

Dramatic Presentation of Meeting with the Archbishop

Clue to Tension in Simple Phrase

Archbishop Reisach demanded that Mother Theresa and all professed sisters meet with him on April 22, 1852. This critical meeting has two sets of minutes; one set was given by the clerical secretary and a second set was written by an unnamed School Sister of Notre Dame. From these minutes one can enter the hearts of the participants and understand that the very life of the congregation was in danger.

In her response to the Archbishop's questions on April 22, 1852, Mother Theresa consistently responded with humility. She also added a phrase that was not recorded in the Munich Archdiocesan Minutes, though she and her sisters used it often.

When asked if they would submit to the Archbishop's demands their response was: "Yes, I submit to the decree *according to our former observance*". This cryptic response infuriated the Archbishop. It was another way of saying *we will obey by living the Holy Rule as Bishop Wittmann encouraged us to do, following a woman as general superior*.

If the reader is alert to the differences in the two sets of minutes, there is a consistent refusal on the part of the clerical secretary to record the phrase "according to our former observance." The unnamed School Sister of Notre Dame taking minutes for the sisters noted the following dialogue in which: the Reverend Vicar asked her to submit and Reverend Mother said: "Yes, I submit, until the Holy See decides otherwise, according to our former observances." The SSND secretary notes: "The last phrase was not written down."