

MOTHER FRANCES WARDE, RSM

The publication **Give Us This Day** has a section in it called "Blessed Among Us" in which a saint or significant person is featured each day. Today is the anniversary of the death of Mother Frances Warde, RSM. Her story is included in this message. I thought I would share it with you because of the impact that the Sisters of Mercy have had within our Diocese.

Mother Frances Warde, RSM, one of the first to join Mother Catherine McAuley, lived for a time in Providence. The Warde-robe, an outreach to those in need, located in Central Falls, is named after her. The witness of her life is truly inspiring. She is one of the "Blessed Among Us."

God Bless!

Fr. Joe

Mother Frances Warde

Sister of Mercy (1810-1884)

"Frances Warde, who was born in Ireland and became the first professed member of the Sisters of Mercy, would go on to play an enormous role in establishing and shaping the Catholic Church in America. The key event in her life occurred when she was sixteen and met Catherine McAuley, who was in the process of founding her new religious congregation. After her profession as a Sister of Mercy, Frances joined in the work of caring for Dublin's poor before helping to establish several other foundations in Ireland. Then in 1843 with six companions, she set sail for a new mission in the United States.

Their first stop was Pittsburgh, where Bishop Michael O'Connor sought the sisters' help in ministering to the Irish population. But with incredible speed the number of her sisters had vastly multiplied, and before long Mother Warde had established parish schools throughout southeastern New England. Among other challenges, they confronted threats from anti-Catholic "Know-Nothings." In Providence, Rhode Island, a mob of several thousand threatened to burn down the convent of these "female Jesuits." Though the mayor advised her to flee, she refused. Armed Catholic men gathered to protect the convent, but it was ultimately the brave composure of the bishop and Mother Warde herself that shamed the mob into dispersing.

During her term as superior general of the Sisters of Mercy in the United States, Mother Warde established a total of twenty-seven convents in ten states. She died on September 17, 1884."

"The blessed Cross of Christ be about us."

—Mother Frances Warde

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