

Dr. Bernard Schels, Faithful Friend and Competent Clerical Advisor

Dr. (Fr.) Bernard Schels was a loyal friend of Mother Theresa as well as educator (1851) and confessor at the Normal School in the Au-suburb. As a former resident of the German College in Rome, Dr. Schels was acquainted with Rome and spoke fluent Italian. He had offered to travel there with Mother Theresa so that she might give testimony regarding the Rule. But Archbishop Reisach refused her permission to travel to Rome. Dr. Schels went alone to Rome, arriving August 16, 1852.

He had a warmth and erudition that the prelates with whom he spoke admired. The affairs of the Poor School Sisters of Notre Dame had become his own. He was prudent and reserved and realized that the Sacred Congregation had heard only Archbishop Reisach's position on the Rule. The Secretary of the Sacred Congregation responsible for approving Rules was impartial: he welcomed Dr. Schels and respected Mother Theresa's views of the Rule. Because of the importance of the Rule, Mother Theresa had sent a copy of both the Archbishop's proposed Rule and her own asking each professed sister to decide which Rule they would choose. The sisters were unanimous in wanting to continue to live the Rule that had given them such life and growth. On December 19, 1853 Dr. Schels met with Pope Pius IX, who assured him that the Order would be given approval to continue.