Maryland Jesuits and Slavery
by Bernard A. Cook

After Pope Clement XIV suppressed the Jesuit order in 1773, Fr. John Carroll, S.J., returned to Maryland from the Jesuit seminary in Liège, where he had been teaching. Under his leadership, the 23 Jesuits in Maryland and Pennsylvania formed the Select Body of Clergy that continued the Jesuit mission there until 1804. (1) Members of the Select Body of Clergy continued to operate five large estates and a smaller farm in Maryland (2): St. Inigoes Manor and Newtown Manor in St. Mary's County, St. Thomas Manor in Charles County, White Marsh Manor in Prince George's County, Bohemia in Cecil County, and St. Joseph on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake in Talbot County. In 1804, the Jesuits of Maryland were reconstituted as part of the Russian Province of Jesuits, which had never been suppressed thanks to the intervention of the Russian Czarina Catherine the Great. Pope Pius VII finally restored the Society of Jesus throughout the Church in 1814.

The Jesuits were involved in the colony of Maryland from its inception. Fr. Andrew White, S.J., who was invited by Lord Baltimore to join his Maryland project, sailed on the *Ark,* a 400-ton merchant ship, in 1633 with two other Jesuits, Fr. John Altham Gravenor and Fr. Thomas Gervase. The *Ark* carried approximately 140 colonists to Maryland. The Jesuits financed the passage of 26 men who accompanied them on this initial voyage. (3) In return, these individuals were then obliged to work for the Jesuits as indentured servants for three or four years after their arrival. During the next five years, the Jesuits brought another 48 men to Maryland as indentured servants. (4)

Fr. White was particularly concerned to bring Christianity to the indigenous people he encountered. To further his effort, White created a dictionary and translated the Catholic catechism into the languages of the native Americans in the area, and he converted Chitomachon, the chief of the Piscataway tribe. Like many converts among indigenous leaders, Chitomachon might well have seen this as politically advantageous. The Yaocomico and the Anacostans also saw relations with the English as an advantage in their conflicts with other native Americans.

Metagnomen, the local chief of the Yaocomico, granted land to White. However,

the terms of the grant of land by Metagnomen meant that although White could live on and utilize the land, he could not exercise ownership over it. Lord Baltimore refused to recognize this acquisition and insisted that he alone could grant claims to land. (5) To receive land a person had to finance the voyage of indentured servants to populate Baltimore's colony. Those who brought indentured servants in 1633 would receive 10 acres of town land for every five men brought over. After 1633, "Adventurer Gentlemen" would receive title to five acres of town land and 2,000 acres of farmland for every 10 individuals whose transportation they provided. Consequently, in exchange for the indentured servants whose passage they had financed, the Jesuits acquired their first two estates, St. Inigoes Manor and St. Thomas Manor. (6)

St. Inigoes, located on the left bank of the Potomac near the initial settlement at St. Mary's, was the oldest of the Jesuit plantations. The Lords Baltimore granted the Jesuits the 2,000 acres there in 1637. St. Thomas Manor, further up the river, initially consisted of 700 acres to the east of Port Tobacco Creek and 923 acres on the west side of the creek. At one point it consisted of 4,500 acres, and was the largest of the Jesuit plantations. (7) Eventually the five Jesuit plantations and smaller properties amounted to approximately 13,000 acres, and were worked by some 323 enslaved people in 1790. (8)

Catherine O'Donnell notes, significantly, in "Jesuits in the North American Colonies and the United States," that Lord Baltimore valued the Jesuits but placed limitations upon them. They sailed to Maryland as individual Englishmen. As such they could own property as individuals and, in that way, fund their missionary enterprise. However, the Society of Jesus, according to Baltimore's order, could not own property. Assigning land to individual Jesuits enabled Baltimore to subvert the Statutes of Mortmain, which forbade corporate ownership of land. It also allowed Baltimore to avoid anti-Catholic attacks. O'Donnell asserts, "Jesuits' landholding and need to support themselves had momentous consequences: it drew them as willing participants into the plantation system." (9) The Jesuits of Maryland, as a consequence, eventually relied upon enslaved labor to support themselves and their mission. (10)

The Jesuit properties were initially farmed by tenant farmers and indentured servants. Indentured servants, as mentioned above, were required to labor for a fixed

number of years to pay for the cost of their passage to Maryland. (11) Mathias de Sousa, a free person of mixed race, arrived with the colonists on the *Ark* in 1634. (12) It has been asserted that he joined the *Ark* when it stopped at Barbados for supplies after having been blown off course by a terrific storm. De Sousa, who was the first Black man to reside in the colony of Maryland, worked for the Jesuits as an indentured servant. After he fulfilled his obligation of servitude, he sailed up and down the Potomac bringing goods back and forth between settlements. He was not only the first free Black man to reside in the colony, he eventually became a member of the colonial Assembly. (13)

Historians debate whether the shift from indentured servants to enslaved labor occurred in the English mainland colonies because of a decline in the supply of indentured servants or an expectation that slavery would provide a consistent supply of labor and be more profitable. The first slaves from Africa were brought to St. Mary's City in 1642, only eight years after the arrival of Fr. White and the colonists in 1634. In the 1660s, only 3 percent of the population in the colony consisted of enslaved people. By 1710, 24 percent of Maryland's population was enslaved. (14)

During the Puritan Revolution in England in the 1640s, Catholics and the Jesuits in the colony endured a period of persecution. Anti-Catholics from Virginia seized White and seven other Jesuits in 1645. Three Jesuits perished, and White and the others were sent back to England on account of their "evil" preaching. Thomas Copley, S.J., who was also expelled, was allowed through the intercession of Baltimore to return in 1648, so the Jesuit mission in Maryland continued. However, the character of the colony changed and with it the mission of the Jesuits. The native population dramatically decreased and the number of settlers increased significantly. Catherine O'Donnell writes, "The Jesuit mission was also growing and changing. No longer focused on the indigenous peoples who had inspired their labors, Jesuits in the colony were 'priest planters,' conducting missions to Catholic settlers throughout the colony." (15)

When the Jesuits in Maryland began to hold enslaved people is not clear. An annual report from 1638 mentions four "servants" purchased in Virginia. Whether they were enslaved persons or indentured servants is not clear. Enslaved people as well as indentured servants were referred to as "servants." Fr. Copley sued a Capt. Ingle over a boy sold in Virginia for £20, the usual price for an enslaved boy in the late 1630s. (16)

Two individuals, who worked on the Jesuit estate at St. Inigoes in 1664, were called "servants." It is uncertain whether they were enslaved or indentured. A former enslaved woman told the Jesuit Joseph Zwinge in the early twentieth century that she was a descendant of an enslaved person given by Lord Baltimore to the Jesuits at St. Inigoes around the same time. (17) In 1717, with growing Protestant hostility, William Hunter, S.J., made a list of all of the property owned by the Jesuits at Newtown Manor. If necessary, he intended to transfer the Jesuit property to a Catholic layman, Thomas Jameson. Hunter's inventory contains the first list of enslaved people held by the Jesuits. He enumerated, "Negro servants 15. 4 men, Will, Jack, Kill, Peter. 4 women, Mary, Teresa, Clare, Pegg. 4 boys, Jack, Clemm, Tomm, James. 3 girles [sic], Betty, Kate, Susan." (18) By 1765, the total number of enslaved people held by the Jesuits was 192. If the date at which the Maryland Jesuits first acquired enslaved people is uncertain, their holding of slaves was not unique to the Maryland Jesuits. Jesuits owned and utilized the labor of enslaved people while Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the order, was still alive. Ignatius' companion, Francis Xavier, later canonized, reprimanded Jesuits in Goa for spending money on gardeners instead of buying slaves. Christopher J. Kellerman, himself a Jesuit, wrote "the Jesuit participation in the slave trade and their justification of that participation would only increase over time." (19)

Under the Stuart monarchs in England, Charles II and James II, Catholicism was tolerated in Maryland. However, after the English Glorious Revolution in 1688, Catholics again experienced repression. In 1704, the Maryland General Assembly outlawed the ownership of land by religious orders. The Jesuits then transferred the Jesuit holdings, including land and any enslaved people, to individual Jesuits as they had been required to do initially by Lord Baltimore. Those individual Jesuits held and administered the estates and the enslaved on behalf of the order and bequeathed the property in land and enslaved people to other Jesuits, or after the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773, to individual members of the Select Body of Clergy, or the Corporation of the Roman Catholic Clergymen, chartered by the Maryland legislature in 1792. (20)

Utilizing these tactics, the Jesuits by 1790 had enslaved some 323 men, women, and children. (21) Slavery was slavery. However, the Jesuits recognized their religious responsibility for the enslaved. This obligation and a paternalistic attitude were

expressed in a sermon by George Hunter, S.J., in 1749. Hunter said, “Charity to negroes is due from all, particularly their masters. As they are members of Jesus Christ, redeemed by his precious blood, they are to be dealt with in a charitable, Christian, paternal manner, which is at the same time a great means to bring them to their duty to God and therefore to gain their souls.” (22) John Lewis, S.J., the last superior of the Maryland Jesuits before their suppression in 1773, referred to the enslaved as “Brothers in Jesus Christ,” and warned, “he who takes no care of his domesticks [sic] is worse than an infidel and has denied his faith.” (23)

O’Donnell provides a rather stark assessment of the Jesuits as enslavers. She writes, the “Jesuits’ attention to enslaved people’s sacramental life coexisted with physical coercion, expropriation of labor, and, of course, the overarching injustice of enslavement itself.” (24) The Jesuits utilized physical punishment to enforce discipline and to punish perceived infractions. John Bossy refers to an “ineradicable mixture of social paternalism and racism with which the Jesuits regarded” the enslaved people they held. (25)

Joseph Mobberly, S.J., who administered the Jesuit property at St. Inigoes and the enslaved people there from 1806 to 1820, defended the institution of slavery, but was ambivalent about its consequences. Mobberly wrote that “slavery is not only lawful, reasonable and good, but that it is also necessary.” (26) However, he argued that the responsibilities of masters for the spiritual and material welfare of their enslaved people was such that owners would be better off materially and certainly, in view of eternal salvation, much better off spiritually without enslaved people. (27) Mobberly wrote that masters were morally obliged to answer for the enslaved people they held by “providing them with beds and comfortable houses, . . . providing them with necessary food and rainment, . . . permitting them to marry, . . . prepar(ing) them <u>properly</u> for the sacraments.” Owners were to be held responsible before God for “using cruel methods in correcting them, neglecting them in sickness and old age, . . . selling them under grievous circumstances and separating man and wife.” (28) In 1815, he wrote to Giovanni Grassi, S.J., Superior of the Jesuit Maryland Mission and the president of Georgetown College from 1812 to 1817, “It is better to sell for a term, or to set your people free. Because we have their souls to answer for.” (29)

Though Mobberly expressed concern for the spiritual welfare of the enslaved under his control at St. Inigoes, he had a low opinion of the enslaved. He claimed, “The better a Negro is treated, the worse he becomes.” (30) When Peter Kenney, S.J., an Irish Jesuit, sent as a special Visitor, or overseer, to the American mission, visited St. Inigoes in 1820, he questioned the enslaved about their conditions. He listened and was appalled. He made his concerns known to his superior and the Jesuits removed Mobberly from his post within a month. (31)

Freedom Suits

During the early years after the American Revolution, a number of freedom suits were brought by enslaved people in Maryland against their enslavers, arguing that female relatives had been indentured servants - free women. (32) Enslaved status was transmitted by the status of the mother and not the father. If an enslaved woman was impregnated by a free man the offspring was nevertheless enslaved. Regardless of the identity or status of the father the identity of the mother was undeniable. Some of the suits were eventually successful. By April 1796, twenty enslaved people had won their freedom in suits against John Ashton, S.J., who assisted John Lewis, S.J., the administrator of White Marsh Plantation. (33) The enslaved people, who won their freedom, were members of the Queen family, descendants of Mary Queen, a free woman of color, who had come to Maryland from England as an indentured servant around 1713. (34) In addition to members of the Queen family, a number of other free Black families, members of Holy Trinity parish, such as the Butlers, Shorters, and Thomases, gained their freedom through these suits. Though these people achieved their freedom through freedom suits, they were the exception. Suits for freedom were extremely difficult and rarely successful. Family traditions, which claimed descent from a free woman, were most often rejected as mere “hear say.”

In 1797, Charles Mahoney filed a freedom suit against Fr. Ashton. Richard Ridgely, Mahoney’s lawyer, argued, “slavery is incompatible with every principle of religion and morality. It is unnatural and contrary to the maxims of political law, more especially in this country, where 'we hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal.’” (35) If this moral and legal argument did not impress the Jesuits, the

freedom suits were a factor that led the Jesuits to reconsider their involvement in the institution of slavery.

Francis Neale, S.J., the founding pastor of Holy Trinity parish, had been the administrator of St. Thomas Manor at Port Tobacco in Charles County, Maryland. In 1809, when he became president of Georgetown College, Neale had Priscilla Queen brought to Georgetown, probably from Port Tobacco. She took advantage of her transfer to the District of Columbia to lodge a freedom suit asserting that she was a descendant of Mary Queen. (36) Although she lost that suit, the Jesuits were concerned about the possibility that their property in enslaved people was threatened by freedom suits. The account book of St. Thomas Manor in August 1794, recorded £4 17s 6p paid to Philip Barton Key, the uncle of Francis Scott Key, “To retain or stop the mouth of lawyer Key from speaking in favor of the Negroes who have sued for their freedom.” (37)

Georgetown College

Georgetown College was founded in 1789 by the Maryland Jesuits reorganized as the Corporation of Roman Catholic Clergymen. The college did not own many enslaved persons, never “more than five people in any given year from 1792 to 1862,” when slavery was abolished in the District of Columbia. (38) However, the college was dependent upon enslaved laborers, whose services it rented. Enslaved people cooked for the Jesuits and students. They cleaned the school and did the laundry of the faculty and students. The college also utilized enslaved laborers to construct buildings including Old North. It hired enslaved masons from a builder, Daniel Bussard, to construct an infirmary and smokehouse, and it hired enslaved bricklayers and carpenters from George B. Magruder, James Harvey, George Athee, and others for a variety of construction projects at the expanding campus. As many as 20 enslaved people worked at the college in 1815 and 1816. (39) It is probable that the original church at Holy Trinity, now the Chapel of St. Ignatius, as well as the present church, dedicated in 1851, were constructed utilizing the labor of enslaved workers.

In addition to hiring enslaved workers, the college administrators bought and sold enslaved people. In 1810, the college sold Liddy to Phillip Bussard for $220, of which

$70 was in cash and the rest in whiskey and sugar. In 1808, Fr. Francis Neale purchased from St. Inigoes a woman and a man named Len “for the use of the college.” (40) Bishop John Carroll himself had proposed the sale of enslaved people when the Jesuits needed money in 1805. He wrote, “the sale of a few unnecessary Negroes, three or four, and stock would replace the money.” (41)

In 1813, Jesuit trustees met at Georgetown College. They discussed whether they should free the enslaved people held by the order. It was proposed to sell “the whole or greatest part” of the enslaved on their plantations in Maryland for a specific term of years “after which they should be entitled to their freedom.” In June 1814, they agreed to sell all of the enslaved people they held with the provision that they would be granted their freedom after a specific number of years. (42)

Freedom suits were not the only concern. The enslaved people on the Jesuit properties were not reconciled to their status. In July 1814, the British on the way up the Potomac to Washington sacked the Jesuit plantation at St. Inigoes in St. Mary’s County and liberated numerous enslaved persons, including some members of the Queen and Mahoney families. In all, more than 700 enslaved people in southern Maryland fled and joined the British. (43) It was evident that servitude was a burden from which the enslaved wished to free themselves.

There was also a dramatic indication of the desire of the enslaved for freedom at St. Inigoes at Easter time in 1817. There was a general disturbance by nearly 300 enslaved and free people, who pelted Whites with sticks and bricks before order was restored. A Vermont newspaper reported, “It is customary for the slaves, immediately after the church fast and festival days to have two or three holidays for their recreation. On Easter Monday the 7th of April about 300 negroes bond and free are said to have been collected. After having spent the day in festive amusements peculiar to themselves they became so noisy and riotous, that the civil authority was deemed necessary in order to quell them.” (44) The people, enslaved and free, did not accept the effort to terminate their festival passively. This disturbance was a dramatic indication of the willingness of the enslaved to assert freedom.

In 1814, Fr. Francis Neale personally sold an enslaved man, Isaac, who had run away from Georgetown College and attempted to reach Pennsylvania and freedom.

When Bishop John Carroll discovered that Neale continued to sell for life people enslaved by the Jesuits, he wrote Neale of his surprise and mortification. He declared that the sales “for life” were “in direct contradiction to the humane decision of the Corporation.” Carroll expressed his belief that the sales were invalid. (45) Despite Carroll’s indignation, the Jesuits did not implement their decision for gradual emancipation. Carroll died on December 3, 1815, two months after his denunciation of the continued sale of enslaved people for life. In 1820, the Jesuits reversed their decision. They argued that they “on mature reflection considered the measure prejudicial.” (46) The sale “for life” of those enslaved by the Jesuits would continue.

In 1820, Thaddeus Brzozowski, S.J., the Father General of the Jesuits in Rome, in response to complaints by European Jesuits who had come to Maryland, sent Peter Kenney, S.J., an Irish Jesuit, as a special visitor or overseer to the American mission. Fr. Kenney was disturbed by the treatment of the enslaved people on the Jesuit estates. He complained that the enslaved were given insufficient food, were overworked, and were punished excessively. He was particularly distressed by the fact that enslaved women were beaten and those who were pregnant were whipped “in the priests (sic) parlor, which is very indecorous.” (47)

Kenney recommended that the Maryland Jesuit Consultors (advisory council) impose strict regulations concerning the treatment of the enslaved. He wrote, “Great zeal, piety, prudence & charity with a regular system are required to check the evils attendant on the possession of slaves.” Although Fr. Kenney did not view the sale of the enslaved by the Jesuits as immoral, he declared that owning them was immoral, and he ordered the Jesuits “to part with them.” (48) Despite Fr. Kenney’s order, the Jesuits did not immediately sell the enslaved people under their control.

Belgian Jesuits propelled by anti-Jesuit laws of the new United Netherlands created by the 1815 Congress of Vienna came to the Jesuit plantation of White Marsh in 1822. (49) Supporting the Belgians placed an economic burden on the Maryland Jesuits. They, therefore, were happy to respond to the invitation of Bishop Louis Dubourg of Louisiana and the Two Floridas, a Sulpician and former president of Georgetown College, to send Jesuits to St. Louis. (50) They dispatched the Belgians, and along with them six enslaved people.

In 1823, Charles Van Quickenborne, S.J., and 11 Belgian Jesuit priests, novices, and brothers set out from Maryland to establish the new mission in Missouri. They brought with them three enslaved couples, Thomas and Mary (Polly) Brown, Isaac and Susanna (Succy) Queen-Hawkins, and Moses and Nancy Queen from the Jesuit White Marsh plantation, to set up their novitiate and its accompanying farm in Florissant, Missouri.

The Maryland Jesuits transferred to Fr. Van Quickenborne the enslaved "all of whom are the property of the above Corporation, with permission to transport them into the State of Missouri and there employ them in his service." (51) The enslaved, in addition to the hardship of their labor and living conditions in Missouri, suffered from the separation from friends and relatives on the Jesuit plantations in Maryland. They were able to reestablish some contact in 1829, but only after the Jesuits transferred 16 additional enslaved men, women, and children from White Marsh to Florissant. These enslaved persons, personally led by Fr. Van Quickenborne, included more Queens and Hawkinses: Proteus and Anny Queen-Hawkins, Jack and Sally Queen, and children of both couples. (52) The Missouri Jesuits utilized their enslaved not only at Florissant, but also at other missions and at St. Louis College, which they took charge of in 1829, and which became a university in 1832. (53)

The Mass Sale

In 1830, Fr. Peter Kenney was sent back to America as the special representative of the new Father General, Jan Roothaan, S.J. Kenney was tasked with considering the pros and cons of selling the Jesuit plantations. Advised by Kenney and the former Maryland superior, Francis Dzierozynski, S.J., Roothaan ordered the Maryland Jesuits not to sell their plantations. However, he said nothing about the enslaved people on the plantations. In 1833, the Maryland Mission was elevated to a Province. William McSherry, S.J., was appointed provincial. McSherry and Thomas Mulledy, S.J., both came from western Virginia, now West Virginia, and were uncomfortable with the Maryland Jesuit tradition of priest-planters. (54) They supported selling the estates and the enslaved persons after a period of time. (55)

There were two problems. The political and social climate in Maryland had

become increasingly hostile to the growing number of free Black men and women in the state, so deferred emancipation would have been difficult. There was also little possibility in Maryland of selling the people enslaved on the Jesuit farms without breaking up families. The economy in Maryland had changed. Tobacco cultivation had exhausted the soil and there was no demand for large numbers of enslaved people there.

The possibility of a mass sale of the enslaved held by the Maryland Jesuits led them to look to the plantations of the Deep South. (56) There was demand for the labor of enslaved people in Louisiana. Sale of those enslaved by the Jesuits to planters there would remove a moral and institutional problem and at the same time provide much needed finances.

The Jesuits established contact with Catholic planters in Louisiana, who expressed interest. On September 10, 1832, Fr. Kenney asked Fr. Neale to provide him with “the number and description of the Blacks, whom you would sell [from the Jesuit St. Thomas Manor] to Mr. John Lee and to Mr. Horsey” in Louisiana. Kenney wrote that the planters “prefer Catholics.” (57)

Fr. Roothaan, the Superior General of the Jesuits in Rome, opposed the sale of enslaved people by the Maryland Jesuits. He wrote, “It would be better to suffer financial disaster than suffer the loss of our souls with the sale of the slaves.” (58) He was, nevertheless, persuaded to allow the sale by Fr. McSherry, then Georgetown president, and Fr. Mulledy, the provincial in charge of the Jesuits’ mission in Maryland.

Roothaan was told that Georgetown College would not survive without the sale. He relented, but insisted on three conditions, which he hoped would mitigate the evil of the sale - that the enslaved people could continue to practice their Catholic faith, that families would not be separated, and that the money received would not be used to pay off debts incurred during the presidency of Mulledy. (59) Fr. Roothaan approved the sale in October 1836. Due to Roothaan’s order that the Maryland Jesuits care for their elderly and infirm, some of those enslaved by the Jesuits were excluded from the sale. (60)

The Jesuits sought a purchaser who could take the people they enslaved in Maryland and would agree to allow them to continue to practice their Catholic faith, and

since such a purchaser could not be found in Maryland, they turned to a Louisiana planter. Henry Johnson, the principal purchaser, ultimately lost ownership of some of the enslaved people he had purchased. He had used some of them as collateral in failed financial ventures. Families were split up, and the new enslavers were indifferent to the religious needs of the enslaved Catholics. (61)

McSherry, who was suffering from terminal cancer, asked to be replaced as the local Jesuit superior or provincial. Mulledy was appointed provincial by Roothaan in October 1837, and he completed the sale in June 1838 for $115,000, $25,000 of which was required in a down payment. The remainder was to be paid in ten years.

Roothaan's conditions were not fulfilled. The sale paid for $17,000 of the $30,000 debt incurred by Georgetown College during the presidency of Fr. Mulledy from 1825 until 1837. $8,000 was transferred to the archbishop of Baltimore to settle his claims against the Jesuits. (62) The remaining $90,000 was dedicated as Roothaan required to the formation of young Jesuits. Families were separated both at the time of the sale (63) and later because of financial difficulties experienced by the Louisiana purchasers. Finally, the spiritual concerns expressed by Roothaan were not fulfilled.

Complaints from fellow Jesuits, especially Stephen Dubuisson, S.J., Peter Haverman, S.J., Thomas Lilly, S.J., and Ignatius White, S.J., and from Samuel Eccleston, the archbishop of Baltimore, led Roothaan to oust Mulledy as provincial. Fr. Dubuisson had briefly served as president of Georgetown College and as pastor of Holy Trinity from 1825 to 1826, and again from 1831 to 1833. At the time of the sale, he was pastor of St. Mary's in Alexandria, Virginia. Dubuisson, although he did not view slavery itself as immoral, opposed the sale of the enslaved by the Jesuits as immoral. He feared that if those enslaved by the Jesuits were sold, that they would be ill-treated and abused, that they would be denied education, and that their right to marry would not be recognized. (64) Haverman, as the superior at Newtown Manor, had significantly improved the conditions of the enslaved there. (65) He accused Mulledy of being like "slave traders who value nothing except money." (66)

Fr. Lilly, who was at St. Thomas Manor, was outraged. Mulledy, accompanied by Johnson and a sheriff, had arrived without notice to prevent the Jesuits at St. Thomas from warning the enslaved and allowing them to go into hiding. Lilly wrote to Roothaan

that he had been deceived by Mulledy. He said that the enslaved “were dragged off by force to the ship and led off to Louisiana. The danger to their souls is certain.” (67) Fr. White, the superior at White Marsh, who opposed slavery in general, denounced the sale as tantamount to slave trading. (68)

The unfulfilled conditions and the subsequent uproar led Roothaan to remove Mulledy as provincial. (69) In disgrace, he was called to Rome, and he feared that he might be removed from the order. However, in 1843, after a few years in exile, he was allowed to return to the United States. Bishop Benedict Fenwick, S.J., of Boston requested that Mulledy become the president of Holy Cross College, which Fenwick was setting up in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Bishop Fenwick was a Jesuit from Maryland. He had studied at Georgetown College before entering the Jesuits. In June 1817 he had become president of Georgetown College and simultaneously succeeded Fr. Francis Neale as pastor of Holy Trinity. He became the bishop of Boston in 1825. He was the great-great-great grandson of Cuthbert Fenwick who had come to Maryland on the *Ark* in 1633. Bishop Fenwick had opposed the sale of the enslaved by the Jesuits. He wrote to his brother Fr. George Fenwick, S.J., “extraordinary news. Poor Negroes! I pity them.” (70) George Fenwick had been one of the four Jesuit consultors who joined Mulledy and McSherry to provide the majority who approved the sale over the substantial objection of the other consultors. Fr. Mulledy subsequently served as pastor of Holy Trinity from 1857 to 1858.

In 1848, following a trip to Louisiana, James Van der Velde, S.J., (71) the Western Provincial of the Jesuits, wrote to Fr. Mulledy concerning the spiritual neglect of the enslaved people the Maryland Jesuits had sold to enslavers in Louisiana. Fr. Van der Velde wrote,

They are all very good people, industrious, faithful, moral, &c. - the character given to them by their owners & their neighbors. But they have scarcely any chance to attend to their religious duties, & the children, several of them not yet baptized, grew up without any religious instruction whatever. Mr Thompson’s plantation is about 10 miles from Donaldsonville, where there is a Catholic church attended by the Lazaristo, & to reach it they have to cross the Bayou Lafourche. Some of the stoutest can walk it, & do

sometimes, - but very seldom, - as the distance is so great, & their services are generally wanted at home. The women & children have a cart at their disposal, but they scarcely ever use it; & the cart, after all, could accommodate but a very small number. Then all they can do is to hear Mass, - the sermon being always in French, of which they do not understand. Some of the women told me weeping that they had not been to Church for more than a year, & these women appeared strong & healthy, but they have either to attend to their children, or to household works, & cannot absent themselves so long. Hence you may judge how it fares with the aged, infirm, the children, &c.

To tell you the truth, I am of opinion that the Provce of Md is in conscience bound to contribute to it, [the building of a Catholic Church for the enslaved] *& thus to provide for the salvation of those poor people who are now utterly neglected, & whose children grow up without any notion of Religion. Justice as well as Charity require that their former masters should step in & aid other well-disposed persons to procure them the means of salvation. I therefore entreat yr Revce to lay the subject before the Provincial & his consultors, & to lose no time in providing for those poor abandoned people, - who, though neglected, are still firmly attached to their Religion*. (72)

When Fr. Van de Velde received no reply, he wrote in November 1848, to Fr. Ignatius Brocard, S.J., the provincial of the Maryland Jesuits. He wrote,

I take the liberty of writing a word to you again in order to plead the cause of the poor negroes, who previously belonged to your Province, and who are now found destitute of nearly all religious succor in Louisiana.

I may be mistaken, but it appears to me that the Province of Maryland is obligated by conscience to procure them succor and to make some sacrifices in this matter. . . I think of these poor people, particularly the children, who, bit by bit, lose religion. It is an extreme case. If justice does not demand it (although I am of the opinion that it demands it in this case), at least security asks it.

All that is asked is that the Province of Maryland contribute $1,000, the neighbors will contribute the rest; and what is a mere $1,000 for the province that has the income from so many farms, and which has already received so large a sum for these poor

exiles? . . . [W]ho knows if the refusal of coming to their aid will not attract misfortune on the Province? I myself am very worried about this, and if I seem tiresome to you, I am sure that you will pardon me for it, since it is for the good of these poor abandoned children that I importune you. (73)

Despite the complaints of Fr. Van der Velde nothing was done.

A year after the sale of the enslaved people from the Jesuits' Maryland estates, Pope Gregory XVI issued on December 3, 1839, an authoritative papal statement, a Papal Bull, *In supremo apostolatus.* In this document the pope unambiguously condemned the buying and selling of enslaved people. He stated,

We have judged that it belonged to Our pastoral solicitude to exert Ourselves to turn away the Faithful from the inhuman slave trade in Negroes and all other men. . . We say with profound sorrow – there were to be found afterwards among the Faithful men who, shamefully blinded by the desire of sordid gain, in lonely and distant countries, did not hesitate to reduce to slavery Indians, negroes and other wretched peoples, or else, by instituting or developing the trade in those who had been made slaves by others, to favour their unworthy practice. Desiring to remove such a shame from all the Christian nations, having fully reflected over the whole question . . . We warn and adjure earnestly in the Lord faithful Christians of every condition that no one in the future dare to vex anyone, despoil him of his possessions, reduce to servitude, or lend aid and favour to those who give themselves up to these practices, or exercise that inhuman traffic by which the Blacks, as if they were not men but rather animals, having been brought into servitude, in no matter what way, are, without any distinction, in contempt of the rights of justice and humanity, bought, sold, and devoted sometimes to the hardest labour. Further, in the hope of gain, propositions of purchase being made to the first owners of the Blacks, dissensions and almost perpetual conflicts are aroused in these regions.

We reprove, then, by virtue of Our Apostolic Authority, all the practices abovementioned as absolutely unworthy of the Christian name. By the same Authority We prohibit and strictly forbid any Ecclesiastic or lay person from presuming to defend

as permissible this traffic in Blacks under no matter what pretext or excuse. (74)

Slavery after the Sale

The sale of the enslaved people of the Jesuit plantations and Pope Gregory's 1839 denunciation of slavery did not end the involvement of the Maryland Jesuits in the enslavement of people.

Between 1840 and 1850, Georgetown College continued to utilize enslaved labor. Ten enslaved men cleaned and cooked. They labored at a college farm and a vacation villa. (75) Two enslaved women washed the clothes of the students and priests. (76) In addition to renting the services of enslaved people, the Jesuits of Georgetown College bought Charles Taylor in 1842 for $300, and Aloysius in 1844 for $635. (77) Despite the sale of enslaved plantation workers in 1838, that year did not end the use of enslaved labor by the Jesuits on their plantations. Just five years after the sale of the 272, the Jesuits bought an enslaved man, Len, for their plantations in 1843. (78)

Slavery ended in Georgetown before the end of the Civil War. The enslaved men and women who were members of Holy Trinity's congregation, and any owned by the College, were freed in 1862. President Abraham Lincoln signed the District of Columbia Compensated Emancipation Act on April 16, 1862, which ended slavery in the District, and compensated enslavers of the District for each emancipated enslaved person. (79) The law did not affect the functioning of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 within the District of Columbia. Under that act enslaved people who had escaped and sought refuge in the District could be apprehended and returned to their owners living in states not in rebellion. The Fugitive Slave Act was repealed in 1864, and slavery was abolished throughout the United States by the Thirteenth Amendment, which was ratified and proclaimed in December 1865.

Maryland, though a slave state, had not joined the Confederacy. Therefore, Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 did not apply to enslaved people in that state. Maryland held a constitutional convention in 1864. If Len was still enslaved by the Maryland Jesuits, he and any other enslaved people remaining under the control of Maryland's Jesuits were freed by the new constitution, which ended slavery, and was

narrowly passed by a general referendum on November 1, 1864. As Pope Gregory wrote there was no longer “pretext or excuse.”

Notes

1. When Pope Clement XIV suppressed the Society of Jesus for political reasons on July 21, 1773, Jesuits in Maryland reorganized themselves as the Select Body of Clergy, or the Corporation of the Roman Catholic Clergymen. The Maryland legislature chartered this organization in 1792. Catherine the Great, the Russian Czarina, forbad the promulgation of the suppression in her territories. She apparently valued the educational work of the many Jesuits who worked in the areas of her country annexed in the partitions of Poland in 1772, 1793, and 1795. In 1782 Pius VI gave formal permission for the Society to continue to operate in Russia. Under the umbrella of the Jesuits in Russia, Jesuit provinces were formally reconstituted in Great Britain in 1803, in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in 1803, and in the United States in 1805. Daniel L. Schafly, Jr., “General Repression, Russian Survival, American Success: The 'Russian' Society of Jesus and the Jesuits in the United States" in Jeffrey D. Burson, ed., *The Jesuit Suppression in Global Context: Causes, Events, and Consequences* (New York, 2015), pp. 201-3. On August 7, 1814, Pope Pius VII ended the suppression of the order. A Polish Jesuit, Tadeusz Brzozowski, who had been elected head of the Jesuits in Russia in 1805, became the Superior General of the reconstituted order.

According to Catherine O’Donnell, “The Select Body of the Clergy, [was] an institutional successor to the suppressed Jesuit community. The select body was designed to be representative in nature and practical in its duties, meant to carry Jesuit charism and property through to a hoped-for restoration.” O’Donnell, “Jesuits in the North American Colonies and the United States: Faith, Conflict, Adaptation,” *Brill Research Perspectives in Jesuit Studies* 2, https://brill.com/view/journals/rpjs/2/2/article-p1_1.xml?language=en.

2. Thomas Murphy, S.J., *Jesuit Slaveholding in Maryland, 1717–1838* (New

York, 2001), p. xiii.

3. Sharon M. Leon, “Jesuit Estates: Jesuit Holdings in Colonial Maryland,” *Jesuit Plantation Project*, https://jesuitplantationproject.org/s/jpp/page/estates. There were approximately 76 indentured servants on the *Ark.* According to O’Donnell, “The Select Body of Clergy,” “Jesuits and their indentured servants comprised sixty-two of the roughly three hundred settlers in the first five years of Maryland’s history.”

4. Lists of the passengers on the *Ark* can be found at *The Ark and The Dove*, http://www.usgennet.org/usa/md/state/arkdove.html; Leon, “Jesuit Estates.”

5. The idea of individual ownership of land was foreign to indigenous people in North America. From their perspective they could assign the right to use land but not the right to possess it as a commodity. Talia Bond, “Native Perspectives on Land Ownership,” Grand Canyon Trust, June 29, 2021, https://www.grandcanyontrust.org/blog/native-perspectives-land-ownership. Lord Baltimore, a typical colonizer, did not recognize the land rights of the indigenous people. For Baltimore’s rejection of Native American land rights see Leon, “Jesuit Estates.”

6. Leon, “Jesuit Estates.”

7. Stephanie A. T. Jacobe, “Where Were the Jesuit Plantations in Maryland?” *Catholic Standard*, Feb. 2, 2021; Leon, *Jesuit Plantation Project, https://jesuitplantationproject.org/s/jpp/page/welcome.* Professor Leon’s site provides a wealth of information about the Maryland Jesuits, their estates, and the enslaved people under their control.

8. Elsa Barraza Mendoza, “Catholic Slaveowners and the Development of Georgetown University’s Slave Hiring System, 1792-1862,” *Journal of Jesuit Studies*, December 15, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1163/22141332-0801P004.

9. O'Donnell, "Jesuits in the North American Colonies and the United States." See also Leon, "Jesuit Estates." The Magna Carta of 1215 had prohibited the donation of land to the Church in order to avoid feudal obligations. The prohibition had lapsed under Henry III, the son of King John, the signer of the Magna Carta. Henry's son, Edward I, restored the original prohibition in the 1279 and 1290 Statutes of Mortmain which outlawed the passing of land to the Church without royal permission.

10. O'Donnell, "Jesuits in the North American Colonies and the United States."

11. David S. Bogen, "Mathias de Sousa: Maryland's First Colonist of African Descent," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 96 (2001): 68-71.

12. "Mathias de Sousa," *Maryland Roots*, https://mdroots.thinkport.org/library/mathiasdesousa.asp.This site asserts, "Some people recognize Mathias as the first free person of African descent living in Maryland." He was not. Four Blacks were hired out by William Claiborne to work on Kent Island in 1633. However, de Sousa, "an Atlantic creole," was the first person of African descent in Calvert's Maryland colony. Bogen, "Mathias de Sousa," p. 68.

13. Bogen, "Mathias de Sousa," pp. 73-74.

14. Russell R. Menard, "The Maryland Slave Population, 1658 to 1730: A Demographic Profile of Blacks in Four Counties," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser. 32 (1975): 30, 41-45; Leon, "Jesuit Estates." The causes of decline in indentured servitude have been rigorously debated. Historians have cited the end of debtor prisons in England, a rise in per-capita income in England, and more affordable passage to America. More probable is the phenomenon of labor substitution when enslaved workers proved cheaper than indentured servants. Indentured servants were more difficult to manage than enslaved workers. Indentured servants, who eloped, could blend into the white population. With time, the rising cost of indentured laborers and the decreasing time of their contracts made enslaved labor more attractive to employers.

David Galenson, "The Rise and Fall of Indentured Servitude in the Americas: An Economic Analysis," *Journal of Economic History* 44 (1984): 1–26; Russell R. Menard, “From Servant to Freeholder: Status Mobility and Property Accumulation in Seventeenth-Century Maryland,” *William and Mary Quarterly,* 3d ser. 30 (1973): 37-64.

15. O’Donnell, “Jesuits in the North American Colonies and the United States.” Peter Kenney, S.J., “Temporalities,” 1820, Maryland Province Archives X-T-1, Georgetown University Library Special Collections.

16. £20 in 1638 would be approximately $3979 in 2020. Eric W. Nye, *Pounds Sterling to Dollars: Historical Conversion of Currency* https://www.uwyo.edu/numimage/currency.htm.

17. Leon, “Jesuit Estates.”

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid. Christopher J. Kellerman, S.J., *All Oppression Shall Cease: A History of Slavery, Abolitionism, and the Catholic Church,* (New York, 2022), pp. 73-80.

20. Ibid.

21. Mendoza, “Catholic Slaveowners and the Development of Georgetown University’s Slave Hiring System.”

22. William W. Warner, *At Peace with All Their Neighbors: Catholics and Catholicism in the National Capital, 1787-1860* (Washington, D.C., 1994), p. 88 and n. 21.

23. Robert Emmett Curran, “‘Splendid Poverty’: Jesuit Slaveholding in Maryland, 1805-1838,” p. 38, in Adam Rothman and Elsa Barraza Mendoza, eds., *Facing*

Georgetown's History: A Reader on Slavery, Memory, and Reconciliation (Washington, D.C., 2021).

24. O'Donnell, "Jesuits in the North American Colonies and the United States."

25. Kenney, "Temporalities," referenced in Curran, "'Splendid Poverty,'" pp. 37-38; and O'Donnell, "Jesuits in the North American Colonies and the United States."

26. Joseph P. Mobberly, S.J., Papers, "'Slavery Is According to Reason': The Mobberly Diaries, Part II, August 1823," Georgetown University Slavery Archive, item 144, https://slaveryarchive.georgetown.edu/items/show/158.

27. Ibid., "'Masters Must Answer,' The Mobberly Diaries, Part I, 1820," Georgetown University Slavery Archive, item 140, https://slaveryarchive.georgetown.edu/items/show/152.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., "A 'Multiplicity of Deaths': Fr. Mobberly to Fr. Grassi, on a Series of Deaths That Occurred at St. Inigos, 1812," Georgetown University Slavery Archive, item 104, https://slaveryarchive.georgetown.edu/items/show/113.

30. Ibid., "Masters Must Answer."

31. Curran, "'Splendid Poverty,'" p. 39.

32. O'Donnell, "Jesuits in the North American Colonies and the United States."

33. William G. Thomas III, "The Timing of *Queen v. Hepburn:* An Exploration of African American Networks in the Early Republic," *O Say Can You See: Early Washington, D.C., Law and Family*,

https://earlywashingtondc.org/stories/queen_v_hepburn#footn8.
White Marsh plantation in Prince George's County was bequeathed to the Jesuits by James Carroll in 1729. White Marsh held more enslaved people than any other Jesuit plantation. From 1783, it served as the meeting site for the Corporation for Roman Catholic Clergymen. Carroll had purchased the services of Mary Queen, a Black indentured servant. The normal period of service for an indentured servant was seven years. However, when Carroll died Queen was considered part of the estate bequeathed to the Jesuits. Thomas, *A Question of Freedom: The Families Who Challenged Slavery from the Nation's Founding to the Civil War* (New Haven, 2020), pp. 20 and 173-79. See also Leon, "White Marsh," "John Ashton," and "Mary Queen."

34. Thomas, *A Question of Freedom*, pp. 167-72.

35. Ibid., p. 354 n. 6. Charles Mahoney initially won his freedom. However, the case was appealed and re-tried. Amid the fear evoked by the revolt of enslaved people on Saint-Domingue, Mahoney lost his freedom at his third trial in 1802.

36. Thomas, *A Question of Freedom,* pp. 167-72.

37. Thomas, "The Timing of *Queen v. Hepburn."* A contract between Mary Queen and Charles Carroll concerning Mary Queen's indenture could not be produced by Priscilla Queen's attorney, and the District of Columbia rejected the oral evidence of an old relative as hearsay.

38. Mendoza, "Catholic Slaveowners and the Development of Georgetown University's Slave Hiring System."

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. O'Donnell, "Jesuits in the North American Colonies and the United States."

42. Thomas, *A Question of Freedom*, p. 187.

43. Ibid. Also see Leon, "Jesuit Estates" as well as Leon's website. The National Park Service in "Enslaved African-Americans Confront Difficult Choices," states that, "As British ships began to enter Chesapeake Bay in March 1813, some enslaved African-Americans made their way in small boats to claim their freedom. In April 1814, after Vice Admiral Alexander Cochrane became Commander-in-Chief of British forces in the North Atlantic, he issued a proclamation aimed at African-Americans still in bondage. Addressed 'to all persons wishing to emigrate from the United States,' Cochrane's proclamation noted that those escapees would be received by the British, as 'either entering into His Majesty's Sea of Land Forces,' or 'as FREE Settlers to the British Possessions in North America or the West Indies.'" National Park Service, https://www.nps.gov/articles/slave-loyalism.htm.

44. *Vermont Intelligencer,* Bellows Falls, Vt., July 7,1817, p. 3, https://www.newspapers.com/clip/34262208/slave-resistance-in-st-marys-county/.

45. Thomas, *A Question of Freedom,* pp. 188-89.

46. Mendoza, "Catholic Slaveowners and the Development of Georgetown University's Slave Hiring System."

47. Curran, "'Splendid Poverty,'" pp. 37-38. Perhaps the temptations involved in the Jesuits' control over female bodies provided another reason for the termination of slavery. Thomas discusses the allegation that Fr. John Ashton, S.J., the manager of White Marsh plantation, fathered children with Susanna Queen, an enslaved woman. Thomas, *A Question of Freedom,* pp. 47-52.

48. Ibid.; Mendoza, "Catholic Slaveowners and the Development of Georgetown

University's Slave Hiring System." See also Robert Emmett Curran, "Peter Kenney: Twice Visitor of the Maryland Mission (1819–21, 1830–33) and Father of the First Two American Provinces," in Thomas M. McCoog*,* ed., *With Eyes and Ears Open: The Role of Visitors in the Society of Jesus*, *Jesuit Studies* 21 (2019): 191–213.

49. The Flemish Jesuits are usually referred to as Belgians. However, technically there was no Belgium in 1822. The former Austrian Netherlands had been joined to the United Kingdom of Netherlands at the Congress of Vienna. Belgium did not emerge as an independent country until after the Belgian Revolution of 1830.

50. David Collins, S.J., Andrew Dial, Kelly Schmidt, Laura Weis, and Ayan Ali, *Jesuit Slavery in North America*: *An Overview* (Washington, D.C., 2020). https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/resources-by-theme/04-jesuits-and-slavery-in-north-america-jan2021.pdf. DuBourg was born in Saint-Domingue and was sent to France for education. There he became a Sulpician. Forced to leave France during the French Revolution, he came to the United States in 1794. He ministered in Baltimore under Bishop Carroll and was appointed president of Georgetown in 1794. He contributed to the growth of the college but amassed a large debt and was replaced as president in 1798. In 1812 he was appointed apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Louisiana and the Two Floridas. He was elevated to the status of bishop in 1812. Because of opposition to his authority in New Orleans, he moved his residence to St. Louis.

51. Kelly L. Schmidt, "A National Legacy of Enslavement: An Overview of the Work of the History, Memory, and Reconciliation Project," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 8 (2020): 81-107, https://doi.org/10.1163/22141332-0801P005.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Curran, "'Splendid Poverty,'" p. 42. William McSherry (1799-1839) was provincial of the Jesuit Province of Maryland from 1833 to 1837 and again briefly before his death in 1839 and president of Georgetown College from 1837 to 1839. Thomas Mulledy (1794-1860) was president of Georgetown College from 1825 to 1837 and from 1845 to 1848, and was provincial of the Jesuit Province of Maryland from 1837 to 1839.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid., p. 43. Both Mulledy and McSherry came from families who held enslaved people. However, they felt that the plantations distracted the Maryland Jesuits from serving the spiritual needs of the increasing numbers of Irish immigrants in the eastern cities.

57. "'They Want Them . . . for Their Plantations': Fr. Kenney to Fr. Neale on Their Plans to Sell a Group of People to a Louisiana Planter, Sept. 10, 1832," Georgetown University Slavery Archive, item 107, https://slaveryarchive.georgetown.edu/items/show/117.

58. "Fr. Roothaan, S.J., Lays out the Conditions for the Sale of Enslaved Persons, 27 December 1836," Georgetown University Slavery Archive, item 86, http://slaveryarchive.georgetown.edu/items/show/94.

59. Curran, "'Splendid Poverty,'" p. 46. See Rachael Swarns, "272 Slaves Were Sold to Save Georgetown. What Does It Owe Their Descendants?" *The New York Times*, Apr. 16, 2016.

60. Collins, Dial, Schmidt, Weis, and Ali, *Jesuit Slavery in North America.*

61. Ibid.

62. Samuel Eccleston, the archbishop of Baltimore, a Sulpician, had asserted a

claim on behalf of the Archdiocese of Baltimore for the lands and enslaved held by the Jesuits. Ibid.

63. See Curran, "'Splendid Poverty,'" p. 53, n. 81.

64. Cornelius Michael Buckley, *Stephen Larigaudelle Dubuisson, S.J. (1786–1864) and the Reform of the American Jesuits* (Lanham, Md., 2013), p. 237.

65. Curran, "'Splendid Poverty,'" p. 38.

66. Ibid., p. 48.

67. Ibid., p.47.

68. Ibid., p. 44.

69. Collins, Dial, Schmidt, Weis, and Ali, *Jesuit Slavery in North America.*

70. Curran, "'Splendid Poverty,'" pp. 47-48.

71. James Oliver van der Velde, a Fleming, completed his Jesuit novitiate at Georgetown, where he served as librarian from 1818 to 1831. He subsequently became the vice-provincial of the Jesuits in the United States and then provincial of the Jesuit's western province. He taught at Saint Louis University and served as its president from 1840 to 1843, before becoming the Bishop of Chicago. Because of health reasons, he requested transfer to the Diocese of Natchez in Mississippi and died only 23 months after his arrival in Natchez.

72. "Letter from James Van de Velde, S.J., to Thomas Mulledy, S.J., March 28, 1848," Georgetown University Slavery Archive, item 3, https://slaveryarchive.georgetown.edu/items/show/3.

73. “Letter from James Van de Velde, S.J., to Ignatius Brocard, S.J., November 27, 1848,” Georgetown University Slavery Archive, item 82, http://slaveryarchive.georgetown.edu/items/show/90.

74. In Supremo Apostolatus, https://www.papalencyclicals.net/greg16/g16sup.htm.

75. Mendoza, “Catholic Slaveowners and the Development of Georgetown University’s Slave Hiring System.”

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

79. “The District of Columbia Emancipation Act,” Apr. 16, 1862, Record Group 11, General Records of the United States Government, National Archives and Records Service. See Peter J. Albert, “Enslavement and Emancipation at Holy Trinity,” below.