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# Vision and Narrative: How Two Religious Sisters of Mercy Initiated and Managed Organizational Change

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VISION AND NARRATIVE: HOW TWO RELIGIOUS SISTERS OF MERCY  
INITIATED AND MANAGED ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Donald G. Talbot

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

December 2010

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Title: Vision and Narrative: How Two Religious Sisters of Mercy Initiated and Managed Organizational Change

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By examining the narrative fragments and narratives that circulated throughout their organization over the course of many decades, this historical case study assesses how a community of Catholic religious women, and in particular the two primary change agents, Sr. M. de Sales Farley and Sr. M. Silverius Shields, used stories about their past and constructed stories about their imagined future to sustain communal identity and lead change.

David Boje's (2008) insights into the dynamics of organizational storytelling, his distinctive interpretation of how *narratives* and *stories* differ, his definition of storytelling organizations that posits the replacement of individual memories with institutional collective memory, and his six elements for creating strategy narratives became the filters for analyzing the data collected for this study. Based on methodology derived from the work of Jules David Prown (1982) and Catherine Whalen (2009), a three-tiered analysis was applied to data presented in the form of an original three-act play.

Nine individual interviews, one focus group of five participants including a co-moderator, and archived materials served as primary data sources. Constant-comparative analysis of data proved useful in sorting through transcripts of interview responses, researcher field notes, and archival documentation. Prior to analysis, data were organized chronologically by subjects and key themes flagged to facilitate retrieval.

Findings suggested that the community of Religious Sisters of Mercy of Loretto-Cresson had worked, prayed, and studied at an institution that Boje (2008) would describe as a storytelling organization. Data pertaining to the two primary subjects of this study was inconclusive in regards to whether or not they had used narratives to lead change in their organization. The Loretto-Cresson Sisters used multiple narrative forms (scrapbooks, theatrical performances, objects of material culture, written accounts, and oral transmission) about their Mercy heritage and religious beliefs before, during and after the transition period. Having in many instances supplanted individual memories with communal memory, the Sisters continued, over time, to preserve their communal identity and sustain their cultural heritage by adding to the plotline of their organizational story.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## CHAPTER 1

### PROLOGUE: IN THE BEGINNING...

*“Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper...”*

*“As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be...”*

*(Gloria Patri, a Roman Catholic doxology)*

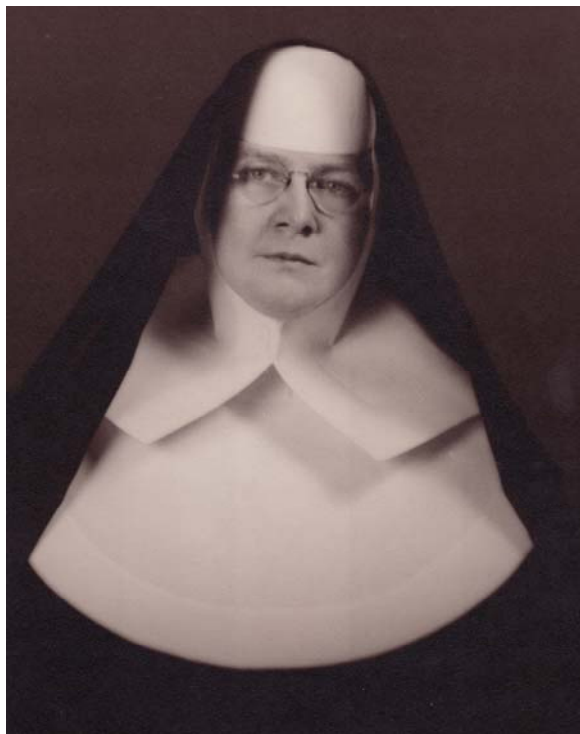
#### *Main Characters*

“If you believe that your faith is like a mountain—then a mountain it will be and from mountain tops one can envision many things not discernable to those shadowed in the valley below. Much depends on vision” (Shields, c. 1988b). Thus wrote Sr. M. Silverius Shields, RMS (hereafter referred to as Shields) about the vision of her friend and colleague, Sr. Mary de Sales Farley, RSM (hereafter referred to as Farley). These two Religious Sisters of Mercy labored side-by-side for thirty-five years, dependent on one another for the administrative and leadership qualities that each possessed uniquely, qualities that each would contribute to the ultimate success of their shared vision to launch a junior college at the summit of a mountain in Cresson, Pennsylvania (Shields, c. 1988a).

Shields (see Figure 1) was a prolific writer and an engaging storyteller in her own right. Her autobiography is preserved in Pulling’s (1994) *Sisters of Mercy of Loretto-Cresson*, a self-published history of that religious community. Shields opens her own autobiographical sketch not with the stereotypical “I was born on such-and-such a date” but with a statement that suggests her professional life was important only inasmuch as it interconnected with the life of her colleague, Farley (see Figure 2). “How does one mesh the many events of her life with that of another with whom she has worked for



*Figure 1. Sr. M. Silverius Shields, c. 1955.*



*Figure 2. Sr. M. de Sales Farley, c. 1939.*

years? To write this requires a joining and a separation and a rejoining on a mutual plane on which the work of these two persons has been established” (Pulling, 1994, p. 89).

Shields comments on how different she and Farley were both in terms of their family backgrounds and personalities. Shields was a rural Pennsylvania laborer, while Farley assumed the role of New York City society matron. Farley was the visionary never short of new ideas, whereas Shields had to be the practical problem solver who would bring those ideas to fruition. Shields tells the story of her working relationship with Farley with surprisingly candid honesty, humor, and genuine affection. Her autobiography lays out not just details about her own life but recounts the story of two women laboring in a common cause, the founding and development of a junior college.

She [Farley] came from a background of great refinement and I came from a working class family. My one value [to Farley] seemed to be my business skills and the fact that I possessed a strong back. This in convent parlance meant that one could work....

Just when we reached a small plateau and possibly could rest for a moment, Sr. de Sales would appear at my office door and she would introduce some new idea of development....She would say, “Now, you are the Registrar....” For some reason known to herself, the title of Registrar was synonymous with factotum. Therefore, the scope of my duties ranged from the academic, the administrative, college instruction, to teacher of violin, to stage hand, to managing the beautiful teas she gave her students and their guests, to setting her plans into action.... It never seemed odd to her or to me. (Pulling, 1994, pp. 93-94)

In spite of their different backgrounds and personalities, Shields acknowledges the common vision and dream she shared with Farley and the persistence that was needed



to make that dream a reality. “Long hours of concentration and longer hours of work in the pursuance of a dream, a vision, eventually showed in material form the educational plane whereon a school was developed...” (Shields, c. 1988b). Shields goes on to acknowledge the originator of the “dream,” Farley, and in the same sentence she informs us that she, Shields, was a willing participant in Farley’s dream. “So it was with Sr. Mary de Sales Farley and me. Her work, her dream became our work, our goal” (Shields, c. 1988b).

Farley’s dream was to transform a K-12 Catholic academy for girls into a junior college (see Figure 3). Though seemingly a rather commonplace dream, when one realizes that she wanted to do this in 1939 as America was emerging from the Great Depression and with an academy whose staff of teaching Sisters was not wholly supportive of the endeavor, that was heavily in debt, that had few resources, and was located in rural Western Pennsylvania, then one begins to appreciate the difficulties Farley would encounter bringing this dream to fruition.



*Figure 3.* Main Building, Mt. Aloysius Academy, Cresson, PA, c. 1915

Farley and Shields belonged to The Religious Sisters of Mercy, a Catholic congregation for women founded by Catherine McAuley in Dublin, Ireland in 1831.

McAuley, born in 1778 into a wealthy and staunchly Catholic family, was raised along with her two siblings by her mother left widowed upon the death of Catherine's father in 1783. Catherine's mother, Elinor, spent the next fifteen years, until her own death in 1798, squandering the family's fortune enjoying "the high life of the Dublin social set" (*Catherine McAuley*).

After her mother's death, Catherine and her siblings were sent to live with Protestant relatives who tried, in vain, to get her to convert to Protestantism. Then in 1803, Catherine went to live with distant relatives—a prosperous, retired couple—William and Catherine Callaghan, who regarded Catherine as a daughter (*Catherine McAuley*). "Both of them were devout Christians and encouraged Catherine in her growing concern for the poor who lived in the vicinity...and gave her the practical means to help them" (*Catherine McAuley*).

As sole heir to the Callaghan fortune, Catherine inherited the means to build a house on Baggott Street in Dublin to serve as a center for helping the poor, especially women and children. Catherine initially envisioned a secular house of charity since she wanted to remain in direct contact with the poor, an impossibility for orders of cloistered women religious at that time. Since she and her handful of followers were already living much like religious sisters, even assuming simple garb and addressing one another as "Sister," Catherine and two of her followers were persuaded by the local Archbishop to begin religious training and in 1831 took their religious vows and founded the Religious Institute of the Sisters of Mercy (Austin, 1911; *Catherine McAuley; A History of Venerable Catherine McAuley*).

In the next ten years, until her death [in]...1841, Catherine worked successfully to promote and establish many new Mercy communities, dedicated to the alleviation

of poverty and giving hope and means of escape to those in its trap....[At her death, McAuley] left a thriving community of nearly 150 sisters in fourteen foundations....Fifteen years later [1856], the Mercy Congregation numbered three thousand in foundations that reached across the globe....Wherever they went, the Mercy sisters led the way in setting up essential community services, such as schools, hospitals and other support services for the elderly, the sick and the poor. (*Catherine McAuley*)

*Setting: Time and Place*

In 1848, Sr. Frances Warde, superior of the Mercy community at Pittsburgh, sent four Sisters from her community to Loretto, Pennsylvania in hopes of their establishing a new foundation and starting a school. Within five years of their arrival, the Sisters founded Mount Saint Aloysius Academy, housed in an imposing three story Victorian structure where local young women were provided with a liberal arts education, which included languages, literature, history, music, mathematics, astronomy, and chemistry coupled with classes considered essential to the proper development of young women: china painting, embroidery, and other needle arts (*Brief M.A.J.C. History*).

By the last decade of the nineteenth century, realizing that the academy at Loretto “was in the wrong place geographically” (*Brief M.A.J.C. History*), the Sisters decided to build a new academy just four miles down the road in Cresson since the borough was on a main line of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Construction of the new academy at Cresson was completed in 1897 (*Brief M.A.J.C. History*). Over the next thirty years the academy would continue to grow adding new buildings as enrollments climbed: Alumnae Hall in 1902, St. Gertrude Dormitory in 1904, and the new chapel/convent building in 1923 (*M.A.J.C. Historical Dates*).

## *Conflict*

In October 1929, the stock market crashed plunging the United States into the Great Depression, a worldwide economic downturn that would last through the end of the 1930s (*Great Depression*). Likewise, Mount Aloysius Academy had financial problems brought on by changing social conditions. In part, an increase in the number of Catholic high schools able to accommodate students from less affluent families than those normally served by the private academies would contribute to the decline in academy enrollments (Shields, c. 1988b). An untitled July 1936 document (Institute Archive, Dallas, PA) detailing declining student enrollment and declining receipts lists a total number of 120 academy students in 1925-26 and only 55 students in 1935-36; 1925-26 receipts from the academy were listed at \$40,269.40 as compared to 1935-36 receipts of only \$13, 277.80. The same document also notes that the Sisters' salaries were in arrears in the amount of \$9,646.50. Further depleting their student base, in 1922, two diocesan Catholic high schools were established within the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown: Johnstown Catholic High School, now Bishop McCort High School, only 31 miles from Cresson (*Bishop McCort High School*) and Altoona Catholic High School, now Bishop Guilfoyle High School, only 18 miles from Cresson (*Bishop Guilfoyle Alumni Association Bulletin*, 2003).

Another factor that contributed to the Mount's financial difficulties was the enormous debt that had been incurred when the chapel wing was constructed in the early 1920s. In April 1937, Dr. Caroline A. Chandler, chair of the Mount Aloysius Academy Alumnae Association Finance Committee, in a letter to regional presidents of the alumnae association reported that, "At the present time it [the chapel debt] amounts to something in the neighborhood of \$200,000. Owing to the recent depression not only has

it been impossible for the Academy to reduce the debt at all but it has also been impossible to keep up the interest payments in full for the last few years” (Chandler, April 3, 1937).

Minutes of academy meetings and of alumnae association meetings of the late 1930s record the desperate attempts being made by the Sisters, alumnae, and the school committee to reverse the Mount’s financial decline. Plans were made to increase enrollment by increasing advertising, offering more alumnae sponsored scholarships, providing transportation for students from outlying areas, and by asking the local Bishop to designate the Mount as the Catholic high school for northern Cambria County (*Mount Aloysius Academy Minutes*, February 28, 1937).

In addition, the Alumnae Association would aid in the effort by sending representatives to speak to girls graduating from local grade schools to promote the advantages of an academy education, by having alumnae contact parents of potential students by telephone followed by a “series of letters,” and by raising funds for the establishment of scholarships, to increase the library holdings, and to assist in the amortization of the chapel debt (*Mount Aloysius Academy Alumnae Association Minutes*, March 21, 1937). At a Mount Aloysius Academy meeting held on April 4, 1937, someone [unnamed] went so far as to suggest that the Academy could establish a high school for boys. “Sr. de Sales advised that they were not equipped to take care of high school boys” (*Mount Aloysius Academy Minutes*, April 4, 1937). Desperate times may call for desperate measures, but times were not yet that tough!

#### *Denouement*

An article in the *New York Times* reporting on the “rapid and remarkable growth of the junior college movement on the West coast” (Shields, c. 1988b) suggested to

Farley a possible solution to the Mount's financial crisis. Knowing that she could not achieve her vision of starting a junior college on her own, Farley selected Shields as her trusted assistant. In her autobiography, Shields writes: "The goal's real test came one February evening in 1939 when Sr. Mary de Sales knocked at my classroom door and said, 'We're going to open a junior college and you're going to help me.' Looking up from my work I asked, 'What is a junior college'" (Shields, c. 1988a)?

#### Statement of Problem

So far this account seems to have all the elements of a well-written story: engaging characters, a dramatic setting, and a seemingly insurmountable conflict that we anticipate will eventually be resolved successfully. But what about *plot*, the series of interrelated events that got them to that desired resolution? "The Storytelling Organization is a tapestry of multiple intersecting, interpenetrating collective memories of members of various groups" (Boje, 2008, p. 81). How does one begin to make sense of all the narratives and narrative fragments that circulate throughout an organization over the course of many decades? Boje's (1991) theory of "organizations as a collective storytelling system" goes a long way toward explaining how Catholic religious communities assimilate multiple narrative threads in their fabrication of a meaningful whole cloth.

From their inception, most Catholic religious communities have been educated, inspired, sustained, and motivated by stories preserved and recounted in many formats. Stories from the *Bible*, *The Lives of the Saints*, secular texts such as Copeland's (1989) *The Golden Thread*, "narrative" religious artwork (e.g., paintings, iconography, sculpture, stained-glass windows, and illuminated manuscripts), oral and written accounts of an

order's great leaders, its history, and its accomplishments intertwine into a narrative web defining that particular religious community.

So too, since their establishment in 1848, the Religious Sisters of Mercy of Loretto-Cresson have devised many ways to preserve and recount their unique stories both to sustain their identity and to lead change (Pulling, 1994). Written and oral stories of the community's founding and history abound, from Burton's (1947) highly romanticized account of the community's early years, *So Surely Anchored*, to Shields' reminiscences in a 1989 videotaped interview of how she and Farley founded the junior college in 1939 (Kennedy, 1998). Audio tapes recorded during the 1970s of elderly sisters recounting how they came to enter religious life and their recollections of significant community events and persons spanning nearly a century are preserved alongside document boxes containing the "dead" files of deceased sisters, some still revered decades after their passing and others long ago forgotten. Private journals, personal and business correspondence, many file drawers filled with photographs (a few with names of the sisters who appear in the photograph carefully inscribed in a florid hand on the back), scrapbooks (filled with yet more photos, newspaper clippings, mementoes of community events, obituaries), and virtually every other scrap of ephemera collected over 150 years are, after a fashion, organized in the community regional archive at Dallas, Pennsylvania.

#### Purpose of the Study

Catholic communities of religious men and women spend their lives surrounded by and immersed in stories. Like all humans, Catholic religious women and men love to tell stories of who they are, what they believe in, what they have accomplished, and what they hope to become. This historical case study seeks to understand how the Religious

Sisters of Mercy of Loretto-Cresson, and in particular the two primary change agents, Farley and Shields, used stories about their past and constructed stories about their imagined future to sustain their identity and lead change. Research suggests that organizational storytelling is an invaluable but often underutilized leadership tool (Boje, 2008; Brown, Denning, Groh, and Prusak, 2005). As leaders within their organization, Farley and Shields seemed to appreciate the power of narrative. Perhaps as women immersed in a culture rich with organizational narratives, their ability to use stories to their advantage was inevitable.

### Research Questions

Boje (2008) theorizes a framework that he utilizes to make sense of what he calls *strategy narratives*. According to Boje, strategy narratives are usually "...a paragraph which has a logo and five sentences. One sentence each for motto, plot, mission, vision, and founding story, which can be a paragraph, or longer" (p. 263). Boje's use of *strategy* suggests the way an organization makes sense of itself and presents itself to itself and to the rest of the world. Furthermore, Boje notes that one area of organizational storytelling in need of further research "...is how to align visual, textual, and oral ways of showing, writing, and telling a strategy to a variety of different stakeholders" (p. 24). Boje's six-element "lens" may be one way to begin assessing why and how the narratives told by the Religious Sisters of Mercy of Loretto-Cresson were important and remain significant today.

Boje (2008) analyzes strategy narratives using six narrative elements: logo, motto, plot, mission, vision, and founding narrative (pp. 100-101). Certainly, these six elements have changed and evolved significantly over time at Mount Aloysius. Thus, these six



narrative elements are useful in making sense of the organization's polyphonic narratives and narrative fragments and how they have morphed over time.

Consequently, this study poses the following questions based on Boje's definition of *storytelling organization*, *managerial collective memory*, and his six-part theoretical framework for understanding strategy narratives:

1. Was Mount Aloysius Academy, later Mount Aloysius Junior College, a storytelling organization? If so, in what way(s) was it a storytelling organization?
2. What types of organizational narratives and stories would have been heard and told by the Religious Sisters of Mercy at Cresson prior to the 1939 transition?
3. Did Farley and Shields use narratives and stories to lead organizational change as they transformed Mount Aloysius Academy into a junior college in 1939? If so, what were those stories? How and why did they use them?
4. Which narratives and stories about that transitional period continued to be told in the years following the transition and have persisted into the present thus becoming part of the managerial collective memory of the institution?

#### Theoretical Framework

This study is about how two women led change in their organization, an institution which this researcher surmises was a storytelling organization. Therefore, a theoretical framework that encompasses particular aspects of leadership, storytelling within institutions, and organizational change are all essential to this study.

#### *Transformational Leadership Theory and Vision within Charismatic Leadership*

If leading social theorist Max Weber is correct in his claim that charismatic leaders "...generally appear in times of trouble and that their followers exhibit 'a devotion born of distress'" (Gardner, 1987, p. 185), then one might logically consider transformational

leadership theory (Bass 1985; Burns 1978) and, specifically, vision as a key component of charismatic leadership when assessing the leadership characteristics of Farley and Shields since they successfully led an institution through a time of trouble and distress.

Nadler and Tushman (1990, 1995) link their definition of a charismatic leader to actual behavior. They claim that a charismatic leader "...refers to a special quality that enables the leader to mobilize and sustain activity within an organization through specific personal actions combined with perceived personal characteristics" (p. 108). Since this study is examining administrative and leadership behaviors that facilitated organizational change during times of crisis, Nadler and Tushman's theory linking organizational change to both charismatic leadership and instrumental leadership seems particularly relevant.

Nadler and Tushman (1990, 1995) claim that a charismatic leader creates an exciting vision of a "desired future," energizes followers through their own "personal excitement," and enables followers by means of support, empathy, and expressed confidence in followers' abilities to succeed (p. 109).

#### *Instrumental Leadership*

Instrumental leadership as defined by Nadler and Tushman (1990/1995) is comprised of three behavioral components: structuring—building the team that will execute the change, controlling—"creation of systems and processes to measure, monitor, and assess both behavior and results and to administer corrective action" (p. 112), and rewarding/punishing as needed for successful change. Nadler and Tushman theorize that "...effective organizational re-orientation requires both charismatic and instrumental leadership" (p. 113), leadership styles that I believe led to Farley and Shields' success in starting a junior college.

### *Guest's Conditions of Effective Authority*

In a limited way, Guest's (1962) *Conditions of Effective Authority*, as well as other organizational change theories, proved useful in understanding the dynamics of organizational change especially as it occurred during Mount Aloysius' transition from academy to junior college. One of Guest's five conditions, derived from his earlier 7-step phases in the change process, gives a leader the authority to act without supervisory oversight. To some extent, that was true of Farley in 1939. Though she had to answer to superiors, those superiors had given her broad "leeway to act" (Guest, 1962, p. 128).

### *Boje's Organizational Narrative/Story and Collective Memory Theories and Six Elements of Strategy Narrative*

Though other researchers may use the terms interchangeably, organizational management theorist David Boje makes a clear distinction between *narrative* and *story*. For Boje (2008), a *narrative* is "...an action that is complete in itself...which has a beginning, middle and end," whereas a *story* is an ongoing and constantly "emergent" activity "...involving two or more people interpreting past or anticipated experiences" (pp. 261-262). Boje sees the distinction as more than semantics; narrative is a retrospective, fully-realized activity, while story is an organic, ever-evolving process (p. 8). Though he seems to favor research that seeks to elucidate some aspect of story complexity, Boje acknowledges the importance of organizational stories vis-à-vis narratives and narrative fragments. "Emergent story dynamics plays with images, symbols, history in social organization, and transcendent reflexivity in free form, but is never free of narrative expectations" (p. 63). "Storytelling Organization is an 'and' relation between narrative and story forms" (p. 8). This study recognizes and accepts

Boje's distinctive definitions of *narrative* and *story* and uses the two terms in the same way.

Boje (2008) defines collective memory as "...a tapestry of group's and some errant individuals' collective memories, interpenetrated by strands and threads of thoughts interwoven across the groups....there are a multiplicity of them and several types" (p. 81). Boje (2008) theorizes that time, space, and medium all play vital roles in the act of collective memory (pp. 83-86). He points out how time can "...vary within and between organizations..." (p. 83), a phenomenon which can greatly influence how members of an organization perceive themselves individually and collectively. So too, how members of an organization design space (*décor*) says much about who they are and how they may wish to be perceived. "It's this story that tells a way of life. This imprinting of space gives a group a sense of its continuity....Years of routine uses of buildings constitute a spatial framework that tells a collective story" (Boje, 2008, p. 84). Boje asserts the importance of space by noting that "...space utilization... [can] demarcate a before and after, either expansion or downsizing, or remaining just the same. The story is also adapting to the space" (2008, p. 84). *Medium* defines the multiple ways that artifacts (oral, textual, visual) can create collective memory (Boje, 2008, pp, 85-86).

In particular, Boje's six elements of strategy narrative, 1) logo, 2) motto, 3) plot, 4) mission, 5) vision, and 6) founding narrative, proved a useful framework for identifying and assessing the narrative and narrative fragments garnered from interviews and archived materials, even though I was not focused on identifying or creating a Mount Aloysius Junior College strategy narrative. Boje's definitions of the six elements he identified as essential to a strategy narrative as well his definition of strategy narrative are included in the Definition of Terms section of this chapter.

## Significance

If one accepts Boje's (2008) assertion that "Every workplace...is a Storytelling Organization" (p. 4), then the significance of studying the storytelling complexities of one particular organization and how those stories may have led and sustained change within that organization becomes apparent. A review of organizational storytelling literature suggests that, though the activity of telling stories is both uniquely human and ancient (Gabriel, 2000), research into organizational narrative and storytelling practices has occurred largely over the past thirty years (Boyce, 1996). "The interest of organizational studies in stories is as belated as it is enthusiastic" (Gabriel, 2000, p.4). Furthermore, Boje notes that, "...very little is known about how Storytelling Organizations differ, or how they work, how they respond to their environment, how to change them, and how to survive in them. Even less is known about the insider's view of the Storytelling Organization..." (2008, p. 4).

Though the scope of this study did not allow this researcher to explore all these storytelling organizational dynamics, a better understanding of "the insider's view" emerged from subject interviews and from archived materials. Furthermore, one began to understand the complex dynamic of how the organization's storytelling history had influenced its various stakeholders. Specifically, one sought to understand how the leadership team of Farley and Shields had used stories to lead their institution through a difficult time of organizational change.

## Definition of Terms

Throughout this study, the following definitions will apply.

*Change agent*: "A change agent... is someone who intentionally or indirectly causes or accelerates social, cultural, or behavioral change" (*Change agent*).

*Charismatic leader:* A charismatic leader is one whose special qualities enable her/him “...to mobilize and sustain activity within an organization through specific personal actions combined with perceived personal characteristics” (Nadler and Tushman, 1990a).

*Collective Memory:* “...a tapestry of group’s and some errant individuals’ collective memories, interpenetrated by strands or threads of thoughts interwoven across the groups” (Boje, 2008, p. 256).

*Founding narrative:* “...a sentence or paragraph (or longer) that answers the question, where did we come from” (Boje, 2008, p. 259)?

*Horarium:* “Is the name given to the daily schedule of those living in a religious community” ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horarium](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horarium)).

*Instrumental leadership:* A form of leadership that “...build[s] competent teams, clarif[ies] required behaviors, build[s] in measurement, and administer[s] rewards and punishments so that individuals perceive that behavior consistent with the change is central for them in achieving their own goals” (Nadler & Tushman, 1990a).

*Junior college:* “In the United States, a junior college is a two-year post-secondary school whose main purpose is to provide academic, vocational and professional education” (*Junior college*).

*Logo:* “... a symbol of the corporation” (Boje, 2008, p. 260).

*Managerial Collective Memory:* “This is the erection of horizontal and vertical narrative lines of retrospection to one or more center points....BME [beginning, middle, end] historical narratives assume wholeness, with fixed attributes of finalized meaning” (Boje, 2008, p. 87).

*Mission:* “...a sentence that answers the questions, who are our customers, why do we exist” (Boje, 2008, p. 260)?

*Motto*: "...a sentence...stating the moral sentiment that binds logo to...[vision, founding narrative, plot, and mission]" (Boje, 2008, p. 260).

*Narrative*: "Is a whole telling, with the linear sequence of a beginning, middle, and end (BME); is usually a backward-looking (retrospective) gaze from present, back through the past, sorting characters, dialog, themes, etc. into one plot, and changes little over time" (Boje, 2008, p. 7).

*Plot*: "...a sequence of events that will get enterprise from mission to vision" (Boje, 2008, p. 261).

*Restorying*: "Is defined as a deconstructing any dominant story, in order to develop a story out of fragments, that can be liberatory from oppression (White & Epston, 1990) [Chapter 9]" (Boje, 2008, p. 262).

*RSM*: Religious Order of the Sisters of Mercy (*Sisters of Mercy*).

*Sisters of Mercy*: An international community of Catholic women religious, founded by Catharine McAuley in 1831, "vowed to serve people who suffer from poverty, sickness and lack of education with a special concern for women and children" (*Sisters of Mercy of the Americas*).

*Story*: "Is defined as 'an oral or written performance involving two or more people interpreting past or anticipated experience' (Boje, 1991: 111) [Introduction]. I would now add an architectural expression interpreting or expressing experience. By 'story' I mean a highly 'dialogized story' (Bakhtin, 1981: 25), not only the polyphonic (many-voiced) story, but one dialogized with multi-stylistic expression, diverse chronotopics, and the architectonics of interanimating societal discourses" (Boje, 2008, pp. 262-263).

*Storying*: “Is defined as the more or less continuous behavior of getting story realized, getting others to take roles, to be part of either a managed and directed story, or one that is more emergent and even collectively enacted” (Boje, 2008, p. 263).

*Storytelling Organization*: “Is defined as, ‘collective storytelling system[icity] in which the performance of stories is a key part of members’ sense-making and a means to allow them to supplement individual memories with institutional memory’ (Boje, 1191: 106, bracketed amendment, mine) [chapter 1]” (Boje, 2008, p. 262).

*Strategy narrative*: “Is defined as a paragraph which has one sentence each for motto, plot, mission, vision, and founding story” (Boje, 2008, p. 263).

*Transformational leader*: A transformational leader is one who “...shapes, alters, and elevates the motives and values and goals of followers” in order to “achieve significant change” (Couto, 1993).

*Vision*: “...a sentence that answers the question, where are we going” (Boje, 2008, p. 264)?

### Limitations

One of the primary limitations of this study is that its two primary subjects cannot be interviewed since they are deceased. The researcher must rely on documents including biographical and autobiographical sketches provided by one of the subjects along with other primary and secondary sources from the Sisters of Mercy archives. Also, the few persons still living who had first hand knowledge of the two primary subjects are now elderly; as interviewees their recollections may be clouded by time and tainted by nostalgia. There may be some difficulty separating historical facts from anecdotal lore.



To some extent this study is limited by researcher bias since the subjects of this study were selected based on the researcher's belief that the subjects were worthy of study due to their accomplishments. Obviously, an organization whose history spans more than 160 years is teeming with subjects of equal and, perhaps, of greater merit and notoriety. Nonetheless, the lives and deeds of these two women are deeply rooted in the collective memory of the institution they led. As a full-time faculty member at Mount Aloysius College, this researcher is well aware of the long shadow cast by these two remarkable women.

Since Mount Aloysius is an institution seemingly saturated in narratives and steeped in organizational storytelling, major limitations of this study are the inability of this researcher to grasp all the stories, to understand the whole story, or to winnow fully fact from fiction. These limitations are acknowledged by other researchers as well. "There is no whole story. One never gets the whole story....Whole story is *poetic* illusion" (Boje, 2008, p. 54). Recognizing the commonsense truth in Boje's supposition, this study can do little more than shed a narrow ray of light on a nearly unmanageable subject. Also, this researcher recognizes that this study is not so much about the verifiable truth of the stories told about and by the subjects of this study, but about the meaning that is to be gleaned from their *storying* and *restorying* (Boje, 2008, pp. 262-263). "For, as it has been widely argued, the truth of a story lies not in *the facts*, but in *the meaning*. If people believe a story, if the story grips them, whether events actually happened or not is irrelevant" (Gabriel, 2000, p. 4).

### Chapter Summary

Chapter 1 presents several of the primary narrative elements crucial to know prior to undertaking this study: the main characters (Farley & Shields), the setting (Mount

Aloysius Academy, 1939), the conflict (need to become a junior college), and the resolution (the successful transition). Only once this researcher had gathered together the many loose threads of primary narratives and narrative fragments unraveled and scattered by time in the memories of this study's participants and the archives of the Sisters of Mercy was he able to visualize and assess the rich and complex tapestry of interwoven events, the plot, with a relative and subjective degree of completeness. In Chapter 4, multiple narrative strands (the data) have been realigned into a series of interconnected events (plot presented in the form of an original three-act play). Chapter 5 examines Boje's six elements of strategy narrative (logo, motto, plot, mission, vision, and founding narrative), and Chapter 4 data are assessed using Whalen's three-tiered analytical methodology.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

To more fully comprehend how two Religious Sisters of Mercy transitioned a foundering academy for girls into a successful junior college and how narratives/stories were used within their organization, I have reviewed literature pertaining to leadership theories and, more specifically, to the leadership theory that most informed this study, visionary leadership. Also, literature pertaining to organizational story and storytelling informed a crucial aspect of this study's theoretical framework and has been included in the review. Literature dealing with the history of American Catholic higher education, as well as literature specifically focused on Catholic academies and colleges run by and for women, established the socio-cultural context of this study. Since the subjects of this study are both educator-leader Sisters of Mercy who are being scrutinized during a volatile time of institutional transition, literature pertaining to Sisters of Mercy history and their involvement in higher education and literature concerning organizational change and transition theories was reviewed.

#### Overview of Contemporary Leadership Theories

The study of leaders and leadership is as ancient as the story of humankind. For more than two millennia, both Eastern and Western philosophers have sought to explicate various aspects of leadership theory (Ciulla, 2004). Sometime in the 6<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., the Chinese philosopher Lao-tzu purportedly observed that, "A leader is best when people barely know he exists....of a good leader who talks little when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say, 'We did it ourselves'" (*Lao-Tzu*), suggesting the possible transformational nature of leader-follower interactions. So too, the Roman senator and historian Tacitus in the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. seemed to be offering some measure

of support to future trait theorists when he wrote, “Reason and judgment are the qualities of a leader” (*Tacitus*). Even the *Bible* points the way toward the future study of vision and leadership. “If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch” (*Matthew 15: 14*). As brilliant as these ancient verbal gems may be, not until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century did contemporary philosophers, historians, and sociologists engage in a systematic study of leadership theory.

### *“Great Man” Theory*

Though individuals throughout history have assumed or been assigned roles as leaders, serious attempts by theorists to answer questions such as what qualities define a leader, are leaders born or made, do leaders possess certain unique leadership traits, and how do leaders act differently from followers may trace their origins to the philosophical musings of Scottish historian Thomas Carlyle who wrote, “The history of the world is but the biography of great men” (*Great man theory*). “Great Man” theories posited that leadership was the prerogative of learned men, even though the world had produced countless women leaders such as Joan of Arc, Boadicea, Elizabeth I, and Abbess Hildegard von Bingen. Beyond its gender bias, this theory could not begin to explain all the complex dynamics of leadership.

### *Trait Theories*

Trait theories emerged in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as a logical extension of the “Great Man” theory. Researchers sought to identify unique traits that could distinguish a leader from a follower. Many studies, such as L. L. Bernard (1926), Bingham (1927), Tead (1929), and Kilbourne (1935), were conducted utilizing individuals identified as either leaders or followers in order to measure features believed to be leadership traits (Lubin, 2001). These studies generally produced varied and inconclusive results (Chemers,

1984/1995). Ralph Stogdill's (1948) landmark study of 124 traits studies conducted between 1904 and 1948 concluded that "...a person does not become a leader by virtue of the possession of some combination of traits..." (Boje, 2003, [http://cbae.nmsu.edu/~dboje/teaching/338/traits.htm#stogdill\\_1948](http://cbae.nmsu.edu/~dboje/teaching/338/traits.htm#stogdill_1948)). Rather, Stogdill suggested that traits varied by situation and "...that leadership theorizing would be inadequate until personal and situational characteristics were integrated" (Chemers, 1984/1995, p. 84).

Stogdill would revise his ideas about trait theories in 1974 at the conclusion of a study that examined 167 trait studies conducted between 1949 and 1970. Stogdill stated that the negative results of his earlier study had refocused attention on situations (contingency theories) to the detriment of traits. He conceded that certain traits may exist that allow a leader to lead followers effectively within certain situations (Boje, 2003, [http://cbae.nmsu.edu/~dboje/teaching/338/traits.htm#stogdill\\_1948](http://cbae.nmsu.edu/~dboje/teaching/338/traits.htm#stogdill_1948)).

Rather than examining leadership traits, researchers after Stogdill's 1948 study focused their attention on behavioral and situational variables. According to Chemers (1984/1995), "...the emphasis was to move away from the focus on the internal state of leaders...to the more basic question of what it is that leaders actually do" (p. 85). During the 1950's, Hemphill and Coons developed the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LDBQ) which was used in studies that led researchers to classify leader behaviors according to two labels: *consideration* or *initiating structure*. Leaders exhibiting *consideration* behaviors were characterized as displaying "interpersonal warmth, concern for the feelings of subordinates, and the use of participative two-way communication" (Chemers, 1984/1995, p. 85). Leaders perceived as *initiating structure* tended to be more task oriented having clearly articulated participant roles, expectations, and standards of performance. Just as earlier trait theories had proven inadequate, the use

of behavioral factors to explain how leadership behaviors influence group outcomes proved unreliable. Group productivity and follower attitudes could not be consistently predicted from particular leader behaviors (Chemers, 1984/1995).

### *Contingency Models and Theories*

In order to better explain the interplay of leader behaviors and/or leadership styles and situations, work of leadership theorists in the early 1960's turned to contingency theories/models beginning with the work of Fiedler (1964), *A Contingency Model of Leadership Effectiveness*. Fiedler's LPC (least-preferred co-worker) scale, which measures a respondent's *esteem for the least-preferred co-worker*, asks a person to think about a co-worker with whom s/he was least able to accomplish tasks. Then the respondent is given a series of bipolar adjectives, such as friendly-unfriendly or hostile-cooperative, that are assessed using an 8 point scale. A score indicating that the respondent sees the "least-preferred co-worker" in a positive light suggests that that individual is "relationship motivated," while a negative rating of the "least-preferred co-worker" suggests that the respondent is more task oriented (Chemers, 1984/1995, p. 86).

Other notable contingency models and theories include Hersey-Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory (1977), Path-Goal Theory (Evans, 1970; House, 1971), and the Vroom-Yetton Normative Decision Theory (1973) (Chemers, 1984/1995).

According to Hersey and Blanchard (1979/1995), situational leadership examines the relationship between a leader's behavior and a follower's level of performance readiness during a particular situation. This model suggests that leaders need to "remain sensitive" to followers readiness levels and

...that leaders should alter their behaviors accordingly. Thus, situational leadership assumes a dynamic interaction where the readiness level of the

followers may change and where the leader's behavior must change appropriately in order to maintain the performance of the followers. (Hersey & Blanchard, 1979/1995, p. 207).

Path-Goal Theory examines how leader behaviors impact the satisfaction and motivation of their followers (Chemers, 1984/1995). Leadership literature of the 1970's makes frequent reference to Path-Goal Theory in the work of Evans (1970), House (1971), House and Dessler (1974), and House and Mitchell (1974) (Lynch, 2007). This theory, intended "to enhance employee performance" (Lynch, 2007 quoting Northouse, 2004, p. 32), suggests four leadership styles that may be assumed by a leader based on a particular situation: a *supportive* (relationship-oriented) style intended to boost follower confidence, a *directive* (task-oriented) style intended to clarify follower "path to the reward," an *achievement* style that sets high goals for followers and demands high performance, and a *participative* style that is more sensitive to a follower's needs and includes the follower in the decision-making process (Woolard, 2009, [http://www.dr-woolard.com/miscellaneous/path\\_goal\\_theory.htm](http://www.dr-woolard.com/miscellaneous/path_goal_theory.htm)).

Like many other contingency leadership theories, Vroom and Yetton's (1973) Normative Decision Theory looked at situation-based leader-follower interactions. Some of the situational factors considered by this model include the likelihood that subordinates will support and accept a leader's decision and the quantity and quality of decision-making data available to the leader and subordinates (Chemers, 1984/1995). Based on the interplay of all situational factors, this theory suggests "a range or decision-making styles" (Chemers, 1984/1995, p. 89). At one end of the decision-making continuum, Vroom and Yetton identify *autocratic* styles that are leader driven and non-participatory,

and at the opposite end of the continuum, *consultative* styles that seek follower input prior to leader-made decisions (Vroom & Jago, 1988).

### *Transactional and Transformational Leadership Theories*

In *Leadership* (1978), biographer and leadership theorist James MacGregor Burns proposed two differing forms of leadership: *transactional* leadership and *transforming* leadership. A refinement of Max Weber's earlier *Model of Transactional and Transformational Leaders* (1947), Burns defines transactional leadership as that which "occurs when one person takes the initiative in making contact with others for the purpose of an exchange of valued things" (Burns, 1978/1995, p. 101). Both leader and followers must recognize the value of and benefit from the exchange; the individual needs of all parties are somehow satisfied. Like a marketplace transaction, followers are willing to fulfill the desires/goals of a leader provided that they, too, have some needs met.

Burns defines *transforming* leadership as that which "occurs when one or more persons *engage* with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality..." (Burns, 1978/1995, p. 101). Transforming leadership "fuses" the purposes of leader and followers into one common goal pursued by all for the betterment of all.

Bernard Bass (1985), industrial and organizational psychologist, expanded upon Burns' work by first changing *transforming* to *transformational*. This is not merely a linguistic refinement but a conceptual modification as well, for Bass suggests that, unlike Burns' approach that has both followers and leaders influencing one another in an egalitarian interaction, "transformational leaders transform followers" (Couto, 1993/1995, p. 104) in a manner that is unilateral rather than participatory.



A transformational leader impacts the beliefs and actions of followers in a number of ways: by altering and elevating follower needs, refocusing follower self-interests, and increasing follower confidence that group and/or organizational goals can be successfully attained. Transformational leaders “create increased motivation in followers to attain the leader’s designated outcome and eventually to perform beyond their own as well as the leader’s initial expectations” (Couto, 1993/1995, p. 104).

Couto helps to clarify how Burns and Bass’s approaches to transforming and transformational leadership differ. Couto notes that the primary difference between the two approaches is one of application. Bass’s research was “conducted primarily in formal organizations, i.e. schools, industry and the military,” whereas Burns “is dealing with leadership within social movements and politics” (Couto, 1993/1995, p. 105). Consequently, Bass’s *transformational* leadership may appear more pragmatic in its focus on followers attaining organizational goals in a manner “that exceeds past accomplishments,” while Burns’s *transforming* leadership may be more philosophical in its focus on “significant change” within larger social movements (Couto, 1993/1995, p. 106).

Bass and Avolio devised the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (1985) in order to determine to what degree a leader is either transactional or transformational and to assess follower satisfaction with their leaders. Though the instrument has undergone many revisions over time, it remains a widely used leadership assessment tool (*An interview with: Dr. Bruce Avolio*, 2006).

### *Servant Leadership Theory*

When Robert K. Greenleaf retired in 1964 after working for more than four decades for A.T. & T. (Greenleaf, 1977), he could have slipped into a quiet life of leisure.

Instead, he opted to share his knowledge of management, research and development, and education by becoming a consultant, writer, and speaker (Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership [GCSL]).

Greenleaf initially considered the notion that one could lead best by first being a servant upon reading Hermann Hesse's *Journey to the East*. In that novel, Hesse's character, Leo, is the leader of a religious order who has assumed the role of servant as he accompanies a group of men on a journey to the East. When Leo mysteriously disappears, the journey is abandoned because the group seems unable to function without the beloved servant who held them together. At the end of the story, the narrator learns Leo's true identity and realizes that the group's lowly servant was actually its leader. Inspired by this story, Greenleaf introduced his concept of leader-as-servant in his 1970 essay, *The Servant as Leader* (GCSL; Greenleaf, 1977).

In *The Servant as Leader* (In *Servant Leadership*, 1977), Greenleaf observed "this story clearly says that *the great leader is seen as servant first*, and that simple fact is the key to his greatness" (p. 7). But Greenleaf expands on this notion of leader-as-servant by stressing the importance of recognizing that servants are also "seekers" because, as he explains, that is what servants do: search, listen, and expect "...that a better wheel for these times is in the making" (pp. 8-9). A servant-leader remains aware of the ebb and flow of socio-cultural events while constantly seeking to ameliorate shortcomings in the human condition.

Clearly, Greenleaf believes that servant leadership is crucial in times of organizational and institutional upheaval and change. He recognizes that ours is a time of "tension and conflict" (p. 9) at all levels of society. Greenleaf writes about the need for servant leadership in business, schools, government, and churches. Furthermore,

Greenleaf adds that, “it is seekers, then, who make prophets...” (1977, p. 8); thus, he links servant leadership to vision. “The variable that marks some periods as barren and some as rich in prophetic vision is in the interest, the level of seeking, the responsiveness of the hearers” (1977, p. 8). For Greenleaf, leader and follower must both be seekers and servants in order to fulfill the prophetic vision.

Most significant to my study is Greenleaf’s application of servant leadership to the conceptualization and attainment of a goal. “A mark of leaders, an attribute that puts them in a position to show the way for others, is that they are better than most at pointing the direction” (1977, p. 8). By all accounts, that is exactly what Farley did in 1939 at Mount Aloysius Academy; she pointed the way to a future that few of her colleagues comprehended and that many even feared.

The word *goal* is used here in the special sense of the overarching purpose, the big dream, the visionary concept, the ultimate consummation which one approaches but never really achieves. It is something presently out of reach; it is something to strive for, to move toward or become. It is so stated that it excites the imagination and challenges people to work for something they do not yet know how to do, something they can be proud of as they move toward it.

(Greenleaf, 1977, pp. 15-16)

Qualities of the servant-leader that Greenleaf (1977) identifies in his first essay include the servant-leader’s ability to listen and be silent, the ability to “withdraw and reorient oneself” (p. 19) so as to make “optimal use of one’s resources” (p. 19), the ability to accept others for who they are and to empathize with them, the possession of foresight, intuition, awareness, and perception, and the ability to persuade and conceptualize. Lubin (2001) notes that Greenleaf’s initial model was refined by Larry

Spears (1998), Executive Director of The Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, who identified ten characteristics of servant leadership: “listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community” (p. 32). To that list, Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) added the characteristic of “altruistic calling” the idea that servant-leaders are called to serve others at the expense of their own needs and desires.

### *Visionary Leadership Theories*

Greenleaf is not alone in his call for more leaders with vision. A review of visionary leadership literature from the past twenty five years suggests the value currently being placed on visionary leadership (Lubin, 2001). Peek (1997) traces the origins of Visionary Leadership Theory to Burns’s (1978) groundbreaking work in the area of *transforming* leadership that was later refined and redefined by Bass (1985) “through scientific inquiry” (p. 36) into *transformational* leadership. Peek (1997) cites Bennis and Nanus (Bennis 1989; Bennis & Nanus 1985), Kouzes and Posner (1988), Conger and Kanungo (1987) and Sashkin (1988) as “the most prolific writers and researchers” (p. 37) contemporary to Bass dealing with variant approaches to transformational leadership theory.

In the early 1980s, “visioning” was the latest craze in corporate America. Innovation Associates based out of Framingham, Massachusetts offered workshops in visionary leadership to corporate executives. Workshop participants were encouraged to examine the current state of their organizations and to envision what they wanted for themselves and for their organizations. In order to “move reality close to what has been envisioned” (Kiechel, 1986, pp. 127-128), participants, once they had returned to their organizations, had to *enroll* “their subordinates in the vision” (pp. 127-128). Kiechel

quotes Peter Senge: “He’s responsible (the leader) not for the vision, but first that there be an ongoing process of visioning throughout the organization. Second, the leader is ultimately responsible for the organizational learning process” (pp. 127-128).

Nonetheless, the cynical tone of Kiechel’s article (*Visionary Leadership and Beyond*) suggests that *visioning* had not yet been fully articulated.

Marshall Sashkin (*True Vision in Leadership*, 1986), leadership and performance management theorist, was among the first scholar/researchers [Office of Educational Research and Improvement, United States Department of Education] to write about the value of vision in education leadership. Sashkin describes “three major aspects to visionary leadership in action” (p. 60). First, Sashkin claims a leader must construct a vision of the ideal image of one’s school and its culture. Second, a leader must implement the vision on an organizational level. Third, a leader must implement the vision through “personal practices” (p. 60). This is accomplished through five sets of visionary leader behaviors: “effective communication practices,” “expressing the vision in unusual, exciting, and attention-grabbing ways,” consistency in leader actions, “exhibiting respect for oneself and others,” and creating “risks that organization members can buy into and share, both in action and outcome” (Sashkin, 1986, pp. 60-61). Sashkin concludes that when leaders act according to these five sets of behaviors, followers view them as charismatic thereby allowing these visionary leaders “to mobilize the members of the organization to carry out the leader’s vision and make it real” (1986, p. 61).

Sashkin developed (1984) and later refined (1995) the Leader Behavior Questionnaire (LBQ) in order to “assess and quantify a level of transformational leadership” including visionary leadership (Gerhardt, 2003, p. 8). “According to Sashkin

(1995), the LBQ correlates with such things as organizational performance and productivity, as well as organizational beliefs” (Gerhardt, 2003, p. 8).

Another major researcher and theorist in the area of visionary leadership, Burt Nanus “and his colleagues developed and tested many of the concepts of visionary leadership” (1992a, p. xxx). In *Visionary Leadership: Creating a Compelling Sense of Direction for your Organization* (1992a), Nanus began by pointing out the “short supply” (p. 4) of visionary leadership in our day and lamented “where are the leaders who could dream great dreams” (p. 15)? He defined *vision* as “a realistic, credible, and attractive future for your organization” (p. 8) and suggested that the four roles leaders must “juggle” today—“direction setter, change agent, spokesperson, and coach” (pp. 12-14)—can best be accomplished by someone who has and can communicate a clear vision (Nanus, 1992a). An organization with what Nanus calls the *right vision* is “well on its way to the realization of the dream” (p. 16), whatever that dream might be. Nanus observes that the *right vision* achieves four strategic outcomes; it: “attracts commitment and energizes people, creates meaning in workers’ lives, establishes a standard of excellence, and bridges the present and future” (1992a, pp. 16-17).

Nanus notes that beyond getting the *right vision*, an effective leader must assist in the continued evolution of the “vision-forming process” (1992a, p. 17) by encouraging subordinates to articulate their own visions, by revising/replacing the vision if it is not working, and by remaining “prudent” (Nanus, 1992b, p. 23). A *prudent visionary* is one who, among other things, does not go it alone, but rather works with others to fulfill the vision, who is not “overly idealistic,” who is vigilant “for organizational inertia,” and who never gets “complacent” (Nanus, 1992b, pp. 23-35).

Wall, Solum, and Sobol (1992) apply visionary leadership behaviors to organizational change. Though largely concerned with corporate rather than educational change, they assert the value of visionary leadership during times of change. “It is precisely during these times of chaos that leaders must possess one property: the ability to develop and share a clearly defined sense of direction—as vision of the desired future” (Wall, Solum, & Sobol, 1992, p. 4). Though the behavior of a visionary leader is often equated with altruistic concerns, Wall, Solum, and Sobol stress the “practical” (p. 4) side of visionary behavior. The “new vision” (p. 19) recognizes that traditional “top-down” (p. 19) leadership may be too unresponsive to patterns of ongoing change within an organization. “Authority is being shifted to frontline workers not to help them actualize themselves but to improve quality and production” (p. 19).

Though Wall, Solum, and Sobol (1992) never offer one definition of visionary leadership, they do, on the other hand, suggest some of the qualities of a visionary leader. They observe that a visionary leader “is much like a symphony conductor” (p. 23) making a harmonious whole out of disparate “autonomous” (p. 23) elements. Also, a visionary leader is one who is “acutely aware of ... [his/her] strengths and weaknesses,” one who can “motivate and empower” subordinates, and one who is a “culture builder” (pp. 23-25). *Culture building* is essential since the visionary leader recognizes the value of the *team* (“shared mission”), a team that can only function in an atmosphere “that promotes trust, participation, communication, inspiration, and individual empowerment” (p. 26).

Wall, Solum, and Sobol (1992) stress that a clearly defined mission statement with an ability to act quickly and decisively in times of corporate change may decide whether or not an organization survives. They note that at such times subordinates should have

more, less rigidly defined, roles to play within the organization. However, subordinates who suddenly find they have been given greater responsibility and autonomy without the guidance of a clearly defined mission statement tend to respond with “anger and distrust” (p. 39); subordinates believe that management may have a “hidden agenda” (p. 39).

Wall, Solum, and Sobol (1992) identify four steps in the change process: “the announcement stage,” “implementing the vision,” “the change begins to take,” and “completing the transition” (p. 126). The length of time required for an organization to go through these four stages is largely dependent on the nature and scope of the change. They claim that a major “broad-scale transformation” (p. 127) can take three to five years. According to Wall, Solum, and Sobol failure is generally the result of “over-estimating” (p. 127) the *announcement stage*, i.e. assuming that by simply making the announcement that the change will automatically occur, and by “underestimating” (p. 128) the time and effort needed to implement the change.

Wall, Solum, and Sobol (1992) posit yet another, and simpler, change model. This three-stage model (“the Ending, the Middle Zone, and the New Beginning”) (pp. 165-166) places much importance on what happens before implementation of the vision (New Beginning) can occur. Being able to let go of something old and long-cherished (the Ending) and being able to negotiate through the period of “confusion and self-examination” (p. 166) (the Middle Zone) is the only way that an organization can hope to successfully accomplish change (the New Beginning).

Dilts (1996) defines leadership in term of “skill” (p. 2) sets that can be learned in order to become a more effective leader. Dilts identifies four skill sets which he considers essential to all effective leadership: self skills (understanding oneself), relational skills (how well one works with others), strategic thinking skills (goal setting)



and systemic thinking skills (understanding dynamics of the organization). These skill sets are used in order to put “vision into action” (p. 19) by moving along a path that begins with creation of a vision and articulation of the mission and ends with communication of the vision to others who will assist in putting the vision into action.

Cox and Rock (1997) suggest that visionary leaders must be able to see clearly; they must have “20/20 vision” (p. 3). This clear vision is supported by what Cox and Rock call *The Seven Pillars of Visionary Leadership*:

- 1) visioning- “a revolution of the imagination” (p. 1) ,
- 2) mapping- a “mental map” (p. xviii) plotting the way to the vision,
- 3) journeying- valuing what was successful in the past while looking ahead to the future,
- 4) learning- linked to self-knowledge and assessment,
- 5) mentoring- “inspir[ing] others to embrace the vision”(p. xix),
- 6) leading (acting as a servant leader),
- 7) and valuing- honoring one’s “historical value roots” (p. xix).

Harper (2001) coins a new term for leaders who exhibit visionary thinking; he calls them *breakthrough leaders*. Reformulating many of the theories posited by Sashkin, Nanus, and others, Harper defines a *breakthrough leader* as one who demonstrates “courage and resilience,” is “decisive (similar to Wall, Solum, and Sobol’s “need for speed”), demonstrates “impatient patience” (understanding the difference between what must be done immediately and what needs “time to germinate”), and “provides the spark that ignites commitment” (pp. 30-34). Harper, too, notes that change is a collective group effort and that effective *breakthrough leaders* not only motivate followers, but they “develop leaders” (p. 39).

Like other visionary leadership theorists, Harper believes that organizations must be willing to break with the past and be more “forward-focused” (p. xv).

“Breakthrough leadership involves developing a shared and compelling vision for what can be, what should be, and what must be” (pp. 30-31).

For Bill Pierce (1997), there are pragmatic reasons for needing visionary leadership among higher education administrators: “Higher education administrators need strong leadership and managerial skills to address problems and fulfill responsibilities amidst tight budgets and limited resources. Visionary leadership is also needed for goal-setting efforts and to accomplish daily administrative functions” (p. 34). Stressing the importance of both *vision* and *purpose* as vital components of visionary leadership, Pierce quotes Peter Senge (1990): “Vision is a definite picture of a desired future, while purpose is more abstract....Nothing happens until there is vision, but vision without a sense of purpose is equally futile” (p. 34).

An article by Perry Pascarella [then editor-in-chief of *Industry Week*] (1989) further suggests how the concept of visionary leadership was rapidly gaining recognition and acceptance among corporate leaders. Pascarella cites Ronald H. Walker, senior partner and managing director of Kom/Ferry International, as saying that visionary leadership rather than management skills would be vital to organizations in the future. “Leaders will have to be more dynamic, open, and charismatic” (Pascarella, 1989, p. 48). Pascarella also cites Charles W. Joiner, Jr., president of Mead Imaging, who stresses the importance of the “spiritual” nature of humans as they grow in “self-actualization” (p. 49), thus echoing the transformational essence of visionary leadership.

After almost twenty-five years, global interest in visionary leadership theory remains strong. A study conducted by Chandprapalet and Suwannapirom (2008) “to

explore the components of leaders visioning, adaptability and managing change, as well [as] to provide practical guidelines by utilizing developmental assignments to promote visionary leadership in organization[s]” (p. 1), conducted “in depth” interviews of “twenty-six top management participants” (p. 5) from the “Future Leader” project (2005) intended to train future Bank of Thailand executives in “transformational working practices” (p. 5).

From their analysis of data obtained from these in-depth interviews, Chandprapalet and Suwannapirom concluded that five components were essential to the development of visionary leadership: strategic management, leadership personality and behavior, innovation and change management, problem solving and decision making, and organization diagnosis. Citing Ireland and Hitt (1999), Chandprapalet and Suwannapirom (2008) define *strategic management* as a leader’s ability “to anticipate, envision, maintain flexibility, and empower others to initiate strategic change as necessary” (p. 3). In regards to *leadership personality and behavior*, citing McCarthy, O’Connell, & Hall (2005), Chandprapalet and Suwannapirom (2008) explain that leaders need “to be aware of self-leadership and adaptability, and present behaviorally complex responses[s] appropriate to crisis and challenges” (p. 3). *Innovation and change management* compel leaders to involve subordinates in the change process while challenging their “old assumptions” and helping them “overcome their resistance to change” (p. 3). Noting that “most strategic decisions are made by humans” (p. 3), Chandprapalet and Suwannapirom (2008) observe that *problem solving and decision making* can only occur if leaders are able to “counteract groupthink and cognitive biases” (p. 4) thereby fostering a creative and supportive problem solving environment that develops “individual talent” and “fosters a readiness for change” (p. 4). Citing

Cummings and Worley (2001), *organization diagnosis* is defined as leaders “need to understand their organization[s] before attempting to change and improve them so that the strategies fit the organizational unique characteristics, needs, and circumstances” (p. 4).

In one of the most unusual, compelling and convincing theories of visionary leadership, Edward Wons (1999) separates the visionary function from the leadership role. For Wons, being a visionary is something greater than being a leader; one can be either a visionary or a leader, but not a visionary leader.

The role of a visionary is one that sees the overall organization from a perspective greater than self. Janet Hagberg describes visionaries, in terms of personal power, as people who have a view of life greater than self and are not motivated to seek leadership or management. They accept leadership only when it is thrust upon them or as a means of creating a greater good. Once the greater good is accomplished, the leadership role is relinquished. I submit that visionaries prefer to work behind the scenes influencing the organization’s culture avoiding the limitations imposed on leaders and managers.

The visionary by nature, or definition, holds views different from the organization as a whole. The visionary may be able to escape the limitations of management and leadership, but does not escape the social control exerted on the individual. Given these two opposing forces, a visionary, simply to survive in the organization, must develop a strong internal frame of reference for guidance. (p. 29)

## Organizational Change Theories

Understanding the complexities of organizations—how they are structured, how the people who work in them interrelate, how they evolve and change over time—has been a concern of management theorists, sociologists, psychologists, and writers since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, understanding how and why organizations change is as important as understanding the behaviors and motivations of the leaders who lead through that change. Most scholar-researchers in the area of organizational change attribute the origins of organizational change theory to the work of prominent Gestalt psychologist, Kurt Lewin.

### *Lewin's Unfreezing/Refreezing Theory*

Kent (2001) explains Lewin's simple unfreezing/refreezing analogy in laymen's terms. Kent suggests that an organization is like a resistant block of ice that is not in a size or shape that will fit into one's punchbowl. By melting the ice, placing the water into a different mold, and then refreezing it, one can obtain the desired shape. The same is true, according to Lewin (1951), of organizations.

The *unfreezing* stage "requires adding new forces for change [such as a new leader or a new mission] or removal of some of the existing factors that are at play in perpetuating the behavior" (Wirth, 2004, p. 1). At this stage, subordinates may experience much anxiety at the thought of having to try something new or they may lack the motivation even to attempt a change.

At the second stage ("unfrozen and moving to a new state" or "making the change") (Wirth, 2004, p. 1; Kent, 2001, p. 2), subordinates are offered an alternative to current unsatisfactory organizational conditions. A clearly articulated "view of the new state" (Wirth, p. 1) becomes a motivating factor to make the change.

Finally, *refreezing* is essential at the third stage “so that the change becomes a permanent part of the operation” (Kent, 2001, p. 2). Otherwise, the organization would remain in a perpetual state of flux with the new changes never being fully implemented into its culture.

### *Tichy’s Strategic Change Model*

Noel Tichy (1983), organizational behaviorist and leadership consultant, constructs a strategic change model by plying the three “strands of the strategic rope” (p. 10): the technical strand (a belief that organizations change based on empirical knowledge), the political strand (a belief that organizations change according to its internal power structure), and the cultural strand (a belief that an organization can be changed by altering its shared values).

Tichy states that these “three dominant traditions [which] have guided thinking about organizations and the practice of change” (p. 7) need to be “brought together” (p. 7) to form a new strategic change model. A *strategic* change is one that is prompted by a “*threshold* phenomenon” (p. 18) that usually arises during a time of crisis. In order to successfully manage change through a six-step process—creating a “comprehensive organizational model” (p. 21), formulating diagnostic strategies, identifying intervention techniques, outlining conditions needed for success, devising an evaluation plan that assesses “outcomes of intervention” (p. 21), and designing an implementation plan, Tichy suggests that “three ingredients must be present...: 1) a diagnostic capability”..., 2) a capacity for developing change strategies..., and 3) “a cluster of skills and competencies required to implement” the changes (p. 20).

### *Schein's Theory of Leadership and Cultural Change*

Social psychologist, Edgar Schein (1985, 1992, 2004) examines the interaction of leadership and organizational culture and, more specifically, how leadership can impact cultural change. Schein claims that culture and leadership “are two sides of the same coin; neither can really be understood by itself” (p. 1). Schein defines culture as:

...a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 17)

Leaders are connected to all phases of culture formation and transformation, from a founder/leader's establishment of a new organization's values and core beliefs to leaders who assist in the cultural *differentiation* that occurs at an organization's *midlife*. Schein (2004) notes that “the role of the leader in ‘managing’ culture differs at the different stages of organizational evolution” (p. 291). Schein's “conceptual model for managed culture change” (p. 319) owes much to the work of Lewin, whose unfreezing/refreezing model Schein cites as being similar to his own. An organization's stakeholders must first go through a period of “disconfirmation” or “disequilibrium” (p. 320) [Lewin's *unfreezing*] in order to create a sense of anxiety, thereby prompting a desire for change in order to survive. Next, the organization needs to experience “cognitive restructuring” (p. 325), essentially learning to think in new ways. In the final *refreezing* stage, new behaviors and ideas are “reinforced to produce once-again confirming data” (p. 328).

## *Senge's Learning Organizations*

Organizational systems theorist, Peter Senge (1990/2006) speaks of organizational change in terms of *learning organizations*:

...where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together. (p. 3)

*Learning organizations* evolve from the interaction of five strategic disciplines (personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision, team learning, and systems thinking), with the fifth discipline, systems thinking, designated as the most important since “it is the discipline that integrates the disciplines” (Senge, 1990/2006, pp. 11-12). *Systems thinking* promotes problem solving via an examination of integrated patterns rather than studying isolated systemic components.

The other four disciplines, the “core” disciplines, are essential in building an effective learning organization. As the term implies, *personal mastery* is a high level of individual competency achieved through a deep commitment to lifelong learning. “*Mental models* are deeply ingrained assumptions...that influence how we understand the world and how we take action” (Senge, 1990/2006, p. 8). A *shared vision* motivates and inspires all the stakeholders, from upper level management to entry-level employees. *Team learning* occurs when an organization’s stakeholders engage in problem-solving *dialogues* which ultimately lead to “extraordinary capacities for coordinated action” (p. 9). A *learning organization* is always engaged in *practicing* these five disciplines, since mastery is never possible—“You never arrive” (p. 10).



Recently, Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, and Flowers (2004) have advanced “new ways of thinking about *learning*” (p. 10). As in his earlier work, Senge et al. is still concerned with learning’s impact on individual, organizational, and societal change. Now, however, he is focused on how “deeper levels of learning create increasing awareness of the larger whole” (p. 11), suggesting that deeper knowledge leads to a more profound understanding of how an individual or a system evolves and changes over time.

The theoretical model based on this deeper learning, the Theory of the U, is a three-stage process: an observational stage wherein one becomes “one with the world” (Senge et al, p. 88), a reflective stage that allows time for the emergence of “inner knowing” (p. 88), and an action stage when one “act[s] swiftly, with a natural flow” (p. 88). These three stages (sensing, presencing, and realizing) form the “U” with *presencing* in the *bowl* or deepest part of the “U” signifying its strategic importance in the change process.

Standard theories of change revolve around making decisions, determining “the vision,” and very often acting through a charismatic figure who can command people’s “commitment to the vision.” But [Brian] Arthur spoke of reaching a state of clarity about and connection to what is emerging, to an “inner knowing” where, “in a sense, there is no decision making. What to do just becomes obvious,” and what is achieved “depends on where you’re coming from and who you are as a person.” (p. 89)

#### *Kanter, Stein, and Jick’s Organizational Change Model*

To understand the Kanter, Stein, and Jick (1992) change model one need only remember the number *three*: the three kinds of movement that occur within

organizations, the three kinds of change associated with those movements, and the three kinds of actions that can be taken in response to those movements.

The three movements can be viewed in terms of dynamic inter-relationships: how individuals “jockey for power” (Kanter et al., p. 15) within an organization, how the various components of an organization interact as the organization “progresses through its *life cycle*” (p. 15), and how the organization interacts within a larger, global context. These three movements can lead to changes in *identity* (how an organization reconfigures itself to accommodate environmental changes), *coordination* (how an organization changes itself internally), and *control* (how an organization changes based on internal power struggles). *Change strategists* tend to address issues related to the organization as it struggles to survive within its macro environment, *change implementors* assist with internal, micro environmental issues, and *change recipients*, who have had little input into, but are greatly impacted by, the change process, are presented with changes formulated by higher ranking members of the organization (Kanter et al., 1992).

#### *Burke and Litwin’s Causal Model of Organization Performance and Change*

W. Warner Burke (2002), social-organizational psychologist, credits Litwin’s 1960’s research into organizational climate for creating the “groundwork for what later became our overall organizational framework” (p. 195)—the Burke-Litwin Causal Model of Organization Performance and Change (1992). Expanding upon the work of many earlier theorists (e.g., Kerr and Slocum, Nadler and Tushman, Tichy) Burke and Litwin presented their model in the form of a web-like chart with twelve interconnected components essential “for organizational understanding and analysis” (p. 200). This complex model attempts to capture the dynamic interactions of both transactional and transformational models of leadership. The model illustrates the dynamic interchange

between *external environment* and *individual and organizational performance* and how these two factors impact the other ten performance/change factors identified by Burke and Litwin (essentially interacting factors generally internal to the organization, such as leadership, structure, and management practices) (Burke, 2002).

*Guest's Process of Change Model and Conditions of Effective Authority*

When Guest (1962) penned the metaphorical opening lines to *Organizational Change: The Effect of Successful Leadership* (later revised as *Organizational Change through Effective Leadership*, Guest, Hersey & Blanchard, 1977) in which he compared an “acutely ill” patient who becomes “extremely healthy” (p. 1) to the change process within an organization transitioning from decline to prosperity, he acknowledged that “the study of change in a complex human group is a relatively new field of theoretical inquiry” (p. 1). That was almost fifty years ago, but, in the larger context of human history, organizational change theory is still in its infancy.

Guest (1962) cited the groundbreaking 1950's work of E. Wight Bakke, Talcott Parsons, James March, and Herbert Simon that dealt with the structure of organizations and the behaviors of individuals within those organizations. Guest, in 1962, was calling for “more empirical material, more real life studies in on-going organizations” (p. 2). He cautioned future researchers to consider the factor of *time* and how it influences the *process* through which organizational change is accomplished. He stated that his study, conducted over several years of an automobile plant facing closure due to management problems, was his “modest attempt” (p. 4) to study “change over time in complex organizations” (p. 4). By studying the plant before and after the period of managerial change, Guest established a baseline requirement for future longitudinal studies of organizations.

Guest's (1962) multi-step methodology began with his compilation of data, gleaned from multiple interviews of participants and from performance and personnel records obtained from all levels of the organization, into a *descriptive* narrative that allowed the participants to "speak for themselves" (p. 7). In his analysis and interpretation, Guest examined "essential differences" (p. 7) between the two time periods (before and after the change in management) under consideration according to data assessed according to certain themes, such as "interactions," "sentiments," and "measurable results of activities" (p. 7).

Guest (1962) concluded by proposing a model for the "process of change" (p. 106) derived from his study of the automobile plant. He described seven sequential, often overlapping, *phases* in the change process:

- 1) introduction of a new change agent (i.e. a new manager),
- 2) change agent "becoming informed about the needs of the organization,"
- 3) "'institutionalizing' interactions" among personnel,
- 4) "enlarging the span of cognition" (making all members of the organization aware of the roles played by others and how the organization *fits* together),
- 5) "planning and action,"
- 6) "reinforcement of results,"
- 7) and "aftermath" (the continued improvement in organizational performance even after the change agent leaves) (pp. 109-114).

Of even greater relevance to this study, Guest (1962) synthesizes these ideas into five "conditions which appear to be present in the effective exercise of authority" (p. 126). Guest's *Conditions of Effective Authority* include:

- 1) "leeway to act" (the leader can act without supervisory oversight),

- 2) “time perspective” (the leader allows a longer time to meet goals; leader is focused on “future planning”),
- 3) “horizontal work-flow interaction” (instead of the traditional vertical chain of command),
- 4) “enlarging the span of cognition of the leader and subordinates” (as in #4, above),
- 5) and “group interaction” (use of “primary groups” to carry out tasks rather than via chain of command directives) (pp. 128-132).

Guest (1962) reduced his ideas about how effective leaders manage change even further by suggesting that effective leaders know how to work within, and sometimes circumvent, *the formal organization* so as to find out about and act upon “matters which are important to those at lower levels” (p. 132). By being sensitive to the concerns of subordinates, a leader begins to “diagnose their environment” (pp. 132-133) so as to formulate appropriate situational strategies for dealing both with subordinate concerns and with problems arising from the change process.

### Organizational Story and Storytelling

Boyce’s (1996) seminal critical review used three frameworks, “social constructivism, organizational symbolism, and critical theory” (p. 1), to categorize and assess the first 25 years of studies into organizational stories and storytelling. Boyce (1996) noted that these studies began the process of answering some vital questions about which stakeholders tell, interpret, and attribute meaning to an organization’s stories. Among the earliest and most notable researchers, Boyce credited Clark (1970, 1972) with coining the term *organizational saga* to describe the connection between “...a charismatic leader and strong purpose with a claim of unique accomplishment...” (p. 15).

Following Clark's lead, Mitroff and Kilmann (1975) stressed the importance of *epic myths*, events of great accomplishments usually during times of adversity in an organization's history. *Epic myths* can be found at all levels of business and may be used to train new employees, to preserve and transmit corporate values, culture, and traditions, and to disseminate information about what makes a company "unique" (James & Minnis, 2004, p. 23).

Boyce (1996) cited several early single-perspective studies focused on how perceived leaders impact their organization's culture, among these "Clark (1970, 1972), Hackman (1984), Martin et al. (1983), Pettigrew (1979), Schein (1983, 1985), and Wilkins (1978, 1983, 1984)" (p. 15). In addition, Boyce (1996) cited similar single-perspective studies, including Gregory (1983), Reynolds (1986), and Rose (1988), that take an opposing view which suggests an organization's culture is created by all the stakeholders and is, in fact, "...shaped by forces beyond the control of the founder" (p. 16). Martin's (1992) study advanced the single-perspective framework of these earlier studies by proposing a "...three-perspective framework [that] presents a challenge to traditional studies...and lays a foundation for developing fuller, more textured expressions of meaning in organizations by utilizing more than one perspective" (Boyce, 1996, p. 16).

Other studies have sought to understand the organizational story process, especially how narratives may be used and altered over time to assist an organization focused on change. Such institutions are *remythologizing*, "...a process used ...to interpret and understand organizational symbology, bring it to consciousness, and enable organizational renewal (Agmon & McWhinney, 1989; McWhinney & Battista, 1988)" (Boyce, 1996, p. 17). Remythologizing may facilitate the organizational change process

by reminding stakeholders of founding narratives recounted in order to inspire current and future change. A significant contribution to the study of myth and remythologizing is McWhinney's (1995) study that "...uncovered nine metaphors related to health in an exploration with health-care professionals" (Boyce, 1996, p. 17), thereby suggesting an interesting framework for assessing organizational narratives.

A more multi-perspective, collective understanding of how organizations make use of stories within a "structurally closed system" was suggested by Boyce's (1990, 1995) studies and Boje's (1995) study of "...the array of official and unofficial stories about Walt Disney and the Disney Studios" (Boyce, 1996, p. 18). Even in his earliest studies, Boje advocated a polyphonic comprehension of organizational storytelling (Boyce, 1996). Boje's (1991) study conducted in an office-supply firm observed that "...stories were dynamic, varied by context...were frequently challenged, reinterpreted, and revised by hearers..." (p. 106), which led him to theorize that organizations are "collective storytelling system[s] in which the performance of stories is a key part of members' sense making and a means to allow them to supplement individual memories with institutional memory" (Boje, 1991, p. 106). Recently, Boje (2008) has continued to refine and redefine his theory into a complex interpretation of what constitutes a storytelling organization, in particular by distinguishing "living story" from "dead narrative" (p. 5).

Boje (2008) suggests that there are at least eight types of "narrative and story sensemaking:"

1. BME retrospective narrative ["...Beginning, Middle, and End progressive sequencing of retrospective narrative..."],
2. fragmented retrospective narratives ["...terse, interrupted, non-linear..."],

3. antenarrative [a "...nonlinear, incoherent, collective, unplotted, and pre-narrative speculation...a proper narrative can be constituted"],
4. Tamara [...landscape of space-time distribution of rooms...in which storytelling and narrative is moving"],
5. emotive-ethical [...embodied memory that provokes present ethical inquiry..."],
6. horsesense [...embodied telling and listening in the social moment of answering..."],
7. dialectics [...debate among fragment tellers..."],
8. and dialogisms [...different voices, styles, and ideas expressing a plurality of logics in different ways, but not always in the same place and time"] (pp. 255-264).

Boje acknowledges the interplay of these eight story patterns in the formation of collective memory (2008, pp. 75-77).

Boje credits Deleuze and Guattari (1987) for theorizing four collective memory types:

1. managerial [...a 'General Linear Reality model...' (p. 87)],
2. punctual [...having a point in space...' (p. 88)],
3. multilineal [...transhistorical...breaks with horizontal and vertical points...' (p. 89)],
4. and polyphonic [...plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses...' (p. 261)].

As is true of the eight types of sensemaking, Boje suggests that these four collective memory types are interconnected and help establish the full spectrum of a storytelling organization's collective memory (2008, pp. 75-93).



Boyce (1996) concluded that the first 25 years of organizational storytelling research had been used to determine how organizations and their stakeholders used stories to learn, lead change, solve problems, assimilate new employees, make sense of organizational culture, and focus groups of stakeholders on organizational values and mission.

Driscoll and McKee (2007) cited studies since the mid-1990s, “e.g., Adamson et al., 2006; ...Fleming, 2001;...Gabriel, 2004;...Parkin, 2004” (p. 206), that have focused on “...confirming shared experiences, generating commitment, renewing a sense of purpose, co-creating a vision for the organization, engaging emotions, driving strategic change, and facilitating sense-making” (p. 206). In particular, Gabriel (2000), in *Storytelling in Organizations: Facts, Fictions, and Fantasies*, made significant contributions to organizational storytelling theory and research methodology. Most importantly, Gabriel (2002), like Boje, argued that “not all narratives are stories” (p. 5), that not all stories have significance or are “good” stories, that stories do not have to be factual in order for them to convey meaning, and that “stories...should not be seen as automatically dissolving ‘fact’” (p. 5).

Denning (2000, 2004, 2005, 2007) suggested that the *springboard story* could become a strategic tool for a transformational leader attempting to lead organizational change. A *springboard story* is a relatively short narrative that “communicates a complex idea and springs people into action” (Denning, 2005, p. 1). Key to success of the *springboard story* is its performance in “minimalist fashion” by a leader (Denning, 2005, p. 3) who follows three steps of “getting the audience’s attention,” “eliciting desire for a different future,” and “reinforcing with reason” (Denning, 2007, pp. 31-36). Also, Denning (2007) theorized six key enabling conditions that augment a leader’s oral

presentation: clarity in regards to what needs to be changed, the leader's obvious commitment to the change, understanding the audience's point of view, cultivating an ability to "think narratively," "telling authentically true stories," and "deploying the body language of leadership" (pp. 38-47).

In recent years, several researchers have studied the dynamics of organizational storytelling in their doctoral dissertations. In particular, four studies (Kleasen, 2001; McCarthy, 2002; Bailey, 2007; Vaccaro, 2007) are relevant to this study.

Kleasen's (2001) phenomenological study examined the relationship between organizational collective memory and organizational performance. Themes related to performance emerged during her analysis of interviews which led her to conclude that organizational members' future visions "...were built upon continuing current performance strengths and resolving the current deficits by returning to the strengths of the past" (Abstract).

McCarthy's (2002) case study explored how organizational stories transmitted information and values across an organization especially during times of stress and strategic change. McCarthy found a direct relationship between the quantity of stories told and the degree to which an organization was resilient and more willing to adapt to change during difficult times. McCarthy concluded by affirming the practical value of storytelling in organizations and by noting that "...storytelling helps bind communities together through the active inculcation of shared value systems being expressed in the stories themselves" (p. 201).

Bailey's (2007) study is unusual in that her pool of randomly selected participants is all members of an organizational storytelling group that meets weekly to tell personal workplace stories. As the group's founder and facilitator, Bailey became increasingly

interested in the participants' [storytellers and story listeners] expressed sense of connectedness upon telling and hearing the stories. Bailey wanted to understand the process of telling a story from the storyteller's point of view and to understand how the storytellers communicated personal experiences at work after their storytelling experience. Bailey concluded that her study's most significant contribution was the discovery that a workplace needs to "...foster a storytelling environment, to grasp the organizational and personal benefits of storytelling, and move it away from perceptions of...unprioritized uses of organizational time and talent..." (p. 235).

Vaccaro's (2007) study sought to understand how one organization successfully managed a major structural change over the course of twelve years. Much of what Vaccaro discovered from his study is supported in Denning's (2000, 2004, 2005, 2007) work and closely parallels Denning's steps for leading change through carefully crafted and performed narratives. Vaccaro observed that leaders within the organization engaged all the organization's stakeholders, stressed the need for change, were consistent and persistent in their narrative, and offered evidence supporting the change. Vaccaro concluded that "organizations gain their meaning and coherence from the language patterns in which they are embedded. Organizations...can be seen as patterns of collective actions inspired by certain sensible and coherent storylines" (p. 6).

#### Objects of Material Culture

Not all the data collected for this study is textually based; a significant portion took the form of cultural objects/artifacts and photographs. In Chapter 4, data presented in Act III, scene 2, "The Object Speaks," pertains entirely to Mount Aloysius architecture and cultural objects. Prown (1982) suggested a methodology for understanding objects of human creation. Prown delineated objects according to six categories including art,

diversions, adornment, landscape modifications including architecture, applied art, and devices. He did not include oral or written works among those artifacts, though it is the contention of this researcher that stories as human creations could be regarded as textual objects of material culture. Prown devised a three-step methodology for assessing objects of material culture: description (physical, content, and formal), deduction (how viewer connects with the object), and speculation (what the viewer imagines the object to be about).

Whalen (2009) revised Prown's methodology and created her own three-tiered structure for analyzing vintage photographs. Whalen was intrigued by an old photograph album that she had purchased at an antique shop. Wanting to know more about the girl who had presumably assembled the album, Whalen devised a system for describing what she saw in the photographs, for filling in the gaps in her knowledge through research, and for making personal speculations about what she imagined to be behind the content of the images. Whalen called her three stages of analysis: her story, back story, and my story. Whalen's methodology was used in Chapter 5 of this study as the analytical vehicle for assessing the data presented in Chapter 4.

#### Recent Studies of Women in Catholic Higher Education

Contemporary research into Catholic higher education and, in particular, the participation of women in Catholic higher education during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, has been the focus of several books and doctoral dissertations. Notable recent studies relevant to this study include, Tarvardian's (1990) *An Uncompromising Commitment to Mission: Mundelein College and the Advancement of Women's Higher Education, 1930-1950*, Struder-Ellis's (1996) *The Social Transformation of Four-year U.S. Women's Colleges, 1960 to 1990*, Eden's (2002) *Seasons of Change: Catholic Higher Education from the*

*End of the Second World War to the Decade Following the Second Vatican Council*, Higgins's (2002) *Leader Behavior in the Development of Vision in Catholic Higher Education*, Getty's (2004) *Resiliency of Small Catholic Higher Education Institutions: Mission, Finance, and Enrollment*, and Lynch's (2007) *The Impact of Organizational Culture, Feminist Theory and Leadership on the First Seven Presidents on the Development of Mercyhurst College (1926-1972)*.

Tarvardian's (1990) study examines how "Munderlein College personified the mission of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary as envisioned" (p. 65) by the order's five foundresses. Like the Sisters of Mercy, the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary were founded in Dublin in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (1831). Also, like the Sisters of Mercy, the B.V.M. congregation's mission was focused on working among the poor, in particular by providing what the congregation believed to be the "greatest need of the day," education (p. 65).

In a brief overview of the early history of women's education in the United States, Tarvardian (citing Woody, 1929) notes that, in spite of Lucy Downing's 1636 letter to Massachusetts Bay Colony Governor John Winthrop pleading that women be provided "...a college like a man's...to teach them all that men are taught" (p. 2), prior to the admission of four women to Oberlin in 1837 (citing Butts, 1971) the education of women was primarily centered around their domestic role. This is confirmed in Solomon (1985) who writes of the longing of Lucy Stone, "the first woman in Massachusetts to receive the A.B. degree (Oberlin, 1847), to 'go off with the boys to college'" (p. 43).

Studer-Ellis's (1996) review of literature is limited entirely to *The Evolution and Legitimacy of Women's Colleges* with a significant portion of that chapter devoted to the history of women's colleges in the United States from 1855-1960. Studer-Ellis's study,

like this one, is concerned with “organizational change that proposes organizational legitimacy” (p. iv) and how the legitimacy of organizational change impacts “the likelihood of organizational change” (p. iv). Studer-Ellis is interested in the role played by “a declining customer base and financial adversity” (p. iv) in the decision of four-year women’s colleges (1960-1990) to become coeducational. This study examined how certain factors, college prestige, size, denominational or non-denominational status, and enrollments, influenced a college’s decision to become coeducational.

Of Studer-Ellis’s multiple findings, the one most significant to this study was his assertion that, “contrary to previous theory and evidence,” increased “likelihood of change in educational organizations” was significantly influenced by dropping enrollments and “financial adversity” (p. 220). Certainly, evidence suggests that declining academy enrollment and impending foreclosure were both factors that prompted the founding of Mount Aloysius Junior College, the focus of this research, in 1939.

Eden’s (2002) detailed study lists among its purposes his investigation into “the social, economic, and intellectual factors that initiated significant changes on Catholic campuses following the end of World War II” (p. 5). Beyond his thematic analysis of periodical literature, Eden constructed his historical narrative using data gathered from interviews of three retired Catholic university presidents so as to learn about the “theological motivation behind” (p. 5) the changes they made during their administrations.

Some of Eden’s (2002) findings begin to inform the socio-historical context of this study. In particular, Eden noted that there was “a discernable continuity of change in Catholic higher education” (p. 37) after World War II as well as “an erosion of the

denominational isolation of Catholic higher education” (p. 46). Though this study is primarily concerned with events leading up to and immediately following the founding of Mount Aloysius Junior College in 1939, Eden’s study suggests that the late 1930s to the end of World War II in 1945 were transitional years marking the end of the post-World War I (1920s and 1930s) *Catholic Renaissance* and the start of a post-World War II era of continuous change in Catholic higher education. Inescapable socio-historical events, along with the *right vision*, contributed to the perhaps inevitable transition from academy to junior college at Mount Aloysius.

Higgins’s (2002) study, like this one, was concerned with leader vision in Catholic higher education. Her study “...examined the leadership behavior of Catholic university presidents to: discover and describe transformational leadership behavior, explain the process of vision development, and investigate leadership in a new and unique context” (Abstract). An analysis of data collected from interviews of former Catholic university presidents, some of their followers, and archival resources, led Higgins to conclude that transformational leadership which leads to vision development does exist in Catholic higher education. Higgins’s findings were presented in the form of “portraits which describe[d] how each president established, implemented and accomplished a vision by leading followers...in the development of a complex and dynamic process” (Abstract). This research, too, is concerned with one woman’s vision and how she led her sometimes reluctant followers through an arduous period of organizational transition.

In her considerations for future studies, Higgins (2002), while claiming that hers is the first study to examine the development of vision by Catholic university presidents, suggests that instead of a multi-case study, a researcher may want to limit a study to one presidency in order to gain knowledge from a larger number of followers and

stakeholders. Higgins notes that her study had not allowed "...for in-depth research into the role of faculty in the development of the vision" (p. 13) and that the four presidents she had interviewed had stressed the importance of faculty in the implementation of their visions. To some extent, this study does have this narrower focus with greater knowledge being gleaned from interviews of former faculty, students, and associates of Farley and Shields.

Getty's (2000) research into the role that mission, finance, and enrollment play in the resiliency of small Catholic colleges led to inconclusive results since she could not find a significant correlation between mission and finance or mission and enrollment due to the fact that the institutions she surveyed were "not strong in their missions" (p. 58). Getty citing Leslie and Fretwell (1996) defined a resilient institution as one "...that uses a focused and distinctive mission to survive in times of distress and to thrive in times of success" (p. 21). She recommended future research into these areas even suggesting that researchers may want to look back at earlier times to acquire more "trend data" (p. 63).

Lynch's (2007) recent study of the transformational leadership behaviors of the first seven (all Religious Sisters of Mercy) presidents of Mercyhurst College is as closely aligned with the intentions of this study as any other reviewed. As with this study, Lynch's historical case study approach analyzed and interpreted data collected from interviews, biographies, personal communications, and archival documents. Lynch's findings are classified as *historical*, i.e., organizational history, history of the Sisters of Mercy, curriculum, cultural events, and biographical accounts and *other findings*, assessment of the leadership style of each president, impact of each president on organizational culture, and "leadership theories viewed through a feminist lens" (p. 143).



Of Lynch's (2007) findings, the one most noteworthy in relation to this study confirmed the visionary leadership of the Sisters of Mercy especially as they undertake "...to transmit their charism and enduring values to lay leadership" (p. 160). Regrettably, Lynch made no mention of the significance of her study or of her findings, nor did she offer suggestion for future research.

On the other hand, Lubin's (2001) study of the congruency of visionary leader behaviors with their servant leadership characteristics offers nine possible areas for further study. One of her suggestions is particularly relevant to this study. Lubin suggested that a future researcher "study the spirituality of the effective school leader and its impact on the school culture. Would there be differences or similarities in a school culture of a leader who is spiritual versus someone who is a servant leader" (p. 95)?

Though Lubin (2001) never defined *spirituality*, based on her findings one would surmise that she may be suggesting certain religious beliefs and core life values that inform, direct, and give meaning to one's life. Lubin implied that her participants had an understanding of spirituality "as an ethical framework incorporating integrity into one's life rather than just involvement in an organized religion" (p. 69). Lubin noted that "over half of the participants found their spirituality to be relevant to their thinking and beliefs within the school environment....Spirituality provided opportunities for deeper reflection in order to do the right or ethical thing" (p. 70).

The purpose of Lubin's (2001) study was "to identify the behaviors of visionary leaders within small school districts...to examine their congruency with the ten characteristics of servant leadership" (Abstract). Lubin interviewed eighteen leaders identified as *visionary leaders* and found that her participants "exhibited behaviors that closely matched many of the servant leadership characteristics" (Abstract).

Lubin stated that another significant theme to emerge from her study was that “visionary leaders who self-identified as ‘passionate about their work’ also displayed an astute awareness of stewardship” (Abstract). Furthermore, Lubin adds that “every participant clearly recognized that having a vision was a critical element to being an effective and powerful leader” (p. 91). Lubin’s study concluded that the importance of vision was the only point on which there was 100% participant agreement.

#### History of Catholic Girls’ Academies

Though some academies existed before 1800, “the largest expansion...came between 1830 and 1850. At mid-century more than a quarter of a million students were enrolled in over 6,000 academies” (Solomon, 1985). Solomon, quoting Benjamin Rush, noted that the liberal arts dominated in the separate female academies. Beyond this, Solomon had little to offer when it came to understanding factors that led to the establishment of or the unique character of Catholic female academies.

Confirming this lack of historical grounding, Schier and Russett (2002) noted that recent scholarship has been “focused on the higher education of women” (p. 1) while ignoring the history and contributions of Catholic women’s colleges. “Catholic higher education for women and the women who made it happen remains a closed book” (p. 3). *Catholic Women’s Colleges in America* is a compilation of ten essays by selected scholars who collectively decided on the “shape” of the study and “the topics to be considered” (p. 7).

Mahoney’s (2002) *American Catholic Colleges for Women: Historical Origins*, one of the essays in the collection, is particularly useful in understanding how by the late nineteenth century “Catholic higher education for women was an idea whose time had come” (p. 26) in spite of the two controversies that could have derailed it: 1) conservative

Catholic attitudes wanting to preserve the ideals of the Victorian *True Woman*, one “defined by the virtues of purity, piety, gentleness, and morality and by relationships and responsibilities within the domestic sphere” (p. 27) as opposed to endorsing the *New Woman*, one “defined by greater engagement with the world beyond the home, a tendency to delay or bypass marriage, and increasingly, a college education” (p. 27), and 2) “the Catholic Church’s increasingly strident campaign against modernity” (p. 27).

Mahoney (2002) claimed that “a confluence of three factors” (p. 27) prevented these two controversies from gaining ascendancy and ultimately led to the founding of the first Catholic colleges for women: (a) the *need* created by the large number of religious sisters and middle-class women wanting to go to college, (b) a general *consensus* among Catholics, both liberal and conservative, that educating their women would serve a variety of socio-cultural needs, and (c) a “*legacy* of women religious as scholars and educators, dating to the Middle Ages, ...served both as precedent and inspiration” (p. 28).

After outlining the historical European antecedents of this *legacy* of Catholic female scholarship, Mahoney traced the origins of the female academy in the New World. Understanding the history and socio-cultural significance of female academies, especially their role in American society and in nineteenth and twentieth century Catholic culture, is highly relevant in contextualizing this study.

The first and only colonial-era academy for girls was founded by French Ursuline nuns in New Orleans in 1727 (Mahoney, 2002). However, the boom in Catholic female academies would not begin until the first quarter of the nineteenth century. “In 1820 there were ten academies for girls; by 1840 there were forty-seven. As the Catholic population grew rapidly after 1840, so, too, did the number of academies, exceeding six

hundred by 1890” (Mahoney, 2002, p. 37). Of course, Mount Saint Aloysius Academy at Loretto (later Mount Aloysius Academy, Cresson) would have been among those six hundred academies.

Mahoney (2002) noted that the second half of the nineteenth century marked a “massive...campaign of institution building” (p. 37) for American Catholics that included “the establishment of thousands of parishes, hospitals, orphanages, asylums, publishing houses, and schools” (p. 37) to serve the masses of Catholic immigrants. By the end of the nineteenth century, these Catholic institutions would be staffed by 44,000 nuns from 118 religious orders (Mahoney, 2002).

Catholic girls’ academies stressed the importance of “language and literature and training in manners and household management as well as religion” (Mahoney, 2002, p. 38). The emphasis on religion is what distinguished Catholic girls’ academies from non-Catholic academies and infused the entire structure, from the course of studies to their daily routines, with “Counter-Reformation Catholicism” (p. 38) with all its rituals and external manifestations: prayer threaded among daily activities, the celebration of daily Mass as well as religious holidays and feasts, and the filling of every space “with crucifixes, statues, religious pictures, holy water fonts, and stained-glass windows” (Mahoney, 2002, p. 38).

All was geared toward creating young women who embodied the ideals of the True Catholic Woman—whose “self-sacrifice, humility, submission, purity, silence, and obedience” would eventually enrich her life as a wife and a mother or perhaps as a nun and, most importantly, would ensure her prospects for the afterlife. (Mahoney, 2002, p. 38)

The irony that so many religious orders of women founded to serve the poor would find themselves educating young women from middle-class and wealthy families is not lost on Mahoney. In many instances, Mahoney (2002) noted, the tuition secured from students who could well afford to pay it helped to offset the tuition-free education provided to students from poor families. This, too, was a common practice at Mount Aloysius Academy.

The “genteel education provided by the sisters” (Mahoney, 2002, p. 39) was a major drawing point for Protestants who opted to send their daughters to Catholic academies over other educational options. The “pervasive religious [Catholic] influence” (p. 39) did not seem to deter their enrollment. For their part, the women religious running the Catholic academies willingly accepted, and even sought out, these non-Catholic students. Once again, this seems rather ironic considering that non-Catholic female academies generally emphasized the same curriculum and faith-based formation, all the while perpetuating the “Victorian views of women” (p. 39) still maintained at Catholic girls’ academies.

One major difference in curricular focus that Protestant education reformers criticized was the continued emphasis placed on “polite training in the ornamental and domestic arts at the expense of academics” (Mahoney, 2002, p. 41) so often associated with Catholic girls’ academies. This emphasis was certainly true of Mount Aloysius Academy as evidenced in its first Cresson catalogue of 1897. The catalogue lists courses in drawing, painting, wood carving, tapestry painting, embroidery, lace work, china painting, vocal music, and instrumental music (including instruction in violin, harp, piano, guitar, banjo, and mandolin). Even today, almost seventy years after the founding of the junior college, many of the Sisters of Mercy speak with pride of the academy’s

grounding in the visual and performing arts. Though some Catholic girls' academies had rigorous academic standards and curricula comparable to that offered at the best boys' academies, most "acted primarily as finishing schools for members of the Protestant and Catholic middle and upper classes" (Mahoney, 2002, p. 42).

According to Mahoney (2002), the days of female academy education were numbered due to the "growing relationship between formal education and the world of work" (p. 42) and the increase in higher education opportunities open to women. Furthermore, the academies, in many instances, would become "the literal foundations for some the women's colleges" (p. 43).

#### Transition to Junior Colleges and Colleges

The growth in the number of American Catholic women's colleges "has been the most conspicuous feature of Catholic college development in this [the twentieth] century" (Hassenger, 1967, p. 83). Landy's (2002) study of the development of Catholic women's colleges during the twentieth century and "of the larger social, ecclesial, and educational trends that shaped them" (p. 55) is useful in understanding this phenomenon.

Landy's (2002) longitudinal data was collected from the U.S. Department of Education's biennial *Report of the Commissioner of Education* and from the biennially published *College Blue Book*. Landy's analysis of data suggested "the continual expansion in the number of [Catholic] colleges [for women] until the late 1960's" (p. 67) with a total of 190 Catholic women's four-year and junior colleges established "from 1918 to 1968" (p. 65). By 1936, just three years before Mount Aloysius Academy would transition into a junior college, "the number of Catholic women's colleges had outstripped the number of Protestant and nonsectarian colleges for women" (p. 65). This

fact certainly suggests that Farley's dream of a junior college was congruent with the trends of the day and had, with luck and ingenuity, a fair chance of success.

Landy (2002) attributed the "uninterrupted growth in the number of colleges founded by women religious" to "the rising economic status of Catholic parents," the increased emphasis on education by Americans, changing "attitudes toward the role of women," the "effect[s] of social upheavals like war and economic depression, and growth in the number of women religious in America" (pp. 66-67).

Landy (2002) noted the unexpected growth in both the number of Catholic women's colleges and in the number of women enrolling in those institutions during the Great Depression. Rather than "the economy...driving institutional expansion" (p. 71), Landy attributed growth during the 1930s to "the strengths of religious women in organizing institutions despite limited outside resources" (p. 71). In fact, Landy could have used Farley and Shields' efforts to salvage the financially strapped Mount Aloysius Academy as an illustrative example of an institution surviving largely due to the leadership *strengths* of these two religious women.

The ever increasing twentieth century American preoccupation with "professional requirements in most fields" (p. 72) may or may not have played a role in the growth of Catholic women's colleges during the mid-century (Landy, 2002). Landy described this factor as one that "can cut either way: it can justify the creation of more (or better) institutions that grant access-providing credentials, or it can chase students away from the smaller institutions to those that provide the best or most widely recognized credentials" (p. 72). Farley's near obsession in her pursuit of institutional accreditation, something she wanted (and obtained) within two years of founding the junior college, suggests that she understood this dynamic. A small junior college in rural Pennsylvania could only

survive and thrive if it offered a professional credential equal to that which could be had by attending a larger institution.

Landy (2002) suggested that “enhanced vocational opportunities for women” (p. 72), in particular the increased availability of more lucrative careers in teaching and nursing, may have been a contributing factor to the growth of Catholic women’s colleges. He hastened to add, however, that “it is difficult to connect work opportunities to college growth, since we still lack data for most of the twentieth century about the extent to which the alumnae of Catholic women’s colleges were actually entering the labor force or were attracted to college in pursuit of work opportunities” (p. 72), thus offering an interesting area for future study.

Women by the end of the 1930s may have been experiencing unprecedented financial need that made college-acquired professional skills and credentials appealing. The Great Depression had created urgency for families to acquire “income from any source” (Solomon, 1985, p. 148) and more significantly, according to a 1939 study, two-fifths of all employed women “had partial or full responsibility for one or more dependents” (p. 149).

Perhaps the most interesting factor that Landy posited for the growth in the number of Catholic women’s colleges during the mid-century were the social upheavals of the day, especially the war. “We know that significant changes in social patterns and ideologies of all sorts are often born out of the turmoil of large social events that force us to look at our lives and beliefs in new ways” (Landy, 2002, p. 75). Landy cited data indicating marked increases both in the founding of women’s colleges and in female college enrollment during and/or immediately following the Civil War, World Wars I and II, and the Vietnam War.



The final factor, the one Landy (2002) claimed to be the most significant, to which the growth of Catholic women's colleges may be attributed was "the demographics and organizational structure of the religious communities themselves" (p. 77). Landy cited the large number of women religious in the United States engaged in elementary and secondary teaching during the first half of the twentieth-century. Also, he cited the independent organizational structure of religious orders for women, one that allowed them the autonomy to add "the operation of a college" to their "repertoire of apostolates" (p. 79).

Gleason (1967) offered a different explanation for the success of religious orders in their establishment of new colleges. Gleason observed that many religious orders in addition to specializing in educational work, also had "superior organization and discipline," readily available personnel, and a "corporate character" that suggested a "degree of permanence" (p. 32). Furthermore, Landy (2002) observed that, over time, running a college became:

...important to the identity of the [religious] communities....Most of the growth in the number of institutions came not because each local community or province decided to open many colleges, but because so many communities each decided that a college would be a valuable apostolate, often as a logical outgrowth of an academy. (p. 80)

Certainly, this seems to have been the case with the founding of Mount Aloysius Junior College. If Landy's analysis of the factors that supported the growth in the number of Catholic women's colleges is correct, then the evolution of a foundering academy into a junior college (and eventually into a four-year college) appears to have been predestined provided that a visionary leader was available to point the way.

## History of the Sisters of Mercy

Remarkably, much has been recorded about the Religious Sisters of Mercy since their founding in 1831 and their arrival in the United States in 1843 (Healey, 1992). Included among this documentation are hundreds of books, articles, audio and video recordings, personal reflections, memoirs, and dissertations. Even the rather modest Mount Aloysius College library in Cresson, Pennsylvania lists 77 holdings in its collection dating back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Sr. Mary C. Sullivan, RSM, on behalf of the Mercy International Research Commission, has compiled a comprehensive bibliography of over 1,400 Mercy-related resources. (*Bibliography of books and articles published by or about the Sisters of Mercy, 1831-2005*).

As might be expected, these works vary from carefully researched and fully documented scholarly texts, such as Sullivan's *Catherine McAuley and the Tradition of Mercy* (1995) to generally factual (occasionally fictionalized) and undocumented narrative accounts like Burton's *So Surely Anchored* (1948), a romantically sentimental, yet seminal history (and a delightful read!) of the Sisters of Mercy in America, that opens:

The stage coach was going its slow, jolting way through Pennsylvania one December day of 1843. The hilliness of the road increased as the coach went along and that made for further discomfort. The driver on his lofty perch was perhaps a little more uncomfortable than the passengers inside, but not a great deal. (p. 1)

Much has been written about the life and spirituality of Catherine McAuley, foundress of the Sisters of Mercy. Contemporary biographical and spiritual McAuley-focused literature includes, among others, Sullivan's (2004) *The Correspondence of*

*Catherine McAuley, 1818-1841*, Burns's (1996) *Praying with Catherine McAuley*, and Bolster's (1990) *Catherine McAuley: Venerable for Mercy*.

Moreover, several books have been written about important Mercy leaders such as American foundress, Frances Warde (Healey, 1973), Patricia Joseph Waldron, Superior of the Philadelphia Sisters of Mercy (Connelly, 1986), Mary Clare Moore (Sullivan, 1999), foundress of the Sisters of Mercy in London, and Mary Carmelita Hartman, whose efforts during the 1920s to amalgamate the over sixty Mercy motherhouses is documented in Sabourin's (1976) *The Amalgamation: A History of the Union of the Religious Sisters of Mercy of the United States of America*. These contemporary biographies and historical narratives are carefully researched and thoroughly documented studies.

Other biographical compilations, such as Pulling's (1994) self-published *Sisters of Mercy of Loretto-Cresson*, preserve the memory of and offer valuable insights into the lives of lesser-known, yet still extraordinary Sisters of Mercy whose identities and accomplishments would otherwise be lost to history. Some researchers have opted to limit their studies to one particular Mercy community during a narrowly specified and often significant period of that group's history. Included among these recent studies are McClelland's (2000) historical account of the work of the Sisters of Mercy at Hull, England from 1855 through 1930, Pfeffer's (1992) history of the Sisters of Mercy at Louisville, Kentucky from 1869-1989, and Allen's (1989) account of the labors of the Sisters of Mercy in Victoria and Tasmania.

Mercy-related literature also includes works that document personal, first-hand accounts linked to one, particular historical event, such as Oakes' (1998) study of the

Sisters of Mercy who ministered to victims of yellow fever during the American Civil War.

### Constitution and Mission of the Sisters of Mercy

Farley and Shields, unlike other institutional, corporate, or political leaders, spent their entire adult lives as members of a religious community whose mission was clearly delineated in its writings. As members of a religious community, their daily occupation and life's mission was clearly spelled out in key documents such as the *Rule and Constitutions of the Religious Sisters of Mercy* (McAuley, 1835) and *Customs and Guide of the Institute of the Religious Sisters of Mercy of the Union in the United States of America* (Sisters of Mercy General Motherhouse). These important writing stress the value of service, especially service to the "...Poor, Sick, and Ignorant" (*Constitutions*, Article 1), thus suggesting that Mercy service to those in need of education might manifest itself in the creation of schools. Even the morning prayer (Morning Oblation) included in the *Mercy Choir Manual* (1953) includes as part of this daily recitation a reference to their vowed mission: "Grant that I may perform all my duties in the spirit of my Constitutions, and that I may observe faithfully my Vows, which I renew:...and promise faithfully to observe Poverty, Chastity, Obedience, and the service of the Poor, Sick, and Ignorant..." (pp. 214-215).

### Sisters of Mercy and Higher Education

Particularly relevant to this study are recently published books and dissertations examining the higher education leadership roles and responsibilities assumed by many Sisters of Mercy and their work in higher education. The most notable contributions to this area of study are Daigler's (2001) *Through the Windows: A History of the Work of Higher Education among the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas* and, as previously

discussed, Lynch's (2007) qualitative study of the first seven presidents of Mercyhurst College.

Daigler (2001) utilizes profiles of eleven contemporary Religious Sisters of Mercy who have made significant contributions in higher education to augment her historical account. Daigler states that little has been written about the "15,000 women who play and played immensely significant roles in the development of higher education in the United States" (p. 1). She notes that between 1843 and 1997, the Religious Sisters of Mercy founded twenty-nine colleges and universities, yet little has been written about these institutions. Daigler offers brief histories of each institution, examines the positive and negative effects of managing higher education institutions on individual Sisters and on the religious community as a whole, and notes how the institutions have changed and networked since their founding.

#### Chapter Summary

This study is about leadership, organizational change, and the organizational narratives told by and about the two women who led that change. Consequently, this review touched upon literature in these three crucial areas as well as auxiliary literature establishing the socio-cultural backdrop of this study, specifically, literature about women in higher education, Catholic higher education in America, and the Religious Sisters of Mercy.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In 1939, two Religious Sisters of Mercy, Farley and Shields, decided to save a foundering academy for girls by starting a junior college. In many ways, the odds were against them: the country was just emerging from the Great Depression, the academy remotely situated atop a mountain in rural western Pennsylvania was burdened with massive debt, and creditors had been threatening foreclosure for several years. Despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles, these two women would end up making the right decision at precisely the right historical moment. Of course, Farley and Shields had no way of knowing that at the time.

Why do some institutions successfully accomplish transition even when the odds are seemingly against them, while others fail when favorable outcomes appear likely? A cynical person might attribute the success of these two women to “dumb luck” or simply to being at the right place at the right time. Yet, seventy years after the founding of Mount Aloysius Junior College, Farley and Shields are remembered and lauded by their fellow Sisters and Mount Aloysius Junior College colleagues as great leaders. Assuming that theirs was a storytelling organization, this researcher cannot help but wonder how these two women might have been influenced by the stories that permeated their religious community. Anecdotal narrative fragments about their vision, tenacity, and shrewdness continue to be told to and by members of the Mount Aloysius College community. Narratives about these two women have become ingrained into the collective memory of the institution. Certainly, much anecdotal evidence suggests that they were women of faith, intelligence, courage, cleverness, humility, and perseverance. These qualities are

valuable at all times, but certainly they are essential at times of crisis and may be particularly valuable at times of institutional transition.

### Research Design and Methodology

According to Slavin (2007), “historical investigations seek to reveal facts about certain events in the past or relationships between events in the past by means of critical reviews of documentary evidence, sometimes supplemented by interviews with eyewitnesses involved in the events” (p. 154). Historical investigations are best suited to, “qualitative research [which] properly seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings. Qualitative researchers are most interested in...symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles, and so forth” (Berg, 2004, p. 7). Thus, this study was best suited to qualitative methodology since it examined not only the “relationships between events,” such as the successful transition of an academy to a junior college at the end of the Great Depression, but also the dynamic of how perceived leaders like Farley and perceived follower-leaders like Shields shaped those events. In addition, this study sought to understand the role that stories played in influencing participants and shaping events within their institution at a time of critical organizational transition.

Since the two primary subjects of this study are deceased, this historical case study was largely dependent on content analysis [“...objective coding scheme ...applied to the notes or data...” (Berg, 2004, p. 265)] of participant interviews and archival research.

### *Interviews*

With assistance from Sr. Benedict Joseph Watters who has been associated with Mount Aloysius College since 1942 and data available through Mount Aloysius

College's Office of Institutional Advancement, I was able to identify more than a dozen Sisters and several early alumnae who were able to provide me with valuable first-hand knowledge of Farley and Shields and the time period under investigation, 1935-1945. I conducted in-depth interviews of eight individuals who had known Farley and Shields either during this time period or in later years. In order to determine what stories continue to be told about the time period and about Farley and Shields, I interviewed three Sisters who are currently working at Mount Aloysius as volunteers, and I made use of my own awareness of stories that have been transmitted to me during my six-year association with the institution. Interviews were recorded and later transcribed. Immediately after the interviews, I wrote up field notes of my impressions and clarified and/or expanded upon notes I had handwritten during the interview process.

Prior to conducting the actual interviews, I piloted the questions by conducting 30-45 minute interviews of two Sisters of Mercy who had first-hand knowledge of Farley and Shields, but who had not known them in the 1940s. Based on interviewee responses, questions were modified, deleted or replaced. Some data gathered during these pilot interviews proved useful in understanding the subjects of this study and was incorporated into the final analysis.

In addition to individual interviews, I conducted a focus group with five Sister participants including Sr. Ruth Hollen who served as co-moderator. Participants in the focus group were selected based on their availability, willingness to participate, and their long association with Mount Aloysius.

#### *Archive Repositories*

The Mount Aloysius College archive preserves many significant historical documents and statistical records including, among others, a biography of Farley written



by Shields, Shields' autobiography, a videotaped interview with Shields in which she describes events surrounding the founding of the college, audio taped reminiscences of several retired Sisters of Mercy recorded in the 1970s, minutes of faculty meetings, student records, college catalogues, minutes of alumnae meetings, scrapbooks, photographs, and memorabilia.

The archive of The Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Mid-Atlantic Community located at Mercy Center in Dallas, Pennsylvania has many other historical documents pertaining to the college and to the Sisters who lived and worked at the academy and junior college. Each Sister has a permanent file with photographs, documents relating to her life, newspaper clippings, sample writings, letters, and such. The extent of the archived material for a particular Sister is dependent on her prominence in the religious community and her professional achievements. Farley and Shields have extensive files.

#### Description of Participants

In a qualitative historical case study, careful selection of interviewees is critical because "...research participants may shape the conclusions they [the researchers] come to" (Esterberg, 2002, p. 94). Furthermore, selection of potential interviewees is something to be taken seriously and approached cautiously. Seidman (1998) noted that "because interviewing involves a relationship between the interviewer and the participant, how interviewers...make contact with them can affect the beginning of the relationship and every subsequent step in the interviewing process" (p. 34).

Primary interviewees selected for this study were persons who knew Farley and Shields, particularly during the time period under investigation. "In general, you should choose those interviewees who can give you the greatest possible insight into your topic"

(Esterberg, 2002, p. 93). All the interviewees were Sisters of Mercy, four of whom are retired and residing at Mercy Center in Dallas, PA.

Also, interviewees were selected based on my ability to interview them face-to-face, their willingness to be interviewed, the supposition that they might have knowledge relevant to this study, and the potential quality/reliability of their recollections.

Fortunately, evidence suggests that advanced age of interviewees may not diminish memory reliability. In fact, "...research indicates that older adults are better at telling stories of the past than are young adults," even though, "...whether young or old, [people] remember what is important to *them* [author's emphasis]" (Yow, 2005, p. 39).

My primary source in the selection of potential participants through *snowball sampling* was Sr. Benedict Joseph Watters. "In this technique, you begin with an initial interviewee—often, a key informant. Then you ask that person to refer you to...others who might be appropriate to interview" (Esterberg, 2002, p. 93). Not only would I have been unable to select appropriate interviewees without her assistance, I would not have been able to assess the quality of interviewee memories without the guidance of Sr. Benedict Joseph. Though, "...there is always 'truthfulness' in the interaction that is reflective of broader social truths even though the actual information conveyed may have a limited intersection with any empirical reality" (Warren & Karner, 2005, p. 139), I wanted to make certain that my interviewees were at least capable of working within these rather broadly acceptable parameters of acceptable veracity. Sr. Benedict Joseph's extensive knowledge of Mount Aloysius College, its people and its history, and her more than 65 year association with the Mount made her a unique resource.

Interviewees had either a connection to the college that went back to the 1940s or first-hand knowledge of Farley and/or Shields.

1. *Sr. Benedict Joseph Watters* was a student at the Mount from 1942 to 1948. She entered the order in 1948 and began teaching at the academy in 1951. Most of *Sr. Benedict Joseph's* professional life has been spent at the Mount. From 1962-1966, she served as Dean of Students under President Farley.
2. *Sr. Maria Josephine D'Angelo* joined the Mount Aloysius Junior College faculty in 1949 as a lay teacher. She joined the Sisters of Mercy in the early 1950s and continued teaching at the Mount until her retirement in 2004.
3. *Sr. Miriam Rita Biter* was among the first commuter students to attend the junior college (1941-1942); she later joined the order and was in residence at the Mount during the summer months like many of the community's Sisters who would return to the Mount for a six week summer session of instruction.
4. *Sr. Michelle Brophy* was an early junior college resident student. She taught at the college and for many years was also in residence at the Mount during the summer sessions.
5. *Sr. Charlene Kelly* came to the Mount in the 1940s as a high school student. She knew both Farley and Shields. For many years, *Sr. Charlene* served as registrar of the junior college. Today, she continues to volunteer her services to the college.
6. *Sr. Cecelia Meighan* entered the community in 1951. *Sr. Cecelia* served in several positions at the Mount in the 1960s and 1970s: chairperson of the English department, assistant dean, dean, and president.
7. *Sr. Kathleen M. Smith* was a good friend of Shields, especially in Shields' later years. *Sr. Kathleen* was a dean at the Mount in the 1970s.

8. *Sr. Timothy Galbraith* graduated from the academy in 1944 and had intimate knowledge of life at the academy during the 1940s. Though she knew both subjects of this study, Sr. Timothy considered herself a close friend of Shields.
9. *Sr. Anne Frances Pulling* was housed at the Mount during the summers and year-round in the early 1960s. Sr. Anne Frances is also an unofficial historian for the Sisters of Mercy of Loretto-Cresson having collected and published a book containing biographical sketches of the Sisters associated with the Loretto-Cresson community. Interview questions were piloted with Sr. Anne Frances. Participants in the focus group included:
  1. *Sr. Benedict Heiss* who entered the community in 1937 and knew both Farley and Shields.
  2. *Sr. Maria Josephine D'Angelo* (see above).
  3. *Sr. Alphonsus Smith* who entered the order in 1936 and taught at the Mount for many years.
  4. *Sr. Jane Schellhammer* who attended the academy in 1948 and entered Mercy in 1950. After 21 years in the community, she left the order but reentered again in 1999.
  5. *Sr. Ruth Hollen* who entered the community in 1959. Prior to its closing, Sr. Ruth was the administrator of the retirement community of Sisters, McAuley Hall, on the Mount campus. She is currently archivist of the regional archive in Dallas, PA. Interview questions for both the individual interviews and the focus group were piloted with Sr. Ruth. She was both a participant in and co-moderator of the focus group.

## Collection of Data

This researcher contacted potential interviewees either in person or via intermediary insiders, Sr. Ruth Hollen or Sr. Benedict Joseph Watters. Since many of the interviewees are elderly, I felt they would respond more favorably to a personal contact. “Telephoning is often a necessary first step in making contact....although individual contact visits tend to be more effective” (Seidman, 1998, p. 40). Once they agreed verbally to be interviewed, each potential interviewee was sent a formal letter inviting them to participate in the study; the letter described briefly the subject, purpose, and method of this study. Participants, prior to the interview, were asked to read and sign a consent form detailing the rights of the interviewees.

The 60-120 minute long interviews were conducted at a location convenient to the interviewees either at Mercy Center in Dallas or on the Mount campus. Participants were informed of the subject and nature of the study at least one week prior to the interviews, though they were not provided with the actual interview questions in advance.

Interview questions were open-ended thus affording interviewees the opportunity to “...tell her own story...and lead the interview in directions other than those anticipated by the researcher” (Slavin, 2007, p. 131). Seidman (1998) identified two types of open-ended questions: “...one is what Spradley (1979) calls the ‘grand tour’ question, in which the interviewer asks that participant to reconstruct a significant segment of an experience” (p. 69). For example, one of my questions asked participants to tell me about their connection to Mount Aloysius College. The second type of open-ended question “focuses more on the subjective experience of the participant” (Seidman, 1998, p. 70). An example of this second type would be my question asking participants to recount what they considered to be “the most memorable story” about Farley or Shields. Also, Yow

(2005) suggested that open-ended questions tend to work best with older interviewees because with open-ended questions "...the aged narrator selects what he or she wants to talk about within the topic indicated" (p. 76). As needed, I asked more probing and directive follow-up questions.

Participants were encouraged to share artifacts, letters, journals, and other mementos that could shed light on the subjects of this study, though none of them did. Sr. Ruth and I selected several photographs from the archive to share with members of the focus group to see if the images might spur additional insights from the participants. The photographs provided some lively dialogue among the participants, but they did not elicit many useful comments. I let participants know that a follow-up interview might be necessary in order to clarify areas of researcher uncertainty or to seek out additional information.

Since these women lived and worked together in community for most of their adult lives and were relatively accustomed to group conversations, I felt that a focus group might elicit some interesting information based on group participants assisting one another with their recollections. "The comparative strength of focus groups as an interview technique clearly lies in the ability to observe interaction on a topic" (Morgan, 1997, p. 10). In preparing for the focus group, I utilized the four-step methodology suggested both by Morgan (1998) and by Krueger and Casey (2000). I planned the group and developed questions, recruited participants with the assistance of Sr. Ruth Hollen, co-moderated the group with Sr. Ruth Hollen, and analyzed/ reported the data. As part of the planning stage, I needed to decide if this study would benefit from a single-category design or a multiple-category design (Krueger & Casey, 2000, pp. 30-31). A multiple-category design pinpointing three distinctive audiences (Sisters who had known Farley

and Shields as colleagues, Sisters who had been students at the academy and/or the junior college in the early years, and Sisters who arrived on the scene in later years and had only casual knowledge of the subjects of this study) provided unique perspectives on the two subjects of this study and on the organization's use of narratives/stories.

Though I served as primary moderator for the focus group, a co-moderator who was a trusted, knowledgeable Sister was better positioned to elicit information from the focus group of elderly Sisters than a moderator who is male, lay, and an outsider. Sr. Ruth Hollen, Mercy archivist and former administrator of the Mercy retirement community at Cresson, served well as the focus group co-moderator and was able to ask more probing questions than I would have been comfortable asking. Having lived with the Sister-participants for many years, Sr. Ruth was sensitive to the dynamics of the group and knew appropriate questions and follow-up questions to ask, was able to refocus the discussion when it got off-track, and was better able to handle the more challenging participants as identified by Krueger and Casey (2000): "...the expert, the dominant talker, the shy participant, and the rambler" (p. 111).

Since Krueger (1998) offered useful tips for developing, phrasing, sequencing, changing and piloting questions to be used in focus groups, I utilized his methodology to develop my focus group protocol. Krueger warned that piloting focus group questions can be difficult. Rather than have a preliminary focus group serve as the pilot for the questions, Krueger suggested that the questions can be piloted with members of the research team, experts, or potential participants and non-researchers (p. 58). As a secondary moderator for the focus group, Sr. Ruth Hollen could be considered both part of the research team and an expert. Focus group questions were piloted with her and with

Cresson historian, Sr. Anne Frances Pulling. I piloted the questions with them and made modifications to the protocol based on their responses.

Interviews were recorded and word processed transcripts of the interviews were sent to the interviewees for correction or emendation. This afforded interviewees an opportunity to correct content errors and to decide if they approved of and were still willing to have used information provided during the initial interview.

Since, according to Slavin (2007) “field notes are the most important data collected” (p. 132), I recorded my impressions of the interviews and of the interviewees soon after the interview sessions. In addition, interviewers, according to Seidman (1998), “must be sensitive to the participant’s energy level and any nonverbal cues he or she may be offering” (p. 68). “A skilled interviewer also watches for body language, which can provide important clues to the respondent’s meaning” (Esterberg, 2002, p. 105). Documenting non-verbal clues such as laughter, facial expressions, hand motions, and how the interviewee conducted herself during the interview, and interviewer impressions regarding interviewee responses were useful when doing my data analysis.

As a Mount Aloysius College employee, I have ready access to our college archive. In order to access the regional Mercy archive, I telephoned and emailed the archivist explaining the subject, purpose, and method of my study and requested her assistance in locating essential archival materials. Sr. Ruth Hollen was eager to assist me with this study and proved to be a tremendous asset during the focus group.

Since every individual looks at people and events from a very personal and narrow point of view, I believe it is critical to have some knowledge of an interviewee’s background so as to “see” people and events through the same lens that that individual views them. “Oral history is inevitably subjective: its subjectivity is at once inescapable



and crucial to an understanding of the meanings we give our past and present. To reveal the meanings of lived experience is the great task of qualitative research..." (Yow, 2005, p. 7). Consequently, I began initial interviews with questions probing the background of each interviewee in order to establish her connection to Farley and Shields, to Mount Aloysius Academy/Junior College, and to the Religious Sisters of Mercy.

In general, people tend to be more comfortable talking about what they know best, themselves and their own life experiences. Establishing a certain level of comfort with the Q&A process early on in the interview made answering questions about others, in this instance two women who are deceased, somewhat less discomfiting. One of my fears was that interviewees would not want to "speak ill of the dead" and would filter out of their responses anything that might seem critical of Farley and Shields.

After learning something of each interviewee's background, I wanted to learn of her connection to the Mount and of her personal and professional interactions with Farley and Shields. I asked interviewees to tell me about Farley and Shields' personalities, behaviors, and leadership traits, about their knowledge of events leading up to, during, and following the Mount's transition from an academy to a junior college, and about anecdotal stories that illustrate their personal perceptions and beliefs.

#### Analysis, Interpretation, and Reporting of Data

"Interviews, field notes, and such...are often not amenable to analysis until the information they convey has been condensed and made systematically comparable" (Berg, 2004, p. 265). Constant-comparative analysis of data proved useful in sorting through the many hours of interview responses and my field notes. In constant-comparative analysis collected data are persistently compared with the researcher's

emerging categories (Creswell, 1998; Slavin, 2007). Patterns of verbal responses as they relate to predetermined themes were coded and examined for similarities and differences.

Initially, I considered using some type of qualitative research data analysis software such as NVivo or XSight to facilitate categorizing data but opted, instead, to take a more traditional, less technological approach which proved very satisfactory. Data were collected by subject and arranged chronologically, oldest to most recent, in 3-ring binders with each sheet of information dropped into a plastic page protector sleeve. This system was particularly useful because I was able to make notes directly on the plastic page protector sleeves with a non-permanent marker without damaging the original document and could easily affix adhesive notes and color-coded “flags” to indicate certain themes and topics. Data were collected into the following categories: Sr. M. de Sales Farley, Sr. M. Silverius Shields, Sr. Camille Marie d’Invilliers, Mount historical documents, chapel debt documents, minutes of faculty meetings, transcripts of interviews, and transcripts of audio/video tapes.

Content analysis, “the systematic study of documents to study human behavior” (Slavin, 2007, p. 156) of archival materials, as previously described, coupled with scholarly secondary sources provided essential triangulation.

In triangulation, researchers make use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories to provide corroborating evidence (Ely et al., 1991; Erlandson et al., 1993; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1980, 1990). Typically, this process involves corroborating evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective. (Creswell, 1998, p. 202)

Berg (2004) stated that “objective” analysis of content is only possible when one follows “...explicit rules called *criteria of selection* [author’s emphasis], which must be formally established before actual analysis of data” (pp. 267-268). Berg further noted that content analysis methodology must be “rigidly and consistently applied so that other researchers or readers, looking at the same messages, would obtain the same or comparable results” (p. 268). What Berg was suggesting is that a researcher should employ a method of content analysis to often subjectively interpreted written and oral communications that is rigorously objective thereby eliminating, as much as is humanly possible, researcher subjectivity.

Warren and Karner (2005) suggested an initial approach to analyzing qualitative data should be one that helps the researcher establish a “big picture” by means of a process called “open coding...an unstructured process of initially seeing what arises from the data” (p. 191). Once one has identified certain key themes, one can begin the process of coding occurrences of those themes and perhaps related sub-themes. Beyond open coding, Creswell (1998) suggested *axial coding* whereby “...the investigator assembles the data in new ways after open coding,” *selective coding* whereby “...the researcher identifies a ‘story line’ and writes a story that integrates the categories in the axial coding model,” or “...a *conditional matrix* that elucidates the social, historical, and economic conditions influencing the central phenomenon” (p. 57).

In Chapter 4, material garnered from the interviews and archival data was transformed into “profiles” of the primary subjects of this study presented within the larger context of a three-act play. Seidman (1998) described profiles, [“The idea comes from Studs Terkel’s *Working* (1972)” (p. 102)], as longer narratives that are “complete and compelling” and have “a beginning, middle, and an end,” in other words, they are

true narratives replete with fleshed out “characters” (p. 102) and conflicts to be resolved. According to Seidman (1998), “Profiles are one way to solve the problem the interviewer has of how to share what he or she has learned from the interviews....telling stories is a compelling way to make sense of interview data. The story is both the participant’s and the interviewers” (p. 102). Seidman’s *profiles* are similar to Boje’s BME Managerial Narratives: beginning, middle, and end “...horizontal and vertical narrative lines of retrospection to one or more center points” (2008, p. 87). Seidman suggested that another approach to presenting interview material is one that isolates and compares common themes that emerge among participant interviews (see Table 1) (2008, pp. 102-105).

Table 1: *Seidman’s Process for Crafting Profiles*

1. Create transcripts of recorded interviews.
2. Read the transcript and mark passages of interest. Label passages as you read.
3. Select all the passages marked and put them into a new transcript. Keep passages in original order.
4. Always preserve and use the exact words of the participant. Use the first person voice of the participant.
5. Create a first person “mini-narrative.”
6. Describe the participant in the third person.
7. Use description to introduce the mini-narrative or “weave” the two together.
8. Use your own words to make transitions between passages. Can add clarity where needed.
9. Material from the multiple interviews of the same participant can be interwoven for thematic continuity provided material is not used out of context.
10. Protect identity (if promised) and dignity of participant.

Boje's (2008) six narrative elements of strategy narratives: logo, motto, plot, mission, vision, and founding narrative (pp. 100-101), provided an analytical framework for sorting data into manageable thematic groupings. These six narrative elements proved useful in making sense of the Mount's polyphonic narratives and narrative fragments, while explicating how they had been used to lead change and sustain cultural identity, and how they had been retold and adapted over time.

After being sorted and thematically grouped, the data were transformed in Chapter 4 into a three-act play done in the form of a collective memory staged reading. Since this study revealed that dramatic presentations had played a major role in the lives of the Sisters and students at Mount Aloysius, I thought the play format would be an appropriate vehicle for gathering together the narratives and narrative fragments collected during the research phase of this study. The two primary subjects of this study, Farley and Shields, assume roles in the play, as well as Sister Camille Marie who emerged as a key figure in the Mount's larger story during data collection. The three members of the Sister-Chorus serve as audience for the primary characters and portray minor figures in the drama.

Since the play is presented in Chapter 4 without analytical commentary, Chapter 5 serves to identify sources of material used in the play while analyzing the data using a three-tiered approach suggested by Whalen's (2009) work with objects of material culture. Whalen's methodology was adapted from the work of Jules David Prown (1982) who posited a system for making sense of objects of material culture that he saw as having multiple layers of meaning. Prown made sense of objects by analyzing them in three ways, via: description, deduction, and speculation. Whalen applied Prown's methodology to photographs substituting "her story," "back story," and "my story" for

Prown's three modes of analysis. In Chapter 5, I applied Whalen's methodology to my data as presented in play form in Chapter 4.

### Researcher Bias

Due to the subjective inclination of qualitative methodology, one must be sensitive to the potential of researcher bias. Furthermore, Gabriel (2000) noted that one of the problems with "...story-based research is the selective use of organizational narratives to amplify or reinforce the researcher's preconceived ideas or assumptions" (p. 151).

Clearly, a certain degree of researcher bias appears unavoidable, but its impact can be minimalized provided that one "exercise[s] constant vigilance" (Gabriel, 2002, p. 151).

Richards (2005) described *bias* as a process akin to "declaring what is in your baggage...as you [arrive] at an international airport" (p. 26). This researcher acknowledges that his "baggage" contains a life-long association with the Catholic Church, its schools, and its religious orders. As an Assistant Professor of English and Fine Arts at the college that is the setting of this study, I have close ties to the Religious Sisters of Mercy who founded, own, and continue to administer the college. The primary subjects of this study, Farley and Shields, were selected due to their recognized prominence as significant historical figures at the college. Admiration of the perceived qualities of these women did not preclude this researcher's ability to remain objective while gathering, analyzing, and presenting data. This researcher's intent was not to create saints or to vilify the subjects of this study. Rather, with vigilant awareness of potential bias, I attempted to present an honest and balanced portrayal of this study's subjects. After all, "the goal of most qualitative research is to learn from the data" (Richards, p. 24), not to force that data into some preconceived model in order to conform to researcher bias.

## Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research

Morse and Richards (2002) presented current conflicting viewpoints regarding qualitative research reliability and validity clearly and succinctly. They began by defining the terms: "...reliability requires that the same results would be obtained if the study were replicated, and validity requires that the results accurately reflect the phenomenon studied" (p. 168). Morse and Richards noted that some qualitative researchers believe the "terms have no place in qualitative inquiry" (p. 167), while others claim that the "qualitative context" (p. 167) requires method-specific terminology (p. 168). Morse and Richards stated that, though qualitative and quantitative researchers approach them from differing points of view, issues of reliability and validity must be addressed in qualitative research. In order to assure reliability and validity in a qualitative study, Morse and Richards suggested researcher attention to: "appropriate preparation" of the researcher since "in qualitative research...the *researcher is the instrument*," a careful review of literature that distinguishes "what is known" from what is yet to be learned about the subject, a qualitative mindset that allows for flexibility in gathering and assessing data, and a methodology and design appropriate to what is being studied (pp. 168-172).

### *Reliability*

Reliability, or trustworthiness, in a qualitative study differs from what one might expect within the controlled parameters of a quantitative study (Richards, 2005). Nonetheless, a certain degree of reliability is assured if a researcher's "well-validated procedures" (p. 141) remain systematic and consistent. In particular, coding consistency assures reliability.

Coding reliability is attained by determining in advance if the interviews will be semi-structured or unstructured. In semi-structured interviews “participants are all asked the same questions in the same order” (Morse & Richards, 2002, p. 175) thereby requiring greater consistency in coding, whereas in unstructured interviews the fluidity of the process necessitates an open-minded approach consistent with the interviewing method. In fact, “imposing a consistent coding scheme can...be a source of *invalidity*” (Morse & Richards, p. 175) when applied to unstructured interviews.

If the researcher is learning about the phenomenon as the study progresses [as is the case in this particular study], interview content changes as the researcher becomes more informed about the phenomenon....Consistency works against the development of a rich interpretive study, the latter being the very purpose for which the researcher decided to use unstructured, interactive interviews....The key is to keep track of coding decisions, and researchers use memos to track changes in the development of categories, recoding and relabeling the categories as often as necessary. As categories emerge in the process of analysis, the researcher keeps verifying data bits with the categories, verifying as interviews continue, and verifying/confirming with new participants during data collection. (Morse & Richards, 2002, p. 175)

Though interviews conducted for this study were directed by a series of pre-determined open-ended questions, the actual interview process remained deliberately unstructured and interactive so as to allow unexpected narratives and narrative fragments to emerge.



### *Validity*

Richards (2005) suggested that internal validity, “the degree to which findings correctly map the phenomenon in question” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 186), can be assured using triangulation and member checking. Triangulation utilizes various data sources or methods of analysis in addressing a study’s research questions (Richards, 2005). In this study, triangulation of archival materials (text, photographs, and memorabilia), participant interviews, and researcher observation assured a certain degree of internal validity. Member checking assured validity by having interviewees review the finished report in order to offer feedback that can determine if participants agree with the researcher’s analysis (Richards, 2005). In this study, participants were asked to read the proposed final analysis in order to determine if the researcher had accurately interpreted the data from their interviews.

External validity, “the degree to which findings can be generalized to other settings similar to the one in which the study occurred” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 186), is often considered problematic since “a qualitative study’s transferability ... to other settings” (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 144) is not readily demonstrable. Marshall and Rossman observed that a study grounded in sound “theoretical parameters” that delineate “how data collection and analysis will be guided by concepts and models” (p. 144) allows for the future application of the same parameters to future studies with the onus of “transferability” resting on the shoulders of future researchers.

### Chapter Summary

This study utilized qualitative methods in order to learn how two Religious Sisters of Mercy led change in their storytelling organization. Data gathered from interviews of participants identified through snowball sampling were triangulated vis-à-vis archived

materials and researcher observation so as to assure internal validity. Constant-comparative analysis aided in sorting and assessing data against this researcher's emergent theory that Farley and Shields, influenced by their storytelling organization, successfully transitioned Mount Aloysius Academy into a junior college. Boje's six elements for creating *strategy narratives* provided a theoretical framework and lens for sorting and categorizing the data in order to generate, in Chapter 4, Seidman-style *profiles* set within the context of a three-act play about the subjects of this study. In Chapter 5, data presented in play form in Chapter 4 were analyzed using Whalen's three-tiered methodology.

## CHAPTER 4

### I REMEMBER:

#### A COLLECTIVE MEMORY NARRATIVE IN THREE ACTS

##### **Characters**

###### **SR. CAMILLE MARIE D’INVILLIERS**

A Sister of Mercy and the oldest, best friend of Sr. M. de Sales Farley, an accomplished musician, a great wit. She lived to be 106 years old.

###### **SR. M. DE SALES FARLEY**

A Sister of Mercy, co-foundress of Mount Aloysius Junior College, the college’s first dean and, later, its president—a dreamer.

###### **SR. M. SILVERIUS SHIELDS**

A Sister of Mercy, co-foundress of Mount Aloysius Junior College, the college’s registrar and, later, Executive Director of The Federation of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas—a practical, hard-working woman.

###### **CHORUS OF SISTERS (three or more players)**

Like a Greek chorus, the Chorus of Sisters functions both as a choral group and as individual players assuming roles of minor characters.

##### **Setting**

While the audience is filing into the theater, members of the CHORUS are circulating three different scrapbooks for audience members to read while waiting for the play to begin. These scrapbooks contain copies of assorted ephemera including documents and photographs from the Mount Aloysius College archive and from the Religious Sisters of Mercy provincial archive at Dallas, PA. The scrapbooks, as much as possible, are fabricated to look like authentic period (1930s-50s) scrapbooks.

One scrapbook, entitled “Fides” (Faith), is filled with photographs, newspaper clippings, and other archival ephemera from the early years of Mount Aloysius Academy, 1897-1938. The second scrapbook, “Mores” (Morals), contains mementoes from the transition years when the junior college was established, 1939-1945. The third scrapbook, “Cultura” (Culture), has materials related to the post-transition period, 1946-present, with most of the items pertaining to cultural events, e.g., plays, pageants, speakers, and concerts.

As the houselights dim, members of the CHORUS collect the scrapbooks and the player in charge of the “Fides” scrapbook goes to the podium reserved for it, places her scrapbook on the podium with the cover/title facing the audience, and then opens the scrapbook to one of the interior pages revealing architectural plans and images of the chapel.

Since the scrapbooks are meant to be symbolic representations of the community's collective memory and, by extension, silent players in the drama, a spotlight remains on the scrapbook podium throughout the performance. It is the only light still lit at the end of the play and remains illuminated even as the audience leaves the auditorium. At the beginning of Acts 2 and 3, CHORUS players in charge of the scrapbooks for those respective acts place their scrapbook on the podium prior to the start of the acts.

During Act I, the players stand at individual podiums forming a single line across the stage with (from stage right) the three members of the CHORUS followed by SR. DE SALES, SR. CAMILLE MARIE, and SR. SILVERIUS (see Figure 1), thereby suggesting that the three principals are essentially part of the larger community of Sisters. During Acts II and III, the three members of the CHORUS stand as a group stage right, and the three principal players are in a triangular formation at center stage (See Figure 2).

With the house and stage in total darkness, except for a single spotlight illuminating the scrapbook podium, first the chirping of songbirds is heard, to which the following sounds are added, one at a time at 10-15 second intervals, each new sound adding its "voice" to the choral blend: the sound of one hammer, like a heart beating a steady, solid rhythm; a second hammer, more staccato and less regular than the first; then a third hammer and a fourth, each with its own distinct rhythm and personality—symbolizing individual members of the community working in concert to accomplish a task; the voices of Sisters chanting in Latin; the ringing of the Angelus.

As the final exuberant peals of the Angelus are rung, all the sounds drop out except for the voice of one Sister and the first hammer and, finally, only the steady, rhythm of the one hammer which begins to fade and then is silent.

Throughout this opening auditory prelude, images—photographs, blueprints, architect's drawings—of Mount Aloysius Academy architecture from the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are projected on the wall behind the players. Lights come up on members of the CHORUS.

### **Program Note**

This play weaves together narrative fragments and stories gathered from archived materials and from interviews I conducted with Sisters of Mercy from the Cresson community. As much as possible, I have used the actual words from my sources with occasional minor grammatical and mechanical alterations, elliptical compression, and addition of transitional words or phrases. Some passages weave together narrative fragments from multiple sources, making it difficult to identify every source with technical accuracy. My intent was not to obfuscate or plagiarize but to enlighten through a new story fabricated from already existing materials—a new garment from old cloth.

**Act I**  
Fides: The Early Years

**Scene 1**  
“Litany of the Forebears”

*(Rear wall projections for the litany are done in a single PowerPoint slide with an image of each person--individual photo, group photo, or photo of grave marker--mentioned being added to the collage as her name is read.<sup>1</sup>)*

I remember.	CHORUS 1
Mother Frances Xavier Warde.	CHORUS 2
It is good to remember. <sup>2</sup>	ALL <i>(Excluding three principal players.)</i>
Mother Mary DeSales Ihmsen.	CHORUS 3
It is good to remember.	ALL
Mother Gertrude Cosgrave.	CHORUS 1
It is good to remember.	ALL
Mother Xavier Phelan.	CHORUS 2
It is good to remember.	ALL
Mother Pierre Greene.	CHORUS 3
It is good to remember.	ALL
Mother Constance McBride.	CHORUS 1

ALL

It is good to remember.

CHORUS 3

Mother Marianne Niggel.

ALL

It is good to remember.

CHORUS 2

Sr. Camille Marie d'Invilliers.

*(SR. CAMILLE MARIE turns on the light at her podium.)*

ALL

It is good to remember.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

Sr. Agatha Carney.

ALL

*(Now including SR. CAMILLE MARIE.)*

It is good to remember.

CHORUS 3

Sr. Mary de Sales Farley.

*(SR. DE SALES turns on the light at her podium.)*

ALL

It is good to remember.

SR. DE SALES

Mother Anne McCue.

ALL

*(Now including SR. DE SALES.)*

It is good to remember.

CHORUS 2

Sr. Mercedes de Martini, Sr. Josephine Ihmsen.

ALL

It is good to remember.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

Sr. Margaret Mary Quinn. Sr. Teresita Doyle. Sr. DeLellis Sherlock.

ALL

It is good to remember.

SR. DE SALES

Sr. Mary Silverius Shields.

*(SR. SILVERIUS turns on the light at her podium.)*

ALL

It is good to remember.

SR. SILVERIUS

Mother Magdalene O'Reilly. Manny Harkins.

ALL

*(Now including SR. SILVERIUS.)*

It is good to remember.

CHORUS 1

Sr. Gonzaga Flynn.

*(From this point on, the litany begins to accelerate—gradually at first, then with greater speed—with players stepping on one another's lines.)*

SR. SILVERIUS

The King sisters: Sr. Mary Grace. Sr. Mary Annette. Sr. Mary Jerome.

CHORUS 3

Sr. Margaret Mary Quinn. Sr. Borgia O'Rourke. Sr. Damian Geisler.

CHORUS 2

Sr. DePaul Porta. Sr. Cyrilla Kendra. Sr. Renata Idarola.

SR. DE SALES

Miss Emma Halley.

ALL

It is good to remember.

*(From this point until CHORUS 2 reads the name of Catherine McAuley, all players read their list of names simultaneously, with varying speed and volume. There should be a sense of acceleration—of building to a crescendo—as the litany comes to Catherine's name. The "It is good to remember" response punctuates*

*the lists of names at irregular intervals. The recitation should sound random while remaining chorally harmonious.)*

CHORUS 1

Sr. Loretta O'Brien.

Sr. Paschal Armstrong.

Sr. Norbert Brandt.

Sr. Ricardo Parrish.

Sr. Augustine Munsch.

Sr. Francisca Kelly.

Sr. Columbia Gibson.

Sr. Inez Golden.

Sr. Patrice Farren.

Sr. Consilia Connell.

Sr. Salome Michaels.

CHORUS 2

Sr. Cecelia Black.

Sr. Camilla White.

Sr. Frances Rooney.

Sr. Theodore Pringle.

Sr. Fidelis Orschek.

Sr. Wilfred Matthews.

Sr. Catherine Loftus.

Sr. Boniface Kirkpatrick.

Sr. Irenaeus Buddinger.

Sr. Reginald Klemens.



CHORUS 3

Sr. Clotilde Binder.

Sr. Hyacinth Karafa.

Sr. Francis Regis Jondreau.

Sr. Rita Itell.

Sr. Gertrude Marie Cullinan.

Sr. Benedicta San Antonio.

Sr. Urban Fox.

Sr. Avila Long.

Sr. Francis de Sales Keppner.

Sr. Sebastia Robinson.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

Sr. David Shaffer.

Sr. Berchmans Ager.

Sr. Ellen Thorpy.

Sr. Joan Werfel.

Sr. Nolasco McGough.

Sr. Dorothea Leasure.

Sr. Hilda Butz.

Sr. Philip Neri Hagg.

Sr. Madeline Hines.

Sr. Leo Hoye.

SR. DE SALES

Sr. Pauline Roche.

Sr. Vincenza Marinaro.

Sr. Beatrice Heckman.

Sr. Germaine Gallas.

Sr. Martha Pfiester.

Sr. Angela O’Friel.

Sr. Celestine O’Hara.

Sr. Fabian Washington.

Sr. Alacoque Thornton.

Sr. Ignatius Benniger.

#### SR. SILVERIUS

Sr. Paula Beck.

Sr. Rose McCormick.

Sr. Loyola Irwin.

Sr. Bridget Tobin.

Sr. Austin Wills.

Sr. Basil Smith.

Sr. Elise Slaughenhaupt.

Sr. Assumpta Houllion.

Sr. Eucharica McCabe.

Sr. Clare Kingston.

Sr. Demetria Chervenak.

Sr. Ursula McCue.

#### CHORUS 2

Mother Catherine McAuley.

*(The famous painting of Catherine McAuley is the last one added to the collage of portraits and is overlaid over the other portraits.)*

ALL

It is good to remember. It is good to remember. It is good to remember.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE  
(*Looking up at the portrait.*)

Just hold everything! You can't use that portrait. I know they have that picture of Catherine McAuley hanging all over the world. But recently I learned something about that painting that I didn't know.

You see, last summer, Sr. Dorothy Kline visited Mother McAuley's House of Mercy in Dublin, Ireland; Sr. Dorothy walked into Baggot Street, saw the famous painting, and said, "Oh, I just love that picture of Mother Catherine." And the Sister who was taking her around said, "It's not Catherine."

(*Pause.*)

And Dorothy said, "It's not?" And the Sister replied, "No, it isn't. When Mother Catherine died, they had no pictures of her. So after a couple of years somebody said, 'If this whole thing continues, we might want to have a picture of her. Let's look around the community and see which Sister we remember looking the most like Catherine.'" They found her. She posed. And that's it.<sup>3</sup>

(*The cast emits a collective, mournful sigh of disappointment.*)

CHORUS 1

Oh, now, don't fret. After all, those Sisters were just being practical.

CHORUS 2

And, besides, what we're interested in here is not literal truth—but fidelity—keeping faith with those who came before us.

CHORUS 3

Artist-poet Brian Andreas has published a small volume entitled, *Mostly True: Collected Stories & Drawings*. His introduction highlights the wonder of storytelling and suggests that stories are necessary for our world today and indeed that the world would be a much better place, both more strange and more wonderful, if we did more storytelling. He says, "The moments I have with my friends and family are really all that I need."

CHORUS 2

"I like to take them, weave them into stories filled with laughter and music and lunacy."

CHORUS 3

"And they are mostly true, but I'm not telling you which parts."

CHORUS 1

And that's going to happen this afternoon/evening. Everything you hear is going to be mostly true...

ALL  
...but we won't be telling you which parts.<sup>4</sup>

CHORUS 1  
Because our storytellers are going to weave their moments with friends...

CHORUS 2  
And colleagues...

CHORUS 3  
And their experience of Mount Aloysius into stories—

SR. DE SALES  
Stories of faith—

SR. SILVERIUS  
Stories of morals—

SR. CAMILLE MARIE  
And stories of a culture sustained through times of poverty and painful transition. Here are just some of the stories of Mount Aloysius.

**Scene 2**  
“The Builders”

CHORUS 2  
Amelia Ihmsen—known to most of us as Mother de Sales. And Emma Cosgrave, known as Mother Gertrude. Those two women played leadership roles at the Loretto convent and academy. Their influence was felt all around. I didn't know Mother de Sales personally; she died the year before I came here. But I did know Mother Gertrude, because when I came to school here in 1911, she was still very much part of the academy. She was a very beautiful and affable woman. Very talented in music. I remember...she coached us for our graduation speeches...<sup>5</sup>

CHORUS 1  
*(With great earnestness and flourish, as though giving a valedictory address.)*  
Whatever shadows may fall in my future path, whatever be the fates of the friendships I may hereafter form, the constancy of your kindness and of your love will, at least, be something bright to look back upon.

CHORUS 3  
Some of you, like me, are about to exchange the retirement of boarding school for the busy and trying scenes of worldly life. We will soon share in common the pleasures as well as the dangers of society. This world of ours is indeed beautiful, but in its fairest bowers may be seen the trail of the serpent.

### CHORUS 1

No doubt, some who have been educated at Convent schools have been sadly unfaithful to the graces they there received. If faithful to the principles here instilled into our minds, we shall need no other wisdom to enlighten us in difficulty and doubt. Blessed teachers, fond companions of my best years, farewell.<sup>6</sup>

### CHORUS 2

Mother de Sales and Mother Cosgrave were builders to start with. They built what we know as the Main Building; it was through their ingenuity that that building was put up. And then it was followed in close succession by Alumnae Hall—with the aid of Charlie Schwab, the steel magnate from Pittsburgh.<sup>7</sup>

### CHORUS 1

Then followed St. Gertrude Hall two years later, and then the Faculty House which was built to accommodate overnight guests.

### CHORUS 3

They were builders in that sense. But I really think their greatest contribution was to the spirit, to the spirit that they left to this whole institute...the spirit of generosity, compassion, hospitality...all the things that we try to promote even today.

### CHORUS 2

And I think they did that wherever the need was; they were right there with their hospitality or their generosity or their compassion.

*(Pause.)*

I entered in 1924, which is a good many years ago for most of you. 1924. It was very different than what it is now.<sup>8</sup>

### CHORUS 1

*(Reading from Customs and Guide.)*

Each Sister's cell or place in the dormitory is furnished with a simple bedstead, mattress, pillows, and such covering as the climate renders necessary; a press for clothes; a chair; a wash stand provided with a drinking glass, a soap dish, and a basin and pitcher unless there is running water; and if necessary, a table or desk. The vows are hung on the wall. An inexpensive crucifix, a holy water font, a devotional picture in a simple frame, and a small inexpensive statue are permitted.<sup>9</sup>

### CHORUS 2

We were much more restricted. We had more rules and regulations. We had a regular routine of life—every hour was on the horarium. We had mostly our studies; we did a lot of reading. And we had instruction in the spiritual life.

### CHORUS 3

We were helped by the people who were seasoned in religious life: Mother Pierre Greene, Mother Xavier Phelan, and Sister Annunziata Jamison—I could name a long,

long list. We had many wonderful superiors and counselors who helped us to understand. You had to be taught what the vows meant.

#### CHORUS 2

We were appointed to whatever duties had to be done. We were told what field of endeavor we were going to be in. For most of us that was teaching. We had very little contact with our families; once we left them we saw them only rarely. We wrote to them once a month. There were very few telephone calls.

#### CHORUS 3

All religious communities were like that at the time. It was a very happy life, and we managed to enjoy the little things, I guess, more than anything.

#### SR. SILVERIUS

Vatican II saved my life. I mean that literally. I would stand up and give witness to the value of Vatican II in my life and to the renewal of the Church. Personally, I also think it did a lot for the Sisters of Mercy.

#### SR. DE SALES

One of the mandates that came out of Vatican II was for the religious communities to go back to the original charism of the foundresses. And in going back, we began to study Catherine McAuley as we had never studied her before. And in going back we realized that fourth vow of service and what it really meant.<sup>10</sup>

#### CHORUS 3

*(Reciting the vow.)*

By the vow of service, we commit ourselves to exercise the spiritual and corporal works of mercy revealed to us through the life of Jesus. Enriched by His love, healed by His mercy and taught by His word, we serve the poor, sick, and ignorant.<sup>11</sup>

#### SR. CAMILLE MARIE

Catherine was adamant against having a community of women who were cloistered. And when we went back and studied the charism of Catherine, we fully realized that we were the first community of religious women—please get this—it’s really important—in the history of the Church—the first group of women in the history of the church that did not have the vow of enclosure.

#### SR. DE SALES

And that’s why in Ireland we were nicknamed “The Walking Sisters;” we were the only Sisters on the streets. It gave us limitless opportunities for service.

#### SR. SILVERIUS

There wasn’t a thing a Sister of Mercy couldn’t respond to. If the need was there and the Sister at the community had the talent, they were to share it. And over the years, like all religious communities and the Church, we kind of lost it.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

And then Vatican II called us to renew; and in calling us to renew it gave us back the spirit of Catherine McAuley.

CHORUS 1

Catherine McAuley was a true lay minister. For fifty years of her life she lived a lay life, and she modeled mercy for us a lay woman. She only spent ten years as a sister.

CHORUS 2

So the legacy of Catherine is rich for religious; she gave us the responsible freedom to serve, and she modeled for the laity that they too were called and chosen.<sup>12</sup>

SR. SILVERIUS

*(Ringing an old-fashioned classroom bell to get everyone's attention.)*

Ladies, it's time to begin today's lesson. I think you should know that at the turn of the twentieth century, higher education was not considered a necessity for girls. The academies were finishing schools for young ladies. Colleges were for boys.

SR. DE SALES

But at the time, the academies had a much higher standard than modern high schools.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

Great attention was given to correct English, letter writing, and good spelling. When I was at school, Mother de Sales Ihmsen herself presided over spelling bees in the study hall. They were quite exciting!<sup>13</sup>

CHORUS 1

*(As Mother de Sales.)*

Miss Ryan...Lugubrious.

CHORUS 2

*(As Miss Ryan.)*

Lugubrious. L-A-G-G-U-B-R-I-U-S. Lugubrious.

CHORUS 1

That is incorrect, Miss Ryan. Miss O'Connor, lugubrious.

CHORUS 3

*(As Miss O'Connor. With much confidence.)*

Lugubrious. L-U-G-U-B-R-I-O-U-S. Lugubrious.

CHORUS 1

That is correct, Miss O'Connor. Miss, d'Invilliers...garrulous.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE  
*(Looking a bit panicked and somewhat hesitant.)*

Er...ah-hh...garrulous?

CHORUS 1  
Yes, Miss d'Invilliers. As in, "Miss d'Invilliers is an uncommonly garrulous young lady.

*(Giggles from the CHORUS.)*

SR. CAMILLE MARIE  
*(Loudly and with confidence.)*

Garrulous. G-A-R-R-U-L-O-U-S. Garrulous!

CHORUS 1  
That is correct, Miss d'Invilliers.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE  
*(Wiping her brow with mock exaggeration.)*

Phew! In her last years, Mother DeSales was diabetic and losing her eyesight, but she was still a commanding figure, and in matters of discipline, she had the last word.

CHORUS 2  
Mother Gertrude was dearly loved. She taught what was then known as elocution. The pupils went to her office for this. Special attention was given to the valedictory. There was *always* a valedictorian.

CHORUS 3  
Mother Gertrude would rehearse the valedictorian almost word for word—stopping at the commas, full stop at the period, the right inflection of the voice—so that it might be heard even at the rear of Alumnae Hall.

CHORUS 1  
*(CHORUS 2 and 3 mime drinking tea from a teacup. They make slurping sounds and their elbows stick out.)*

Mother Xavier gave a lecture in etiquette once a week. She came, as I remember, bringing a plate, cup and saucer, knife, fork and spoon to the study hall and illustrated the right and wrong way to use a knife and fork. Students were warned not to stick their elbows out!<sup>14</sup>

*(CHORUS 2 and 3 pull in their elbows.)*

SR. DE SALES  
Waning physical strength of the co-foundresses, Mother Mary de Sales and Mother Gertrude, led to internal administrative changes in the academy.



SR. SILVERIUS

Sister Mary Constance McBride...Mother Con, as she was affectionately called...was appointed headmistress and remained in the position for 32 years.<sup>15</sup>

**Scene 3**

“The Great Depression: Let’s put on a show!”

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

World War I and its attendant influenza epidemic brought other shifts and changes. The Sisters imposed their own quarantine during the influenza epidemic and, as a result, nobody at the academy became a victim of that dreaded disease.

SR. DE SALES

Mother Pierre Greene had plans for the growth of the school plant in the form of a chapel and convent wing.<sup>16</sup> The style chosen was Lombardy-Romanesque with cloisters reminiscent of monastic life. This was a reflection of Sister Pierre as surely as the Main Building reminded one of an earlier period reflecting the co-foundresses. The chapel was dedicated in October 1923.

SR. SILVERIUS

To pay for their new chapel, the Sisters of Mercy of Cresson, using their property as collateral, obtained from the Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company a loan of \$200,000.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

A loan agreement was signed in May 1928. October of the following year, 1929, the Sisters found themselves on the brink of financial ruin.<sup>17</sup>

SR. DE SALES

By building the chapel, the Sisters overextended themselves just before the onslaught of the Great Depression. For the next ten years, armed with faith, wits, and courage, the Sisters would try to meet their obligation to repay Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company.

*“Very Truly Yours: A Play within the Play, Act I”*

SR. DE SALES

And now, ladies and gentlemen, for your enlightenment...

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

*(Sotto voce.)*

Well, it’s certainly not for their entertainment.

*(Sr. de Sales gives her a dirty look; Sr. Silverius looks amused.)*

SR. DE SALES

We present *Very Truly Yours*, a dramatic reading of excerpts from letters<sup>18</sup> on the subject of our chapel debt.

CHORUS 1

July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1928. Dear Mother Annunziata. The interest on \$200,000 from the day you received the check from Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company should be computed at 5¼ % and a check drawn payable to the company in the amount you ascertain to be due. Very truly yours. Edward J. Harkins, Attorney at Law. Johnstown, Pennsylvania.

SR. DE SALES

March 22, 1930. To Louis F. Turner, cashier. Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Co. Dear Mr. Turner. July 1<sup>st</sup> of this year a payment of \$2,500 will be due on the principal of our loan. We write to ask if you can arrange with the company to allow this payment to lapse until July 1931. Superior. The Sisters of Mercy of Cresson.

CHORUS 2

March 29, 1930. To the Sisters of Mercy, Cresson, PA. Mesdames. The time for payment of \$2,500 is hereby extended to July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1931, with interest at...

*(With great emphasis.)*

...5¾% per annum. Yours truly. Osgood F. Fifield, Second Vice President. Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company.

SR. DE SALES

September 19, 1930. Dear Mr. Turner. We herewith enclose our check in the amount of \$2,500 to pay the principal note that was originally due July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1930. Also, we enclose our check for the interest up to and including September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1930. We thank you for the courtesy extended to us. Superior. Sisters of Mercy of Cresson.

CHORUS 3

*(Officiously.)*

January 4, 1932. To Sr. Xavier, Superior--Sisters of Mercy of Cresson. Dear Sister. Will you kindly send us remittance for \$3.37 to cover four days' accrued interest on principal at...

CHORUS 1

*(With emphasis.)*

6%.

CHORUS 3

We wish to advise that the terms of *all* our loans provide that where interest or principal items are not paid on or before the due date that interest at...

CHORUS 1  
*(With even greater emphasis.)*

6%

CHORUS 3  
...shall be charged. We cannot consistently make an exception in your case. We realize that your institution is in the nature of a...

CHORUS 1  
*(Condescendingly.)*

quasi-charitable institution...

CHORUS 3  
...and while we wish to give you every consideration possible, we must point out that we, as a mutual company, are acting in a fiduciary capacity in the loaning of our insurance funds, as these funds actually belong to our policy holders and will eventually be paid to...

CHORUS 1  
*(Melodramatically.)*

...widows and orphans.

CHORUS 3  
We hope that you can arrange to take care of the interest in question at this time. Very truly yours, Louis F. Turner, cashier. Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Co.

SR. SILVERIUS  
September 7<sup>th</sup>, 1933. To Harry W. Little, cashier. Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company. Dear Mr. Little. Our circumstances are so strained that it will be impossible for us to pay interest on interest. We owe hundreds of dollars for taxes, thousands for insurance, tens of thousands for meat, bread, butter, and groceries.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE  
Banks are not paying interest, corporations are not paying dividends, business firms are being indulgent to their debtors, terms of agreement are being modified—all these changes in usual business policy to save helpless debtors from bankruptcy.

SR. SILVERIUS  
Surely the great Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company will not assume the harsh role of the whipland.

SR. DE SALES  
You know that we have not yet paid a dollar on the interest due July 1<sup>st</sup>, and that in six or seven weeks the amount will be double. Please present these facts to your Board. The

power of foreclosing the mortgage is in their hands. Very truly, Sisters of Mercy of Cresson.

*Interlude*

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

Foreclosure? Sisters, let's put on a show!

ALL

What? Huh? What did she say?

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

I said, "Let's put on a *real* show!" A pageant! All this chatter of debt and interest and interest on interest and bankruptcy and foreclosure is...well...it's depressing! The Sisters in Chicago have published a pageant commemorating the centenary of our founding in Dublin. It's full of tableaux, songs, readings, dances...it recounts the story of the origins of the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland and then goes on to tell about the expansion of the Institute into England, Scotland, Australia, and finally, into America. And for a grand finale--Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus*!<sup>19</sup> It will be lovely!

CHORUS 1

But it's so much work.

CHORUS 2

Who will make the costumes...or build the set?

CHORUS 3

And who will rehearse the singers? And should we really be dancing?

CHORUS 1

Where will we find the money?

CHORUS 2

Or the time?

CHORUS 3

Or the MONEY!

CHORUS 1

Who will direct the show?

SR. DE SALES

*(Holding up a hand to silence the commotion.)*

Sisters, Sisters, please! I think it's a splendid idea. And, Sr. Camille Marie, I think you should be in charge of this enterprise. You can direct the centenary pageant.<sup>20</sup>

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

So I did.

*(During this speech, members of the CHORUS and other players silently mime rehearsing for the pageant: creating tableaux, singing, dancing, etc.)*

It was an immense undertaking, but it was produced in our Alumnae Hall on the evening of December 11, 1931. The next evening, December 12<sup>th</sup>, the pageant was given in the Altoona Cathedral Hall.

Snow was falling when the cars pulled out for Altoona and the roads were becoming hazardous. You can imagine our anxiety with almost a hundred children from Cresson, as well as our Academy girls to take care of.

When the show was over, Mother Constance and I were in the last car coming up the mountain, praying as we had never prayed before. When I, in a state of exhaustion, fell into bed that night the thought occurred to me that it had been an awful lot of work for nothing.

*(Pause.)*

Some twenty years afterward, I was talking to a Sister of Mercy from Dallas, Pennsylvania, and I asked her how she had become acquainted with the Mercy Sisters, as I knew she had gone to school to the Sisters of Charity. She answered, "In 1931, I saw a pageant of the work of the Sisters of Mercy given in the Cathedral Hall in Altoona, and I decided that I would like to be a Sister of Mercy." Thank you, Lord. It was worth something after all.<sup>21</sup>

*"Very Truly Yours: A Play within the Play: Act II"*

SR. DE SALES

And now, back to our little play. *Very Truly Yours*. Act II.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

Must we?

SR. DE SALES

*(With impatience and firmness.)*

We must!

SR. SILVERIUS

Circular letter to all the houses in our unit. November 15, 1933. Dear Sisters. Financial conditions have become so alarming that this morning a meeting of the Trustees of the Sisters of Mercy of Cresson was held to consider the following. The Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company is charging us 6% on the delayed interest on our loan.

SR. DE SALES

We are making an appeal to each house of our unit and to each individual Sister to curtail expense in every possible way and to help save our Mt. Aloysius home.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

Let us all unite in earnest prayer to our Heavenly Father for help, having unwavering confidence in His Omnipotence and Mercy. Affectionately in Jesus Christ. Sister Mary Xavier.

CHORUS 1

To the Sisters of Mercy of Cresson. July 2, 1934. My dear Sister Superior. It is not the practice of our company to waive accrued interest on past due interest, although we did make an exception and waive accrued interest on the interest which was due January 1<sup>st</sup>.

CHORUS 2

We are, of course, entitled to accrued interest on interest payments which are not paid promptly when due, and we regret that we can not again waive the accrued interest as requested.

CHORUS 3

We will, however, not charge the penalty rate of 6% but will charge the reduced rate of 5½%. Harry W. Little, cashier. Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company.

SR. DE SALES

March 19, 1935. To E. B. Woodruff, manager. Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company. Dear Mr. Woodruff. Your letters requesting monthly reports have not been answered because financial conditions are weighing so heavily upon us that all the time and energy we have left is consumed in effort trying to collect the meager amounts due us to pay interest and keep up the insurance.

CHORUS 2

Our creditors for maintenance bills are urging payments.

CHORUS 1

Some bills have been due since 1933.

CHORUS 3

We are writing you now, Mr. Woodruff, to say that it is impossible for us to pay more than 3%.

SR. SILVERIUS

In every way possible we have economized, reducing our personal expenses to a minimum.

SR. DE SALES

We ask you to change the rate of interest to 3% and we will continue the struggle to meet this amount. Sincerely, Sr. Xavier, Superior. The Sisters of Mercy of Cresson.

### CHORUS 3

April 5, 1935. To Sr. Xavier, Superior. Sisters of Mercy of Cresson. Dear Madam. The company does not feel that it can reduce the rate as low as 3%, but we are wondering if the rate were reduced to 4½% if you would be able to raise the money to pay your installments at this time. Yours very truly, E. B. Woodruff, manager. Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company.

### SR. DE SALES

Dear Mr. Woodruff. Since writing you on March 19<sup>th</sup>, we have been able to accumulate only \$950 and this under a volley of letters from the butcher, baker, grocer, text book firms and, what is more appalling, insurance firms.

### SR. CAMILLE MARIE

Our trustees could devise no means of raising more funds. So you can figure, Mr. Woodruff, that it is impossible for us to reach 4½%.

### SR. SILVERIUS

If your board will grant us 3% there would be a ray of hope towards meeting a higher rate in the future. You can assure your board that we are doing our very best and also that we appreciate their indulgence. Very truly, The Sisters of Mercy of Cresson.

### CHORUS 1

May 27, 1935. Dear Madam. While the company does not see its way clear to grant such a reduction in the interest rate to 3%, I am inclined to believe that if your request can be changed to a reduction of 4% that this may be granted by the company conditional upon the fact that sufficient money be raised to pay the present delinquent interest at the rate of 4%. Yours very truly, E.B. Woodruff, manager. Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company.

### SR. DE SALES

Dear Mr. Woodruff. Grateful as we are for your partial concession to our request, we find after figuring every possible means to raise the amount that it is beyond our power. We offer another proposition, that Massachusetts Mutual cancel all accrued interest and reduce the rate of interest to 2% until January 1, 1940. Thereafter, a rate of 4% will be paid until the debt is finally liquidated. Very truly, The Sisters of Mercy of Cresson.

### Scene 4

“Vision and Daring: Sr. M. de Sales Farley”

### SR. SILVERIUS

Sr. Mary de Sales...Gertrude Farley...New York City...May 3, 1892. The eldest daughter of John Austin Farley and Mary Tack Farley was born into a late-Victorian world of wealth and privilege.<sup>22</sup>

### SR. CAMILLE MARIE

Her maternal uncle...the American Impressionist painter, Augustus Vincent Tack...Uncle Gus. Her paternal uncle...John Cardinal Farley of New York.

#### SR. SILVERIUS

Like Gertrude, two of her three siblings would enter religious life. Her brother, Theodore, became a Jesuit priest; her sister, Marian, entered the community of Maryknoll Missionary Sister.

#### CHORUS 1

Her early education with the Madames of the Sacred Heart at Madison Avenue and 54<sup>th</sup> Street, New York City came at a time when private academies for young ladies were at their peak.

#### CHORUS 2

These academies were designed not only for formal education in science, art, and literature but for the development of the social graces as well which would enable young women to take their place in the society of that time. This kind of school set a permanent mark on Gertrude Farley for she was to become a woman of charm and distinction.

#### CHORUS 3

After completing her academy studies, she entered Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart. The following year, 1912, she went to Cresson where her great aunt, Mother Mary Gertrude Cosgrave, was an administrator of Mount Aloysius Academy.

#### CHORUS 1

Gertrude Farley was no stranger to life at Cresson. She and her sisters, Marion and Josephine, had been boarders at the academy. As a boarder, Gertrude met the novice, Camille Marie d'Invilliers, a vivacious young woman from an aristocratic family who would become a lifelong friend. However, their friendship had a rocky start.

#### SR. CAMILLE MARIE

During my novitiate, I was given a night charge in St. Gertrude's Dormitory. Once when Gertrude Farley offered to relieve me for a while, I gave her the "cold shoulder," as we had been warned that "there should be no particular attachments among us." So I assumed an indifference that I did not feel, and Gertrude imagined I did not like her.<sup>23</sup>

#### SR. SILVERIUS

One of the more powerful influences of her life now began to develop as she was placed under the directorship of the mistress of novices, Mother Pierre Greene.

#### SR. CAMILLE MARIE

Mother Pierre was held in high esteem. She was a violinist, a philosopher, and one who enjoyed and could share with those in her charge, a mystical approach to all things material and non-material.<sup>24</sup>

#### SR. SILVERIUS

Sr. Mary de Sales was among those most ardent in following Mother Pierre as her spiritual guide.



SR. CAMILLE MARIE  
(*Looking at SR. SILVERIUS.*)

Do you know she didn't have kneecaps?<sup>25</sup>

SR. SILVERIUS  
(*Surprised and exasperated by the interruption.*)

Mother Pierre didn't have kneecaps?

SR. CAMILLE MARIE  
No, no! Sr. de Sales didn't have kneecaps.

*(Waits to see if her revelation will have any impact. When she gets nothing but blank stares, she adds....)*

Her brother didn't have any either!

SR. SILVERIUS  
(*Dumbfounded.*)

That's—er-r-r—that's...fascinating.

*(Pauses to recollect her train of thought.)*

The world would be lost without dreamers and visionaries—the social world, that of art and beauty, and the economic world as well. Songs must be sung, and victories assured if the human spirit is to grow. Somewhere, someone must stop and study what is to be changed. And then the dream must be examined closely in order to place it on a workable base.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE  
Sr. Mary de Sales Farley found her dream taking form from the pages of the educational section of the *New York Times*. Perhaps not a romantic area, but certainly one which could evoke a course of action. It was a daring dream, and an unusual vision, and for those who considered her impractical, this dream was impossible.<sup>26</sup>

SR. SILVERIUS  
Daring is part of our Mercy tradition. We have dared to do things we weren't equipped to do. Sisters of Mercy don't act with caution! It's not in our tradition. If we'd decide to sit back and act always in caution with all the things that we need, we'd never get anything done.

I want to tell you a story of daring that fascinates me. I was in Port Scott, Kansas at the Mercy Hospital out there, and a Sister told me this story of how they got to Port Scott.<sup>27</sup>

### CHORUS 1

The Sisters were up in Michigan at the lumber camps. They worked where the lumber camps had been started; they were teaching the children and giving instruction...that sort of thing.

### CHORUS 2

One of the Sisters began to suffer from a very severe pain in her spine. Apparently, it was a very severe pain because it was decided that she should go with a sister companion south from Michigan and across to San Francisco where the Sisters of Mercy had the great St. Mary's Hospital.

### CHORUS 3

So they started the trek down from the Michigan woods. They got as far as Fort Scott which had been an army post. And when they arrived there, they met the priest, and he started to tell them that there was nothing he needed so much as a Catholic school.

### CHORUS 2

And he must have had a wonderful power of persuasion. They forgot the pain in the Sister's back; they turned around, they went back to Michigan to find out from the Mother Superior if they could return to Fort Scott to found a school. Permission was granted.

### CHORUS 1

They began to collect the things they needed for starting the school, which in the 1800's was fairly simple. When they got their gear together, they headed south again. The Sisters arrived in Fort Scott and presented themselves to the priest who had requested they found a Catholic school. The priest said, "I've changed my mind. I want a hospital."

### SR. SILVERIUS

So they gave him a hospital. To this day there are no Mercy schools in the State of Kansas...never have been. But there are all kinds of Mercy hospitals. Daring. It's DARING...that's all it is. We have to remember that it takes daring to do things.

### SR. CAMILLE MARIE

For Sr. de Sales, the dream was not ephemeral; it was brick and mortar strong and educationally sound. The *New York Times* had reported the rapid growth of the junior college movement on the West Coast and a few scattered schools of this nature along the East Coast.

### SR. SILVERIUS

To Sr. Mary de Sales, in a conservative milieu, without funds, and without knowledge of how such a school is instituted, the dream could be materialized here in the Alleghenies. Her question was, "Why not?"

### SR. CAMILLE MARIE

She saw that such a school would benefit many, could break any seeming existing bonds of exclusivity and elitism and a new adventure in education could take shape.<sup>28</sup>

“*Very Truly Yours: A Play within the Play: Final Act*”

SR. DE SALES

And now for the final act of *Very Truly Yours*.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

*(Sotto voce.)*

Praise be His Holy Name! It could use a few show tunes!

*(Everyone is amused by the remark, except SR. DE SALES.)*

SR. DE SALES

February 14, 1936. To J. B. Woodruff, President. Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company. Gentlemen. In the past four years our struggle to pay interest to your company has been desperate.

SR. SILVERIUS

Interest on our loan at the original rate of 5¼% for four years amounts to \$44,300. Upon this total we have paid \$32,487.50.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

In view of general financial conditions and of the reduction policies adopted by corporations, banks, trust companies and the United States government, the rate of interest on our real estate mortgages in these four years should not have been higher than *(with emphasis)* 3%, making the total amount owed you \$25,200.

SR. DE SALES

Therefore, we claim Massachusetts Mutual owns us \$7,286.50. Very sincerely, Sisters of Mercy of Cresson.

SR. DE SALES

June 9, 1936. To Thomas F. Dougherty, Cashier. First National Bank, Spangler, PA. Dear Mr. Dougherty. This afternoon Mr. Woodruff and Mr. Mount arrived at the academy.

SR. SILVERIUS

Mr. Mount, after glancing over the Academy receipts, expressed the situation as being a “tough” proposition to handle. He did not seem hopeful of the company accepting our terms.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

Mother Xavier staunchly stood her ground. She finally told them if our proposal could not be accepted they could have the deed to the property.

SR. DE SALES

Mr. Mount seemed amazed at this offer. He seemed inclined to wait until fall, believing our school enrollment would improve.

SR. SILVERIUS

To this we objected saying it was necessary for us to have something definite as soon as possible. Mr. Mount will put the matter before the President and Finance Committee of Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company. Sincerely in Jesus Christ. Sisters of Mercy of Cresson

CHORUS 2

June 22, 1936. Dear Sr. Xavier. The proposition as submitted by you when Mr. Mount and I called upon you a few days ago has been declined by the company. The company is convinced that a strong effort must be made to use your building in such a way as to produce more income.

CHORUS 3

You should convert your building to some other use, either a college or home or whatever might be done with it in order that you may get the necessary support to pay your obligations. Yours very truly, E.B. Woodruff, manager. Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company.

CHORUS 3

January 13, 1939. To Sister M. Callista, Superior. Mount Aloysius Academy, Cresson. Dear Sister. I have in the past cited that Massachusetts Mutual Insurance Company over-extended their line of credit to you and the earning capacity of the Academy can never—in the past, the present or the future--meet the obligation unless they scale it down to \$50,000 or \$75,000. In other words, future correspondence on this matter is only futile.

CHORUS 2

It was with sorrow that I learned of the death of Mother Xavier and regret that I could not attend her funeral. She always impressed me as a real executive and her master mind will be very much missed in the conduct of your affairs. Sincerely, T. F. Dougherty, cashier. First National Bank, Spangler, PA.

CHORUS 1

March 28, 1939. To Sister M. Cecilia. Dallas, Pennsylvania. Dear Mother Provincial. On the strength of my representation to Mr. Mount and Mr. Rawlings, officers of Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company, concerning Sister de Sales' plans for application for junior college privileges, as well as general revival of hope on the part of the Sisters in charge at Cresson, the men are willing to cooperate in every way possible.

CHORUS 2

They would be willing to accept a lesser amount than the contract obligation. They talked about the settlement of interest at...

SR. DE SALES  
(*Smugly.*)

3%.

CHORUS 3

From the general attitude of the two men, I would say that the situation at present is that there is no immediate intention to foreclose.

CHORUS 1

Officers of the company know full well that even if a college charter were at hand at this time no great income would be derived this year nor for some reachable time after the college plan was put into operation.

CHORUS 2

I feel completely justified in urging the Sisters to continue with any plans they have in mind with the assurance that their efforts will not be in vain. Very truly yours, James P. Costello, Jr., Attorney at Law.

SR. SILVERIUS

Sr. de Sales' own strong faith held her in the belief that a junior college could prosper...would prosper...and she was amazed if anyone thought otherwise.<sup>29</sup>

## Act II

Mores: The Transition

### Scene 1

“Sr. Silverius Shields: ‘We are the endowment!’”

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

In spite of opposition from the senior Sisters who did not believe she could do it, Sr. Mary de Sales Farley opened a junior college in 1939, on Mercy Day, September 24<sup>th</sup>.<sup>30</sup>

SR. SILVERIUS

To describe how we began the junior college is like telling a fairy tale. What do you do? How do you plan? I don't know. I didn't know when I first came to Cresson as a young sister, and Sr. de Sales was principal of the academy.

Early in 1939, her plan had germinated far enough in her mind to seek an associate in the endeavor. There were no new funds, no in pouring of new faculty, no remodeling of parts of the existing buildings. Her swiftness of action exemplifies something of her character. One afternoon in February, Sr. de Sales walked into my classroom where I was preparing the next day's lessons.

SR. DE SALES

We're going to start a junior college, and *you're* going to help me.

SR. SILVERIUS

I looked up from what I was doing and said, “Well, what is a junior college?” How often I was going to have to answer that question in the next few years.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

Sr. de Sales was very good at finding the right people to help with the right thing.<sup>31</sup>

SR. DE SALES

Eleanor Shields...Sr. Mary Silverius...Silver...was born into a working class family of five children, February 2, 1907. Eleanor’s mother, Julia, was a pianist and made certain that the home was filled with classical music. Although, by many standards, they were poor, it never seemed to be that way to Eleanor and her siblings.<sup>32</sup>

SR. SILVERIUS

We always seemed to have what was needed and early on I felt that, if we were suddenly cast up on some desert island, Mother would manage to have bacon and eggs for breakfast despite the desolation of our environment. Luckily, she was never put to the test.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

After her father became an invalid, it was left to Eleanor’s mother to manage a small grocery store which her father had established when he was no longer able to work in the steel mill.

SR. DE SALES

Consequently, her mother set the pattern for work and brought her into independence and self-sufficiency, an independence and self-sufficiency that would carry her through life. On February 2, 1932, her 25<sup>th</sup> birthday, she entered the convent of the Sisters of Mercy in Cresson.

SR. SILVERIUS

When I entered the convent I thought, well all I have to do is secretarial work and maybe play my violin a little bit and prepare my classes. Little did I know.

*(Mimicking SR. DE SALES.)*

“We are going to start a junior college, and you’re going to help me.”

Sr. de Sales gave me a skeletal survey of what a junior college was. She knew a little bit more than I—she had been reading. But keep in mind that was February 1939—and do you know when we opened it? September 1939. We had a class of twenty-four students.

SR. DE SALES

Why did I select Sr. Silverius to assist me in starting the junior college? That’s a good question. Some years in age separated us. We came from very different backgrounds.

But Sr. Silverius had at least two qualities I believed to be essential to the operation: business skills and a strong back. Her mind and her hands were never idle. Any task I

would assign her, no matter how daunting, regardless of lack of experience in the matter, she would attempt. What's more, she would not rest until the task was completed to mine, and her, satisfaction.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

I remember when Silver was registrar, she kept a knitting bag behind the door of her office, and when somebody would come to talk, she'd get out her knitting. One priest friend would say, "Put that thing down; I'm talking to you...pay attention!"<sup>33</sup>

SR. DE SALES

And I hated it because it was red, and I thought that was terrible. It was too bright. She shouldn't be using a red knitting bag.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

She could still give you 100% of her attention, but her hands had to be busy all the time.

CHORUS 1

Silverius had a marvelous sense of balancing. When she prayed, she prayed; when she worked, she worked, and when she played, she played. And all with the same intensity.

CHORUS 2

Silverius loved gardening. She had English ivy growing on that circle outside the Main Building. And lavender. And perennials of all sorts. Of course, Sr. de Sales would have a fit at the thought that Silverius would spend time doing something like that. De Sales would say...

SR. DE SALES

All the things you have to do in that office and you're playing in mud?

CHORUS 3

Silverius would tell her, "When I come back in, I'll do twice as much as if I hadn't gone out!"<sup>34</sup>

SR. SILVERIUS

It came down to this. I had the skills; she needed them. It was the beginning of a long association.

Sr. de Sales had a funny way of addressing new things that she would do in the school. I was serving in the position of registrar. And to her, what registrar meant, I was never able to encompass. Never. Because she would come into my office and say...

SR. DE SALES

Now you're the registrar...

SR. SILVERIUS

A fact which I had some concept of. Or she would say...

SR. DE SALES

Out on the West coast right now they're doing a great deal in junior colleges with merchandising. I think we'd better get ourselves a course in merchandising.

SR. SILVERIUS

And having said that, she would go off and leave me to find out how to put together a course in merchandising. It always meant research, finding out who was teaching it, how they were teaching it, what they thought was necessary, and then going out into the community and discovering what those who were professionally in merchandising thought was essential to the job.

*(Pause.)*

You have to have a dreamer to set anything in motion. And I really reached a point in my life where I thought if she came in once more and said, "Now you're the registrar..." I really thought I would come to some point where it was the end of the tether. Not a bit of it. I had to stretch my line and my thinking instead. And I had to learn that there was absolutely no boundary that she would not assail. If she thought something belonged in the junior college, then into the junior college it came!<sup>35</sup>

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

Sr. de Sales went out and recruited students, talked junior college, kept the faculty updated on what was going on, and prayed her way through the thicket of things she didn't know.

SR. SILVERIUS

And I came along, somehow, filling in the gaps that had to be filled in and not even knowing why we were doing it. I learned to pray, too, in those days.

But Sr. de Sales had enlisted me in her ranks. And having done that, I found out very early on it was my business to supply, what I like to call, the "nuts and bolts" that would hold together the dream she possessed.

SR. DE SALES

Let's go see the people in Harrisburg to find out how they feel about junior colleges and what they expect.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

There was a man in Harrisburg—Dr. Henry Klonower—who had established a set of criteria for anybody who wanted to open a junior college. A great long sheet of paper—everything on that paper making perfect sense. Opposed to that, we were talking about something which seemed to be made of that strange material out of which dreams are spun. It didn't balance.

CHORUS 1

We needed a minimum enrollment of 100 students. We didn't have a hundred students enrolled; of course, we didn't. We had sixty. How do you start out with a hundred students?



CHORUS 2

We needed an endowment fund of at least \$100,000; we had an endowment fund of about that much in debts.

SR. SILVERIUS

We came home from that Harrisburg trip and started to talk about what we would do to meet the criteria. We got along remarkably well. We had a wonderfully good faculty—there was no question about that. But when it came down to equipment—well somebody else had asked us one time what we had in the area of visual aids—and smilingly Sister told them we had a 35mm strip that you could use—and a 35mm movie machine, which you could also use. We had three microscopes in the science lab, two of which worked. We had one 16mm slide machine that operated by hand. An inventory that was very easy to take. We had a high school library of 600 books.

SR. DE SALES

We went along rather nicely figuring how we could edge these things in—get it all to fit—when we met the line: \$100,000 endowment. And before that I almost quailed.

SR. SILVERIUS

But she did what she often did. She would go to the chapel and pray and pray and pray. One day I was walking down the corridor, and it hit me strong and hard. We have a \$100,000 endowment; we have it. (*Turning toward SR. DE SALES.*) We've got the \$100,000!

SR. DE SALES

Where?

SR. SILVERIUS

And I pointed it out to her. I remembered in the reports that we would file every year, they always gave us credit for having a faculty worth \$100,000—nobody got any salary, but there was not another junior college in the state that had a faculty it didn't have to pay. And when the next report went in on our progress, it was there; it passed. \$100,000—that's what we were worth walking around here.

(*Pause.*)

We were worth a lot more.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

What do you do when you're up against the insurmountable? What we did when we were up against the insurmountable was to join her in prayer and sit down and figure out how to do it. Mount Aloysius was built on a foundation of prayer that went on unceasingly.<sup>36</sup>

CHORUS 2

You could go up to the chapel in the early morning and find her—praying.

CHORUS 3

You could find her after lunch—praying.

CHORUS 1

You could find her late at night—sitting there—praying.

**Scene 2**

“It’s the right thing.”

SR. SILVERIUS

Untrammled by either lack of experience or the restraints of tradition, Sister Mary de Sales and I set out to use what we had to the best of our ability. We shared our travail among all our Sisters and a few dedicated lay people. Strength lay in this community.

One of the very important things in the establishment of any school is that it be accredited. Sr. de Sales would say...

SR. DE SALES

We have to get it! We cannot transfer one of these students if we don’t get it. We have less than two years to become accredited. We owe it to our students.

SR. SILVERIUS

Sister friends in other colleges—four year institutions—said...

CHORUS 1

Now look, don’t expect to get this. Nobody gets accredited so quickly!

CHORUS 2

You want to get state accreditation in two years and regional accreditation in four?!

CHORUS 3

Nobody gets a Middle States accreditation in less than ten years. It just doesn’t happen.

SR. SILVERIUS

By the combined effort of that entire faculty of ours, I will always remember the day in 1943 when we received Middle States accreditation. And state accreditation two years earlier in 1941—on Valentine’s Day of all days. We got it by dint of hard work and close cooperation....At lunch that day, Sr. de Sales read the letter from the State to the entire community. Everyone was elated. And relieved.<sup>37</sup>

SR. SILVERIUS

In the early 1940’s, Sr. de Sales took stock of her school in another way. One of the statements appearing in the catalog was that Mount Aloysius admitted students regardless of race, color, or creed.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

But she had not tested the registration of blacks into her all-white school.

SR. SILVERIUS

It had not been difficult to find Asian students or Latin-Americans. And the school registered Jewish and Moslem students.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

By 1948, Sr. de Sales had admitted black students, and this long before the cry for equality had rung through the nation, or that Selma, Alabama, had become a point of new determination.

CHORUS 1

The entrance of these young women meant not only a need for acceptance by their classmates, but an acceptance by the parents of the white students as well.

CHORUS 2

Sr. de Sales faced this clearly and, in one particular instance, she had the opportunity to drive home the point with a disgruntled mother.

SR. SILVERIUS

It was admissions day—opening day—and at that time high school students were living in the dormitories with a number of students in the same room separated into curtained alcoves.

SR. DE SALES

That semester, we had admitted one of our first black students. And the parent of one of the students who was in the same room as the black girl didn't want her daughter rooming with a black student. I said to her, "Madame, I won't change this. If I were to do that, I might as well take the cross off the top of the building." And that ended the discussion.<sup>38</sup>

**Scene 3**

"That sense of light hit me."

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

On May 9, 1955, Sr. Silverius defended her doctoral dissertation in partial fulfillment of her Ph.D. in Economics. She was 48 years old. Economics had not been her choice. Rather, the Dean of her school at Catholic University had persuaded her that a doctorate in economics was the logical degree to pursue. Other than her studies in accounting, she knew nothing of economics.<sup>39</sup>

SR. SILVERIUS

For me, this was a new challenge given in the old pattern--something not expected--something for which I was not prepared.

SR. DE SALES

Hard work had been her way of attaining the end in the past and hard work it would be again.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

The evening of her doctoral defense, Sr. Silverius called Sr. de Sales to tell her the good news that she'd successfully defended her dissertation. Not content with the phone call, Sr. Silverius went back to her room and wrote Sr. de Sales a letter<sup>40</sup> that filled in details about that extraordinary day.

SR. SILVERIUS

Dear Sister. The sound of your voice is still ringing in my ears. It was a wonderful topper for a particularly wonderful day. Elation is usually short-lived. Thank God for that. We couldn't take a steady diet of the feeling that surges through one. It could be exhausting.

I attended our usual community Mass here, had a sketchy breakfast, walked over to the campus, attended a second Mass at the Shrine, and just as I stepped into one of the vestibules for the second Mass, Father Allen, a priest who is a student in the department, came towards me.

CHORUS 1

*(As Father Allen.)*

It's all in the bag, Sister. I fixed it with the Holy Ghost, Blessed Mother, and Saint Joseph. Don't worry; it's all an assured thing!

SR. SILVERIUS

At that moment I wasn't so sure. One should always calculate risks. The higher one climbs, the greater and more severe could be the descent, if one is toppled off his props.

It would be difficult to tell you how that first question sounds when the major professor places it. As usual, glibness didn't desert me, but that was because all of you people had so stormed heaven that the light of the answers seemed to flash before my mind. It was like a great inrush with sufficient time to use each light provided.

CHORUS 2

What we could do with ourselves, if we picked up graces in the same way as I picked up lights yesterday morning. Sanctity would be something quite different from what it is!

SR. SILVERIUS

There is no doubt about the fact of sensing the power that God puts at your disposal at such a moment. I have heard other Sisters say that—now I know. God struck the first match, located the intellectual switch, turned it on, and there lay the facts in the order needed. The experience was a glorious one. It was stimulating. Without Divine Intervention it would not have been done.

CHORUS 3

After being dismissed from the board room, I went outside to await the verdict which came within a few minutes. What a pleasant thing to have one's teachers whom one respects offering congratulations.

SR. SILVERIUS

The hour of the ordeal was really brief in the final analysis. I entered the room at nine o'clock, was out by ten-twenty and had my verdict a little before ten-twenty-five. Well, the next big one is the particular judgment. May I be ready for it.

*(Pause.)*

Your trip to Atlantic City sounds kippy. Use your past experience on sunburn and take care of your sweet sixteen complexion. Sun and you don't get along too well. That's what it is to be a lady and have a fine complexion. You should see my swarthy face—I've been studying in the little park. Father Allen's parting shot today was, "Well, you sure look healthy." I reminded him that it was my business to maintain such a status. Lovingly in Jesus Christ. Sr. M. Silverius

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

After completing her studies, Sr. Silverius found herself back at the Mount in the same job she'd had before going to study for the doctorate.

SR. SILVERIUS

It never seemed strange to me that I should return to the same work, in the same place, for this was my place. The school continued to grow, to present opportunities to use the education that I had attained. I fitted the mold and the mold fitted me and life moved on.<sup>41</sup>

**Act III**

Cultura: Moving Forward. Looking Back.

**Scene 1**

"Twenty-four hours from the ballet to the cow pasture..."

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

A thought came to me last night. I think one of the factors that influenced the culture was the poverty...the need for the farm and that kind of thing. It probably helped build community, you know what I mean?

SR. DE SALES

The common work, too, was part of the culture: picking beans, canning....we were always working together on housework—in a team sometimes. Everyone worked.

SR. SILVERIUS

Most evenings we would have supper and then recreation, and then we would have night prayers. But every once in a while, Sr. Magdalene—she was the superior—would have "early bed" as she would say, and we would have the night prayers right after supper.

CHORUS 1

This particular evening—it was springtime—Sr. Magdalene said, "Sisters, we'll have early night prayers tonight, and will all the young Sisters please come to the cow pasture to clean up the branches that have come down through the winter so the fields will be ready for the men to use."

CHORUS 3

Everybody trooped out there including Sr. Veronica, who was then in her mid-80's—and we were quietly picking up and piling the brush.

CHORUS 2

Silverius was there too—all the faculty—anybody who was free and wasn't tied up with students somehow—and there we were picking up these branches.

CHORUS 1

And Silverius came over, poked me in the ribs, and said,

SR. SILVERIUS

“Just think, BJ, twenty-four hours from the ballet to the cow pasture.”

CHORUS 1

Because the evening before we had had this beautiful presentation in Alumnae Hall of a ballet that Sr. de Sales and the cultural committee had prepared.

SR. SILVERIUS

Sr. de Sales thought that even though the college was small she had to bring into the community people of stature. She had a nose for smelling out the right thing and getting it at the right time. And then advertising it in such a way that our little Alumnae Hall was filled to bursting.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

We had Madame Von Trapp's family of singers.

SR. DE SALES

We had the organist from Radio City Music Hall—Dick Liebert.

CHORUS 1

And one time there was a group of Cossack sword dancers.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

And interpretive dancers from New York City—really modern stuff—Sr. de Sales loved dance.

CHORUS 2

And Father Walter Cizek, the Jesuit who lectured on life behind the Iron Curtain.

CHORUS 3

And Betty Friedan who talked about her book, *The Feminine Mystique*. I remember that made for some lively discussion at our next faculty meeting.

SR. DE SALES

And remember Helen Ryan who did wonderful monologues based on Elizabeth Barrett Browning? And then there was that Chinese fellow—a university professor from Seton

Hill, I can't remember his name—who lectured on the differences between Eastern and Western cultures. Fascinating stuff!

#### SR. SILVERIUS

And I remember his plane was late. All the students and faculty were gathered in Alumnae Hall—waiting—waiting. Sr. Camille Marie grew impatient, jumped up on stage, and she started playing boogie woogie, show tunes—whatever was on Broadway, she knew. She would just slap them out one after another, and then she'd turn around and would have this broad smile. The kids loved it. Just as this Chinese professor was coming in, the kids all stood up and gave her a standing ovation.<sup>42</sup>

#### SR. DE SALES

Sr. Camille Marie. An original. Marie Adelaide d'Invilliers was born in 1886—the daughter of Camille Stanislaus d'Invilliers and Mary Antoinette Devitt.<sup>43</sup>

#### SR. SILVERIUS

Her paternal great grandmother, Emilie le Clerc, had been a French aristocrat and a ward of the Princess Adelaide and one of Marie Antoinette's Ladies in Waiting.

#### CHORUS 1

The ancestral home, a château on the outskirts of Paris, had been called "Chantilly." When in 1902 Sr. Camille Marie's father built his family a colonial-style house in Cresson, Pennsylvania, it, too, would be named "Chantilly."

#### SR. CAMILLE MARIE

At the time of my baptism, I was very tiny having arrived two months earlier than I was expected. But I grew up to be healthy and quite a little spit-fire. In fact, spitting was an early acquired technique to relieve my feelings when things were not going my way. I have a vivid recollection of being pushed into the confessional for my first confession. I was seven years old.

#### CHORUS 2

From an early age, Sr. Camille Marie loved to take charge. She accepted any challenge. She was fearless.

#### SR. CAMILLE MARIE

In the winter, when a toboggan route was built for us, I was invariably at the wheel guiding the sled—all protestations having been silenced. And when Miss Susie, Pastor Styles' sister-in-law promised a prize for the one who could tell the best story, I, at once prepared one while lying on my back on our see-saw. I won the prize. This did not surprise me; I fully expected it! If there was a question of jumping from a high beam in the hayloft, I always took the dare!

#### CHORUS 3

Sr. Camille Marie was a pianist, composer, writer and, when circumstances demanded, producer of plays, concerts, and recitals. She was always ready to enhance any gathering of students or friends with her art. On her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, she entertained those who had gathered for the occasion with a medley of tunes on the piano and concluded by dancing

an Irish jig.

SR. SILVERIUS

One time Camille Marie got the idea that the Sisters should put on a program for the kids. We were to do a puppet show. It was for their Christmas party...and it was the story of *Silent Night*.

CHORUS 2

And we were running around making all our little puppet things.

CHORUS 1

We spent hours working on this puppet show.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

Sisters Mariella and Gertrude and Carlos were doing the puppeteering. Silverius might have been backstage. And Benedicta, of course, did a lot of the staging.

SR. DE SALES

We went over and sang the songs for the Carmelites. That was Camille Marie's idea.

CHORUS 3

It was a lot of work, but we had fun. I remember Sr. Agnese was here. I remember Agnese because she stole what I was going to use for the bed I was making for the puppet show. I had to make a bed, and Agnese had to make a chair. She took a piece of my bed to use as the back of her chair. Yes, we had fun.<sup>44</sup>

SR. DE SALES

Composing music was always part of her life. She composed and produced an operetta entitled *The Countess and the Cop*—a comic melodrama of characters exchanging identities and of the chaos that ensues.

SR. SILVERIUS

For Sr. Camille Marie, musical composition and transcription was as simple as writing a letter and was done just as swiftly. She taught music theory, French, gave private lessons, played accompaniments for glee club concerts, and wrote many songs.

SR. DE SALES

Perhaps Sr. Camille Marie managed to accomplish so much in her days because she thought things through and then proceeded immediately to action. What this ability to think and act must have cost her as she dealt with the more pedestrian folk around her, only she could know. It was generally accepted that she must have suffered many frustrations without comment.

CHORUS 1

In 1985, at age 99, Sr. Camille Marie noticed that the chorus of the Mount Aloysius alma mater song was not full and knew immediately that it had been written in a key too high for general chorus. Two days later, she presented the score transposed suggesting that it be used at subsequent graduations.<sup>45</sup>



**Scene 2**  
“The Object Speaks”

SR. SILVERIUS

I’m going to begin our guided tour as I have so often done with someone coming to the registrar’s office, for as you know I was registrar for many years. And sometimes it started just like this.<sup>46</sup>

CHORUS 1

This is, as you know, the office of the registrar—a little bit unconventional—not quite as businesslike as you might expect it. Perhaps the most important object in this room is the college seal<sup>47</sup> hanging on the opposite wall from the fireplace.

CHORUS 2

It’s only when one has been able to participate in the design of such a thing as this college seal that it takes on much significance. At the time it was being made, we had some very interesting discussions.

CHORUS 3

There are two fields. The upper field was designed by the dean of the college, Sr. Mary de Sales Farley, who founded the school in 1939. She wanted the girls who came here to be able to receive knowledge and pass it on in service to other people.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

Here you see the hand of the Sister holding one side of the lamp of knowledge and the hand of the student receiving it on the other side. She chose for that field the simple statement of, “With our light, we serve.”

CHORUS 1

The lamp is passed from the Sisters, who carried on that life of service, to the new students of Mount Aloysius. The Sister places it as a sacred trust into womanly hands which alone can serve the world in the way in which it so much needs to be served.

SR. DE SALES

Service to hearts and souls and bodies and minds...

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

Service that is enlightened and steady and bright in a world where all too much darkness prevails.

CHORUS 2

Service that heals where life has cut wounds...

CHORUS 3

Service that opens eyes which have been blind to God’s realities...

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

Service that goes on when it is difficult to follow the path of duty.

SR. SILVERIUS

In the lower field is one of the symbols of Our Lady. I was the happy one who provided that. Here is the figure of the Tower of Ivory. It's a place where one lives or can live; it's a stronghold.

CHORUS 1

A tower is a strong edifice well based and stretching upwards for the purpose of enabling us who use it to see far out over the expanse below.

CHORUS 2

It is an inspiring edifice which serves as a beacon to those who need it as a guide.

CHORUS 3

The tower symbolizes the purity of Our Lady and the personal purity of those who strive to imitate this most glorious of her virtues.

SR. SILVERIUS

Curved about the base of the tower are the words: Faith, Morals, and Culture.

CHORUS 1

Faith comes first in order of nature and grace. The power to believe...

CHORUS 2

Then morals...the power to act in accordance with that belief.

CHORUS 3

Out of these two rises that culture that marks a woman who is a positive force for good in this world.

SR. SILVERIUS

Encircling the oval-shaped seal are two laurel branches indicative of the reward that comes to the victor.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

A Mount Aloysius woman is expected to be a victor in time and in eternity. She, like the seal, embodies all that is beautiful in Catholic womanhood.

SR. SILVERIUS

And speaking of towers, when one approaches the complex of buildings which make up our campus there is one feature which distinguishes our skyline: three towers.

CHORUS 1

One tower rises above the chapel wing. It was designed as a bell tower, but no bell was ever installed.

## CHORUS 2

The northeast side of the Main building has a Norman Tower. That tower does not rise as high as the others, but it is a most practical tower used from its circular foundation to its top third storey.

## CHORUS 3

And rising above the entrance to the Main Building is a prominent, square tower, a true bell tower that housed for eight decades a large and deep-toned bell. Then, in the early 1980's, the voice of "Aloysius," for that is what the bell was named, was silenced.

## SR. DE SALES

"Aloysius" used to sound the Angelus hours and could be heard over the entire town.

## SR. CAMILLE MARIE

"Aloysius" was rung on special occasions as well: at the close of the two World Wars and when the American hostages returned from Iran...

## SR. DE SALES

...and for Sisters' funerals.<sup>48</sup>

## SR. SILVERIUS

And "Aloysius" would have been used to summon the assistance of local townspeople in the event of a fire like the one that ravaged the old Loretto academy in 1904.

## CHORUS 1

Fearing that structural deterioration in the tower might cause the giant bell to crash into the floors below, "Aloysius" was taken down and is now sitting in a dank corner of a basement storeroom—his clapper removed—mute—awaiting the day when he will be allowed once again to proclaim daily rituals and announce human triumph over adversity.

## SR. SILVERIUS

As we enter the Aloysian Parlor, the room that now serves as the office of the college President, please take note above the mantelpiece a painting whose very existence has become the stuff of legend. The new academy was completed in 1897, just in time for spring commencement exercises when the new building in its entire splendor was to be shown off to visitors for the very first time.

## SR. DE SALES

A large oval mirror permanently installed into the mantel above the fireplace, for some unknown reason, shattered revealing the rough boards behind it. With so little time before arrival of the first visitors, what was to be done?<sup>49</sup>

## CHORUS 1

Ever resourceful, Sister Josephine Ihmsen, whose talents were extensive, asked for a workman to sand the rough boards. Then mounting a stepladder, she began to create, where the mirror had been, a panel of flowers. The painting is as beautiful and fresh as it was on that June morning of 1897.

SR. SILVERIUS

In addition to the Aloysian Parlor, other parlors grace the first floor of our Main Building: the Maple Parlor, the Madonna Parlor, and the Sisters' Parlor. Each parlor, like the other important rooms in the Main Building, has a fireplace, each with a unique surround and mantelpiece. The woodwork and fireplace mantelpiece adorning the Maple Parlor is bird's eye maple, which beautifully sets off the emerald green tile that surrounds the hearth box.

CHORUS 2

The Madonna Parlor used to have a great many Madonnas in it...

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

Almost too many!

CHORUS 2

Here again is a very beautiful fireplace, in this instance surrounded by rich, blue tile. Above the mantle is a fragment from the tomb in Florence of Bishop Zenobius—angels in flight...very, very, graceful!

CHORUS 3

The Sisters' Parlor was originally designed to be a museum. Behind the door, not often seen, is a picture by Sister Maria Josephine d'Angelo—it is the Holy Family. The Christ Child, Saint Joseph and Our Lady in this very humble scene share a meal. Here is one more trace, and a strong one, of that particular theme that runs through the Sisters of Mercy of this community, a taste for art and the ability to execute it delicately.

CHORUS 1

Sister Maria Josephine d'Angelo also designed the Mercy cross that is worn by our Sisters all over the world.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

And on this wall is something very special. In 1925, Mother Constance McBride, Sr. de Sales, and I posed for an informal photograph just outside the Aloysian Parlor at the foot of the golden staircase. In the photo, Mother Con, as the school girls affectionately called her, sits facing me. Sr. de Sales looks over Mother Con's left shoulder in my direction. I've always loved the casual intimacy of this particular photograph.

SR. DE SALES

For thirty two years, Mother Con was Mistress General of the Academy. An intelligent woman who loved poetry and music, Mother Con was one of the first of our Sisters to earn a B.A. degree.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

I can remember her, when in 1899, I was a frightened little freshman and Mother Con took me by the hand and led me to her classroom to talk things over. Her kindness dispelled all my fears, and I was never again to feel afraid.

#### SR. SILVERIUS

After thirty-two years as head of the academy, Mother Constance was sent to teach in the Altoona Catholic High School. No one was around when she left the Academy one afternoon in early September. Since the Academy did not own a car, friends came to transport Mother Con to her new mission.

#### SR. CAMILLE MARIE

I happened to be going up the steps from the laundry and reached the side door just as the car was driving off. I felt a few tears rising to my eyes. No one there to say “goodbye--” no words of thanks or appreciation after thirty-two years of devoted service. She would not have expected any.

#### SR. DE SALES

I accompanied Sr. Camille Marie on her last visit to the hospital to see Mother Con. Sr. Camille Marie stood on one side of the bed, and I on the other. We each held one of the hands of the dying Sister.

#### SR. CAMILLE MARIE

“You’ll pray for us that we can make the college a reality, won’t you?” asked Sr. de Sales. Mother Con opened her eyes wide and pressing our hands said, “I certainly will.” The next day Mother Constance left Earth for heaven.<sup>50</sup>

#### SR. DE SALES

There is an Oriental proverb that states, “Where there is no past, there is no future.” Our chapel has a past and leads to us into the future. Mother Pierre Greene wanted a beautiful and functional chapel and chose the Lombardy-Romanesque style with its gracefully curved roof and long, slender and somewhat dark interior for our new place of worship.

#### CHORUS 1

It is monastic in arrangement—with a rood screen separating the Sisters’ seating in front from the seating at the rear of the chapel reserved for students and guests. The Sisters’ carved oaken stalls are arranged for prayers said in common. The official prayer of the Church, the psalms, is recited with two choirs facing one another. One side begins the psalm reading one strophe, or verse, and the other side responds with the next strophe, and so on back and forth.

#### CHORUS 3

As we face the sanctuary, we can see the central point of the chapel—the altar made of Sienna marble and Mexican onyx. The altar had been in the Loretto chapel. Rising above the altar is a baldachino, added in 1932, decorated with carved angels that appear to be in flight—notice the thrust of their bodies, the strength of their wings.

#### CHORUS 2

Our stained glass windows are gems in themselves. Each has a small medallion depicting a scene taken from either scripture or Church history. My favorite is of St. Catherine, patron saint of schools and colleges. The inscription on her window translates, “The beginning of wisdom is fear of the Lord.” These windows give us a short compendium

of the Old and New Testaments—stories that continue to instruct in our own time. They remind us what Catholic education is all about.<sup>51</sup>

SR. SILVERIUS

In what is now a student parking lot behind the chapel, until it was deliberately burned in the mid-1960's, stood our half-timbered, Tudor-style barn. For many decades it served as mute witness to leaner days of hard work and the need for self-sufficiency.

SR. DE SALES

A humble yet beautiful structure, for several generations the barn housed an array of farm animals: cows, sheep, pigs, goats, and horses.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

The chickens, however, lived in style—a brick chicken coop!

SR. SILVERIUS

And this tiled arcade leads us to Alumnae Hall, designed to be a music hall, but used since it was completed in 1902 for many events: graduations, spring concerts, plays, recitals, meetings, gymnastics, and movies! It's a functional building.

SR. DE SALES

We had at one time, on the great arch above the stage, the motto, "They that trust in the Lord are as Mount Zion." But somebody seemed to think it was a good idea to paint over that, and it is no longer emblazoned there.<sup>52</sup>

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

The acoustics seem exactly right for the violin. We've had violinists here who would pick a certain spot on the stage where they found the melodies they played could be made to sound just as they liked to hear them.

SR. SILVERIUS

And speaking of violins and violinists, our school has been blessed with both. Three special violins have found their way to the Mount. The best of the three was one belonging to Mother Pierre Greene—a sweet, singing instrument made by Alexander Gaglianias in 1721. Mother Pierre taught violin at the Academy. She was very sensitive to this violin which she treasured. It was, for her, a special, delicate, musical part of her life.

CHORUS 1

The second violin also belonged to Mother Pierre; she had it during her teenage years. It is a larger violin with the head of an old man carved above the keys for tuning the strings. The ribs of the instrument are carved with a Latin motto: "Viva fui vi salvas Deo, Vi morte dulce."

CHORUS 2

"I have lived in the forest of God; now dead, I sing sweetly."

### CHORUS 3

On the back of the instrument there is a scene showing either the wall of a city or a monastery. It adds nothing to the violin except making it a museum piece.

### SR. SILVERIUS

The third violin was mine, brought to the convent when I entered in February 1932. I acquired the violin when I was a high school freshman and always found it a joy to play. It came from an old man who was dying in the “poor house” and who was selling it to help meet his funeral expenses. He asked the pastor of our church to find a buyer for it. The pastor, knowing that my mother was looking for an instrument better than the one I had, made it available. The funeral costs were met, and I had an instrument I never ceased to enjoy in my adult life.<sup>53</sup>

### SR. CAMILLE MARIE

And so our history goes on. It is a history with a vision.

### SR. DE SALES

A people without vision will perish; a people with a vision will endure.

### SR. SILVERIUS

The vision in which we work is all around us—in the structures we inhabit, in the objects we cherish, in the words we live by.

### CHORUS 1

“They that trust in the Lord are as Mount Zion.” Trusting in the Lord, creating a relationship with God strong as a mountain.

### CHORUS 2

Those who serve—“With our light we serve”—have a reason for being.

### CHORUS 3

And as you go out the door there is another tablet made in 1923 by Sister Mary Josephine Ihmsen. It says: “Faith, Morals, Culture.”

### SR. SILVERIUS

To inculcate faith...

### SR. DE SALES

To inculcate morals...

### SR. CAMILLE MARIE

To develop culture that will contribute to the ages as it borrows from the past.

### ALL

This is what we have; this is what we offer.

SR. SILVERIUS

As you go out the door, I would like you to look at two other monuments on the grounds: the Sacred Heart statue and the stature of Our Lady of Mercy at the front entrance. They were given to us by Mrs. Mary Tack Farley, Sr. de Sales' mother. And I want you to look back at this building—these buildings—and I'd like you to come back.<sup>54</sup>

**Scene 3**

"I remember..."

CHORUS 1

I remember the day I got on a bus and went up to the Mount for the first time.<sup>55</sup> I walked in cold, off the highway, entered the registrar's office, and I met Sr. Mary Silverius Shields. And we talked, and after a while she said, "Well, why didn't you come in the spring? You could have had a scholarship."

CHORUS 2

And I said, "Well I didn't even know you existed in the spring." So since she couldn't offer me a scholarship, she reorganized the schedule to allow me to take some of the basic courses I needed. Three courses, I remember, that first semester: English, math, and sociology.

CHORUS 3

As a teacher, much later, I sometimes thought, I wonder how she managed that with those teachers because this was in August; school begins in September and the registrar changes the course schedule! Many teachers wouldn't find that helpful!

CHORUS 1

But, at any rate, she did. And I continued my work at the factory—the night shift—and went to school in the late morning and early afternoon, traveling by bus up and down the Alleghany Mountain to the Mount.

CHORUS 2

By the time April came around, there were some radical changes at the factory where I worked, and my job was changed from night shift to day shift. So I had to quit going to school because I needed to keep my job. And it never occurred to me to tell the Sisters at the Mount that I would not be coming back to school.

CHORUS 3

And so I simply went on to day shift. About two weeks afterwards, it dawned on me that somebody at the Mount might wonder where I was—as young people often are, I was fairly unconscious.

CHORUS 1

At any rate, about two weeks later—I believe it was in April—I again went up the mountain on a bus, walked into Sr. Mary Silverius Shield's office, and told her why I had been missing school for two weeks. She did not like this.



### CHORUS 2

Sr. Silverius suggested that I ask the supervisors at the factory to change my shift back to night shift. There were so many women who had families who really needed a job at night that I decided I really didn't want to do that. So I said good-bye and went back to Altoona.

### CHORUS 3

A few days later, as I was working the day shift—there were hundreds of women making television tubes and I was sitting at a welding machine doing my job—I remember many, many men in suits and ties came down the long rows and stopped at the row where I was working—everybody of course was wondering why all the suits were there. They left after a few minutes of watching us. And then within a few more minutes, I was summoned to the superintendent's office.

### CHORUS 1

This was quite frightening because I had never been in the superintendent's office, nor did I know anyone who had. I was known as something of a practical joker at this factory because it was a way of helping wile away the time. So I had a few things to think about as I walked that long trip up to the superintendent's office—and I was very young, of course.

### CHORUS 2

I walked into the office, he greeted me very warmly, asked me to sit down, told me his name, and he said he had received a letter from the registrar of a junior college, Sr. Mary Silverius Shields. He told me that she said I was an excellent student, that my job had been changed, that she felt this was unfortunate.

### CHORUS 3

He also told me that he himself had been a high school teacher and was interested in education, so we chatted a while and then he said, "You go back on night shift tomorrow." I left his office, went back to complete my job—somewhat shocked by this experience—and within a few days I returned to my classes at the Mount.

### CHORUS 1

You might think that I would have been given a break—that my teachers would have forgiven me some of those missed assignments, but none of them did. I had not only to continue to work, but to make up the work that I had missed. Nonetheless, I was able to complete those courses for that semester, and I went on to teach at the Mount some years later and to serve on the Board of Trustees.

### CHORUS 2

I have been a teacher for over 40 years. And I do sometimes think back and wonder what my life would have been like had I taken another road—had not Sr. Silverius intervened at a most crucial time in my life and enabled me to continue my education.

### SR. SILVERIUS

I remember Holy Family School in Latrobe back in the 1950s.<sup>56</sup> There were three buildings that formed the main complex. There was one building for grades one through

four; another that housed grades five through eight. Those two buildings were parallel to one another.

SR. DE SALES

Perpendicular to them, forming a U, was the convent. In the center was a brick courtyard with a huge oak tree where the children played at recess.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

And, of course, during the nice days when we were out there it wasn't unusual to see a litany—a procession—of beggars and tramps and what have you enter the school yard.

CHORUS 1

And they would knock on the door of the convent; a Sister would answer, and she would direct them to sit down there on the stoop, and she brought out a tray, whoever the Sister was at the time would bring out a tray—not simply a bag lunch as we know it today.

CHORUS 2

It was like they were sitting down at a restaurant. The Sisters served those men a full meal, and it was done with such dignity.

CHORUS 3

And that was part of my education—hospitality—Mercy hospitality and how it is to minister to the poor and other people. Serving others not for one's own salvation, but because it's the right thing—it's simply the right thing to do. When you grow up in that, you don't know it as anything different from your own life.

SR. SILVERIUS

I remember going into the countryside—walking into the homes of people—trying to recruit students—And here was Sr. de Sales, a product of wealth and finishing schools—but conscious that we were to serve—what were the needs of where we lived?—and living here at the Mount wasn't taking her into the countryside—so she WENT into the countryside.

CHORUS 1

The Sisters were so practical and had a future orientation. That's what was so impressive about them...and the Sisters lived on the edge of poverty. As a student, I was always curious to know if the Sisters were eating as well as we were, because you got a sense, if you were here very long and if you were paying any attention, you got a sense that everything was done to make life good for the students who were here.

*(Pause.)*

And you began to wonder, what was the cost?

CHORUS 2

You never heard that...you never saw it....Dallas was entirely different.

### CHORUS 1

When I entered the novitiate at Dallas, Pennsylvania, I became very conscious of the difference, because as young women we were really the cheap labor for College Misericordia. We did a lot of things at Misericordia. And I felt so bad, I thought, “Oh, I wish we could have done that at the Mount.”

### SR. SILVERIUS

Because I remember seeing Sr. Carlos Maria on her hands and knees scrubbing floors because they couldn't afford to hire people. But the place was always kept spotless and beautiful. And I always felt so bad when I was doing the manual and menial tasks at Misericordia—how I would have loved to have done that here at Mount Aloysius.<sup>57</sup>

### SR. DE SALES

I remember Sr. Assumpta who was a real character. She taught science and was about this wide...

*(Holding hands close together to suggest someone very skinny.)*

Everybody thought she was near death, and she lived forever. She was dean of students at one time. It was opening day in September and kids were coming in.

### SR. SILVERIUS

They always came on Sundays, which wasn't a good idea, but they did it for the convenience of families. We didn't have janitors. We had a few guys working on the plant, but they weren't here on weekends.

### SR. CAMILLE MARIE

So Sr. Assumpta was there at the side door—you know, the one by the gallery—and this father came in and said...

### CHORUS 2

Sister, is there a janitor around? I want someone to help—my daughter has a trunk.

### SR. CAMILLE MARIE

Sr. Assumpta pulled herself up to her full length, and she said...

### CHORUS 3

Sir, I am the janitor!

### SR. DE SALES

That father discovered he could lift the trunk himself.<sup>58</sup>

### SR. SILVERIUS

We had no vacations. At Christmastime, we had a couple of weeks off. It became a period of real celebration and community activity.

## CHORUS 2

I remember that right after Thanksgiving, Sr. Silverius and a group of us would go out to the woods and pick ground pine and put it in burlap bags. It seemed to be a ritual.

## CHORUS 1

Silverius would get the Sisters to help make the wreaths and garland—beautiful wreaths—for all over the college. The wreaths were in every window—all the parlors, chapel, on the doors. Big red ribbons. She really had a knack...it was a lot of hard work.

## SR. SILVERIUS

And we'd have this big party. And we'd exchange gifts...little stuff, but it was a real celebration—not just Christmas dinner.

## CHORUS 1

Then on the Feast of the Holy Innocents we observed the old custom of superiors and juniors exchanging roles for the day. I don't know where else they did it, but we always did it at the Mount.

## CHORUS 3

Superiors who were usually served by the younger members of the community became the servers for the day. And Camille Marie would go up with coffeepots in both hands and pour coffee. She was unbelievable. She was in her 70's and still in the thick of it!

## CHORUS 2

Sr. Magdalene and Sr. de Sales would dress up in their finery. They'd send home for clothes, and they'd dress up like lay people in all their finery. Anybody that wanted to could dress up!

## CHORUS 1

Yes, I remember de Sales dressed in her finery! The way Sr. de Sales was brought up was reflected in the way we were trained at the Mount. I remember de Sales gave a course called Personal Adjustment. I will never forget that class. I learned more in Personal Adjustment than I think I learned anywhere.<sup>59</sup>

## CHORUS 2

De Sales would take it step-by-step—how you act here or there or everywhere—and I did learn a lot from her. She kind of took the rough edges off in a gentle way.

## CHORUS 3

And I can see her sitting up there—she never offended anyone—she had a way of doing it that was not offensive, but you really did learn how to act like a lady. Especially before a dance—we were told how to conduct ourselves and how we were to dress. She was a lady! She had all the finesse of a lady. And when we went on field trips, we had to wear gloves and hats. Students from the Mount who went on field trips were always dressed up. That's what was expected; that's how we were.<sup>60</sup>

CHORUS 1

I remember the day we graduated, when we had the Mass, Father told us in his homily that a lot of us would go on to further education or go out into the world to do other things or to work in our vocations—whatever—that no matter where we went, we would probably be loved no more than we are here. And I found out that was true...that they cared as much as they said they cared really, really meant a lot.<sup>61</sup>

**Scene 4**  
“Amen.”

CHORUS 1

Receive Thy handmaid, O Lord, into the place of salvation, which she hopes to attain through Thy mercy. Amen.

CHORUS 2

Deliver, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant, as Thou didst deliver Noah in the flood. Amen.

CHORUS 3

Deliver, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant, as Thou didst deliver Job from his afflictions. Amen.

CHORUS 1

Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit. O Lord Jesus Christ, receive my spirit.<sup>62</sup>

CHORUS 2

On March 15, 1972, Sr. Mary de Sales Farley took that final step into eternity.

*(SR. DE SALES turns off the light on her podium.)*

She left a memorial which few are given to fashion.

CHORUS 1

She had lived her early years as a teacher enjoying the bond that exists between student and teacher.

SR. SILVERIUS

She had enjoyed the development of her dream as she lived her mature years. Life would go on in the school after her passing but only because she had generated a situation in which it could develop and respond to challenges in later times.

SR. CAMILLE MARIE

A simple headstone marks her grave. On it are given two dates: that of her religious profession and that of her death. For those who have known her, a world of activity lies between those two dates.

SR. SILVERIUS

She had a singular courage which her work demanded, a not common gift. This was a gift she shared in large measure with her Sisters and students. She shared it graciously.<sup>63</sup>

### CHORUS 1

At Thine approach, encircled by Angels, may the infernal spirits tremble and retire into the horrid confusion of eternal night. Amen.<sup>64</sup>

### CHORUS 3

August 7, 1989, in the 83<sup>rd</sup> year of her natural life and the 58<sup>th</sup> year of her life in Mercy, Sister Mary Silverius Shields entered eternal life with God. Sr. Mary Denny, RSM, offered a detailed account of Sr. Silverius' long and productive life by quoting extensively from Silver's own autobiography. Unwittingly, Sr. Silverius had scripted major portions of her own eulogy. Silverius had written...

### SR. SILVERIUS

In the beginning of The Mount, the Mother Foundresses had chosen as their motto a quote from the Psalms, 'Those who trust in the Lord are as Mount Zion.' That motto is valid these many years later and will continue to be so long as we understand what we are about, namely, working for others that we and they may ultimately meet in the courts of eternity because we have sought the Lord in the corridors of time.<sup>65</sup>

*(SR. SILVERIUS turns off the light on her podium.)*

### CHORUS 3

But Sr. Mary Denny's final tribute was entirely her own.

### CHORUS 2

*(As Sr. Mary Denny.)*

And so, Lord, from the corridors of time, we give back to You one who sought You with confidence and loving hope throughout her life. While we marvel at her deeds and the breadth of her vision, we remember her with affection as a dear friend, a diligent gardener, a talented artisan, an inspiring teacher, an enthralling storyteller... We thank You for the gift of her life among us; we pray that our memories of her may be full of Your consoling joy and peace as she enters now Your courts on Mount Zion for all eternity.<sup>66</sup>

### CHORUS 3

May Christ Jesus, the Son of the living God, place thee in His garden of paradise; and may He, the true Shepherd, own thee for one of His flock. Amen.<sup>67</sup>

### CHORUS 1

Sr. Camille Marie d'Invilliers, RSM, at the age of 106, was received into eternal life on October 16, 1992.

*(SR. CAMILLE MARIE turns off the light on her podium.)*

Her grand-niece, Sr. Robin Stratton, OCD, gave the eulogy.

CHORUS 3  
(As Sr. Robin Stratton.)

She was, in the best sense of the word, a renaissance woman. She surrounded herself with the beauty of good music and great conversation and good thought. She loved people. She told me once that it gave her great pleasure to give pleasure to others.

She never completely conquered what she called her “spit-fire temperament.” She enjoyed playing cards, but when some of the Sisters took winning at card games too seriously, she could hardly contain herself!

She remembered everyone who had ever crossed her path and could tell you all about them—about their families to the third generation one way or the other. When I would visit in her later years, I was always invited to look through her scrapbooks, cards, photographs, and letters. And stories—always the stories to go with them.

Sr. Camille Marie’s friendship with Sister de Sales is known to all. The support and love these two women shared over the years enabled both to be richer human beings and more dedicated religious. However, when Gertrude, Sr. de Sales, entered the novitiate in 1912, Auntie was warned not to speak with her. In those days, novices and professed Sisters were not allowed to converse together. She obeyed, but it cost her dearly. Some years ago, in telling me the story, she said it was the only thing she had ever regretted in her whole life. She said, “It was wrong, because it was a failure to love.”

Her life was a romance, but a very earthy one. When asked about the readings for her funeral Mass, Auntie replied, “Well, something from the Song of Songs. You know, I’m a real romantic.” She loved God. Her motto: “I to my Beloved, and my Beloved to me,” articulates the love affair. Her ring, in which this motto is engraved, was bought before she entered the Sisters of Mercy, because it was, she said, “nobody’s business but God’s and mine.”<sup>68</sup>

*(This final litany mirrors the end of the litany in Act I, Scene 1. Now, instead of names of deceased Sisters, the CHORUS recites names of living members of the community.)*

CHORUS 3

Let us pray. To Thee, O Lord, do we commend the souls of Thy handmaidens that being dead to the world, they may live unto Thee; and whatsoever sins they have committed through the frailty of their mortal nature, do Thou, in Thy most merciful goodness, forgive and wash away. Amen.<sup>69</sup>

“Litany of the Living Storytellers”

CHORUS 1

I remember...Sr. Benedict Joseph Watters, Sr. Anne Frances Pulling,

*(CHORUS 2 begins, while CHORUS 1 continues to recite names.)*

Sr. Giuseppe DaBella, Sr. Caritas Kennedy, Sr. Evangelista Stromier, Sr. Jocile Pekala, Sr. Monica Imgrund, Sr. Anita Miller, Sr. Rose Tomlinson, Sr. Avila Long, Sr. Benedict Heiss, Sr. Suzanne Hudson, Sr. Patricia May Neilsen.

#### CHORUS 2

I remember...Sr. Ruth Hollen, Sr. Maria Josephine D'Angelo

*(CHORUS 3 begins while CHORUS 1 and 2 continue to recite names.)*

Sr. Frances Stein, Sr. Elaine Peters, Sr. Charlene Kelly, Sr. Eric Marie Setlock, Sr. Jane Kelly, Sr. Celine Kirsch, Sr. Marina Culp, Sr. Anne Crouse, Sr. Jane Schellhammer.

#### CHORUS 3

I remember...Sr. Michelle Brophy, Sr. Miriam Rita Biter, Sr. Colman Krise, Sr. Timothy Galbraith, Sr. Joachim Ryan, Sr. Alphonsus Smith, Sr. Kathleen Smith

*(CHORUS 1 ceases reciting names followed by CHORUS 2. CHORUS 3 recites two more names and is silent. After a long silence...)*

#### CHORUS 1

It is good remembering.

*(Blackout, except for light on podium with "Cultura" scrapbook, which remains lit for 10-15 seconds, then total blackout. After audience applause begins to diminish, a light comes up on SR. SILVERIUS, and she gives this final monologue.)*

#### *Epilogue*

#### SR. SILVERIUS

I've been working in history for some time now, Mercy history, and as I reflect on all that I've written, I realize that there are many, many things which I've not recorded, which I hope you will add, or that you will contribute to this effort by correcting the errors that I've made. For those things, for the continuance of our history, and for relating our history, I would like you to be a part.

And as we think about Mother de Sales Ihmsen, Mother Gertrude Cosgrave, Sr. de Sales Farley, Sr. Camille Marie d'Invilliers, the artists, and the musicians, the Sisters who did not have all of those brilliant talents but who made Mount Aloysius live, all of them, we think in the total vision of all these women.

And I have come to know, in a sense, those who went before us, and I look forward to meeting them in eternity. So often, we get lost in the day-to-day grind—so often. If we are not careful, the vision dims and, with the changing scene, we can lose sight of what it's all about.



I hope that together we can construct a greater Mount Aloysius than that which we inherited. And great it was! But in our time, there is more to do, more to give, more mountains to be climbed, more heartaches to be felt, more joys to share.

This dream of Mount Aloysius, once given to us, must be preserved. Sometimes it's preserved in prayer—very, very earnest prayer; sometimes it's preserved in teaching; sometimes it's preserved in counseling; sometimes it's preserved in the housework that has to accompany such a vast effort. But wherever it is preserved, and however it is preserved, it will succeed as long as we pray for its success and work for its success and glory in the opportunity to be part of Mount Aloysius.<sup>70</sup>

(Blackout.)

### Notes

1. Names of Sisters used in the opening and closing litanies were taken from:  
Pulling, A. F. (1994). *Sisters of Mercy of Loretto-Cresson: Biographical sketches of the Sisters of Mercy who comprised a small Mercy community high in the Allegheny Mountains of Western Pennsylvania*. Cresson, PA.
2. M. J. d'Angelo (personal communication, September 11, 2009)
3. (1993). *A comfortable cup of tea with Kitty McAuley* [Unpublished video recording]. Personal recollection recounted by Sr. Andre Dembowski.
4. Andreas, B. (1993). *Mostly true: Collected stories & drawings*. Decorah, IA: Story People. Cited by H. M. Burns (2009). *Storyfest* [Unpublished audio recording].
5. (1993). *A comfortable cup of tea with Kitty McAuley* [Unpublished video recording]. Personal recollection recounted by Sr. Anne McCue.
6. Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (n.d.) valedictory address given at St. Xavier Academy, Latrobe, PA. Attributed to Amelia Ihmsen [Mother de Sales Ihmsen]. Sisters of Mercy Regional Archive, Dallas, PA.
7. (1993). *A comfortable cup of tea with Kitty McAuley* [Unpublished video recording]. Personal recollection recounted by Sr. Anne McCue. Sr. Benedict Joseph Watters noted that Schwab was also from Loretto where he had

been taught by the Sisters of Mercy.

8. (1993). *A comfortable cup of tea with Kitty McAuley* [Unpublished video recording]. Personal recollection recounted by Sr. Anne McCue.
9. *Customs and guide of the Institute of the Religious Sisters of Mercy of the Union in the United States of America*. (1957). Washington, DC: Sisters of Mercy General Motherhouse, pp. 124-125.
10. (1993). *A comfortable cup of tea with Kitty McAuley* [Unpublished video recording]. Personal recollection recounted by Sr. Andre Dembowski.
11. *Constitutions: Sisters of Mercy of the Americas*. (1992). Silver Spring, MD: Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, p. 11.
12. (1993). *A comfortable cup of tea with Kitty McAuley* [Unpublished video recording]. Personal recollection recounted by Sr. Andre Dembowski.
13. d'Invilliers, C. M. (n.d.). *Memories of Sister Camille Marie d'Invilliers, R.S.M.* Sisters of Mercy Regional Archive, Dallas, PA.
14. d'Invilliers, C. M. (n.d.). *Sister Camille Marie*. Unpublished manuscript, Dallas, PA.
15. Pulling, A. F. (1994). *Sisters of Mercy of Loretto-Cresson: Biographical sketches of the Sisters of Mercy who comprised a small Mercy community high in the Allegheny Mountains of Western Pennsylvania*. Cresson, PA, p. 23.
16. Shields, M. S. (1982). *As Mount Zion*. Unpublished manuscript, Cresson, PA. Sr. Benedict Joseph Watters noted, "Originally, this building was called the 'convent building,' not the 'chapel.' It fulfilled the purpose of the originally planned wing of the Main Building which was not affordable in the 1882-1897 period. Hence there was a need for housing for the Sisters as well as a chapel."

17. Sisters of Mercy Regional Archive, Dallas, PA.
18. Documents dating from 1928 to 1938 (letters, loan notes, financial records) pertaining to the chapel/convent debt were collected into one packet by some unknown Cresson archivist. They are now preserved in the Sisters of Mercy Regional Archive, Dallas, PA.
19. *Centenary of Service: 1831-1931* (Mercy Pageant). Mt. Aloysius Academy Hall, Cresson, PA, December 10, 1931 and Cathedral Hall, Altoona, PA, December 11, 1931.
20. According to the program, Ferdinand K. Shields was the pageant director. Sr. Camille Marie's name does not appear in the program. In her memoir, she states that Mother Xavier had put her in charge of the production.
21. d'Invilliers, C. M. (1973). *Memoirs of the d'Invilliers*. Unpublished manuscript, Cresson, PA.
22. Shields, M. S. (c. 1988). *Sister Mary De Sales Farley, 1892-1972 (Biographical Sketch)*. Unpublished manuscript, Cresson, PA.
23. d'Invilliers, C. M. (1973). *Memoirs of the d'Invilliers*. Unpublished manuscript, Cresson, PA.
24. Shields, M. S. (c. 1988). *Sister Mary De Sales Farley, 1892-1972 (Biographical Sketch)*. Unpublished manuscript, Cresson, PA.
25. B. J. Watters (personal communication, October 16, 2009)
26. Shields, M. S. (c. 1988). *Sister Mary De Sales Farley, 1892-1972 (Biographical Sketch)*. Unpublished manuscript, Cresson, PA.
27. Shields, M. S. (1980). *Mother McAuley and the spirit of daring among the Sisters of Mercy* [Unpublished audio recording].

28. Shields, M. S. (1982). *As Mount Zion*. Unpublished manuscript, Cresson, PA.
29. Shields, M. S. (c. 1988). *Sister Mary De Sales Farley, 1892-1972 (Biographical Sketch)*. Unpublished manuscript, Cresson, PA.
30. Shields, M. S. (c. 1988). *Sister Mary De Sales Farley, 1892-1972 (Biographical Sketch)*. Unpublished manuscript, Cresson, PA.
31. Kennedy, M. C. (Producer). (1998) *What tribute can we offer?* Baltimore, MD: Mission Helper Productions, Inc.
32. Shields, M. S. (c. 1988). *Sr. Mary Silverius Shields, R.S.M., 1907- (Autobiographical sketch)*. Unpublished manuscript, Cresson, PA.
33. T. Galbraith (personal communication, October 10, 2009)
34. T. Galbraith (personal communication, October 10, 2009)
35. Shields, M. S. (c. 1988). *Sr. Mary Silverius Shields, R.S.M., 1907- (Autobiographical sketch)*. Unpublished manuscript, Cresson, PA.
36. Kennedy, M. C. (Producer). (1998) *What tribute can we offer?* Baltimore, MD: Mission Helper Productions, Inc.
37. Kennedy, M. C. (Producer). (1998) *What tribute can we offer?* Baltimore, MD: Mission Helper Productions, Inc.
38. Shields, M. S. (c. 1988). *Sister Mary De Sales Farley, 1892-1972 (Biographical Sketch)*. Unpublished manuscript, Cresson, PA.
39. Shields, M. S. (c. 1988). *Sr. Mary Silverius Shields, R.S.M., 1907- (Autobiographical sketch)*. Unpublished manuscript, Cresson, PA.
40. Letter postmarked May 10, 1955 to Sister Mary de Sales, R.S.M., Mercy Hospital, Johnstown, PA from Sr. M. Silverius Shields. Sisters of Mercy Regional Archive, Dallas, PA.

41. Shields, M. S. (c. 1988). *Sr. Mary Silverius Shields, R.S.M., 1907- (Autobiographical sketch)*. Unpublished manuscript, Cresson, PA.
42. B. J. Watters (personal communication, October 16, 2009)
43. d'Invilliers, C. M. (1973). *Memoirs of the d'Invilliers*. Unpublished manuscript, Cresson, PA.
44. B. J. Watters (personal communication, October 16, 2009)
45. *Biographical sketch of Sister Camille Marie d'Invilliers, R.S.M.* Unpublished manuscript, Dallas, PA.
46. Shields, M. S. (1976). *Tour of first and second floor Main Building of Mount Aloysius Junior College, Cresson, PA*. Unpublished manuscript, Cresson, PA.
47. *The Mount college seal*. Unpublished manuscript, Cresson, PA.
48. B. J. Watters (personal communication, May 19, 2010)
49. Shields includes this version of Sr. Josephine Ihmsen's painting in her tour of the Main Building. It is, perhaps, the most recounted Mount story.
50. d'Invilliers, C. M. (1974). *Sister Mary Constance McBride, R.S.M.* Unpublished manuscript, Dallas, PA.
51. Shields, M. S. (1976). *Tour of Chapel of Our Lady of Mercy, third floor of Main Building, Alumnae Hall, and final remarks*. Unpublished manuscript, Cresson, PA.
52. Shields, M. S. (1976). *Tour of Chapel of Our Lady of Mercy, third floor of Main Building, Alumnae Hall, and final remarks*. Unpublished manuscript, Cresson, PA.
53. Shields, M. S. (n.d.). *The three violins*. Unpublished manuscript, Cresson, PA.
54. Shields, M. S. (1976). *Tour of Chapel of Our Lady of Mercy, third floor of Main Building, Alumnae Hall, and final remarks*. Unpublished manuscript, Cresson, PA.

55. Kennedy, M. C. (Producer). (1998) *Mount Aloysius Junior College alumni speak*. Baltimore, MD: Mission Helper Productions, Inc. Personal recollection recounted by Sr. Christian Koontz, R.S.M.
56. (1993). *A comfortable cup of tea with Kitty McAuley* [Unpublished video recording]. Personal recollection recounted by Dr. Paul Kessler. The school in Latrobe was served by Sisters of Mercy from Pittsburgh, not Cresson. Sr. Benedict Joseph Watters noted, “We [Cresson Sisters] had a ‘St. Joseph bench’ outside the kitchen on the ground floor. I often served the ‘men of the road’ there!”
57. M. Brophy (personal communication, April 2009)
58. B. J. Watters (personal communication, October 21, 2009)
59. M. R. Biter (personal communication, September 11, 2009)
60. M. J. d’Angelo (personal communication, September 11, 2009)
61. Kennedy, M. C. (Producer). (1998) *Mount Aloysius Junior College alumni speak*. Baltimore, MD: Mission Helper Productions, Inc. Personal recollection recounted by Marty Sebetich.
62. *Mercy choir manual*. (1953). New York: Frederick Pustet Company, Inc.
63. Shields, M. S. (c. 1988). *Sister Mary De Sales Farley, 1892-1972 (Biographical Sketch)*. Unpublished manuscript, Cresson, PA.
64. *Mercy choir manual*. (1953). New York: Frederick Pustet Company, Inc.
65. Shields, M. S. (c. 1988). *Sr. Mary Silverius Shields, R.S.M., 1907- (Autobiographical sketch)*. Unpublished manuscript, Cresson, PA.
66. Denny, M. (1989). *Sister Mary Silverius Shields*. Unpublished manuscript, Dallas, PA.

67. *Mercy choir manual*. (1953). New York: Frederick Pustet Company, Inc.
68. Stratton, R. (1992). *Sister Camille Marie d'Invilliers, R.S.M., 1886-1992*.  
Unpublished manuscript, Dallas, PA.
69. *Mercy choir manual*. (1953). New York: Frederick Pustet Company, Inc.
70. Shields, M. S. (1976). *Tour of Chapel of Our Lady of Mercy, third floor of Main Building, Alumnae Hall, and final remarks*. Unpublished manuscript, Cresson, PA.

## CHAPTER 5

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### Introduction

An explanation of and the rationale for using Whalen's (2009) three-tiered methodology as a way to analyze visual data was discussed toward the end of Chapter 3. Whalen, based on the work of Prown (1982), postulated a method for sorting out the various "possible narratives" suggested by objects of visual culture. In the first stage of analysis (her story), Whalen described as accurately as possible what is visually present with minimal subjective speculation as to the object's inherent meaning(s). Next, Whalen filled in contextual details based on her own knowledge of the subject and based on data gleaned from research conducted for the specific purpose of learning more about the object under scrutiny (back story). Finally, Whalen allowed herself to become part of the narrative (my story), since it is extraordinarily difficult and, perhaps, even undesirable for a qualitative researcher to remain dispassionately and objectively removed from the subject under investigation.

Data collected for this study include both textual (archival documents and interviews) and visual objects (photographs and actual objects) of material culture. Though she applied her three-tiered method of analysis exclusively to visual objects of material culture (photographs), Whalen's methodology is one that this researcher postulates could be useful as well in the analysis of textual objects (stories and narrative fragments). Consequently, in this chapter the data presented in Chapter 4 in the form of a three-act play will be analyzed using Whalen's methodology.

The play consists of a list of characters, a description of the play's setting, eleven scenes separated into three acts, the three "acts" of the play within the play, an interlude,



and an epilogue. In order to facilitate data analysis, I will discuss sequentially the content of each of these segments using Whalen’s three-tiered methodology. Unlike Whalen, I have opted to call my first level of analysis “Their Story” instead of “Her Story” since my data are more collective memory narrative than the account of one person. Like Whalen, I have used the terms “Back Story” and “My Story” for the other two methods of analysis.

## Characters

### *Their Story*

The play has three main characters, Sr. Camille Marie D’Invilliers, Sr. M. de Sales Farley, and Sr. M. Silverius Shields. Success at co-founding Mount Aloysius Junior College in 1939 is attributed to Farley’s visionary leadership and Shields’ practicality and hard work. Sr. Camille Marie, who lived to be 106 years old, was a lifelong friend of Farley and a woman whose connection to the Mount spanned most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (see Figure 4).



*Figure 4.* Sr. Camille Marie d’Invillier (standing)  
and Sr. M. de Sales Farley, 1967.

The three members of the Chorus of Sisters act like a traditional Greek chorus assuming roles of minor characters (male or female; religious or layperson), speaking as anonymous members of their religious community, and serving as audience for the three main characters.

### *Back Story*

Over time, the three main characters of this drama have been reduced from the multi-dimensional women they were in life to one-dimensional characters generally summed up with one or two words or phrases. Interviewees, without prompting, often would use the words *visionary* and *dreamer* to describe Farley. With further probing, one would learn that Farley also was regarded as practical, prayerful, and very strict, but very fair. Shields was characterized as Farley's opposite; Shields was described as *practical* and *hard-working*. Further investigation revealed that Shields was also considered to be very intelligent, spiritual to the point of being mystical, and artistic. Though she had many other qualities as well, Sr. Camille Marie was known for being *musical* and an *entertainer*. One interviewee said that Sr. Camille Marie exuded "holy cheerfulness."

One goal of this study (Research Question 3) was to understand more fully how the two primary subjects, Farley and Shields, used stories as they transitioned their failing academy into a thriving junior college. What stories did Farley, Shields, and other Cresson community Sisters tell about themselves and their predecessors that sustained and inspired them during a difficult period of institutional change? It's easy to say that someone is a "visionary" or "hard-working," but what does that really mean? What organizational narratives still exist that illustrate how Shields was practical or how Farley was a dreamer?

## *My Story*

When we were told in the first semester of this doctoral program that we needed to start thinking about dissertations, I felt that I'd been cast adrift on an ocean of possibilities, and that I'd never find my way to dry land in the form of a meaningful topic. I suspected that there was likely something valuable to be learned about leadership, especially women in leadership roles, by studying one of the Sister-leaders who had been part of Mount Aloysius Junior College's formative years. But which Sister?

Farley's name kept resurfacing since she is the one credited with the founding of Mount Aloysius Junior College. Whenever her name is mentioned, it is paired with the word "visionary." That was the sum total of my knowledge of the subject prior to beginning this study. So, initially, I thought I would be studying one influential woman whose uncommon vision had led her to start a college. But a conversation with Sr. Benedict Joseph Watters in the early days of my investigation enlightened me as to the truth about the college's founding. In fact, two women, Farley *and* Shields had worked in tandem to start the college. How could I study one without studying the other?

As I collected data, a third Sister, Camille Marie d'Invilliers, began to emerge as a major player in the life of the Mount and, more significantly, in Farley's life. Just as she had been difficult to ignore in life, Sr. Camille Marie remained someone who needed to find a place in this story. So, though she is not one of the primary subjects of this study, Sr. Camille Marie has been included as a primary character in the drama.

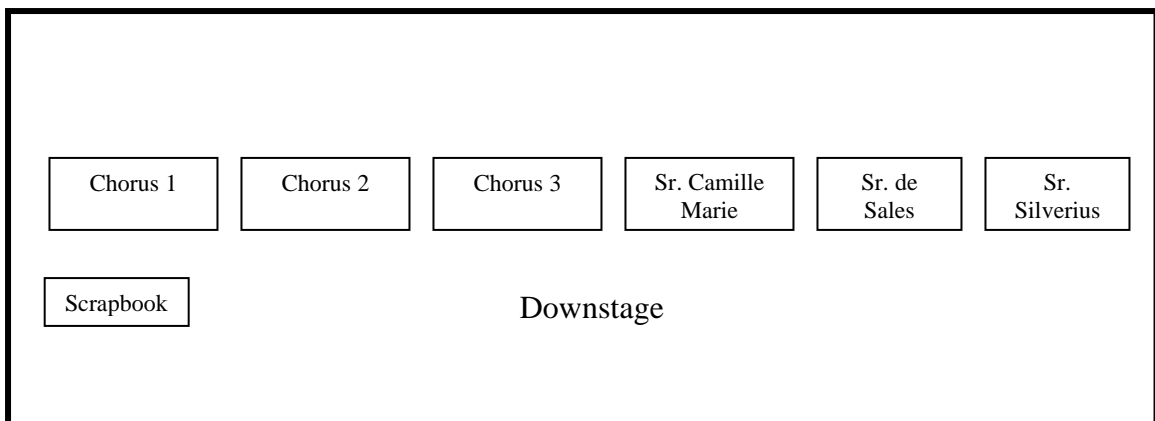
In retrospect, what Farley and Shields did in 1939 was not unprecedented. Landy (2002) notes that many Catholic women's college were founded during the Great Depression largely due to "the strengths of religious women in organizing institutions

despite limited outside resources” (p. 71). Nonetheless, Farley and Shields were facing an uphill battle and could not be sure that they would succeed. What they lacked in assurance, they made up with daring, teamwork, and faith sustained by prayer.

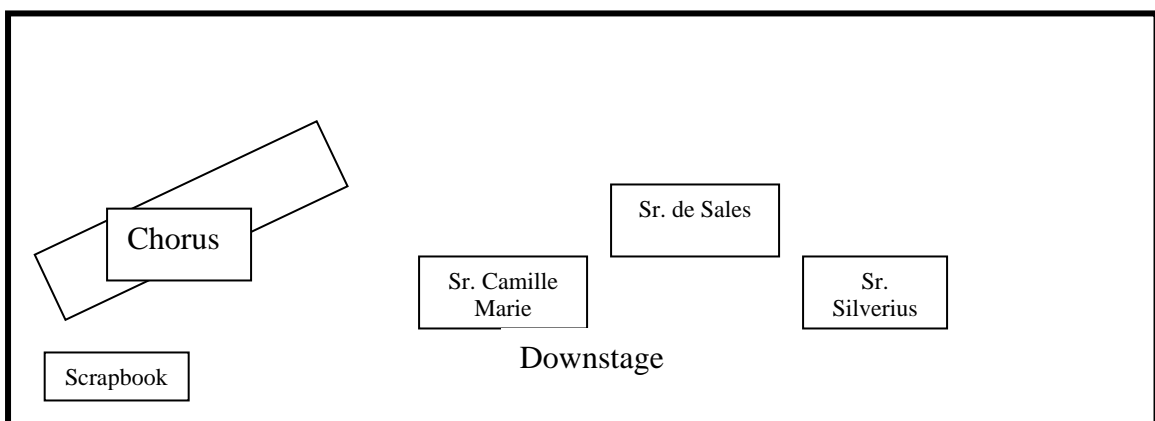
### Setting

#### *Their Story*

The play entitled “I remember: A collective memory narrative in three acts” is performed as a staged reading. Each performer stands at a podium that has a document light. In Act I, the six performers form a straight line across the stage; in Acts II and III, the three principal characters stand center stage in a triangular formation and the three members of the chorus stand stage left in a straight line (see Figures 5 & 6).



*Figure 5: Act I, setting.*



*Figure 6: Acts II and III, setting.*

Before the play, chorus performers circulate among audience members three scrapbooks (Fides, Mores, Cultura) containing copies of ephemera including documents and photographs from the Mount Aloysius College archive and from the Religious Sisters of Mercy provincial archive at Dallas, Pennsylvania. Assorted imagery (photographs, blueprints, text) is projected behind the performers not only in the first scene but throughout the play.

Prior to Act I, scene 1, the sounds of hammering, birds singing, a bell ringing, and the Sisters singing are introduced sequentially and are intertwined as each new sound is introduced. This introductory sound sequence begins and ends with the sound of a single hammer.

### *Back Story*

Three mottos have been associated with the Cresson Sisters and Mount Aloysius community for many decades. “Fides, Mores, Cultura” appears on a plaque (see Figure 7) in the Main Building and was used on the junior college seal (see Figure 8). The three words were intended to succinctly encapsulate the core goals (mission) of the academy/junior college. Mother de Sales Ihmsen is credited with selecting from the *Psalms* the Loretto-Cresson community’s motto: “They that trust in the Lord are as Mount Zion” (see Figure 9). And Shields credits Farley with the second motto included in the junior college seal: “With our light, we serve.” That motto is above a logo representing a Sister’s hand placing a lighted lamp in a student’s hand. Boje (2008) selected *motto* and *logo* as two of the six narrative elements of *strategy narratives*. Over time, the three dominant institutional mottos have been utilized in many ways including yearbooks, the school newspaper, letterhead, on the ceiling above the stage in Alumnae

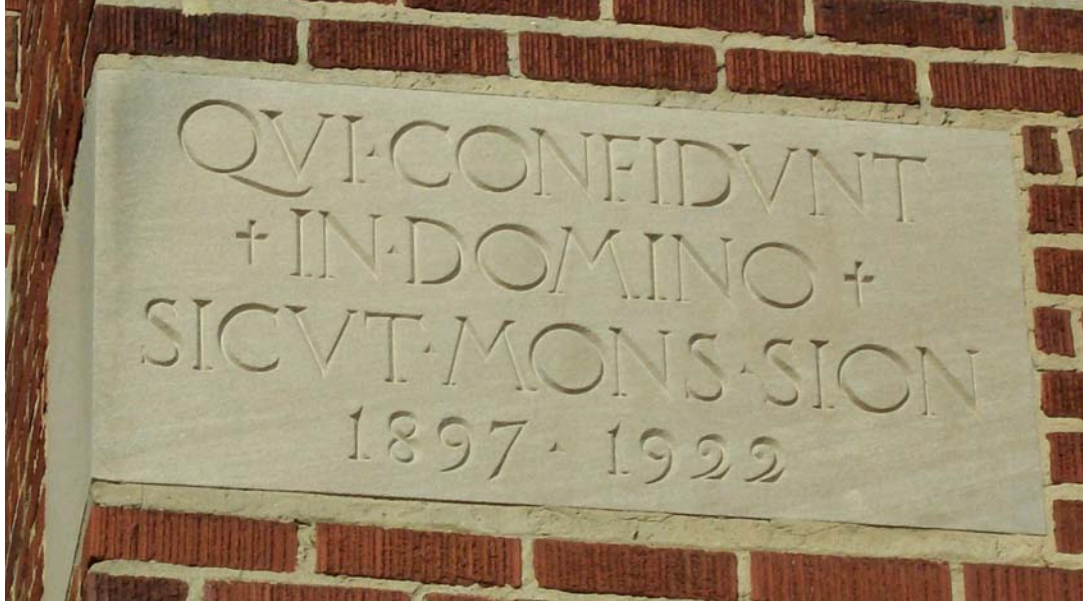
Hall, banners, and in speeches. Though few people on campus now know the origin of or, perhaps, the meaning of these mottos, they continue to be used today.



Figure 7: “Fides, Mores, Cultura” plaque, Main Building, 1923.



Figure 8: Mount Aloysius College seal.



*Figure 9: Loretto-Cresson motto, chapel cornerstone.*

Four logos have been used extensively by the Cresson community: the Mercy shield (see Figure 10), the tower (Tower of Ivory, bell tower), the lamp of service passing from the hand of a Sister to a student (see Figure 8), and the Mercy cross (see Figure 11). The Tower of Ivory (a tradition symbol representing the Blessed Virgin Mary) and the lamp of service both appear on the school seal. In 1971, the Sisters of Mercy of the Union decided they needed a new symbol that could be worn by Mercies all over the world. A design competition was held, and Sr. Maria Josephine d'Angelo, a Mount Aloysius art teacher for 53 years, won the competition for her design (Werntz, 1989).

The Mercy shield predates the order's founding by six centuries and was adopted by Catherine McAuley as a symbol of the Sisters of Mercy. The Cresson Sisters provided an extensive history of their shield in the 1948 production of "Our Nuns."

Pedro, King of Aragon, had resisted Simon de Montfort when that count was waging war against the Albigensians. In 1213, the king was killed. Simon entrusted the six year old James, head of the Aragon kingdom to Saint Peter

Nolasco. This small hostage was to become famous in Spanish history as James the Conqueror. During his long reign of over sixty years, he founded two hundred churches in the countries he conquered. To this monarch, to Saint Raymond of Pennafort, and to Saint Peter Nolasco, Our Lady appeared. In each of the visions, she disclosed to them the same divine command. They were to found a congregation for the deliverance of captives under the title of Our Lady of Mercy. The result of these visitations was the establishment of a royal and military order composed of knightly laymen and priestly religious [The Order of Mercy]. The king, as co-founder of the new order desired the members to wear upon their person, the royal arms of Aragon.

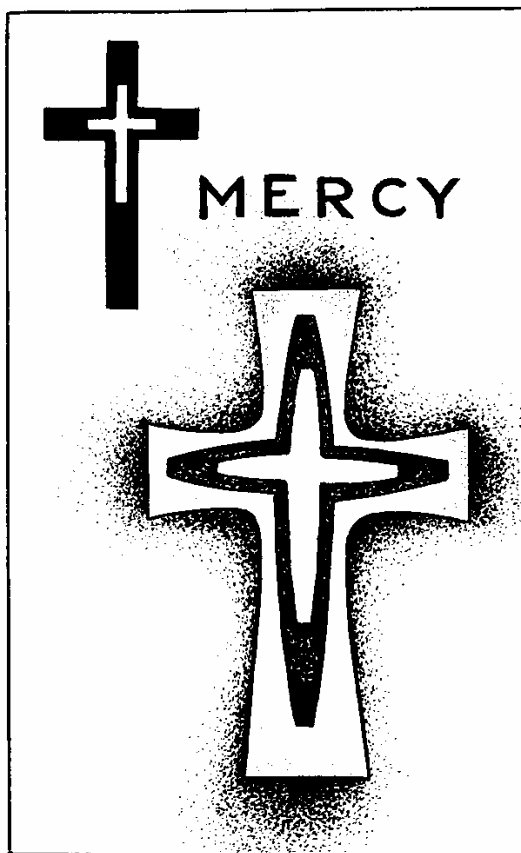
”...an ancestor [of James the Conqueror]...was wounded in battle when he was defending the rights of his Frankish overlords against the Norman invader. Covered with blood, he appeared before the Emperor Charles the Bald, grandson of Charlemagne. When asked what he wished as a reward for his gallant conduct, Geoffrey’s answer was: a device for his unemblazoned shield. The emperor dipped his four fingers into the blood which flowed from the wound of the knight; he then drew them swiftly down the shield. Such was the origin of the four red bars. The white cross known as the cross of Saint John of Jerusalem was the insignia of the Cathedral of Barcelona, which had been dedicated under the title of the Holy Cross. (pp. 2-3)

The Sisters of Mercy of Loretto-Cresson preserved their stories in many ways but, in particular, two methods beyond oral storytelling seem to have been used through much of their history: the house annals and scrapbooks. The house annals (see Figure 12) were essentially a form of diary recounting events related to the house and to the Sisters living



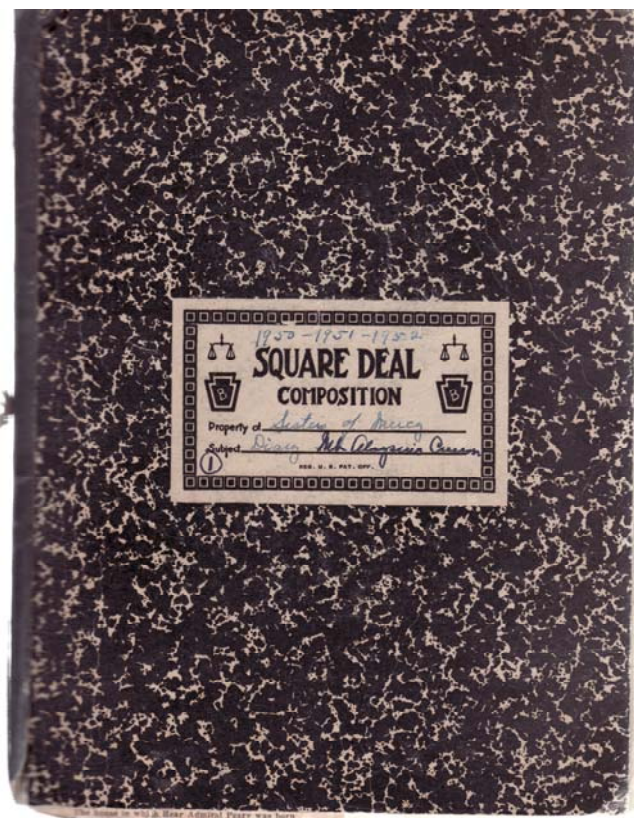


*Figure 10: Mercy shield.*



*Figure 11: Mercy cross.*

there. Usually written by the superior or by someone appointed by the superior, the house annals were handwritten accounts that documented community events, both mundane and extraordinary. The Sister in charge of the annals at any given time was not obliged to write in it daily; in some periods, entries seem to follow only when the writer believed something noteworthy needed to be recorded. The annals are, among other things, a record of major purchases, cultural activities, celebrations, deaths, and world events that had an impact on the community. For example, when the first Catholic U. S. president, John F. Kennedy, was assassinated, the Sister in charge of the Cresson annals noted the community's reaction and response to the assassination during the days following that event.



*Figure 12: Diary, Mount Aloysius, Cresson, 1950-1952.*

A 1951 performance by the Trapp Family (see Figure 13) merited two pages in the annals. The entry documents some fascinating bits of information about the famous family.

On the afternoon of Thursday, Nov. 15, they [the Trapp family] gave an afternoon performance for the Sisters and the clergy....and in the evening sang to a crowded house. This concert was originally scheduled for October 15, but owing to the illness of the Baroness, it was postponed for a month, but still, she was unable to be here, having undergone a major operation (brain tumor)....In the evening before the concert, Agatha confided to Sr. de Sales that it was the first time they had appeared in public without their mother, and they missed her terribly. (*Sisters of Mercy Diary, Mt. Aloysius, Cresson, 1950-1951-1952*)



Figure 13: Trapp family singers, c. 1951.

In recent years, the art of scrapbooking has made a widespread comeback. Likewise, in the first half of the twentieth century, keeping scrapbooks was a common

practice. Evidence of scrapbooking can be found in both the Cresson archive and the regional archive in Dallas, Pennsylvania. For example, scrapbooks about art department events were kept by Sr. Maria Josephine d'Angelo for more than fifty years. Other Sisters created memorial scrapbooks about the lives of important Mount Aloysius figures. One such scrapbook in the Cresson archive preserves photographs and memorabilia pertaining to the life of Mother Gertrude Cosgrave.

One of my interviewees, Sr. Benedict Joseph Watters, recalled the importance of both oral storytelling and scrapbooks when it came to passing information from one generation of older Sisters to a younger generation of students and Sisters. I asked how young Sisters in the mid-twentieth century learned about the culture and history of the Mount. How, I asked, was that information being disseminated? Sr. Benedict Joseph responded:

Very informally. I know of something because it [was] like living with the grandmothers....You could ask them stuff. It was just word of mouth...part of the daily living. Nothing much. But I was a kid, and I was...interested. I remember when I was in high school, there was an essay contest,...and I wanted to write something on the Sisters of Mercy and [Sr.] Camille Marie was my source. She even took me down to the community room because that's where the big scrapbooks were, and she showed me stuff in the newspaper, pictures of the Loretto fire. And I won [the essay contest].

Boyce (1990, 1995) and Boje (1996, 2008) both acknowledge the significance of studies that seek to understand how “structurally closed system[s]” (Boyce, 1990, 1995), like the Mount community, make use of their multi-perspective and collective organizational narratives. My data suggest that Mount Aloysius was and is a “collective

storytelling system in which the performance of stories is a key part of members' sense making and a means to allow them to supplement individual memories with institutional memory" (Boje, 1991, p. 106).

### *My Story*

When I sat down to type up transcripts of the many hours of interviews and audio/video tapes preserved in the archives, I was struck by the importance of the words "I remember." Over and over again, my interviewees kept using that expression or some variant of it. Once aware of how often my subjects would insert the expression into their narratives, I began to see and hear the expression at every turn. Even the junior college yearbook in the 1950s was titled *Remember...?* Subjects I interviewed used the expression in many ways: to add details to a narrative they were in the midst of telling, to transition into a new narrative line, to express delight and surprise at having remembered something they had not thought about in a long time, or to prompt the recollections of other interviewees.

I opted to present my data in the form of a play because it seemed to be a logical means for organizing so many disparate, yet somehow interconnected, narrative fragments. Trying to make sense of more than 150 years of stories and narrative fragments that are part of a community comprised of dozens of participants who lived and labored together over several generations is a daunting task. The bits and pieces I had collected were just a handful of the stories and narrative fragments that actually exist in some form or other. And those stories and narrative fragments could be pieced together in many different ways to tell countless larger tales. And all those tales are potentially significant.

But I wanted to tell one particular tale—the story of how two daring women had transitioned their institution into a junior college when the odds were seemingly against them. The larger story appeared to consist of three distinct time periods: 1) the events that had prompted a need for the transition, in particular the debt incurred when the Sisters built a new chapel/convent just as the country was about to be plunged into the Great Depression, 2) the years of actual transition as they started the junior college and sought accreditation, and 3) the years that followed the transition period as the Sisters built a new junior college culture on the foundations of the old academy culture. A three-act play was beginning to emerge as a likely candidate for presenting my data.

I was further convinced when I learned from my research how important cultural events had been to the Sisters throughout the period under investigation. Even during hard times, they managed to put on elaborate pageants, recitals, operettas, and plays. Musical events generally featured songs that underscored their faith and the spirit of their community. A pageant was often the vehicle for recollecting and transmitting stories about their past—stories of their struggles and daring and triumph over adversity. Consequently, the three-act play seemed to be a perfect format for piecing together my narrative fragments.

I wanted my play to capture the sense of faith and community spirit that had emerged from the data. I wanted to convey the idea that their stories and narrative fragments were living things, or at least things that have the potential to come to life whenever someone comes along and resurrects them from their dormancy.

The introductory sound sequence weaves together sound symbols that represent important aspects of the Sisters' lives in the years prior to the transition: 1) the physical and spiritual constructions of those early Sister-builders represented first by the sound of

one hammer and then by the “voices” of many hammers laboring together, 2) the rural setting captured in the chirping of birds, 3) the routines and rituals of daily life symbolized by the ringing of a bell, and 4) a culture of prayer elicited through the voices of Sisters joined in chant. This sound-scape of layered and interconnected sounds echoes what is to come—the play itself which combines multiple stories and narrative fragments into one, larger coherent tale.

As I was piecing together my data and thinking about the events that had led to the formation of the junior college, it occurred to me that had the Sisters not built their chapel the college might not exist today. It had been the crushing debt from that construction project that had precipitated all the events that followed, especially the need for income from some new venture. Had they not built that chapel, I might not have my current job, and I might not be writing this dissertation. I, too, have been woven into their story.

## Act I

### Fides: The Early Years

#### Scene 1

#### *Litany of the Forebears*

#### *Their Story*

The motto of Mount Aloysius Academy, “Fides, Mores, Cultura,” (Faith, Morals, Culture) provides a theme for each of the play’s three acts. Act I presents stories of “Fides.”

The first part of Act I, scene 1, *Litany of the Forebears*, lists the names of Religious Sisters along with the repeated response, “I remember.” This is followed by a story about the famous portrait of Catherine McAuley (see Figure 14) recounted by Sr.

Camille Marie. The scene ends with performers explaining the difference between truth and fidelity and stressing the value of storytelling even when the stories being told are not always factually accurate.

*Back Story*

The *Mercy Choir Manual* contains prayers that would have been recited by the Sisters as part of their daily devotions. Included among the Sisters' prayers are several litanies, a prayer that utilizes a series of invocations recited by a leader that alternate with repetitive responses from the congregants. Though a litany can be prayed by an individual in private, the true impact of the litany is in its communal performance. When prayed by a community, the measured cadence of the form establishes a regular rhythm that mirrors the repetitive rituals of daily life. It is the steady beat of a ticking clock or of a hammer hammering or of a heart beating.



*Figure 14: Mother Catherine McAuley, c. 1840s.*



The Sisters' names selected for the litany were taken from Sr. Anne Frances Pulling's (1994) *Sisters of Mercy of Loretto-Cresson*. In her preface, Sr. Anne Frances wrote:

This chronicle is an affectionate attempt to record for posterity the background and changing patterns of our mountain community....there are lessons to be derived from struggles of the past....My gratitude goes first to Sr. Mary Silverius Shields who completed her autobiography shortly before The Lord summoned her into eternity. This and the work on Sr. Mary de Sales Farley were requested by the College Administration....Her dream was to complete the works of all her colleagues for future generations. When her life was ebbing, her expertise and gentle nudge, coupled with the many anecdotes of Sr. Mary Anne McCue, and her enchanting tid-bits of yesteryear, inspired me toward action.

It would appear that Shields was a storyteller up to the end, and that she was willing to pursue whatever needed doing to assure that the Sisters and their stories would not be forgotten. Sr. Anne Frances' "affectionate attempt" compiles a wealth of information about the Sisters of Mercy of Loretto-Cresson into one volume. Though her biographical sketches may contain some gaps and inaccuracies, they continue to breathe life into historical figures that would otherwise be nothing more than names on headstones in the Sisters' cemetery.

Over time, the Sisters of Mercy managed to preserve their stories in many ways, some ways more unusual than others. Included among those stories are accounts of Catherine McAuley's life and of her founding the Religious Sisters of Mercy in 1831. Catherine's story, too, has been told and retold in many forms over the years. One unexpected approach came to light as I gathered data for this study, an unusual comic

book version entitled *Catherine McAuley and the Story of a Woman of Prayer and Compassion* (1982).

Sr. M. Angela Bolster, author of the comic book, in an essay (*My Mercy Odyssey*, p. 17) intended to explicate her motivation and journey toward the creation of that work, noted the importance of strong visionary leadership and of the communal efforts of followers inspired by a leader in pursuit of a dream. “Institutions and great movements are personal things, owing their existence to some outstanding personality and the life that is theirs today was first the life of a single man or woman” (p. 17). The article includes a photograph of a banner supporting Bolster’s assertion. The banner reads, “Catherine’s dream...a Vision born in Hope of Mercy’s tender courage. We follow as bearers of the Dream” (p. 17). *Vision* and *dream* emerged as recurrent themes from the data gathered and analyzed for this study (See Act II, Scene 4, *Back Story*).

Boje’s (2008) narrative elements—*mission, vision, founding narrative*—are ones whose roots can be traced back to the order’s foundress, Catherine McAuley. McAuley articulated the original mission of service to the sick, poor, and uneducated, especially women and children in her original handwritten Constitution. That tradition of service continues to be part of the Mercy mission today. Since their founding, the Sisters of Mercy have established schools, orphanages, and hospitals in many parts of the world. Service continues to be a hallmark of institutions founded by the Sisters of Mercy, including Mount Aloysius. Incoming students are introduced to service during their first semester (Cultural Literacy Seminar) and are encouraged to continue serving their community by taking courses structured around a service learning component. Student organizations wanting college funding must perform community service involving more than 50% of their membership.

Another unexpected means for transmitting the stories about how the Sisters of Mercy came to the United States and their establishment of a motherhouse in Loretto-Cresson can be found in a series of twenty, quasi-fictional bulletins written by Sr. Camille Marie d'Invilliers in 1943 under the collective heading of *Bulletins to Commemorate the Centenary of the Coming of the Sisters of Mercy to the U.S.A.* An interesting handwritten note appears on the archive folder containing copies of the bulletins. "I had forgotten all about these until I recognized my handwriting on page 2 of Bulletin I." I suppose it would be unreasonable to expect a prolific writer and music composer to remember everything she'd penned in 106 years! The bulletins appear to have been distributed to Sisters throughout the Province.

Sr. Camille Marie makes another interesting and tantalizing comment in the letter sent out with the final bulletin. "I think you will agree that we have interesting material for the Annals of Cresson and Loretto. I am going to make a start, using Mother Xavier's and Sr. Gonzaga's notes so if you have any suggestions to make, they will be gratefully received." Clearly, in 1943, Sr. Camille Marie, like two of her predecessors, was interested in preserving the story of the Loretto-Cresson community. I was not able to identify Annals of Loretto-Cresson authored by Sr. Camille Marie, though many fragments of narratives about the community exist with no author cited. Nor was I able to find notes made by Mother Xavier or Sr. Gonzaga though, according to Sr. Camille Marie, those notes existed in 1943, suggesting that at least some Loretto-Cresson Sisters in the first half of the twentieth century wanted to preserve stories of their community's past.

Sr. Camille Marie's *Bulletins*, like herself, are colorful, fanciful, and witty. She tells the larger story of the coming of the Sisters of Mercy to the United States through a

series of smaller narratives, many filled with imagined dialogue ascribed to her mostly real historical figures. In her series of bulletins, Sr. Camille Marie follows the first Sisters of Mercy from their arrival in New York aboard the *Queen of the West* in 1843 to the fire that destroyed the Mount Aloysius Academy building (by that time converted to an orphanage) at Loretto in 1904. Along the way, she writes about the first convent on Penn Street in Pittsburgh, the establishment of the Loretto Foundation in 1848, and moving the academy from Loretto to Cresson in 1897. Of that momentous occasion, Sr. Camille Marie writes: “‘You must be ready, Sisters, to leave for Cresson tomorrow,’ said Mother de Sales [Ihmsen] to the sisters assembled for recreation. ‘We are planning to hold the Commencement Exercises at Cresson, and it will take a lot of work to put the place in order.’ It was a lot of work, but they did it. (Sisters always do.)” Sr. Camille Marie’s bulletins weave fact, fiction, and personal commentary into a highly entertaining series of interconnected narratives.

The story about the famous Catherine McAuley portrait was originally recounted in August 1993 by Sr. Andre Dembowski in “A Comfortable Cup of Tea with Kitty McAuley,” a faculty development roundtable presentation described in the program as: “An informal discussion of Venerable Catherine McAuley’s legacy to society and a review of the works of the Sisters of Mercy in Pennsylvania.” Participants in the discussion included Sr. Colman Krise who, at that time, had been a Sister of Mercy for more than 40 years, Sr. M. Anne McCue, former President of Mount Aloysius Junior College and part of the Mount community since 1911 (Pulling, 1994), Sr. Andre Dembowski, Coordinator of Associate and Lay Programs for the Sisters of Mercy, and Dr. Paul Kessler, Vice President for Academic Affairs and moderator of the roundtable. During the hour-long presentation, discussants answered questions from the audience and

shared stories about their lives at the Mount and about Sisters who had made significant contributions to the Sisters of Mercy and to the Cresson community. Other narratives from this presentation can be found in Act 3, Scene 3 (See Act 3, Scene 3, *Back Story*).

The scene concludes with opening remarks made by Sr. Helen Marie Burns, Vice President for Mission Integration, at a Mercy Day 2009 presentation entitled, “Storyfest” where participants Dr. Paul Farcas, Sr. Benedict Joseph Watters, and Ms. Margaret Steinbieser shared stories about their years at the Mount. Both Farcas and Steinbieser have taught at the Mount for more than 35 years, and Sr. Benedict Joseph Watters has been part of the Mount community since 1942. Sr. Cecelia Meighan, former Mount President, gave the keynote address detailing how the junior college was first conceived and how it grew and evolved over time.

### *My Story*

I wanted the rhythms established in the opening sound sequence to extend into the action of the first scene. At the same time, I wanted to find some way to include as many names of Sisters who had been part of the early community at Cresson in order to convey the idea that the institution was built and sustained by the communal efforts of numerous women, most of whom are largely forgotten. They became important to the institution only inasmuch as they were able to blend into and add integrity to the Mount Aloysius Academy tapestry. The thread that was their lives formed part of an image in that tapestry, yet those Sisters as individuals were never allowed to become a completed image. They did not lead the litany; they provided the communal responses. They were not the leaders; they were the followers. If not visionaries themselves, they were assuredly the labor behind the vision.

In research question one, I asked if the Mount was a storytelling organization, and if so, in what ways was it a storytelling organization. Data collected for this study suggest that the Mount was and continues to be a storytelling organization. Evidence of ongoing efforts to preserve and recount narratives important to the Mount Aloysius community can be found in the Cresson and Dallas archives. Not only did the Mount community continue to transmit its heritage through roundtable discussions such as “Storyfest” and “A Comfortable Cup of Tea with Kitty McAuley,” but it did so via a vast array of other formats as well, including but not limited to: books, pageants, scrapbooks, memoirs, monographs, bulletins, photographs, and oral presentations (formal and informal). Examples of these storytelling efforts are cited in this chapter whenever relevant to the discussion.

As previously noted, I opted to present my data in Chapter 4 as a three-act play because theatrical presentations had been such a vital part of life at the Mount, both before and after the 1939 transition. Two examples of how the Sisters preserved and recounted their story using dramatic presentations are particularly noteworthy. In 1956, Mount Aloysius Academy and Junior College students presented “Mercy Makes a Match” as part of the institution’s 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the founding of the Sisters of Mercy. A program note describes the setting for this drama as a meeting of “four ‘Mercy-minded’ misses” (an academy girl, a collegian, an alumna, and a newcomer) who have come together to plan the upcoming anniversary celebration. As these four performers concoct their plans, six scenes unfold performed by other students. Most of the scenes recount events from the life of Catherine McAuley and significant stories of Mercy history in the United States. Their choice of a “newcomer” as a principle character suggests a desire on the part of the play’s anonymous author(s) to pass

on the Mercy story to someone unfamiliar with it. Also, their inclusion of an academy girl, a collegian, and an alumna as the other principle characters implies a concern for community inclusivity regardless of age or length of time associated with the institution. The Mercy story is everyone's story, young or old, newcomer or veteran. The Mercy story is a collective memory narrative that draws in all members of the community, past, present, and future.

The Cresson Sisters presented a far grander spectacle on the occasion of the 1948 centennial commemorating the arrival of the Sisters of Mercy in Loretto (see Figure 15). "Our Nuns" recounted the Mercy "story" in three episodes: the founding in Dublin, the arrival in the United States, and the expansion into the Diocese of Altoona. The pageant offered an explanation of the history and symbolism of the Mercy shield, biographical sketches of significant foundresses such as Ihmsen and Cosgrave, and several songs including a communal finale singing of the "Mercy Loyalty Song." Similar to my play, "Our Nuns" was a staged reading of biographical sketches of Sisters whose lives were considered pivotal in Mercy history.



*Figure 15: "Our Nuns," 1948.*

## Scene 2

### *The Builders*

#### *Their Story*

“The Builders” introduces the two Sisters, Mother de Sales Ihmsen (see Figure 16) and Mother Gertrude Cosgrave (see Figure 17), who founded the original Mount Aloysius Academy and who were responsible for building both the physical plant (the buildings) and the religious community (the spirit). Other notable Sisters from the early



*Figure 16:* Mother de Sales Ihmsen.





*Figure 17: Mother Gertrude Cosgrave.*

days of the academy, Mother Pierre Greene (see Figure 18), Mother Xavier Phelan (see Figure 19), and Sister Annunziata Jamison (see Figure 20), are cited for their contributions to the community. Characters discuss the mission of and the roles performed by the Sisters of Mercy, the differences between the lives of Religious Sisters in the past vis-à-vis their lives today, and the purpose of Victorian female academies.

### *Back Story*

A two page document in the Cresson archive, “Mother Mary Gertrude Cosgrave,” quotes on the first page a few historical facts about Emma Cosgrave (Mother M. Gertrude) taken directly from Burton’s (1948) *So Surely Anchored*: a bit of family

background, her novitiate and profession, and her connection to Amelia Ihmsen (Mother M. de Sales). Though a romantic and fanciful account, Burton's book preserves the basic facts as they were known in 1948 about the two women who had established an independent Mercy motherhouse in Loretto in 1879 and who later moved their academy and convent to Cresson in 1897 (Burton, pp. 151-179).

More significantly, the anonymous author of this document makes several comments pertinent to this study, especially concerning how the history of the Loretto-Cresson community was preserved and disseminated. The author writes, "As years have passed in their steady pace and as we, the Sisters of Mercy of Cresson, look back we are given pause by the fact that while an oral history of our co-foundresses exists, very little has been written except the simplest vital statistics of these two revered women."



*Figure 18: Mother Pierre Greene.*



*Figure 19: Mother Xavier Phelan.*



*Figure 20: Sister Annunziata Jamison.*

Comparing the handwritten emendations on the document to samples of Shields' handwriting, I suspect that she is the author. First, the writing style—phrasing, word choice, rhythms—is similar to that of Shields. Second, Shields was the Cresson archivist from 1981-1988 and spent many hours recording facts and stories about her predecessors in the community. The author continues:

Entering the Community of the Sisters of Mercy we heard their [Ihmsen and Cosgrave] names often mentioned....[we] heard little scraps of their lives but there was no long coherent study which would underlie the years in which they governed the Sisters of Mercy. Remembrances of them were usually word pictures which in every remembered instance brought into clear focus two beloved women. This in itself was a memorial of the finest kind.

The author acknowledges the significance of oral history, what she terms “word pictures,” as a means of conveying information about the two women who had founded and fostered growth of the Cresson community. She goes on to explain why, she believes, so little was written about the past.

...they [the Sisters] were so engrossed in the development of the religious community and the school. They were “doers” and those who “do” seldom have time to write about what they do. And, as one looks at the horarium of their days, it is clearly evident that the time for doing was considerably the greater—the time for writing was almost non-existent.

Another anonymous Cresson archive document, “Mother Mary Gertrude Cosgrave: Co-Foundress of the Cresson Community,” dated April 1943, is likely the work of Sr. Camille Marie d'Invilliers. The typed format of this particular document is identical to that of Sr. Camille Marie's twenty bulletins, also written in 1943,

commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Sisters of Mercy in the United States. Also, the writing style is virtually identical to that of her bulletins. This document notes that Sr. Gertrude, the eldest of seven children, was the sister of Mary Cosgrave who later married Theodore Tack of New York. Mary Tack was Farley's maternal grandmother. The author of this document writes, "Her beloved niece and namesake, Gertrude Farley, was then [the year of Mother Gertrude's Golden Jubilee, 1915] a novice and took a leading part in a religious play entitled the 'Crown of Glory' which was produced under the skillful direction of Mother Pierre Green, Mistress of Novices." (Note: The memory of the author was a bit faulty. Farley was professed in 1914 and was no longer a novice by 1915.) Thus, Farley's roots reach deep into the rich soil of Loretto-Cresson Mercy heritage.

A third anonymous document in the Cresson archive, "Mother Mary de Sales Ihmsen, 1839-1911," stresses the long-term impact of Mothers Ihmsen and Cosgrave's legacy on the Sisters who followed them. The author, for the same reasons cited earlier, appears to be Shields. Observing that Ihmsen and Cosgrave alternately "held the administrative reins of the school and community" for thirty years, the author adds,

...it appears to be clear that the community prized their leadership and found it satisfactory for the Sisters were the ones who continued to elect them to fill the offices of Reverend Mother and Assistant....Their long relationship, however, and their natural differences seems to demand they be written of individually although to this day they are always spoken of as Mother de Sales and Mother Gertrude. Rarely are the names separated.

Like their predecessors, both archival evidence and data compiled from my interviews suggest Farley and Shields may have been a successful team due in part to

differences in their personalities and abilities, a fact that both women seemed to recognize from the earliest days of their relationship. In her writings and video-taped interviews, Shields frequently referred to how different she and Farley had been. Perhaps the most charming comparison was one made by Shields in a letter she wrote to Farley the day that she, Shields, defended her doctoral dissertation. After recounting the events of that momentous day, Shields concluded the letter by teasing Farley.

Your trip to A. City sounds ‘kippy.’ Use your past experience on sunburn and take care of your sweet sixteen complexion. Sun and you don’t get along too well. That’s what it is to be a lady and have a fine complexion. You should see my swarthy face—I’ve been studying in the little park. Father Allen’s parting shot yesterday was—‘Well, you sure look healthy.’ I reminded him that it was my business to maintain such a stature.

Subjects interviewed for this study described Farley as: a lady, charming, a visionary, spiritual/prayerful, elegant, refined, and a dreamer. When asked to describe Shields, respondents identified her as: hard-working, intelligent, self-deprecating, hardy, humble, prayerful, artistic, a Jack-of-All-Trades, a professional nun, and practical. Most interviewees tended to describe the two women along the lines of the dichotomy that has become fixed over time in the minds of those who knew them. As one subject stated, “Sr. de Sales was more of a dreamer; Sr. Silverius was very practical.”

But this black and white assessment of Farley and Shields seemed an oversimplification to at least one interviewee. That subject made a particularly interesting point in regards to how she believed Farley and Shields were perceived by members of the Cresson community.

I think she [Farley] suffered from misunderstanding, because people wrote her off as being impractical. She was practical within her limits. I think some people thought she wasn't a Silverius, who could do the nitty-gritty stuff. She wouldn't have had the physical strength to begin with. There was a big age difference. And I'm not saying that apologetically. I found her [Farley] to be very kind and approachable...encouraging.

Sometimes a seemingly casual observation is the one that speaks most eloquently about a particular situation. One interviewee stressed that though Farley and Shields had been very different personalities, "...they appreciated each other."

### *My Story*

A visitor to Mount Aloysius College today would find just a few reminders of the institution's early founders. The co-foundresses, Ihmsen and Cosgrave, are memorialized in the names of two buildings: Ihmsen Hall (see Figure 21), a student dormitory dedicated in 1964, and Cosgrave Student Center (see Figure 22), built in 1967 and remodeled in 2004. And, of course, like so many other Mercy institutions, the Mount remembers the woman who started it all, Catherine McAuley, whose name was first given to a student residence hall completed in 1960. That McAuley Hall (see Figure 23) was transferred to the Sisters of Mercy and served as a retirement home for the Sisters of the Cresson community from 1972 until 2006 when it was razed and replaced by a new McAuley residence hall (see Figure 24) that could better serve the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century college students.

Oil portraits of Ihmsen (see Figure 25) and Cosgrave (see Figure 26) depicting them in lay clothing before they became Sisters hang in a side corridor of the Main Building's first floor along with a plaque acknowledging Ihmsen's contribution to the





*Figure 21: Ihmsen Hall.*



*Figure 22: Cosgrave Student Center.*





*Figure 23: McAuley Hall, c. 1962.*

institution (see Figure 27). Archival evidence suggests that the Cosgrave portrait was painted from a photograph, not from life, so it may have been painted after she was professed. Two other portraits (see Figures 16 & 17) of these women painted decades later after they had assumed roles of leadership in the community have hung over the years in various rooms of the Convent and Main Building. Regrettably, in recent years, these two painting were taken down and are currently in storage. Other oil portraits of early superiors and photographs of individuals important to the life and growth of the college, including formal portraits of the college's past presidents, remain in storage. Though the Sisters and other members of the Mount community did a good job in the past of preserving their communal and institutional history and telling stories of past struggles and triumphs, for many reasons interest in such matters has waned in recent years.

Perhaps the most significant reason why these stories no longer filter through the institution is that the number of Sisters of Mercy has decreased sharply in the past twenty



*Figure 24: McAuley Hall, 2009.*



*Figure 25: Amelia Ihmsen (Mother de Sales), c. 1860.*



Figure 26: Gertrude Cosgrave (Mother Gertrude), c. 1862.



Figure 27: Ihmsen foundress plaque, Main Building.

years. Forty-five years ago, the faculty was largely composed of Religious Sisters of Mercy, many of whom had spent their entire lives as Sisters in Cresson. They knew the stories because they had lived them.

Over time, religious vocations declined and, as the Sisters retired or died, they were replaced with lay teachers. When I arrived at Mount Aloysius in August 2004, the Sisters remained very visible on campus. About ten Sisters worked at the college: two in upper-level administrative positions, one in campus ministry, one in counseling, and several in either full-time or part-time teaching positions or as volunteer staff. More than twenty retired Sisters were still housed at McAuley Hall, and many could be seen daily walking around campus and interacting with students, faculty, and staff. Now, six years later, the Sisters housed at McAuley Hall have been moved to Mercy Center, the retirement home in Dallas, Pennsylvania and only six Sisters of Mercy are present on campus: two in full-time administrative positions, one in campus ministry, and three as volunteer staff.

Some attempts have been made to preserve and transmit these stories. In 2000, a freshman first-year experience course (F.Y.E.), later renamed Cultural Literacy Seminar (C.L.S.), was added to the core curriculum. Initially, F.Y.E. took a thematic approach and was geared toward exploration of a focused topic in order that students might develop critical thinking skills and engage in respectful dialogue. When F.Y.E. became C.L.S., “cultural literacy” was defined, in part, as a rudimentary understanding of one’s own institution, its history, traditions, and values. Also, in 2006, the Office for Mission Integration was created and charged with the task of articulating, preserving, and transmitting the heritage, traditions, and core values of the Religious Sisters of Mercy and of Catholic higher education. That office has done a fine job of reintroducing students to



the culture of the institution. For example, every year the office plans a series of events to celebrate “Mercy Week” at the end of September to coincide with the date of the founding of the Sisters of Mercy. Mercy Week celebrations have included a one-woman play about the life of Catherine McAuley, an open-forum dialogue called “Storyfest” to encourage community members to share recollections of people and events from the Mount’s past, and displays in the Main Building (see Figure 28) and Cosgrave Student Center (see Figure 29) of photographs and memorabilia from the Mount Aloysius archive.



*Figure 28: Mercy Week display, Main Building, 2009.*



Figure 29: Mercy Week display, Cosgrave Student Center, 2009.

### Scene 3

*The Great Depression: "Let's put on a show!"*

*Very Truly Yours: A Play within the Play (Act I, Interlude, and Act II)*

#### *Their Story*

Anticipating nothing but continued growth and prosperity, in the early 1920s, the Sisters of Mercy of Cresson build a new chapel (see Figure 30) which they finance through Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company. By the mid-1920s, Mount Aloysius Academy enrollment begins to decline, signaling the beginning of the end of private female academies. Based largely on correspondence between the Sisters of

Mercy of Cresson and Massachusetts Mutual, the Sisters put on a play about the chapel debt and about their ongoing struggle to repay the loan.



*Figure 30: Chapel/convent building, c. 1923.*

Though they make payments on the chapel loan, the Sisters are not always able to meet their obligation in a timely manner. The Sisters ask the loan company for more time to repay. Massachusetts Mutual charges penalties on their late payments, and the Sisters end up having to pay interest-on-interest. The Sisters repeatedly implore that their interest rate be reduced to a level that is more in keeping with what other banks are charging. Massachusetts Mutual appears unwilling to compromise. “Act I” ends with the Sisters’ growing awareness that they face foreclosure.

Sr. Camille Marie, bored by the play within the play, interrupts the action (*Interlude*) suggesting the Sisters put on a “real” show, a pageant celebrating the

centennial of the founding of the Sisters of Mercy. Though Sr. Camille Marie concludes that the extraordinary labor and cost of the pageant may not have been worth it, she learns years later that the pageant had inspired one young audience member to become a Sister of Mercy.

Following the *Interlude*, Act II of the play within the play has the Sisters looking for ways to repay their massive debt. They ask other Sisters at branch houses for assistance. The Sisters continue to haggle with Massachusetts Mutual over interest rates. Every time the company agrees to lower its rate, the Cresson Sisters ask for a still lower interest rate.

### *Back Story*

In early June 1936, Mother Xavier Phelan assembled data to support the Sisters' claim that they could not meet the demands of Massachusetts Mutual. In a Dallas archive document labeled "Proposition to Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company (Presented to Mr. Woodruff and Mr. Mount during conversation with them at the Academy, June 9, 1936)," Mother Xavier indicated a steady decline in academy receipts. In 1925, receipts from 104 academy students totaled \$40,269.40. Over the next ten years, her data showed a steady decrease in both enrollment and revenues. By 1935-1936, only 55 students were enrolled (28 resident; 27 non-resident) with academy receipts totaling \$13,277.80. In July 1931, the Sisters had attempted to increase enrollments by reducing tuition for students whose families had been hard hit by the Depression.

An announcement inserted into the Academy catalogue read, "Owing to the present wide-spread financial depression a discount on catalogue terms will be given. Correspondence or a call at the Academy from persons interested will be pleasing to The Sister of Mercy of Cresson." Mother Xavier noted that in 1935-1936 only six of the



twenty-eight resident students were paying regular rate, fourteen were paying the “special” rate, and eight were attending free.

In addition, Mother Xavier stated that the Academy’s maintenance indebtedness, which included monies owed for repairs, groceries, and coal as of April 30, 1936 totaled \$19,730.18. Also, she listed arrears on salaries of Sisters teaching in the two local high schools and fourteen local parochial schools in the amount of \$9,646.50. From 1930 to 1936, some of the darkest days for the Cresson community, Mother Xavier negotiated terms with Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company. Then, in November 1936, Mother M. Callista Coyne, an equally stalwart negotiator, succeeded Mother Xavier Phelan as Superior of the Cresson community.

Correspondence regarding the chapel debt suggests the Sisters made appeals for financial assistance not only to other Sisters in their unit and to academy alumnae, but to the bishop of their diocese and to prelates in their region as well. Bishop Guilfoyle, Diocese of Altoona, informed the Sisters that he was unable to loan them money since the diocese was approximately one million dollars in debt and was likewise receiving letters demanding payment from Massachusetts Mutual regarding outstanding parish loans that the diocese had with the company (Letter 4-14-37 from Bishop Guilfoyle to Mother Callista). Michael J. Curley, Archbishop of Baltimore, in a terse, two sentence letter dated October 29, 1938 to Mother Callista, Cresson Superior, stated bluntly: “I want to say very frankly that I have not a penny in the world to loan to anybody.”

Tired of negotiating repayment terms with the Cresson Sisters, Massachusetts Mutual decided to go “over their heads” and appealed to the Apostolic Delegate, the Pope’s representative in the United States, to do something about the debt of the Cresson Sisters and about delinquent loans owed the company by other Catholic organizations.

On November 7, 1936, Sister Mary Cecilia, the Mother Provincial, wrote to the Cresson Superior, Mother Callista, stating that:

...the Massachusetts Mutual has made report to the Apostolic Delegate with a hope of forcing some issue....The Baltimore Unit [of Religious Sisters of Mercy] with five times the Cresson debt has its business [with Massachusetts Mutual] in the hands of a competent lawyer who alone meets the Firm....As you see from Woodruff's letter, our numbers must be only a couple of the loans to Catholics.

In a January 1937 letter to the Apostolic Delegate, Woodruff threatened both the Cresson Sisters and the Catholic Church: "...something must be done soon in connection with these delinquent interest items or it probably will be necessary for our company to foreclose....the fact that no payments having been made for several years certainly tends to destroy the credit of Catholic churches and institutions as a whole."

But Mother Callista was not easily intimidated. In a letter to the Mother General (January 20, 1937), Mother Callista defended the actions of the Cresson Sisters and offered proof that the Cresson Unit had repeatedly attempted to renegotiate the terms of their loan with Massachusetts Mutual, and that the company, at every turn, had rejected the Sisters' suggested compromises. In the same letter, Mother Callista acknowledged that they had received "able advice" from a lawyer and from a banker in their negotiations.

The Johnstown lawyer, Edward J. Harkins, offered occasional legal advice to the Sisters, but the banker, T. F. Dougherty, cashier at The First National Bank in Spangler, Pennsylvania and father of Patty, a student at the Academy, was a much trusted and often consulted advisor in regards to financial matters. Dougherty (March 10, 1936) counseled the Sisters to remain firm in their dealings with Massachusetts Mutual. "In my opinion,

the hour is at hand when financial conditions such as yours must be recognized; and once again I say ‘stand by your guns,’ and in doing so the savings effected thereby will be worthwhile.”

Dougherty’s three year correspondence with the Cresson Sisters ended in January 1939, a couple weeks before Farley announced to Shields her intent to start a junior college. Mother Xavier Phelan, who had been Superior during the most difficult negotiations with Massachusetts Mutual and who in her face-to-face meeting with representatives from the company had offered them in a call-their-bluff move the deed to the property, died January 2, 1939 (Pulling, 1994, p. 22). “She was always noted for a quick, elastic walk, alert countenance and never allowed herself any relaxing of the rule” (Pulling, 1994, p. 22). In his final letter, Dougherty expressed regret at having been unable to attend Phelan’s funeral and commented, “She [Phelan] always impressed me as a real executive and her master mind will be very much missed in the conduct of your affairs.”

Sr. Camille Marie’s “real” show, the Mercy pageant “Centenary of Service: 1831-1931,” must have been a massive undertaking. A perusal of the pageant program suggests that Sr. Camille Marie had good reason to lament the efforts that had gone into this production. The program consisted of a prologue followed by three acts divided into six scenes, two song and dance interludes, and a postlude—Handel’s “Hallelujah Chorus” from the *Messiah*. Participants in the two-hour long pageant included Mount Aloysius Academy pupils, students from several local parochial schools and from the Cresson public high school, parishioners from several local Catholic churches, dancers from a local dance school, and the Altoona Catholic High School orchestra.

*Remythologizing* (Agmon & McWhinney, 1989; McWhinney & Battista, 1988), the organizational storytelling process that allows institutions to use narratives and alter them over time to focus on change, occurred regularly at Mount Aloysius, especially during anniversary years. Historical material used in the “Centenary of Service” pageant found expression in other Mount productions as well, including the 1948 centenary seminar, “Our Nuns,” the 1956 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary play, “Mercy Makes a Match,” and the 1993 panel discussion, “A Comfortable Cup of Tea with Kitty McAuley.”

### *My Story*

As I began gathering archival data for this study, one crucial body of information remained elusive: written evidence supporting the necessity to start a junior college. Academy enrollment figures from the first quarter of the twentieth century were not to be found in the registrar’s archive. Records of community and academy income and expenses were, at best, sketchy. Information about the chapel debt appeared to be lost.

Then one day, Sr. Ruth Hollen, archivist of the regional archive at Dallas, and I began unpacking Cresson community documents that had been transferred to Dallas when McAuley Hall, the Sisters’ retirement home on the campus of Mount Aloysius in Cresson, was closed. To our surprise, we found in the first box we looked into a packet of letters, over one hundred pages chronologically arranged from 1928-1939, all pertaining to the chapel debt.

Everything I had been looking for was there in that collection of documents: enrollment and financial data indicating a steady decline in both student enrollments and income from 1925 to 1935 and correspondence between the Cresson Sisters and individuals with a vested interest in their chapel debt: officers and tellers of Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company that held the \$200,000 note on the new

chapel/convent building, the Mother Provincial, the Mother General, lawyers, and T. F. Dougherty, the Sisters' trusted advisor. I was delighted that, like me, someone else had been interested in this story and had taken the time to gather all the correspondence and documents pertaining to the chapel dept into one packet. Though we may never know who collected and organized this important data, Sr. Ruth Hollen suggested that a former Cresson archivist, perhaps Shields, might have done so.

If one were to come across any one of these letters or documents in a file with no other corroborating documentation, one would dismiss it as a lifeless old document about some financial transactions from the distant past—just boring facts and figures. But taken together and read chronologically, I was stunned at the drama these letters and documents could elicit seventy years after they had been written. One letter may not be a story, but dozens of letters written over an extended period of time can spin a very powerful and engaging tale. As I was reading through the packet, I kept thinking that here was a twentieth century version of the story of David and Goliath—a fearless underdog (the Sisters) facing off against a mighty adversary (the mortgage company).

Cultural activities had always been a staple of life at the Mount as evidenced by the dozens of programs for theatrical and musical performances dating back to the late nineteenth century in the Cresson archive. Even during the darkest days of the Great Depression, theatrical performance enriched the lives of the Sisters and students at Mount Aloysius Academy. And like the Mercy Centennial pageant of 1931, most of the productions were ambitious affairs employing the talents and energies of many members of the Mount community. Just as the Sister-Builders, Ihmsen and Cosgrave, had been able to rally the community during those early years when the physical plant was being constructed, Sisters like Camille Marie had a real knack for persuading members of the

community to pull together to accomplish a task like putting on a pageant. Working together toward a common goal was just part of community life at Cresson, whether it was erecting a new building or canning peaches or putting on an operetta or picking up branches in the cow pasture or collecting ground pine for Christmas wreaths or starting a junior college. Sometimes the tasks were done with joy; sometimes they were done grudgingly. But in the end, the community made certain that any task worth doing was well done and done to completion.

#### Scene 4

##### *Vision and Daring: Sr. M. de Sales Farley*

##### *Their Story*

The scene begins with a profile of Sr. M. de Sales Farley, the dreamer credited with having the necessary vision and daring to start a junior college in order to save the institution. The audience learns of Farley's affluent family background, her friendship with Sr. Camille Marie, and her reverence for Sr. Pierre Greene who had been instrumental in planning and building the new chapel.

To illustrate how daring is part of the Mercy tradition, the performers tell a story of the two Sisters of Mercy who founded a hospital in Fort Scott, Kansas. The scene ends with the final act of the play within the play.

##### *Back Story*

As previously noted, the importance of *vision/visionary* and *dream/dreamer* emerged as recurrent themes from the data gathered and analyzed for this study. Boje (2008) includes *vision* as one of his six narrative elements of a *strategy narrative*. Nanus (1992b) stresses that having the *right vision* is only the first step toward becoming a *prudent visionary*, one who works with others to fulfill that vision and who is constantly

moving the vision forward. Likewise, Wall, Solum, and Sobol (1992) identify *culture building*, the shared work of a team, as essential to visionary leadership.

By all accounts, Farley was a visionary. However, Farley was not without her flaws and none of my interviewees described her as a *visionary leader*. Senior Sisters who had not been informed in advance of Farley's plan to open a junior college accused her of acting alone. Archival data indicates that those senior Sisters were wrong, but Farley's inability to make the mission clear and to enlist the assistance of all her subordinates early on led to a few harrowing weeks of community unrest in 1939. Once the dust had settled, the community stood behind her and, ultimately, even many of her detractors acknowledged her as a visionary.

Wons (1999) claims that being a visionary is something greater than being a leader and that one cannot be both. One must be either a visionary or a leader, not a visionary leader. "They accept leadership only when it is thrust upon them or as a means of creating a greater good" (p. 29). That seems to have been the case with Farley. She was a natural visionary but a reluctant leader. Wons adds, "...a visionary, simply to survive in the organization, must develop a strong internal frame of reference for guidance" (p. 29). Farley's "internal frame of reference" was one grounded in her prayer life.

On the other hand, Greenleaf (1977) claims that the "mark of leaders...is that they are better than most at pointing the direction" (p. 8), something that Farley, as a visionary, was adept at doing. And though she did possess at least a couple of Greenleaf's servant-leader characteristics, the ability to "withdraw and reorient" (p. 19) herself through prayer and to make "optimal use of...[her] resources" (p. 19), Farley seems to have had fewer characteristics of a servant-leader than her collaborator, Shields.

Ultimately, all one can say is that Farley assumed leadership roles at the Mount and that, to some extent and depending on the characteristics one wishes to ascribe to a leader (and “experts” disagree), she could be called a leader. But more importantly, Farley was a visionary and dreamer.

Shields used *vision* and *dream* repeatedly in her autobiography, her biography of Farley, and in her various historical accounts, both oral and written, of events surrounding the founding of Mount Aloysius Junior College. In most instances, Shields used these two words to describe the woman she perceived to be the visionary, Farley. “In this Sister and through her vision, Mount Aloysius Junior College was to emerge as the fortunes of the Academy dimmed” (*As Mount Zion*, p. 8). “Long hours of concentration and longer hours of work in the pursuance of a dream, a vision, eventually showed in material form the educational plane whereon a school was developed...” (*Autobiography*, p. 1). And perhaps Shields’ most eloquent description of her colleague is found in her biography of Farley:

The world would be lost without dreamers and visionaries—the social world, that or art and beauty, and the economic world as well. Songs must be sung, and victories assured if the human spirit is to grow. Somewhere, someone must stop and study what is to be changed. And then the dream must be examined closely in order to place it on a workable base. (p. 6)

Subjects I interviewed were asked to suggest three words or phrases to describe the two primary subjects of this study, Farley and Shields. Nearly half of my interviewees used the word *visionary* to describe Farley. One subject described her as a “visionary person.” Another subject observed that Farley “...was a visionary in the sense [that she] didn’t mind taking the risk...to start a junior college.” Even an elderly Sister



who had entered the community in 1901 commented in a tape recorded 1974 interview, thirty-five years before I interviewed my subjects, that Farley was a “visionary.”

In 1980, Shields gave an impassioned speech to a group of Sisters at Mercy Center in Dallas, Pennsylvania. Entitled “Mother McAuley and the Spirit of Daring among the Sisters of Mercy,” the talk is an example of Shields at her rhetorical best. Clearly, she was enthusiastic about her subject matter, and she brought into the speech stories of Mercy daring that she had collected during her travels around the world first as a volunteer in the Movement for a Better World (1965-1970), followed by her appointments in the order as Assistant Provincial (1970-1971), Provincial Administrator (1971-1973), and, finally, as Executive Director of the Federation of Sisters of Mercy in the Americas (1973-1981). As Shields wrote in her autobiography, “I literally circled the globe.” In particular, her job as Executive Director required that she “...learn more of the great Mercy history to try to be a connecting link so that our united services to the poor, the sick, and uneducated would be effective in our world” (Shields, c. 1988a).

In her speech, Shields recounted many stories of daring including stories of Mercy expansion into England, Newfoundland, San Francisco, and the Channel Islands. She talked about the daring needed to found College Misericordia in Dallas, Pennsylvania and briefly acknowledged the daring that had been required to found Mount Aloysius Junior College. Throughout the speech, Shields was able, apparently without notes, to recall names, dates, and places. She concluded the speech with a powerful call to mystical prayer, charity, and love of self and neighbor all the while connecting her thoughts to stories of Mother McAuley, Catholic saints, and Sisters who had played key roles in her spiritual formation.

## *My Story*

As I accumulated and began reviewing data for this study, I realized that often I had multiple versions of the same story. Even Shields, the consummate storyteller, did not always include the same details as she recounted a particular narrative. The “facts” did not always align with information provided in other versions of the same story, and, at times, biographical data about the primary subjects of this study could be conflicting. Clearly, memories of those telling the stories were not always flawless. Which accounts of Farley’s and Shield’s lives were the authoritative ones? Did it matter? It seemed to me that Shield’s reverential autobiography of Farley was as valid as the less sanitized recollections of Farley that emerged from other sources.

Ultimately, though historical accuracy is important, I decided that it was far more imperative that one remain faithful (*fides*) to the original historical experience rather than worry about the literal truth of every detail. The subjective nature of historical narrative will never morph into some sort of objective truth. The profiles of Farley, Shields, and Sr. Camille Marie, as well as all the other stories and narrative fragments preserved in this study, have been filtered through me.

I kept recalling my first encounter with the powerful personal narratives in Studs Terkel’s *Working* (1975). Terkel tape recorded interviews with his subjects, but he knew that, as compelling as their stories might be, he could not simply present literal transcriptions of his taped interviews. Through compression and thoughtful editing Terkel was able to transform good material into far more engaging stories. I created my profiles much like Seidman (1998) who modeled his profiles on the work of Terkel (1975). And always at the back of my mind was Seidman’s assertion that “... the story is both the participant’s and the interviewers” (p. 102).

Likewise, I kept returning to Boje's (2008) understanding of *story* as an "emergent" activity involving many people engaged in interpreting the past through the process of *collective memory*. According to Boje, no single narrative account is any more truthful or false than any other account; they are merely narratives told from different perspectives. Every participant's "I remember..." is valid and significant. And though cast in the role of researcher, I, too, am a participant in the drama. Consequently, *Their Story* and *My Story* are constantly in the process of coalescing into *Our Story* and beginning to suggest that the institution where this activity occurs might, in fact, be a *storytelling organization*, a "...collective storytelling system...in which the performance of stories is a key part of members' sense-making and a means to allow them to supplement individual memories with institutional memory" (Boje, 2008, p. 262). After months of sifting through and analyzing data, I believe there is considerable evidence suggesting that Mount Aloysius was, and continues to be, a storytelling organization.

*Very Truly Yours: A Play within the Play, Final Act*

*Their Story*

The Sisters continue to implore Massachusetts Mutual for an interest rate that is more in line with the financial conditions of the time. Insisting that they've been forced to repay the loan at an unfair interest rate, the Sisters tell Massachusetts Mutual that they, the Sisters, are the ones who are owed over \$7,000 due to overpayment. The ploy does not work.

When two representatives of Massachusetts Mutual visit the academy, the Superior, Sr. Xavier, makes one final bold move. She tells the representatives that since the company seems unwilling to compromise on the interest rate, they are welcome to the deeds to the property. Shocked by the offer, Massachusetts Mutual concedes to the

Sisters' request of a 3% interest rate and suggests the Sisters find a more profitable use for their property. One suggestion is that the Sisters start a junior college. The "play" and Act I end with Sr. de Sales making plans to start a junior college and Massachusetts Mutual stating they will not foreclose.

### *Back Story*

Invariably, the communal collective memory of Mount Aloysius credits Farley as being the one who had the vision to transform her failing academy into a junior college. Shields supports that claim by asserting that it was Farley's reading in the *New York Times* about the success of junior colleges in other parts of the country that led her to believe a junior college might be successful in Western Pennsylvania. Most of my interviewees and all written stories about the founding of Mount Aloysius Junior College make the same assertion that Farley, acting alone, decided to start a junior college.

However, some evidence suggests that Farley may not have been the one who first suggested a junior college, and that she might have been working behind the scenes with her superiors to lay the groundwork for the junior college months, perhaps years, before she approached Shields with the idea in February 1939. Sr. Camille Marie wrote that she and Farley had asked Mother Constance McBride (see Figure 31), on her deathbed, to "...pray for us that we can make the college a reality, won't you" (d'Invilliers, 1974)? Mother Constance died in November 1935, more than three years before Farley approached Shields with her decision to open a junior college.

Seven months later, June 1936, Mother Xavier Phelan, the Cresson superior, seemed surprised when Woodruff, manager of Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company, suggested that the Sisters convert their building to some other use, perhaps a

college. Mother Xavier responded (June 25, 1936), “You [Woodruff] state in your letter that a strong effort must be made by us to use our building in such a way as to produce more income....A college, one of the outstanding institutions in our county, has had a decreased enrollment for the past five years....There is keen competition from other schools in our section that we had to combat.” In the final draft of her letter to Woodruff,



*Figure 31:* (l. to r.) Sr. Camille Marie d'Invilliers,  
Mother Constance McBride, Sr. de Sales Farley, 1925.

Mother Xavier did not include this line from her earlier draft, “It would be a foolish gesture to convert our building to any other use in hopes of increasing the income in order to liquidate our indebtedness.” Had the Sisters already discussed the idea of starting a junior college and dismissed it as impractical? Had Farley as principal of the academy been part of that discussion? Had she been the one who had offered the suggestion in the first place?

By 1939, the idea for the junior college was being credited to Farley. James P. Costello (March 28, 1939), the attorney handling the Massachusetts Mutual debt for the Sisters of Mercy, wrote to Sister M. Cecilia, the Mother Provincial, that Massachusetts Mutual was willing to continue working with the Cresson Sisters based on “...Sister de Sales’ plans for application for junior college privileges....” Also, in her August 12, 1939 letter to the Mother Provincial, Farley informed her superior that she, Farley, had been accused by some of the senior Sisters “...of launching the junior college without the vote of the Trustees or the Corporation” and that Sr. Magdalene had called the junior college “a one man venture.” Farley had rebutted with the assertion that she “had followed the word of...[her] higher superior.” The Mother Provincial, in a letter to the Mother General (August 14, 1939), confirmed Farley’s claim:

As you know when the matter of the Cresson loan came up, last January [1939], and we tried to find some way of doing something to assure an income for Cresson, the only thing that we could see was to do something about opening a Junior College since the days of Academies are a thing of the past. At the time we had very little hope of succeeding and it was due to the efforts and influence of S[r]. M. de Sales and her many influential friends that permission to begin was granted August first of this year.

Did Farley get the idea to start a junior college from the *New York Times*, from Woodruff of Massachusetts Mutual, or from some other unknown source? Or did several sources in concert inform her decision? Once again, veracity seems less important than fidelity. Mount Aloysius collective memory prefers to remember Farley as the visionary who suddenly one evening in February 1939 appeared in Shields' classroom and announced, "We're going to open a junior college and you're going to help me." That's close enough to the truth. And it makes a better story.

### *My Story*

As a child raised and educated within the Catholic faith, I witnessed first-hand the virtues and vices of men and women Catholic religious. Contrary to current media representations, I believe their virtues far outnumber their vices. That was certainly my contention when I undertook this study. In particular, I felt that the Cresson Sisters of Mercy who had transitioned their academy into a junior college must have been extraordinarily courageous and clever to have done so with few resources beyond their faith and wits. Here was a group of women who, despite all odds, had had the courage to do what needed to be done.

As Shields expressed in her speech about the spirit of daring among the Sisters of Mercy, "We don't act with caution, ladies! It's not in the tradition. You dare it! If we'd decide to sit back and act always in caution with all the things that we need, we're not going to get it done." When I first read through the packet of letters concerning the chapel debt, I was struck by the courage of these women who had stood up to a large financial institution run by men and who had managed through persuasion and tenacity to get what they wanted on their terms. The Sisters were not trying to avoid repayment of

their loan; they simply wanted terms appropriate to the conditions of the times. They were seeking an equitable solution to a difficult situation.

The Sisters were not going to appear to be intimidated, though the tone of their letters to other Sisters and friends suggests that they were a bit fearful, “It is an anxiety having the affair in an unsettled condition...” (February 4, 1936). When in June 1936, Sr. Xavier in a final act of bravado offered representatives of Massachusetts Mutual the deed to the Mount property, she did so at the urging of T. F. Dougherty, the Sisters’ trusted advisor. A couple days before that fateful meeting with Massachusetts Mutual, Dougherty had written to Sr. Xavier. “As a last resort, in order to win your point, offer them the deed....You have the ability to accomplish this. Following your conference...I will expect a letter to the effect that you have fought the battle and come out victoriously.” Sr. Xavier did exactly as she had been counseled by Dougherty. One of the Sisters reported back to Dougherty that, “Mother Xavier staunchly stood her ground, impressing upon them that we had done our very best and that there was nothing else to do.”

Of course, Massachusetts Mutual had more sense than to accept the deed to what they must have thought was a white elephant property in Cresson, Pennsylvania. Nonetheless, it had taken great daring to follow through with such a bold move. Sr. Xavier was risking not only the academy, but the home and source of livelihood of her entire community of Religious Sisters. She must have been asking herself, “What will I do if they accept my offer? Where will we go? What will become of our community?” Fortunately, she never had to answer those questions.

When Dougherty prepared the draft of a letter to Massachusetts Mutual on behalf of the Sisters following the meeting, he wrote, “It certainly is evident from the statement



submitted to you while you and Mr. Mount were in our office that our proposition must be carefully considered by you and accepted. Otherwise, the only alternative is to prepare a deed, vesting the title in your company (June 25, 1936).” Mother Xavier used most of Dougherty’s letter but knew where to draw the line. She thanked Dougherty for his assistance and stated, “We hesitated going on record as for offering to deliver deed of property.” It had been acceptable to make a verbal offer of the deed behind closed doors but quite another matter to do so publicly in writing. “Women of Daring” (Shields, 1980)! And very, very smart!

## Act II

### Mores: The Transition

#### Scene 1

*Sr. Silverius Shields: “We are the endowment!”*

#### *Their Story*

Act II is structured around the theme of “Mores,” the second element of the Mount Aloysius motto.

In the first scene of Act II, Sr. de Sales enlists the assistance of Sr. Silverius in starting the junior college. This is followed by a profile of Sr. Silverius which illustrates how different these two cofounders are in terms of background and ability. Steps taken by Sr. de Sales and Sr. Silverius to start the junior college are outlined. The two Sisters manage to finesse their way around the State’s requirements for starting a junior college, but they run into a seemingly insurmountable roadblock when asked to come up with a \$100,000 endowment. The Mount, after all, is virtually broke.

Sr. Silverius recalls that the State credits the institution with a faculty worth \$100,000, even though none of the Sisters are paid for their services. With approbation

of the State, the Sisters become the junior college's living endowment. The scene ends with a reminder of the importance of prayer in the life of Sr. de Sales.

*Back Story*

An ability to recognize the worth of human resources seems to be one quality that allowed the Cresson Sisters of Mercy to overcome obstacles and successfully transform their institution. Ihmsen and Cosgrave, the early Sister-Builders, recognized the value of friends like Charles Schwab (see Figure 32) and alumnae when it came to raising funds needed to grow their campus. Though Sr. Xavier Phelan and the other Cresson superiors during the 1930's lacked essential knowledge to handle financial negotiations with Massachusetts Mutual, they knew who to consult and they made good use of the advice they were given. Likewise, Farley knew that she would need a loyal colleague with business sense and energy to assist her in starting the junior college; she found what she needed in Shields.



*Figure 32: Charles Schwab, 1938.*

So it is not surprising that Shields eventually solved the dilemma of the \$100,000 endowment by finding it embodied in the collective labor of the Cresson Sisters. Because they were worth collectively \$100,000, the Sisters were able to overcome a seemingly insurmountable obstacle and were allowed to open their junior college.

Of all the stories and narrative fragments that I heard and read about the Sisters of Mercy of Cresson, three kept resurfacing: the story about how Shields came up with the \$100,000 endowment mandated by the State to open the junior college, how Sr. Josephine Ihmsen “saved the day” by painting a floral mural (see Figure 33) in the Aloysian Parlor when the mirror above the fireplace shattered, and narrative fragments surrounding the celebration of Christmas, in particular how Shields coordinated efforts for gathering ground pine which would then be made into wreaths and garland. These stories share a common theme of *resourcefulness*. Of the three, the narrative about the \$100,000 endowment is one I would classify as a Boje (2008) *founding narrative*. The second important *founding narrative* that emerged from the data was the one encapsulated in Farley’s announcement: “We’re going to open a junior college, and you’re going to help me.” The narratives about Sr. Josephine Ihmsen’s painting and the \$100,000 endowment have become Mount Aloysius *epic myths* (Mitroff and Kilmann, 1975), events of great accomplishments that emerged during times of adversity. These stories are still used to transmit organizational values and culture at the Mount.

In addition, these three significant stories encapsulate other themes that resonate among many of the other narratives that have been preserved about Mount Aloysius and the Sisters of Mercy. Additional themes suggested by these three stories include: 1) ingenuity/cleverness, 2) quick action at a time of need/daring, 3) goals attained due to communal hard work, 4) the importance of making a good appearance, and 5)

hospitality. Certainly, many other themes, such as the importance of prayer and the central role of the visual and performing arts to the culture of the institution, emerge from the data. Other themes, such as these, will be noted as they emerge within this discussion.



*Figure 33: Aloysian Parlor, c. 1960s.*

Undoubtedly, the Sisters of Mercy of Cresson were *resourceful*. They were especially resourceful when it came to finding the right people both within the school community and the community at large who could get a job done. Farley, in selecting

Shields to assist her in starting the junior college, was making the best use of her human resources. Shields had the “business skills and the strong back” that Farley lacked. The Sisters resourcefully made use of alumnae such as Dr. Caroline Chandler, Chairwoman of the Alumnae Association Finance Committee, who organized efforts to increase tuition revenue when the academy was in decline. Parents of students could also provide assistance, as did T. F. Dougherty, who regularly offered advice to the Sisters struggling to deal with the mortgage company that held the note on their chapel loan. And the Sisters, many of whom had been born into wealthy families, used their connections to achieve the results they desired. Even Sr. Cecilia, the Mother Provincial, in a 1939 letter to the Mother General, acknowledged Farley’s “pull” with the right people: “...we had little hope of succeeding [starting the junior college] and it was due to the efforts and influence of Sr. M. de Sales and her many influential friends that permission to begin was granted....”

And here was a community where ingenuity abounded. Not only did Shields come up with the solution to the \$100,000 endowment problem, but the Sisters also found a way around the problem of the minimum one hundred students required to open a junior college. With only twenty-four junior college students enrolled that first year, the Sisters simply restructured the academy so that they could count upper level high school students as part of the junior college.

In 1980, Shields gave an impassioned lecture on the subject of Mercy daring to a group of Sisters at Mercy Center in Dallas, PA. In “Mother McAuley and the Spirit of Daring among the Sisters of Mercy,” Shields recounts many stories about Mercy daring beginning with the daring required of Catherine McAuley who founded the order. Though in this particular speech Shields does not fully develop her narrative about the

founding of the junior college, she does manage to work it into her larger story of Mercy daring.

We don't act with caution, ladies! It's not in the tradition. You dare it!...I've been looking in my new job [as Cresson archivist] at what happened up at Mount Aloysius when Sister de Sales decided to open the junior college.... [She cites the lack of resources.] We had a lot of spirit, and we opened the college.

Frequently, my interviewees commented on how the Cresson community worked cooperatively to accomplish tasks: stories about picking up branches in the cow pasture, collecting ground pine for Christmas decorations, the domestic tasks, starting the junior college. Despite occasional disagreements, the Sisters got things done by working as a team. Comparing the Cresson Sisters to Sisters from other houses, one interviewee commented, "...the soul of Cresson is different. The Cressonites. I don't know. Somebody smarter than me should figure that out. I just tell you there is!" About the shared domestic chores, another interviewee observed, "And I realized that that's what this place was all about [everyone doing whatever needed to be done]. They really were going to do whatever it took to keep this place."

Making a good appearance was one way the Cresson Sisters expressed hospitality, a hallmark of the congregation of the Sisters of Mercy. The Main Building was designed to look like a French chateau; even today, first-time visitors to the Mount are impressed by its grandeur and imposing facade. And much of the appearance was façade as several interviewees noted. Visitors to the academy would be ushered into one of the many elegant parlors furnished with antique furniture, original artwork, and Oriental rugs. Contrary to what visitors saw, the Sisters lived very humbly and worked tirelessly to maintain a good appearance.

For the Cresson Sisters, maintaining a good appearance was not so much an attempt at deception as it was an extension of hospitality. The Sisters wanted to honor their guests by providing aesthetically pleasing reception rooms. However, good appearance meant more than just creating an elegant physical environment. For Mount girls, lessons in etiquette and a strict student dress code remained part of the curriculum even after the founding of the junior college.

### *My Story*

On more than one occasion, I have witnessed Mercy hospitality or been its fortunate recipient. I have shared meals with retired Sisters both at McAuley Hall on the Mount campus and at Mercy Center in Dallas. While researching this dissertation, I was provided gratis meals and lodging at Mercy Center. I have seen the Mount College President at a formal dinner get up and, with great humility, pour water for guests at her table. And, as they have done for decades, retired Sisters continue to volunteer their services on the Mount campus, their cheerful, warm, and welcoming demeanor enriching the institution and making it a far more hospitable place for students, staff, and faculty. Over seventy years, that initial \$100,000 living endowment has paid out bountiful dividends.

### Scene 2

*It's the right thing.*

### *Their Story*

The Sisters seek and obtain both State and regional accreditation in record time. In an era when higher education opportunities for certain minorities, especially blacks, are limited, the Mount seeks to diversify its student population. Some parents of white students are upset that their daughters will be forced to live and study with black students.

The scene ends with a story of Sr. de Sales admonishing a particularly vocal mother who doesn't want her daughter sharing a room with a black girl.

### *Back Story*

Three interviewees, with great pride, told me the story of how Farley had chastised a white mother for not wanting her daughter to room with a black student. The first Mount Aloysius Junior College catalogue declared that the school admitted students "...regardless of race, color, or creed." In one of her many biographical sketches of Farley, Shields included a section on integration. "Believing in the importance of integration and the justice factor implied within it, she [Farley] actively sought black students. During the academic year 1946-1947, she registered one young lady in the sophomore division of the secondary school." Shields noted that, at the time, schools in the South were still largely segregated. In her autobiography, Shields made a similar comment about her alma mater, Catholic University. "The University registered black students long before that was the rule in those days. A sense of pride arose in the fact that my university was color blind." By 1948, black students were enrolled in the junior college.

Shields recounted how one black student and her father had managed to change attitudes about race.

One young lady coming from Washington brought a great favor in her train. Her father, Louis Vaughn Jones, was professor of violin at Howard University and also a concert violinist in his own right. He visited the school and on one occasion played a long-remembered concert for the students. All of this was as Sister Mary de Sales had hoped it would be—an understanding that intelligence



and talent is not confined to any one race. This move required tact and graciousness, two qualities in which the Dean was replete....” (Shields, c. 1988b)

Shields used the example of Farley’s early efforts at integration to illustrate what she, Shields, believed to be important characteristics of a leader. She described Farley as a woman who knew “...what to do and when to do it,” who knew what had to be done “...often before others were aware that situations were going to present themselves,” and who “...could look ahead and institute the situation that would bring growth (Shields, c. 1988b).”

### *My Story*

I was told the story about Farley’s confrontation with the mother who didn’t want her daughter sharing a room with a black girl more than sixty years after the incident occurred. To my knowledge, no written account of this event exists. I think that is remarkable since most of the other often-repeated narratives I encountered are ones that had been written down, usually by Shields. Here was a story considered so significant to the storytellers that they thought it was worth retelling even after sixty years. The tellers took great pride in the fact that Farley had been willing to take a stand against injustice, especially in an era when doing so was considered daring and imprudent.

Even before the junior college enrolled its first black students, Shields noted that the school had accepted Jews, Moslems, and Latin-American students. That may not seem remarkable in 2010 with most American colleges and universities committed to increasing diversity on its campuses. But it is certainly noteworthy that Farley was actively seeking to diversity her small, Catholic college in rural Western Pennsylvania in the mid-1940s. Certainly, the Catholic Church at that time was not advocating diversity. In fact, Catholic prayer books of the period included prayers for the conversion of the

Jews. I recall reading those prayers as a child in the early 1960s and wondering why Jews needed to be converted!

### Scene 3

*“That sense of light hit me.”*

#### *Their Story*

Shields is sent to Catholic University of America in Washington, DC to pursue a doctorate in economics. Though she feels unprepared for the task, she completes the program and is awarded the degree. After successfully defending her doctoral dissertation, Shields writes to her old friend, Farley, to give her the details of her extraordinary experience. After earning the degree, Shields returns to the Mount. Once again, she is the registrar.

#### *Back Story*

Shields was 48 years old when she completed doctoral studies in economics at Catholic University. As she noted in her autobiography, economics “...would not have been my individual choice. It was more or less an assignment from the Dean of my school at the university and in his mind it was a logical step.” Despite her reluctance to study economics, Shields loved university life.

Catholic University has an international tone peculiar to itself. Students and professors from many different countries are there. I soon found myself paying attention to different accents and listening to lectures which, while being delivered in English, lead one to distinguish easily the country or at least the region from which the lecturer came....The school did what any good school would do: it challenged. (Shields, c. 1988a, p. 19)

By all accounts, Shields loved the challenge and was an exemplary student. When interviewees were asked to suggest three words or phrases to describe Shields, many responded with a comment about her intellect: “I think she was very bright. Very, very intelligent. Sometimes I thought she was almost self-deprecating.” “She was good at everything.” “She was very capable.” “She certainly was bright. She had a PhD from Catholic University in economics. In those days, what women were into that?” According to one interviewee, Shields’ major professor in economics at Catholic University had once described her as the most brilliant student he’d ever had in front of him. “He [the economics professor] asked her [Shields] one time who was typing her dissertation. And she said, ‘Well, I am.’ And he said, ‘Your community educates [you] to this degree and you’re typing your own dissertation?’ And she said, ‘You should see me run a dishwasher!’”

After earning her doctorate, Catholic University invited Shields to teach summer graduate classes. She loved the intellectual stimulation and described it as “...a wonderful occupation quite removed from the junior college plane and very satisfying.” Pleased with her work, Catholic University asked her to join the faculty during the regular academic year. Her superior reminded Shields that she had been educated in order to teach at the Mount, not at Catholic University. Shields would remain at the Mount another ten years. Not until 1965, at age 58, would Shields be allowed the opportunity to show what she was truly capable of accomplishing.

### *My Story*

One morning while working in the Mercy regional archive in Dallas, I came across the Cresson house annals from the early 1950s. Handwritten entries in an ordinary black and white composition book chronicled events that had in some way impacted the

Cresson community. Tucked into the journal was an envelope postmarked May 10, 1955 and addressed to Farley at Mercy Hospital in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. A handwritten note on the face of the envelope read, “Sr. M. Silverius Shields rec’d her doctorate at the C.U. Washington DC.” I was intrigued.

I extracted the letter and started to read. By the second paragraph I realized that I was reading a letter that Shields had written to Farley the evening following her doctoral defense. Realizing that Farley was in the hospital and unable to join her at Catholic University for this momentous milestone, Shields had taken time to record all the details of that day for her colleague and friend. In the midst of collecting data about the lives of these two women for my own doctoral dissertation, I had stumbled upon a letter documenting the completion of Shields’ doctoral studies. I couldn’t believe that it had been saved and had been placed in the annals.

The more I read, the more I was moved by the letter’s eloquence, charm, mysticism, and expression of tender concern. Alone in the archive, by the time I’d finished reading the letter, I was trembling and crying. No other moment in the three years of work spent on this study could compare to the discovery of that letter. For a few minutes, I was privileged to overhear an intimate conversation between the two subjects of this study. Here was a rare glimpse into the private lives of these two extraordinary women.

### Act III

Cultura: Moving Forward. Looking Back.

#### Scene 1

*“Twenty-four hours from the ballet to the cow pasture...”*

### *Their Story*

Act III presents stories about Mount Aloysius “Cultura.” In the opening scene, performers recall some of the major performances, lectures, and cultural events that became part of the fabric of life at the junior college in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. Sr. Silverius’s comment that it had been “only twenty-four hours from the ballet to the cow pasture” reminds the audience that, even though the junior college appears to be growing, the Sisters continue the pattern of community hard work established during leaner times.

Sr. Camille Marie is profiled. We learn about her aristocratic roots, her sense of humor, her fearless nature, her self-confidence, and her musical talents. Performers recount the story of the puppet show orchestrated by Sr. Camille Marie and the community effort required to put on the show.

### *Back Story*

As I researched the two primary subjects of this study, I kept coming across the name of Sr. Camille Marie. Of course, it was virtually impossible to ignore her. Sr. Camille Marie’s life spanned the twentieth century. She arrived at the Mount in 1899, two years after the construction of the Main Building; she did not leave until after her one hundredth birthday in 1986. She died six years later.

In 1973, when she was 87 years old, Sr. Camille Marie wrote “Memoirs of the d’Invilliers,” a detailed account of her family’s history. The chronicle prominently featured major events of her life written with astonishing detail and with much humor. After completing the memoir, she kept recalling other events she considered significant and concluded by adding a postlude, a reflection and five appendices.

In particular, one paragraph in Sr. Camille Marie’s memoir was relevant to this study. Sr. Camille Marie provided a couple pieces of information about when the

academy first started to experience a decline and how Sr. de Sales had attempted to use “culture” to ameliorate the situation.

In the fall [1936], Sister de Sales was given charge of the Academy. We were beginning to go on the rocks. To raise money, Sister de Sales decided to give a really good Glee Concert and asked Helen Krumbine if she would conduct it, with Sister Camille Marie at the piano. Helen agreed and thus were started a series of spring concerts that have never been surpassed before nor since. (d’Invilliers, 1973, p. 17)

Of course, the Mount’s financial situation had been bleak for several years, and it would take more than receipts from a few concerts to turn things around. In July 1936, two months before Farley would be named head of the academy, Mother Xavier Phelan had compiled a list of academy receipts from 1925 to 1935 tracing the steady decline in income and decrease in enrollment.

Minutes of alumnae meetings for 1937-1938 remained largely focused on how to save the academy by coming up with new marketing and recruitment strategies, by raising funds to create additional scholarships, and by solving the transportation problem (getting local day school students to Cresson). One sentence in alumnae meeting minutes from this time period alluded to the possibility of a college, but minutes from future meetings suggested that nothing was ever done to follow up on the suggestion. “Mr. Myers hopes that the day will arrive when Mt. A.A. will establish a college course and thinks this can be done in connection with St. Francis College [Loretto]” (February 28, 1937). Two years later, Farley would make her move to open a junior college. But she would not need Franciscans to assist her, just the business-savvy and capable Shields.

Culture at the Mount had always meant plays, concerts, lectures, and pageants. Farley opting to try a Glee Club concert as a fund raiser was in concordance with that tradition. Though many Sisters were talented musicians, few could equal Sr. Camille Marie. One particular performance marked a musical milestone in her career, the 1932 premiere of her operetta “The Countess and The Cop.”

Prior to joining the Sisters of Mercy, Sr. Camille Marie had begun composing an operetta, “Jane and Janetta.” Warned by her piano teacher, Camille Zeckwer, that she would never be allowed to finish the operetta once she entered the convent, Sr. Camille Marie got the assurance of Mother de Sales Ihmsen that she would be allowed to finish it once she had completed her postulancy. When Mother Xavier succeeded Mother de Sales as superior, she asked Sr. Camille Marie to abandon the project (d’Invilliers, 1973). Sr. Camille Marie wrote in her memoir:

...I was heartbroken at a promise not being kept, a promise in which I had so firmly trusted, and I wept copiously. It was then and there that “same day” I vowed that before I died I would write an operetta. I was not going to have Camille Zeckwer tell me, when we met in Heaven, “I told you so.” This was the origin of “The Countess and the Cop” composed twenty-four years later.

(d’Invilliers, 1973, p. 16)

Sr. Camille Marie’s operetta was completed and performed for the first time twenty-two years after taking her final vows. On the program’s cover, authorship was credited to Marie A. d’Invilliers. She kept her promise to herself, even if her superiors had not.

## *My Story*

When the Main Building was designed in 1895, the Sisters were deeply committed to the performing arts. A suite of practice rooms, now the offices for Institutional Advancement, were considered essential to academy education. For a modest fee, early Mount students could rent instruments—even a harp. The academy, later the junior college, had a glee club, an orchestra, and regularly staged large productions, including an early 20<sup>th</sup> century production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado* with an all-female cast (see Figure 34).



*Figure 34: The Mikado, c. 1905.*

The early Sisters seemed to understand that performance activities—large group activities whose success was dependent on everyone doing her part—were a good way to build community. To succeed as a community they had to pull together. Religious life was geared toward doing things communally—prayer, domestic chores, and recreation.



In life, as in the performing arts, there were “soloists” and “stars.” Ihmsen, Cosgrave, Farley, Shields, Sr. Camille Marie, and several Sisters mentioned in this study were the community’s “stars.” However, most of the “stars” seemed to understand that they could not accomplish much without their “supporting cast,” those Sisters who did what needed doing even if the tasks seemed trivial. They lived their lives according to the dictum of another nun, St. Therese of Lisieux, who wrote, “Each small task of everyday life is part of the total harmony of the universe” (St. Therese of Lisieux Writings). The quote, a personal favorite, is one that I use to remind myself that tedious daily chores have value, a lesson I regularly need to relearn as an educator.

## Scene 2

### *The Object Speaks*

#### *Their Story*

Sr. Silverius takes us on a tour of the Main Building and the Mount campus. Along the way, she and the other performers talk about objects that hold special meaning to the Sisters and the Mount community. Many of the stories and narrative fragments associated with these objects have become part of the lore of the institution.

#### *Back Story*

In October 1976, at the request of Sister Mary Claver Cronin, President of the Corporation of the Sisters of Mercy of Cresson, Shields tape recorded an extensive room-by-room tour of the Main Building, the chapel, and Alumnae Hall. Transcripts (Shields, 1976) were made of her recordings which she then condensed into a document for use by admissions personnel entitled, “An Informational Tour of Mount Aloysius.” Today, admissions tours have reduced Shields’ detailed narrative to an almost unrecognizable truncated version of her original.

By the time she recorded her tour, Shields had been part of the Mount community for more than 40 years and had played a key role in transitioning the institution into a junior college. She had known many of the older Sisters who had made the transition from Loretto to Cresson in 1897, and she seems to have heard and retained their stories. It is clear from reading the transcripts of her tour that Shields was passionate about all aspects of the Mount—its buildings, its objects, its people, its history, and its stories. Before beginning her narrative, Shields apologized should she “ramble a bit” since she did not want “...to sound exactly like a catalogue” (Shields, 1976, p. 1). Shields knew how to spin a yarn!

And her tale was spun from Mount facts, folklore, and, fiction. For example, when describing the Aloysian Parlor, Shields recounted the well-known story of how Sr. Josephine Ihmsen saved the day by replacing a shattered mirror above the mantelpiece with a mural. The essential facts of the story are likely true, though Shields may have added a few embellishments. Since Sr. Josephine lived until 1950, Shields would have had the opportunity to hear the story first-hand from the artist.

On the other hand, she passed off a bit of Mount lore as fact when she wrote, “A kiln was built and clay from the property was used to fashion the bricks. These bricks made a building that rests on firm, firm, thick walls.” That statement is a half-truth. A kiln was built on what is now the site of Ihmsen Hall to fire bricks fabricated from clay from the property. However, according to one of my interviewees, bricks made from Mount clay proved to be inadequate, and the Sisters had to purchase bricks to build the Main Building. House ledgers from 1895-1897 support this claim with numerous entries indicating the purchase of large quantities of bricks.

After discussing the portraits of Ihmsen and Cosgrave on the first floor of the Main Building, Shields made a rather revealing aside. Noting that Ihmsen had been the one to select the Cresson motto (“They that trust in the Lord are as Mount Zion”), Shields commented:

I didn’t know Mother de Sales. She was dead before I entered, but I can trace in that [motto] a certain strength of character, an inner spiritual strength that brought a lot of things into being that we enjoy today. It would have been wonderful to have known her. When one hears the Sisters talk about her, everything they say only makes you eager to reach a time when you’ll make her acquaintance.

(Shields, 1976, p. 6)

Shields’ statement reveals her passionate interest in historical Mount figures and offers evidence that she did hear Sisters talking about the past.

In many ways, the dozens of narrative fragments that Shields wove together to tell the Mount story captured the spirit of the Cresson community. Shields is at her best when she “rambles a bit.” For example, she interrupts her history of the Mount library, formerly the chapel, with a couple anecdotes related to Sisters and the library. Her first anecdote is about Sr. Camille Marie.

When I first entered [the order]...the organ was still in the corner. In those days, I don’t think they took a library nearly as seriously as they do now because there were different kinds of meetings in the library and this particular evening, shortly after I arrived here, we were going to have a movie....The Sisters had come in...and there was Sister Camille Marie sitting up on this organ bench, with all these church organ pipes above her head, playing...”I Found My Million Dollar Baby in a Five and Ten Cent Store.” I’ll never forget it. (Shields, 1976, p. 7)

And before leaving the library, Shields offers one more memorable story about an unnamed Sister who, like Shields, had been "...a little bit chauvinistic about the place" (Shields, 1976, p. 7).

One day, years ago, when she was taking some people through the building, she threw open the door, the library cases were only around the walls of the room, and she said rather triumphantly to the group, and there was a priest among them, "In this room you will find any book you ever would want to read." Taking up the challenge, the priest said, "Is that so, Sister?" And she said, "Yes, that's so." He said, "Can you tell me, do you have *The Life of the Holy Ghost*?" She said, "Well, I don't know where it is, but I'm sure it's here...." We smiled over that story many times. (Shields, 1976, p. 7)

### *My Story*

Many of the objects Shields described in her tour still exist though the rooms, in many instances, have been converted to other uses. For example, the Aloysian Parlor is now the President's office, the Madonna Parlor (see Figure 35) is now the registrar's office, and the library is now a gallery/conference room. Some objects have been sold, put into storage, or moved to other locations. The Mount, in earlier days, was not just a school; it had been a home. Today, the "homey" touches have given way to office equipment, bulletin boards, and institutional all-white walls.

Sadly, important objects and symbols of Mount culture and heritage have been discarded or neglected. The Mount has two bell towers and two bells. Both bell towers are empty. One bell, *Aloysius* (see Figure 36), is in a basement storeroom its clapper removed; the second bell still hangs in the stairwell between the second and third floors of the Main Building; its bell rope has been removed and its clapper securely wrapped in



*Figure 35: Madonna Parlor, c. 1960s.*

leather and twine. Two objects once central to daily life at the school are now silent. Few people would even know why the bells were once important—why, when, and by whom they were rung. Ironically, the Main Building’s central bell tower is used as a primary institutional logo, and the Tower of Ivory selected by Shields for the college seal is still being used today (see Figure 8). Boje (2008) includes *logo* as one of his six narrative elements of a *strategy narrative*. Though the Mount continues to use logos that connect it to its history and culture, those symbols seem to have lost some of their impact and are now more decorative than meaningful.

Five years ago, maintenance personnel were asked to clean out a storage area on the third floor of the Main Building, the tank room. The tank room, immediately below



*Figure 36: "Aloysius."*

the building's central tower, was so named because of the large, iron vat that in the early days had collected rain water for use in the building. Beneath a pile of lumber and other assorted junk, maintenance workers discovered a long-forgotten stained glass window of some unknown female saint (see Figure 37). As head of the visual arts program, I was asked if I wanted the damaged window for use in my art classes.

Though the window had been extensively damaged from years of neglect, I realized that it was not just trash to be recycled into student art projects. After doing extensive research, I learned that the window had once been installed on the first floor of St. Gertrude Hall, a student dormitory. In the early 1960s, when a new student



*Figure 37: St. Gertrude window.*

residence, Ihmsen Hall, was built, the stained glass window in St. Gert's had been replaced by a door to allow for easier access to the new dorm.

Additional archival research revealed that the window depicted St. Gertrude, and that it had been donated shortly after the building was erected in 1904 by the wealthy Pittsburgh family of an academy alumna in memory of her deceased father. St. Gertrude had been a well-educated thirteenth century abbess. The window depicts her holding a crozier, a staff with a crook, symbolizing her office.

An academy for girls co-founded by Mother Gertrude Cosgrave, who had taken the name of a powerful female saint, once honored both the saint and the school's foundress with a special window. A century later, the window and its story await restoration. The cost of that restoration and reinstallation would be about \$10,000, a sum that administration is unwilling to commit to the project.

### Scene 3

*"I remember..."*

#### *Their Story*

Performers recount an assortment of stories told by the Sisters and alumnae. Included in this scene are stories of community life, hospitality, generosity, service, and devotion of the Sisters to the students in their charge.

#### *Back Story*

In 1989, the junior college celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. Knowing that Sr. Silverius was ill and didn't have long to live, she was asked to recount the story of the junior college founding one final time. This time, she and her story were preserved on videotape. A true storyteller to the end, Sr. Silverius told the story without a script, filling in details that one would think she would have forgotten in half a century. The film was titled "What Tribute Can We Offer: Mount Aloysius Junior College, The Early Years."

At the same time, seven alumni were interviewed and videotaped. The finished product, "Mount Aloysius Junior College Alumni Speak," preserves their stories. Sr. Christian Koontz's story that introduces Act III, Scene 3 is the longest of the alumni stories and, perhaps, the one that best captures the personality of Sr. Silverius and the culture of genuine concern that was the hallmark of Mount Aloysius Junior College in the



early years. Sr. Christian Koontz, had Sr. Silverius not intervened, would have dropped out of school, returned to work at the factory, and would likely never have completed her education. Instead, she completed the program at Mount Aloysius and went on to earn a doctoral degree.

The second story in Scene III was taken from a 1993 video recording, “A Comfortable Cup of Tea with Kitty McAuley.” Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Paul Kessler moderated a panel of three Sisters: Sr. Colman Krise, Sr. M. Anne McCue, and Sr. Andre Dembowski. According to his administrative assistant, Bonnie Sheridan, Dr. Kessler “was concerned for the older nuns on campus” and interested in their stories. “At one point, Sr. Silverius (Silver) had an office next to ours and, she and Dr. K. enjoyed long talks.” Sheridan claims that Sr. Silverius was reluctant to record the story of the Mount’s early years until Dr. Kessler told her that if she would record her story on tape that he would have Sheridan type up the manuscript. Sheridan wrote, “I had the pleasure...of transcribing her tape which I did at home in the evenings. I would send her the hard copy, and she would read [it] and make changes, and send it back so that I could correct the disc and send her another hard copy....In the same way, he also had her do a biography of Sr. Mary de Sales Farley.”

The story of Holy Family School in Latrobe, PA, a fond remembrance from his days there as a boy, was recounted by Dr. Kessler. Dr. Kessler remained passionate about the Sisters of Mercy and their mission till the end. Sheridan informed me that, “At the time of his death (February 2005), Dr. Kessler was President of Mercy College of Northwest Ohio in Toledo.”

Other narratives that conclude the scene were taken from my interviews with Sr. Michelle Brophy, Sr. Benedict Joseph Watters, and Sr. Miriam Rita Biter. The scene

ends with alumnus, Marty Sebetich, recalling words from the homily given at Mass the day he graduated from Mount Aloysius.

### *My Story*

One of the challenges I confronted while doing this study was deciding what data to use and what to exclude from my final analysis. Not long after I began gathering data for this study, I realized that I was finding many wonderful stories and narrative fragments that related to this inquiry in little more than a marginal way. Yet, virtually every scrap of archival data, every interview, every photograph was interesting, at least to this researcher, and could, with a bit of effort, find a place in the larger story I was telling.

But like my predecessors—the Sisters who had recorded their narrative fragments and stories—I had to be selective. Ultimately, the stories preserved here are the ones that I liked, the ones I believed to be germane to this inquiry and the ones that, if not entirely truthful, I sensed had a core of fidelity. I wanted to preserve stories that in some way had moved me by their humanity, that made me laugh or cry as they had their original tellers, that made me reflect on what it means to be a leader or a visionary or just an ordinary person, that made me wish I had lived through most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, like Sr. Camille Marie, so I could have met these amazing women.

Scene 4

*Amen.*

### *Their Story*

In the final scene, the three principal performers are eulogized after their passing. The play ends as it started, with a litany of names of living Sisters who are themselves among the remembered. These are the Sisters who continue to remember those who came before them and who continue to tell the stories. These are the living storytellers.

### *Back Story*

According to one obituary, “Sister Mary de Sales, RSM, died at noon March 15, 1972.” What the obituary doesn’t tell us is that she died wearing borrowed socks while being attended by her dear friend of many decades, Sr. Camille Marie. When asked about her memories of Farley, one of the first things that one of my interviewees exclaimed was, “She died wearing my socks!” At first, the detail seemed irrelevant. But she went on to explain that in her final days, Farley complained about her cold feet and, not having socks heavy enough to warm them, Sr. Camille Marie sought out a younger Sister likely to wear less traditional hosiery and borrowed a pair of heavy socks for her friend to wear. After Farley died, the socks were laundered and returned to the Sister who had loaned them. “I knew her as an ailing woman,” noted my interviewee. “I knew her as a retired Sister...I just know that she had a great friendship and that that friendship [with Sr. Camille Marie] sustained her and her storytelling and sustained her to live.”

Many sources indicate that Farley was not as physically capable as her collaborator, Shields. In 1955, Sr. M. Celestine, the Mother Provincial, wrote to Father Ted Farley, Farley’s brother, attempting to explain why it had been necessary to remove his sister from active duty as Dean. Farley had become increasingly dependent on sedatives and was no longer able to function effectively. Sr. M. Celestine wrote:

For some reason or other, her past two years as Dean caused her to lose control of the situation to such an extent that she did not even know the names of the girls in the college....She would go off duty in the morning at eleven o’clock and sleep until eleven o’clock the next morning, etc. I knew that she must have been taking something to make her sleep, but I do not think it was any dangerous narcotic; just sedatives with the dosage increased each time. When Sister Camille Marie, her

friend, reproached me for taking her off duty, and for the attitude that the sisters at Mount Aloysius had toward her, I told her what I thought Sister's trouble was and wanted her help. Sister in her simplicity, while at Atlantic City, told Sister de Sales, and as a result she has completely destroyed the work that was done during the spring.

Sr. M. Celestine's letter suggests that some of the rancor toward Farley that had preceded the founding of the junior college persisted more than ten years later. Had that internal community conflict led to her drug addiction? Or had some physical ailment caused her to begin taking medications to which she had become addicted? Was the problem one that arose after she became Dean in 1939, or was it a recurring problem with which she struggled throughout her life? One may never know.

What I do know is that I opted not to include this information in my play because that part of Farley's life has not become part of the official "story" of the institution. Subjects I interviewed, who likely knew more about the situation than they were willing to share, generally attributed Sr. de Sales' health problems to the strain of her job. Sr. Camille Marie, in a short biographical sketch about her old friend, suggested that Farley had suffered a mental breakdown due in part to her "...not being allowed to act independently [as Dean of the junior college] while her Mother was becoming more and more demanding of her time." Apparently, she had a brief recovery, because Sr. Camille Marie noted that her "health broke for a second time," which led to Farley's hospitalization.

Though officially serving as Dean, Farley actually functioned as the unofficial president of the junior college from 1939 to 1955. The superior of the house was the ex

officio president of the junior college, but it is unclear to what extent she involved herself in the day-to-day operations of the school.

By 1960, Farley was well enough to return to full-time duty and officially served as president from 1961 to 1966. Sr. Camille Marie wrote that Farley's appointment as president of the junior college came "...much to the astonishment of the senior Sisters" (d'Invilliers, 1973, Appendix C). Were they astonished that she'd managed a full recovery, or were they astonished that she'd been given a second chance? Eventually, arthritis, high blood pressure, and failing eyesight forced Farley into retirement.

Though not as prolific a writer as Shields, Farley, as president of the junior college, penned a few sage words of advice for Mount Aloysius graduates in the 1962 yearbook. About leadership, Farley observed, "Everyone recognizes the fact that good leaders are needed, but very few will make the sacrifices and the effort that such leadership calls for. It requires more work, more self-denial, more selflessness than the average person is willing to give." Was she thinking about herself, about her own failed health, and about what she had sacrificed in founding and leading the junior college for more than a quarter century? Was she thinking of the sacrifices made by Shields who, despite her intelligence and talents, was never allowed to serve in any capacity beyond that of registrar?

What one does know is that, even in her final years, Farley was looking toward the future, to a time that she would never live to see. "What you and millions of others like you do—or neglect to do—in the next ten years or the next forty years leading into the twenty-first century, will undoubtedly decide whether the times ahead are shaped towards the peace on earth that God wishes men to enjoy, or toward godless totalitarianism." As a visionary, Farley continued to look forward—to imagine a future that would require

“strong, influential Christian leaders.” How could she not be thinking about her own life when she added, “Life can be a glorious adventure for you if, on your own initiative...you decide to be a participant, not a mere spectator, and that you grasp every golden opportunity of every day” (Mount Aloysius Junior College yearbook, 1962). Indeed, Farley appears to have done exactly that throughout her own life, especially in 1939 when bold action was needed to save her institution. Whatever else one might say about her, she was certainly not a mere spectator.

Mount students paid one final tribute to Farley by dedicating the 1964 yearbook to her. In their letter of dedication, the Class of 1964 wrote, “How proud we were to offer you our efforts for ‘Faith, Morals, and Culture’ and if ever we lost sight of our aims you never failed to be our friend and guide....We thank Him for your insistence upon self discipline....We thank Him for...your faith in our dreams.” To the end, Farley valued dreams, even if the dreams were those of a younger generation.

Though Shields would never serve the junior college she helped found in a capacity beyond that of registrar, she would go on to greater challenges beginning in 1965. A retreat she was forced to attend would ultimately change the path of her life. Inspired by the “special program” of “spiritual reconstruction” presented by the retreat master, Shields became aware that she needed to refocus her life. She wrote in her autobiography, “I knew that a radical change was vital in my life....I had to join the Movement for a Better World. This meant I had to volunteer to enter the lists of those who taught this age old doctrine of love” (1988a, pp. 21-22). Shields explained that as a Sister of Mercy one was appointed to duties; one did not volunteer for tasks, especially tasks outside the community. In order to join the Movement for a Better World, Shields first had to request permission to do so from the Mother Provincial. “Now volunteering

to do this was a step of daring...I felt this call was almost as demanding as had been my call years earlier to become a Sister of Mercy” (1988a, p. 22).

Ultimately, permission was granted and Shields would spend six months at the Movement for a Better World office in Rome followed by four and a half years serving as retreat director at their office in Washington, DC. For the first time in her professional career, Shields felt she was being allowed to make full use of her energy, intellect, and passion. She was fifty-eight years old. “The margins of my life were being pushed back constantly. They went upward and outward to heights and breadths I did not know existed” (Shields, 1988a, p. 23). Now, it would seem, Shields could not be stopped. She would go on to become the Assistant Provincial, the Provincial Administrator, and Executive Director of the Federation of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas from 1973 to 1981.

Her final years would be spent at her beloved Mount Aloysius bringing order to decades of accumulated newspaper clippings, photographs, and college records. She would compose for posterity her own autobiography and the biographies of Sisters who had made significant contributions to the Mount Aloysius community. From 1981 to 1988, Shields was the Mount Aloysius Junior College archivist.

Sr. Mary Denny eulogized her by recalling the valuable contribution that Shields had made through her writings. Undoubtedly, Shields was articulate, insightful, and prolific. Quoting extensively in the eulogy from Shields’ writings, Sr. Mary Denny (1989) noted, “Many of her writings stand the test of time well and remain remarkably current and encouraging even in the present.” In an undated document entitled “Reflection for Foundation Day,” Shields, in summing up her philosophy of life, wrote what could have been her own epitaph.

To persevere until the end of my life without knowledge of what it will bring...this is a glorious cry from the human heart. It is the cry of a champion. We have flung that cry down through the caverns of our unknown future years where it gains in volume and power as time passes. Let us follow after the immortal beauty of it. It is a love song not meant for this world alone.

Born in 1886, six years before Farley and 19 years before Shields, Sr. Camille Marie outlived both women. When she was interviewed shortly before her one hundredth birthday, Sr. Camille Marie observed with her customary humor, “Yes, the Statue of Liberty and I are both celebrating our 100<sup>th</sup> birthdays” (*The Aloysian*, 1986). Ten years earlier, as a 90 year old resident of the McAuley Hall retirement community at Cresson, Sr. Camille Marie wrote a personal note of encouragement to Sr. Jane Frances Kennedy, the Provincial, after she’d visited the retired Cresson Sisters. The note says much about Sr. Camille Marie’s spirit and captures her profound insight into post-Vatican II religious life.

I have come to believe that “Religious Life” as we have known it has served its purpose, and is, now, coming to an end—but something better will emerge from the “ashes”—....This must surely come about....I came across two sentences in one of our spiritual books that I think are appropriate for us who are struggling in the darkness. It reads, “Lord, give us the strength to love and the joy to live.”

Sr. Camille Marie was allowed to remain in Cresson until after her one hundredth birthday. Shortly thereafter, she was transferred to Mercy Center, the retirement community in Dallas where she would live out her remaining six years. A wit to the very end, Sr. Camille Marie could find humor even in her own advanced age. “If I don’t go soon,” she quipped, “my parents won’t know me” (*The Aloysian*, 1986).



## *My Story*

The last line of the play is a direct quote from one of my first interviewees. I had intended to keep interviews under an hour so as not to exhaust my subjects. But when interviewing Sr. Maria Josephine I lost track of time, and suddenly I realized that we had been talking for two hours. That was easy to do since Sr. Maria Josephine holds a special place in my life; she is the Sister whose job I filled when she retired after teaching at the Mount for more than 50 years. Whenever we get together, she and I seem to have much to talk about.

Fearing that the interview had gone on far too long, I apologized to Sister for having taken up so much of her time. Her gracious response was, “It’s good remembering.” Though no other interviewee put it so succinctly, I found that my subjects seemed to enjoy talking about their past.

Shortly after I had completed Chapter 4, one of my interviewees, Sr. Michelle Brophy, died. I had included her among the living storytellers listed at the end of the final scene of Act III. Now that she was deceased, I considered moving her name to the opening scene of the play, to the “Litany of the Forebears.” I quickly dismissed the idea.

Living or dead, she, like the other Mount Aloysius storytellers, continues to live and speak through the narratives she left behind. Her stories are part of the collective memory of the community of which, I too, am a member. Her stories are now as much mine as they were hers. Her memories have become my memories. Her stories have become my stories. As long as I remember and recount her stories, she lives.

Originally, I had intended to end the play with Sr. Maria Josephine’s “It is good remembering.” Then I came across Shields’ parting shot, an addendum to her recorded tour of the Mount campus. In it, she spoke directly to her fellow Sisters, inviting them to

continue her efforts at preserving the story that she had begun to write. She acknowledged making errors in her account and having left out “many things.” Shields, the consummate storyteller, called on her colleagues to join her in the communal act of storytelling. How could I not give her the final word?

## CHAPTER 6

### DENOUEMENT: LESSONS LEARNED

#### AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

##### Introduction

In Chapter 4, narrative fragments and stories told by the Loretto-Cresson Sisters of Mercy before, during and after Farley and Shields transitioned their academy into a junior college were reconfigured into an original three-act play preserving, as much as possible, the “voices” of the original storytellers. Narrative fragments and stories in the play’s three acts were thematically gathered according to one of the Mount’s mottos: “Fides, Mores, Cultura.” Seidman-style profiles (1998) of the play’s three principal characters, Farley, Shields, and Sr. Camille Marie, were integrated into the staged reading’s plot line. A play within the play based on correspondence (1929-1939) surrounding the community’s massive debt incurred when the Sisters built a new chapel/convent (1923) delineates the drama’s major conflict.

Based on methodology derived from the work of Prown (1982) and Whalen (2009), Chapter 5 offered a three-tiered analysis of the data presented in Chapter 4. The first mode of analysis (Their Story) was purely descriptive; the second mode (Back Story) made use of research (interviews, archival materials, socio-cultural background data) to help bring context to the material being analyzed; the third mode (My Story) acknowledged the researcher’s subjective connectivity to and interpretation of the data.

##### Boje’s Six Elements of Strategy Narrative

Boje’s (2008) insights into the dynamics of organizational storytelling, his distinctive interpretation of how *narratives* and *stories* differ, his definition of storytelling organizations that posits the replacement of individual memories with institutional

collective memory, and his six elements for creating strategy narratives became the filters for analyzing the data collected for this study. For Boje (2008), a storytelling organization is one in which its members make sense of their institutional experiences by performing (two or more persons) their interpretation of communal events. Every member's performance has validity. Eventually, members' individual recollections and performances are morphed into a collective institutional memory. Boje believes a *narrative* is a complete entity with a beginning, middle, and end; a *story*, on the other hand, is an ongoing and ever-changing entity. Thus, like my Chapter 4 play, a story may contain multiple narratives or narrative fragments. The narratives collected into that larger story (the play) could be retold in countless other stories and in other formats.

Boje's (2008) six elements of strategy narrative (logo, motto, plot, mission, vision, and founding narrative) proved useful for sorting and analyzing data. Mount logos (e.g., the tower, the Mercy shield, the college seal) and mottos (e.g., "With our light, we serve") continued to be used over time and retained, for the most part, their meanings. Catherine McAuley's vision was articulated into a mission in the constitution she drafted for her new religious order of women. Since 1831, that vision and mission, with minor additions, have remained constant and strong. Farley, a visionary in her own right, articulated a new mission for her institution. The Loretto-Cresson Sisters can point to multiple founding narratives, including, among others: those about the founding of their order, those about their order's expansion into the United States, those about the establishment of a new motherhouse in Loretto in 1879, those about the founding of numerous Mercy-sponsored hospitals and schools, and those about the founding of Mount Aloysius Junior College. The plot of the narrative which is the subject of this study is one that presents the primary conflict (the chapel debt) and traces the series of

interconnected events that led up to a climactic organizational transition in 1939 (founding of the junior college) and its aftermath.

### Whalen's Analytical Methodology

Whalen's (2009) three-tiered analytical methodology is one with which this researcher is very familiar. As a professor of art, I teach my students how to approach art by describing in a strictly objective manner what it is that they are viewing, by researching the works in order to learn more about their socio-cultural context, and by subjectively speculating about an artist's intentions. Whalen's methodology seemed an excellent way to achieve the level of thick analytical description I desired by allowing for the inclusion of significant data that augmented material used in Chapter 4 and subjective researcher insights and speculation.

### Lessons Learned

Like a person's life, historical case studies meander, diverge, circle back on themselves, and eventually find their way to endings far removed from what one might have imagined at the onset. "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be" does not really apply to life or to this study. Few things in life, perhaps none, truly remain constant over time. My initial research questions are far removed from those I finally proposed. What started out as a study seeking to understand the leadership qualities of one woman rapidly shifted toward a study of how two women worked together to transition their institution at a time of critical change. Preliminary research and extensive reading as I crafted Chapter 2, the "Review of Literature," prompted me to take another tack toward organizational storytelling resulting in a study that has turned out to be, at least for this researcher, far more rewarding and enlightening than what would likely have emerged from my original proposal.

### *Research Question 1*

- Was Mount Aloysius Academy, later Mount Aloysius Junior College, a storytelling organization? If so, in what way(s) was it a storytelling organization?

Without a doubt, Mount Aloysius Academy/Junior College was a storytelling organization. Boje's (2008, p. 262) definition of storytelling organization ("collective storytelling systemicity in which the performance of stories is a key part of members' sense-making and a means to allow them to supplement individual memories with institutional memory") became this study's grounding point. The Loretto-Cresson Sisters told stories and preserved narrative fragments in multiple ways: scrapbooks, theatrical performances, objects of material culture, written accounts, and oral transmission.

Though it would be gross exaggeration to state that every member of the Loretto-Cresson community was an accomplished storyteller, data suggest that many Sisters over time participated in the process of sustaining community identity and preserving cultural heritage through the act of storytelling. Storyteller superstars like Sr. Silverius Shields, Sr. Camille Marie d'Invilliers, and Sr. Benedict Joseph Watters are rare. However, even community members less talented at spinning good yarns participated in the act of supplementing individual memories with institutional memory. Examples abound: the 1931 "Mercy Pageant," the 1948 "Our Nuns," the 1956 "Mercy Makes a Match," the 1993 "A Comfortable Cup of Tea with Kitty McAuley," and the 2009 "Storyfest."

Shields' 1976 tape recorded and transcribed tour of the Main Building, chapel, and Alumnae Hall is replete with details about the Mount's architecture, college seal, mottos, furnishings, art work, and stained glass windows all interwoven with narrative anecdotes about the people who had lived in and with those objects, had cared for them

and treasured them. Even today, visitors to the President's office, the former Aloysian Parlor, are told the story of Sr. Josephine Ihmsen's floral painting and how her talent saved commencement day in 1897.

Autobiographies, biographies, and memoirs written by the Sisters are preserved in the Mount Aloysius College archive and the regional archive of the Sisters of Mercy in Dallas, Pennsylvania. Also, thousands of photographs, letters, annals, and memorabilia are preserved there each with its own story to tell. And, perhaps more significantly, those stories are preserved and transmitted via an oral tradition that is institutionally encouraged. Through the act of storytelling, incoming students are introduced to Mount culture, values, and heritage in Cultural Literacy Seminar, and The Office for Mission Integration assures that all members of the Mount community remain rooted in the institution's founding vision.

### *Research Question 2*

- What types of organizational narratives and stories would have been heard and told by the Religious Sisters of Mercy at Cresson prior to the 1939 transition?

Based on archival data, especially the scrapbooks, theatrical events programs, and memoirs, the pre-1939 organizational narratives and stories tended to be about Mercy history, community culture, and religious faith. The Sisters would have known the stories surrounding their order's founding, facts about the life of their foundress, Catherine McAuley, stories about the establishment of new Mercy foundations, including their own, in the United States, and stories about important persons and events associated with the Loretto-Cresson community. Many of these stories would have been transmitted orally.

In addition, objects of material culture that surrounded them would have imparted their own stories: the chapel's narrative stained glass windows and Stations of the Cross, the religious paintings, statues and artifacts, and the precious (antique furniture and Oriental rugs) as well as the more mundane (the bells and musical instruments) objects of daily life.

### *Research Question 3*

- Did Farley and Shields use narratives and stories to lead organizational change as they transformed Mount Aloysius Academy into a junior college in 1939? If so, what were those stories? How and why did they use them?

Much evidence suggests that Shields was an accomplished and consummate storyteller. She was a prolific writer and a dynamic orator. However, the bulk of her extant writings were produced after she left her long-held post as registrar at Mount Aloysius Junior College in 1965. Shields imagined that so little had been written about Mothers Ihmsen and Cosgrave because the Sisters had been too busy "doing" and had had no time for writing. I believe the same was true of Shields. From 1939 to 1965, she was busy "doing" all that had to be done to found and grow a new junior college. Prior to 1939, Shields had been a junior Sister teaching at local elementary parochial schools for five years. As a young teacher, she would have had little time for reflection and writing.

Consequently, I was not able to ascertain definitively that Shields had used narrative or storytelling to lead organizational change in 1939. I do know that, many years after the fact, Shields was using stories about that time period to preserve organizational heritage and influence institutional culture. That was evident from her writings and video/audio recorded accounts produced during her final "retirement" occupation as Mount archivist.



Unlike Shields, Farley was not a prolific writer. Other than Shields' significant biographical sketch, other narrative biographical fragments preserved in the memoirs of Sr. Camille Marie, and official period correspondence, little is known or remembered about Farley and how she acted during those transitional years. Besides their personal post-1945 recollections of Farley, interviewees provided me with little other than what had been recorded in Shields' biography.

None of my interviewees were able to provide me with specific examples of Shields or Farley using narratives or stories to lead organizational change. Most of them had not been there in 1939, and their recollections were generally about events post-1945. Nor was I able to link any archival information to Farley and Shields' use of narrative and storytelling to lead change.

Shields claimed that Farley "prayed her way through the thicket" (Kennedy, 1998) during those transitional years. And she added "that I learned to pray too in those days" (Kennedy, 1998), and that the Sisters often joined Farley in prayer. Aside from their hard work, Farley, Shields, and the community of Cresson Sisters seem to have accomplished organizational change through prayer and faith. By 1939, any stories that Farley and Shields might have told would already have been part of the community's collective memory as evidenced by the "Mercy Pageant" of 1931. In those transitional years, Farley and Shields were busy "doing," living the stories that would be told in the future.

#### *Research Question 4*

- Which narratives and stories about that transitional period continued to be told in the years following the transition and have persisted into the present thus becoming part of the managerial collective memory of the institution?

As identified in Chapters 4 and 5, narratives and stories about the transitional period can be classified according to several themes, including stories about: 1) individual and communal ingenuity/cleverness, 2) quick action at a time of need/daring, 3) goals attained due to communal hard work, 4) the importance of making a good appearance, 5) hospitality, 6) the importance of prayer/faith, 7) Mercy heritage, 8) justice, and 9) the central role of the visual and performing arts to the culture of the institution. Examples of each can be found in Chapters 4 and 5, however, two stories continue to be retold as *founding narratives* (Boje, 2008): the story about Shields' realization that the collective worth of the Sisters could be used as their \$100,000 endowment, and the story about how, through the combined efforts of the Sisters, they had been able to get state and regional accreditation within four years. Those two narratives encompass several of the themes listed above and spin off other narratives that encapsulate some of the other themes as well.

### Summary of Findings

Members of the Mount Aloysius Academy/Junior College community worked, prayed, and studied at an institution that Boje (2008) would describe as a storytelling organization. The two primary subjects of this study, Farley and Shields, may or may not have used narratives and stories to lead change in their organization in 1939. However, the Loretto-Cresson Sisters certainly used stories about their Mercy heritage and religious beliefs before, during and after the 1939 transition to sustain communal identity and to spur courageous moves during periods of community crisis.

The Loretto-Cresson Sisters of Mercy could find comfort and strength in multiple founding narratives and a narrowly-focused mission formulated from the perceptive vision of Sr. M. de Sales Farley. The Sisters, as they had done in the past, succinctly

articulated that mission via ever-visible logos and mottos. Having in many instances supplanted individual memories with communal memory, the Sisters continued, over time, to preserve their communal identity and sustain their cultural heritage by adding to the plotline of their organizational story.

### Recommendations for Future Study

This study, like many others, ended up posing more questions than it answered thereby providing innumerable avenues for future research. Areas for future study that most intrigue this researcher fall into three categories: 1) leadership dynamics especially within closed institutions, 2) organizational storytelling, and 3) qualitative research analysis and reporting methodologies.

As previously noted, my initial inclination was to study how one purportedly visionary woman had led her institution through a difficult time of organizational transition. That focus on a solo leader soon shifted to one examining the symbiotic relationship between two women who actually managed the transition. During the course of this study, data emerged suggesting that the two subjects of this study, Farley and Shields, had operated in much the same manner as had two of their illustrious predecessors, the organization's co-foundresses, Ihmsen and Cosgrave. That led me to speculate about how a leadership duo might be different from solo leaders or leadership teams comprised of three or more individuals. Were Farley and Shields, like Ihmsen and Cosgrave, successful because they shared leadership responsibilities with only one, trusted collaborator whose skill set completed what they were lacking? Could Farley have succeeded without Shields or vice versa? Would the input of a third collaborator, perhaps Sr. Camille Marie, have improved or impaired the transitional process?

Also, a religious order (or any faith-based organization) is essentially a “closed” institution. One has to undergo an extensive period of initiation in order to claim membership and, once a member, allegiance to the group is considered mandatory. Closed institutions, like religious orders, tend to have their own rules, their own peculiar history and culture, and their own way of seeing and interacting with the world around them. Traditionally, members of these institutions lived and labored together within the close confines of their communities, sometimes for decades. Leaders of other organizations get to go home to family and a life away from the workplace. That was not the case for the Loretto-Cresson Sisters of Mercy or for many other religious orders of women and men, especially prior to the reforms of Vatican II. How did leadership roles differ in these closed institutions? Did the dynamics of their peculiar living/working situation impact how tasks were accomplished and who assumed or were assigned to positions of leadership?

This study focused on the organization’s superstars, women who had accomplished much during their lifetimes due to their intelligence, courage, and ambition. I began to wonder about the bit players, the followers, those dozens of Sisters who had contributed to the organizational transition and had never risen to the heights attained by their institution’s leaders. I was intrigued by their lives. What had they thought? How had they felt? If St. Therese of Lisieux was correct and “each small task of everyday life is part of the total harmony of the universe” (*St. Therese of Lisieux Writings*) then had not the countless small tasks of these women amounted to something? I wanted to know their stories.

This researcher utilized Boje’s (2008) six elements of strategy narrative as one means for sorting through the massive amount of data collected during the research phase

of this study. I was able to identify Boje's six elements as they applied to the Loretto-Cresson community and how those elements had changed or remained constant over time. I realized, for example, that the logos and mottos of the Loretto-Cresson community were not far different from those of the larger institution of which they were a part, the Catholic Church. How had 2,000 years of Catholic Church history and culture impacted the narratives of the Sisters of Mercy and of the Loretto-Cresson Sisters? What could one learn by applying Boje's six elements to an institution as old as the Catholic Church? And what might one discover by comparing the six elements of the Catholic Church versus those of a smaller unit, such as a religious order, within that larger institution?

As noted in Chapter 1, Boje (2008) believes that, "...very little is known about how Storytelling Organizations differ, or how they work, how they respond to their environment, how to change them, and how to survive in them. Even less is known about the insider's view of the Storytelling Organization..." (2008, p. 4). That comment alone suggests countless areas for further research. Boje's work supports the notion that an organization's narratives and stories are essentially polyphonic, many-voiced, with each voice contributing a unique perspective to the overall collective memory narrative of the institution. I found that to be true as I worked with data collected for this study.

I also started to consider the number of ways a researcher might arrange those narratives and narrative fragments into a larger whole and the veracity and/or fidelity of the resulting story. How much does the subjective perspective and actions of a researcher impact the finished product? How different might my final product be had I been researching the managerial skills of a 1930's executive at Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company who had to contend with a delinquent and stubborn bunch of women

in rural Pennsylvania? In this David and Goliath story, I was unabashedly rooting for the Sister with the slingshot. What if, instead, I had been enamored of the giant and had wanted to take his point of view?

I opted to present my data in the form of a three-act play and to use Whalen's three-tiered analytical methodology for interpreting objects of material culture because, as an artist, I believe that research data can be presented in unexpected, non-traditional ways. In fact, recent narrative inquiry and analysis scholarship suggested more creative, and perhaps more artistic, modes for presenting and analyzing research data.

Polkinghorne (1995) states that "the purpose of narrative analysis is to produce stories as the outcome of the research" (p. 15). Blumenfeld-Jones (1995) notes how the work of a narrative inquirer parallels that of an artist.

Narrative inquirers, no less than artists, need to attend to the enhancement of interest if their work is to "speak" of the world which they would portray....The chaos of sensory experience becomes organized into patterns which foreground some moments of an art piece and background others. Artists may attempt to guide the viewer to more narrow interpretations of the art. (p. 32)

Blumenfeld-Jones (1995) challenges narrative inquirers to move toward more creative methods of analysis while preserving scholastic integrity. "In scholarly writing there also exist possibilities for fidelity couched in aesthetic language" (p. 34). I wholeheartedly concur! Blumenfeld-Jones cites several examples of "...narrative inquiry which is not bound to standard social science language," after which he concludes, "I would hope that the door can be opened to aesthetic language and other forms of presentation as valued forms of narrative inquiry" (p. 34). My fervent hope is that future

researchers conducting studies similar to this one will look for alternative aesthetic modes of presentation and analysis that have heretofore not been attempted.

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## Appendix A: Informed Consent Letter

### (IUP Letterhead)

#### **DeSales Farley and Silverius Shields: How Two Religious Sisters of Mercy Led Change in their Storytelling Organization**

#### **Informed Consent Form**

You are invited to participate in this research study. The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision whether or not to participate. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask. You are eligible to participate because you knew either Sr. DeSales and/or Sr. Silverius in a context that is relevant to this study.

The purpose of this historical case study is to examine how the Religious Sisters of Mercy of Loretto-Cresson, and in particular the two primary change agents, Sr. DeSales Farley and Sr. Silverius Shields, used stories about their past and constructed stories about their imagined future to sustain identity and lead change as they transitioned Mount Aloysius Academy into a junior college in 1939.

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research. The interview will be scheduled at a time and location to be determined in advance to accommodate the convenience and comfort of the interviewee.

One would hope that you would find the experience of sharing the portion of your life history that intersects with that of Sr. DeSales and Sr. Silverius and your knowledge of Mercy and Mount Aloysius Academy/Junior College stories to be enjoyable. The information gained from this study may help us to better understand how storytelling functions in organizations especially during times of radical institutional change.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigator or IUP. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw at any time by notifying the Project Director or informing the interviewer. Upon your request to withdraw, all information pertaining to you will be destroyed. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence. Your responses will be considered only in combination with those from other participants unless you give specific permission to use your name in this study. The information obtained in the study may be published in educational journals or presented at educational meetings but your identity will be kept strictly confidential unless you have given your specific permission to use your name in the study.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement below and return in the stamped, self-addressed envelope to the researcher. The extra copy is for you to keep.

Project Director: Dr. Cathy Kaufman  
Rank/Position: Professor  
Department Affiliation: Administration and Leadership Studies  
Campus Address: 126 Davis Hall  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
Indiana, PA 15705  
Phone: 724/357-3928

Researcher: Donald Talbot  
Rank: Graduate student at Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
Home Address: 3404 Oneida Avenue,  
Altoona, PA 16602  
Phone: 814-886-6470 (w) or 207-576-3896 (c)

*This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724/357-7730).*

Appendix B: Voluntary Consent Form

**VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM:**

**I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a subject in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential unless permission to use my name in this study is given below and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.**

**Name (PLEASE PRINT)**

**Signature**

**Date**

**Phone number or location where you can be reached**

**Best days and times to reach you**

**VOLUNTARY CONSENT TO USE MY NAME IN THIS STUDY:**

**I have read and understand the information on the form and I *consent to the use of my name* in this study.**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I have read and understand the information on the form and I *do not* want my name used in this study.**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research study, have answered any questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Investigator's Signature**

## Appendix C: Interview Questions Protocol

1. Please tell me about yourself. In particular, tell me about your professional/personal connection to Farley and Shields and to the Religious Sisters of Mercy.
2. What is your connection to Mount Aloysius Junior College, i.e., when did you first come to the Mount, in what capacity, what was the length of your association, what position(s) did you hold, what years were you there?
3. Please describe what you know of the events that led up to starting the junior college and Farley and Shields' involvement in those events.
4. What stories were told about the time prior to the transition of the academy to a junior college?
5. What do you know of the transition process from academy to junior college and Farley and Shields' involvement in that process.
6. What stories were told about the transition period?
7. What do you recall of the events following the formation of the junior college and Farley and Shields' involvement in those events.
8. What stories about the transition period have you heard retold in the years following the transition?
9. What is the most memorable story you can tell me about Farley?
10. What is the most memorable story you can tell me about Shields?
11. What three words would you use to describe Farley?
12. What three words would you use to describe Shields?
13. Is there anything else you would like to add? Is there anything that I didn't ask that you believe I should know?



Appendix D: Research Questions-Interview Questions Matrix

Research Questions	Interview Questions
<p>1. Was Mount Aloysius Academy, later Mount Aloysius Junior College, a storytelling organization? If so, in what way(s) was it a storytelling organization?</p>	<p>1-10</p>
<p>2. What types of organizational narratives and stories would have been heard and told by the Religious Sisters of Mercy at Cresson prior to the 1939 transition?</p>	<p>1-3, 6-10</p>
<p>3. Did Farley and Shields use narratives and stories to lead organizational change as they transformed Mount Aloysius Academy into a junior college in 1939? If so, what were those stories? How and why did they use them?</p>	<p>3-10</p>
<p>4. Which narratives and stories about that transitional period continued to be told in the years following the transition and have persisted into the present thus becoming part of the managerial collective memory of the institution?</p>	<p>5-10</p>

## Appendix E: Focus Group Interview Questions Protocol

1. Tell us your name and when you joined the Religious Sisters of Mercy.
2. What do you think of when you hear the expression “organizational storytelling?”
3. Think back to your time living/working at Mount Aloysius Junior College in Cresson, and tell us about some of the memorable stories that were told by the Sisters there.
4. Specifically, what stories were told about the academy years prior to 1939?
5. What stories were told about the transition to a junior college in 1939?
6. What stories were told in the years following the transition?
7. What stories were told about Sr. DeSales?
8. What stories were told about Sr. Silverius?
9. Of all the stories that have been shared here today, which one(s) do you most enjoy retelling or hearing retold? Why?
10. What I am hearing is that these are the stories about...(the Mount, Farley, Shields) that you consider most memorable. (Researcher summarizes stories according to topic. After each topic the researcher asks...) Is this list complete? Are there any other stories that should be added to the list?

Appendix F: Photo Gallery: Sr. M. Silverius Shields



Eleanor Shields (far right) with Mother and siblings, c. 1910



Eleanor Shields (rear, right) with siblings, c. 1912



Eleanor Shields, 1919



Eleanor Shields, graduation photo, 1924



Sr. M. Silverius Shields (far left), c. mid-1930s



Sr. M. Silverius Shields, registrar, c. early 1960s



Sr. M. Silverius Shields in front of Ihmsen Hall fireplace, 1965



(l. to r.) Sr. Silverius, Sr. Carlos Maria, Sr. Benedict Joseph, Sr. Fides, n.d.





Sr. M. Silverius Shields, c. late-1970s



Sr. M. Silverius Shields, n.d.



Sr. M. Silverius Shields, c. 1980



"  
"  
"  
"

May 10, 1955  
St. Antonius

Dear Sister:

The sound of your voice is still ringing in my ears. It was a wonderful "topper" for a particularly wonderful day. Elation is usually short-lived. Thank God for that. We couldn't take a steady diet of the feeling that surges through one. It could be exhausting.

You might like a few of the details of the event. There were many surrounding elements that played upon the day's happenings. The morning was a glorious one---sunshine, Washington's heavenly blue sky, two masses, the prayers of one's Sisters and many other friends, the kindness of one's professors, and such things as are etched sharply on such a day.

I attended our usual community Mass here, had a sketchy breakfast, walked over to the campus, attended a second mass at the Shrine, and just as I stepped into one of the vestibules for the second Mass, Father Allen, a priest from Detroit who is a student in the department, came towards me. He had just finished his mass and said: "It's all in the bag, Sister. I fixed it with the Holy Ghost, Blessed Mother, and Saint Joseph. Don't worry, it's all an assured thing." At that moment I wasn't so sure. One should always calculate risks. The higher one climbs, the greater and more severe could be the descent, if one is toppled off his props. And at that particular moment, the possibility of failure along with the great incertitude of what the good doctors might ask, had me in its grip. However, Msgr. O'Connor's Mass followed. Then a few moments after that for freshening my mind on some last few points, and up to the Dean's office. (They didn't ask one of the things on which I had taken the short refresher!)

It would be difficult to tell you how that first question sounds when the major professor places it. As usual, glibness didn't desert me, but that was because all of you people had so stormed heaven that the light of the answers seemed to flash before my mind. It was like a great inrush with sufficient time to use each light provided. (What we could do with ourselves, if we picked up graces in the same way as I picked up lights yesterday morning. Sanctity would be something quite different from what it is!) There is no doubt about the fact of sensing the power that God puts at your disposal at such a moment. I have heard other Sisters say that----now I know. But all the study in the world did not prepare me directly for some of those questions; yet if there had not been much intensive study, the questions would not have been comprehensible. The answers required a leaning back on areas of knowledge, broad areas; it meant drawing conclusions from facts previously learned and applying those conclusions to a new situation. It could not have been done without prayer.

Some of the questions are factual questions. These are the kind that snap back and forth something like firecrackers. Then there are the other type which open out vistas. It is here that that sense of light hit me. The question seemed like a door being

opened; someone (only God) struck the first match, located the intellectual switch, turned it on, and there lay the facts in the order needed. The experience was a glorious one. It was stimulating. Without Divine Intervention it would not have been done.

An hour sped by----I never heard the carillon which strikes the quarter chimes. Suddenly, I discovered that Dr. Nuesse was checking his list to learn if the other professors were satisfied, or if they would like to ask other questions. No one had any desire to put any more. Then it came the Secretary's and the Dean's turns. They question only after the other professors have finished. Fifteen minutes more. During this period I opposed, politely and yet factually, the position which the secretary, Father McCoy, assumed. His question may have been placed to draw out that opposition, I do not know. We are told that the student is put in such a position as further test of ability to handle another "spot" situation. This may or may not be true. Be that as it may, from the corner of my eye I could see Dr. Spiegel looking quite satisfied with my replies and so held my ground. All others in the room were seculars; one was a Jew. And here am I, a daring candidate, opposing the only priest present. Why, I do not know----maybe that's the way Father wanted it. He's in the political science department----and is a Doctor of no small stature. Well, it must have been all right.

After being dismissed from the Board room, I went outside to await the verdict which came within a few minutes. What a pleasant thing to have one's teachers whom one respects offering congratulations. God has His Own way of putting a wonderful balm on a strained spirit.

We came home after another brief visit to the Shrine where Dr. M. John Bosco told me she would be waiting. The Sisters here at Lady of the Angels were lovely. They had been praying too during the time and so wanted to know the results as soon as they could hear them. The hour of the ordeal was really brief in the final analysis. I entered the room at nine o'clock, was out by ten-twenty and had my verdict a little before ten-twenty-five.

Well, the next big one is the particular judgment. May I be ready for it.

Take good care of that foot. I didn't get too much information about it over the phone. What did Dr. Goldman think when he saw you last? Aunt Violet was glad to hear that so much was being done for you.

By the way she's due to drop along here at 3:30 to take me up to the Franciscan Monastery with her. She has some business there and wanted me to accompany her. God knows what it will all bring. Poor old dear, she tries so hard to see people about buying those pictures. It is an almost impossible task and she's not really equal to it.

Your trip to A. City sounds "kippy." Use your past experience on sunburn and take care of your sweet sixteen complexion. Sun and you don't get along too well. That's what it is to be a lady and have a fine complexion. You should see my swarthy face---I've been studying in the little park. Father Allen's parting shot yesterday was---"Well, you sure look healthy." I reminded him that it was my business to maintain such a status.

Lovingly in J.C.---

*S. M. Silverius, R.S.M.*

Box 61, Brady Hall  
8th and Varnum, N.E.  
Washington 17, D.C.

*Sr M Silverius Shields*  
*rec'd her Doctorate*  
*at the C. U. Washington D.C.*

Sister Mary de Sales, R.S.M.  
Mercy Hospital  
Johnstown, Pa.

WASHINGTON, D.C.  
MAY 10 7 30 PM '55

BUILD YOUR FUTURE  
WISELY  
U.S. SAVINGS BONDS

Letter to Sr. M. de Sales Farley from Sr. M. Silverius Shields  
May 10, 1955



Appendix G: Photo Gallery: Sr. M. de Sales Farley



Gertrude Farley, 1894



(l. to r.) Gertrude, Mary Tack Farley, Ted, c. 1896



Gertrude Farley, c. 1908



Postulant Gertrude Farley, 1912



Sr. M. de Sales Farley and her brother, Theodore, at his ordination, 1927



American impressionist painter, Augustus Vincent Tack, Sr. M. de Sales Farley's maternal uncle

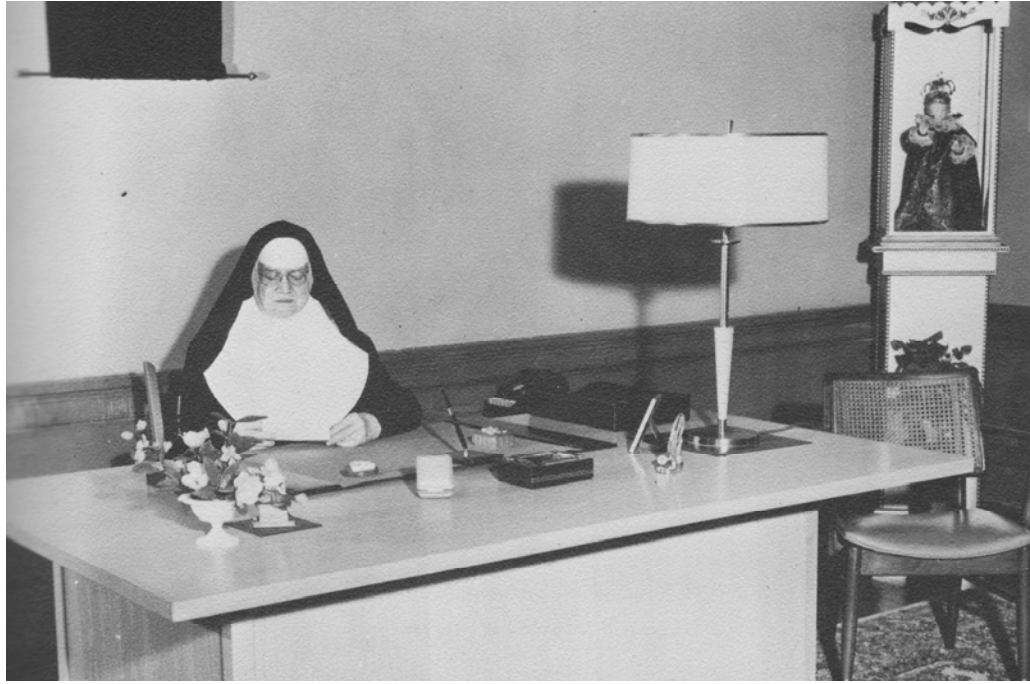


John Cardinal Farley, Sr. M. de Sales Farley's paternal uncle



Sr. M. de Sales Farley, Dean of Mount Aloysius College, c. late-1940s





Sr. M. de Sales Farley, President of Mount Aloysius Junior College, 1962



Sr. M. de Sales Farley (l) & Sr. Camille Marie d'Invilliers,  
Freshman tea, 1965



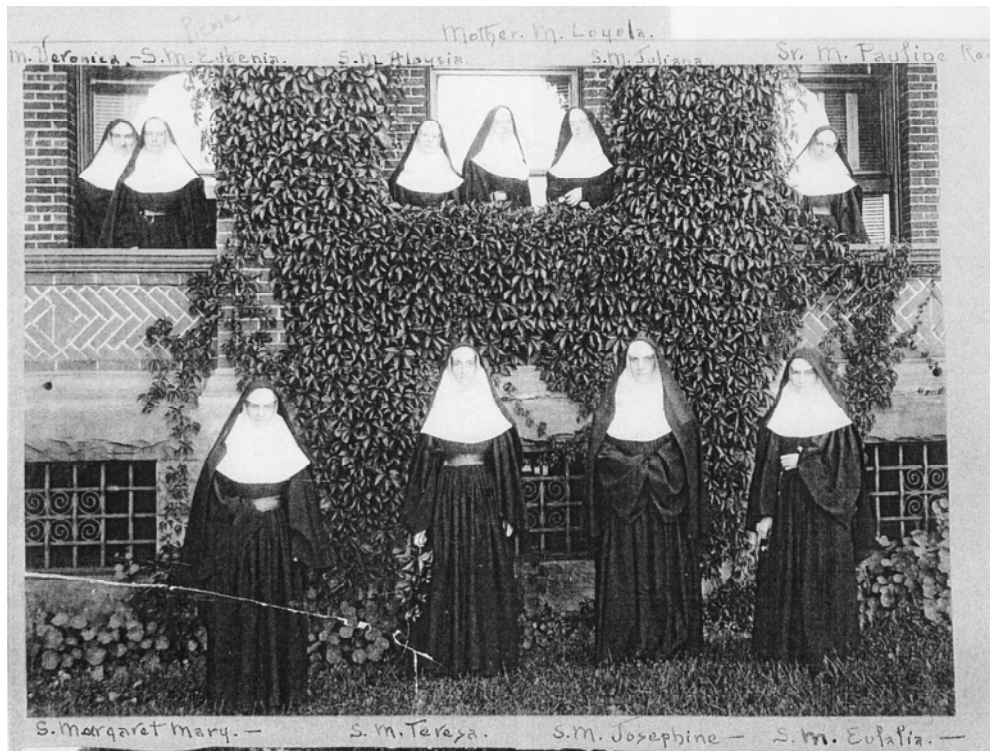


Sr. M. de Sales Farley, 1966

Appendix H: Photo Gallery: Mount Aloysius Academy and Junior College



Mother de Sales Ihmsen (center, 1), Golden Jubilee Banquet, July 1910



Sisters of Mercy of Loretto-Cresson, c. 1910



Sr. M. Josephine (Hildegarde) Ihmsen,  
niece of Mother de Sales, c. 1900



Religious assembled in the Mount Aloysius chapel to attend the Pontifical  
Mass of Thanksgiving, Centennial Celebration, 1948



Freshman tea at bottom of Golden Staircase, c. early 1950s



Lessons in etiquette, Aloysian Parlor, n.d.






Barn, Mount Aloysius Academy, n.d.



Sisters of Mercy, Cresson, 1958

CONGRATULATIONS  
FROM  
*His Holiness Pius XI*



CABLEGRAM			FOR POSTAGE STAMPS	NUMBER OF MESSAGE
PREFIX	WORDS	CODE	 For Use Anywhere	
CHARGE				
SENT AT <b>12.21P.M.</b>	TO	BY	SERVICE INSTRUCTIONS <i>Via Western Union</i> Nov. 18, 1931.	
<p>Send the following message</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <p>To APOSTOLIC DELEGATION, WASHINGTON, D. C.</p> </div> <p>ON THE OCCASION OF THE CENTENARY OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY HIS HOLINESS SENDS TO THE MOTHER GENERAL AND THE SISTERS OF MERCY OF THE UNION IN THE UNITED STATES HIS PATERNAL BLESSING AS PLEDGE OF HEAVENLY FAVORS FOR AN INCREASE IN FERVOR AND EFFICIENCY OF THE INSTITUTION FOUNDED BY MOTHER MCCAULEY.</p> <p>W54 57 CABLE CIAL SVAT CITTADELVATICANO.                      CARDINAL PACELLI.</p>				
NAME OF SENDER	PERMANENT ADDRESS		CABIN NO.	

Cablegram from Cardinal Pacelli (Pope Pius XII) to U. S. Apostolic Delegate and the Sisters of Mercy in the United States, 1931



Cryder's Point

Beechhurst, L. I. N. Y.

Flushing 3 - 5177

December 1, 1951

Dear Sister Mary de Sales,

Thank you ever so much for your kind letter about the concerts, and especially for your prayers. I am very sorry I had to miss the concerts, but of course it makes me happy to hear that they were so successful and so enjoyed.

Here are the words of the folk song you wanted to have for the Bishop:

Yuletide is here.  
Yuletide is here.  
Now the holly leaf is green  
Easter would come  
When Yuletide is done  
If Lent wouldn't fall between.

Thanks for sending the newspapers, and best regards,

Sincerely yours,

*Maria Augusta Trapp*

Sister Mary de Sales, Dean  
Mount Aloysius Junior College  
Cresson, Pennsylvania

Letter from Maria Trapp to Sr. M. de Sales Farley  
after the 1951 Trapp Family concert at Mount Aloysius Junior College