



Oblate Sisters of Providence

# The Lange Letter



December 2007

Mother Mary {Elizabeth} Lange Guild News

Issue No. 49



Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien,  
15th Archbishop of Baltimore is introduced to  
Sister Veronica de los Santos, OSP, Guild Staff

## WELCOME ARCHBISHOP O'BRIEN

### *Meet Servant of God Mary Lange*

Fall had just touched the air with a cooler evening or two when the archdiocese, indeed all of Baltimore witnessed the splendid extravaganza of welcome. The archdiocese has a newly appointed leader. It was the welcoming ceremony — the installation of the newly appointed Archbishop of Baltimore celebrated through the most powerful and awesome of prayers: the Eucharistic Liturgy.



The Mother Mary Lange Guild of the Oblate Sisters of

Providence welcomes Archbishop O'Brien. We offer him the pleasure and challenge of meeting a woman of all seasons whose virtuous fruits and works have stood tests of almost 200 years. God's grace continues to be operative through Servant of God Mary Lange as her daughters make relevant services to God's people through education, social services and evangelization. Her life and mission to the marginalized are timeless and beg to be enhanced as the process for canonization winds through labyrinthine ways. It is this process in dire need of an advocate. The Lange Guild promoting the canonization of Servant of God Mary Lange looks forward to the advocacy of Archbishop O'Brien.

### An open letter to

## Cardinal Keeler

*Dear Cardinal Keeler:*

*As you leave the helm of leadership in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, we find mixed emotions in writing this missive. Over-riding all is the sense of gratitude for all you are, have done and will continue to do for the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Certainly your support, encouragement and promotion for the cause of Mother Mary Lange has brought to fruition many blessings. We beg and look forward with confidence to your continued support.*

*You have been and will continue in our prayers. We ask in turn, please, your blessing.*

*In God's providential care,*

*Members of the Mother Lange Guild*



Above center cut-out:  
Retiring Cardinal William H. Keeler,  
14th Archbishop of Baltimore



## *The Adventures of Solomon The Sisters' Dog*

It was the 1840's Mother Mary had completed her second term as the elected Superior of the Congregation. She had taken her turn serving as housekeeper in the ministry of the seminary. She was serving as Mistress of Novices and treasurer of the infant community. She was also not so busy that the exploits of the convent dog did not register with her offering a bit of mystery and humor. Grace Sherwood's account in *The Oblates' Hundred and One Years* (Macmillan, NY, 1931, p. 85f) indicated that the convent watchdog "gave the Sisters much pleasure."

[The following excerpts Sherwood's account of the incident:]

"Solomon grew sickly and died...of poison...he was known to hate intruders and keep them at a distance. The same morning that he died, almost at the hour...the seminary director met, running loose on the street, a dog which he believed to be [a] seminary dog...A worker and the sisters working there, however declared him to be the Sisters' dog. Every one...gathered about the dog calling him "Solomon" to which he apparently responded. So they made a feast for him. The Director, however was dubious...The dog went on with his feast and others with their recognition of him.

[Later being conducted by rope] to the Sisters' house from which everybody believed it strayed, M. Joubert set out to escort it home. The dog following happily...Father exclaimed: "He knows he is getting home," as they neared the convent.

M. Joubert ...ready to scold the Sisters for their carelessness in allowing their good watchdog to stray...was met at the door by the mournful statement that Solomon was dead [and Sisters

**Solomon's progeny? Posing for Solomon. This is actually "Brian" the pet of Sr. Madeline's nieces and nephews of Cincinnati, Oh.**



Mary and Chantal were at the garden gate reimbursing the man who was carting poor Solomon's body away. In the meantime, the pseudo-Solomon had already taken possession of everybody's heart and was even then attacking a second feast prepared for him by the children and the Sisters.

On this scene of merriment and rejoicing walked Sister Mary and Sister Chantal fresh from the gruesome task of disposing of Solomon's remains! Judge their astonishment to find him apparently come to life again and frisking around eating his head off. "Fear seized them" it is quaintly recorded and they were both for backing out to the garden again where they had just parted from the last of the authentic Solomon!

Fear seems to have been an accompaniment of Solomon the second. No one claimed him, the diary tells us and he became the Sisters' authorized guardian.

## **MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**

Happenings to remember:

**N**ovember 15th - "Stay-at-Home Ball" return cards due for placement on altar at Thanksgiving. **YOU** share in special prayers of thanksgiving and remembrance on this National Day of Thanks to the God of all good things.

**D**ecember 25th - Christmas joys and peace to you that lasts all through the New Year.

**J**anuary 25th - February 2nd - Novena of blessings and intercession for your intentions in preparation for the anniversary of Mother Lange's death February 3, 1882.

**F**ebruary 3rd - Celebrating the 126th anniversary of the death of Servant of God Mary Lange. Join us in a day of prayer; Cardinal Keeler to participate. For details, call or e-mail the Mother Lange Office.

## **DONATIONS / ORDERS ON-LINE AT OUR WEBSITE**

For your convenience, did you know that you can easily and securely donate or place orders to the Mother Mary Lange Guild by going on-line to the Guild website?

[web address to be announced](#)

- Click on "Make a donation"
- Click on "Information, please"
- Click on "Order"
- Click on "Membership"
- Click on "Pilgrimage"
- Click on "Prayer request"
- Click on "Favors received"



# Favors Asked; Favors Received; Favors Asked; Favors Received;

*With faith no explanation is necessary, without faith, no explanation is possible.*

## Prayers Answered

I thank Mother Lange for her intervention and helping me make my wishes come true.

J. P.; NJ

*Dear Mother: ...I graduated from St. Augustine's School. [I] thank the Oblate Sisters of Providence for their prayers for the intercession of the newborn emergency brain surgery of Baby Lia...that she survived. The second miracle was that she did not need further surgery that her doctor had planned. The family believes it is a miracle. We are all very happy. I am grateful for the intercession of Mother Lange for the healing of Baby Lia.*

E.M.S.; DC

...Expressing thanks for favors received.

M.J.G.; MD

...Expressing thanks for favors received.

D.E.N.; NY

...Expressing thanks for favors received.

B.G.; MA

...Expressing thanks for favors received.

E.I.C.; MD

...Expressing thanks for favors received.

P.T.B.; NJ

...Expressing thanks for favors received.

M.J.Y.; CA



At left is 5 St. Mary's Court, where the first 3 Oblates began their novitiate, June 13, 1828. They were Mademoiselles Elisabeth Lange, Marie Magdeleine Balas and Rosine Bouegue. Nine boarding scholars moved in with them. One of them Almaide Duchemin, joined the novices in April of 1829. They took in three more children gratis, one of these being Germaine, who later entered the community and became Sister M. Clotilde.

Rented from a Mr. Hoffman, 5 St. Mary's Court did not suit at all; Father Joubert considered a house on Pennsylvania Avenue, but it was not much better.

*Dear Sister: Just a note to share a miracle. I say the healing prayer to Mother Mary Lange always putting in names of those in need of healing. I'd been adding my name because two biopsies showed basal cell cancer on my nose. Since a special salve didn't rid me of cancer, I had to have layers sliced off until no cancer cells were in evidence. After the first slice, we waited for the lab report. The doctor returned with thumbs up. There wasn't any cancer. He even said it was a miracle. Now I'm just taking care of the open sore on the nose which will slowly heal. I am humbled by God's goodness through the intercession of Mother Lange.*

J. L.; ND

*There were other sayings of Mother Lange besides those published in Timeless Wisdom: Mother Lange said... (Edited by Fish & Durkin, Editions du Signe, publishers; France.) This saying of Mother Lange was the response from the Oblate Book of Ceremonies used by the Sisters from 1828 – 1830.*

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Responding to the question put to her by the Reverend Director: "Are you disposed to sacrifice yourself especially in teaching the children according to the end of this institute?" The response of Mother Mary Lange and all Oblate Sisters who have followed her was and is "I am ready to do all for the love of Jesus Christ my Redeemer!"

Mother Mary said these words July 2, 1829 for the first time. They were preliminary to making the commitment of poverty, chastity and obedience. To Mother Lange it was the fulfillment of a lifelong desire. She, a black woman, could aspire to religious consecration.

It was unheard of in the Catholic Church until that memorable day. She, with three other women, consecrated themselves to the Christian education of children [of color]. This was something that must have had deep personal meaning to one who had held this desire for more than ten years. It was a triumph of the human spirit's ability to endure and to hope. It was the triumph of the Holy Spirit who "makes a way out of no way." After the example of Mother Mary Lange, we knock, we seek, we trust. Meanwhile we act. We do good and leave the results in the hands of

providence. "It is no secret what God can do."

(Reprinted in part from *The Lange Letter* 4/ '97; # 18)

**"I am ready  
to do all for  
the love of  
Jesus Christ  
my Redeemer"**

**-- Mother Mary Lange --**



NOVEMBER,  
NATIONAL BLACK CATHOLIC  
HISTORY MONTH  
TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF  
**Oblate Sisters of Providence**  
HISTORY

By Marlene Apollon

**How many questions can you answer correctly?**

1. What year did the first ships of refugees from St. Domingue arrive in Baltimore?
2. In what area of Baltimore did the refugees from St. Domingue settle?
3. Why did Elizabeth Lange's parents leave St. Domingue?
4. Where did Elizabeth's parents seek refuge after leaving St. Domingue?
5. What is the present name of the former colony of St. Domingue?
6. What is the name of the school that Elizabeth founded?
7. What is the name of the church (Chapel) where she used to worship?
8. What is special about the foundation of the Oblate Sisters of Providence?
9. What was the name of the French priest who co-founded the Oblate Sisters of Providence?
10. How many sisters were there when the Oblate Sisters of Providence first started?
11. Can you name one of the first sisters besides Mother Lange?
12. What date did they pronounce their vows?
13. What can you see today at the place where the sisters pronounced their vows?
14. What is the motto of the Oblate Sisters of Providence?
15. What was Mother Lange's favorite language?
16. What other foreign language did Mother Lange speak?
17. Where can you see the room where Mother Lange died?
18. What year did the cause of canonization of Mother Lange officially open?
19. Who approved the opening of the cause of canonization of Mother Lange in 2001?
20. Where can you see the stained glass window dedicated to Mother Lange in 2001?
21. What is the name of the organization that is working to promote the cause of canonization of Mother Lange?

**OOPS!**

Apologies and  
bouquets to  
**Margaret M. Covert**  
whose name was  
omitted from the  
August edition of '06  
"Ball" listings.

**Answers:**

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 1. 1793   | 9. Father Joubert                        | 14. <i>Providentia Providebit</i> ; God will provide |
| 2. Fells Point                                  | 10. Four                                 | 15. French   |
| 3. Because of the revolution in that country    | 11. (Elizabeth Lange), Magdalene Balas,  | 16. Spanish  |
| 4. Near the city of Santiago, Cuba              | Rosine Bouegue,                          | 17. At St. Frances Academy                           |
| 5. Haiti  | Almaide Duchemin Maxis                   | 18. April 1991                                       |
| 6. St. Frances Academy                          | 12. July 2, 1829                         | 19. Cardinal Wm. Keeler of Baltimore                 |
| 7. Chapelle Basse                               | 13. A monument dedicated to Mother Lange | 20. At the Shrine of the National Basilica in        |
| 8. It is the first Catholic religious order for | and the Oblate Sisters of Providence     | Washington, DC                                       |
| women of color in the world.                    | (610 George Street, Baltimore, MD )      | 21. The Mother Lange Guild                           |

**Vignette:** Mother Mary Lange (b. circa 1784 – d. 1882) was a free woman of color in a slave state. An immigrant of Haitian parentage she favored French and Spanish languages. She had an unwavering consecrated trust in God's providence. With indomitable courage, faith and compassion, Elizabeth Lange (later Mother Mary) began educating children of color in her home in Baltimore, Maryland

more than forty-five years before the Emancipation Proclamation. She founded Saint Frances Academy, and with Father James Joubert, S.S., began the first Catholic religious congregation for women of African heritage in the world—the Oblate Sisters of Providence (1829). Her cause for canonization is under investigation.

**Speaker's Bureau / Pilgrimage**  
To engage a speaker or plan a pilgrimage  
for your group call or write:

Mother Lange Guild Office  
701 Gun Road  
Baltimore, MD 21227-3899



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Website: [www.oblatesisters.com](http://www.oblatesisters.com) then choose "Ministries".