



Priceless Spirit: A History of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, 1841-1893 (Collected Studies Series; Cs456)

M. Georgia Costin

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In *Priceless Spirit* Sister M. Georgia Costin, C.S.C., recounts the history of the Sisters of the Holy Cross from the time of their founding in 1841 to the death of the "architect of their autonomy," Father Edward Sorin, in 1893. Here is a lively, detailed study of a women's religious community in nineteenth-century America, wherein the complexities of frontier life, tensions with their community leaders in Europe, and collaboration with a male clergy and hierarchy are fully detailed in stories that run the gamut from humor to poignancy. Costin, having tapped previously unused historical and archival sources, provides a stimulating, often surprising, reappraisal of people and events in Holy Cross history. The liberal use of quotes from actual letters and annals gives readers a very real picture of the complex characters in Holy Cross history, casting them in a truer light than ever before. Of particular interest is how the persona of Father Sorin, founder of the University of Notre Dame, emerges in this study. Previous biographies and chronicles have depicted him as a self-serving autocrat, but here he is revealed to be a compassionate, loving person, always supportive of the Sisters in their various missions and in their efforts to establish Saint Mary's College. *Priceless Spirit* may lead readers to formulate new conclusions about the history of Sisters of the Holy Cross in particular and the evolution of the Congregations of Holy Cross in general. Historians and students of American Catholicism and American religion and culture, as well as persons associated with the University of Notre Dame and Saint Mary's College, will find much of interest in this chronicle that stands out not only as a history of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, but also as a testimony to their indomitable spirit - past, present, and future.

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