

2000-9

**Brother Gatian:
Nemesis in America**

by
Brother George Klawitter, C.S.C.

**Holy Cross History Association
Conference on the History of the
Congregations of Holy Cross
June 9-11, 2000**

Brother Gatian: Nemesis in America

by Brother George Klawitter, CSC

When the first seven Holy Cross religious set foot on American soil at New York City September 13, 1841, the little colony included two teenage novices, Brother Anselm (Pierre Caillot) aged sixteen and Brother Gatian (Urbain Monsimer) aged fifteen. Both boys had been selected by Basil Moreau for the trip from Le Mans because they were bright, energetic, and showed aptitude for language, valuable talents for successful missionaries in any century. Indeed, the two young men mastered English within a few years while the other five men struggled with it and one, Brother Vincent, despaired of ever learning it. Brother Gatian not only conquered the basics of English, but by 1849 he was writing letters in English with an elegance many native speakers never achieve.

Born on his grandparents' farm near Saulges, France, in 1826, Gatian entered Father Moreau's community in August, 1840, from Chéméré-le-roi, the town near which his parents had a farm. At Le Mans he came under the care of some of the oldest members of the Sainte-Croix group, and in America he prospered under the gentle tutelage of the novice master Brother Vincent Pieau and the strong direction of the Indiana superior Edward Sorin. From Vincent he developed his classroom talents which he later put to good use when he was sent by Sorin to do quality checks on the Brothers teaching in Brooklyn. From Sorin he honed a steely resistance that he ultimately turned against his superior with a nasty vengeance. For all of his intelligence, there ran through the young man a fierce pride and a strand of paranoia, both of which would eventually take him out of the community into bitter final years in California during the 1850's, years documented in his long and fascinating correspondence.

The first letter we have by Brother Gatian was written in February of 1846, a full four years after he arrived in America. The letter is postmarked from Notre Dame to Father Moreau in

France and is written entirely in French. It was not, of course, the first letter he had written to Moreau. This loquacious and talented young man of twenty years could hardly have kept his pen silent for a long period. His gift for interpreting the activities around him would have often boiled over into letters to his homeland. If he ever wrote to his parents we do not know. He may have, but none of those letters survive. The first letter to Moreau suggests that Gatian had been seeking previous counsel from his spiritual father in Le Mans. Although he is the youngest of the expatriates, he is not shy about his independence:

Father Superior's trip doesn't make me uneasy although there's no one here who can replace him and human prudence expects only disorder and ill fortune, because since only I myself of the entire council voted negative, one can piously believe it's the will of God. Father Superior, better than anybody, will be able to make you understand the urgent needs of the house, to come to an understanding with you on the interpretation of certain passages in the Constitutions and on the founding of establishments, and to explain the confusion which the contract with Monsignor de la Hailandiere often puts us in.¹

Gatian is almost boastful of the fact that he alone in the Minor Chapter voted against Sorin's trip to France, but he accepts the overwhelming majority vote as a sign from heaven that the trip is necessary. Or does he? There is a hint of cynicism in his phrasing: "one can piously believe it's the will of God." Since the French "on" can be variously translated as "one" or "they" or even passively as "it can be," there is plenty of room for reading into the phrase a nasty swipe at those who voted to sanction Sorin's trip abroad. How sad, at any rate, to see this young man already so out of tune with those around him. He must have sensed the group was generally behind Sorin's trip. Why would he persist in casting the only negative vote? He is a stubborn young man, almost prideful, unwilling to admit he is wrong. We can see him in the Minor Chapter meeting, the youngest member, speaking up in the discussion, voicing objections to the trip, hearing the others

defend the trip, and when the vote comes, rather than admit he is wrong, he bullheadedly votes the only "no."

Something else about Gatian surfaces in this letter quite disturbingly: he seems to be a stickler for the Constitutions, a kind of hard-line interpreter of the letter of the law. This blind adherence to words does not bode well for a pioneer in a wilderness where crises and interruptions can challenge the rigorous dynamism of spiritual laws fashioned in a gentler climate for cloistered men and patterned on the walled security of Benedictine monasticism. The Indiana frontier was a lively and engaging area, even in the relative seclusion of the Notre Dame paradise where farming concerns and active little boy-scholars tested the rigidity of prayer schedule and quiet time. Gatian pledged himself to an iron-clad Rule, and he never showed much tolerance for those who did not buckle under to its dictates. If he was hard on others, he also was naturally hard on himself, incapable of appreciating the spirit behind the letter of the law.

Gatian's rancor takes a particular spitefulness when he lists for Moreau Sorin's shortcomings:

Father Superior's great kindness (or his timidity or lack of vigilance) lets him be easily fooled in his moves and in his dealings with hypocrites and flatterers who get from him everything they want. For example, there's been little concern for three postulants or Brothers, never giving them the least public reproach, although their scandalous conduct merited expulsion, but instead of believing them guilty, he preferred to imagine that those who complained were mistaken. They're no longer in the house. One was since married without a priest at the door of the university. Another revealed Council matters from when he had been secretary. Thus jealousies and complaints are created. I have to add, however, that Father Superior is more on his guard this year.²

One gets the distinct impression that Gatian was itching to have given the three lax postulants a

piece of his own mind, but such interference would have been forbidden by the Rule: only the Brother in charge of postulants could correct young recruits. Gatian, however, undoubtedly made his mind known locally: we can hardly believe he would hold back from the superior or the postulant director the harsh insights he conveys to Moreau by letter. Of special interest here is Gatian's references to one postulant who left and then caused a local scandal by being married without benefit of church blessing somewhere on or near the Notre Dame property. It is difficult to know whether Gatian's "at the door of the university" is literal or metaphorical, and it may very well have been this marriage "at the door of the university" incident that would later inspire Gatian around 1850 to threaten a similar scandal when his own ties to the community would become very thinly strung. A curious segment in this part of the letter is the information that the secretary of the Minor Chapter had divulged council matters. Since Gatian was secretary of this chapter a good deal in these early years, we cannot help but wonder if Gatian is warning himself or patting himself on the back for his own sense of secrecy. Gatian does not name names here, and the anonymity of all the sinners may have been studied, indicating all the more that Gatian held no one to the Rule more than himself if indeed he were thinking of his own position as secretary of the chapter. He is a most unusual and troubled young man.

Unusual also in this letter is the way in which Gatian writes of himself in the third person. After listing Brother Vincent's many jobs, he notes:

Brother Gatian is director of studies, prefect of discipline, head of the accounting office, secretary of four weekly councils, and in the boarding-school, professor of the upper division course in which the students know as much as the teacher, supervisor of all recreations and of a dormitory, and professor of French to boot.

You can guess how the jobs are done.³

It seems as if Gatian is writing through Moreau to the Major Chapter in Le Mans at which gathering he probably hoped the letter would be read. The third person narrative would then seem

objective and not so self-serving as if it had been carried with the first person pronoun. The job list, of course, is overblown. Since the college had but a dozen students, the job of “director of studies” would have been negligible. “Prefect of discipline” would have meant dealing occasionally with a boy who stepped out of line and could not be handled by one of the other Brothers. Still, we cannot begrudge Gatian the insight that his talents were stretched. Pioneer Brothers, especially talented ones like Gatian, were expected to fill many shoes, and as a result the quality of their job performance was often less than satisfactory. Any rural high school teacher today can recognize the same situation: tight school budget, minimal staffing, great expectations. “Burn-out” is not uncommon among people pushed beyond their capacity. In nineteenth century Indiana, the pie was sweetened, however, by religious motivation, sometimes an impetus stronger than salary, and by the family-like support of the Brothers’ community: living together twenty-four a day, on and off their “jobs,” they afforded each other instant camaraderie and problem solutions, an esprit de corps that cannot be so present in most of today’s educational institutions where the end of the school day scatters the staff hither and yon.

That Gatian appreciates his Community is apparent in this same letter when he begs for reinforcements: had he despaired of Notre Dame’s potential, he would not have wasted his energy asking for more religious, not that Moreau had any to spare for a foundation that had already made great demands on his available personnel and finances. Gatian, moreover, wants young men: he specifically asks for “Brothers fifteen years old who can learn English to perfection and be other Anselms.”⁴ This is his only reference to Brother Anselm, his companion on the trip from France, lost sadly to the Ohio River in the summer before Gatian’s February letter to Moreau. It is good to know that Anselm was still on Gatian’s mind, even though the two had minimal time together during the previous four years: separated when Gatian moved north to Notre Dame in November, 1842, the two young men must have experienced great joy in those weeks during each summer when Anselm could rejoin his religious family at Notre Dame for the annual retreat. It is curious

that Gatian specifies men “fifteen years old,” because that was his age on emigration, not Anselm’s. Anselm was sixteen. Unconsciously Gatian is projecting himself into his wish list.

He was, of course, a brilliant young man, and he knew it. Anyone today who reads his letters can marvel at their style and grace, the ease of his language skills. By the time he was twenty, he wrote flawless English, with barely a trace of French idiom. Having mastered both the letter and the spirit of his American tongue, he had fulfilled Moreau’s every wish in sending Gatian and Anselm to America. Being as intelligent as he was, Gatian was very much in touch with his own short-comings. He appreciates the fact that his temperament is “somber and irritable,” and he tells Moreau that, coupled with his exhausting schedule, he is concerned that his duties “sometimes make me want to play the fool.” This is a phrase that Gatian uses from time to time in his writings, and it seems a code phrase for sexual urges. To “play the fool” probably meant sexual play of some kind, play that Gatian here tries to explain away as a stress reducer. It is a not so subtle attempt, perhaps, to blackmail Moreau into pressuring Sorin to relieve Gatian of some of the multiple duties Gatian had. Not that the young man disliked positions of authority. He craved them. But the multiplicity of jobs gave him an excuse for “playing the fool.” At the same time, Gatian believed he was suited for a different calling—ordination. He would be willing to study for the priesthood, he tells Moreau, if his superiors would so direct him, but he can only hint at his change of vocation because as a religious under vowed obedience, he cannot make the change on his own volition.

In the fall of 1846 Gatian writes to Moreau from a position of established power: as a member of the administrative council at Notre Dame, he feels he has an obligation to report on the general state of affairs. He first enumerates more jobs assigned to him: in addition to the previous list, he adds “secretary of four weekly councils and one monthly council, which take up the whole night.”⁵ He reminds Moreau that a decision has been promised about Gatian’s inclination to ordination, and he adds rather paranoidly, “He [Sorin] who ought to communicate it [the decision

on ordination] to me no doubt has his reasons for not doing so.” Of course Sorin would have been in contact with Moreau over the matter, but by this time, having lived on a day to day basis with Gatian for five years, Sorin would have appreciated that Gatian’s lack of tact ill-suited him for an ecclesiastical career, especially in a religious community that was trying to establish itself credibly in a new land. The last thing Sorin needed was an irascible young priest antagonizing the frontier bishops and diocesan clergy. Keeping the young man busy at multiple tasks was the method Sorin used to channel Gatian’s energy into areas for which he was very well qualified: bookkeeping, prefecting, and secretarial chores. The strategy worked for nine years, but eventually, as we shall see, Sorin had to resort to more drastic measures to keep Gatian occupied. Nevertheless, the young man never seemed too busy that he could not monitor other people’s spiritual lives. In this November letter he gets right to the point: Sorin is power hungry and considers himself equal in authority to the motherhouse in France. Secondly, Sorin keeps sloppy financial records. In fact, Gatian notes, in preparing the records for his trip to France, Sorin created them from memory (with the help of Brother Lawrence), and passed them off in Le Mans as authentic. On learning the purpose to which they were put, Gatian cut his signature off the bottom of the records. He then cites for Moreau’s benefit some of the errors passed off on the motherhouse. First of all, the Indiana community actually owes local merchants some 4500 francs more than Moreau was told. Secondly, they also owe a defrocked Brother [possibly ex-Brother Mary Joseph] 3500 francs. Gatian does not specify the reason for the latter debt, but since religious who left a community are never paid for services rendered over the years, the money was probably money that the man had brought with him when he entered the community at Notre Dame. In addition, Notre Dame, according to Gatian, would soon have to spend 30,000 francs to purchase land.

At this point in his long letter, Gatian becomes methodical and begins to outline Sorin’s faults. We can recognize in Gatian an extremely tidy mind, one that thrives on organization, even in letters of complaint. He is logical to a fault, but unfortunately his logic is mired in anger, and hostility blurs any advantage he may have hoped to gain with the founder in France. Rancor

appeals to the rancorous, and since Moreau was a man devoid of vengeance, he could not have received Gatian's outpouring with the seedbed of rapt admiration that Gatian expected. If anything, the letter would have confirmed in Moreau's mind any insights he may have received from Sorin about Gatian's volatility. The two priests were not in any kind of secret plot to destroy Gatian. Moreau especially would have been the most patient of listeners and the kindest of counselors. Gatian's fevered brain lashes at Sorin whom he perceives as a local incompetent, but Sorin was not, of course, incompetent. He knew how to use people, and he may have been a bit untidy in his record keeping, but his spirit was always bigger than his organization. He could get people to work for him, generally more out of respect than fear, and he was not one to be intimidated by Gatian and his outbursts. Moreau thus becomes the ultimate appeal. Gatian has no one to turn to in America above Sorin. Bishops had no interest in how religious superiors treated their subjects so Moreau was thus in the unenviable position of having to listen to Gatian and having somehow to let Sorin deal as best as he could with the outspoken young man.

It is difficult today to realize the love not only that Moreau had for his subjects but also the love they tendered to him. Separated by years, we have also been separated by the calculated rancor of wayward men and stiff clerical biographies making the man seem unapproachable. Of the two, books are the easier to deal with because we can return to them and read through the veneer of twentieth-century crustiness, but sincerely good men like Sorin who plotted against Moreau to further their own apostolic agendas are more difficult to assess.

Gatian divided the remainder of his remarkable November, 1846, letter into three parts: 1) "Father Superior does everything by himself" 2) "Probable reasons for Father Superior's conduct" 3) "Remedies." Each of these sections has subdivisions, following classic outline form. Gatian must have put much thought into this letter before he actually began to write it. The first flaw in Sorin's character, his assuming too many jobs when subordinates prove incompetent, may have been simply the expeditious route for a superior who wanted things to run smoothly but was either frustrated by poor performance or lacked the manpower to shuffle responsibilities, but Gatian,

nevertheless, reads Sorin's actions as simply the priest's being anxious to do everything himself. The example provided by Gatian involves the loss of a sugar loaf from the infirmary, the bailiwick of Father Gouesse. The priest-infirmarian had sent a note to Sister Mary of the Cenacle: "A loaf of sugar was taken from the infirmary; if it has fallen into your hands, please have the courtesy to send it back."⁶ Whether he knew it or not, Cenacle was the actual culprit, and whatever her intentions for the sugar, she was angry enough to complain to Sorin who removed Gouesse from the supervisory position. Sorin disliked Gouesse immensely, probably for good cause,⁷ and eventually tried to force him out of the Congregation.

The second charge against Sorin is more serious: Gatian gives evidence that Sorin acted without the permission of his council on matters of grave importance. Sorin, in fact, realizing a matter would be voted down in council, would simply not bring the matter up. Thus several enterprises, including a hospital, a home for elderly priests, and a boardinghouse, had to be abandoned for lack of resources. Gatian is not clear on whether or not these institutions ever got out of the planning stages. A museum, however, was established on the campus at the cost of 4000 or more francs, and its revenues for the first two years were 150 francs. Gatian had it on the best authority (a former member of the council) that the proposal to create the museum was actually voted down in council. It should be said to Sorin's credit, however, that the concept of a museum was sound pedagogically, in the best tradition of French education. There are several references in early letters to a wonderful sense of natural history among the pioneer Brothers, particularly in the letters of Brother Anselm who wrote with great enthusiasm about the bugs and things collected in cooperation with one of the local priests. This quest for hands-on knowledge of creatures and their habitats would have been certainly more refreshing activities for little boys studying science than dry textbooks. Nothing like a field trip to take the dull edge off a tedious class. Gatian, of course, saw only the bottom financial line: the museum did not support itself, no matter its educational pluses.

Another item in Gatian's 1846 catalogue of Sorin abuses affords us a rare opportunity to get another side of the story. Gatian complains to Moreau that Sorin sent two Brothers off to teach in an Indiana school before the pastor had offered an invitation. The exasperated pastor refused to accept the Brothers, one of whom "disgusted with management of our house, instead of coming back here, defrocked."⁸ Gatian thus loads the event totally to Sorin's discredit, but if we look at the situation from someone else's point of view, we can gain a more objective appraisal of the events. Fortunately we have a letter sent to Sorin by Brother Mary Joseph one month before Gatian's letter to Moreau. Mary Joseph was one of the two Brothers sent to Madison, Indiana, to St. Michael's parish where Anselm had worked happily and effectively a year earlier. In fall of 1844 Anselm had been shifted from Vincennes to Madison after his pitiful sufferings under Hailandière in the cathedral town. Anselm's death by drowning in July, 1845, left Madison without a Brother for the school year. As beloved as he had been, Anselm needed to be replaced if Sorin hoped to maintain the good will of the people in Madison. He should have, of course, consulted with Maurice de St. Palais, the priest who had in June, 1846, replaced Father Julian Delaune, Anselm's pastor at St. Michael's, but Sorin apparently just sent the two Brothers without consulting St. Palais. One would think that a pioneer pastor would have been delighted to be given two religious teachers for his school without having to beg for them, but St. Palais was not delighted. Mary Joseph fills in the details:

Reverend Mr. St. Palais was in the sitting room. I presented to him your letter and he asked me who had told Father Sorin he wanted Brothers. I said that I had, that the people were asking me everywhere when I passed through, when they would have two Brothers. I said that if they would write, that they would have either one or two from South Bend, and that the representations I had made to you induced you to send two. When we arrived in Madison, the people were glad to see us all except two persons who wrote against Reverend Mr. Delaune to the

bishop and one of them, Mr. W. Griffin, has circulated through the town that Reverend J. Delaune had taken the people's money from Madison to buy the college and farm in Kentucky.

These men boasted on Sunday that we would not be received by Reverend Mr. St. Palais. I asked Reverend Mr. St. Palais if he would permit us to teach catechism on Sunday. He said it was not necessary. I said, very well. On Sunday we went to High Mass. Everyone welcomed us to Madison. They asked us when the school would commence as their children were running wild for want of a school. Others told me they were sending their children to Protestants' schools, but would send them to us as soon as we should start the school. There were over 40 children in gallery at Mass and there has been an increase of several families since I left. All told us they would assist us. Some offered us rooms if we would accept of them. I told them I would wait till I would know what the priest would tell us.

Brother Francis and myself went to Mass on Monday morning after we went to see Reverend St. Palais to ask him if we should start school as the children were at the school door waiting for us. The school and desks were all ready. He talked with us some time, then told us that his house was not ready yet and he wanted to ask you about the terms. I told him the terms were \$50 for each Brother for 10 1/2 months schooling. He said he wanted to see the people about it. I told him the people had sent their children to school and that they had paid well last year and said they would do the same this. He then said his house was not yet finished and he wanted us to live in his house and he would rather we would return to South Bend. He would pay the expenses back and would send for us when he wanted us. He wished us to leave Madison, and I said we could not leave until we had an answer from the Superior. He said he would take that upon himself and would give us a letter to you which would be satisfactory.

Brother Francis and I thought it would be best for us to write to you and wait until you should tell us what to do in this matter. The members of the congregation are very much displeased. They say that Mr. Griffin and Mr. Blenkinsop have prevailed with Reverend Mr. St. Palais to send us back. You will not believe this possible perhaps, but if you knew these men as well as I do and how they have troubled Reverend Mr. Delaune since his first arrival in Madison until this day and even now are trying to blacken his character by saying that he took the money of the congregation away with him, but no one believes them because they knew Reverend Mr. D. Too well.

You perhaps will say what has this to do with the school? Why when Brother Anselm was here, Mr. Griffin went to him and wanted him to make more of his children than the rest. Brother Anselm refused. He [Griffin] sent them to a Protestant school. When I came here a year ago, he did not like to send them, but Reverend Mr. D. Said he must. He sent them. They came to school 7 months, behaved bad, would not conform to the rules of the school. Reverend Mr. D. told me to punish them. I did so. He [Griffin] took them from school and sent them to Protestant schools. He refused to pay Reverend Mr. Delaune his school money that was due, but abused when he was asked for it. Mr. Blenkinsop has no children.⁹

Thus the truth of the matter emerges: a local tussle between Brother Mary Joseph and a disgruntled parent had poisoned the well. Mary Joseph was no Anselm, and although he may have worked in the Madison school with some success under Delaune, he met his match under St. Palais. A postscript to this letter continues the saga:

Since writing the letter in which this [is] enclosed, Brother Francis had an attack of the fever and ague. About 4 o'clock we heard that Sr. Liguori was dying, so I went to enquire how she was. Whilst I was there, Reverend Mr. St. Palais

sent for me. I went. He told me he had written a letter to you and that he believed all would be settled. I told him that Brother Francis was sick. He seemed to doubt it, said he would send the doctor to see him, and he would know whether he was able to travel. I said also that I wished to have a letter from you before I left Madison regarding something which I wished to ask you. (This was whether you would allow me to go [to] Kentucky as I had not settled the matters we agreed to.) He said he could not see why I wanted to stay. He said it appeared that we did not want to leave Madison. I deny'd wanting to stay in Madison. I said that I thought it was necessary according to our Constitution to write to you before leaving any place. I told him I had done so regarding Reverend Mr. Delaune. He then said in an angry tone, "I as parish priest of Madison and as Vicar General of this diocese order you both to leave Madison immediately." He said that he "would defray the expenses." I said that perhaps you might have some other destination for us. He said that "he would defray the expenses back." He said there were his last words. He said that "he had nothing against us but that if we were to stay 6 days waiting for your answer, the people would want to detain us to keep school and he would not do it."¹⁰

It is possible that St. Palais did not disdain all religious teachers so much as he had aversion for this particular one. Mary Joseph may very well have proven to Griffin and Blenkinsop that he was ill-suited to fill the place of the hard-working and beloved Anselm. It is not easy to replace an idol. So the real culprit in this case may have been Mary Joseph who could have misrepresented the Madison situation to Sorin. Mary Joseph, the replacement for Anselm two years earlier in the hot-bed of Vincennes, may have seen a way out of Hailandière's town and knowing the wondrous goodwill enjoyed by Anselm in Madison, may have engineered the switch himself without knowing the nature of the situation in Madison as it had festered in the year since Anselm's death.

St. Palais, already number two man in the diocesan clergy and destined to be consecrated bishop three years later when Hailandière was sent packing unceremoniously, was nobody's fool, and he undoubtedly took umbrage at the outspoken Mary Joseph, who had proven himself confrontational when necessary on at least one earlier occasion.¹¹ Mary Joseph's poor little companion, Brother Francis (Michael Disser) was caught between the mighty egos of his travelling companion and the feisty future bishop of the territory.

In his letter to Moreau, Gatian spells out none of the mitigating circumstances about the Madison affair: no mention of the poisoning of the atmosphere by the two disgruntled Madisonites, no mention of Mary Joseph's inventiveness, no mention of St. Palais' imperiousness. Everything is Sorin's fault. We cannot, of course, let Sorin off without some fault—he was, after all, assigning men to an institution without an explicit invitation from the pastor, and although Sorin may have conjectured that once established, a foundation remains running on its initial invitation, his decision to send Mary Joseph and Francis looks at least impolite and presumptuous. Moreover, St. Palais was not Delaune, and it was Delaune who had been pastor in Madison when Holy Cross first began its work there. Of course, the bishop was ultimately responsible for the acceptance of all religious personnel in the diocese, but it would be foolish to imagine a local pastor could be overlooked in the renewal of a contract. Sorin may very well have negotiated with Hailandière, and Hailandière may have neglected to bring St. Palais into the loop, but we must remember Hailandière was himself careening towards his own effacement and did not enjoy the full respect of even his own diocesan clergy. It was they more than anyone who brought about his ouster in 1849. At any rate, the debacle as it unfolded was laid by Gatian at Sorin's feet, and there it would remain had we not Mary Joseph's letter to help clarify the actual events in Madison. Mary Joseph's defrocking was not the result of his disgust "with the management of our house" (as Gatian put it to Moreau),¹² but was rather the result of a series of things, not least of which may have been his ill-success as a teacher-replacement for Anselm or his disgust with being a ping-

pong ball between Vincennes and Madison. His disposition, whatever it was when he first joined Holy Cross in 1842 at age 23, could not have improved after a year teaching in Vincennes and living with the prelate who had bedeviled Anselm into sickness and acute mental agony. One would like to think, however, that Mary Joseph could have given as much to Hailandière as Hailandière gave to others. It may have been, in fact, such a chemistry that could have induced Hailandière to be less than unhappy when Mary Joseph left for Madison. There must have been hot times in the episcopal palace when the French bishop crossed swords with the hot Irish Brother. No long suffering Anselm, Mary Joseph could give back whatever was dealt to him. Anselm cried in his room over Hailandière's insults and humiliations, but Mary Joseph would never have cried. No bishop would push him around.

In all the acrimony of the early Gatian correspondence, we often find flashes of brilliant insight buried under heaps of character assassination. From his earliest letters in 1846, he went on to continue his surveillance of Sorin's activities at Notre Dame and to report them to Moreau in France. What was it that finally prompted Sorin to send this bright young man on a gold prospecting expedition to California? Gatian was hardly disposed to pan for gold in mountain streams. We cannot investigate that question today but must reserve it for a future time. Gatian we know soured beyond repair in California and severed his formal ties with Holy Cross in 1850. He continued, however, to write letters to Sorin until he shipped himself back to France where he died on his father's farm in 1860, in the very house at Saulges where he was born. Buried in a little cemetery outside the town, his grave is today unmarked.

Notes

1 Letter of Brother Gatian (Urbain Monsimer), February 18, 1846, reprinted in George Klawitter, *Adapted to the Lake: Letters by the Brother Founders of Notre Dame, 1841-1849*, New York (Peter Lang), 1993, p. 103. All letters are quoted from this source. No letters addressed to Gatian remain today.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 104.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 104.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 104.

5 Letter of Brother Gatian, November 21, 1846, p. 114.

6 Note by Rev. Francis Gouesse, quoted in letter by Brother Gatian, November 21, 1846, p. 117.

7 See Rev. James Connolly, "Holy Cross Foundations in New Orleans in the 1850's," Notre Dame (Indiana Province Archives), 1988.

8 Letter of Brother Gatian, November 21, 1846, p. 117.

9 Letter of Brother Mary Joseph, October 26, 1846, pp. 111-113.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 113.

11 Letter of Brother Francis (Michael Dissier), November 18, 1845, p. 96.

12 Letter of Brother Gatian, November 21, 1846, p. 117.