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Francis J. Weber

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WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO SAINT VINCENT’S COLLEGE?

Msgr. Francis J. Weber

An aura of mystery has long surrounded the abrupt demise of Saint Vincent’s College, the more so since it came at a time when that institution was the undisputed leader in the educational circles of Los Angeles, “the envy of the University of Southern California and Occidental College.”1 The topic takes on a particular relevance when one recalls the generally held view that “the history of this great old college is almost the history of early Los Angeles.”2

Though the question has often been discussed, no effort has apparently been made to reconstruct, in chronological order, the chain of events which provoked the bewildering announcement, on July 30, 1910, that the Congregation of the Mission was retiring from its pedagogical endeavors in California’s southland. Admittedly, the lacunae in the available evidence may forever militate against any “definitive” conclusions, but existing documentation, even if incomplete, does allow for a fairly balanced appraisal of the motives leading up to the closing of Saint Vincent’s College.

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Historical events cannot be properly evaluated if they are isolated from the framework in which they occur. For that reason careful attention must be given to the persuasive personality of Bishop Thomas J. Conaty (1847-1915), the dominating figure in the overall narrative of Catholic education in the Diocese of Monterey-Los Angeles during the years between 1902 and 1915. The Irish-born prelate was widely acclaimed as a natural leader "of strong yet amiable character, and a pastor of singular devotedness and indefatigable zeal," honored and respected by all who knew him as an honest and upright man of God.\(^3\) Like many great personages, however, the Bishop had his shortcomings. The key to understanding the prelate's relationship to Saint Vincent's College hinges on the recognition that Conaty was far from being an accomplished administrator, exhibiting as he often did neither talent in, nor concern for, the practical mundanities of daily life.

During the years immediately preceding his appointment as residential ordinary, Bishop Conaty occupied the rectorship of The Catholic University of America. At the time of his selection for that post, in 1896, it was generally thought that Conaty was an admirable choice. He was not a trained educator, but there were few among the American clergy who were. While achieving an enviable record during his years in the District of Columbia, Conaty's efforts, however, "did not resolve the growing complexity of the University difficulties" in a manner acceptable to the Board of Regents.\(^4\) Recognizing the general dissatisfaction with his administration, the Bishop diplomatically withdrew his name from consideration for a second term.

\(^3\) *Ave Maria II* (October 2, 1915), p. 441.

Understandably, Conaty arrived in Los Angeles with something of an educational chip on his shoulder. Were he able to inaugurate a Catholic center of higher learning on the West Coast, the spectre of his failure at Washington would be effectively overshadowed. To the prelate, Saint Vincent’s College, the area’s leading Catholic educational institution, loomed prominently as the ideal launching pad for plummeting the Church into the more lofty atmosphere of graduate studies.

Bishops Conaty’s appointment to the Diocese of Monterey-Los Angeles had been warmly applauded by the Vincentian Fathers who viewed his demonstrated enthusiasm for improving Catholic educational opportunities as a welcome contrast to the seemingly indifferent attitude of his two immediate predecessors toward anything beyond the limited primary and secondary parochial system enjoined by the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore. Initially, Father Joseph S. Glass and his Vincentian confreres were as elated as they were flattered by Conaty’s overtures, made almost immediately after his installation, for expanding even further the influence of Southern California’s most prominent institute of higher learning. At Conaty’s suggestion, several lengthy meetings were scheduled between the Bishop, Father Glass and community leaders to explore various ways of implementing their mutual objective.

The results of the discussions were made public in November, with announcement of the first in a series of projected steps to “make St. Vincent’s college one of the largest institutions of learning in the United States.” The Vincentian Fathers disclosed the purchase, from E. J.

1Los Angeles Times, November 10, 1905.
Baldwin, of eighty-five acres of the Rancho La Cienega o Paso de la Tijera, southwest of the city limits on the Inglewood division of the Redondo electric line, as the projected site of a complexus of buildings with facilities to accommodate 1,000 students, or three times the existing enrollment.

As soon as the envisioned buildings were in operation, the masterplan called for converting the structures on Grand Avenue into a diocesan boys school to allow for what one local newspaper called "perfection of the system of Catholic education for which plans were set on foot when he [Conaty] first came to the diocese." In the meantime, a four-year secondary course, distinct from the college department, was to be inaugurated as a "feeder" for expanding the overall enrollment during the transition years.

The unfortunate series of financial reverses that plagued business interests of Southern California in subsequent months were severe enough to incline Father Glass towards the logic of a less ambitious and more gradual expansionary program than originally outlined. The Bishop's enthusiasm, on the other hand, was not so clearly curtailed, even after the Vincentian educator frankly told Conaty that the Congregation of the Mission, already overly extended at Holy Trinity College in Dallas, was unwilling to incur any additional indebtedness.

While remaining outwardly oblivious to the financial complexities entailed, Conaty continued publicly to recite the advantages that would accrue to Saint Vincent's College when it entered "that greater development which

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*Archives of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles (hereafter referred to as AALA), Unidentified news-clipping, November 10, 1905.

its interests on every side demand." He declared on any number of occasions that "he would not be satisfied until the College had become a university." Quite naturally the Vincentians resented the Bishop's prodding, especially since his frequently repeated offers of aid and assistance stopped considerably short of the badly needed financial support.

It was generally known that during Conaty's years at The Catholic University of America "he was wary of religious-order men on the teaching staff and no one was assigned to it in his time." Nevertheless, the growing impatience of the Bishop of Monterey-Los Angeles over apparent Vincentian apathy partially accounts for Conaty's action, in mid-1908, of inviting the Society of Jesus, under whom he had been educated in Worcester, to assume the parochial activities of Our Lady of Sorrows Church in Santa Barbara. Though careful to elicit a pledge from the Jesuits that they would not open a college in the southland for at least ten years, and then only with the local ordinary's consent, Bishop Conaty obviously reasoned that the presence of the Society, firmly ensconced in the mainstream of diocesan affairs, would pressure the Vincentians into taking measures to break what the prelate considered an educational logjam.

As a matter of fact, the opposite reaction took place. The constant badgering by the Bishop induced Father Glass to bring the whole issue of expansion before the Vincentian Provincial, the Very Reverend Thomas

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9 AALA, Thomas J. Conaty to Joseph S. Glass, C.M., Los Angeles, November 11, 1908.

9 The Tidings, June 19, 1908.


11 AALA, George de la Motte, S.J. to Thomas J. Conaty, Santa Clara, August 2, 1908.
Finney. Noting Conaty's desire of having the college advanced to university status, Glass wondered if the Congregation of the Mission was adequately "prepared to enter upon such an enlargement and such development as that contemplated by the Bishop, and suggested by the great future in store for Southern California." While acknowledging that the prelate's encouragement and his frequent expressions of confidence in the faculty were "indeed most flattering," Father Glass felt that "honesty compels us to ask ourselves certain serious questions, and urges us to consider thoughtfully certain important facts" that can no longer be postponed.12

Meanwhile, Bishop Conaty's pressure tactics received a fortuitous impetus when, on December 28, 1909, a disastrous fire swept the central part of Santa Clara College, destroying the faculty building and severely damaging several other structures. Sentiment for relocating the college in Southern California, until that time voiced only in guarded tones, gradually emerged as more attractive than the previously projected sites of Manresa, Watsonville, and Mountain View. The Jesuit Provincial, Father Herman J. Goller, journeyed to Los Angeles where he discussed at some length the various alternatives open to the Society. Conaty advised against Los Angeles "for the present," though he left open the possibility of San Diego and Pasadena.13

The atmosphere at Los Angeles took on a wholly different tone when word of Goller's meeting with Conaty was leaked to Father Glass. The possibility of Jesuit interference had suddenly been advanced to the more

12AALa, Joseph S. Glass, C.M., to Thomas Finney, C.M., Los Angeles, February 13, 1909.

tangible realm of probability. Sentiment among Vincentian officialdom crystallized rather quickly when Glass relayed assurances to his Provincial that the forty-five years already invested in Southern California’s Catholic higher education would be perpetuated. And so it was that the instrument originally envisioned by Bishop Conaty as a “pious threat” was the very one seized upon by the Vincentians as an escape clause from a situation they regarded as otherwise insoluble.

According to an entry in the Minute Book of the Vincentian General Council at Paris, dated May 2, 1910, Father Finney submitted the proposal to close Saint Vincent’s College and to replace it with a house for missions. One of the chief reasons given for the request was the possibility that “the Jesuits plan to open a Catholic College in this same city, which is not big enough for two institutions of the same kind.” Finney was advised to submit the matter to his Provincial Council and to abide by that body’s decision.

In what local newspapers regarded as the most radical change of any that had occurred in Catholic circles of the Southwest in the past decade, Father Glass issued a brief

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14 There is absolutely no available evidence to substantiate a persistent oral tradition that some sort of an accommodation had been reached between Conaty and Glass whereby the latter was assured of a bishopric if he could bring about an unobtrusive withdrawal by the Vincentians. That such a suggestion was ever seriously considered, probably derived from the resentment voiced by certain of Glass’s confreres at his initiative in proposing that the Congregation of the Mission step aside for their Jesuit counterparts. The tradition seemingly arose after the appointment of Glass as Bishop of Salt Lake City as a convenient post hoc, ergo propter hoc explanation as to why Saint Vincent’s College was closed. Bishop Conaty was in no position to make such a proposal, a fact that any episcopally-anxious candidate would have been the first to realize.

15 This information was graciously provided by the Very Reverend James A. Fisher, C.M., Visitor of the Western Province of the Vincentian Fathers. See AALA, James A. Fisher, C.M. to author, Saint Louis, November 8, 1968.

16 AALA, Unidentified news-clipping, late 1911.
public announcement, on July 30, 1910, that the Congregation of the Mission had decided to retire completely from its educational commitments in California. An excuse, if not a reason, for the action was given when the matter came before the diocesan Board of Consultants on September 11, 1910. There it was stated: “The General of [the] Vincentian [Fathers] forbids all college work and in [the] future the Fathers will devote themselves exclusively [to] the church’s [missionary] work.”

On the day after disclosure of the Vincentian retirement, Father James P. Morrissey, a long-time advocate of moving Santa Clara to the south, was named President of that institution. Both Goller and Morrissey visited the as yet undeveloped La Cienega site and shortly thereafter, confident that the 319,000 population of Los Angeles augured well for the future, informed Bishop Conaty that the Jesuit institution would indeed move southward.

In the formal notification subsequently sent to Conaty by Vincentian authorities, the Bishop was thanked for the “kindest consideration” and “most gracious encouragement” he had exhibited for the work of the Vincentians in Los Angeles. Nonetheless, as the Provincial stated, “teaching in colleges, except in the countries of the foreign missions, is a work not in accordance with our special vocation.” Recognizing that facilities in California’s southland would require an increased investment of funds and personnel, Father Thomas Finney felt that such would mean a further

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17 *The Tidings*, March 3, #911.

drifting away from their own special work, and the
assuming of financial and other burdens which they were
not prepared to bear.19

Finney's letter was as loquacious for what it omitted
as for what it stated. Even the casual observer would not be
presumptuous in identifying the anxiety of the Jesuits for
an establishment in Southern California with "the
particular conditions and circumstances in Los Angeles"
which the Vincentian Provincial thought opportune "for
beginning the execution of the purpose which we have
before us."20

An attitude of utter dismay at the sudden turn of
events was expressed in religious and educational circles.
The diocesan newspaper stated that "Bishop Conaty had
not the slightest intimation from any source whatever that
such a determination had been reached...."21 In his reply
to the Vincentian Provincial, Conaty reiterated that "the
surprise which the message gave me was like a thunder­
clap out of a clear sky. It had never occurred to me that
your Fathers would be anxious to withdraw from a field of
work in which they had been so successful." Then, quickly
shifting moods, the prelate expressed his appreciation of
the reasons outlined for the action, standing ready, as he
said, to cooperate with the Community in carrying out
their plans.22 "Thunder-clap" or no, what Conaty
regarded as the chief obstacle to a Catholic university in
Southern California had now been bridged!

19AALA, Thomas Finney, C.M. to Thomas J. Conaty, Perryville, September
12, 1910.
20Ibid.
21The Tidings, March 3, 1911.
22AALA, Thomas J. Conaty to Thomas Finney, C.M., Los Angeles, February
24, 1911.
For their part, the Vincentians, whether personally irritated at being "forced out" or elated at being "liberated," had earned the plaudits of a grateful community. The appreciation of one elderly resident was reproduced in the local Catholic press:

It was a frontier life into which they [the Vincentians] entered, a voluntary exile, and they endured many privations in those early days of the pueblo. The story of their steadfast fidelity, whole hearted zeal, and exemplary lives can be truly appreciated only by the standards of eternity.

The first priests were a superior band of men and since their day, their record has been ably upheld by their successors, who have at all times, been identified with the best progress of the city.

For nearly fifty years, these priests have labored thus in Los Angeles, and the people owe them a debt of gratitude which it would be difficult to pay. The earnest cooperation of the people of the diocese will, without doubt, be theirs in all their undertakings, for the people can never fail to appreciate their presence here, and to beg God to give them long years of usefulness in their chosen work.23

The transfer of collegial sovereignty came perilously close to being completely aborted in the aftermath of the confusion caused by the unexpected death, on November 5, 1910, of the forty-three year old Jesuit Provincial, Father Herman Goller. Shortly after the appointment of his successor, Father James A. Rockliffe, Morrissey was called to Spokane where the question of the possible transfer of Santa Clara to Los Angeles was taken up as the best means of redeeming Goller's promise to Bishop Thomas J. Conaty.24 A questionnaire was secretly circulated among thirty-four Jesuits of the Province about

23The Tidings, March 3, 1911.
24This data was generously made available by the Reverend Leo Cullen, S.J. from the Archives of the Society of Jesus, Province of California (hereafter referred to as ASJC). See Richard A. Gleeson, S.J., Memoir, n.p., circa July 25, 1911.
the advisability of transferring the college to the city or environs of the Southern California metropolis. Of those consulted, nineteen favored moving to Los Angeles, and fifteen preferred remaining at Santa Clara. Most of those responding expressed a sympathy for making the newly located institution a day-school.

Gradually, however, with the removal of Father Goller, the most influential proponent of relocating Santa Clara College at Los Angeles, the apparently widespread opposition to such action among that institution's faculty emerged as the deciding factor against any further negotiations along those lines with the Bishop of Monterey-Los Angeles. In deference to the majority view to those most intimately concerned, the newly-named Provincial avoided taking any action on the delicate issue until after circumstances forced the President of Santa Clara to proceed with an earlier announced program for rebuilding the gutted college structures at the existing campus. One writer has noted, almost by way of footnote, that "a person desirous of catching Father Morrisey's vision of Saint Vincent's on its Angelus Mesa campus can go to Santa Clara today fifty years afterwards, where the buildings he wished to grace View Park still flank Father McCoy's New Mission Church."25

The decision against moving Santa Clara to the Diocese of Monterey-Los Angeles necessitated a thorough reappraisal by the Jesuits of their firmly expressed commitments to California's southland. Even as early as August 7, 1910, Father Goller had notified Conaty that it would be "practically impossible" for the Society to take over the administration of Saint Vincent's College for at least another year.26 Now, without the personnel from


Santa Clara, prospects became even less promising.

As a temporary solution to the lack of available Jesuit educators, Father Rockliffe proposed suspending the collegiate division on an interim basis, and beginning with the initial two years of high school. An additional grade would then be added annually until the full-fledged college course could be restructured. To this outwardly acceptable suggestion, Bishop Conaty concurred, recognizing the difficulty involved in taking up the work at Saint Vincent’s College as already initiated. In the prelate’s opinion, “The whole question resolved itself into the feasibility of purchasing a site and starting a day school for boys with a gradual and systematic development into a college.” Shortly afterwards, Rockliffe reported to the Bishop, “The plan of commencing an educational work at Los Angeles with the lowest class of the high school and developing it on the lines usual in the Society meet the full and unqualified approval of my consultors.”

The Vincentian reaction to discontinuance of the college grades was predictably unfavorable. Father Glass reminded Conaty of the wishes expressed by the Congregation of the Mission that the only Catholic college in Los Angeles be perpetuated. Such a proposal as that advocated by the Jesuits would be a step backward. It was that concern that had motivated Glass’s Superiors to recommend that the Community “be succeeded, in this

27 AALA, Thomas J. Conaty to James Rockliffe, S.J., Los Angeles, March 20, 1911.
28 AALA, Thomas J. Conaty to n.n., Los Angeles, March 30, 1911.
29 AALA, James Rockliffe, S.J. to Thomas J. Conaty, San Jose, March 31, 1911.
special work, by a religious congregation, or society whose vocation is the direction of colleges...."\(^{10}\)

The generally soft-spoken Vincentian, recalling his Community's willingness to turn over its educational work in Los Angeles to any group able to broaden the existing prospectus, asked the Bishop how a suggestion along the lines proposed by Rockliffe could achieve the prelate's plan of advancing the already established program. In addition, the President of Saint Vincent's felt that the general public would regard such a regression "as a crooked deal." Glass stated that he "most assuredly would never have approved, in any way whatsoever, the proposition to turn over Saint Vincent's to them," had he ever envisioned the course now outlined by the Society of Jesus. Seeing no advantage to the diocese, the cause of Catholic higher education or the college itself, Father Glass expressed the opinion that if the proposition to have merely a high school and modest college were acceptable to Conaty, he would favor a return to the relatively successful system followed in the pre-1905 years. Glass categorically stated that the Vincentian withdrawal would never have met with his Community's approbation, had such action meant the doing away with Saint Vincent's College instead of its development into a greater school. Glass concluded by reminding Conaty that he was doing as well by his diocese in having Saint Vincent's as it is, as he would be "by approving the contemplated plans of the Jesuits."\(^{31}\)

The vociferous protest of Glass caused the Bishop confidentially to inform the Jesuit Provincial that "the

\(^{10}\)AAAL, Thomas Finney, C.M. to Thomas J. Conaty, Perryville, September 12, 1910.

\(^{31}\)AAAL, Joseph S. Glass, C.M. to Thomas J. Conaty, Los Angeles, April 8, 1911.
general understanding was that St. Vincent's would be continued" for at least a year so that justice might be done the pupils already studying there. Such an arrangement, the prelate pointed out, would relieve the Vincentians from any allegation that they had allowed "the change to be made without consideration for their students and Alumni."32

To Conaty's intervention, obviously intended as a compromise, Father Rockliffe responded that everywhere it had been the custom of the Society to begin its educational work on the lines of organic growth and gradual development. That procedure enabled the Jesuits to train the first students according to their own system, forming "newcomers year by year on the same lines by the example and traditions of the older boys." The Provincial saw no merit in altering the tried and accepted pattern and felt that "surely the Catholics of Los Angeles will understand the temporary necessity of interrupting the high school and college course in the city."33

The Bishop, Vincentians and Jesuits had obviously arrived at a physical impasse, inasmuch as the logic of Glass's observations was effectively counterbalanced by Rockliffe's inability to provide the necessary personnel to maintain the college. Ultimately a compromise of sorts was reached, whereby the Jesuits agreed to open the institution in the fall of 1911, with the full complement of high school classes.34 Though the early catalogues of the Jesuit college stated it was "legally and in fact" a

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32AALA, Thomas J. Conaty to James Rockliffe, S.J., Los Angeles, April 5, 1911.

33AALA, James Rockliffe, S.J. to Thomas J. Conaty, San Jose, April 13, 1911.

continuation of the earlier institution, the three year suspension of collegiate courses plainly indicates that "there is no juridical succession" between old Saint Vincent's and present-day Loyola University. Because of the unforeseen tribulations experienced in the overall transaction, one is inclined to agree with one Jesuit observer who said, "The hard fact of Garvanza is that the six religious and one lay teacher who began the Jesuit era with their jejune high school program... were not nearly what the press had given the people to expect."39

The question of a site for the Jesuit foundation in Los Angeles presented another problem of major proportions. Originally, the Society of Jesus had considered using the existing college buildings on Grand Avenue and to assume, in lieu of rent, the interest payments on the rather formidable debt already incurred by Saint Vincent's College. This arrangement, however, was vetoed by the Jesuit Provincial Consultors as financially prohibitive. Father Rockliffe also observed that since the Vincentians intended to retain their nearby parochial foundation, "it would be very painful... if our presence in the very midst of their fine parish would interfere in anyway with their good influence on their flock."40

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36Archives of Loyola University (Los Angeles), Arthur D. Spearman, S.J. to Richard A. Trame, S.J., Santa Clara, January 30, 1958. The collegiate department was resumed only in 1914.

37The new faculty replaced sixteen Vincentian Fathers and seven lay teachers.

38The lay teacher, Charles C. Conroy, was the only faculty member retained from the earlier institution.


40AALA, James Rockliffe, S.J. to Thomas J. Conaty, San Jose, April 13, 1911.
When it became evident to Bishop Conaty that the Society of Jesus wanted a clean break from the Grand Avenue facilities, the prelate expressed his preference for a site in the Highland Park — Garvanza area of town. The Jesuit, on the contrary, favored the general vicinity decided upon when plans were first announced for expanding Saint Vincent’s College in 1905. With a view towards implementing these designs, the Jesuits asked if they might be entrusted with the Parish of Saint Thomas, a centrally located parochial unit in a growing section of the city with adequate public transportation.41

Conaty replied that in earlier discussions “the matter of a parish had never been mentioned in any way.” Moreover, the prelate countered, an offer of a parish in the Highland Park — Garvanza district was “the best we can do under the present circumstances.” Conaty pointed out that there was no vacancy at St. Thomas and with the local pastor absent in Europe on diocesan business, “it would be most unseemly of me to think of giving the parish to anyone.” The Bishop regarded the Highland Park — Garvanza area, lying midway between Pasadena and Los Angeles, as a most suitable location for the Jesuit educational foundations and, therefore, parochial assignment. Railway facilities were readily available at the economical rate of five cents a ride. He recalled the success already enjoyed in the area by the Presbyterians at Occidental College.42

For his part the Jesuit Provincial was not easily deterred. He observed that Father Goller had been a very sick man when the earlier negotiations took place and

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41AALA, James Rockliffe, S.J. to Thomas J. Conaty, San Jose, March 31, 1911.

42AALA, Thomas J. Conaty to James Rockliffe, S.J., Los Angeles, April 5, 1911.
scarcely able to grasp the proposition in all its bearings. While anxious to comply with Bishop Conaty's expectations, Rockliffe emphasized his view and that of his Consultors, "that a location on the West or Southwest is the most advantageous that could be chosen." He noted how sad it would be "to repeat the mistake in Los Angeles that has been made more than once elsewhere, and, after the price of property has advanced, to change the location of the college to the place that should have been selected from the very start."43

The inflexible attitude of Conaty finally triumphed, and the Society of Jesus purchased property on West Avenue 52 in Garvanza. With a minimum of remodelling, the three bungalows on the site were fashioned into classrooms, residence and faculty quarters. The northernmost section of Sacred Heart Parish was dismembered and formed into a juridical unit under the patronage of Saint Ignatius. On September 11, 1911, two Jesuit priests and four scholastics opened their institution in austere surroundings with an enrollment of eighty boys spread out through the four years of high school.

The name of the Garvanza foundation was also embroiled in a measure of confusion. As early as March 3, 1911, Bishop Conaty had requested "that the name 'St. Vincent's College' be retained in order that the splendid traditions of the past may continue unbroken."44 To the prelate's suggestion, however, Father Rockliffe noted that "even if it were desirable for us to occupy the present premises of St. Vincent's College, it is clear that the Society would have to incorporate under a modified or under a new title in order to avoid any legal

41AALA, James A. Rockliffe, S.J. to Thomas J. Conaty, San Jose, April 13, 1911.

42"The Tidings, March 3, 1911."
entanglements." Rockliffe had been advised by an outstanding local attorney to be cautious about taking the old name, especially if it involved holding themselves out as the identical corporate institution.

The logic of some title alteration was also shared by the institution's acting Superior, Father Richard A. Gleeson: "Had we taken over St. Vincent's as at first arranged, and gone into the buildings of the Vincentians, and gone right ahead with their classes, it would be natural and most becoming to keep the old and honored name of St. Vincent." Under existing circumstances, however, inaugurating a wholly new institution with its own educational program, six miles from the earlier site, was reason enough, he thought, for changing the school's name.

In any event, the institution began operation as Los Angeles College. That name could not be long utilized for it was discovered that another private school was operating under the same title. For a brief period, the patronage of Saint Vincent was resumed, but since 1918 the foundation has been known in local annals as Loyola. In retrospect, allowing the original title to die, along with the college it designated, seems to have been a wise choice, inasmuch as the Jesuit institution, following neither the traditions nor the methods of its predecessor, has yet to regain the proportionate stature in Southland society enjoyed by old Saint Vincent's College.

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44AALA, James A. Rockliffe, S.J. to Thomas J. Conaty, San Jose, April 13, 1911.

46ASJC, Francis S. Montgomery to James A. Rockliffe, S.J., Los Angeles, July 5, 1911.

47AALA, Richard A. Gleeson, S.J. to Thomas J. Conaty, Los Angeles, July 16, 1911.
If and when the history of the forty-six years of pedagogical work by the Congregation of the Mission in the Diocese of Monterey-Los Angeles is written, the removal of Saint Vincent’s College from Southern California will loom in even greater perspective as the most unfortunate and needless turn of events in an episcopate otherwise remembered for its noble accomplishments. In addition to being “pained, shamed and humiliated” by the retirement of the Vincentians, the uncompromising attitude of Bishop J. Conaty which provoked the action confirmed in substance, if not in extent, the dichotomy between recognized educational competency and undeniable administrative ineptitude which had earlier characterized the prelate’s tumultuous years as Rector of The Catholic University of America.

The esteem for those who suffered most personally was well expressed in an unsigned editorial which appeared in the S.V.C. STUDENT for July of 1911:

As educators, as teachers in Saint Vincent’s College, they are no more, but as educators and teachers in the world of life they will ever hold an important place; wherever they go they will influence those with whom they come in contact to greater efforts in the cause of truth, to greater labors in the pursuit of justice, and by so doing will benefit not only individuals, but society as a whole.49

Whatever may happen you must not fret but rise above it and remain in peace. No harm can befall you if God does not will it; and if He permits it, it will be for a good end since, to those who serve Him, all things turn out for the best.

St. Vincent de Paul

When God makes us undertake anything difficult, or exposes us to any grievous suffering in His service, or for His glory, it is consonant to His Providence that he should defend and assist us.

St. Vincent de Paul

We should never speak badly of those who are opposed to us; we should rather, with a cheerful heart, accept contempt and confusion, so as to consult for our neighbor's good name.

St. Vincent de Paul