

Claret and Antonia París committed to giving birth to a “New Order”

BEING IN SANTIAGO... THE INTRICATE WAYS TO THE FOUNDATION...

The Founder never intended a foundation of the Company of Mary, it was only a strategy for the foundation, and this is what he explained in a letter to Caixal from Port-au-Prince on September 24, 1853: "... you do not like very much that the Teaching Rules have been requested, but I tell you that it is a necessity, and even so there will be work to be done for royal approval. Remember that I told you from the beginning that in this matter, because of the Royal Patronage, we are in a very different position from Spain and France. What I am saying is that THEY SHOULD BE APPROVED IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, me as Prelate, already know what I have to do or approve. I say approve, because I would like Sister Antonia to say I want this and this, that I am ready to approve it..."

The Captain General, Don Valentín Cañedo, sent the Queen the entire dossier received from Claret, and wrote to the latter on August 8, 1853, saying: "I am sending to Her Majesty's decision the dossier on the installation of the Institute of the Sisters of Mary of this Archbishopric, as the granting of permission for it corresponds exclusively, according to the laws, to the Queen...Which I declare to Your Grace for your satisfaction and knowledge".

In the meantime, the matters of the purchase and arrangement of the house were progressing, of which Claret entrusted Fr. Currius, who informed him, in his letter of August 14, 1853, that "the house for the Nuns, the one for the purchase of which the Provisor was in favour of, has just been adjusted. It is adjusted to the value of 11,000...". Claret replied tersely, almost by return of post, on 21st August, from Port-au-Prince, "I tell you that I agree with what you tell me about the Nuns". The question of the purchase and building of the house was another subject on which Marie-Antoinette found it difficult to get along with the Provisor, since it involved the question of evangelical poverty. On this matter, both Claret and París were in agreement, although they knew that the poverty they wanted for the Order was not in accordance with the canon laws of the time. The Provisor understood canon law, but he did not grasp the essence of the Institute in this respect. The Order had to be founded with convents without rents, without possession of buildings, and the nuns had to live by their work, which was NOT contemplated in the ecclesiastical legislation of the time.

While the matter was being processed before the government, and so that the sisters could try out the style of life they intended to establish canonically and civilly, the Archbishop wanted to constitute them as a religious community; so, on June 7, 1853, after the Eucharist, he blessed their habit and they began their novitiate. At that time Antonia París was given the name of María Antonia de San Pedro. On the 15th of the same month, classes began. In January 1854, nine aspirants arrived from Spain.