CHAPTER SIX

THE UNITED STATES, 1794–1839

1. Introduction: First Spiritans in the States

The first Spiritan on record to enter the territory now known as the United States probably was Father Maillard. It has been noted he spent some time in a Boston jail1 before his deportation to France in 1745.* His brief sojourn among the New England Puritans was, of course, wholly involuntary and could hardly be represented as part of the Spiritans’ labor in the United States.

A plan to have the Spiritans play an important role in the Catholic Church of the United States was formulated in 1783, when the Holy See negotiated with Benjamin Franklin about the ecclesiastical organization of the United States. Writing to the Papal Nuncio in Paris, who conducted the discussions with Franklin, Cardinal Leonardo Antonelli, Prefect of the Propaganda, did not favor the establishment of a special college in France for the training of American missionaries. He suggested instead that “consideration be given to the idea of increasing somewhat the income of the Seminary of Foreign Missions... or better still, Holy Ghost Seminary..., imposing upon it the obligation of maintaining there, for the present, a reasonable number of ecclesiastics, to be sent... to the provinces of the United States. If, to begin with, eight or ten missionaries are sent, besides the vicar or bishop, this will provide sufficiently for the needs of the faithful in question.”2 Nothing, however, came of this idea which was intimately linked with a plan, favored by Franklin, to entrust control over the infant Catholic Church in the States to Frenchmen.3

In reality it was the French Revolution of 1792 which forced a few Holy Ghost Fathers to come to the States

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1* Chapter One indicates that there may have been other Spiritans in the States. However, the absence of documents precludes any positive discussion of them.

2 Cf. p. 35.


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for freedom from persecution. They were John Moranvillé, Matthew Hérand, and Charles Duhamel. These three men occupy a special place in this history, because they were the first Spiritans in North America who, before their departure to the missions, were officially admitted as members of the Congregation.2*

As the reader will recall, after the suppression of the Jesuits, Church and State officially entrusted the religious service of Guiana to the Holy Ghost Fathers in 1775. It was around this time that the Spiritans formally began to associate foreign missionaries with their society; hitherto its strict membership had been limited to the professors and directors of its seminaries. Among the personnel sent out in this fashion were Father James

2* To these three members of the Congregation in the United States, one could add yet another Spiritan in a broader sense, Father René Louis Bertin. He had entered Holy Ghost Seminary in 1827 because he wanted to become a missionary in America.4 In 1830, after finishing his studies, he and more than a score of other young priests were on the verge of associating themselves with the hard-pressed congregation when the political turmoil of France forced the Seminary to close its door and almost led to its total disappearance.5 Pressed to join the Eudists, it was as a member of this society that Bertin went to the Spiritan mission of Martinique and then came to the States in 1834 for a first brief sojourn.6 Later, he went to Trinidad, where he established St. George College (1838), the forerunner of the flourishing Spiritan institution known as St. Mary’s College.7 In 1847, he was again in the States in connection with the closing of the ill-starred Eudist College of Saint Gabriel at Vincennes, Indiana.8 After a prolonged stay, the priest returned to France, where he died in 1862.9

In passing it might be remarked that, according to Father Bertin, the very excellence of the studies at Holy Ghost Seminary paradoxically had prevented it from re-establishing itself securely after the Revolution. Desirous of re-opening their own seminaries, closed by persecution, many French bishops forced its best students to return to their dioceses, there to assume teaching positions in the local institutions.10

5 Koren, op. cit., pp. 54 f.
6 Bertin, op. cit., II.
7 Ibid., IV.
8 Ibid., VII.
9 Ibid., IX.
10 Ibid., I.
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Bertout, the future Superior General, saintly Father Lanoué\(^3\) and the three above-mentioned priests.\(^1\)

The most important of the three Spiritans who took refuge in the States undoubtedly was Father Morangeville. His prominence lies not so much in the rather doubtful and conspicuous role he was forced to play in the Revolution of Guiana as in the zeal and holiness that marked his long sojourn in Maryland. His eminence there was such that Ambrose Maréchal, Archbishop of Baltimore,\(^1\) after the priest's death, took the unusual step of requesting Father Simon Bruté, later Bishop of Vincennes, Indiana, to prepare the deceased's biography.\(^4\)

2. Early Labors in Guiana

After his ordination in 1784, Father John Morangeville\(^5\) received his appointment to the mission of Cayenne in South America.\(^6\) Soon after, he sailed for this distant land, once reputed to be an El Dorado. The disastrous

\(^3\) He died in 1791, reputedly a saint, after having evangelized the Macari Indians in Guiana. It was most probably his body that was accidentally exhumed in 1799 and whose uncorrupted condition so thoroughly frightened the diggers that they hastily closed the grave again.\(^7\)

\(^4\) Disappointed in his expectation of receiving from France the necessary documentation about the early life of the priest and his role in Guiana, Father Bruté was unable to finish the biography.\(^8\) In 1834, after his appointment to the Diocese of Vincennes, he gave his manuscripts to Dr. Bernard U. Campbell. This historian utilized them for a long series of articles on Father Morangeville, published in 1842. Unfortunately, after Campbell's death, his widow burned the large collection of documents and manuscripts left by her husband because no one seemed interested in acquiring these valuable papers. Presumably Bishop Bruté's manuscript was thereby destroyed.\(^9\)

\(^5\) He was born in 1760 at Cagny, near Amiens, and had entered Holy Ghost Seminary in 1778.\(^10\)

\(^6\) He died in 1791, reputedly a saint, after having evangelized the Macari Indians in Guiana. It was most probably his body that was accidentally exhumed in 1799 and whose uncorrupted condition so thoroughly frightened the diggers that they hastily closed the grave again.\(^12\)

\(^7\) Cf. Mémoires de Mgr J. Brumauld de Beauregard, vol. 2, Poitiers, 1842, p. 352.


\(^9\) Ibid.


\(^12\) Ibid., p. 352.

\(^13\) Ibid., pp. 434 f.
settlement attempts of 1763, previously outlined, must have left no illusions in the mind of the young apostle about the life of hardships, misery and dangers upon which he had just embarked.

Upon his arrival, Father Moranville was appointed to the main church of Cayenne, the colony’s capital, but his work often took him to distant plantations to look after the spiritual welfare of the Negro slaves. As a rule, these wretched people were more inclined to accept his religious ministrations than were their proud and wealthy owners who all too frequently spent their lives in debauchery. The priest also devoted considerable attention to the Indians living in the vast forests of the colony, among whom early Jesuit missionaries had made a good number of converts.

His confrere, Father Duhamel, became director of the local college in Cayenne. Father Matthew Hérald followed these two Spiritans in 1788 and was appointed pastor of the Iracoubo mission.

In later years, Father Moranville used to recount to his Baltimore friends some of the edifying or amusing experiences of his early missionary life. Their interest prompts a recounting of them here. On one occasion his zealous exhortations succeeded in turning away a young slave girl from the life of sin to which her master had forced her to submit. When thereafter she refused to submit to his wicked passion, he ordered her flogged until she would do his bidding. The only word, however, that escaped her lips before she sank, dying, to the ground, was a cry to God to pardon her past sins. Father Moranville arrived just in time to administer the last Sacraments to this heroic martyr to the cause of Christian purity.

On another occasion he had to assist a slave con-

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18 Cf. pp. 83 f.
19 Campbell, art. cit., p. 437.
22 Campbell, art. cit., pp. 438 f.
demned to death as an accomplice in the attempted murder of his master. To make the execution a horrifying example for other would-be murderers, the authorities had sentenced the poor wretch to be dismembered in the four quarters of the town before being beheaded. It did not take the priest very long to move the doomed man to repentance and to persuade him to offer his sufferings in expiation for his sins. On the day of the execution, Father Moranvillé mounted the movable scaffold with the condemned man in order to assist him during his supreme trial. When the executioner struck off the slave's right hand, the severed limb fell upon the priest's feet and spattered him with blood. Whereupon the distressed victim picked it up with his left hand and flung it into the dirt, and apologized to his consoler for having soiled his shoes.23

The priest's first encounter with one of the country's species of large apes gave rise to an amusing incident. He was traveling leisurely on horseback, reading a book, when suddenly his mount reared up in fright at the sight of a man-sized creature on the path in front of him. Glancing down upon the dusky form and seeing no clothes, Father Moranvillé began to shame the "man" for walking around nakedly. The ape's wild antics and inane chatter in response to his remarks soon convinced him of his mistake and he had a good laugh at himself.24

Almost Buried Alive. After years of uninterrupted labor and travel, the murderous climate of Guiana slowly undermined his health. He began to suffer from a wasting disease which sapped his strength and soon confined him to the sickbed. Despite the best efforts of the local physician, he sank lower and lower until at last all visible signs of heartbeat and breathing disappeared. The attending physician pronounced him dead and ordered preparations to be made for his burial. However, when mourners came to carry his remains to the grave, the priest's faithful old housekeeper noticed that his body had not stiffened and obstinately refused to release it for interment. In order to avoid a painful emotional scene

23 Ibid., p. 439.
24 Ibid., p. 440.
with the recalcitrant woman and to give her a chance to change her obstinate attitude, they agreed to wait another day.\textsuperscript{25}

Twenty-four hours later, the physician returned to Father Moranvillé's house. He noted that the body was still flexible but, attributing this condition to the local climate, he peremptorily ordered its immediate burial. Not daring to resist this official command again, the housekeeper left the room to prepare to go to the cemetery. Less than fifteen minutes later, she returned to the priest's room. One can easily imagine the woman's surprise and delight as well as the physician's discomfiture when suddenly Father Moranvillé moved and tried to raise himself into a sitting position.

Although saved from an untimely grave, he remained ill for a long time. Only gradually did he regain his strength and many months passed before he was able to resume his pastoral duties.\textsuperscript{26}

3. The French Revolution in Guiana

Father Moranvillé Becomes President of the Revolutionary Assembly

Meanwhile political events in France had forced its king to abandon his absolute powers. In his stead a National Assembly ruled the country. The colonies had to follow the example of the mother country and constitute their own assemblies.\textsuperscript{27} Guiana did so on August 8, 1790, and, in its meeting of August 26th, this Assembly ordered anyone elected to an office to accept his mandate under penalty of legal prosecution. It then elected Father Moranvillé as President. His choice clearly demonstrates that, at least in its beginning, the Revolution was not all anti-religious in the colony. As a matter of fact, the Assembly had wanted to inaugurate the new order with a solemn High Mass, followed by a procession of the Blessed Sacrament and a \textit{Te Deum}. So much religion,

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., pp. 441 f.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{27} Adolphe Cabon, "Le clergé de la Guyane sous la Révolution," R.H.C. 1950, p. 175.
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however, was not to the liking of the local army officers. Imbued with the ideas of Voltaire, they forced the Assembly to limit the religious inauguration ceremonies to a simple low Mass.²⁸

Despite his presidential powers, Father Moranvillé saw himself unable to check the excesses and abuses of power which a few revolutionary hotheads in the Assembly forced upon it. The blame for these excesses fell, of course, largely upon its unfortunate President, who was criticized especially for the seizure of the College of Cayenne, then directed by Father Duhamel.²⁹

In October of the following year, the Assembly imposed a civilian oath upon all government functionaries and the clergy. The Prefect Apostolic, followed by about half the local clergy, obeyed the instruction. The Spiritans all refused, except Fathers Moranvillé and Hérard.³⁰ The latter orally and in writing excluded from the oath anything considered objectionable from the religious point of view. When the government closed its eyes to this reservation, he found himself in the unusual position of being considered in good standing by both Church and State.³¹

Father Moranvillé does not seem to have made any such reservations. Some historians think that he may not have considered them necessary.³² In the absence of the exact formula used in Cayenne, it is not easy to determine the issue. The formula imposed upon the clergy in France amounted to a schism from the Church and therefore had to be rejected in conscience by any Catholic priest. However, the objectionable part of this formula certainly was not applicable to the colonies and a Commissioner sent from France in 1792 declared that in Guiana there was not even any legal ground for imposing the French oath. At any rate, when the government

²⁸ Ibid., p. 176.
²⁹ Ibid.
³⁰ Ibid., p. 178.
³¹ See reference of footnote 20, p. 5.
³² Campbell, art. cit., p. 442; Moreau, op. cit., p. 201.
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became obviously anti-religious, Father Moranvillé rejected his oath and suffered the consequences.\textsuperscript{33}

Deportation of Father Hérard, Father Duhamel and Other Spiritans

In February 1793, the Colonial Assembly imposed a sentence of expulsion upon all priests who had refused to take the prescribed oath. They were to be deported to the United States. Considering that elsewhere in French lands heads were rolling in large numbers, this sentence of exile was surprisingly mild. Among those exiled were Father Duhamel, Father Hérard, Father Legrand, and Father Hochard.\textsuperscript{34}

Early in May they embarked on a ship sailing for New York. To their great surprise and apprehension, the vessel made for Guadeloupe, the French West Indian island on which a veritable reign of terror had already started. When the ship docked, they expected the worst, for their passports had been stamped "prêtre exer-\textsuperscript{35}

menté," to indicate that they had refused to comply with the oath demanded by the government. Orders for their arrest had already been given when, fortunately, the captain was able to prevent their being carried off to the local jails where large numbers of victims were awaiting execution. However, he could not persuade the police to remove the menacing gendarmes, placed aboard ship to keep a twenty-four hour guard over the dangerous characters whom he had dared to introduce into their harbor.\textsuperscript{35}

After delaying the voyage for six weeks in this fashion, the authorities allowed the ship to proceed without removing the hunted priests. They were scarcely beyond sight of the island when a new danger struck: the pirate flag of a British freebooter suddenly appeared on the horizon. Capturing the French vessel, the pirates put a crew aboard and sailed their prize to Saint Kitts.\textsuperscript{36}

The priests' hopes of being well received here as vic-

\textsuperscript{33} Cabon, \textit{art. cit.}, pp. 178, 180.
\textsuperscript{34} See reference of footnote 20, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 6 f.
\textsuperscript{36} \textit{Ibid.}; see also footnote 21.
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Tims of the French Revolution were high, but met with sharp disappointment. The island was full of refugees who, without going to the trouble of investigating, suspected them of being disguised revolutionaries bent on causing trouble among the exiles. Thus the priests saw themselves again condemned to stay on board ship as prisoners, under a blazing sky, deprived of any comfort.37

After ten days' confinement, when their water supply was finished, the exhausted prisoners managed to contact an American of French descent. At his suggestion, they sent their stamped passports to the Governor as proof of their bona fide refugee status. Realizing that the priests had been erroneously imprisoned, the governor ordered them released at once and saw to it that they received the best of treatment. At this juncture Father Peter O'Brien, Prefect Apostolic of the British West Indies, visited Saint Kitts and, upon his invitation, Father Hérard in July, 1793, made his way to Saint Croix in the Virgin Islands.38 His confrere Duhamel followed him later.

Moranville's Escape from Cayenne

In Guiana meanwhile a nephew of the infamous arch-revolutionary, George Danton, had arrived on the scene to keep the "true" spirit of the Revolution burning in Cayenne's Jacobin Club.39 The increasingly anti-religious condition of the colony clearly showed the thrust of this spirit. Father Moranville realized that his conscience left him no choice. He went straight to the Governor and told him that he could no longer reconcile the oath with his priestly duties. Neither threats nor persuasion could induce him to change his mind. Withdrawing from the capital to the village of Macoura, he prepared to leave the country secretly.40

Before departing, however, he wanted to repair any

37 Ibid., p. 7.
38 Ibid., pp. 9 f.; M. Hérard à Mgr Carroll, 11 janvier 1805: B.C. Arch., 4F2, p. 3.
39 Cabon, art. cit., p. 185.
40 Campbell, art. cit., p. 443.
scandal that his taking of the oath might have given. Writing an open letter to the Governor, he indicated the reasons for his actions. After making a number of copies of this declaration, he addressed them to the Governor and many other persons in the country, entrusting them to a friend for delivery a few days after his departure. Then, in the middle of the night, he boarded a schooner and sailed for Surinam.41

Unfortunately, the priest’s friend was terrified of being caught with these incriminating papers. In his panic, he deposited them at once at the door of the government offices. Consequently the infuriated governor received them only a few hours later. He at once ordered the priest’s apprehension and imprisonment. Hearing that the intended victim had already sailed for Surinam, he immediately dispatched a fast vessel in pursuit to intercept the Dutch schooner. He was too late, however. The Frenchman did not catch up with the schooner before it had reached the safety of a Surinam port and, although the pursuing captain demanded that the priest be handed over to him as a fugitive from justice, the Dutch governor adamantly refused and accorded Father Moranvillé his full protection.42

Next, the governor’s generosity enabled the harrassed priest to travel to British Guiana, there safely to embark upon an American vessel which no ship of the French Navy would dare to stop and search. In this manner the third Spiritan refugee managed to escape from revolutionary justice. He landed in 1794 (or early 1795) in Norfolk, Virginia, and from there sailed on a coastal vessel to Baltimore.43

4. „The Good Moranvillé” in Baltimore

First Years, 1795—1805

Until he had mastered English sufficiently to make himself useful in regular parish work, Father Moranvillé taught French and geography at the fashionable

41 Ibid.; Moreau, op. cit., pp. 201 f.
42 Campbell, art. cit., p. 443.
43 Ibid., p. 479.
FATHER JOHN MORANVILLE
Portrait preserved in St. Patrick's Rectory, Baltimore
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academy for young ladies which Madame Lacombe had opened in Baltimore shortly after his arrival. In addition, he preached regularly in French for the numerous refugees from various revolutions now settled in the city. An excellent musician—people would come to his services just to hear him sing High Mass and Vespers—he devoted his spare time to enhancing the beauty and dignity of the performance of the sacred ceremonies to such an extent that he and his successor as choirmaster of the city's church, Father John David, later Bishop of Bardstown, have been called the "creators of religious chant" in Catholic United States.

In 1801, when peace was restored between Church and State in France, the priest traveled to Paris to visit his homeland after an absence of almost eighteen years. On this occasion, as well as in 1808, the question arose whether he should not return to Guiana. Understandably he was rather reluctant. As Father Legrand relates, "He cannot decide to come and exercise his ministry in a country which has witnessed his mistakes. Moreover, he is convinced — and I share this conviction — that he can do more good" in Baltimore. Being more inclined to active ministry than to teaching, he likewise declined the invitation of the Spiritan Superior General to become a staff member of Holy Ghost Seminary in Paris. Thus, after a visit to his family in Amiens, he returned again to Baltimore.

The Pastor of St. Patrick's Church

Building the New St. Patrick's. In 1804 or 1805, Bishop Carroll appointed Father Moranvillé pastor of Saint Patrick's in the Fell's Point section of Baltimore, where a tiny thirty-three by forty feet "church" served the local congregation. His phenomenal zeal and re-

44 Ibid., pp. 479 ff.
46 Ibid., p. 204.
47 Campbell, art. cit., p. 481.
48 Cabon, art. cit., p. 201.
49 Campbell, art. cit., p. 622.
50 Ibid., pp. 524 f.
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markable success in finding fallen-away Catholics, aided by immigration, increased the parish to such an extent that the little chapel soon proved too small. Undaunted by the poverty of his flock and the fact that the construction of the Baltimore Cathedral, just begun, absorbed all available funds, he courageously undertook the building of a spacious new church. To get the necessary funds, he called, in person, upon every Catholic capable of making a contribution, ingeniously adapting his appeal to prospective donors' sensibilities by appealing, with Frenchmen, to their recollection of the magnificent cathedrals in "la belle France" and, with the sons of Eire, to the privilege of being able freely to practice their undying Irish devotion to Saint Patrick and the Church. His years of teaching at the fashionable academy of Madame Lacombe now proved very profitable, for they had introduced him personally to all the city's prominent families.52

In November 1807, Bishop Carroll solemnly dedicated the edifice in "the most spendid and imposing religious spectacle that hitherto had been witnessed in the United States."53 Contemporaries claimed that no church between New Orleans and Philadelphia could rival the beauty of the new Saint Patrick's.54

Promoting the Liturgy. The exquisite way in which the splendid liturgy of the Church was regularly performed by Father Moranville, as well as the renowned preachers who mounted his pulpit, caused people to flock from all over the city to St. Patrick's. It should be realized here, of course, that Catholics had just begun to timidly emerge from the catacombal status to which penal laws had hitherto condemned them. They were as yet unaccustomed to see the full splendor of liturgical worship surrounding the divine sacrifice.55

Father Moranville's zeal was not limited to the church. In 1811, he boldly led through the streets of Baltimore a solemn procession of the Blessed Sacrament, the devotional pageantry of which could have rivalled the best

52 Campbell, _art. cit._, p. 526.
53 _Ibid._, p. 527.
54 _Ibid._, pp. 525 f.
55 _Ibid._, pp. 556 f.
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traditions of its European counterparts. One might have feared deplorable incidents to occur in this connection, but not a sign of disrespect escaped the gaping crowds of various creeds that lined the streets.\textsuperscript{56}

**Founder of the First Parochial School in Baltimore.** If Father Moranvillé devoted much attention to the dignity of divine worship, it was not at the expense of his other duties as pastor. Disturbed by the total lack of free schools, both public and parochial, in Baltimore, he organized in 1815 St. Patrick's Benevolent Society to operate a free school open to all, regardless of creed.\textsuperscript{57} Though the claim cannot be maintained that it was "the first parochial school in the United States,"\textsuperscript{58} it was at least the first public or parochial school in Baltimore itself.\textsuperscript{7} Hitherto there had been only private schools for the children of the more prosperous families.

**Care of the Poor.** The poor of the parish — and they were many — came in for a generous share of his loving attention. Although he had spontaneously cut his slender salary from eight hundred to six hundred dollars a year, he managed to spend most of it in quietly relieving the sufferings of destitute families. When his own funds ran out, he humbly went begging for them among his affluent friends. No beggar ever left his house without receiving some gift. Many of his benefactions went to the children of immigrants who often arrived penniless. On the needy who were too proud to beg, he delicately bestowed his gifts in the sacristy when they came there to him for confession.\textsuperscript{60}

To the despair of his housekeeper, his own inadequate wardrobe was constantly depleted. On a cold winter morning the good lady mentioned its pitiful state to a gentleman, who forthwith sent a supply of warm clothing. When the pastor came for dinner, she happily presented

\textsuperscript{7} Philadelphia had a parochial school as early as 1781 and three in 1811. New York opened its first in 1800.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., pp. 558 f.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., p. 622.

\textsuperscript{58} See reference of footnote 51, p. 62.

\textsuperscript{59} Guilday, *op. cit.*, pp. 792 ff.

\textsuperscript{60} Campbell, *art. cit.*, pp. 625 ff.
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him with the gift. Without a word, he picked up the clothes and left the dining table. Thinking that he had gone to put on the new suit, she waited patiently for him to return. Imagine her surprise when he finally returned in his old threadbare garments. When questioned, he replied that he had gone to deliver the whole bundle to a poor sick family. When she remonstrated that he should have kept at least the new suit and given away the old one, he replied that "the poor sick had nobody to mend their tattered garments and therefore stood more in need of new clothing than he who had so good a seamstress for his housekeeper." 61

Promoter of Religious Orders. Father Moranvillé displayed a broad interest in the promotion of religious orders and congregations in the States. He was one of the earliest and most zealous friends of the sisters' community founded by Blessed Elizabeth Seton and sent postulants to their various communities as far away as Kentucky. He did the same for the Sisters of Loretto, founded in 1812 by Father Charles Nerinckx. 62

The austere Trappist order received a large share of his loving affection. Expelled by the French Revolution from La Trappe, the monks had wandered for twenty years throughout Europe and, since 1802, through the States. Tired of their restless travels and their ceaseless misfortunes, the weary survivors made their way to Baltimore around 1812. Just then another group of Trappists arrived there from Bordeaux to start foundations of the male and female branches of this venerable order in the States. 63 Father Moranvillé accorded the travelers a hearty welcome in his parish and provided accommodations for them. When the political situation in France deteriorated again and made their planned return to La Trappe impossible, he invited them to stay in Baltimore. Soon after, he was able to present them with several postulants from his parish who had expressed the wish to join their communities. When, in 1814, the Trappists

61 Ibid., pp. 626 f.
62 Ibid., p. 623.

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again decided to move, this time to New York, Father Moranvillé accompanied them to help plan the new foundation.64

The sudden fall of Napoleon, coupled with the difficulties they had to face in New York, made the monks anxious again to return to France. To the chagrin of the good priest, they sailed from New York in 1815. Two of their novices from Baltimore accompanied them to La Trappe, while the others, ignorant of French and too old to learn the language, returned with Father Moranvillé to Baltimore. Upon his request, the women novices found a warm welcome in the community of Blessed Elizabeth Seton and became members of this congregation.65

The priest’s disappointment with the sudden departure of the Trappists was all the more keen, because he himself had often expressed the wish of retiring among these contemplatives “to weep over his sins in solitude and to prepare for death.”66 For many years after their departure, he entertained a lively correspondence with the monks, but his desire to enter a Trappist monastery was never destined to be fulfilled. With the scarcity of priests in Baltimore, he could hardly have been replaced and thus was unable to leave his parish.

His Personal Religious Life. The daily life of the pastor demonstrated how severe he was with himself. Although a friend’s gift enabled him to build a fairly large rectory alongside the church, in which travelling priests and many other wayfarers were always welcome,67 his own quarters were of Spartan simplicity. A few straight-backed chairs and a couple of small tables loaded with books and papers constituted its furniture. A wretched bed accommodated his brief nightly rest. At four o’clock he would rise for three hours of meditation and reading before going to the church to say Mass for the parishioners. Although his years in the tropics had made him very sensitive to cold, he never allowed a fire to be lit in his room. However, he saw to it that his

64 Campbell, art. cit., p. 624.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid., pp. 624 f.
67 Ibid., p. 556.
housekeeper and guests did not have to share this penance. Much of the time that was not occupied with his parochial duties he spent praying in the church or on his knees in his room.  

Care of the Sick. No sick call ever suffered a moment’s delay. He would abandon at once whatever he was doing and, whether by day or night, in good weather or bad, he would set out immediately, even if the call meant a long tiring march into the country. This zeal for the sick manifested itself in heroic fashion during the yellow fever epidemics which struck Baltimore in 1819 and 1821 and raged particularly in the Fell’s Point area. While many people fled in panic to the country, so that “the poor and the sick were almost the only inhabitants” left, Father Moranville was the sole clergyman who stayed at his post in Fell’s Point. Unsatisfied with attending to the spiritual needs of the sick and the dying, he had nourishing meals prepared for the stricken families and provided needed medicines. Experience quickly taught him also what remedies to prescribe when overburdened physicians were no longer able to cope with the magnitude of the plague.

Twice he himself caught the disease through his close contact with the sufferers while hearing their confessions and administering the sacraments. Although the attacks did not kill him, they left him weak and susceptible to further illness.

Father Moranville Resigns from St. Patrick’s. In 1823, it became evident that he needed a long rest and he gratefully accepted an invitation of a Mrs. Harper, the daughter of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, to stay at Doughoregan Manor and to accompany her to Berkeley Springs. When this rest proved ineffective, his physician and friends advised him to take a trip to France in the

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68 Ibid., p. 627.
69 Ibid., pp. 627 f.
71 Campbell, art. cit., p. 631.
hope that the air of his native country would accomplish what rest in Maryland had proved unable to do.  

Father Moranvillé must have felt that he would never return, for, prior to departing, he gave his library and furniture to his successor and all his money — one hundred and fifty dollars — to a friend, requesting him to pay it to his poor servant in monthly installments.  

Friends raised a sum of money for his own use but, knowing his love of the poor, they decided to hand it to him only at the moment of his departure. He may have found a way, however, to elude their vigilance, for a note written to a neighbor on the day of his leaving asked to exchange the enclosed bills into dollars, half dollars and quarters, because he "had no change and could give nothing to his desolate friends."  

Shipwrecked. On October 1, 1823, he sailed on the Paris from New York in the company of Bishop John Cheverus of Boston. The voyage was uneventful until they reached The Channel. There a sudden storm ensued and wrecked havoc in this crowded shipping lane. All around them ships sank with their crews and cargoes. The captain of the Paris had to inform his passengers that the situation was hopeless; at any moment the ship might strike one of the numerous rocks abounding in the area into which their vessel had been driven. In a desperate effort to save the ship, the captain decided to drive it aground. Soon the horrible groaning and creaking of the tortured vessel indicated that they had struck rocks. Torrents of water poured into the stricken ship and sloshed around in the cabins. Escape seemed impossible. However, the captain had managed to set his ship on the rocks in a place which, during low tide, would be almost dry. When the sea began to recede, the passengers were able to set out for dry land by walking though mud and water for about twenty-five hundred yards. It was later
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reported that theirs was the only vessel in the area that had been saved in the storm.\(^76\)

**Last Illness and Death**

After traveling to Amiens to see his family, he was forced to retire to the sickbed. The fond expectations that the native air of France would restore his health proved utterly vain. Soon he was too weak to even attempt the contemplated trip to Paris, there to die among his confreres.\(^77\) Yet he lingered on for several months until the last feeble spark of life left his tortured body on May 16,\(^*\) 1824.\(^78\)

His passing away impressed those who had witnessed his last illness as the death of a saint. Many persons came to have their rosaries and other objects of piety touched to his remains, as is the custom when a holy person passes to his eternal reward.\(^79\)

Father Moranvillé had wished to die and be buried among his beloved parishioners of Fell’s Point. The great distance and the opposition of his relatives, however, made it impossible to return his body to Baltimore. The parish endeavored to obtain at least his heart as a relic, but even this wish could not be fulfilled. They retained, however, their loving memories of the man who had been their saintly pastor for twenty years and whom all knew as “the good Moranvillé.”\(^80\)

5. **Father Hérard in the Virgin Islands**

**Sad Condition of the Church**

It has already been noted that in 1793, after being released from his forced confinement on board of a ship at St. Kitts, Father Hérard made his way to Saint Croix...
in the Virgin Islands. The year 1801 is the date given by Father Hérard. Some historians report that Duhamel went to the States and became pastor of Hagerstown, Maryland, as early as 1795. But Hérard declares that "Duhamel came to join me [in Saint Croix] toward the end of 1795," and that he left for the States "May 11th, 1801." When in 1804 the attention of the Holy See was drawn to the fact that wars, revolutions, and changes of ownership had thoroughly confused the situation of the Church in the Danish Virgin Islands and elsewhere in the same general area, the Propaganda gave Bishop John Carroll of Baltimore the power to appoint one or two Prefects.

His confrere, however, stayed on the Virgin Islands and made a determined effort to remedy the sad condition of the Church. From the juridical point of view, Father Hérard appears to have functioned mainly on the strength of faculties communicated to him by the Prefect Apostolic of Cayenne to exercise his ministry in the countries where he would go and in which there would be no ecclesiastical superior." When in 1804 the attention of the Holy See was drawn to the fact that wars, revolutions, and changes of ownership had thoroughly confused the situation of the Church in the Danish Virgin Islands and elsewhere in the same general area, the Propaganda gave Bishop John Carroll of Baltimore the power to appoint one or two Prefects.

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Apostolic and thus to re-establish competent church authority.\textsuperscript{90} In accord with this mandate the prelate, in the same year, appointed Father Kendall as Prefect and Father Hérard as Vice-Prefect of the Virgin Islands.\textsuperscript{91} The latter had just traveled to New York and Baltimore, in an effort to restore his health undermined by fifteen years of labor in tropical climates.\textsuperscript{92} The return trip had not been without adventure, for the priest relates that all his luggage was lost at sea.\textsuperscript{93}

As could be expected, in the absence of clear-cut jurisdictional control, many West Indian islands in general and the Danish Virgin Islands in particular had become a haven for all kinds of questionable ecclesiastical characters and adventurous impostors.\textsuperscript{94} This sad condition was destined to last for many years. Writing to Bishop Carroll about St. Thomas Island, Father Hérard had to point out that "the majority of priests who have staffed this mission were fugitive monks or expelled from their order."\textsuperscript{95} On one occasion he had to dismiss a suspect Spanish priest who had suddenly arrived without the required documents and swore that he would avenge himself in a most spectacular fashion for the "insulting" way in which he was treated by Hérard. His dire threats, however, so aroused the people against him that he had to depart in secret before he could carry out his nefarious plans.\textsuperscript{96} On another occasion, Father Hérard unmasked an Italian sailor who, apparently tired of a seafaring life, posed as a deacon and wanted to take up a collection in an orphaned parish to finance his impending ordination for the service of this place.\textsuperscript{97}

To make the desperate situation even worse, in November 1804, a tremendous fire destroyed the town

\textsuperscript{90} Propaganda to Carroll, 18 martii 1804: *B.C. Arch., 10K5.
\textsuperscript{91} Reference of footnote 86, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{92} Reference of footnote 82, pp. 15 f.
\textsuperscript{93} Reference of footnote 86, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{94} Hérard à Mgr Carroll, 11 janvier 1805, 24 déc. 1895, 17 févr. 1806, etc.: * B.C. Arch., 4F2, 4F4, 4F5, etc.
\textsuperscript{95} Reference of footnote 86, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{96} Hérard à Mgr Carroll, 24 déc. 1805, p. 6: *B.C. Arch., 4F4.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid., p. 1; Hérard à Mgr Carroll, 17 févr. 1806, p. 3: *B.C. Arch., 4F5.
of St. Thomas. Its pastor, Father Trochard, O.P., died of shock a few weeks after the disastrous conflagration had utterly destroyed his church and rectory. His death reduced to two, Fathers Kendall and Hérard, the number of priests in good standing who were supposed to take care of the Virgin Islands.98 Sadly Father Hérard had to report that Antigua, Barbados, Saint Kitts, Montserrat, and Saint Eustachius were without any priests.99

To remedy the perilous situation, he asked Bishop Carroll to assign at least "his friend and confreere" Father Moranville to the Virgin Islands.100 Although Kendall added a fervent plea, "for God's sake let Moranville be as expeditious as possible,"101 the hard-pressed bishop reluctantly had to turn a deaf ear to the desperate cries reaching him from these islands. Hérard also turned to the Mother House of the Spiritans, asking the Congregation to assume charge of the territory.102 However, they were unable to help him, for they had only the previous year regained legal existence.103 Still weak, desperately struggling for survival, and charged with the crushing burden of providing personnel for all French colonies, the Spiritans, in 1808, asked him to return to the missions for which his congregation was responsible. When, however, Father Hérard explained his position, they agreed that as "Ecclesiastical Superior of two colonies which needed his presence very badly, he could not in good conscience abandon them without being replaced, and this would be very difficult in these troubled times."104

Schism of Father Desblanchamps

The occurrence of schisms in the West Indies as well as the United States in the first part of the nineteenth century should not cause too much surprise. The French

98 Hérard à Mgr Carroll, 4 mars 1805, p. 1: *B.C. Arch., 4F3.
99 Reference of footnote 86, p. 6.
100 Reference of footnote 98, pp. 3 f.
102 Reference of footnote 82, pp. 4. 8.
103 Notes et Documents relatifs à l'histoire de la congrégation du Saint-Esprit, Paris, 1917, pp. 25 f.
Knaves or Knights?

Revolution had thoroughly disorganized the Church. In many areas, it was next to impossible to determine who were the competent ecclesiastical authorities. Moreover, religious persecution had driven large numbers of monks, who often were wholly unprepared for pastoral work, wandering through the world without any kind of supervision. Finally, after the Revolution, the depleted ranks of the clergy had induced many bishops to relax intellectual requirements and to become too lenient in admitting candidates to the priesthood, so that there were more than the usual number of misfits. Many of these fled to the States and the West Indies when bad conduct made it impossible for them to remain in good standing at home. As could be expected, it did not take very long before these characters again found themselves in difficulties with their bishops or superiors in this part of the world.

Two of these schisms caused by such priests constituted the heaviest cross Father Hérard had to bear in the Virgin Islands: the schism of Father Desblanchamps in 1809 and even more so that of Father Flynn in 1814. Father Desblanchamps had been assigned the parish of Saint Thomas some time before, during a brief absence of Father Hérard. An old man who had lost whatever energy he may have possessed in his younger years, he did as little work as possible. Understandably, he became fearful when Father Hérard returned to the island to check on the condition of the local congregation. Apprehensive about losing his pastorate, the old man appealed for support to the Danish governor, who quickly declared his parish independent of its legitimate ecclesiastical authorities, thus making it impossible for Father Hérard to take any legal steps against him. Desblanchamps then tried unsuccessfully to secure the necessary faculties for the exercise of his ministry from the bishop of Puerto Rico.

Unable to dispossess the recalcitrant pastor, Father Hérard was at his wit’s end. The thought of leaving the islands, where he felt that most of his work had been

105 Hérard à Mgr Carroll, 12 juillet 1809, p. 3: *B.C. Arch., 4F8.
106 Ibid., p. 4.
fruitless in the midst of all such troubles, presented itself constantly to his mind. At that point there arrived a fine young priest from Cork, Ireland, Father David Desmond, whose talents and zeal immediately showed great promise. Soon after, Father Hérard announced to Bishop Carroll his intention to go to Guadeloupe "temporarily," and "leaving behind all his possessions" in order to replace a pastor who was on leave of absence. As it happened, with the consent of Bishop Carroll, his sojourn in Guadaloupe and other French islands lasted from March 1810 to July 1815 because the local Prefect Apostolic "practically forced" him to stay. He would probably have remained there indefinitely if death had not deprived the Virgin Islands first of Father Desmond in 1811 and then of Father Kendall in May 1814. The latter's demise occurred at a most unfortunate moment, for at that time a second schism threatened the islands.

Meanwhile the schism caused by Father Desblanchamps had continued unabated in Saint Thomas Island. As late as 1818, Father Hérard had to report to Archbishop Ambrose Maréchal of Baltimore that there was on the island a "priest who called himself in capital letters 'the Roman Catholic pastor'" and publicly proclaimed that "he does not recognize any other authority than that of the secular commander of the island." Fortunately by then a zealous Spanish priest had been assigned to the island, so that at least the people were able to address themselves to a priest in good standing with the Church and thus could avoid following a schism because of their desire to receive the sacraments.

The Schism of the Fugitive Trappist, Father Flynn

The fascinating history of the ancient and venerable

107 Ibid., p. 2.
109 Exposé de la situation, 10 nov. 1815, p. 1: ibid., 8A-R3 app.
110 Hérard à Mgr Maréchal, 8 juillet 1818, p. 4: ibid., 17I-2.
112 Reference of footnote 110, p. 4.
Knaves or Knights?

Cistercian order during the quarter-century that elapsed between its expulsion from the famous Abbey of La Trappe at the beginning of the French Revolution until its return after the fall of Napoleon in 1815, is full of ceaseless wanderings, countless tragedies, indomitable perseverance, strict adherence to a severe religious rule, and a few human frailties. Such frailties and lapses, both tragic and uncommon, must be considered as a part of history and should be calmly viewed as such.

In 1809 Dom Augustin de Lestrange, the “Savior of La Trappe,” who had returned to France from exile, incurred the wrath of Napoleon, because he supported Pope Pius VII, then imprisoned by the excommunicated Emperor. The haughty tyrant at once ordered the abbot’s arrest. Escaping from his confinement, Dom Lestrange fled to Germany and from there, via Russia, to England. Soon after, with about a dozen monks, he made his way from England to Martinique in the West Indies, where the party landed in May or June of 1813. Shortly after their arrival, the monks appeared to have revolted against their Abbot in a spectacular fashion. The immediate result was that the civil authorities indiscriminately arrested and imprisoned all of them. Upon their release, the Trappists received orders to leave the country and to return to England. Being without sufficient funds to travel together, each of them had to find for himself the ways and means of returning. Meanwhile the ring-leader of the defecting monks suddenly fell ill. At death’s door, he repented and publicly asked forgiveness for the scandal which he had caused. The order to leave the island, however, continued in force.

Father Flynn, one of the monks, made his way to Saint

129 According to Flynn, their imprisonment was due solely to the Abbot’s neglect of “proper steps to land” the monks and their banishment “to the deceit of one” of the Trappists.


114 Reference of footnote 109, p. 1; Hérard à Mgr Carroll, 28 juillet 1815, p. 3: *B.C. Arch.*, 4F7.


Croix later in the same year, but could not continue his voyage since his funds were exhausted. Father Kendall kindly invited him to stay with him but did not allow him to exercise any functions aside from celebrating Mass, probably because he noted that the youthful monk was grossly ignorant of the most elementary principles relating to the pastoral care of souls. Thus it came to pass that, when Father Kendall died soon afterwards, the Trappist became the only priest on the island, but a priest who had received no power to exercise any pastoral functions. Nevertheless, pressed by the local Catholics, he assumed the ecclesiastical care of the island.

Presumably he would have continued to function peacefully for a long time in this remote outpost of Archbishop Carroll's spiritual domain if there had not arrived in March of 1815 a priest from France, Father Peter Glory (or Glories). A convert, who after becoming a widower had been duly ordained, Father Glory had met Count Charles McCarthy, a Catholic planter of the Virgin Islands, who was traveling in France. Learning of Father Kendall's death, the pious Count managed to secure the services of this priest for his island home. A difficulty arose when Father Glory raised the question of jurisdiction. In Paris no one knew who could possibly be the ecclesiastical superior of the Virgin Islands. Finally, however, the Papal Nuncio solved the issue by according Father Glory temporary faculties until he could get into touch with his future superior.

On the voyage to the Virgin Islands, the priest and his party stopped over at Guadeloupe, where Church and State were then in conflict with another member of the disbanded group of Trappists. This monk, Père

117 Reference of footnote 109, p. 2.
118 Hérand à Mgr Neale, 6 juin 1816, pp. 1 f.: *B.C. Arch., 12A-F2.
121 Reference of footnote 109, p. 3.
122 *Ibid., p. 4.
Knaves or Knights?

Benoît, had quietly occupied a vacant parish on a little island and refused to budge, despite the orders and the threat of excommunication of the Prefect Apostolic. When, shortly thereafter, Father Glory arrived in Saint Croix and found another Trappist, Father Flynn, without any jurisdictional papers, he forthwith rather rashly announced that this man also had been excommunicated.\(^{13}\) Father Flynn, however, had a considerable number of followers among the local Irish immigrants. Thus the announcement in question split the congregation into "Flynnites," "Gloryites," and neutrals.

To add force to his words, Father Glory soon forbade any "spiritual communication" with the monk under penalty of being refused the sacraments.\(^{124}\) This step, instead of restoring unity, made the opposing factions even more antagonistic. Meanwhile the local churchwardens petitioned the Archbishop to confirm Flynn in office.\(^{125}\) Weary of the battle, Father Glory then suddenly decided to leave the islands and to withdraw to Guadeloupe, leaving Father Flynn behind as the apparent conqueror, but with a congregation that had become thoroughly divided and suspicious about the validity of his powers.

At this juncture Father Hérard again made his appearance in the Virgin Islands, for Count McCarthy had written to him at Marie Galante (near Guadeloupe), begging him to return and to restore peace.\(^{126}\) The letter had arrived just when the French islands were in great political turmoil because of Napoleon’s escape from Elba and his triumphant return to Paris. Persecuted by the new local officials, Father Hérard was glad to leave in June 1815. Two weeks later he landed in the Virgin

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\(^{13}\) Actually he had been interdicted and declared an apostate of the Trappist Order in 1813.\(^{123}\)

\(^{123}\) L’Abbé Lestrange à Mgr Carroll, 10 oct. 1813: *B.C. Arch.*, 8A-S3.

\(^{124}\) Reference of footnote 109, p. 5.

\(^{125}\) Vestry Wardens to Archbishop Carroll, 27 March, 1815: *B.C. Arch.*, 10K8.

\(^{126}\) Reference of footnote 109, app., pp. 5 f.
Islands, of which he was still officially Vice-Prefect Apostolic.\textsuperscript{127}

Soon after his arrival, Father Hérard held several fruitless conferences with the fugitive Trappist. The monk claimed that "his conscience was perfectly at ease" and refused to listen to Father Hérard's entreaties.\textsuperscript{128} Having the full support of the Danish governor and of a large number of young Irish bachelors who had recently migrated to the island, he felt himself in a strong position and stubbornly declined Hérard's pressing insistence that he leave the place. Strange as it may seem (and revealing how gross his ignorance was), these fellow Irishmen had apparently convinced the monk that all he needed to validly exercise his functions was an appointment by the local churchwardens.\textsuperscript{129}

Meanwhile Father Hérard's frantic letters to Archbishop Carroll for further instructions remained unanswered for, unknown to him, the valiant patriarch of the Catholic Church in the United States was at death's door. Finally, after six months of waiting, the impatiently expected instructions arrived. They contained the news that Father Flynn had been interdicted as early as 1813 and was really an apostate monk, and ordered the churchwardens to dismiss him.\textsuperscript{130} When Hérard privately communicated the news to Father Flynn and begged him to submit to the orders of the Archbishop, the monk replied: "You are the greatest enemy I have and I will stay here as long as I please under the protection of the government."\textsuperscript{133} While rejecting the legitimate local authority of Father Hérard, Flynn secretly sent a solemn letter of submission to Baltimore, promising obedience "so long as... my Superiors may deem it necessary to allow me" to stay here.\textsuperscript{134} (Apparently he did not know that the

\textsuperscript{127} Hérard à Mgr Carroll, 28 juillet 1815, p. 5: *B.C. Arch., 4F7.
\textsuperscript{128} Reference of footnote 109, app., p. 6.
\textsuperscript{129} Hérard à Mgr. Neale, 6 juin 1816, pp. 1 f.: *B.C. Arch., 12A-F2.
\textsuperscript{130} Hérard à Tessier, 4 février 1816, p. 1: *ibid., 12A-S1; references of footnotes 123 and 129.
\textsuperscript{131} Flynn to Carroll, 1 Dec., 1815, p. 1: *ibid., 8A-L1.
\textsuperscript{132} *ibid., p. 3.
\textsuperscript{133} Hérard à Tessier, 4 février 1816, p. 1: *B.C. Arch., 12A-S1.
\textsuperscript{134} Flynn to Carroll, 8 Jan., 1816: *ibid., 22A-O1.
Archbishop was fully aware of his irregular status.) At the same time he obstinately refused to show Father Hérard his alleged powers and blandly wrote the Archbishop that if His Excellency judged his powers to be insufficient he would forthwith "send to Europe" for broader faculties.14*

On January 28, after Sunday Mass, Father Hérard read the Archbishop's instructions to the churchwardens, who were reinforced for the occasion by about thirty Irish "bachelors."136 Although they disliked and protested against the orders, they finally decided that Father Flynn should leave, but set no time for his departure and significantly added that meanwhile "he may continue to occupy the rectory... in recognition of his good conduct."137 Apparently satisfied with the result, the monk went to enjoy himself at the evening dance given by the Governor, after telling Father Hérard that he would continue to say Mass in his own room and stay on the island as long as necessary "to prove his innocence."138

14* There is a curious passage in Flynn's letter of December 1, 1815, to Archbishop Carroll. He thanks the prelate profusely for a postscript to a letter addressed to Father Hérard in which the Archbishop expressed his intention "of continuing my powers until the first of May 1816, as also for Your Lordship's confirmation of what I have done since the death of the Reverend Mr. Kindall."131 In the light of the Archbishop's order to the Vestry Wardens to dismiss Flynn and his knowledge that this priest's interdict had not yet been lifted, it is extremely unlikely that he would actually have given faculties to the fugitive monk. As the Baltimore Archives do not contain a copy of the prelate's letter and Father Hérard's correspondence with the archbishop says nothing about this matter, it is difficult to state anything with certainty about the point. The most reasonable surmise would seem to be that, in his last illness, Carroll had forgotten about the monk's interdict and expressed a willingness to grant him temporary faculties on condition that he show his alleged papers to the Vice-Prefect and leave the island by May 1, 1816. Father Flynn, however, refused to comply with this episcopal order and pointed out that his confreire, "Père (sic) Benoît" had "no more powers than I have and is in the mean time happy under the Prefect of Guadeloupe."132 How "happy" Père Benoît was has been pointed out in the preceding pages; he was in serious trouble with the Church for exactly the same reason as Father Flynn.

135 See footnote 131.
136 Reference of footnote 133, p. 2.
137 Ibid.
138 Ibid., p. 1.

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The United States

To strengthen Hérard's authority, Leonard Neale, the new Archbishop of Baltimore, in 1816 appointed him his Vicar General in charge of the Virgin Islands.\(^\text{139}\) While accepting the appointment "for the time being," the priest stressed that "given the present conditions, he was not the right man to restore order" and that it was absolutely necessary to send a priest from Ireland or England who alone would be able to deal with the recalcitrant Irish "bachelors."\(^\text{140}\) He particularly warned the Archbishop that recalling Father Glory, as he had been instructed to do, could only serve to make the situation worse.\(^\text{141}\)

How profoundly the schism had afflicted the local congregation can be seen in Father Hérard's reports on its spiritual condition: out of a total Catholic population of about five thousand on Saint Croix Island only one hundred and twenty (21\%\(^\text{1}\)%) fulfilled their Easter duty in 1815: sixty slaves, forty free colored persons, twenty white women and two white men.\(^\text{142}\) In 1816 this pitiful number had again been halved; the others were either too indifferent or too ignorant to practice their faith, save by taking issue for or against the fugitive monk.\(^\text{143}\)

Meanwhile the schism continued to drag on. The Irish "bachelors" held fast to their view that the Trappist was an "innocent victim" of foreign ecclesiastical persecution\(^\text{144}\) and that without the interference of Father Hérard their man would still occupy "the place which they on their own authority had given him."\(^\text{145}\) In April 1816, they sent him off with high recommendations to seek justice from the supreme authority of the Church.\(^\text{146}\)

A few months later, Flynn wrote to them announcing


\(^{140}\) Reference of footnote 133, p. 3.

\(^{141}\) Second reference of footnote 139, p. 1.


\(^{143}\) Reference of footnote 129, p. 5.

\(^{144}\) Hérard à M. Tessier, 19 mars 1816, p. 2: *B.C. Arch.*, 12A-S3.


\(^{146}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{147}\) Reference of footnote 129, p. 2.
that he would soon return with the full powers he hoped to receive from the Holy See.\textsuperscript{148}

Although Archbishop Neale had forwarded the necessary information about him to the Eternal City,\textsuperscript{149} the solution of the conflict by the Prefect of the Propaganda will undoubtedly impress the reader as highly unusual.

Before considering this, it should be kept in mind that the general administration of the Church was still painfully attempting to recover from the chaos created by the French Revolution and Napoleon’s interference in the Church. With respect to American affairs in particular, Cardinal Litta, Prefect of the Propaganda, made some grave mistakes. The most notorious of these was his order to Archbishop Neale to reinstate two priests, Father Simon F. Gallagher and Father Robert Browne.

\textsuperscript{148} Hérand à Mgr Neale, 10 sept. 1816, p. 3: *B.C. Arch., 12A-F3.

\textsuperscript{149} Archbishop Neale to Propaganda, undated: \textit{ibid.}, 10K4.
The United States

O.S.A., suspended by the Archbishop because they had started schismatic churches in Charleston, Virginia, and Augusta, Georgia. It took a personal appeal from the Archbishop to Pope Pius VII in "one of the strongest letters which ever reached the Holy See from America" to rectify the Cardinal's surprising decision.

Because the Propaganda's mistake in this case occurred at the time when Father Flynn sojourned in Rome to seek vindication of his alleged persecution by foreign ecclesiastics, it should be somewhat less surprising that Cardinal Litta reacted to the visit of the interdicted priest by... appointing him, on September 14, 1816, Prefect Apostolic of New Holland (Australia), after lifting the interdict which had struck the fugitive monk.

Subsequent aspects of this affair lie outside the North American sphere and consequently beyond the scope of this book, but are nonetheless included here to bring the strange story to its almost unbelievable ending.

In 1817, Father Flynn arrived in Australia, in defiance of the British Government's refusal to authorize the entrance of a Catholic priest into the colony. Soon after, he went to work in New South Wales, whose population consisted largely of deported Irishmen. His arrival made a tremendous impression upon these exiled Catholics, hitherto deprived of any opportunity to practice their Faith, and forced to attend Protestant services under penalty of being flogged. He succeeded so well that, many years later, these unfortunates still spoke with

150 Although this decree is missing from the files of the Propaganda (as are many other similar documents) his appointment as Prefect Apostolic is certain from Flynn's own letters to the Propaganda and also from the Propaganda's correspondence.


153 Ibid., pp. 57 ff.
great admiration and respect of the unforgettable Father Flynn.\textsuperscript{158}

His sojourn in Australia was very brief.\textsuperscript{157} Annoyed by his popularity and success, the local Protestant ministers prevailed upon the governor to have him arrested and deported to England, alleging that he had landed without the necessary authorization. By hiding in the dwelling of a friend in Sydney, Father Flynn managed to delay his deportation.\textsuperscript{158} Soon, however, he was arrested and deported to England. So great was the love of the local Catholics for their Irish missionary that the place of his concealment — now the site of Saint Patrick’s Cathedral — became “the first sanctuary of religion beneath the Southern Cross.”\textsuperscript{159}

Meanwhile the Holy See had turned its attention to the deplorable religious condition of Haiti, then an ecclesiastical no-man’s-land, on the other side of the globe, which had become the last place of refuge for pseudo-priests and clerical misfits. In 1820, a confidential inquiry of the Propaganda asked the advice of the Spiritan Mother House about the possibility of appointing an ecclesiastical superior to the island.\textsuperscript{160} Although the information sent by the Spiritans counseled caution, the Propaganda afterwards selected Father Glory, whom the political upheavals of the time had expelled from Guadeloupe. Consecrated bishop and duly appointed Vicar Apostolic of Haiti, the prelate set sail for his new domain, there to engage in the formidable task of trying to re-establish ecclesiastical order.

One can well imagine his surprise when, upon entering his residence in Port-au-Prince, he came face to face with its occupant — Jeremiah Flynn! History has left no record of the first meeting of these two men on the soil of Haiti,

\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., p. 64.
\textsuperscript{157} See Father Grassi’s letter quoted in footnote 153; Annales de la Propagation de la Foi, 1838, p. 424.
\textsuperscript{158} Moran, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 64 f.
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., p. 65.
\textsuperscript{160} A. Cabon, Notes sur l’histoire religieuse d’Haiti, Port-au-Prince, 1933, p. 114.
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid., p. 128.
but it must have been mutually shocking. The wandering ex-monk had arrived on the island early in 1819, presumably after his return to England from Australia. Writing to "the most Reverend Moranvilliers" (sic), "Archbishop of Baltimore" (sic), he claimed that he held "a true and lawful mission from the Sovereign Pontiff." Bishop Glory, however, reports that, on July 18, 1820, the Holy See again interdicted Flynn.

Since the recalcitrant cleric refused to move from his place of residence, the bishop found himself forced to share the house with his old antagonist. Thereafter, however, the President of the Republic set out on a military expedition in a distant part of the island and took Flynn with him. Upon his return he found that he had been excommunicated and that the house had been barred against his entrance. His attempts to force his way in attracted a large crowd, composed of "Marienettes" and "Gasparites," two opposing local factions of Catholics, who had sided, respectively, with the bishop and Father Flynn. In short order the two parties prepared to do battle. Before blood was spilled, however, the police arrived and dispersed the mob. Next, the President of the Republic decided to take stern measures and expelled both the legitimate bishop and the ex-monk from the island. It was a drastic step as far as the bishop

16 In his History of the Catholic Church in Australasia Cardinal Moran states, without indicating his source, that Bishop Glory went to Haiti accompanied by Father Flynn. In the light of documents of the Baltimore Cathedral Archives, which the Cardinal did not consult, it is extremely unlikely that such was the case. Moreover, Flynn's presence in Haiti was recorded as early as 1819, the year before Bishop Glory sailed for his new diocese.

17 There is no record of this interdict in the archives of the Propaganda. Many documents, however, have disappeared from its files, so that this absence is not significant. Moreover, the interdict may have been imposed by the Holy Office, whose archives have hitherto remained closed to scholars.

163 Flynn to Archbishop (sic) Moranvilliers (sic), 6 June, 1820, p. 3: *B.C. Arch., 16V1.
164 Cabon, op. cit., p. 131.
165 Ibid., p. 133.
166 Ibid., p. 134.
was concerned, for it meant a new break with the Holy See which lasted until 1863.

A short time after, Bishop Glory set sail for the States, but never reached his destination. A furious storm arose and wrecked the vessel. Among the victims of the disaster were the bishop and four young priests who had accompanied him on his mission.  

Father Flynn briefly reappeared in Haiti in 1822, allegedly to search for buried treasure. He had previously assisted General Richard, to prepare this man for his execution, and the general was supposed to have told him where he had hidden the looted treasury of the Haitian King Henri Christophe (1767—1820). Seized by the police, the ex-monk was again deported and disappeared from the pages of history.

Undoubtedly, Australian readers may be shocked by the picture presented here of the valiant hero, venerated “Down Under” as one of their first zealous and unforgettable pastors. One has only to read the glowing accounts which speak of Father Flynn’s Australian labor to see the tremendous impression he made during the very brief period of his sojourn under the Southern Cross. To suggest a reason for the strikingly different pictures of Father Flynn’s life in the West Indies as compared with his labor in Australia, it should be remembered that in the western hemisphere he had to deal with Frenchmen as his immediate religious or ecclesiastical superiors, while in Australia he was an Irish priest among fellow Irishmen, living under penal laws. Lacking the gift of adaptability and easily inclined to suspect “foreigners” of persecuting him, the poor man

18* In his above-mentioned History, Cardinal Moran suggests that Flynn was one of the Irish priests laboring in the Holy Ghost Mission of Guadeloupe in 1834. However, a search of the colonial clergy records preserved in the Spiritan archives of Paris, failed to reveal his name either on the list for Guadeloupe or for any of the other French colonies.

167 Ibid., p. 135.

168 Ibid., p. 136.


170 Annales de la Propagation de la Foi, 1838, p. 423; Moran, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 53-76.

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had the misfortune of nevertheless trying to live among them in the West Indies. If only, instead of going to the West Indies, he had been allowed to spend his whole life among his fellow countrymen, Father Flynn would perhaps unqualifiedly deserve the high esteem in which Australian Catholics have continued to hold him.

As for Father Hérard in the Virgin Islands, despite the repeated announcement of his intention to depart, he could not bring himself to leave the local Catholics wholly without a priest and gradually tried to heal the terrible wounds caused by the schism.\textsuperscript{171} His continued insistence that Irish priests be sent as the sole way of saving the situation finally produced results. In May of 1818, Archbishop Ambrose Maréchal, successor to Leonard Neale in Baltimore, was able to announce that two Irish clergymen were arriving from Dublin.\textsuperscript{172} Thus freed of his obligations toward the Virgin Islands, Father Hérard declined the Archbishop’s kind invitation to come to Baltimore\textsuperscript{173} because his presence was urgently needed in Paris in connection\textsuperscript{174} with the new restoration of the Holy Ghost Society after its impulsive suppression by Napoleon.\textsuperscript{175} In October, 1819, therefore, Father Hérard temporarily left the American scene to return to his native France from which he had been absent for more than thirty years.\textsuperscript{176}

6. The Last Years of Father Duhamel and Father Hérard

Since Father Charles Duhamel’s bad health did not permit him to stay in the Virgin Islands, in 1801 he left for Baltimore, where Bishop Carroll appointed him pastor of Hagerstown.\textsuperscript{177} As soon as it became possible for the Church to function again in Cayenne, the Spiritan Prefect Apostolic, Father Legrand, repeatedly invited him to return to "the front lines."\textsuperscript{178} Pointing out his many in-

\textsuperscript{171} Hérard à Maréchal, 8 juillet 1818, p. 1: \textsuperscript{B.C. Arch.,} 171-2.
\textsuperscript{172} Du même au même, 16 juillet 1818, p. 1: \textit{ibid.}, 171-1.
\textsuperscript{173} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{174} Hérard à Mgr Maréchal, 6 oct. 1819, p. 1: \textsuperscript{B.C. Arch.,} 171-3.
\textsuperscript{175} Koren, op. \textit{cit.}, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{176} Hérard à Mgr Maréchal, 20 oct. 1819: \textsuperscript{B.C. Arch.,} 171-4.
\textsuperscript{177} Cf. p. 161.
\textsuperscript{178} Duhamel à Mgr Carroll, 28 oct. 1802: \textsuperscript{B.C. Arch.,} 3F1.
Knives or Knights?

firmities, the frail priest told him that he would not do so of his own accord, but was willing to go if Father Legrand gave him a formal order. Realizing that "what we need here are not sick people but men who can work," the Prefect very wisely left Father Duhamel in the Baltimore Diocese. In 1810, the priest's health had deteriorated to such an extent that he "could be of no or hardly any use." To relieve his burdens and perhaps also to remove him from the vexations of a troublesome neighboring pastor who despised this "itinerant monk," Archbishop Carroll transferred him to Emmettsburg to aid in the spiritual care of the Catholics who had settled near Mount St. Mary's College. Burned out prematurely, he died there on February 16, 1818.

Father Hérard, during his visit to the Spiritan Mother House in Paris, received an appointment to the West Indian islands for which the Congregation was responsible. After 1830, however, when the heavy burden of labor under a tropical sky became too onerous for him — he was in his late sixties — he returned to the States. The duties of the old man appeared to have consisted at first of being chaplain and provider for the Carmelite nuns in Baltimore and later of the Poor Clares in Pittsburgh.

The scarcity of priests, which prevailed at the time soon forced him, in spite of his age, to re-assume responsibility for a parish. In 1832 he was located at Saint John's Church of Newark, N.J., and two years later he

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181 Duhamel à Mgr Carroll, 8 janvier 1810, p. 1: *B.C. Arch., 3F5.
182 L'ami de la religion, vol. 20, p. 36.
183 Ibid., vol. 103, p. 229.
185 Catholic Pittsburgh's One Hundred Years, Chicago, 1943, p. 110.
became pastor of Saint Vincent’s at a place called “Bottle Hill” (now Madison), N.J.\textsuperscript{187}

He travelled to France in 1838 to collect funds for the destitute Carmelites of Baltimore.\textsuperscript{188} Perhaps he also felt that the end was near. Having celebrated his golden jubilee among his fellow Spiritans in Paris, he went to visit his family.\textsuperscript{189} He had intended to return to Paris, for he had expressed the wish to end his days in the Mother House of the Congregation. Death, however, took him, before he could return, on October 17, 1839.\textsuperscript{190}

\textsuperscript{187} Ibid., p. 115.
\textsuperscript{188} Reference of footnote 183 and second reference of 184.
\textsuperscript{189} Cabon, art. cit., p. 201.
\textsuperscript{190} L’ami de la religion, vol. 103, p. 230.