

Chapter 25 : Religion & Charity (1824-1879).

Sic transit gloria mundi.

Thomas à Kempis, et al.

The Catholic Congregation had no church, but a place of worship. The members were literally basement Christians. There was an "apostolic substitute" for pastoral care. 1805-1832 it was Abbé Jean Baptiste Gridaine (1764-1832). During Desirée's stay in Sweden in 1811 he was her priest and also in 1823-1832. With Desirée's lukewarm interest, it cannot have been too onerous. At some point, he complained about Charles John's apostasy, but that brought him nothing. In 1832, when her interest in accomplishing something had awakened, Josephine wrote to her mother, complaining about his lack of flexibility, which made him difficult to work with. Hard to evaluate. Like the rest of the royal house Josephine expected total submission. Everything else was lack of cooperation. Gridaine died shortly after of a heart attack and was succeeded by Studach.

Studach & Josephine managed to jointly find enough money to 1836/37 build a Catholic church, the Eugenia chapel on Norra Smedjegatan 24, Norrmalm. Josephine's brother Max had the honour of laying the foundation stone. The building was funded to one third by the congregation and the rest by foreign donors. Desirée, Josephine & her Bavarian family contributed. Josephine's contribution appears to have come from the sale in 1837 of her Duchy of Galliera. 1833/36 Josephine is said to have suffered from a severe depression (pathological melancholy).¹ Possibly because the construction was opposed. The duo also worked for a Catholic church in Gothenburg and in Kristiania.

Afterwards, the congregation was keen to spread the Catholic message. This was forbidden, and in 1844 the Consistory tried to have Studach convicted. He defended himself by saying that although he was an Apostolic substitute, he was not legally responsible for the doing of the congregations employees. This particular case involved a reverend Montz having a master painter Nilsson convert in order to enter into a Catholic marriage. Montz subsequently left the country. Studach defended him wholeheartedly: Swedish law was irrelevant to a Catholic church! Catholics had their own laws! Perhaps a little undiplomatic.²

The case became a legal feuilleton & cause célèbre. The Chancellor of Justice hid the verdict for several years while waiting for a pardon that never came.³ In 1858 during Charles XV's prince reign, six converts were punished by losing their citizenship & expelled. As the story goes, this would be a belated revenge for Studach advising Josephine to remove Charles's love object Sigrid Sparre from the court.⁴ Maybe so. However, the religious persecution soon ended. Hard to imagine while it was going on, though. The law of expulsion was abolished in 1860. Conversion was permitted in 1873. In 1868 Josephine employed the son of one of the expelled, Joseph Müller (1843-1936), as a librarian, secretary, biographer, etc. Meanwhile she corresponded with Pope IX and complained of her distress. One of the letters is from 1868. She sounds rather subdued:

I have been here for 45 years now and Bishop Studach with me. We have suffered much, suffered quietly for our Holy Faith. The beginning was difficult and lasted

¹ NFB 1884: s. 1364.

² Aftonbladet, 1844-08-20, s. 2.

³ Reuterdahl 1920: s. 340.

⁴ Braun 1950: ss. 211-237.

long, required great wisdom and deprivation! Everything I did was just for the purpose of trying to make myself loved through my love for all without distinction, through my patience, my tolerance in the hope that I also would be loved for my faith. God is my witness that I do not say this to praise myself but to thank Him for having from time to time used me in his service!

At first, everybody was suspicious, I was Catholic. For a long time they suspected me of wanting to enlist proselytes, influence my environment, my family. Gradually, the prejudices against my religion diminished, my intentions became better understood. - But as to proselytes, after almost half a century, there are still no successes to be praised; on the contrary, I can say that it is almost humiliating to think of the little success I have achieved over so many years. It has often happened that the bishop and I have despondently asked us: Why has God brought us here, when we can do so little in His glory?⁵

Josephine tried to influence the Vatican's Swedish priest appointments. She had little influence over the Pope, but further down in the hierarchy things went well. In 1875, she visited Rome, met Pius and was allowed to reinstate her favourite Giovanni Moro as long as she paid him with her own money. Studach had had him removed after a conflict over Moro's more conciliatory style compared to Studach's tendency to never back down. There is a letter:

On June 3 I visited the Papal chapel with my niece [Princess] Mathilde [Viano] at half past eight, where he gave us the Holy Communion. I knelt in the middle, Mathilde on my one side and [my maid of honour] Rosalie [Muffat] on the other. It has happened a few times, that the pope has honoured a visiting queen or princess this way, but Mathilde is the first Roman princess, and Rosalie the only non-princely lady to be allowed into the papal chapel. Afterwards the pope had breakfast and for the first time with a princess on his right. Mathilde sat beside me, while Rosalie was served in a neighbouring hall.⁶

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Josephine's charity commemorated two events: The birth of an heir (charities 1826/33) & her arrival to Sweden 1823 (charities 1873/76). The money was raised through donations & she also used her own money. The following list is based on Robert Braun's appendix "List of Queen Josephine's charities"⁷ & checked against a number of sources. In addition Josephine allowed associations to be founded in her name:

- "Friends of the Poor" (the Stockholm Division; 1826-1913). In 1841, its scope was restricted to children. That same year, Charles John became the Society's patron. Josephine became an honorary member when the statutes in 1843 were amended to permit it.⁸
- "Society for the Encouragement of Parental Care" (the Stockholm Division; 1827-1944) with Josephine as protector & chairman. The society in various ways supported poor families with multiple children. There was also a Gothenburg Division (1849-1965?) & a Malmö Division (?-1909+). Josephine's role is implied by the following:

⁵ Lindqvist 1993: ca. 1868-05.

⁶ Braun 1950: s. 283. [Brev från Josephine till Agnès Müller, 1875-06-15.]

⁷ Braun 1950: ss. 323-324.

⁸ SKL 1845; N.N. 1882.

The governing bodies consisted of a board trustees and an executive committee. According to the statutes, the Board consisted of 40 members "living in the separate districts of the Capitol, so that each of them, with the help of the Church may ascertain what help is needed and also their moral state.". The executive committee originally consisted of six members of the Board, appointed by Josephine. "They managed the Funds and deliberated on their distribution". Funds were acquired through annual fees and through donations.⁹

- "The Society for Faithful Servants" (1828-1940) was a sort of pension institution for those with 15 years of employment or more. Josephine is not mentioned.¹⁰
- 1829 Josephine "inherited" Princess Sofia Albertina's "Charitable Women's Society" (1819-1934). In 1819-1825, the society operated under informal conditions. In 1825, the society was given statutes and Sofia Albertina became president. Upon her death in 1829, Josephine became chairman.¹¹ The Society mainly supported widows & fatherless daughters.
- "The Society for Domestic Silkworm Farming" (1830-1898), was something completely different from the other societies. Almost an industrial venture. It was an old idea to turn silkworm farming into a Swedish "cottage industry". The society distributed plants, seeds of mulberry trees & eggs of silkworm. Josephine was persuaded to be the protector of the society but did not grow anything herself. However, she persuaded others to try.¹²
- "The Society for the Encouragement of Labour" (1833-1880) was established by Josephine to organize work for poor women. The main business was handicraft and Josephine urged the Executive Board to buy from the society's stores instead of in the shops for donations. The Society thus appears to have acted as a subcontractor to other aid organizations.¹³ When it was closed, the remaining assets were transferred to the "Society for Encouragement of Parental Care" (above).
- Queen Charlotte protected the "General Institute for the Blind and the Deaf" (the Manila School; 1809-present). Her patronage was dormant after her death in 1818, but in 1829 Desirée took over and at Desirée's death in 1860 Josephine.¹⁴
- Josephine's sister Amelia died in 1873. She bequeathed Josephine the management of a nursing home for pulmonary disease located in Funchal, Madeira: Hospicio Donna Maria Amélia. In addition, a considerable amount of money that Josephine used for what was close to the heart: "The Foundation for King Oscar I's memory", a nursing home for pauvre honteux "The Josephine hospice" & "Dowager Queen Josephine's scholarship fund" - both accommodation & scholarships for poor Catholic students. Much money also went to "The Stockholm Hospice for Incurable Diseases", "The Society Friends of the Poor", "Queen Josephine's Rescue Institute for neglected

⁹ Ranhagen 1977.

¹⁰ NFB 1919.

¹¹ NFB 1893.

¹² Åbonde 2010.

¹³ Söderhjelm & Palmstierna 1944: s. 251.

¹⁴ NFB 1905.

Children” (in Kronoberg County), ”Josephine's Handicraft School for Poor Girls” (in Malmö), ”Dowager Queen Josephine's fund for Women's Education” (in Stavanger), etc.