

Dear Friends,

We hope you all had a lovely Christmas and are staying safe in this New Year. We remember those who have been lost in the past year and pray for those who are ill. Please God, along with the news of the vaccine, these latest restrictions will not last too long and we can return to some form of normality!

The effect of this pandemic on education has been significant. Recently, students and teachers have been experiencing education in unprecedented ways, unable to attend classes in person and learning remotely. This parallels the university education of women in the late 19th Century when women could obtain degrees but were not able to physically attend university classes or tutorials. In response to this, M. Michael Corcoran established university classes for Loreto students which will be explored in this newsletter.

If there are any stories or aspects of IBVM history that you would like to see explored in future newsletters, please let us know. We would be delighted to research it for you!

All the best,
Kate, Kathleen and Áine

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M. MICHAEL CORCORAN AND THIRD LEVEL EDUCATION.

As well as improving the standard of education in their schools, M. Michael Corcoran and her fellow Loreto educators hoped to facilitate the Third Level Education of their pupils. By 1895, Trinity College Dublin, Queen's in Belfast and the newly established Royal University in Dublin were admitting women to degrees. However, they were not allowed to attend the lectures or tutorials in the University as the male students did. Similarly, they could sit university exams but they couldn't do so in the lecture theatres. M. Michael Corcoran believed that Loreto students could benefit from higher education so university classes were established in 1893. These classes were eventually centralised at 53 St Stephen's Green. Subjects included English, French, German, Modern Literature, History, Jurisprudence, Mental and Moral Science.

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Arrangement made in August 1894 for the
University Classes.

The University Classes are to be confined to the Convent in Stephen's Green where the services of professors can easily be secured at much lower terms than in houses at a distance from town.

This course has been determined on for the following reasons:

- 1st To prevent the nuns being overworked, of which there is danger, with our present limited number of nuns, since the work for the higher classes entails not only much heavy teaching but also a great deal of laborious preparation out of class.
- 2nd To secure a thorough working of the intermediate and elementary classes since these are always the largest and most important, and since it is in these classes that the solid foundation of future success are laid.
- 3rd To prevent the drain upon the resources of the Institute involved in keeping up, in every house where University classes would be undertaken, the staff of professors necessary to work such classes successfully.

Copy of 'Arrangement made in August 1894 for the University Classes'. The University classes are confined to Stephen's Green 'where the services of professors can easily be secured at much lower terms than in houses at a distance from the town.' Reasons given for this arrangement include the danger of the nuns being overworked, to 'secure a thorough working of the intermediate and elementary classes' and to prevent a drain on the resources of the Institute by providing these classes in every house. Pupils wishing to begin a university course may attend as boarders or day pupils (and board in any Loreto convent in Dublin). If a pupil insists on taking her university course in the convent where she currently boards, she must be instructed only by professors and must meet the costs of professional tuition herself.

The first Loreto graduates were given their degrees in 1895. Almost 10 percent of the 216 women who received degrees nationwide between 1890 and 1900 were from Loreto. Moreover, in 1908, 'it gained a greater number of honours and distinctions than was ever won by a Women's College under the Royal University.' (77SSG/24).



Loreto University Graduates 1900s
77SSG-COM-12-10



M. Eucharia Ryan
77SSG/COM/12/6

In 1910, M. Eucharia Ryan tried to have the college at St. Stephen's Green recognised as a Women's College which could award Arts & Science Degrees as a constituent college of the National University of Ireland.

While there was support from Bishops for this, it was noted that such a college should not be in the same building as a school for the Intermediate Examinations.

Thus, 77 St Stephen's Green was purchased.

77 ST STEPHEN'S GREEN



The house at 77 St Stephen's Green had been built in 1761 by the Earl of Glandore. Wealthy landowner, William Henry Magan of Clonear bought 77 in 1820s. His only son, John, died in 1860 and the house was inherited by his daughter Augusta Elizabeth. On the morning of her wedding, she was left by her fiancé. As a result, she lived as a recluse until her death 40 years later in 1905. By the time the house came into the possession of the Loreto sisters, in August 1911, the house had fallen into severe disrepair, having been abandoned. Apparently, the 'untasted wedding breakfast moulded in the shuttered reception room' and her 'yellowing wedding gown' had been left to the moths. It is said that this tale, heard during one of his visits to Dublin, was an inspiration to Charles Dickens. The room

was known as Miss Havisham's room and was used by the Dickens Society for readings.

In 1912, Loreto's application was refused as it had been determined that separate women's colleges could undermine the NUI colleges at Galway, Dublin and Cork. Instead, the building became Loreto Hall, a community house for sisters and a hostel for girls attending university. The stables and the upper rooms of the original building were refurbished as dormitories and other rooms were repurposed to provide a dining room, a library and a chapel. In 1962, the old stable dormitories were demolished and replaced by a three story building with student bedrooms on the upper two floors and a laundry room and common room on the lower floor. In 1983, the dormitories were renovated into classrooms to allow for the opening of a business college in 1984.

77SSG/COL/2/38

Letter from the Registrar
of the National University of Ireland.

Notes noting that the application for recognition of
Loreto College cannot be complied with.

