

# FOUNDATIONS

## 1844-1847

This book of letters by Bishop Mathias Loras, D.D., the first Bishop of Dubuque was compiled from several sources. The Loras Press (under the

Kucera Center) published the book in 2004 and all inquiries should be directed either to the bookstore or to the Kucera Center, 563-588-7662.

Additional books include "Letters to a Pioneer Bishop" and "Man of Deeds, Bishop Loras and the Upper Mississippi Valley Frontier."

### **February 5, 1844. (no place given) To the faithful of the Diocese of Dubuque**

It may be objected that the Catholic clergy of this diocese are sufficiently able to support themselves. We acknowledge that they might have been wealthy, had they kept for their personal use the \$49,283.76 which have been spent chiefly in the Iowa territory since the month of April 1838 to December 1843. But instead of making themselves comfortable by those means, they have voluntarily made themselves poor for the kingdom of heaven, and have laid out all that money for the purchase of real estates in almost every town of Iowa for the respective congregations.

They have built 29 churches without hardly receiving any help from the people. They have assisted many orphans and destitute persons, helped the Catholic schools, founded 4 religious communities, etc., keeping hardly anything for themselves, but living in a most economical manner. Some will insist, saying that the European Catholic associations are still sending funds to this diocese. It is in fact so far the case. But how long will they continue to do it?...

Henceforth in each congregation every male member 18 years old or above shall pay the value of one dollar every three months towards the maintenance of the church and clergy as it is practiced by the members of the congregations of Dubuque to their great praise for many years.

### **May 14, 1844. Dubuque. To one of his brothers?**

Last week I was returning from a mission by coach. The Maquoketa River was very high, although I had been told it would be easy to cross. I prodded my heavy and excellent grey horse, Tom. He kept going, but stopped in the middle. The water rose to such a height that my trunk, which was behind, floated above the guardrail of the carriage and took off. The current was such that Tom, who never hesitated, began to lose footing. I pushed him, I struck him, I threatened him. He tried again and reached the other bank. With great difficulty the trunk was saved.



### **June 7, 1844. (no place given) To the Rev. Terence J. Donaghoe**

I hope, my dear friend, that my last letter will have made some impression on you and that you will think seriously of spending the balance of your days in Dubuque. It is the most quiet place in America. Protestants are not bigoted. They respect us and will never threaten to assassinate the poor bishop. Several of them are now under instruction to join the church. The weather is more delightful. Come and live with me, I shall try to make you comfortable.

### **May 5, 1845. Dubuque. To his brother Mathieu**

I approve your decision about the three hundred francs lost by the thief who is more than a clever adventurer. It is a good lesson. The altar boxes were delivered to me by Mr. Mazzuchelli, who arrived safely. He has just bought about 900 acres of land six miles from Dubuque where he hopes to build a college.

### **June 5, 1845. (no place given) To the Rev. Terence J. Donaghoe**

It is customary that a clergyman from Dubuque should visit Holy Cross on the 3rd Sunday of every month. Suppose you take Mr. Corkery as companion and with old Tom and the gig go there on the third Sunday of June if you are well enough, then, and also on the following month.

### **October 28, 1845. Dubuque. To Vincentius Eduard Milde, Archbishop of Vienna**

My Catholic faithful consist partly of Irish, partly of Germans, and partly of French. Their numbers are increasing to such an extent that it will soon be essential to build a new cathedral. The Sisters of Mercy, which I have, also expect help from me as do the outlying parishes and missions which we conduct among the Sioux and Winnebago Indians.

### **February 6, 1846. Dubuque. To Dominique Meynis, secretary of the Propagation of the Faith**

I believe it is my duty to advise the Council...that Mr. Mazzuchelli, who visited Lyons in 1843, no longer belongs to my diocese, but to that of Bishop Henni of Milwaukee, Territory of Wisconsin. This prelate should be addressed to learn if the property which this ecclesiastic has bought and upon which he is going to build, principally at the expense of the Propagation Society, is really destined to the use of the Order of Dominicans, or if it is a private institution.

### **June 11, 1846. Philadelphia. To Mr. Muller at Munich**

I would like to obtain a young German missionary gifted with those qualities which make good missionaries. He would have to exercise the holy ministry either in Dubuque, my episcopal city, or in some other parts of the diocese according to his physical and moral fitness. I beg you earnestly to take my request into consideration and to tell me as soon as you are able what I might count upon. Please have the kindness to write to me at Dubuque, Iowa Territory, via New York, United States of America.

### **June 26, 1846. Dubuque. To Dominique Meynis and the Central Bureau of the Propagation of the Faith**

Two weeks ago, (returning from Baltimore) going up the North River between New York and Albany, I was traveling on the first-class boat, Niagara, beside an officer of the the United States Army in full uniform. Everyone admired us and said that we were both faithful to our vocations and considered it an honor to wear the symbols.

Several distinguished Catholics and Protestants spoke to us. Some offered me money for my mission and convinced me even more that there is no drawback in wearing ecclesiastical dress in the United States, at least a plain cassock. What is unusual about this is that in several places, Protestant ministers for some years have been wearing long black apparel similar to ours. Some Catholic ecclesiastics say that we should not do like the Methodists! Odd speech! Might almost as well say that we must not appear in the pulpit because they themselves show up there.

### **March 12, 1847. Dubuque. To the Rev. Joseph Cretin**

(He) has just this week acquired from the government, fortunately for Dubuque, the choice property of Table Mound, 400 acres of what will be a splendid site for a college and seminary, at \$1.25 an acre! In five years it will be worth \$10. I bled myself white, but I have unlimited confidence in Divine Providence. Everyone agrees that I could do no better. Please explain the reason to Lyons that one day we may establish a training school for the priesthood.

### **October 29, 1847. Dubuque. To Dominique Meynis, secretary of the Propagation of the Faith**

Mr. Cretin arrived here safely with several good subjects: deacon, subdeacon minore, but unfortunately no priest. I thought I would be ready to begin our college and seminary this year, but unfortunately, I have not been able to do so for lack of funds and of capable people to direct it. But next year, probably, we can at last begin. I sent some very good young men to the college and seminary in St. Louis which the Lazarists administer very well. There are eight of them — two Americans, two Irish, two Germans and two French. That's exactly what we need on our mission where all three languages are spoken.