



Catherine Spalding, SCN: A Life in Letters

Mary Ellen SCN Doyle

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At the age of nineteen, Catherine Spalding (1793--1858) ventured into what would become a lifetime of leadership with the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth (SCN) -- one of the most significant American religious communities for women. As a cofounder and first superior of the order, she dedicated her life to developing and improving health care, services for orphans, and education on the early frontier. Her contributions had a lasting impact on Catholicism, the state of Kentucky, and the many people whose lives she touched.

Mary Ellen Doyle supplements her definitive biography of the influential educator and humanitarian, *Pioneer Spirit*, with this meticulously edited and annotated volume. The collected correspondence illustrates Spalding's exemplary character and the scope of her day-to-day life as an administrator. Together, the letters reveal a new picture of Spalding's personality and drive, her insights, her trials, and her world as mother superior. The collection also gives readers a valuable glimpse of antebellum life in Kentucky and the wider south.

Doyle presents the correspondence chronologically, following Spalding through key stages in her career from the founding of the SCN to her final years, as she turned to quieter cares. She provides essential historical context and information about Spalding's various correspondents, and she also analyzes the significance of letters missing from the collection. *Catherine Spalding, SCN* brings the SCN founder's words to a broader audience and offers readers new perspectives on both the world in which she lived and frontier faith.

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