

Mother Aloysia Bath

Prioress from 1877–1880 and 1889–1901



Mother Aloysia (Mary Helena) Bath was born in Addison, Wis., on November 7, 1849, the daughter of Jacob and Sophia Bath. At the age of 15, she entered the newly-founded community of St. Agnes in Barton, Wis. There, she was given the name Sister Agatha and then spent the next six-and-one-half years teaching in public and parish schools.

Because the community's future was questionable, and with the advice of her confessor, she entered Saint Benedict's Monastery in St. Joseph, Minn., on May 31, 1871, received the habit on August 22, 1871, and professed her first vows on August 29, 1872. As a Benedictine, she was given the name Aloysia. For the next three years, she was in charge of the parish district school in St. Joseph. On September 1, 1875, she pronounced her perpetual vows and on September 4 was sent to St. Cloud, Minn., where she taught in the parochial school for one year.

On September 2, 1876, Sister Aloysia was sent to Minneapolis, where she took charge of the newly-opened school in St. Joseph Parish. She remained there until February 21, 1877, when she was appointed Superior of Saint Benedict's Monastery by Bishop Rupert Seidenbusch. She held this office until April 10, 1880, when the bishop accepted her resignation. She then returned to St. Joseph Parish in Minneapolis, where she remained in charge of the school until ill health forced her to return to Saint Benedict's on July 10, 1883.

For a number of years, Mother Aloysia was in charge of the needlework department and the stationery store in the academy at Saint Benedict's. On June 4, 1887, she was appointed second assistant to Mother Scholastica Kerst and on April 22, 1889, she was given charge of the novitiate. On August 28, 1889, in the community's first free election, Mother Aloysia was chosen to be prioress for a six-year term, and on July 30, 1895, was re-elected for another six-year term. During her time as prioress, Mother Aloysia sought to replace the community's over-emphasis on external works with a renewed spirit of prayer, thus bringing about a better balance between work and prayer. Mother Aloysia died on April 16, 1933.