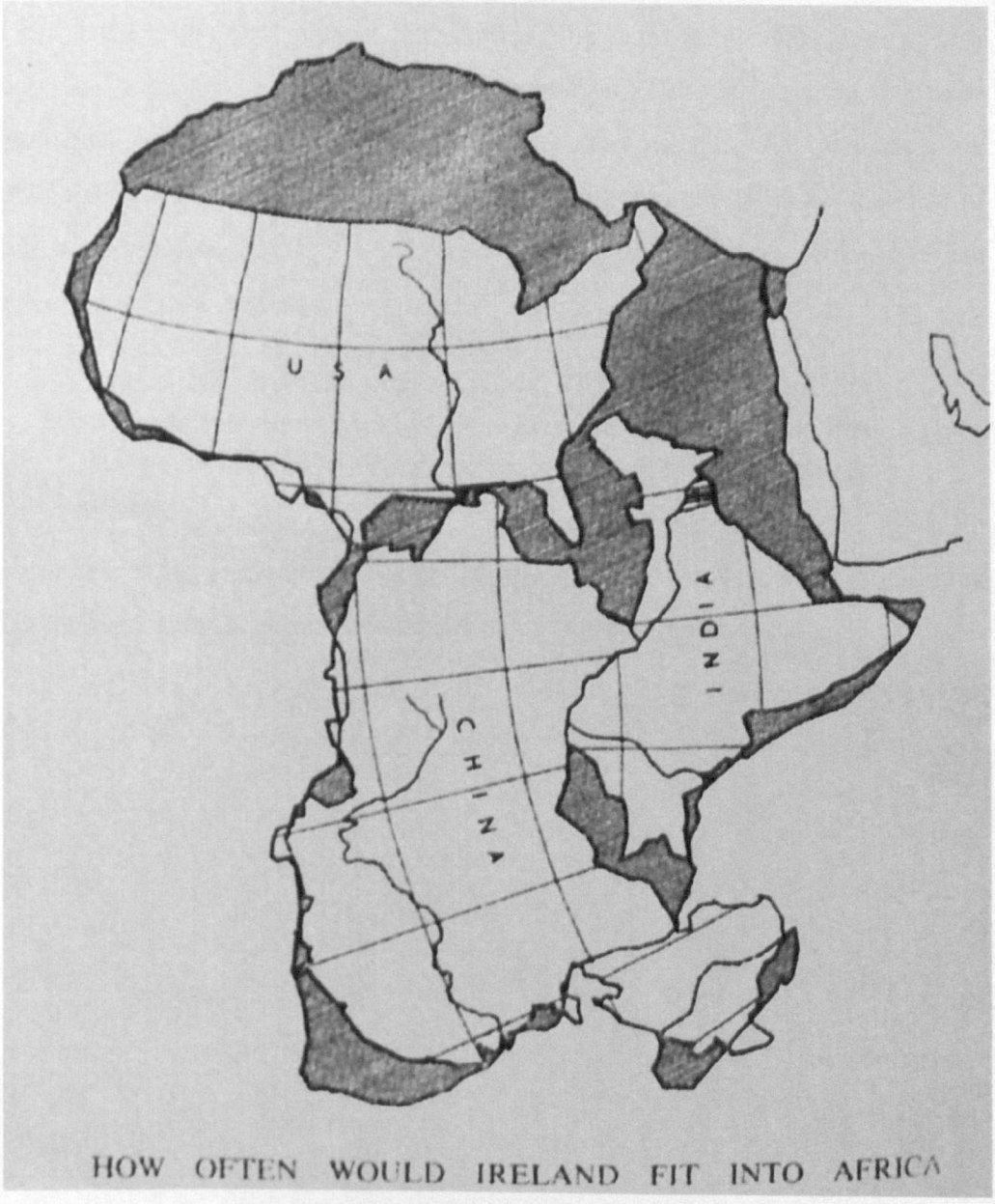
[297] *Tidings*, October – December, 1952.
[298] *Ibid.*
[299] *Oriflamme*, June 1956, p. 20.
[300] *Ibid.*

the limits of missionary expansion relates to the limits of earth's territory (Cosgrove, 2001). The magazines conveyed the scale of what their work set out to achieve through the use of maps and statistics. The following picture is from *Tidings* and depicts the vast physical size of Africa by comparing it to other countries of the world:

Figure 5.15 - "How often would Ireland fit into Africa"



Source: *Tidings*, February – March 1960

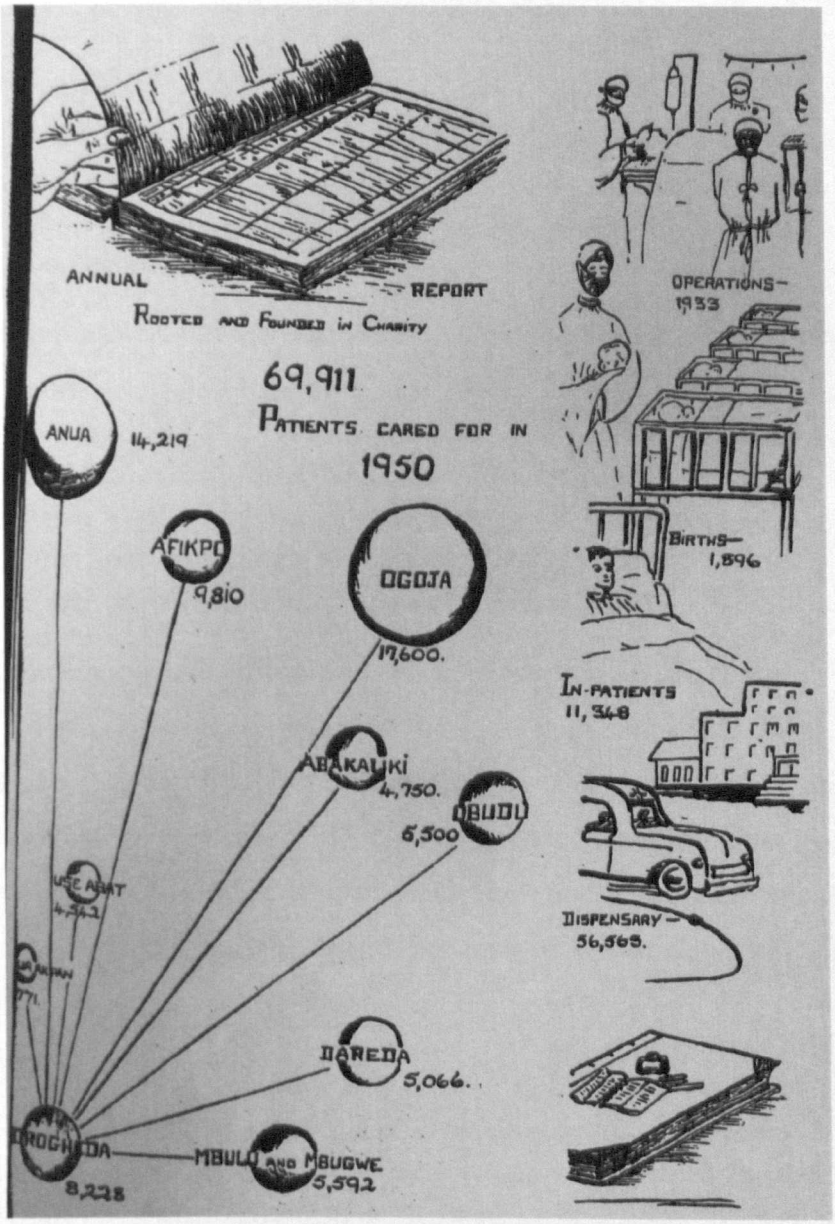
Below the map of Africa is the caption: "How often would Ireland fit into Africa?" This map uses the familiar reference point of Ireland to convey the vast size of Africa to the readership. This striking image was featured on the back page of *Tidings* and informs the reader of the extent of the task faced by the missionaries in the conversion of the continent. Again, in this map Africa is understood in a Catholic sense, for its geographical space is equated with conversions. Therefore, the work of the missionary will not be complete until there is the total conversion of humankind. The scale of the missionaries' task was also conveyed through the use of statistics. The OLA would use their magazine to publish their annual report from their missions: "Pupils attending the Sister's School, 50,094. Orphans and others maintained at the expense of the congregation, 8,431."[301] Likewise the St. Louis Sisters would publish information such as this:

> *"Owo has a population of about 37,000 people, and St. Francis's is our only Catholic Church. For six days of the week it is used as a school and on Sunday is converted into a chapel."*[302]

The sheer volume of potential souls for the sisters to convert was recounted to the readership in diagrams such as the one featured below:

[301] *Tidings*, April – June 1960.
[302] *Oriflamme*, March 1959, p. 17.

Figure 5.16 - Patients Cared for in 1950



Source: *MMM Magazine,* April 1951, vol. XII, no.3, p. 3

In this diagram each MMM mission field is depicted as abstract space. Each circle which represents a mission field is drawn to reflect the number of patients that the MMM sisters had contact with. This picture conveys the extent of the missionary task by using quantitative data. Alongside these visual depictions the magazines featured anecdotes that would 'fill in' the empty spaces on the maps. The following is an account published in the magazines

that conveys how one sister, newly arrived in Kumasi, perceived the scale of the task ahead of her:

> *"It must be its vastness that overwhelms one and writing of details without relation to the whole sounds petty... what struck me most were the teeming masses of people we saw in many of the villages through which we passed on our way from Takoradi to Kumasi."*[303]

This account presents to the reader the vast physical geography of Africa and the sheer number of souls to convert. The sister's account goes on to remark:

> *"The harvest is tremendous here in this little corner of Africa. What of the whole? And how few the labourers! Only 220 priests here altogether and the country is nearly 3 times the size of Ireland with a population of 12 million."*[304]

This article presents the difficulty of this task as compounded by relatively few number of missionaries compared to the local population size. Furthermore, the size of the country, as demonstrated by its comparison to Ireland, is yet another obstacle to the success of the mission. Indeed articles in the magazines often evoked the hardships of the local conditions. One sister recounts her experience of going on visitation. The account draws the reader into the difficulties of the task that she faces:

> *"Let us picture the town in question: three hills or more of mud-red huts with some splendid modern buildings certainly, but also with its incredible maze of putrid streets, in some quarters little better than gulley's where one slithers precariously on green slime, and its evil-smelling alleys leading from one densely-inhabited compound to another."*[305]

The difficulties are further compounded because: "this town is a Moslem stronghold."[306] Nonetheless the sister is able to report successes when working in this space:

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[303] *Oriflamme*, December 1955, p. 25.
[304] *Ibid.*
[305] *Tidings*, January – March 1960, p. 18.
[306] *Ibid.*

> *"Despite the immense odds against their apostolate, scarcely a group returns to its base admitting absolute failure. Nearly always something is accomplished: a lapsed Catholic brought back to the fold, a marriage rectified, Catechumens enlisted, a dying infant baptised."*[307]

The magazines also report the competition that the sisters faced from other Christian denominations and the Islamic religion. One sister's first impression of Africa were published in *Orflamme*, in this she remarked:

> *"En Voyage – Freetown – Our first sight of Africa. We went ashore through the docks swarming with dark-skinned people gathered to see the boat. It was Sunday and as we passed along the streets it was more and more borne upon us that we were in a strange pagan land... there are seventy-two churches only two of which are Catholic. Syrians, Mohammedan, Africans, how shall they be converted!"* [308]

Again this quote is an attempt to engage the reader with the enormity of the task at hand. In this account the sisters do not just face opposition from local faiths but also from Muslim and other Christian denominations. Indeed the rivalry from other religious denominations was often commented upon, as this account from Asankrangwa demonstrates:

> *"This week we had an old man who fell into a bush fire and got very badly burnt; not being able to get taxi or lorry over weekend he was in a bad state; we brought him along here for proper treatment and spent over two hours cleaning and dressing burns. He is a staunch member of Apostolic Church which is worse than pagan (they do dreadful things)."*[309]

Despite these difficulties the magazines do report on the successes that were had and the story goes on to remark:

> *"I tried to change him but he was tough in his beliefs – at any rate he promised to say an aspiration I taught him – and at*

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[307] *Ibid.*

[308] *Oriflamme*, September 1957, p. 13.

[309] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

> *parting he said he might be a Roman if he got well! If he does get well it will be a miracle indeed."*[310]

In the mission fields of West Africa the magazines remarked on the spread of Islam. For example the following quote was written by a sister based in Owo, Nigeria:

> *"We still do visitation. The other evening I was out and called to see an old man who had been a patient in the Hospital. He told me that although he lived all his life as a Mohamadan, he would now go to the Catholic Church because he never received such kindness as he got from the Sisters and doctors in the hospital. He is going to Catechum class and attends Holy Mass and devotions. This is the second chief in a short time to become Catholic."*[311]

In these accounts the success of the missionary project was assessed by the number who converted to Catholicism. Obstacles to overcome in this task included the vast physical landscape, the ratio of missionaries to local people as well as the spread of rival religions. In presenting the missions through successful and potential conversions, the magazines contributed to an understanding of Africa in purely religious, rather then political or imperial, terms.

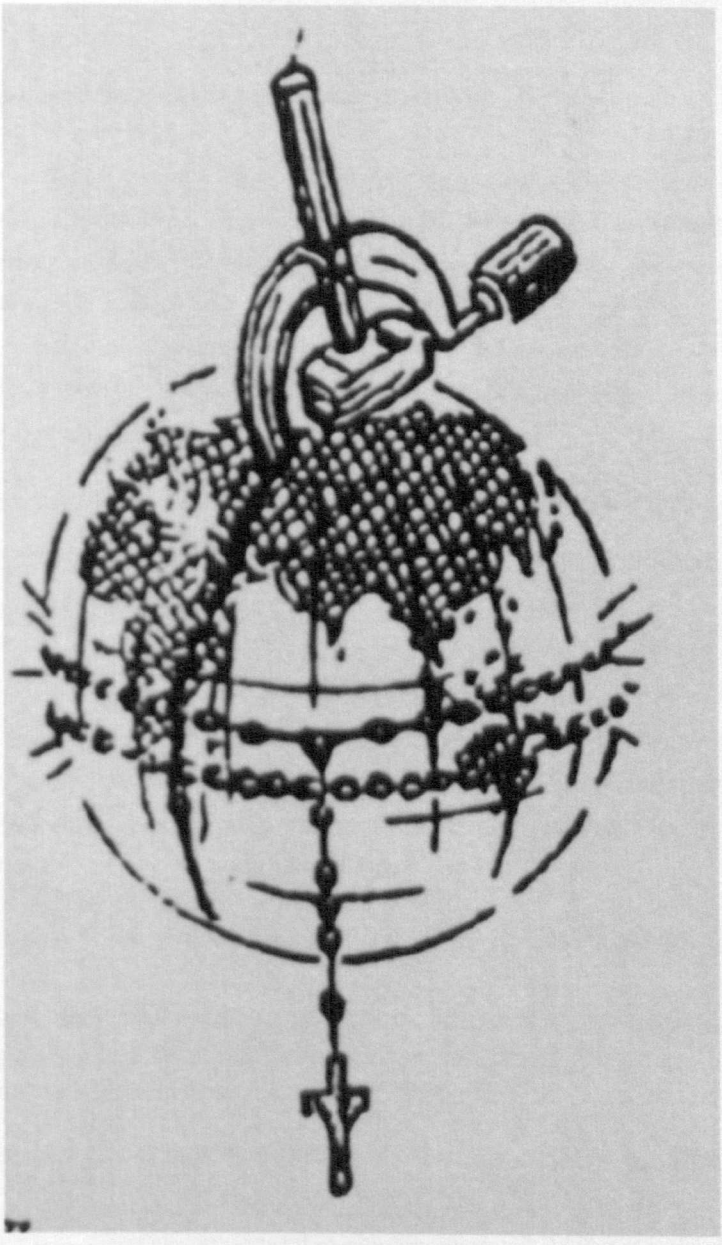
5.4.4 The Catholic Church and communism

In many articles the greatest obstacle to the territorial expansion of the missions was the spread of communism. As discussed in the literature review the Church was vehemently anti-communist. Darwin (1999) has noted how colonial authorities in Africa were cautious about the infiltration of external influences because it was an ideological stasis that helped to maintain their power. However, after World War II, in what Darwin terms the late colonial era, this position was increasing untenable. As Darwin remarks in this era: "The colonial world was no longer secluded... increasingly it was thrust into the frontline of cold war competition" (1999 p 81) and he attributes the rapid decolonisation of Africa partly to this factor. With regards to the Church the

[310] *Ibid.*
[311] *Ibid*, p. 19.

potential for African states to be drawn into a communist world was cause for concern. The magazines presented a distinctly Catholic critique on the spread of communism throughout the mid-twentieth-century and the magazines presented the missionary movement as part of the Church's resistance to communist expansion throughout the world:

Figure 5.17 - Globe



Source: Eastern Star, 1956, vol. X, no. 2

In this drawing the use of the globe reflects the Church's God-like perspective over the world. In this image the limits of both communism and Catholicism potentially expand across the entire world. The threat from the destructive force of the hammer and sickle is resisted by the rosary, a very Catholic symbol of Christianity. Indeed the magazines presented the Church as a force that could be mobilised to oppose communism. The following is an account of the conversion of a local person in a mission field in China entitled: *"Therese – the story of a Little Soul by a Missionary Sister of St. Columban."* The story begins by establishing the context of the missions:

> *"On a bleak, wintry day, some few years ago, the streets of an old city in China were all astir with busy life. It was early morning and the good housewives were bargaining for every imaginable articles of food from red painted ducks' eggs to pig's cheek and cabbage. It was at this time that two sisters, clothed in black habits and carrying medicine bags, might have been seen hurrying along."*[312]

While conducting their visitation the sisters met a girl who was very ill with TB of the spine. However they noted that the child was more worried about her spiritual spiritual then her physical health:

> *"Although grateful for the physical relief afforded her, she was even more so for the spiritual sustenance the Sisters were able to bring her. It was marvellous how her little mind opened up to the divine truths. In time she paid no heed to remedies, all her anxiety was for her soul."*[313]

The sisters enabled the young sick girl to convert to Catholicism:

> *"When the sisters were satisfied that she had sufficient instruction she was baptized and to her great joy called by the name of her patroness, Saint Therese."*[314]

Although the girl never lost her faith, she soon died. This prompted the sister to reflect:

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[312] *Eastern Star*, April – May 1953, vol. VI, no. 5, p 4.

[313] *Ibid.*

[314] *Ibid.*

> *"In these sad days, when evil men have endeavoured to obliterate all traces of Christianity from her native land, one likes to think that one of St. Therese's little souls' keeps watch over that forlorn city on the banks of the Yangtze river."*[315]

This very intimate story, by focusing on one child's adoption of Catholicism, is used by the magazine to argue a wider point about the dangers of communism. Through these stories the magazines brought a Catholic interpretation of this international issue to the Irish readership. In these representations Catholicism was positioned as an opposing force, able to resist the spread of communism. In an issue of *Tidings* the readers were told:

> *"REMEMBER Communists have souls as dear to God as our won... Christ died on Calvary as truly for him as for you. Will you be generous enough to pray for their conversion. If enough prayers are offered, Communism may be eliminated from the world. COMMUNNISM IS GODLESS and no Communist will ask for the grace of conversion, hence your need of prayer for him."*[316]

It was the atheism of communism that was highlighted as significantly potent. Nonetheless the reader is told that concern for communist soul is an innately Catholic act. This sentiment was echoed in other magazines and again this was presented in the magazines as related to Catholics in Ireland. For example:

> *"Dear Home Maker,*
>
> *1953 is on the threshold. Just think it is nearly 2,000 years since the Prince of Peace came yet what a heart-rending sight out Communist-threatened world! Nor have the United Nations given us much to hope for, alas! Their sessions have been compared to a new tower of Babel. Yet, despite the war-clouds, there is no need to despair we have MARY... if you are a member of her Great Rosary Crusade, then you are helping open the flood gates of Grace. Try your upmost to make your neighbours realise the importance of completing the 'sufficient' number Our Lady needs to perform her*

[315] *Ibid.*

[316] *Tidings*, April – June 1958, p 12.

> *promised miracle; The Conversion of Russia. Perhaps a little more effort on your part might be instrumental in securing many ardent helpers who would further the Peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ.*"[317]

This quote actively encourages the ordinary Catholics in Ireland to engage with resistance to the international politics of communism. The following article from *Oriflamme* criticised the spread of communism ends with this call to arms: "[the] reason why we cannot stand aside is that we are Catholics. We have the truth and the truth cannot remain sterile; it must be dynamic."[318] Therefore one's personal adherence to Catholicism was evoked by the magazines as a reason to align oneself with an international missionary endeavour. This specifically Catholic world-view was presented to the readership in quite dramatic terms:

> *"To-day's battle between Atheistic Communism and the belief in the existence of God leaves us no choice. A Religious War is on, and we are, or should be, the Crusaders. Everything in atheism tends to extinguish the Christian way of life."*[319]

In this religious war missionary work was seen as crucial: "The world of to-day needs renewing, re-Christianizing. The missionary effort is essential to the welfare of mankind."[320] Missionary work was equated as an essential act for the benefit of the entire world. Indeed some missionaries are presented at being at the forefront of withstanding the advancement of communism. For example, after their expulsion from China, the SSC proudly declared their mission territories as ideally located to directly face the further spread of communism in the East: "Our front lines against the anti-Christian forces are now stretching to Burma, Korea, the Philippines and Malaya."[321] The SSC present their missionaries as actively withstanding the further advancement of communist forces into these territories. In a similar manner, the excerpt below from MMM

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[317] *Tidings*, January – March 1953, p .6.
[318] *Oriflamme*, September 1952, p. 27.
[319] *Tidings*, January – March 1961, p.11.
[320] *Eastern Star*, February- March 1955, vol. VIII, no. 4, p. 2.
[321] *Eastern Star*, October- November 1956, p. 4.

shows a concern for the future of Africa and the human consequences of political change:

> *"We see the missions highlighted against the dark background of existing world conditions. In this light the work of the missionary takes on a new importance. Every mission-field and every mission station, no matter how remote, has now become an outpost of Christianity whose aim will be twofold. Not only will the missionaries strive to improve the lot of the people and promote their development – spiritual and material- ever leading them towards a fuller Christian life but they must now defend their people against the enemy's disruptive aims. It is in mission lands, in the course of the next few generations, that the balance will be swung – towards God or way from Him."*[322]

In this quote the 'enemy' is nameless but nonetheless infers the presence and advancement of anti-Catholic forces throughout the world. In these dramatic articles the work of Irish missionaries is understood as part of a wider Catholic resistance to communism. The reproduction of this world-view to the Irish readership brought the individual into this struggle. Thus one article in MMM specifically reaches out to the individual reader to participate in this international endeavour:

> *"Africa needs your help and needs it now. She needs trained and highly skilled people in every branch of life – and she can get them. Russia and her satellites would be only too ready to flood the African continent with teachers, doctors, engineers, bank and business officials. It may be a surprise to you to hear that to date Nigeria has refused entry permits to trained personnel from Communist countries – but if her expectations from the 'West' are not realised she will have no option. And then when the harm is done we will wake up to the realisation that we could have prevented tragedy."*[323]

The fear of the spread of communism to the mission fields was portrayed to the Irish people as a something that because of their Catholic faith, one ought to be concerned with. By establishing the existence of an international Catholic

[322] *MMM*, September 1951, vol. XII, no. 7

[323] *Oriflamme*, June 1961, p. 26

network it was right and obvious to call upon people of Ireland to help in this struggle. In the magazines communism was written of through a discourse of war and Irish missionaries were key to the resistance. Yet these articles also acknowledge the important role played by ordinary Irish people in aiding the crusade and it was this Catholic network, which operated on various scales that the magazines were infused with.

5.5 Conclusion

From studying the promotional material produced by the Irish missionary orders two broad conclusions can be drawn. The first is that the mission fields were evoked in Ireland to influence ideal Catholic behaviour within the nation. The magazines were hostile to the infiltration of secular culture to Ireland, as it was perceived that this could erode the Catholicism that the magazines placed as a long-standing facet of Irish identity. In this manner the magazines are part of a wider project of Catholic morality in Ireland. The magazines advocated resistance to this cultural infiltration through practices of Catholicism and these were primarily centred upon the home and the mother. There was a strong gendered element to this presentation of Irish identity for it relied on the Virgin Mary as an example of idealized femininity. However the work of the sisters on the missions to some extent challenged the spaces where an acceptable enactment of Irish identity could occur. Thus the missionary sister, working on the mission field, was also understood in the magazines as an acceptable variation on this discourse of Irish femininity.

Secondly, the magazines and the missionary exhibitions served to demonstrate that Ireland was part of an international Catholic missionary movement. The presentation of this transnational, Catholic network presented the world in terms of Christian and non-Christian spaces. By establishing Ireland within this network, the magazines showed an internationalist element of Irish identity that encouraged ordinary people to actively engage with practices of Catholicism on a variety of interconnected scales, including in the home or with the auxiliary guild. Perhaps this consciousness of, and connection to, the mission field is best understood through the following quote, taken from an

oral history interview conducted with an MMM sister. For this sister, learning about far away places resonated with her growing Catholic conscience:

> *"When I was about 9 or 10, we had a priest come who was a missionary. I can still see it as it was only yesterday. He put up a map on the wall and we were sitting there, adults and children, and he had marked out the outline of Africa, then in a black spot, Nigeria, he must have been working there. It didn't mean a thing to me I didn't know where any of this was, you know. But he must have given a very good talk on the needs of the missions and I remember saying to myself that time, sitting on the floor; 'Oh! I would give anything, if when I grow up, if I had courage to go and help others there.' But I said that would never happen, I couldn't leave home. But that was the way I felt about it. So it never left my mind, I could remember that picture so much."*[324]

This MMM sister's early encounter with the mission field aroused a sense of compassion and sparked a curiosity that would shape the course of the rest of her life. Yet in becoming a missionary sister, these connections between Ireland and the missions would move beyond representations and into practical actions instead. The work conducted by the MMMs on the mission field is the focus of the next chapter.

[324] Sr. J. MMM, Personal interview, 18th November 2009.

6 "No Cross No Crown": The Mission Fields of the Medical Missionaries of Mary in Tanganyika, 1947 – 1962

This chapter looks at the medical work conducted by the MMMs in the territory of Tanganyika. In 1925, after defeat in World War I, the League of Nations confiscated the territory from Germany and gave the British a mandate of control. It remained as such until after World War II when the United Nations allowed mandated territories to become Trust Territories through the implementation of the United Nations International Trusteeship System.[325] Therefore, in 1946 Tanganyika's status changed from that of mandate to a trust territory but nonetheless remained under British control (Yeager, 1982). According to Chapter XII, Article 75 of the International Trusteeship System, Britain, as the administrative authority over the trust territory[326] was henceforth responsible for facilitating Tanganyika social, economic and political path to independence (Taylor, 1963). It was in this political climate, in 1947, that the MMMs first arrived in the territory. From this time the MMM sisters instigated themselves within the healthcare provision of Tanganyika and over the course of eight years established four hospitals across the territory. The table below summarizes the MMM mission fields in the Tanganyika territory and the bishops and vicar apostolic's that oversaw their work.

Mission Field	Date	Diocese / Vicariate	Bishop /Vicar Apostolic
nDareda Makiungu	1947 1954	Mbulu	Winters
Kabanga	1951	Kigoma (Diocese)	Van-Sambeck
Chala/ Mpanda	1956	Karema (Vicariate)	Holmes –Siedle

[325] http://www.un.org/en/decolonization/nonselfgov.shtml#uk.
[326] http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter12.shtml.

For the sisters to establish themselves in these locations required multiple negotiations of power. The MMMs had to have the approval of the British authority before they could receive the necessary funding for their medical work. At the same time they operated under the jurisdiction of a diocesan bishop and therefore had to continue to comply with the regulations of the Church. To study the relations between sisters and the bishops in Tanganyika allows a further assessment of the gender inbalance within the Church. Furthermore, this chapter considers how the MMM Congregation continued to impart its own moral regulation over its own sisters on the mission field. This morality was subsequently imparted onto the local people through embodied practices of Catholicism, the gendered implications of which will be considered. The chapter also pursues the practices of colonial medicine. The relationship between medicine and colonisation is a complicated one, but as Marks (1997) notes:

> *"The history of medicine in the colonies is often an illuminating way to examine aspects of the power and limitations of colonialism and its ideas and discourse"* (p. 215).

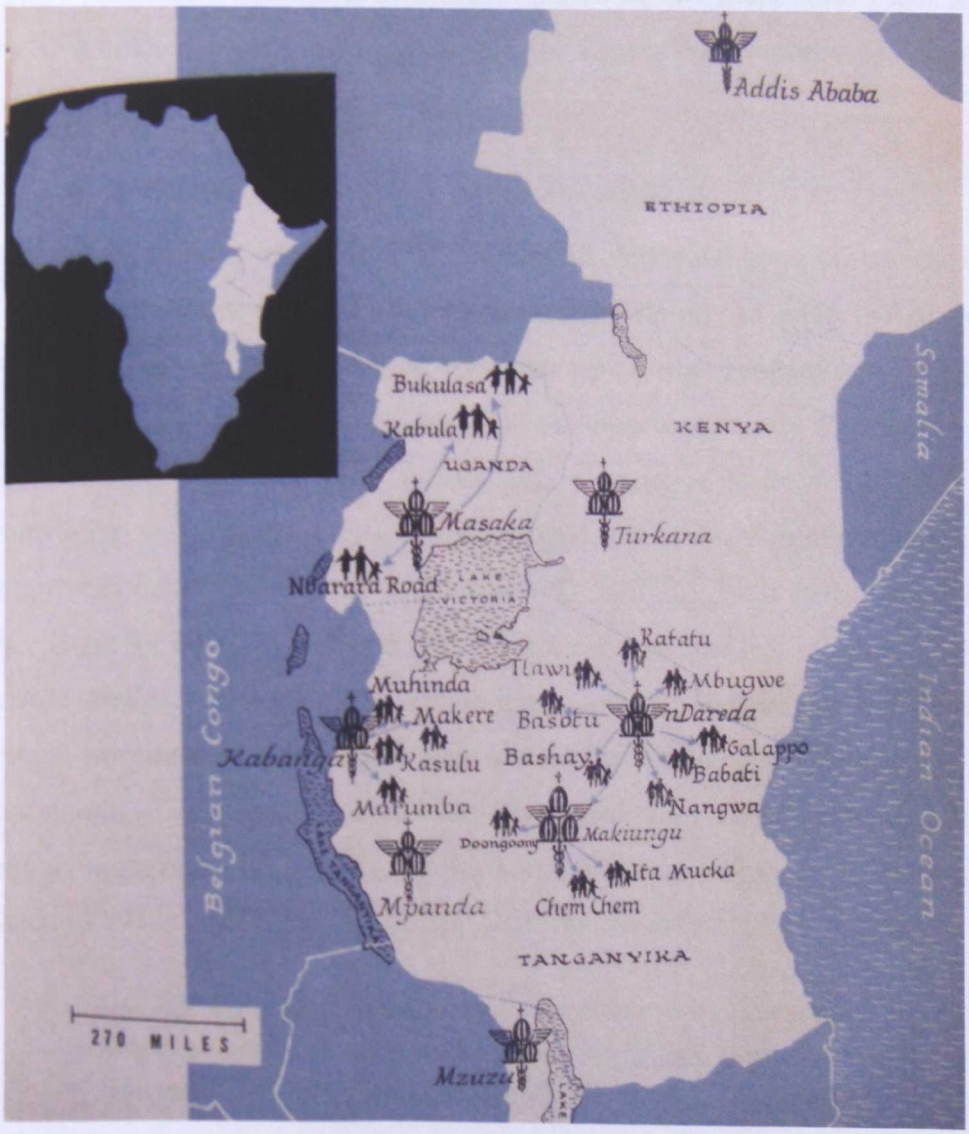
Megan Vaughan (1991, 1994) argues colonial medicine involved knowledge, control and the making of universalist claims which led to discourses of difference and the creation of colonial subjectivities. However, Vaughan has also noted that this study of medicine is more complex then simply seeing it as a direct force employed by colonial powers (1994). Likewise, MacLeod has argued that: "while medical practice may reinforce dependence and sustain political hegemonies, it does not create them" (Macleod, 1988 p 12). This chapter therefore moves beyond thinking of medicine as a part of a metropole-colony dualism (Ernst and Mukharji, 2009) but rather considers the more subtle role of Catholic missionaries in the colonial rule of the Tanganyikan territory. The chapter concludes by assessing the emphasis within the MMM congregation on encouraging the internationalisation of the order. This involved a concerted effort to recruit local women to be future MMM sisters. It can therefore be seen that the ultimate aim of the sisters in Tanganyika was for

the Irish sisters to withdraw completely, but be replaced by Tanganyikan MMMs. The internationalisation of the order will be discussed in relation to the universalist vision of the Church.

6.1 Competition on the Mission Field

The MMM sisters visually presented their mission fields in Tanganyika to its readership in a book to celebrate 25 years of the congregation. The resulting map is shown below:

Figure 6.1 - MMM Mission in East Africa



Source: *Medical Missionaries of Mary: Covering the First Twenty-Five Years,* (Nolan, 1962).

In this map of Tanganyika the MMM hospitals are depicted by the three Ms of its acronym. Medical centres are depicted by a symbol of a family group and are shown as connected to the MMMs hospitals by a series of arrows. These arrows represent how the sisters would visit these clinics from their larger hospital bases. In the map there is almost a complete lack of medical or religious rivals. This is despite the presence of both Lutheran missionaries and the government's hospitals in the territory. To acquire these locations in Tanganyika the MMMs were involved in negotiations with bishops and the British government as well as competing with the Lutherans. This section explores how the Tanganyika territory, depicted in this map, was 'won' and how this challenges any assumption that the sisters were occupying 'empty space.'

6.1.1 Grants-in-aid policy of the Government

The medical work of the MMMs in Tanganyika depended upon the allocation of government money through their grants-in-aid policy. In 1946 the British government set out a ten-year development plan for Tanganyika territory (Taylor, 1963, Yeager, 1982, Kaplan, 1978). This was mainly focused upon education and agriculture but nonetheless revealed a desire to advance a country that was significantly under-developed, particularly in comparison to its northern neighbour, Kenya (Kaplan, 1978). Perhaps, with an emphasis on other areas for development, the government allowed medical missionaries to provide health services. Their grants-in-aid policy was intended to fund mission hospitals in areas where they would benefit the greatest number of local people. The initiation of this strategy reveals how the government were largely supportive of properly trained missionaries entering Tanganyika. Indeed in 1946 the Director of Medical Services remarked:

> *"With the general deficiency in medical services (personnel and beds) both Government and Missions in this Territory, it is obviously the intention that we should accept in principle*

> *any philanthropic or commercial project to reduce this deficiency."*[327]

Medical missionaries can thus be seen as a solution to the financial shortcomings of the territory. Through a system of grants, mission hospitals were to be part of the public health provision in the territory. However, money would only be provided to a mission if it were deemed by the Medical Council of Tanganyika to fulfil a need. For example:

> *"It must be recognised that the activities of the missions are mainly directed to curative work as distinct from preventative or health measures and while all forms of medical work are needed in unlimited amount we must ensure that funds are granted for essentially curative work are really being used in the interest of the local community and not in such a way as to deprive other services of more greatly needed assistance."*
> [328]

As can be ascertained from this quote, the government intended the mission hospitals to provide direct health services for the people of the territory. This funding was not allocated as part of a wider, more costly investment in disease prevention. For example:

> *"We also gave consideration to the position of those missions which receive grants-in-aid for the training of medical personnel or for the conduct of campaigns against specific disease. In our opinion financial assistance for such purposes should not be brought within the scope of the proposed grant-in-aid regulations but should be subject of special provision"*[329]

Once the policy was more firmly established, the government did fund the training of medical staff but at this early stage in the grant programme it is clear that there was a vast distinction between the different aspects of medical

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[327] *Minutes sent to the Honourable Director of medical Services, Dar es Salaam,* 18th September 1946, National Archives of Tanzania, file 10724, vol. III.

[328] *Letter from Director of Medical Services to Chief Secretary,* 4th May 1945, National Archives of Tanzania, file 10721, vol. III.

[329] *Grants in Aid to medical Missions: Report of Sub-Committee of Executive Council,* 16th January 1946, National Archive of Tanzania, file10721, vol. III.

work within the territory. Within this division, the missions were responsible for public health care, which confined them to hospitals and clinics. To ensure that the grant was used for this purpose, the money provided was explicitly used to pay the salaries of qualified medical staff at the following annual rates; £300 per month for each medical practitioner, £120 for each state registers nurses and £30 for each qualified and approved African Medical Auxiliary and African Nurse.[330] Grants were thus allocated according to the professionalism of the medical staff:

> *"No mission shall be eligible for a grant-in-aid unless its medical work is under the direction and control of a registered medical practitioner and under the immediate supervision of properly trained and qualified staff."*[331]

The grant could also be used to fund and maintain hospital buildings. Again in providing this money the mission societies were intended to aid the extension of healthcare across the territory:

> "*The intention behind the Grants-in-aid to Missions Regulation a, viz that Government, in its desire to extend medical facilities as far as possible to the native population, is anxious to assist Missions who are in a position to provide such facilities where it is satisfied that a definite need exists.*"[332]

A missionary order wishing to found a hospital would only be successful in this endeavour if the hospital they wished to open would: "fulfil an acknowledged medical need in the area concerned."[333] It appears to have been the intention to use the funds of the central government to support hospitals

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[330] *The Medical (Grants in Aid to Missions)Regulations*, 3rd September 1948, National Archives of Tanzania, file 10721, vol. VII.

[331] *Ibid.*

[332] Letter from Director of Medical Services to The Member for Social Services, 3rd May 1951, National Archives of Tanzania, file 10721, vol. v.

[333] *Grants In Aid To Missions for Medical Work*, 14th January 1952, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/190.

and larger-bedded rural dispensaries.[334] Once a grant was provided the government would maintain a manner of control over the mission hospital:

> *"It is thus essential, when dealing with the expenditure of public funds, for distributing authority to retain a measure of control of the way in which such funds granted for the welfare of the public, as distinct from that of the mission, are expended."*[335]

Therefore, the government put into place certain stipulations regarding the spending of the funds that it distributed. For example, once permission had been granted for the MMMs to build and run a hospital in Kabanga, the Bishop of the diocese Van Sambeck wrote to the Social Services to state that the intentions of the MMM sisters was to fit into the wider plans for the health-care provision of the territory: "The Sisters...will do their upmost best to devote themselves to their Medical work, under the direction of the Medical Authorities of the country." [336] This shows how the MMM sisters were to integrate themselves within the existing health services of Tanganyika. Once a mission hospital was established under the grants-in-aid scheme it would have to be maintained to a specific standard in order to repeatedly qualify for this money. The MMMs embraced scientific and medical advancements in their hospitals to ensure that the institutions were of "a reasonable standard of buildings and equipment,"[337] as outlined by the grant. Furthermore "a sufficient establishment of qualified medical and nursing staff must be maintained to ensure the efficient running of the hospital."[338] Once in receipt of a grant the MMM hospitals were subjected to annual inspections. One MMM sister once wrote to say that:

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[334] *Memorandum*, no date, National Archive of Tanzania, file 10721, vol. V.

[335] Letter from Director of medical Services, R.R. Scott to The Chief Secretary, 4th May 1945, National Archives of Tanzania, file 10721, vol. V.

[336] Letter from van Sambeck to the Honourable Member for Social Services, 5th September 1951, National Archives of Tanzania, file 10721, vol. V.

[337] *Grants In Aid To Missions for Medical Work*, 14th January 1952, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/190.

[338] *Ibid.*

> *"As we are now subject to a yearly audit and closer supervision by the region, we are in danger of losing our grant if our buildings are not adequate and if our staff are not properly housed."*[339]

Nonetheless during the period of British rule in Tanganyika the healthcare collectively offered by missionaries was essential to the health services of the territory and eclipsed the services offered by the government. Thus this report from Government released in 1952 stated: "it will be many years before Government can provide comparable medical services in all the areas now served by missions."[340] Despite the necessity of the missions to the territory the existence of a grant system did not imply that the government was uncritical of the missionary endeavour. One specific stipulation of the grants-in-aid policy was outlined in 1948, it stated that the recipent of the grant must:

> *"Treat patients of all denominations or faiths without discrimination and that acceptance of treatment involved no obligation to accept religious instruction."*[341]

The grant was thus intended to ensure that the missions would not use this money to propagate faith but rather the hospital would contribute to the creation of a widely distributed health service for the territory. There seems to be some resignation by the government over the necessity of the medical missionaries:

> *"In this territory we are dealing with missions of many denominations and nationalities, some of whose conceptions of the use of public funds differ radically from those of others; but it is probably true, and certainly could be argued, that both the public health and the religious activities of the mission benefit from government grants."* [342]

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[339] *The Vicariate of MBulu*, 26th May 1952, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/191.

[340] *Grants In Aid To Missions for Medical Work*, 14th January 1952, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/190.

[341] *Conditions for Grants in Aid for the Medical Work of Mission*. No date. National Archive of Tanzania, file 10721, vol. III.

[342] Letter from Director of Medical Services to Chief Secretary, 4th May 1945, National Archives of Tanzania, file 10721, vol. III.

A degree of scepticism from the government towards the medical missions can also be detected in this letter written in 1945 by the Director of Medical Services for the territory:

> *"[I] believe that the primary object of the missions in this territory is the healing of the mind (or the saving of the soul), and that their entering onto the medical field (apart from first aid on 'good Samaritan lines') is a secondary venture, often undertaken because it is a most effective form of propaganda for the primary or religious object."*[343]

In this quote, taken from a letter written two years before the arrival of the sisters, a degree of wariness towards medical missionaries can be noted. Nonetheless, in 1945 or indeed in the subsequent years of MMM expansion into Tanganyika it would appear that the government was in no position to reject the medical missionaries' willingness to conduct medical work.

The following is an account of how the MMMs operated within the grant system. In 1951 the Vicar Apostolic of Kigoma very much wanted the sisters to open a dispensary in the village of Kabanga. In the application for a grant to establish Kabanga, Sr. Margaret Garnett of the MMMs sent a memorandum to the Director of Medical Services outlining the plans that the Bishop and MMMs had for the area:

> *"It is proposed that Kabanga is to be the medical centre for the Vicariate and that the doctor should live here and visit the hospital at Ujiji and the Dispensary at Kakonko. It is proposed with the Government's approval to eventually build a hospital here for general and maternity patients."*[344]

As can be seen in this letter the sisters' hospital was to serve the Catholic Vicarate of Kigoma. From this centre the sisters would then be able to visit and dispense medicines to other nearby locations. On behalf of the MMMs, Van Sambeek applied to the government to see if this hospital would be eligible for

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[343] Letter from R.R. Scott, Director of Medical Services to The Chief Secretary. 4th May 1945, National Archives of Tanzania, file 10721, vol. V.

[344] *Memo from Margaret Garnett*, No date, National Archives of Tanzania, file 107.

grants-in-aid. In reply he was told that: "in order to have a fair distribution of medical services in the district, the dispensary should be situated elsewhere and suggested Kakonko."[345] As can be seen here the Catholic distribution of health services did not necessarily match that desired by a secular one. Van Sambeck disagreed with the medical directors decision because: "Kakonko being in the extreme north of the vicariate is inaccessible for the sister doctor to visit regularly"[346] and it was evidently agreed upon to locate the hospital in Kabanga. On receiving the approval of the Medical Grants in Aid Committee van Sambeck was informed:

> *"It will be appreciated that the above decisions have been made in the best interests of all the medical facilities that can be provided throughout the District within the limited funds available to Government."*[347]

The grants-in-aid system was intended to ensure that a sound, evenly distributed medical service was put into place across the Tanganyikan territory. In these archival documents there can be seen a degree of cooperation between the government and the bishop regarding the location of the hospitals. Nonetheless the government's approval had to be secured or the hospital could not be built.

6.1.2 Competition over grants

In both receiving grant money and in the conversion of souls there was a palpable sense of competition between Catholic and other Christian dominations. The MMMs first considered establishing a mission in Tanganyika in 1945 when they were invited to open a hospital in nDareda by an Irishman, Monsignor Winters. The Monsignor had been appointed as the very first Prefect Apostolic of Mbulu in 1944. The reputation of the MMMs preceded them and on a visit home to Ireland in 1945 Winters wrote to Marie Martin, now known as Mother Mary, stating: "several priests have mentioned

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[345] *Memorandum*, 18th July 1951, National Archives of Tanzania, file 10721, vol. V.

[346] *Ibid.*

[347] Letter from Member for Social Services to Vicar Apostolic of Kigoma, 23rd August 1951, National Archive of Tanzania, file 10721, vol. V.

your sisters to me and recommended them, so I am presenting my petition for about six sisters."[348] Winters wanted the MMM sisters to provide health services in his diocese and evidently saw this specific congregation as vital to the spread of Catholicism. Upon receiving this letter from Winters, Mother Mary promptly invited him to visit Drogheda to discuss the logistics of sending MMMs to his Vicariate. Although I have no record of this meeting she evidently agreed to send sisters to nDareda. This was to be the first MMM mission in the Tanganyika territory. From this interaction between Mother Mary and Winters it is clear that the MMMs had to be invited by a bishop before they could be established within his jurisdiction. Therefore, in Africa the sisters continued to work within the protocols of a Catholic and patriarchal hierarchy.

The bishops in Tanganyika appear to have instructed the sisters to occupy specific locations that would pre-empt any rival influences in the region. When the sisters were invited to Chala by Holmes-Siedle, the Vicar-Apostolate of the Karema region, he wrote to Mother Mary in 1951 explaining that:

> *"Karema Vicariate, like Ireland, is almost entirely Catholic, and it would be a great pity if the Protestants were to found a hospital in our little Catholic kingdom. There is a danger of this."* [349]

A year later Mother Mary sent Sr. Monica, who was a qualified doctor, to assess the suitability of the Karema Vicariate for MMM. Sr.-Dr. Monica echoed the sentiment earlier expressed by the Vicar Apostolate: "[Holmes-Siedle] says that medical sisters are a real need at the moment.... to block the prospect of a non catholic hospital in his Catholic Vicariate."[350] The sisters were invited to this region on the premise that once they had opened a hospital it would be impossible for rival medical missionary organisations to also

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[348] Letter from Monsignor Winters to Mother Mary, 4th April 1945, MMM Archive, file I/Dio/4/1.

[349] Letter from J.Holmes-Siedle Vicar Apostolate to Mother Mary, 14th July 1951. MMM Archive, file I.Dis/11/1.

[350] *Report of visit to Karema Vicariate, Tanganyika Territory by Sr. Monica Clarke,* 20th February 1952, MMM Archive.

establish themselves in the locality. However this process also closely involved the MMMs with government. The following is an example of how the grant-in-aid scheme operated alongside the desires of the Catholic bishops and demonstrates their rivalry with the Lutheran presence. In 1950 Bishop Winters wanted to establish a mission hospital in either Singida or Makiungu. In a report composed by MMM, it was written: "In Singida the American Lutherans are creating a situation which is causing alarm amongst the fathers."[351] This was because the Lutherans had applied to the Government to build a hospital ten miles from Singida and ten miles from Makiungu in a place called Puma. The distribution of the mission hospitals as desired by the Catholic bishops did not necessarily mirror the government's plans for health care. The funding that the government would provide was determined by the suitability of location but the close proximity of the Lutheran missions to the proposed MMM mission at Makiungu was concerning because: "If Government give them the plot the building of the proposed hospital at Makiungu is or will be impossible."[352] There was thus competition between the different missionary organisations over Government grants and for the Lutherans to propose a hospital at Puma meant that the MMMs plans for Makiungu were called into jeopardy. Sr.-Dr. Monica sent a report to Mother Mary outlining what was occurring in this diocese. In this she regrets that the MMMs and Bishop did not act quicker in establishing Makiungu:

> *"[In Makiungu] it was regrettable that intimation of the building was not put forward to the medical dept – hence the Lutherans stepped into the breach and have for the last eighteen months been making an investigation about building a hospital."*[353]

Conveyed in this letter, in the competition over grants the locations available to construct a missionary hospital were limited and could not be shared between denominations. Sr.-Dr. Monica then remarked that Monsignor

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[351] *The Prefecture of Mbulu*, 20th August 1950, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/5(f)/ 24.

[352] *Ibid.*

[353] *Report on Singida Central Province*, 25th November 1950, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/5(f)/31.

Winters discussed with her the tactics that they could adopt to counter the spread of the Lutherans. The bishop proposed that he should build a hospital in Singida rather than Makiungu for this would "knock the Lutherans out"[354] of the field. The locations that the bishops wished MMM to occupy within the mission field were in those places deemed most suitable to keep other Christian denominations at bay. However, the government still had to be consulted in this process. To clarify the situation Sr.-Dr. Monica went for an interview with Mr Leecham, a government medical official in Dar es Salaam. She set out to inquire about the government's position on the proposed Lutheran hospital in Puma and the MMMs building one in Makiungu. After the meeting she wrote to Mother Mary explaining that: "I felt it was my duty to remove an impression that we were in the wrong and just came into the field to annoy the Lutherans."[355] Mr Leechman explained that the Lutherans had requested to build a hospital in Puma and because they had the money this permission was granted:

> *"He could not but regret that a dispute had arisen about two hospitals so near each other, it had now happened and Government must do its best to solve it... The P.C. had recommended the following;*
>
> *Let the RC mission build at Makiungu*
>
> *The Lutherans build at their own Mission.*
>
> *The Government build at Singida."*[356]

Sr.-Dr. Monica appears to have been pleased by this response and his willingness to suggest a compromise. Again the government showed itself to be quite accommodating to the wishes of the missionaries despite evidence of its scepticism over evangelisation. The permission to build at Makiungu was reflected on by Sr.-Dr. Monica as advantageous to the spread of Catholicism and she wrote:

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[354] *Ibid.*

[355] *Interview with Mr. Barclay Leecham, member for Social Services, The Secretariat, Dar-es-Salaam.* 30th October 1950. MMM Archive, file I/Cong/5(f)/31.

[356] *Ibid.*

> *"The onward advance of the Lutherans has been stemmed... they have heavy artillery in the field... the Lutherans must be staved now or never."*[357]

The casual use of military rhetoric reveals the epic struggle that the Catholic bishops and MMMs felt they were up against in their missionary endeavour. In 1954, a Bishop proposed through Sr. Monica that the MMMs should be sent to places where the Lutherans were liable to advance in to:

> *"Finally His Lordship said that it was difficult to convey to you in Europe the rapidity of the development nowadays in the Bush, it had come to this, that if we were not able to fill it the places the Lutherans or Government would and so our opportunities would be missed if we could not cover strategic points."*[358]

There is a clear sense of competition in this quote over the location of a hospital. To those participating in the evangelisation of Tanganyika this was a struggle that had clear objectives and clearer opponents. This letter situates the work of the MMMs, within the wider Catholic missionary project and challenges the idea, cartographically displayed by the missionaries themselves, that the MMM were occupying a territory devoid of medical provision.

6.1.3 Rivalry between government and MMM hospitals

As the 1950s progressed the MMM sisters based in Tanganyika increasingly feared that the Government's attitude towards the medical missionaries was shifting against them. This was specifically reported in 1955 by an alliance of missionary groups called the Medical Mission Council. The group concluded that the government saw medical mission work as: "considered to be fulfilling a temporary need until government is ready to provide its own services."[359] These fears were not unfounded, for in 1952 the government outlined that their

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[357] Letter from Sr. Monica to Mother Mary, 24th November 1950, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/5(f)/30.

[358] Letter from Sr. Monica to Mother Mary, 12th September 1954, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/231.

[359] *Minutes of the Meeting of the Medical Mission Council*, 12th -13th July 1955, MMM Archive.

ultimate intention was to "develop its own medical services throughout the territory."[360] If the government were to increase its own medical services this would be to the detriment of the missions, for this represented a lost opportunity to reach local people and was reflected upon by Sr.-Dr. Monica:

> *"Government are pressing very hard and things are developing far too fast and we will be left behind with the people unless we consolidate our position – it is a fast changing world today."*[361]

The sister understands the changes she experienced in Tanganyika within the context of a changing world. This reflects the Catholic Church's concerns at this time with the spread of communism and rising African nationalism. The Catholic Medical Mission Committee of Tanganyika felt that the government was keen to establish its own hospitals in populous centres and from these positions it would be possible to establish a network of rural dispensaries. This occupation of the landscape is something that the missions wished to emulate:

> *"Until the Missions too make their hospitals the centre of a network of rural dispensaries we shall be losing an excellent opportunity of coming into contact with the great mass of people. In saying this we do not wish to diminish the strategic importance of the rural dispensary as an essential part of Medical Mission work; for every one person will attend a hospital there will perhaps be three hundred needing to be treated at a rural dispensary... Therefore if the Catholic Missions neglect the rural dispensary they shall find that Government itself will develop these strategical [sic] centres and one road to the heart of African life will be closed."*[362]

This element of competition with government reveals the precarious position of the missionaries who were reliant on external funds. Indeed the MMMs always had to be aware of political changes in the territory if their hospitals

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[360] *Grants In Aid To Missions for Medical Work*, 14th January 1952, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/190.

[361] Letter from Sr. Monica to Mother Mary, 16th January 1953, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/174.

[362] *Minutes of the Catholic Medical Mission Committee*, 18th January 1954, MMM Archive, file I/Gov/13/2.

were to remain spaces of evangelisation. However, in this competition with the government the MMMs concurrently argued that they provided the better medical service. This can be evidenced in their plans to improve the conditions of their hospitals, in which they felt they faced two options of:

> *"Making our hospitals efficient or letting them go. It is an opportunity that must be grasped now. Our aim therefore should be, not only make our Hospitals as efficient as Government but to make them more efficient."*[363]

The MMMs felt that their hospitals had to reflect the best healthcare that MMM was able to provide because it would be in the quality of this care that any doubts over the necessity of medical missionaries would be dispelled. This reflected a MMM fear that the government was indifferent to the medical work conducted by the missions. Perhaps aware that the government could turn hostile to medical missionaries, Sr.-Dr. Monica urged the sisters of MMM to ensure that each and every one of its hospitals provided the best possible health care:

> *"It is perhaps too little remembered that even in the most primitive areas the pioneer days are almost over. Medicine like Education is a means to bring Christ to Africa but it is developing so rapidly that it can no longer be the means, unless it approximates to modern scientific standards."*[364]

The MMMs felt if they failed to adapt to the changes on Tanganyika then they might be left without a position in the territory. Therefore alongside the religious aspects of their mission the MMMs also operated as competitive medical professionals who were keen to deliver a high standard of health care in the densely networked space of the Tanganyikan territory.

The MMMs also felt able to outperform government in the quality of the pastoral care that they provided because of their close contact with local people. Sr.–Dr. Monica wrote to Mother Mary to explain how the Government did not share this understanding of the people:

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[363] *Untitled report by Sr. Monica*, 16th January 1953. MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/194.
[364] *Ibid.*

> *"It is no exaggeration to say that Government completely ignores the value of the Mission potential and makes it quite clear that they do not want the Missions to play any part in the Territorial Medical Planning."*[365]

The MMM clearly felt that they were able to offer a unique contribution to the health services of the territory. As to be expected Sr.-Dr. Monica in her letters and reports to Mother Mary was quite critical of the government's dismissal of the missionary contribution to health care. She stated that the government's planning over the health services of the territory: "would appear to be upside down, the planning has begun at the wrong end."[366] By this she meant that the government was implanting a health policy without considering the needs of the local people. Indeed it was at this scale that Sr.-Dr. Monica perceived the very strength of the missions to lie. Sr.- Dr. Monica went on to say that the development of the territory's educational services was built upon those services first established by missionary societies, but in contrast, "medical planning has begun without any link to the past and little thought has been given to the ecology of the country."[367] Sr.-Dr. Monica is therefore critical of the presumptions of a government that was physically and culturally distant for the people it ruled over. Furthermore, the MMMs argued that in their concern for social work they also out-rivalled the government. On visitation to the missions Sr.-Dr. Monica, told the sisters stationed there that:

> *"Social work – It is a crying need of Africa to-day and indeed of all underdeveloped countries, it must stem from every branch of our work, without it we will cease to be missionaries."*[368]

The MMMs clearly felt that they were not simply engaged in medical work but were also there to administer to the social and welfare needs of the territory. It was in this field that Sr.-Dr. Monica felt the MMMs excelled and indeed this was "the kernel of the Apostolate and the work which no Government can

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[365] *Untitled Report by Sr. Monica*, 16th January 1953. MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/194.
[366] *Ibid.*
[367] *Ibid.*
[368] *Visitation in Africa by Sister Monica Clarke*, 1956. MMM Archive, file I/Cong/5 (c)/49.

touch."[369] In a report Sr.-Dr. Monica outlines what she perceives to be the greatest strength of the missionaries:

> *"In any Medical planning emphasis must be laid on close contact with the people and on their health education, in fact the impetus, must come from the people. In this respect Missions are wonderfully placed as regard medical work."*[370]

The MMMs felt that they had cultivated particularly strong links with local people and that was lacking in the equivalent government policy. In a similar manner, the Medical Mission Council reported on the usefulness of the missions and the unique form of medical practice that they provide to the people:

> *"Members felt that Missions have a special contribution of a permanent nature to offer to the medical services of the territory both in the sphere of medical training and because of their intimate knowledge of the Africans, in preventative and curative medicine"*[371]

In these quotes it is almost as if the missionaries felt better equipped to plan the healthcare of the territory because, unlike the government, they had forged close ties to the local people. Indeed these interactions were encouraged by the order because the work of sisters was never intended to be confined to the hospital, as this MMM report states: "to fit into this missionary scheme of things and play our little part it is necessary... that we gain the love and trust of the people."[372] Thus when the sisters first arrived in each mission station they would set about learning the customs of the local people. This was particularly the case when the sisters were to open a mission amongst a tribe that they had not previously worked with. For example before establishing themselves in nDareda Sr.-Dr. Monica offered this advice to the sisters who were stationed there:

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[369] *Ibid.*

[370] *Untitled Report by Sr. Monica*, 16th January 1953. MMM Archive I/Fou/4(p)/194.

[371] *Minutes of the Meeting of the Medical Mission Council*, 12th -13th July 1955, MMM Archive.

[372] *Report on Tanganyika Territory, Prefecture of Mbulu*, 18th April 1950, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/5 (f) 12.

> *"The main thing being to try and get to know the people, to understand them and to learn about their customs. They are a new tribe to us, a bantu people and I know that at the moment you would wish us to stabilize and find our way gradually."*[373]

The MMMs seemed keen to engage with the cultures they encountered. Mother Mary wrote to the sisters telling them to always demonstrate acts of charity to the local people:

> *"Get interested in the different types of people you are going to work with, to train and remember the little sisters in the kitchen are as important as the greatest doctor."*[374]

This equality amongst people again reveals the Catholic nature of their work and perhaps marked them out as different from other colonialists.

Central to the sisters' interactions with local people was learning their language and culture. Upon the MMMs arrival in nDareda the sisters were strongly advised by the Bishop there to concentrate on learning the local language. A report sent to Mother Mary articulated the importance of this:

> *"The language is essential, it is needed now as a gift of tongues was required on that first Whit Sunday, we have to learn it by natural means...after all it is their language – their sacred inheritance."*[375]

From both archive sources and oral history interviews it is clear that the sisters took seriously the task of learning the language. To assist in this the sisters employed interpreters and tutors, indeed one sister in nDareda wrote home to say: "It is very funny to have an interpreter... we do know so little of the language. Sometimes we laugh ourselves sick at the idea of it."[376] Learning the language would appear to be a humbling, difficult experience for some of the

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[373] Letter from Sr. Monica to Mother Mary, 3rd August 1954, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/249.

[374] *Visitation to nDareda by Mother Mary Martin,* January 1960, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/5(g)/77.

[375] *Report on Tanganyika Territory, Prefecture of Mbulu,* 18th April 1950, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/5 (f) 12.

[376] Letter to Mother Mary, 26th June 1947. MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/9.

sisters. Upon initially arriving in a mission field, letters sent home by the sisters consistently seemed to express frustration at not being able to speak with the local people. In Kabanga the initial lack of patients in the sister's hospital was in part blamed on the sister's inability to communicate. In a letter to the motherhouse it was remarked that: "learning the language is a difficulty and on their fluency much will depend."[377] Nonetheless, despite these trials, ascertained from oral history interviews, all the sisters who had spent time in Tanganyika, later Tanzania, appeared to have become fluent in Swahili. The progress that the sisters would make in the learning of the language was reflected upon in letters to Mother Mary. For example in Kabanga:

> *"[Sister] is making great strides with the language and now that she can make herself understood finds it so much easier. The people are lovely and simple."*[378]

Clearly the ability to communicate to local people was deemed essential to the sister for the success of their mission.

The ability to speak Swahili not only ensured that their hospitals were popular but crucially it also served to mark the sisters out as different from other Europeans in the area. Thus a sister in Kabanga remarked in a letter to Drogheda that:

> *"The language is the only means in this country of getting the people to know you, if one cannot speak with them they say you are just another European and not interested in them."*[379]

To speak Swahili was a powerful tool to distinguish the MMMs from government officials, for the sisters perceived themselves to be different from other European's resident in Tanganyika and were keen to assert this. Key to this distinction was the Sisters' desire to be part of the local communities that they were living amongst. In an oral history interview a sister recounted:

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[377] *Visitation Report, Kabanga*, April 1952, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/12/67.

[378] Letter from Sr. Kevin to Mother Mary, 24th April 1955, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(r)/40.

[379] Letter from Sr. Evangleist to Mother Mary, 5th January 1956, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/40(r)/ 46.

> *Sr. Dy: "Well, they were very community orientated, which was great. It was easy to feel part of it."*
>
> *Kate: Especially when you knew the language"?*
>
> *Sr. Dy: "Oh when you knew the language, once you know the language, then you're part of it. If you know the language and eat their food."*[380]

Likewise another sister recalled to me her experiences with local food when working in Kabanga:

> *Sr. P: "We ate the local food.... we would eat the ordinary beans and we would eat maize as well. Like there'd be maize there for anyone would wanted it, there was always a rice, a lot of banana's ... we ate rice ... and you put the potatoes and the bananas and the tomatoes and the onions on top of it, it was lovely."*[381]

It would appear that the sister did embrace aspects of local culture. This was certainly a process of adjustment for the sisters, yet many positively recall what they learnt from their time on the missions. The close interaction with local people was often recounted in oral history interview as an enriching time in their lives. It was thus central to the work of MMM to get to know all the local people that they possibly could and it was in these efforts, forged through close contacts, that the sisters felt, marked their work out as different from the health care provided by the government. Thus on the dawn of independence one sister concluded that:

> *"Only through our great love and kindness towards the African can we show them what we religious really are, not just another European to them. After all we are dealing mostly with pagans but they need to see our charity more than the Christians."*[382]

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[380] Sr. Dy. Personal interview, 17th November 2009.
[381] Sr. P. Personal interview, 18th November 2009.
[382] Letter from Sr. Mary Moore to Mother Mary, 6th April 1961, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(i)/55.

It was clearly important to the sisters that they were not seen as simply European. They wanted their difference from the coloniser to be highlighted through the interactions between the MMMs and local people. The fear of being mistaken for government officials reveals the difference between a political colonisation and a religious one and reveals the extent to which the MMMs saw themselves as distinct from a colonial project. The MMM perceived a difference between them and the secular equivalent provided by government and in this competition they felt that they had the potential to be the victors.

6.2 Catholic morality in the provision of healthcare on the mission fields

The sisters believed that through their medical work they could ultimately facilitate the conversion of souls to Catholicism. As discussed in chapter four the medical training of the sisters was infused with Catholic teachings. This section shows how Catholic morality can be evidenced in the sister's medical work, therefore rendering it impossible to separate the professional from the religious aspects of their mission. This section examines the dual aspects of an MMM's life, the type of medical work that they were engaged with and the theological regulations that they were subjected to when on the mission field.

6.2.1 Conversion of the soul

In the professional work of the sisters their understanding of the soul related to the ethics of their medical practice. The sisters understood their medical duty towards local people as informed through the teachings of the Catholic Church, which preaches that the salvation of the human soul after death can only occur within the Church (Eminyan, 2003). The sacrament of baptism is essential for salvation (Jungmann and Stasiak, 2003) and once this sacrament is conferred it brings the recipient into the Church (ibid). The Church professes itself to exist as a horizontal communion between all members and that each Catholic is joined together in an equal relationship with Jesus (Lawlor and Doyle, 2003).

All who are baptised in the Church are therefore equally united in this relationship (Dulles, 2007).

Spiritual language permeated into the correspondence sent from the missions. In a report sent to Mother Mary, the MMMs ultimate objective was outlined as: "not for mass conversion but for the interior conversion of the individual soul."[383] In this task the practice of medicine was vital and the sisters can be seen to be dually motivated by a desire to alleviate physical suffering but also to save the immortal souls of their patients. A sister working in their hospital in nDareda wrote to Mother Mary to request prayers so that "we will do good work for God and souls."[384] This comment is followed by the sister's initial thoughts on seeing the local people: "How one loves to help the African – there are so many of them sick."[385] The suffering that the sister had seen motivated her to help through medicine, but at the same time her patients are still seen as souls to the sister.

The belief in the existence of an individual, immortal soul can be seen as a prime motivator for the medical and spiritual work of the order. It allowed for empathy through the belief in equality of all people. Mother Mary wrote to the sisters in Tanganyika to clarify the relationship between their medical and spiritual duties: "[The sister's] highest act of love of God is to attend to Christ in that person with her medical skill, her gift from God to be given back to Him in His suffering members."[386] Therefore to perform a medical duty was seen as a spiritual act. The presence of Christ in every patient renders each person of great importance, for to attend to him or her is to act unto God himself. Pivotal to this is an understanding of equality between each and every human, which exists regardless of the religious beliefs or the race of that person. Mother Mary explained this to the sisters: "Everyone who comes to the

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[383] *Report from Tanganyika Territory, Prefecture of Mbulu,* 18th April 1950, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/5 (f) 12.

[384] Letter from Sr. Christina to Mother Mary, 30th July 1947, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4/4(p)/12.

[385] *Ibid.*

[386] Letter from Mother Mary to Sr. Evangelist, 30th June 1953, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(r)/17.

door is another Christ and he must be treated so, whether he is Indian, Jew or Mohammedan. We are the Church and we see no distinction."[387] The equality between each individual, as espoused by the Catholic Church, was to be replicated through the medical practices of the MMMs.

Furthermore, through the presence of the soul each person is a potential member of the Church. Thus Mother Mary once wrote:

> *"In some places we are coming in very close in contact to the Moslems and if we can win them we will have done a great work for the Catholic Church, they may only come in ones and twos, but the great day will come when they come and ask us to run a hospital for them."*[388]

The use of hospitals to evangelise to the people was noted by one of the sisters upon arrival in 1948 who remarked: "the sister's medicine is a great way of bringing souls to God."[389] The presence of the hospital was one way that the MMMs could work closely with the local people, who then may choose to enter into the Catholic Church through baptism. In a letter home one sister goes on to say that:

> *"An old man was brought here for treatment – he was here only a week when he got worse and he got the grace to be baptized. He only had left two days when he died RIP."*[390]

To baptise the patient, to bring their soul to God and thus to ensure their place in heaven was the final, most poignant act that the sisters could perform on their patients. The sisters would also baptise babies into the Catholic Church. This provided the sister with some comfort if the child was to die, as this letter sent from Kabanga demonstrates:

> *"Sr. Gemma baptised a baby in the dispensary the other day and it died that night, the mother would not let it stay in for treatment."*[391]

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[387] *Visitation to nDareda by* Mother Mary, January 1960, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/5(g)/77.
[388] *Visitation in nDareda, Tanganyika*, January 1960, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/5(g)/78.
[389] Letter from Sr. Christina to Mother Mary, 28th August 1948, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/183.
[390] *Ibid.*

As these actions show the health care of the MMMs can never be separated from their spiritual duties. If their medical work failed to improve a patient a sister could then tend to their soul and oversee the baptism of a terminal patient. From these quotes it would seem that the sisters were mutually motivated by easing the physical suffering experienced by local people, while also ensuing that the immortal soul was safe within the Catholic Church. This again serves to situate the work of the sisters within the wider missionary ambitions of the Church.

6.2.2 Vow of chastity

The vow of chastity had to, of course, be upheld on the missions. This section will explore how any potential challenges to the vow of chastity encountered during the medical work of the sisters was justified as part of their spiritual vocation.

Compared to the sheltered life that the sisters led in the motherhouse, as explored in chapter four, the mission field contained many potential temptations. Mother Mary acknowledged this in a letter to the sisters: "Every morning we should ask Our Lord to help us not to fail in chastity. He will help us."[392] It would be through faith that the sisters would resist any temptations to their vow. Mother Mary knew that life on the mission was not as protected for the sisters as it was in Ireland and that this is something that the sisters would have to adjust to: "In some parts of Africa the people do not clothe themselves. This may be hard for some."[393] Mother Mary acknowledges the contrast from the single-gendered and enclosed convents in Ireland to the missions, which potentially exposed the nuns to human sexuality. She assured the sisters that all their medical duties were part of their vocation:

> *"Chastity – one thing for us all to remember now we are dealing here with very pagan people and we may meet with*

[391] Letter from to Mother Mary, 22nd April 1951, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(r)/1.
[392] *Conferences by Mother Mary during Visitation, 1959-1960.* MMM Archive, file I/cong/5(g)/16.
[393] *Ibid.*

> *diseases [and] are asked to see things never seen at home."*[394]

Mother Mary does not elaborate on what these diseases are but it is certainly the case that the sisters treated patients with venereal disease in their hospitals. The sisters were advised to deal with these encounters with human sexuality through prayer and to understand their work in relation to God's mission. For example the sisters were told to remember that "charity safeguards chastity."[395] The professional actions of the sisters constituted an enactment of their faith and therefore it posed no threat to their vow of chastity. Furthermore it was written that:

> *"We are in God's presence and if we are doing anything for the male sex, even if thoughts and things come, they are no harm, if we are in God's presence, we offer it up as an act of love for Him."*[396]

This quote is a reminder that the medical work of the sisters was always conducted as a spiritual act to God. Mother Mary was keen to assure the sisters that this work was part of their vocation and she wrote about the potential challenges to the vows when on the mission fields:

> *"If you ever get a bit upset, there is nothing wrong in that, that is a great thing, not to get upset about it, but make it an act of love of God, that you would not be doing it only it is necessary for your work to do."*[397]

This advice from Mother Mary shows the precarious relationship between the sister's medical and religious work, with participation in the former having the potential to threaten the purity of the latter. The sisters were told: "keep a great

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[394] *Visitation to Report to Makiungu by Mother Mary Martin*, January 1960, MMM Archive.

[395] *Visitation Report, nDareda by Mother Mary Martin*, January 1960, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/5(g)/77.

[396] *Visitation Report, Makiungu by Mother Mary Martin*, January 1960. MMM Archive.

[397] *Visitation Report, nDareda by Mother Mary Martin*, January 1960, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/5(g)/77.

custody over our eyes"[398] and to exercise self-control so that they were masters of self-discipline:

> *"The one way to safeguard chastity is to have control over the senses. That is why Spiritual Directors sometimes support doing some extra penance."*[399]

To control ones actions, in particular exposure to visual threats, was an attempt to control one's thoughts. The behaviours that were learned in the motherhouse with regards to chastity had to be put into practice in an environment where the sisters were not sheltered from the world beyond. Through a combination of self-discipline and the exercise of prayer, the sisters fortified themselves from temptation and maintained their vows.

6.2.3 Medicine and local women

On the mission it was felt that it was easier for woman to evangelise directly to other women. In this task the MMM sisters were instructed that: "Everything begins with the home, the Mother and the child."[400] This can be evidenced with the attention that the MMM congregation paid to the field of midwifery at each mission station in Tanganyika. In 1953 a report sent to Mother Mary revealed the confidence with which the congregation felt that it provided midwifery services. In this report it was written: "[Midwifery] is perhaps the one field where we hold an unrivalled position."[401] Thus in midwifery practices the MMMs felt they held an advantage over their competitors and in particular the government. Sr.-Dr. Monica wrote many reports on the MMMs work in midwifery. She suggested that:

> *"The provision of Child Health Specialists on a Territorial basis should not be too remote a possibility. They would be both an inspiration and a guide to doctors developing child care and nutrition centres, which are so essential to the basic*

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[398] *Visitation Report, Makiungu by Mother Mary Martin,* January 1960, MMM Archive.

[399] *Conferences by Mother Mary Martin during Visitation,* 1959-1960, MMM Archive, file I/cong/5(g)/16.

[400] *Visitation to Africa by Sister Monica Clarke,* 1956, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/5 (c)/49.

[401] *Report on Tanganykian mission Hospitals by Sr. Monica,* 16th January 1953, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/194.

> *health of the Community, and so important in the formation of African Christian Homes. Here too, they would find fertile pastures for research which is the vivifying principles of any medical services."*[402]

The MMMs clearly felt that administrating healthcare to mothers was a crucial part of converting a mission field to Catholicism. During a visitation to Tanganyika, conducted on the eve of independence, Mother Mary highlighted the importance of this field of medicine to the future of the territory: "It is in Maternity and Child Welfare that the future of our African Social order depends."[403] Therefore: "due importance must be given to this branch of medicine."[404] For these reasons the sisters did not just aid in the birthing process but rather once this was complete they were told: "our next aim must be to guide the mothers, in its management during the critical neonatal period, and still more critical weaning period."[405] Indeed MMM hospitals and clinics were also used to educate local people on such matters. In particular, the MMMs were instructed: "in our Clinics don't let it just be ante-natal, but teach them about hygiene, food, etc."[406] To successfully teach Catholic morality the MMMs placed the majority of their emphasis on the local female population:

> *"We train local girls in the elements of hygiene, child welfare, health care and home management, and as they will eventually become brides of teachers and other officials, we hope they will continue to disseminate the knowledge they acquire and help to build homes more worthy of the future Africans."*[407]

As this quote shows, the MMMs hoped that through their presence on the mission field they would be able to teach women how to be good wives and good mothers. In doing so Christian homes could flourish and out from them a Christian society could grow across the territory. From the above quote it is

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[402] *Ibid.*

[403] *nDareda Mission Hospital Medical Report*, 1957. MMM Archive.

[404] *ibid*

[405] *Ibid.*

[406] *Visitation to Makiungu*, January 1960. MMM Archive, file I/Cong/5(g)/83.

[407] *nDareda Mission Hospital Medical Report*, 1957, MMM Archive.

clear that the social aspects of the MMMs work went neatly alongside their Catholic values. This education was an important part of their missionary objective for it was understood that Catholicism was best rooted within the family. Of course this was not something that the sisters could impart through example but rather had to actively teach through education. It again becomes difficult to separate the healthcare provided by the sisters and the social responsibilities that they taught. These letters show that the MMMs were participating in a programme of healthcare that went beyond curative medicine and was ultimately informed by Catholic social teachings.

From January 1949 it was possible for medical missionaries to qualify for grants-in-aid money to support the training of local people in health service provision. Once established, a training school would receive £250 per annum.[408] This grant covered trainees in midwifery, general nursing, and hospital assistants. As the MMM hospitals became more established they eventually became responsible for training local women to be nurses. Although this training would occur within the mission hospital, each student had to undergo an external examination from an examiner appointed from the Department of Medical Services. The training of local people was seen as laying the foundations for mission societies to become an integral part of the health care services of the country. However the MMMs also trained these local girls in Catholic practices. To explore the relationship between the nuns and their trainees reveals how the MMMs understood Catholic medical care as essential to the future development of Africa. In the following quote the training nurses was perceived by Mother Mary as essential to progress:

> *"I am very anxious, and I feel Your Lordship is also, that we concentrate all our efforts at present on the [Nurses] Training School. In this we are helping the African Sisters and African people more than in anything else, by training*

[408] *Letter from Director of Medical Services to The Secretary of Medical Missionary Committee*, 7th September 1948, National Archive of Tanzania, file 10721, vol. III.

> *and preparing them for their future work, which is already waiting for them."*[409]

As this quote reveals the MMMs placed the medical training of local girls as crucial to the future development of the territory. Perhaps the MMMs in Tanganyika, by educating the local population about medicine and thereby enabling them to operate independently, occupied an ambiguous position in the colonial practices of the country. This resonates with the work of David Arnold (1993) who wrote about the complicated relationship between medical practice and colonialism in India, for it was eventually taken on by local practitioners.

Student nurses, under MMM training, were placed under the observation of the nuns and lived within their compounds. During this time it was decided: "a sister should be present at each meal of the girls to say Grace before and after meals."[410] Therefore Catholic practices and routines were imparted onto the students. The daily timetable for trainee nurses in nDareda included attendance at 6.00 am mass. Also a sister was assigned:

> *"To watch that the girls are on the compound when they should be and in bed at a reasonable time. Sr. Colman to pay unexpected visits to the dormitory to keep a check on this."*[411]

It would appear that the medical training of the local women extended into moral regulation as well. This will be explored in more detail below. Nonetheless it would seem that the attitude of the MMMs to the girls that they employed was often quite maternalistic and those under their training were regularly referred to as "Our Girls" in their letters sent to the motherhouse. On visitation to Tanganyika Mother Mary advised the sisters in the interactions:

> *"We must not be light or hard in manner, but must strike the right balance. Courtesy is very important virtue and is much appreciated by the Africans. We should remember this in our dealings with them... We, too, should be kind and gentle with*

[409] Letter from Mother Mary to Monsignor Winters, no date, MMM Archive, file I/Dio/14/58.
[410] *Ibid.*
[411] *Report from Hospital Meeting, nDareda*, 9th September 1961, MMM Archive.

> *the Africans, as they are such a kind people. We build them up and win them in this way."*[412]

Evident here is that the sisters were instructed on how to interact with local women. Also the perceived need for this medical training became more and more urgent as the inevitability of independence became apparent:

> *"Tell the sisters that they must now concentrate on training the Africans more and more, so that soon they will be able to take over, that is our big work as Missionaries – we do not intend to stay, we sow the seed, and when it has grown and the Africans are trained, then we move on. Trust them and you will see how they respond to your confidence in them."*[413]

As this quote reveals the MMMs did not intend to stay permanently in Tanganyika but rather they wished to leave behind well-trained nurses as their legacy to the development of the territory. These nurses though would be schooled in a Catholic ethos of medicine. Again this highlights how medical training was not approached as separate from the spread of Catholicism and the social and moral aspects of each were intertwined within the work of MMM.

6.3 The Moral Landscapes of the MMM Mission Fields

The MMMs placed a great emphasis on imparting a Catholic morality in almost all aspects of their mission. This was evident in the cultivation of the spaces that they occupied and reflected the religiosity of their project. As referenced in the literature review, the work of DeRogatis (2003) explored how the practices of protestant missionaries led to the construction of moral landscapes in North America. This section examines the embodied practices of the missionary sisters that contributed to the construction of religious landscapes (Nelson 2006 and Knott, 2008) as well as the meanings that were conveyed in these spaces. This section is particularly focused upon the

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[412] *Conferences by Mother Mary during Visitation*, 1959-1960. MMM Archive, file I/cong/5(g)/16.

[413] Letter from Mother Mary to Sr. Christina, 11th November 1960, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(i)/47.

gendered aspects of morality and the hope that the MMMs placed upon the Christian family, the establishment of which would outlast the duration of the mission.

6.3.1 Cultivation of the missionary landscape

Many of the letters, particularly those sent when the sisters' first established a mission, commented upon the harshness of both the landscape and the climate. For example upon arrival at Makiungu one sister wrote:

> *"The water scarcity is the greatest poverty of all. They have to dig a whole [sic] about 60 feet deep and by means of a bucket and chain the water is taken-up. It is only their guardian angel that keeps them from falling in."*[414]

The trials of the environment and the accompanying suffering are presented as part of the overall experience of life on the missions. Further examples of the hardship of missionary life were often framed in anecdotes that commented upon difficult physical conditions:

> *"It was hard work for the first month trying to find a safe place to put things where they would not be eaten. We had to buy varnish for all this wood work to keep the white ants from eating the timber... not to speak of gardening; every day we have to pull weeds and try to make some sort of a path around the house as it is mud mud everywhere."*[415]

In some other letters, like the following sent from nDareda, the harshness of the environment had much more serious consequences:

> *"We had no heavy rain here yet, the crops are being all burned up with the sun, and there is fear of great famine, so we are all praying hard for rain here at present."*[416]

[414] Letter from Sr. Christina to Mother Mary, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(i)/1.
[415] Letter from Sr. Evangelist to Mother Mary, 22nd April 1951, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(r)/1.
[416] Letter from Sr. M. Angela to Mother Mary, 3rd April 1949, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/48.

Emerging in the letters sent to Ireland is the starkness of the landscape and how easily this can be contrasted to experiences of home. Indeed these references to the climate and environment resonate with literature written about the construction of a discourse of tropicalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Clayton and Bowd (2006) write that: "'Tropicality' was used "to denote a potent discourse that constructs the tropical world as the West's environmental Other" (p 208). This discourse claimed that the powerful, pervasive climate of the tropics resulted in a perceived cultural inferiority in the people of these spaces (Arnold, 2000). The circulation of this discourse allowed for difference and otherness to be established (ibid).

Certainly, in contrast to the letters published in the magazines, the sister's accounts of the harshness of the environment helped to construct a distance between the tropics and home. Their letters describing the environment appear to be an accepted part of the whole missionary experience. In the early months of establishing Makiungu one sister described her experience in these terms: "It is missionary in every way."[417] This quote reveals the necessity of physical suffering and hardships in this chosen life. In another example Sr.-Dr. Monica wrote to tell the sisters that on the mission field: "the challenge is a serious one, to meet it a certain ruggedness surrounded by an aura of serene gentleness is necessary."[418] The emphasis on gentleness reflects a common Catholic interpretation of the Virgin Mary. However, a toughness of character, mirroring the landscape was also encouraged. Therefore during the initial development of the mission, and particularly evident with sisters who had not been on the missions before, there is a sense of the necessity of suffering and that the environment of the tropics adds to this experience. In a letter sent home to Mother Mary from nDareda one sister reflected: "Certainly the change has altered my way of life completely, a noble chance of humiliation I truly realized how little I am able for."[419] Indeed the challenges of the mission and

[417] Letter from Sr. Christina to Marie Martin, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(i)/1.

[418] *Visitation in Africa by Sister Monica Clarke*, 1956. MMM Archive, file I/Cong/5 (c)/49.

[419] Letter from Sr. M. Christine to Marie Martin, 19th October 1948, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/37.

in particular the physical environment that the sisters encountered was deemed part of her spiritual vocation.

Despite acknowledging the hardships of the environment correspondence also reveals a desire to improve this landscape and make it as hospitable as possible. Evident in the letters is how the sisters were engaged in a process of cultivating the landscape that surrounded their missions. A sister at a mission in nDareda wrote to say: "A considerable amount has been done but as the area is still in the rugged pioneering stage the work is hard."[420] It appears that the sisters wanted to take pride in the landscapes that surrounded their convents. One sister wrote to describe the enthusiasm for this improvement project that she witnessed in a newly arrived sister:

> *"[Sister] is full of ideas and plans for Makiungu and I have had many rounds of the compound with her, but there is little we can do because of our financial position."*[421]

Conveyed in this letter is the idea that the sisters felt they possessed some kind of ownership over the compound and would deliberately cultivate this space to be both aesthetically pleasing and practically accommodating. Arnold writes in some cases the tropics could even be imagined the paradise of Eden (2000) and perhaps the sisters engaged with the possibility of creating their own paradise. Certainly from my personal experiences in Makiungu the compound in which the hospital is situated is remarkably different from the landscape that surrounds it. Particularly noteworthy is the abundance of eucalyptus trees that contrast with the semi-desert area that surrounds the hospital. The cultivation of Makiungu hospital by successive generations of missionaries has ensured it a visibly prominent place in the landscape:

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[420] *Canonical Visitation for Mother Mary*, June 1956 – August 1956, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/5 (c)/48.

[421] Letter from Sr. de Lorres Moore to Mother Mary, 1st March 1961, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(i)/52.

Figure 6.2 - Graveyard in Makiungu Compound

Source: Taken by author, September 2010

As shown above, trees surround the graveyard. The land further south, beyond the compound, is arid as noted in the photograph below:

Figure 6.3 - North view of the Makiungu Compound

Source: Taken by author, September 2010

In nDareda, the gardens of the sisters were obviously the source of some pride. One sister wrote to Mother Mary to describe the success of the convent's gardens: "There is a lovely row of Orange trees in front of the Convent also lemon, and banana trees, plenty of them, and beautiful rose trees."[422] In Kabanga the sisters also cultivated their gardens:

> *"Our garden is in good order also and His Lordship is jealous because I have lots of vegetable marrow and gooseberries coming up. We also have some pine-apple and strawberries sown. Of course he is delighted that we were caught out sowing rhubarb as he says it never grows in this country, I tell him that it will come soon but he only laughs."*[423]

For some of the sisters the cultivation of the gardens was a valuable and acceptable pastime. Indeed the growing of familiar foods perhaps served as a comforting reminder of home. The tendency for colonisers to recreate their landscapes of home is noted by Duncan and Lambert (2004): "The imaginative domestication of colonial space was an appropriating, colonising project" (p. 395). However there was also a novelty in exotic foods coupled with the familiar ones from home. The superiors of the mission field encouraged these activities: "All the Sisters at nDareda are well thank God. We are trying to get them interested in hobbies."[424] To attend to the gardens was therefore an individual pursuit that benefitted the community as a whole. Alongside the aesthetic and physical virtues of cultivating the landscape the gardens of the sisters were a vital source of food for the MMMs. The connection with the land and the cultivation of food was a unique feature of the missions compared to life in the Irish motherhouse. Holmes-Siedle wrote to Mother Mary to assure her that the newly arrived sisters were well catered for by the produce from the gardens:

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[422] Letter from Sr. M. Helena to Mother Mary, 15th March 1948, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/4.

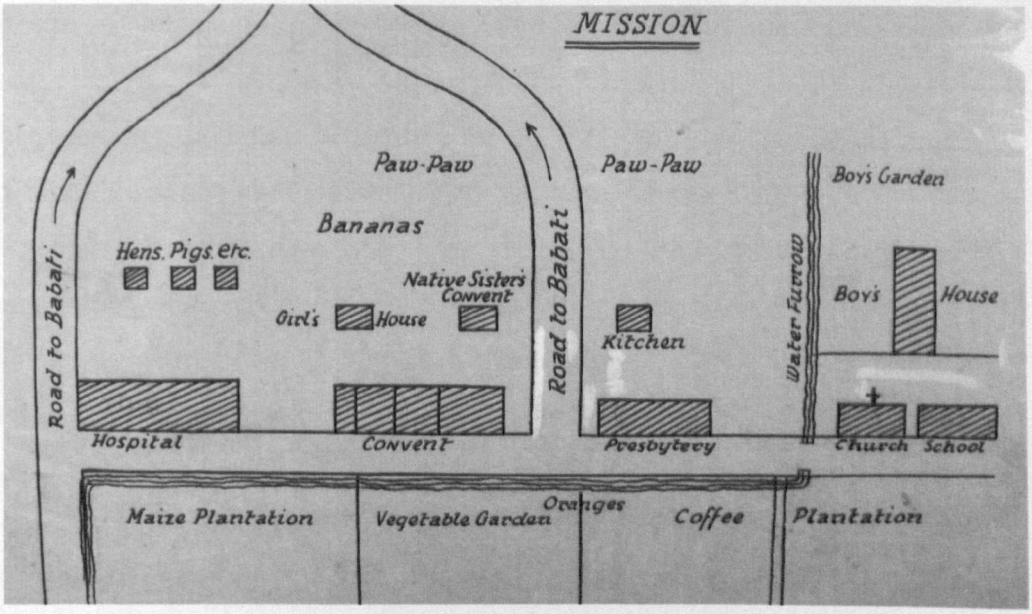
[423] Letter from Kabanga to Mother Mary, 8th February 1953, MMM Archive, file I/Dio/12/58.

[424] Letter from Sr. Monica to Mother Mary, 5th March 1955, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/254.

> *"As for their material situation, I think that they are very satisfied: they have practically everything they need in the essentials, and experience will teach them the tricks of the trade for obtaining eggs, potatoes etc. Most of their food and fruit comes out of their own garden."*[425]

Likewise in Mbulu the sister's compound was surrounded by gardens which would feed them:

Figure 6.4 - Plan of Mbulu



Source: MMM Archive, photographic collection

As can be seen in this diagram the sister's convent, located in the centre of the compound, was surrounded by plantations as well as livestock enclosures. This ensured that the sister's always had adequate provisions, which was especially poignant because the fear of illness was rife. A significant aspect within a discourse of tropicalism was that they were places of disease (Endfield and Nash, 2005). This resulted in a construction of Africa that was both different and potentially dangerous for missionaries (Endfield and Nash, 2007). Within this discourse there was a geographical and gendered element to the propensity to suffer ill health, with female missionaries thought to be especially

[425] Letter from Holmes-Siedle to Mother Mary, 25th December 1956, MMM Archive, file I/Dio/11/39.

susceptible (Endfield and Nash, 2005). Within MMM the health of the sisters was something Mother Mary took seriously and before she consented to allow the first sisters to live in Tanganyika she wrote to Winters to say:

> *"I would prefer to see the place and the conditions and the exact type of work before sending the sisters out to you as I could then choose the sisters who would suit your type of work best."*[426]

This reflected the constant worry about the effects of the environment on the health of the individual. In an attempt to manage the consequences of the environment on the body, Mother Mary promoted a positive relationship between diet and health. Therefore the ability to cultivate the land was seen as a predicition for good personal health. Before sending any MMM sisters to Kabanga, Sr.-Dr. Monica who was already in Tanganyika, was sent to the region to write a report for Mother Mary. In this she describes the situation of food provision and wrote that there was: "Plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables on missions. Fresh meat only available once or twice a month. [The sisters] Will be able to have their own food."[427] Evidently Sr.-Dr. Monica's report was taken seriously, for in 1951 the MMMs arrived in Kabanga. Therefore to know that the sisters would be able to have access to food was vital to gaining Mother Mary's consent to establish Kabanga.

Mother Mary would rely on reports sent by the sisters and the bishops to assess the health of the sisters stationed there. An example of which includes: "Sr. M Christine is looking very well and so does Sr. M. Clare but I'd say has got a bit thin."[428] And also Van Sambeck, the Bishop in Kabanga once wrote to Mother Mary saying:

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[426] Letter from Mother Mary to Mgrs. Winters, 11th August 1947, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/82.

[427] *Report on visit to Kabanga Mission*, 16th May 1949, MMM Archive, file I/Dio/12/12

[428] Letter from Sr. Columbanus to Mother Mary, 25th January 1949, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(P)/41.

> *"The health of the Sisters has not been too good, as you know. It cannot be the climate, which is healthy here. It is certainly due to overwork."*[429]

To which she replied:

> *"I hope the Sisters are looking after themselves and eating well – sometimes they forget the importance of these things particularly in a hard mission. "Penny wise, pound foolish" as we say in Ireland. They should get a cook and see that he is hygienic in his habits. All foundations are hard."*[430]

In this letter the importance of diet and its relationship to health, as well as the impact of climate, was central to how Mother Mary could assess the effects of the missions on the bodies of the MMM sisters. The potential for vulnerability on the missions due to the sister's femininity was pre-empted and managed accordingly. Therefore the gender of the nuns did not prevent them from being fully active missionaries. Also, it is worth considering that because a supernatural calling drove each sister, they could potentially force themselves beyond the point of exhaustion. This possibility too had to be monitored and managed. The cultivation of the missionary landscape to provide the sisters the sustenance they required to perform their medical services ought to be understood as an important component in the life of the missionary sister.

6.3.2 Compounds and gender

The space of the compound was vital to ensure that the MMM sisters were able to present an archetypal feminine role to the local population. Much of their interaction with local people was done in the belief that through non-verbal communication the MMM sisters would be able to aid in the establishment of the Christian family. A goal they shared in common with many female missionaries of different denominations (Johnson, 2003, Grimshaw, 2004, Twells, 2009). This began with the MMMs demonstrating appropriate relations between men and women. When on the missions the sisters ensured that their

[429] Letter from Van Sambeck, Vicar Apostolate Kigoma to Mother Mary, 28th October 1952, MMM Archive, file I/Dio/12/53.

[430] Letter from Mother Mary to Van Sambeck, 8th January 1953, MMM Archive, file I/Dio/12/56.

interactions with men were managed, so that they were able to present feminized yet chaste behaviour to the local population. One sister wrote to Mother Mary stating: "as you know Mother, the people are watching everything we do."[431] This implies that the sisters were cautious of how their behaviour was interpreted by local people. At the same time the perception that they were being watched provided them with the opportunity to ensure that they could present an idealised behaviour. In turn this behaviour would hopefully be copied by the local population.

Mother Mary offered advice about how the sisters should act and instructed: "We should always speak in public places with those of the opposite sex."[432] Therefore the interaction between the sisters and the priests would be conducted in public view to show an appropriate example of a gendered exchange. Certainly the sisters were told to act in a way that would not bring the work of MMM into disrepute. Rather each sister was to be at all times a model of chaste femininity. In particular these regulations on behaviour were focused on the interactions between the sisters and the priests resident in the vicinity. Thus the necessity of the visibility of interactions between them was written about in a report of MMM activity in Tanganyika:

> *"The African finds it hard to believe either a sister or a priest are really keeping their vows ... and that is why we have to use great modesty and dignity, so that we can train them that there is such a thing as a Virgin, such a thing as purity."*[433]

To set an example of cordial but non-sexual interactions between the sisters and the priests was deemed vital to the overall moral purpose of the MMMs. The sisters were told by Mother Mary:

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[431] Letter from Sr. M. Therese to Mother Mary 13th January 1960, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/407.

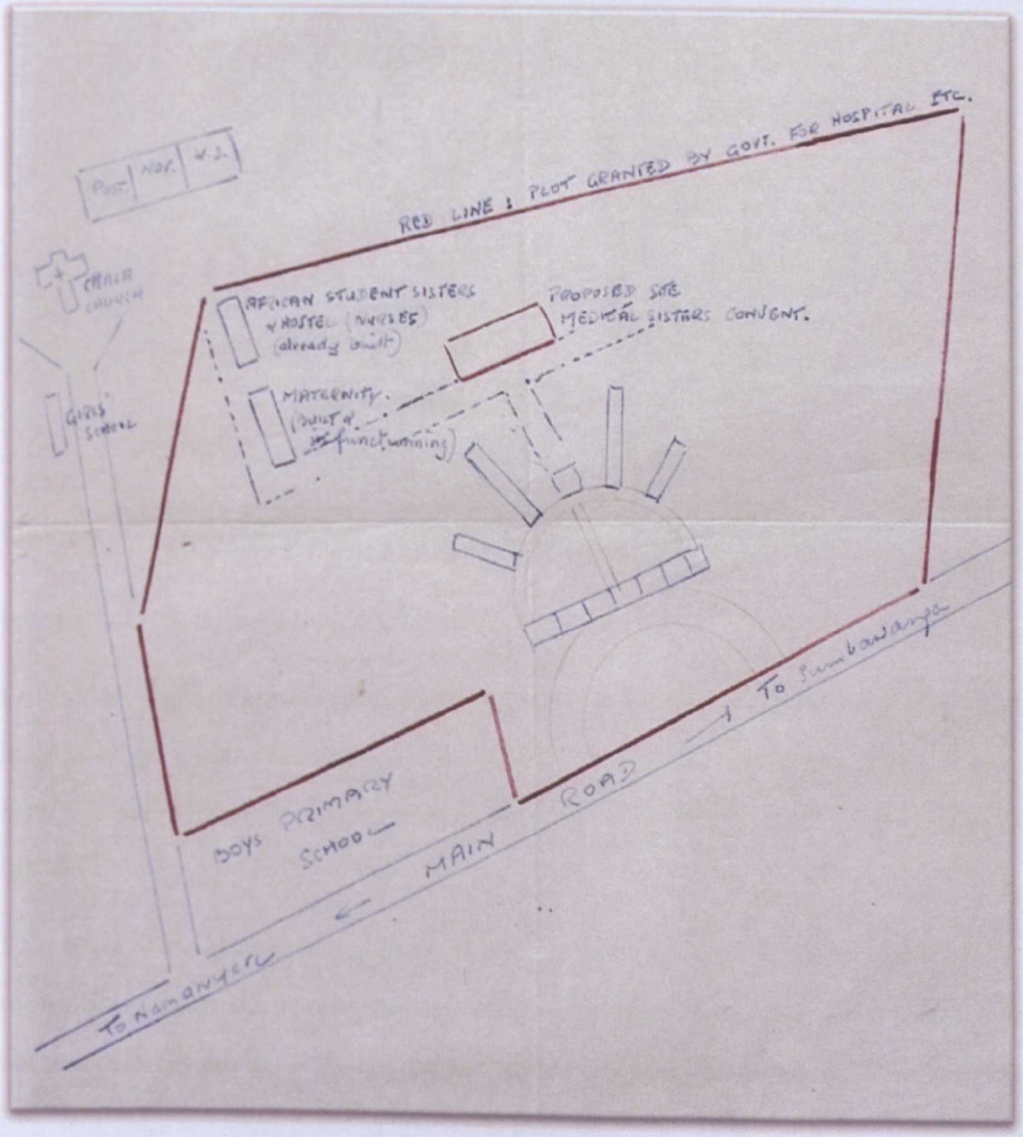
[432] *Conferences by Mother Mary during Visitation*, 1959-1960, MMM Archive, file I/cong/5(g)/16.

[433] *Visitation to Makiungu*, 25th January 1960, MMM Archive, file I/cong/5(9)/83.

> *"In our dealings with the Fathers, with Doctors and others, everything is done in the open. That is why it is good to have a little parlour with an open verandah."*[434]

The purpose of this instruction was that it ensured that any interactions with men was to be done out in the open. The parlour with its verandah would mean that any time spent between the sisters and the priests could be observed. This was further facilitated by where the convent was located within the compound. For example, in this sketch map of Chala, the convent building, which is outlined in red, has been placed in the middle of the compound:

Figure 6.5 - Plan of Chala Compound



[434] *Ibid.*

Source: MMM archive,

Likewise the convent in Makiungu, which was constructed in 1954, was also situated in the middle of the compound:

Figure 6.6 - Makiungu Convent

Source: Taken by author, September 2010

Following the advice from Mother Mary the convent in Makiungu did indeed have a large, open verandah at the front of the house, allowing public, visible interactions with men. This space could be even be used to serve meals to guests.[435]

The behaviour between the sisters and the priests was further controlled by regulations from the motherhouse. Before Mother Mary gave her permission for her sisters to be sent to the missions she agreed some rules regarding interactions between the sisters and the priests:

[435] *Directions to Superiors*, no date, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/11/1.

> *"The sisters do no enter the Father's House after dark except where charity in their medical work requires it. The Sister nurse will always bring a Sister with her and help her in bed-making etc."*

These regulations highlight the fear that gossip could arise from inappropriate behaviour. If the sisters did have to visit the priest's house, say for example if he was sick, then it was instructed that, "you can go to see him two sisters together."[436] This was because the sisters were told: "We must be very careful not to give scandal."[437] It was also written that if the sister absolutely needed something from the priest's house a sister might: "[Send] a note to the Father in charge by either the house boy or girl. If the boy or girl is not there the Sister can go personally but always two."[438] The regulations were thus clearly written to avoid any talk that may have arisen if the sister was to be seen alone in the priest's house. Even when simply walking to church the sisters were instructed to "go by the front of the Father's House not by the back."[439] The reasons for these strict instructions were to ensure that the perception of their virginity could not be challenged by gossip to the contrary. Despite these regulations the sisters and the missionary priests did not live completely separate lives. For example one sister in nDareda wrote to tell Mother Mary:

> *"We had a little party here on Sunday day week last. The priests, brothers, native sisters, and postulants. Rev Superior thought it was a way of getting to know one another."*[440]

It can perhaps be surmised that the relations between the priests and the nuns were cordial. Perhaps more so when the priests were also Irish, for example:

> *"Thank God we are very happy when we arrived at Mombasa I thought that the sound of Monsignor's Galway accent was the most pleasant thing I ever heard."*[441]

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[436] *Visitation to Makiungu*, 25th January 1960. MMM Archive, file I/cong/5(9)/83.

[437] *Conferences by Mother Mary Martin during Visitation*, 1959-1960. MMM Archive, file I/cong/5(g)/16.

[438] *Untitled Note by Mother Mary*, No date, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/28.

[439] *Ibid.*

[440] Letter from Sr. Christina to Mother Mary, 26th June 1947, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/9.

The presence of Irish priests was in some way a little bit of home in Africa. Nonetheless, Mother Mary requested to the Prefect that the priests were also made aware of the potential for behaviour to be subjected to gossip. Thus one of the regulations stated: "It has also been arranged that the Fathers do not visit the Sister's house after dark."[442] In correspondence sent from Mbulu it is clear that the priests stationed on the mission would regularly call around to the MMM convent. This behaviour was cause of some concern to the superior who wrote to Mother Mary to say:

> *"He comes occasionally in the evenings he always leaves before 7:30pm. I often wondered if I should tell him not to come. I believe those regulations that were made for the Fathers were never sent out."*[443]

This quote reveals that the sisters on the missions were conscious that they were not supposed to socialise at night with the priests for this would threaten their image of purity. Furthermore, the implementation of these strict regulations over male and female interactions seem to exist both to impart idealised sexualised behaviour onto the local population but, as one instruction stated: "also as a safeguard for ourselves."[444] To segregate genders was to reduce the likelihood of any un-pure thoughts or potentially any actions occurring. Such regulations can be said to have existed to ensure that the sisters were able to maintain their moral authority. This was essential as they were there to teach, through example, ideal behaviour of femininity. In keeping with the teachings of the Catholic Church, this meant presenting a chaste, virginal performance in the interactions between unmarried men and women and granted the sisters integrity when hoping to impart Catholic values onto the local population.

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[441] Letter from Sr. M. Kieran to Mother Mary, 15th March 1947, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/5.

[442] *Untitled note*, no date. MMM archive I/Fou/4(p)/28.

[443] Letter from Sr. Christine to Mother Mary, 28th October 1948, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/37.

[444] *Conferences by Mother Mary during Visitation,* 1959-1960. MMM Archive, file I/cong/5(g)/16.

The sisters taught the local girls and boys that they employed to be model Christians. In nDareda local boys were employed to work in the labs yet after an undisclosed incident the MMM superior decided that she must dismiss them from the compound:

> *"What made me finally get rid of them was that they caused serious trouble with the girls and the Bishop finally forbade us to house them in the compound."*[445]

The sister enforced the removal of the boys due to their interference with the girls that were employed in the house and hospital. In contrast, to this inappropriate gender interaction, the Christian marriage of one of their girls in nDareda was celebrated in this extract from a letter sent to Drogheda in 1954 it read:

> *"The suitor is the Bishops driver, we will be sorry to lose them from the hospital but we are glad that they are settling down to bring up good Christian families, as you say that is the hope of Africa if we get the family rooted."*[446]

Likewise in Kabanga one sister wrote home to say:

> *"Our cook whom we have had for 4 years is soon leaving to get married I will miss her very much but thank God she is getting a nice husband and she should make a very good wife."*[447]

Through these letters it appears that the Christian marriage was a success for the MMM mission. This is because it was within the family that Catholicism could be fostered and spread. As such Mother Mary told the sisters:

> *"We must remember the Church is built up on the family and if we get the Christian family, it will be a great help for the*

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[445] Letter from Sr. Maria de Magdala to Mother Mary, 25th August 1961, MMM Archive, file I Fou/4(p)/446.

[446] Letter from Sr. Monica to Mother Mary, 14th May 1954, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/215.

[447] Letter from Sr. Evangalist to Mother Mary, 8th August 1958, MMM Archive, file i/Fou/4(r)/84.

> *priests, because it is so much easier to get the Mother and child than to get the Father."*[448]

It was in the promotion of this marital union that the MMMs felt that Catholicism in Tanganyika would continue to grow. However, it would appear that this was not always a straightforward task:

> *"The moral needs of Kabanga are great, there are few Christians, it is even difficult to get the Christians to live with their wives and they are not anxious to have children."*[449]

The MMMs had many aspects to their mission, much of which could not be confined to the hospital. Their demonstration of ideal, gendered behaviour was an important component of their mission and provides evidence of the wider Catholic project that they were engaged with.

6.4 Catholic Hierarchy and MMM Networks on the Mission Field

The MMM sisters on the mission field simultaneously operated within the Catholic hierarchy but also the MMM congregation. With regards to the former, the sisters had to work under a bishop, yet due to their medical expertise this was a different relationship than that explored in chapter four. Their distance from the motherhouse meant that a variety of tactics were implemented to ensure that control over the sisters was maintained. This involved the space of their convent and the role of the superior. The following section shows the mobility and the connectivity of the Catholic religion.

6.4.1 Role of the superior on the MMM mission field

A MMM superior was appointed from Drogheda to oversee the community of sisters on the mission field. These superiors ensured that the individuals who composed the community would function successfully together. This was done with an understanding of the tribulations of missionary life for, as one sister remarked in a letter to Mother Mary:

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[448] *Visitation to Makiungu,* January 1960, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/5(g)/83.
[449] *Visitation Report, Kabanga.* April 1952, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/12/67.

> *"What is evident in these older Sisters is that they come out with a pre-conceived idea of what perfection is, and want the Missions to adapt to them, instead of them to the Missions."*[450]

Central to the control that the order exerted over the sisters was the assignment of a superior to oversee the MMM missionary community. Each superior was to act as a proxy for Mother Mary. Their responsibilities were great and accordingly: "The Superior should have an office or a bigger room, if she cannot have an office,"[451] to aid in the extra administrative tasks that she was responsible for. The appointment of an individual to this role was made in the motherhouse through consultation between Mother Mary and her council. In nDareda Sr.-Dr. Monica was assigned to be a superior because "she had a deep understanding of the Congregation and will be a help to the Sisters"[452] and it was felt that it was "necessary to have a very experienced Superior there for the young sisters."[453] In her role as superior Sr. Monica was expected to:

> *"Be a mother to all the Sisters, someone they can talk to in all their troubles for she is matured with a good religious spirit and has great experience."*[454]

This quote reveals the gendered role that the superior was meant to occupy. She was to be the definite head of the community on the mission but she was to occupy this role in a maternal, gentle manner. The superior was to ensure that the community interacted well with each other:

> *"You should live as a happy family, be a Mother and the Children. In Africa do not sit on your pedestal, but talk as a little family and be all one."*[455]

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[450] Letter from Sr. M Scholastica to Mother Mary, 10th October 1959, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/395.

[451] *Conference by Mother Mary during Visitation*, 1959 -1960, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/5(g)/16.

[452] Letter from Mother Mary to Monsignor Winters, 29th May 1953, MMM Archive, file I/Dio/14/29.

[453] Letter from Mother Mary to Monsignor Winters. Date unknown 1953, MMM Archive, file

[454] *Ibid.*

[455] *Visitation in nDareda by Mother Mary*, January 1960, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/5(g)/77.

As this instruction implies, through the role of the superior the sisters were to live as a family and not as co-habiting friends. This instruction was written with an awareness of the pressures that missionary life could have on the individual. It implied that ideal relations between sisters would not necessarily be more than cordial. For example: "If there are four Sisters there should be silence at breakfast and dinner – there should also be a spirit of silence about the house."[456] Special friendships between sisters was not encouraged: "Particular friendships – that is very very important, especially in a small house, don't leave the third sister out in the cold, think of her misery."[457] The ideal condition within the convent was therefore for all to get along in a warm but also in a professional manner. It was the role of the superior to ensure that the community got along together. Mother Mary instructed each sister: "once the Superior speaks, accept it."[458] Each individual of the community was expected to be obedient to the orders of the superior:

> *"If we have not obedience then medical services mean nothing, I think that it should be well impressed on them in the Novitiate that is the knowledge of the religious life that they came into learn, it is difficult and of course all difficulties are increased on the Mission Field."*[459]

Therefore all the spiritual training that the sisters had undergone in the novitiate was done with the knowledge that this would be tested when on the missions. The superiors were put into place to ensure that the spirit of the congregation, learnt in the motherhouse, was then implemented at each mission station. Thus on a visitation to nDareda Mother Mary told the sisters that: "If you are loyal to me, your loyalty is not loyalty but disloyalty if you do not accept your superiors as appointed by me."[460] Obedience to the superior

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[456] *Discussion between Mother Mary and Sr. Monica on the Missions*, 16th April 1953, MMM Archive.

[457] *Visitation to Makiungu by Mother Mary Martin*, 25th January 1960, MMM Archive, file I/cong/5(9)/83.

[458] *Visitation in nDareda by Mother Mary*, January 1960, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/5(g)/77.

[459] Letter from Sr. Monica to Mother Mary, 16th May 1950, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/5 (f) /18.

[460] *Visitation in nDareda by Mother Mary*, January 1960, MMM Archive I/Cong/5(g)/77.

was obviously deemed as absolutely essential to the successful work of MMM. The appointment of superiors was the method through which authority from Ireland could be disseminated across the great distances of the MMM international network.

In practice though, it can be surmised that the authority of the superior was not always unquestionably accepted. One sister wrote to Mother Mary stating that:

> *"We all have our good and our bad days which makes life hard on the missions "no cross no crown" We all like to be superiors and not subjects."*[461]

Crucial to the maintenance of power within the transnational, scalar MMM network was the writing of letters. The sisters were instructed:

> *"[It] is a serious duty on the missions for the Sisters to write regularly and often to their Superior and also for propaganda purpose."*[462]

In the MMM network Mother Mary was kept reliably informed through a process of letter writing and the sisters were encouraged to form a close relationship with the motherhouse rather than their peers in the immediate vicinity. Cultivating this relationship helped to bypass any internal disputes within the house. The following directive was quite specific over what was expected:

> *"Once a month each sister writes to the Superior General a confidential personal letter and one for the purpose of Propaganda which can be used for publication. Also a short letter home."*[463]

There is evidence in Mother Mary's replies of her counselling and advising the sisters on how best to tackle the problems that they faced. The advantage of letter writing was that the slow nature of the process ensured that people had time to think before they put pen to paper. Through the appointment of trusted

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[461] Letter from Sr. Christina to Mother Mary, 12th June 1955. MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(i)/2.
[462] *Directions to Superiors*, date unknown, MMM Archive, file I/Cong/11/1.
[463] *Ibid.*

superiors and the writing of letters, Mother Mary was to some extent able to know what was happening on the missions. Her knowledge was occasionally complimented by her visitations to the mission field. The process of letter writing and the responses that each received ensured that the presence of the motherhouse and Mother Mary loomed large in the communities on the mission field. This is still true today with her picture adorning the walls of every living room in MMMs convents in Tanzania.

6.4.2 Role of the convent in community and spiritual life

To explore the space of the missionary convent reveals the mobility and uniformity of Catholicism. Once a mission was established it was absolutely essential that the community life of MMM was maintained. The convent was vital for this and one was constructed at each mission field. Just like in Ireland this space was intended to be a home for the sisters but it also performed the vital role of maintaining the spirituality of the community. The MMM convent in nDareda was described in a report sent to the motherhouse as a "single storey, built of burnt brick, tiled roofs."[464] This building had an oratory, a parlour, a single bedroom, a dormitory with six beds and one refectory, and one bathroom with two pit type toilets in a separate block. The interior of the convent was largely westernised in its furnishings. Indeed the MMM sisters themselves were responsible for this and would bring with them materials to decorate and furnish the convent in a familiar style:

> *"We are indeed grateful to you giving the Sisters such a good start and furnishing the house ... The Sisters will be responsible for their bedding, household linen, curtains, Church Vestments, altar linens, crucifixes etc."*[465]

The convent would therefore resemble the homely yet religious space that the sisters would have lived in when in Ireland. It can be argued therefore that the convent was an important space in recreating a sense of home for the sisters

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[464] *Report form Out Lady of Good Counsel, nDareda*, 20th – 28th January 1960, MMM Archive, file I/Dio/14/52.

[465] Letter from Mother Mary to Van Der beck, Vicar Apostolic of Kigoma, 13th February 1950, MMM Archive, file I/Dio/12/130.

amongst the unfamiliar backdrop of the mission field. The sisters would only move to the mission field when this building was ready for them, as noted by Van Sambeck in Kabanga:

> *"Although I am very anxious to have your Sisters here, I think August is too early ... I would prefer that when the Sisters arrive they have a nice and quiet home and surroundings, not only because of their health, but also because of their own spitirual life."*[466]

In this letter the bishop acknowledges the importance of the convent in acting both as a home and a space to maintain the spirituality of the sisters. Within the convent it was specifically the oratory that was essential in ensuring that this was a holy space. In many of the letters written to Ireland, the preparing of the oratory was given great importance. In the process of moving to nDareda one sister wrote home to say:

> *"We are trying to get the Oratory in shape. Please God we shall have the Blessed Sacrament in the convent next week. Oh how grand it will be, to be living under the same roof."*[467]

The importance of the Blessed Sacrament to the sisters almost cannot be underestimated. It was to be an ever-present reminder of the supernatural elements of the Church and it served to emphase their spiritual project. The Catholic Church "expresses its own life and mystery most aptly and most fully in the celebration of the Eucharist" (Power, 2003 p 417). As Sherry writes, through the Eucharist:

> *"The invisible can be known through the visible, the internal and spiritual can be expressed through the perceptible, so that God can be glimpsed in the world through the signs and likenesses that he has created"* (Sherry, 2007 p 463).

The spiritual meaning of the sacrament is drawn out through ritual orchestrated by the priest (Irwin, 2003). By sharing in the ritual of Holy Communion,

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[466] Letter from van Sambeck, Vicar Apostolic of Kigoma to Mother Mary, 19th March 1950, MMM Archve, file I/Dio/12/15.

[467] Letter from Sr. M. Christina to Mother Mary, 26th June 1947, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/9.

members of the local church are united both with each other but also to the universal church (Power, 2003). Furthermore, the presence and rituals surrounding the Blessed Sacrament highlights the mobility of the Catholic faith (Cosgrove, 2001).

Upon arrival in Makiungu the sisters wrote to Mother Mary to describe the humble house that the sisters would occupy there: "The convent is only a four-roomed house."[468] Nonetheless even this humble space could be elevated to religious importance by the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, for the sister went on to say that "we have the great privilege of having a little oratory with the Blessed Sacrament reserved."[469] The Blessed Sacrament brought the uniformity of Catholic life to the sisters for it ensured that daily Catholic routines would revolve around it (Irwin, 2003). Therefore, their missionary life would continue be filled with religion, much like it was in Ireland. For example in Kabanga:

> *"The sisters have Mass each morning in their Oratory, spiritually they are well catered for, they have a weekly confessor and an extraordinary confessor, monthly conferences and they have a regular day of recollection each month."*[470]

This religious routine was essential to their daily lives but also connected the sisters to the international Catholic Church through the solidarity of this routine. In the potentially isolating location of the mission field, the existence of predictable religious rituals would have provided the sisters some continuity of practice between their lives in Ireland and their lives in Tanganyika. This is something I experienced in Tanzania as each night the sisters would read from daily scriptures, the act of which would unite them in a universally shared ritual, dictated by the Catholic Church.

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[468] Letter from Sr. Christina to Mother Mary, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(i)/1.
[469] *Ibid.*
[470] *Visitation report from Kabanga* by Sr.-Dr. Monica Clarke, 1952, MMM Archive, file I/Dio/12/67.

6.4.3 Relations with bishops

On the mission fields the sisters continued to be under the jurisdiction of a bishop. This meant that they were still working within a masculine Catholic hierarchy within the mission space. However, the relationship between the sisters and the bishops of Tanganyika emerges as one quite different from that which existed in Ireland. This was because the sisters were trained as medical professionals which subtlety shifted the power relations between the bishop and the MMMs.

Before Mother Mary sent her sisters to the mission field she would formalise the relationship between MMMs and the bishop in a series of agreements. For example, between the Vicar Apostolate of Kigoma and the MMMs, the position of the sisters in this hierarchy was made clear before their arrival: "The Vicar Apostolic is and remains the proprietor of all the Hospitals and of all the equipment which are built and provided under his direction (or supervision)."[471] The Vicar Apostolic was indeed the landlord of the property and the sisters were there by his invitation. This could, of course, be evoked at any time. However, despite the power that the bishops had, an agreement written by MMM ensured that the: "Sisters are to have complete control of the administration and discipline of the Hospitals and Dispensaries under their care."[472] Thus the sisters, in theory, were free to run the hospital as they saw fit without interference from the Bishop. This was made quite clear in a letter sent by Mother Mary to Van Sambeck, where she outlined how she expected the sisters to run the hospital:

> *"With our experience as a medical Congregation we are anxious that all things will be done in accordance with your Lordship's decision and desires but we feel that the more we*

[471] *Agreement between the Vicar Apostolic of Kigoma and the Superior general of the Medical Missionaries of Mary*, no date, MMM Archive, file I/Dio/12/21.
[472] *Ibid.*

> *administer the Hospitals ourselves as a medical unit, the more successful our work is."*[473]

In asserting the authority of the MMMs to administer their own hospitals, Mother Mary was able to incite the professional qualifications of the sisters:

> *"Doctors are difficult people on account of their profession and as religious this become even greater and very often difficulties arise where directions are given by priests and others who have not got medical degrees."*[474]

Therefore because of their recognisable professional qualifications the gendered, subordinate position of the nuns in relation to priests and bishops that existed in Ireland was somewhat subverted in Tanganyika: "The Bishop guarantees to the Medical Missionaries of Mary full liberty of action in their medical work."[475] The autonomy of the MMMs from the Church hierarchy can be clearly contrasted to the position that they had in Ireland. It was indeed the professional training of the sisters that somewhat released them from their complete dependence on the bishops. The mission hospital was thus intended by MMM to be a space that was, at least to a degree, free for the sisters to operate independently from the bishop. In comparison to their situation in Ireland this must have been liberating for the individual sister who was keen to practice medicine.

However, it would appear that this relationship between the sisters and the bishops was more complex. Upon arrival the sisters had to assert their position in the local community if they were to receive enough patients to be financially sustainable. Initially the sisters in Kabanga had few patients. In a report sent back to Mother Mary, Sr.-Dr. Monica speculated that this maybe because the sisters had no transportation with which to access local areas. Sr. Monica also reported a: "Lack of professional freedom to develop and carry out the

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[473] Letter from Mother Mary to Van Der beck, 13th February 1950, MMM Archive, file I/Dio/12/130.

[474] *Ibid.*

[475] *Agreement between the Bishop of Karema and the Medical Missionaries of Mary*, No date, MMM Archive, file I/Dio/11/68.

work."[476] This was a particular reference to the bishop, who decided when the sisters could visit their medical outstations. Sr.-Dr. Monica concluded that Sr.-Dr. Margaret ought to: "be the judge when places should be visited,"[477] because: "Freedom of movement for the Mission Doctor...is the practice in other Vicariates."[478] The disagreement between the Bishop and the sisters is interesting for it shows that the bishop still had control over the sister's movement even when they left the hospital. This control extended over their professional movements and limited the number of patients that the sisters had contact with. The restriction of the sister's movement conforms to a conservative view of women in the Catholic Church that sees them as static. This mirrors some of the restrictions experienced by the MMMs in Ireland. The sisters occupied a dual role of sister and doctor, which required constant negotiation between their professional duty and their position within the Church. In nDareda the superior had some concerns over the presence of the bishop in the hospital:

> *"Now re- his Lordship for some months previous I thought he was over stepping somewhat for example he was visiting the Hospital far too much for my liking with the inevitable result that some of the Sisters were pleased and others displeased."*[479]

She dealt with this situation by talking to the bishop:

> *"I explained to him that the [sisters] could not do their work properly when he was present and so on... I am glad to be able to tell you that relations could not be better at the moment, but always at a distance."*[480]

The mere presence of the bishop therefore still had the potential to disrupt the sister's work. This is despite the fact that he had no professional medical

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[476] *Visitation Report, Kabanga*, April 1952, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/12/67.
[477] *Ibid.*
[478] *Ibid.*
[479] Letter from Sr. Helenia to Mother Mary, 11th March, 1957, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/323.
[480] *Ibid.*

qualifications and could not serve as an accurate judge of their work. A few months later, another letter complaining about the behaviour of Bishop Holmes-Seide was sent to Mother Mary. It stated:

> *"I honestly believe Bishop Holmes-Seide has too much to say and do where our Sisters are concerned, even though it may be kinder for the superior it is so much better to keep the Bishops in their own places on the missions... we to stand more on our own two feet, but that we may learn by experience and very often the hard way."*[481]

It is clear that the sister responsible for the MMM mission was keen to work separately from the Bishop. These negotiations and grievances were not unique to nDareda. In Kabanga one sister wrote home to say:

> *"His Lordship has discovered at last that a hospital cannot be opened over night. Sister Pauline is very cool and now she doesn't mind what His Lordship says she just tells him we will try but we won't promise."*[482]

The bishop's evidently unworkable suggestion that the hospital ought to be opened at night would appear to contradict the medical experience of the MMMs. However, as this quote shows, the sister involved had the confidence to argue her case and stand her ground. This confidence perhaps came from her professional training. The potential tension here is between the competing experiences and power of the bishop and the sisters. Likewise in Kigoma one sister wrote home to say that:

> *"His Lordship's views on medical work are conservative in the extreme; He takes it as his right that the decision when to visit stations such as Kakanko and Ujiji should be his.... He would wish to relegate the spending of the Sisters' money, for example money received for medicines in the hospital should*

[481] Letter from Sr. Helenia to Mother Mary, 25th June 1958, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/359.

[482] Letter from Sr. Evangelist to Mother Mary, 30th May 1957, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(r)/65.

> *serve to pay for the sisters' safaris as well as to buy medicine.*"[483]

The interference from the bishop gave the sister in charge enough cause for concern for her to put pen to paper and to ask Mother Mary for advice. It cannot be deduced from this letter exactly what conservative views the bishop held, yet his attempts to control the locations of the sisters was contrary to the agreement that the MMMs had with him. The extent of his interference was deemed to be inappropriate and could potentially jeopardise the provision of medical services by the MMM sisters. These quotes reveal the tensions that arose when the sisters simultaneously operated as religious and medical workers. Nonetheless the sisters, while remaining within the Church's hierarchy, were at least able to question the actions of the bishop and voice these concerns to Mother Mary.

6.4.4 The internationalisation of MMM

The MMMs foresaw the growth of both Catholicism and their congregation in Tanganyika to be with local girls joining as sisters. In reflecting upon the order's development in Tanganyika, Mother Mary once wrote that: "As you know it is my great desire to have African vocations for our congregations as I am anxious it will be international."[484] Mother Mary saw the future of MMM not as an Irish congregation but rather as one that was composed of women from many nationalities, including Tanganyika. She was certain that Irish MMMs were not to be permanently based in Tanganyika. Their ultimate role was to train the local girls in both medicine and religion so that these women would be able to take over the running of the mission themselves. Amongst the house girls that worked in the MMM convents, some were seen as potential future recruits to MMM and their training was described as the "Chief work" of the sisters. Many of the letters sent from the mission field report on the progress achieved by the trainees. One sister in nDareda wrote to Mother Mary to say:

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[483] *Report*, 29th May 1952, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(r)/171.

[484] Letter from Mother Mary to Monsignor Winters, 29th May 1953, MMM Archive, file I/Dio/14/29.

> *"You will be glad to know that our girls here are shaping well they have nice little ways, kind and sympathetic to us and very loyal to the Mission."*[485]

The qualities that were deemed necessary to be an MMM, for example kindness, were highly feminized and sought after in any potential recruit. The sisters in nDareda regularly wrote home to describe the temperament and suitability of the girls for the MMMs: "Our girls will make wonderful Catholic nurses and many of them will be future M.M.M."[486] Indeed they did receive requests from some local girls to become sisters:

> *"It was a great joy to hear from the Sisters that there are two promising vocations in Veronica Elias and Teresa. They would need to be exceptionally strong supernatural vocations as it would be very necessary that the first African Medical Missionaries of Mary be imbued with the real spirit of the Congregation."*[487]

In this excerpt Mother Mary acknowledges the difficulties of establishing MMM amongst the local population. She is inferring that African pioneers of MMM would have to be of strong character to undergo the training. This was partly because the MMM networks in Tanganyika was weak and they could only undertake their novitiate in Ireland. Therefore, Mother Mary concluded that any potential recruits could live in:

> *"A small dormitory at nDareda where the aspirants could stay, live the life of the Sisters, get instruction in the spiritual and religious life and help in the work of the hospital and house."*[488]

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[485] Letter from Sr. Monica to Mother Mary, 14th May 1954, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/215.

[486] Letter from Sr. M Scholastica to Mother Mary, 10th October 1959, MMM Archive, file I/Fou/4(p)/395.

[487] Letter from Mother Mary to Monsignor Winters, 29th May 1953, MMM Archive, file I/Dio/14/29.

[488] *Ibid.*

This initial introductory period was deemed necessary to test the vocation of the individuals before they would embark on a journey to Ireland. If this probationary period in Africa was successful these girls could:

> *"Come then to the Motherhouse and Novitiate here where they would fall into the life of the postulant and then the novice and then professed sister."*[489]

In imparting this training, Ireland featured potentially as an important place in the education of these women. Mother Mary, writing in 1960 remarked on the potential importance of the IMTH to Tanganyika's religious and medical development:

> *"I feel now very strongly that perhaps our greatest work will be getting the Africans to come here to us as future medical missionaries and be trained in all the different branches of medicine."*[490]

In Mother Mary's plans, Ireland would become a space of importance in the emergence of independent Tanganyika and the internationalisation of MMM. These African women would then be both professionally and spiritually trained by MMM to become the next generation of missionaries. This would enable them to facilitate their country in an era of political independence. Indeed it was the ultimate aim of Mother Mary for the territory to be independent of Ireland and to have its own novitiate to ensure the future of MMM as a truly international order that would be less reliant on Ireland for its recruits:

> *"It will be very essential for us to build up our native sisters because we would never have enough European sisters to supply all the needs of the different Vicariates. So if we get some girls from each Vicariate they will be able to go back and do their great apostolate in their own country with the real Medical Missionary of Mary spirit."*[491]

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[489] *Ibid.*

[490] Letter from Mother Mary to Sr. Mary Garnett, 12th July 1960, MMM Archive, file I/Gov/13 / 18.

[491] Letter from Mother Mary to Monsignor Winters, 29th May 1953, MMM Archive, file I/Dio/14/29.

The ultimate aim of Mother Mary for MMM in Tanganyika somewhat mirrors the political trajectory of the territory, with local people providing services once done by the colonisers. One crucial difference though is that through the network of MMM the connections to Ireland were never intended to be severed, but rather it was hoped that the two countries would become increasingly interconnected by the mutual exchange of sisters. This situates the work of the MMM as a conscious example of the potential for the true universality of the Catholic Church.

6.5 Conclusion

The MMMs were in Tanganyika to save souls. Therefore their medical work must be seen as a vital tool in the process of evangelisation. This is not to imply that conversion was the only motivation for the sisters. Letters sent from the mission show a deep empathy with the suffering of the local people. Indeed, the concept of suffering, both as witness to and personal experience of, was considered part of the spiritual life of the missionary sister. Despite some frustration towards the government, in particular at not being taken seriously as medical practitioners, the MMMs financially relied upon the provision of government funds for their hospitals. Yet through their emphasis on religion and close interactions with local people, the MMMs saw their work as different from the healthcare provided by the government. The contacts that the sisters forged with local people, particularly cultivated through an intimate knowledge of the language, meant that the MMMs argued that they had a balanced knowledge of local needs. These interactions, which outlasted the British rule, complicates the role of the MMM sisters within the colonial project.

Although to be a Catholic is dependent upon the act of baptism it is also embodied by the individual and enacted through a series of ideal behaviour. The sisters were engaged in a project of educating local people on such matters as hygiene, marriage and childcare and were almost part of a Catholic social service. Within the MMM's work there was a strong emphasis on women and

gendered behaviour, this was because Catholicism was thought to take root in the home. Thus local women in their dual role of mother and wife were thought to be crucial to the lasting conversion of the people. In evangelising to women, the actions and the bodies of the MMM sisters was vital. Accordingly the nuns presented themselves in a Catholic and a feminized manner. The construction and layout of the MMM convents and compounds were important in the presentation of this behaviour.

The establishment of ideal behaviours reveals the ultimate aim of the congregation was to withdraw its Irish nuns from the territory after having left behind a lasting legacy of Catholicism. It was envisioned by Mother Mary that the MMMs would eventually have their own novitiate in Tanganyika from where they would train local women to be nuns. The MMMs hoped that the future of independent Tanganyika would be as a Catholic nation, thus in anticipating the day that independence would be granted, a sister wrote to Mother Mary to say:

> *"We are not worried in any way and don't anticipate any trouble, and we trust that all will go well. The Government has asked everyone to go to their churches on December 8th. So you can see Our Lady is going to take care of Tanganyika."*[492]

In this letter the sister trusts that the fate of the newly independent country is to reside within the Church through the protection of the Virgin Mary. The MMMs felt that they were able to facilitate in the national conversion of Tanganyika through multiple, yet sincere demonstrations of their faith to the local people.

[492] Letter from Sr. Therese to Mother Mary, 30th November 1961, MMM Archives, file I/Fou/4(p)/459.

7 Conclusion

This thesis has shown some of the transnational, scalar interconnections forged by Irish religious women during Ireland's mid twentieth-century missionary movement. This scalar exploration began in chapter four by considering spaces in Ireland. It looked at the importance of the novitiate, the motherhouse and the hostels of the SSC and MMM sisters and how these enclosed and highly regulated spaces were vital to the formation of missionary sisters. The control exercised over these spaces demonstrates the gendered, hierarchal operations of the Catholic Church, for the sisters were regulated by the constitutions of the congregation but were also overseen by the local bishops. The regulation of the sisters relied on religious and gendered control over the body but at the same time allowed the sisters opportunity for education and many went on to receive medical and professional qualifications. While these spaces were demarcated from Irish society, at the same time they were not completely isolated and cannot be understood without positioning them in a vast Catholic network. In particular, the motherhouse and IMTH were places for arrival and departures of sisters and the exchanges of stories from the mission fields.

Chapter five explored how all four congregations conveyed their missionary message to the people of Ireland by the circulation of magazines and films. The content of the magazines strove to reflect national as well as religious ideals. This resulted in the presentation of post-independent Ireland as a culturally Catholic state. In promoting Catholicism as synonymous with Irishness, the domestic home and in particular the role of mother became key to the preservation of Catholic Ireland. However, the magazines did not represent Ireland as an isolated island, rather it was presented as connected to the world and the mission fields by a shared Catholic faith. The transnational spirituality of the Church drew these disparate spaces into close proximity with each other. Therefore on the pages of the magazines, but also evidenced in the practices of the auxiliary guilds, Catholicism was cultivated in the home but ultimately it was expected to transcend this domesticity and to interact with both the nation and the universal scale.

Chapter six looked at the actual work of the MMM sisters on the mission field of Tanganyika and revealed the complex, ambiguous position that they held there. In locating their mission hospitals the MMM were in competition from other Christian dominations. They also had to willingly operate within the desires of a government that was financially required to host the medical missionaries, while simultaneously holding a sceptical view of their religious motives. Once established, the MMM sisters used their medical centres to not only practice medicine but to enact an ideal, Catholic femininity that was hoped would be imparted onto local women. It was in their daily actions that the MMMs had hoped Catholicism would take root in the local population and also how it would continue to spread after Tanganyika's independence. Despite their vast physical distance from Ireland the MMM sisters in Tanganyika continue to operate both within the hierarchy of their congregation and the hierarchy of the Church. Some parallels can hence been drawn between the sisters' work in Ireland and on the mission fields and points to the existence of an ever-present Catholic network that the sisters worked within.

In concluding this thesis it is also necessary to reflect on some of the questions raised in the introduction. The thesis has shown that the Church in Ireland had a strong visual presence during this era. Through magazines, films, exhibitions or the IMTH the Church was confident in presenting the missions as a facet of post-independence Irish identity. To allude to the missions was a way for the Church to exert its assertive moral voice and encourage activities that led to good Catholic practices within Ireland. To study both the promotional material and religious spaces of the missions demonstrates the pervasive nature of Catholicism and its attempts to control practices ranging from the scale of the body to a wider universal network. All of these scales were constructed and understood as part of the same, interconnected Catholic analytical frame.

The promotion of this Catholic, Irish identity was oppressive towards women. The magazines reproduced a discourse that reflected the 1937 Constitution and presented women as wife and mother. Through the wearing of the habit the body of the missionary nuns was suppressed by the authority of the Catholic

hierarchies. However, it is only by exploring all of these scales that the contradictions and variation in gendered identity can be detected. Out of the restrictive routines in the convents came nuns who were able to train as doctors to work on the mission fields. In these spaces, their tough mental attitude ensured their survival, yet this resourcefulness was only privately reported in letters to the motherhouse and was quite different to the serene, patient 'Mother' that the same orders portrayed in the magazines. These nuns, when on the missions, were able to negotiate a valid space for themselves within the Church's hierarchy. Therefore, women, both religious and secular, were vital to the sustenance of the Irish missionary movement; a phenomenon that sought to define and perpetuate both the boundaries of the new State, but also its interconnectedness to other places within a transnational Catholic network. In establishing these networks, religious women were able to traverse across a variety of spaces beyond Ireland.

Nonetheless this transnational gendered Irish identity was dependent upon a colonial mission field. It was in these mission fields, that the sisters sought, and were granted, permission to work in territories of the British Empire. Although they did not share all ideals with the government, they were reliant on the cooperation of these authorities. Despite this dependence, a reading of archival texts reveals that the MMM sisters saw their work as different from that of the colonial government. This separation was due to the Catholic nature of their work, a distinct viewpoint that can be evidenced in the magazines, where the geopolitics of the mission fields was overlooked in preference for a Catholic interpretation of space. This placed an emphasis on shared connections and often focused on children, rather than race. These missionary spaces were not positioned as part of empire, but rather as potential territories for Catholic expansion, populated by souls worthy of saving.

The medical nature of the sister's work no doubt saved lives, but this was an intimate exchange of power where the nuns promoted a western hegemony over local practices. They also implemented moral regulations and oversaw baptism, all of which contributed to a Catholic colonisation, which began with

the submission of the body. In acknowledging that the sisters studied in this thesis were not the pioneers, nor were they the sole missionary workers, I suggest that more research must be conducted on other aspects of Catholic colonisation. There is certainly room for additional research on the role of Catholicism in empire and particularly those orders more closely involved in the Church's hierarchy and not involved in medical practice.

By exploring the intricacies of Irish missionary nuns, this thesis contributes to geographical thought by arguing that religion's relationship with identity must be understood by considering interconnections that cut across multiple scales. The thesis has demonstrated this necessity by showing the sisters' bodies and their existence within a national project as the product of Catholic imaginings of the universal. Through this approach the 'habit', 'hostel' or the domestic Irish home are understood as residing within a wider, transnational Catholic hierarchy. It is entirely possible that the creation, importance and contradictions of these spaces would be ignored if a networked approach without scale was adopted. Geographers of religion could continue to emphasise the interconnections between universal perspectives, national and intimate scales when considering identity in other Christian denominations or faiths.

Furthermore the thesis has demonstrated that adopting scalar approaches to the study of the Catholic Church contributes to the critical value of a project. Accordingly, in exploring the spatialized hierarchy of the Church, this thesis has primarily focused on the production and sustenance of inequality between genders. However a scalar critique of the Church is also of benefit to historical-geographers of postcolonialism. An attention on scale reveals the expansion and existence of a 'Catholic empire', composed of its own ideologies, hierarchies and movements that interacted with imperial networks in a myriad of complementary and contradictory ways. Specifically, to study the interactions of Catholic missionaries and their exchanges of power with local people, offers alternative perspectives on colonial spaces that could continue to advance new imperial history's move away from a metropole-colony dualism.

To further research the scalar operations of the Church, I suggest more work could be conducted in the archives of religious societies. To focus on the regulations, routines and operations of specific orders reveals how different religious congregations accepted or potentially challenged the hierarchical structure of the Church. Therefore, to explore religious archives can only enrich understandings of the spatialities of the Church and its uneven exchanges of power. To study this variation has been particularly poignant during the current moral crisis within the Irish Catholic Church. Through a reading of archival texts, this thesis has focused on the complexities of a Church that has been almost uniformly vilified and instead revealed the multifaceted relationship between religion, gender and national identity.

I wish to conclude this thesis by offering some thoughts on the future of Irish missionary sisters. The MMMs argument that they were not the mouthpiece of the government in Tanganyika was probably exacerbated by the long periods of time each sister spent on the mission. They would use this time to learn local languages and many came back with an affinity for the people. The independence of Tanganyika did not lead to the rejection of the Catholic Church or the expulsion of MMM sisters from the country. Rather, since decolonisation the Church has consolidated a prominent position in the country and accordingly the MMMs are still able to recruit Tanzanian women to their congregation. To reflect this transition the MMMs are pursuing the idea of transferring their novitiate, which still resides in Drogheda, to Africa. If the MMMs do instigate this move, inevitably its ties to Ireland will begin to disappear. Crucial to the construction of 'Mother Ireland' in the poem that began this thesis was the idea of the missionary's possible return to their motherland. I noted that this emotive return to home still resonates within members of the MMM today. Many of the Irish MMM sisters who are still active in Tanzania spoke to me with great affection of soon retiring to 'home,' to which they meant Ireland. To them, despite all their travels and missionary experience Mother Ireland still exists, which leads to questions about the true mobility of Catholicism.

Mother Ireland as the creator of young missionaries has gone. The influence once commanded by the Catholic Church in Ireland has since receded and Irish vocations to the missionary cause are now extremely rare. This is of great sadness to the orders because it reveals the contrast between the eternal, spiritual nature of their project and their brief temporal reality. The ambition with which they were conceived has lasted little more than a generation and some living sisters can narrate the conception, pinnacle and decline of the orders that they devoted their lives to. The survival of the congregations in Ireland is dependent upon continual rejuvenation from an enthusiastic Irish nation, willing to supply new recruits. The decline in vocations is most obviously encountered in the motherhouses of the MMM and SSC. The modernist architecture, used in great abundance in both of these places, reminds one of just how recent the high point of the missions was. These convents were designed to be annually re-filled with a new intake of young postulants, yet now these spaces are quietly emptying and the silence that resonates within them serves as a constant reminder of the fading presence of the orders. This is made all the more poignant because those that remain continue to celebrate and uphold the values that originally brought them to the convent. For these women their constant is the Church and it is Irish society, beyond the convent, that has changed.

The near conclusion of Ireland's contribution to the missions leads to questions of legacy. However, this has been made controversial by the scandals of child abuse and the Magdalene asylums within the Catholic Church. There is a reluctance by the orders, as well as the Irish State, to celebrate the achievements of their missionaries as this could be perceived as a propaganda measure, designed to counter the deeply disturbing actions of other congregations. This thesis is not intended to balance this argument, to present 'good' Catholics to the reader, but rather it acknowledges that the women involved have earned a fair and balanced critique, one that avoids both hysteria or unreserved praise. Nonetheless, the controversy within the Church does demonstrate the complexities of its hierarchical operations, both in and beyond Ireland. The extent to which the sisters evaluate and contemplate their own

place in this hierarchy is difficult to assess. Perhaps conducting this research has allowed the sisters who participated to reflect on their own legacies. This thesis concludes by arguing for the importance of this reflection because the achievements of these women undeniably composed part of the fabric of post-independent Ireland. To ignore their contribution would be to exclude a small but significant facet of Irish female life during this era. And there is a danger that their work will be ignored. Many of the physical legacies of the orders are now hidden by a secular re-appropriation. For example, the IMTH, which was once the pinnacle of the MMMs is now a government-run hospital. On an international scale, Ireland no longer articulates itself through the Catholic Church and it has NGOs rather than missionaries as their moral ambassadors abroad. Yet the origin of Concern, one Ireland's most prominent development charity, owes some debt to the Irish missionaries who were active in Nigeria during the Biafran War. Over the course of the past 40 years Irish society's generosity to the developing world has shifted from the Church to these secular activities. However, Ireland's NGOs cannot be said to recruit from the same societal movement that was seen during the missionary era and their work does not identify with being either a national project or an international, Catholic one.

The multiple acts of courage and sacrifice by the sisters reflected a particular devotion to Catholicism that was rife with enthusiasm and was thus articulated through a largely positive belief in the universal. These female missionaries enactment of Catholicism was of a specific time and geography. This seems unlikely ever to be repeated. At the time of writing the future of the Medical Missionaries of Mary as an Irish congregation remains uncertain but what is equally unclear is how its possible passing will be memorialized in Ireland, indeed if it is at all.

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