

**Easter Duty Lists, c. 1809-1833**  
**St. Mary's Seminary Chapel, Baltimore, MD**  
**Transcribers' Notes**

*Background*

The historic chapel of St. Mary's Seminary & University (est. 1791) was dedicated in 1808 and built on the original campus of the seminary in what is now the Seton Hill neighborhood of Baltimore City<sup>†</sup>. The seminary was established by the Sulpician Fathers, an apostolic society of diocesan priests dedicated to the formation of priests for the Catholic Church, who arrived in this country from France in 1791. The seminary remained at this location for the years 1791-1969. Today, the Seminary continues to operate on a second campus that had been opened in the Roland Park neighborhood of the city in 1929.

Over its history, the chapel served the seminary and college communities located on the campus, as well as the families in the surrounding neighborhood. It was also home to a special ministry that had been established for Baltimore's community of French-speaking Haitian refugees over the period, 1796-1833. Members of this community were of European and African descent, free and enslaved. Although most of the early records for the chapel have been lost, the lists created for those individuals who performed their Easter duties\* at the chapel over the period 1808-1833 have survived. (The surviving lists are for the years: 1809-1822, 1824, 1825, 1827, 1831, 1832, 1832-1833.) These lists have been digitized and transcribed. Names have been entered into a Centralized Name Index in alphabetical-chronological order. Both have been made to researchers to view on the website.

<sup>†</sup>: The chapel is part of St. Mary's Spiritual Center and Historic Site, which is owned and maintained by the Associated Sulpicians of the United States.

\*: During this period in history, it was the practice for individuals to partake in the sacraments of confession and communion just once a year, usually at Easter. In time, this practice came to be known as performing one's Easter duty. In addition to recording the names of those who fulfilled their annual Easter duty, the names of those who received communion for the first time at Easter were also noted.

**Centralized Name Index**

The Easter Duty lists were created and maintained by Rev. Jean-Marie Tessier (1758-1840), a Sulpician priest who served at St. Mary's Seminary, 1791-1840. Rev. Tessier was Superior of the U.S. Sulpician community, 1810-1840, director of the special ministry to the Haitian refugee community, 1796-1827, and spiritual director of the chapel's confraternities, 1796-1833. A native of France, his records were written in French. Transcribers made the decision to translate terms used by Rev. Tessier from French into English. (A list of commonly used terms and abbreviations has been prepared for those people interested in consulting the original records and has been included in the "Additional Notes" section of this document.) The French names of members, however, were not Americanized, but transcribed as written with the exception of

accents. Because the use of accents was inconsistent throughout the records, it was decided to transcribe the names without them.

A separate entry has been created for every name recorded on each list. In instances where an entire or partial name was crossed out, the decision was made to create an entry for the name, unless it was obvious that the name had been mistakenly entered as a duplicate and appears elsewhere on the list. It is noted in the “Comments” field if the name was crossed out.

A list of commonly used terms and abbreviations was created for those people interested in consulting the original records and has been included in the “Additional Notes” section of this document.

### **Explanation of Fields used in the Centralized Name Index**

Last, First and Middles Names: Names have been transcribed and recorded to the best of our ability. In instances where a last name was not recorded, the term “Surname” has been entered. In cases where a first or middle name was not recorded, the field were left blank. If a name was indecipherable or could only be partially transcribed, this was noted. Dashes were used to indicate unreadable letters and question marks to denote uncertainty or a possible spelling.

If a person is listed with multiple last names, ex., a married woman whose maiden name is noted, the person is listed under the name used at the time the record was made. Former last names are entered in the Last Name field and are separated by forward slashes. Likewise, if a nickname was recorded, this information was entered in the field for First Name. The first name and nickname are separated by a forward slash.

Please note that the spelling of surnames in these records is not consistent. As a result, it is not unusual to find a surname listed under several different spellings (ex., de Leyritz/Leyritz or Servary/Servari/Savary). Because of this, the decision was made to list the names as they appeared on each list instead of selecting one spelling to use consistently across all lists. It is always to check under different spelling variations when searching the records to ensure that a name is not missed.

In a number of instances, abbreviations were used in place of the full name (first, middle, and last). In such cases, transcribers made an effort to identify the full name, placing the added letters in brackets to indicate when an abbreviation was used

Ex.

#### First and Middle Names

Ant – Antoine/Anthony

Ed<sup>d</sup> – Edward

Fr or Fran – Francois/Francoise

M/M<sup>c</sup> – Mary/Marie (as identified by transcribers)

Magd – Magdelaine

Marg – Margaret/Marguerite

Ve – Victorie/Victoire

Wm - William

Last names

Vol. – Volunbrun

Montp. – Montpensier

If a title was noted for the individual, ex., Mr. or Mrs., this information was noted in the Comments field.

Year: This column indicates the dated list on which the individual's name was recorded.

Role: The following abbreviations were used to identify the individual's role at the event:

A - Aspirant (person being prepared to receive the sacrament)

R - Recipient (person received the sacrament)

R-1 - First time Recipient (person received the sacrament for the first time)

S - Sponsor (person helped prepare recipient for the sacrament)

Note: The 1825 list also includes the names of those who received the sacrament of confirmation that year. Note of this is made in the Comments section.

Sex: One category Rev. Tessier used to organize membership lists was gender. This field notes the identified gender for the individual. It was also noted when gender was not indicated and could not be identified. The following abbreviations were used:

F - Female

M – Male

X – Unknown

Color: : Another category Rev. Tessier used to organize membership lists was color, although it should be noted that he was not always consistent in recording this. This field provides the information he recorded for persons he identified to be of African descent. The descriptors he used were black, mulatto, and color. In the transcribed records, the following abbreviations were used:

B – Black

C – Mixed descent

Status: This field indicates the legal status of individuals when it was noted by Rev. Tessier. If a person's legal status was not noted in the record, the field was left blank.

The following abbreviations are used to denote legal status:

EN – Enslaved

F - Free

HE - Enslaver

Comments: This column was used to note additional information noted in the record or to clarify an issue. For example, in instances when multiple people shared the same first or last name, Rev. Tessier assigned sequential numbers to each name to distinguish one from another. This number has been noted in the comments field.

### **Additional Notes**

Centralized Name Index: A key to abbreviations used can be found on the last page of the file.

In addition to listing the names of those individual who performed their Easter duties, the lists also record the names of those who were being prepared and/or received sacrament of communion and, in some cases, the sacrament of confirmation at St. Mary's Chapel. Sacraments performed at St. Mary's Chapel (ex., baptism and marriage) were recorded in the registers of St. Peter's pro-Cathedral (1770-1841) and its successor the Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (1821-).

### *Original Records*

The column headings used by Rev. Tessier in the lists were not consistent, changed, and are sometimes missing. The same is true for terms, notations and abbreviations. Transcribers have prepared a rough translation of the ones they identified to assist those interested in consulting the original records.

### Column Headings

Confessions pascales – Easter confessions  
Premiere communion – First communion  
1ère Communion – First communion  
la iere Communions – First communion  
Communions pascales – Easter communion  
Messieurs – white men  
Les Dames/Dames – white women  
Les Dames Amer/Americain – white American women  
Dames franc – white French women  
Hommes blanc – white men  
Hommes de Couleur – men of color  
Femme de – wife of  
Femmes de Couleur – women of color  
Filles de Couleur – young women/girls of color  
Suite des Filles de Couleur – young women/girls of color, continued  
Personnes de Couleur – Persons of Color  
Les Preparants – individuals being prepared to receive the sacrament of First Communion

### Terms, Notations, and Abbreviations

Entries with an “N” written after the name was used to denote Negro/Black  
Entries with an “M” written after the name was used to denote Mulatto

Fille – girl or daughter

Fils – son Femme – wife Mere - mother Negre/Negresse libre – Free black man or woman

M - Monsieur (Mr.)

M<sup>de</sup> – Madame (Mrs.)

Me /M<sup>e</sup> - This abbreviation could not be identified, but might have been for the name Marie.

M<sup>lle</sup>/Delles – Mademoiselle(s)

Mulatre/Mulatriesse - Mulatto man or woman

Mulatre/Mulatriesse libre – Free mulatto man or woman

Negre/Negresse - Black man or woman

Negre/Negresse de – Enslaved black person of

Negre/Negresse libre - Black man or woman

Sœur – Religious sister or professed female religious (religious community identified by transcriber when possible)

Veuve/V<sup>e</sup>/V – Widow and abbreviations for widow

At the top of the list created for the years 1832-1833, Rev. Tessier wrote the following note:

#### Original French

Confessions pascales de 1832 et 1833

Ayant été obligé pour cause de maladie et de vieillesse d’entendre beaucoup moins de confessions, plusieurs de mes anciens pénitents se sont adressés à d’autres confesseurs. Voici les noms de ceux de celles qui sont restés ou viennent à Pâques de 1832, et à celles de 1833.

#### English translation

Easter confessions for 1832 and 1833

Having been obliged due to illness and advanced age to hear far fewer confessions, many of my former penitents have turned to other confessors. The following are the names of those who have remained or come to Easter in 1832, and to those of 1833.