

# MESSEA, CAROLUS EVASIUS

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MESSEA, Rev. CAROLUS (Charles) EVASIUS, born at Finelbergo, near Genoa, Italy, December 30, 1815; entered the Jesuit novitiate at Chieri, Italy, June 12, 1841; studied philosephy at Turin, 1842-44; taught in the College of Nobles, Turin, 1844-47; ordained a Priest, May 13, 1848.

Recruited for the American missions by Father Elet, Superior of the Jesuits at St. Louis, Missouri, while on a visit to Europe in 1848; stationed at Purcell Mansion, Cincinnati, Ohio, teaching elementary French, 1849; teacher of chemistry at St. Aloysius College, Louisville, Kentucky, 1849-50; Assistant Pastor in the Parish at St. Charles, Missouri, and Superintendent of the Jesuit farms, 1851-53; Minister and Tertian at St. Stanislaus Seminary, Florissant, Missouri, 1853-54.

Went to California via New York and arrived in San Francisco November 1, 1854; taught chemistry and the natural sciences at Santa Clara College, 1854-62; Second Assistant Pastor at San Jose, Santa Clara County, California, 1862-63.

He and Rev. Aloysius M. Besce left Santa Clara College for Arizona late in 1863 and accompanied Charles D. Poston and J. Ross Browne in January, 1864, on a journey from Fort Yuma to Tucson with an escort from Company G, 1st California Cavalry, commanded by Captain Samuel A. Gorham; on arrival Padre Besce assumed charge of San Augustine Parish and he went to San Xavier where he was listed in the 1864 Territorial census as Parish Priest.

The following is an extract from the message delivered by Governor Goodwin to the 1st Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Arizona at Prescott on September 30, 1864:

The only school that I have visited in the Territory, though doubtless there are others, is one at the old Mission church of San Xavier. If any such institution be recognized by an endowment I suggest that some aid be given this school. A small donation at this time would materially assist an ancient and most laudable charity of the church to which a large proportion of our people belong and would encourage it in preserving one of the most beautiful remnants of art on the continent.

The Joint Committee on Education submitted a report on October 27, 1864, which reads, in part, as follows:

At the Mission of San Xavier del Bac, Padre Messaya, has at great trouble and expense to himself, educated all children free of charge. His pupils are Mexican and Papago. He has been sadly impeded in his efforts by want of suitable school books.

A donation as suggested by his Excellency, the Governor, in his late message would be but a fitting compliment to the first school opened in Arizona.

Section 1 of an Act to Appropriate Money for the Aid of Public Schools approved November 7, 1864 reads:

That there be and is hereby appropriated and donated to the Mission School of and at San Xavier del Bac, for the purpose of purchasing books of instruction, stationery, and furniture, the sum of two hundred and fifty dollars; and such sum shall be paid into the hands of the person who shall be in pastoral charge of said Mission--he giving his receipt of such money to the Board of County Commissioner.

The following quotations from "Soldiers of the Cross" by Bishop J. B. Salpente explains how they came to Arizona and why they returned to California:

On the 26th of October, 1863, the Right Rev. Bishop Lamy, who had already procured two Jesuit Fathers from California for the missions of Arizona, started from Santa Fe with one of his priests, the Rev. J. M. Couderc, in order to pay a visit to these missionaries and to see the principal settlements of the Territory ....

As the Jesuit Fathers had neither church nor residence of their own in Tucson, they remained only a short time after the Bishop's visit. The people have kept a good remembrance of their stay among them; the San Xavier Indians especially were formerly fond of speaking of Father Messea, as a man who pleaded their cause with their Agent, to get from him the agricultural implements they needed, besides caring zealously for their spiritual welfare.

In August, 1864, the Right Rev. Bishop of Santa Fe was informed that the Jesuit Fathers had been recalled by their Superior, and that Arizona was left without priests to care for the spiritual wants of its people.

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Resumed his duties as Second Assistant Pastor at San Jose until 1867 when he was transferred to St. Ignatius College in San Francisco where he served as Minister and teacher of chemistry until 1869; became Assistant Pastor at Santa Clara, 1869-71; Assistant Priest at St. Ignatius Church, 1871-90; retired to Santa Clara College on account of ill health, where he died on August 12, 1897, aged 81; buried, Catholic Cemetery, Santa Clara, California.

#### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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