

READING FOR THE 3<sup>rd</sup> WEEK OF OCTOBER  
SISTER MARY OF JESUS NOIRRY, BEGGAR FOR THE ORPHANS

Operation of the orphanage [opened by the Sisters] was almost totally dependent upon charity....The Sisters not only relied on the efforts of John Twohig to secure support for the orphans but regularly went out themselves into various parts of the city and begged for donations....**It was Sister Mary of Jesus who first began to go on begging expeditions to the outlying towns and ranches. Her independent personality gave her just the kind of courage and daring she needed to travel fearlessly through the wide open spaces of Texas asking for donations for the orphans.** Through her daring exploits in the wilderness and her colorful character, she became a legend in the Congregation....

She was intent on seeing that the [orphans] had sufficient food and good warm clothing. She persuaded Rev. Mother Pierre to allow her to purchase a wagon and team of horses for her begging expeditions. Then, **wearing a soldier's overcoat that reached to her ankles, a pair of heavy boots and a broad-brimmed straw hat to disguise the fact that she was a Sister in a religious habit, she set out to travel the often dangerous roads of Texas, carrying with her a brace of pistols for protection.** She drove the wagon herself, usually accompanied by one of the orphans or by another Sister. The children and the young Sisters loved to go with her because the trips were always full of some kind of excitement. A first-hand description of the experience is told in the annals by one of her traveling companions:

*We sat upright in the wagon, with rosary beads in hand; frightened at the howling of the coyotes, wolves and panthers, and by noises of various kinds, either real or imaginary, that tended to excite fear. Sister Mary of Jesus, alone, was fearless, and would even laugh at our apprehensions. After tying the horses to the wagon, she would spread her blankets on the ground, then say her night prayers, take out her pistols and placing one of them at each side of her, at a convenient distance, she would lie down and sleep as peacefully as if she were in her bed.*

Her begging tours lasted five or six weeks, and she usually returned with a few hundred dollars plus eggs, butter, bacon, and potatoes for the orphans as well as hay for her horses. **She became well known throughout various parts of the state, particularly at government posts and military installations where she was always treated kindly.**