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1929

## Colorado and New Mexico, Ute Mountain Reservation, Towaoc and Navajo Reservation, Shiprock, 1929

William M. Hughes

*Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions*

Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions

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MISSIONS -40  
COLORADO AND NEW MEXICO  
UTE MOUNTAIN RESERVATION, TOWAOC  
AND NAVAJO RESERVATION, SHIPROCK  
1929

Waterflow, N.M., Jan. 14, 1929.

Very Reverend J.B. Tennelly, S.S., D.B.,  
Washington, D.C.

Very Reverend Dear Father Tennelly:

Rt. Rev. Bishop Mitty has sent me  
a check for \$375. to carry on the work among the Indians of his diocese.  
Please accept my sincere thanks for obtaining this amount for my mis-  
sion. In spite of the tremendous handicaps this work is meeting with  
success and is enjoying the blessing of God.

Superintendent Kneale is gone from Shiprock and a Mr. Six is taking  
his place. From the impression he makes so far I am looking for better  
times at the Shiprock mission.

Very sincerely yours,

*Fr. Marcellus Troester.*

Waterflow, N.M., Feb. 2, 1939

Rt. Rev. Msgr. William Hughes,  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Monsignor Hughes:

✓ JR  
Enclosed is my mission report for the quarter ending Dec. 31. I also enclose two letters of acknowledgment for clothes received, and am returning two notifications of intended shipments which I did not receive.

The new superintendent at Shiprock is engaged at verifying the signatures of the Indians for our mission site. This is done mostly in the office and accordingly it will take some time until he meets them all. He told me he has orders from the Indian Office to check them all. This will be very difficult to do unless I bring some of them to the office but in that case the Protestants are liable to raise a howl again and have the Indian Office make another ruling forbidding this as they did two years ago. However I am hoping for the best.

Very sincerely yours,

Rev Marcellus Troester,

Am't \_\_\_\_\_ Cd.  
Ans. FEB 29 1939 \_\_\_\_\_ On  
Fol'd \_\_\_\_\_  
Letter to Rev. Troester 4/25/39 Elk Dr.  
Order filled \_\_\_\_\_ Work Slip O.K. \_\_\_\_\_ P.O.  
Ship't \_\_\_\_\_ List \_\_\_\_\_ R.O.  
Copy to L.S. \_\_\_\_\_ D.G. or Ref. \_\_\_\_\_ Sp.  
Copy to \_\_\_\_\_ Check sent \_\_\_\_\_ Sh.

40-50

February 11, 1928.

Rev. Marcellus Troester, O.F.M.,  
Waterflow,  
N. Mex.

Dear Father Marcellus:

I inclose Preservation Society check for \$62.50, covering your salary for attending the Ute-Navajo Mission, for the quarter ended December 31, 1928.

Yours fraternally,

Rt. Rev. Mgr. Wm. Hughes,  
Director.

JR



February 23, 1929.

Rev. Marcellus Troester, O.F.M.,  
Waterflow,  
N. Mex.

Dear Father Marcellus:

I have your letter of February 2.

It is the rule of the Indian Office that all signatures must be verified by the Superintendent in his presence. Twenty signatures are all that is required to constitute a representative body. If you wish, you can have the petition sent in as soon as twenty signatures are verified. But it is best to secure as many as possible.

Let me know when the petition is sent in and how many signatures were secured. I will then take the matter up with the Indian Office informally. You can rest assured that no ruling will be passed forbidding this.

Yours fraternally,

Rt. Rev. Msgr. Wm. Hughes,  
Director.

WJ:JR

April 25, 1929.

Rev. Marcellus Troester, C.F.M.,  
Waterflow,  
New Mexico.

Dear Father Marcellus:

In my letter of February 23, in answer to yours of February 2, I asked that you let me know when the petition was sent in and how many signatures were secured. Has the petition been forwarded?

I would like to get this matter settled before the new Commissioner's appointment is confirmed and while Commissioner Burke is still in office.

Yours fraternally,

Rt. Rev. Msgr. William Hughes,  
Director.

EW:MC

Archives and Institutional Repository - Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions

Waterflow, N.M., May 10, 1929.

Rt. Rev. Monsignor Hughes,  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Monsignor Hughes:

Your letter of April 25 is at hand. Mr. Six, superintendent at Shiprock, told me he had orders from the Indian Office to check up all my signatures, to interview the Indians to ascertain their age, (to find out whether any children signed), whether they really signed the paper whose names appear, whether the matter was fully explained to them and they understood what they were signing, whether they were married and how many children were in that family. This, he explained, was to learn how many families were represented by these signatures and how many children would be benefited by the proposed chapel.

All of this entails a lot of work and time. They had been taking a census of the Navajos for the last year or more but had not covered part of that section where I got the signatures, though a man is working there now taking the census. I told Mr. Six that I would offer to bring the respective Indians to the office for him to interview, if I did not know in advance that it would cause criticism. He said he preferred to go about the matter quietly and not cause any disturbance. Of course, he could not keep the matter secret since he had to use Protestant interpreters whenever he interviewed an Indian. So when the Protestants learned that my signatures were being verified and that my application for land might go through after all, they got up and had Indians sign a counter petition to keep the Catholic priest out of Shiprock.

My petition for land contains 88 signatures. I think Mr. Six has been going about the matter very cautiously and wisely, even if it took some time to do it. He tells me he expects to be able to finish up and to send the papers back to the Indian Office in a week or ten days.

Thanking you for all your interest and help, I remain

very sincerely yours,

*Rev. Marcellus Troester.*



May 21, 1929.

Rev. Marcellus Treoster, O.F.M.,  
Waterflow,  
New Mexico.

Dear Father Treoster:

I have your letter of May 10.

You are handling the matter very well in keeping things as quiet as possible.

Kindly let me know when the petition is actually sent to the Indian Office.

Yours fraternally,

Rt. Rev. Mgr. Wm. Hughes,  
Director.

EW:MW

Rt. Rev. Monsignor Hughes,  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Monsignor Hughes:

Today I stopped in the office at Shiprock again to see about the papers for the chapel site. The superintendent was gone but his stenographer told me that she typewrote the papers about the signatures and she saw Mr. Six, the superintendent, put them in an envelope and she thinks he mailed them this morning. In that case the Commissioner will get those papers - signatures of Indians for a chapel site at Shiprock and all data referring to those signatures - one day before you get this letter.

I hope it is not too late and that you can induce the Commissioner to settle this matter and sanction the granting of the chapel site before he retires.

One of the points of information required was the distance the respective Indians who signed the petition, live from the proposed chapel site. If this should be made an objection, since some of them live 20 and 30 miles away, please mention the fact that these Indians have absolutely no Catholic church to go to, and since the chapel would be near the Agency and the Indians generally come to the latter, their headquarters, several times a year, they could at least make their Easter duty, etc.

Another item of information was how many children attend the Shiprock school from those families represented by the Indians who gave signatures. Children who are away, attending non-reservation boarding schools, were not mentioned. And yet, when these children finish school and return home, they will get the service of this chapel and mission.

Thanking you for your help, I remain

very sincerely yours,

Rev. Marcellus Troester.

Waterflow, N. M., June 20, 1929.  
Rec'd JUN 26 1929  
Ans. 7/1/29  
Filed \_\_\_\_\_  
Letter to \_\_\_\_\_  
Order filed \_\_\_\_\_  
Copy to \_\_\_\_\_  
Copy to \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Slip O.K. \_\_\_\_\_  
List \_\_\_\_\_  
D.G. or Ref. \_\_\_\_\_  
Check sent \_\_\_\_\_

July 1, 1929

Rev. Marcellus Treester, C.F.M.,  
Alamogordo,  
New Mexico.

Dear Father Treester:

I have your letter of June 20.

Before leaving for a visitation of the Southwest missions, Father Hughes has directed me to write you on such matters.

I inquired at the Indian Office concerning the petition. They informed me that the petition has not arrived at that office. It may be at the Bureau of Education. That Bureau examines the signatures and sends it to the Indian Office with their approval.

The Indian Office has approved the grant of land. They will send the approval to the General Land Office as soon as the petition arrives.

Very sincerely yours,

Eugene J. Welch,  
Acting Secretary.

EW:TB.

July 25, 1929.

Rev. Marcellus Trooster, O.F.M.,  
Waterflow,  
New Mexico.

Dear Father Trooster:

The Indian Office informed me that a petition has been sent in protesting the issuance of the patent for the two and one half acres at Shiprock. The matter has not been decided upon as yet.

Do you know anything about this petition?

Very sincerely yours,

Eugene J. Welch,  
Acting Secretary.

NW:MW



file # 40-35

**Case** AUG 13 1929      **Armt.** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date** \_\_\_\_\_      **Ent.** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Materia** \_\_\_\_\_      **Mainana** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Reception** \_\_\_\_\_      **Dr.** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Circular** \_\_\_\_\_      **C.O.** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Workshop** O.K.      **P.O.** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Unit** \_\_\_\_\_      **P.O.** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Copy** \_\_\_\_\_      **Per.** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Mr. Brewster** L.B.      **Unit** \_\_\_\_\_

Aug. 9. 1929

My dear Mr. Secretary:

A. Original petition from 88 Navajo Indians of the Northern Navajo Agency, requesting that the Government set aside a small tract of land near the San Juan Boarding School at Shiprock, New Mexico, for use of the Catholic Mission, which tract was to be the site of a Catholic chapel, with a certificate from two interpreters subscribed to before the Superintendent.

C. A sketch showing a site formerly selected and a site now desired in substitution for the first one.

The recommendations were approved on November 24, 1928, in the following words:

Owing in part to a change in Superintendents at the Northern



Navajo Agency, the petition was not returned nor was the required information given until the Superintendent's attention was invited on July 9, 1929, to this omission. In his report he now recommends a different site more conveniently located, both for the boarding school children who will attend the services in the chapel, and for the missionaries also. The site is within one-eighth of a mile of the new school building and is described as NW $\frac{1}{4}$  NE $\frac{1}{4}$  NW $\frac{1}{4}$  SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec. 30, T. 30 N., R. 17 W., G & S R, B & M, in Gila County, Arizona. A roadway is reserved along the south boundary of the said .625-acre tract. Rev. Marcellus Troester, the Missionary, has been conducting services for the children of the boarding school in one of the Government buildings. To grant a building site will relieve that situation.

The setting apart of this tract will be a convenience to the school administration and it is accordingly recommended that authority be granted for the setting apart of this small site for Catholic Mission purposes, with the understanding that no right, title or interest therein is vested in any person or organization either against the Indians or against the United States; that it shall be used for Indian mission purposes only; and with the further understanding that this authority shall be revocable by the Secretary of the Interior at any time.

Respectfully,

(Sgd) C. J. Rhoads

Commissioner.

8 FLF 1

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Aug. 10, 1929

Approved, as recommended.

(Sgd) Jos. M. Dixon

First Assistant Secretary.

40-50

Waterflow, N.M., Aug. 21, 1929.

Adm. <u>File 112</u>	Ent.	Ch.
Pol'd.	Mission	Dr.
Letter to		C. O.
Order filled	Work Slip O.K.	P. O.
Ship's	List	P. O.
Copy to L. E.	D. S. or Ref.	Sp.
Copy to	Check book	Sp.

Rt. Rev. Monsignor Hughes,  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Monsignor Hughes:

Your check for \$6.00, representing donations from readers of the Indian Sentinel, was gratefully received and I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to the kind donors and my appreciation of your good work through your Sentinel. Every cent received in the missions means that the work of winning souls for God is that much extended and lack of funds means a corresponding curtailment of the missionaries' charity in behalf of their Indian wards. May the good Lord bless you and the donors in your good work and reward you with heavenly treasures in the life to come.

Very sincerely and gratefully yours,

*Rev. Marcellus Troester.*

Waterflow, N.M., Aug. 31, 1929.

Rt. Rev. Monsignor Hughes,  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Monsignor Hughes:

40-50

Recd SEP 5 1929 Amt. \_\_\_\_\_ Ch.  
Ans. 9/13/29-84-86 Encl. \_\_\_\_\_ Co.  
Fol'd \_\_\_\_\_ Msses \_\_\_\_\_ Dr.  
Letter to \_\_\_\_\_ C. O.  
Order filed \_\_\_\_\_ Work Slip O.K. \_\_\_\_\_ P. O.  
Encl's \_\_\_\_\_ Ltr \_\_\_\_\_ H. O.  
Copy to: S. \_\_\_\_\_ D. S. or Ref. \_\_\_\_\_ Sp.

I received the copy of the correspondence between Commissioner Rhoads and the Secretary of the Interior in regard to the granting of a piece of land at Shiprock, N.M., for a Catholic Mission site, for which I thank you very much. If I understand these papers correctly it means that the matter is settled, that the land is granted, that the Indian Office will not be influenced by the protests of the Protestants, and that now I can plan to build a chapel and establish a mission at Shiprock.

In that case I feel more secure, can consider myself established at Shiprock, and can let the world, or rather the readers of the Indian Sentinel, know that we are here to stay and to do missionary work among the Shiprock Indians.

Up until now and until this land was granted I did not feel justified in arousing the interest and enthusiasm of our charitable Catholics in behalf of this mission and perhaps receive considerable money for a chapel which would then have to be returned in case we would find it impossible to establish ourselves at Shiprock.

Shiprock is the center of this mission and is to be headquarters and the first thing necessary is to get a chapel there. My work at Shiprock thus far has been extremely discouraging but with a chapel there and especially when I am living there, things will be different. When trying to get children for my instructions the Indians tell me: "Build your prayer house first, then we will let you have our children", and I am sure they will. Besides, the children themselves, being mocked and ridiculed by the Protestants, rebel and refuse to come to the ramshackle log house for Mass and instructions, since the Protestants have a nice brick church right across the road.

My work at Towaoc, though not without its discouragements and obstacles has been more pleasant and encouraging. There I have had a baptism and a First Communion class every year, and once Confirmation, but I must leave Towaoc in the background in order to build up Shiprock first. The Utes at Towaoc refuse to give me a piece of land but that does not worry me now since I do not want to build there until Shiprock is established.

Very sincerely yours,

Rev. Marcellus Trocater.

(ENCLOSURE)

SEP 5 1929 AMT

Navajo, Ute, and Paiute Indians.

Few readers of the Indian Sentinel are aware of the fact that right in our own United States, at the juncture of the four States of New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Colorado, there is a territory of over 12,000 square miles without a Catholic Church, and had been without a priest until the writer was assigned to this section to do missionary work among the Navajo, Ute, and Paiute Indians scattered over this vast area of our Southwest. It is a virgin country, as far as the Catholic faith is concerned, with the exception of one small locality, at Redrock, Arizona, where a number of Catholic Navajos have their homes, who were among the first pupils of the Sisters' school at St. Michaels, Ariz., and who have been held to the faith by visits of the missionary, when they had Mass, received the Sacraments and had their children baptized. It was these Catholic Navajo Indians who had repeatedly requested that a priest be sent to this jurisdiction who could look after their spiritual wants to better advantage.

Owing to the peculiar situation of this mission which reaches out into four States and into the four dioceses of Santa Fe, Tucson, Salt Lake, and Denver, the first requisite was for the writer to obtain faculties from the respective bishops of these four dioceses. The Navajo Indians, who number about 9000 in this Northern Navajo Jurisdiction, are scattered over parts of New Mexico, Arizona and Utah; the Utes are mostly to be found in Colorado, while the Paiutes live in the canyons and on the plains of Utah. It is unnecessary to explain that one man alone can impossibly do justice to this vast missionary field and this large number of Indians, but the start is now made and though the initial work was carried on amid the greatest and well nigh overwhelming obstacles, still the prospects of winning many

of these Indians to the faith are very encouraging. Naturally, the hope of this mission, as of every other mission, is in the children, and there are thousands of them to be saved.

At Shiprock, N.M., the center of this mission, and at Towaoc, Colorado, the writer has been giving religious instruction twice a week and Mass every other Sunday, while the children receive the Sacraments of Penance and Communion every two weeks. The great need, however, is a church <sup>at Shiprock, N.M.</sup> for the worthy celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. At present we have the use of a log building which serves as a public school but which is neither fit for a school nor ~~for~~ a church. The Government has now set aside a piece of land for Catholic Mission purposes and we could go ahead with the erection of a church as soon as funds are available. Needless to say, all help must come from outside the mission since we cannot expect the pagan Indians to contribute to a religion in which, as yet, they are not interested and who think they are doing the missionary a great favor in letting him instruct their children in his unknown religion. So I hope and pray that the good Lord will inspire many generous souls to contribute to this pioneer work of spreading the seed of faith among these Indians and thus help to lay the foundation of a Catholic mission for future generations.

*Rev. Marcellus Troester, O.F.M.*



Waterflow, N.M., Aug. 31, 1929.

Very Rev. J. B. Tennelly, S.S., D.D.,  
Washington, D.C.

Very Reverend Father Tennelly:

In order to be able to continue the missionary work among the Indians in the diocese of Salt Lake, I respectfully request, through the Rt. Rev. John J. Mitty, D.D., that the yearly allowance of \$375.00 from the Indian and Negro fund be granted by the Mission Board for the coming year.

This mission work, which has been carried on the same as last year, consists of giving religious instructions, Mass and the Sacraments to the Indian children and visiting the older folks in their homes and by various means trying to win them to the faith.

Thanking you for past favors, I remain

very sincerely yours,

*Rev. Marcellus Troester.*

*Approved Sept 9-1929*

*+ John J. Mitty  
Bishop Salt Lake*

Waterflow, N.M., Aug. 31, 1929.

Very Rev. J. B. Tenny, S.S., D.D.,  
Washington, D.C.

Very Reverend Father Tenny:

In order to be able to continue the missionary work among the Indians in the diocese of Salt Lake, I respectfully request, through the Rt. Rev. John J. Mitty, D.D., that the yearly allowance of \$375.00 from the Indian and Negro fund be granted by the Mission Board for the coming year.

This mission work, which has been carried on the same as last year, consists of giving religious instructions, Mass and the Sacraments to the Indian children and visiting the older folks in their homes and by various means trying to win them to the faith.

Thanking you for past favors, I remain

very sincerely yours,

*Rev. Marcellus Troester.*

*Approved Sept 9-1929  
+ John J. Mitty  
Bishop of Salt Lake*

40-54  
September 13, 1929.

Rev. Marcellus Troester, O. F. M.,  
Waterflow,  
New Mexico,

Dear Father Marcellus;

Your letter of August 31 with enclosure has come in the absence of  
Monsignor Hughes who is in the West in the interests of Indian missions.

How much will you need for the church at Shiprock?

It may be too late to get this appeal into the Fall issue of THE  
INDIAN SENTINEL, which is now in the hands of the printer. But before making  
any efforts to get funds for the chapel it would be necessary to know how much  
you will need.

Yours in Christ,

SF:SP.

BUREAU OF CATHOLIC INDIAN MISSIONS.

Waterflow, N.M., Sept. 23, 1929.

Rt. Rev. Monsignor Hughes,  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Monsignor Hughes:

Rec'd OCT 1 1929 Atk \_\_\_\_\_ On \_\_\_\_\_  
Ass. \_\_\_\_\_ Ret. \_\_\_\_\_ Cl. \_\_\_\_\_  
Fol'd \_\_\_\_\_ Messed \_\_\_\_\_ Dr. \_\_\_\_\_  
Letter to \_\_\_\_\_ O. O. \_\_\_\_\_  
Order fill \_\_\_\_\_ Work Slip O.K. \_\_\_\_\_ P. O. \_\_\_\_\_  
Ship't \_\_\_\_\_ List \_\_\_\_\_ R. O. \_\_\_\_\_  
Copy to \_\_\_\_\_ D. G. or Ref. \_\_\_\_\_  
Copy to \_\_\_\_\_ Check with \_\_\_\_\_

*Request noted M.B.*

A letter from your Office, dated Sept. 13, says: "Before making any efforts to get funds for the chapel it will be necessary to know how much you will need." That's a mighty hard question to answer. But to make a rough guess I doubt whether I can build a church of the size needed for less than 12,000, perhaps \$15,000, since it ought to be a large one. The two schools at Ship-rock accommodate 400 children and, tho they are mostly Protestant now, our mission will certainly grow, and I do not wish to make the same mistake that was made in our other missions. Every chapel or church built in our Navajo missions, with the exception of those built in the last three years, proved to be too small after some years.

However, I expect some help from our Province, but do not know how much. I have \$1751.89 on hand now for the building. I can hardly hope to get all the necessary funds at once, but every little bit will help and if I can only get the walls up and the roof on, I will be satisfied.

Very sincerely yours,

*Rev. Marcellus Troester.*



Waterflow, N.M., Oct. 3, 1929.

Rt. Rev. J. Henry Tihen, D.D.,  
Denver, Colo.

Rt. Reverend Dear Bishop:

Enclosed is an application addressed to  
Dr. Tennelly for funds from the Indian and Negro fund which I humbly  
beg you to endorse and forward.

The following is a report of the Towaoc Mission for the year  
1928.

Total Catholic Indian population	....	61
Baptisms since last report,		
Infants	...	3
Adults	....	9
Marriages	.....	0
Deaths	.....	4
Confessions	.....	594
Communions	.....	572
First Communions	.....	15
Confirmations		
Whites	.....	7
Indians	.....	50

Hoping that this report meets with your satisfaction and the  
above request with your approval, I remain

very respectfully yours,

*Rev. Marcellus Troester.*



[ENCLOSURE]

Waterflow, N.M., Oct. 3, 1929,

Very Rev. J.B. Tennelly, S.S., D.D.,  
Washington, D.C.

Very Reverend Father Tennelly:

With the permission and sanction of the Rt. Rev. J. Henry Tihen I respectfully request that the yearly allowance of \$375.00 from the Indian and Negro fund be granted by the Mission Board at its next meeting so as to be able to continue the missionary work among the Ute and Navajo Indians in the Denver diocese.

This work has been regularly attended to during the past year, consisting in giving religious instructions twice a week to the Catholic children and catechumens, Mass every Wednesday and every other Sunday, administering the Sacraments of Penance and Communion every two weeks, etc.

Hoping that the Board will be able to furnish the requested aid to this mission and thanking you for all past favors, I remain

Very sincerely yours,

Rev. Marcellus Troester.

Approved  
+ Henry Tihen,  
Bishop of Denver.

Copy for: Bureau  
orig. to donor 12/6/29

Miss Della M. Frits,  
Waterloo, Iowa.

My dear Friend:

Your generous Christmas box, with all the goodies, candy, toys and clothes arrived safely and I wish to thank you and the other members of your choir, both in my own name and in the name of my Indian children for your great charity. There will be some miniature war-whoops or Christmas whoops when the little redskins receive your gifts, and of course we won't forget to ask the Infant Jesus to reward you a hundredfold and to shower His choicest blessings upon you and grant you a happy and holy Christmas.

Most gratefully yours.

(Signed)

Rev. Marcellus Treester.

Copied by MF

40-50  
Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions