



SISTER MARY JOHN

## *Baptist De Lacy*

the difficulties of operating a hospital with limited financial means and used her skills to negotiate the financial and practical needs of the institute, co-opting both Protestant and Catholic supporters and staff. She was an extremely hard worker and assisted at all levels of hospital management, including nursing and the dispensing of prescription medications. She also trained other Sisters who worked in that hospital. De Lacy implemented the policy of the Sisters of Charity which she had learned from Mary Aikenhead, that the Sisters of Charity accept people of any race, colour or creed.

De Lacy returned to Ireland in September 1859, less than two years after the hospital's opening and was welcomed again into the Irish Congregation, working as a Sister of Charity there for almost twenty years. After her death on 12 December 1878, she was buried near the grave of Mary Aikenhead at Donnybrook, Dublin. (below)

**Alicia De Lacy**, later Sr. M. John Baptist De Lacy, was born in Limerick, Ireland on 1 July 1799. Alicia entered the congregation on 27 March 1835, was accepted as a novice on 24 September 1835 and professed on 25 September 1837. She entered the Sisters of Charity in Dublin specifically for the Australian Mission, and gained nursing experience in the newly opened St Vincent's Hospital, Dublin.

De Lacy was thirty- nine years old when she arrived in Australia. She, after some months at Parramatta, helped Cahill to organise the Catholic Orphan School at Waverley in 1839-40, one of the Sisters' earliest ministries. She also helped to introduce order and method to the Catholic schools already in the Colony. When residing permanently in Sydney, she visited Darlinghurst Gaol two or three times a week. For some years De Lacy kept a record of convent events, writing the Annals that provide much of our knowledge about the work of the early Sisters in colonial Sydney.

After Cater left for Ireland in 1846 and three Sisters for Hobart in 1847, De Lacy stayed in Sydney, the last remaining pioneer Sister to do so. She went on to found St Vincent's Hospital on Woolloomooloo Heights in 1857, thus beginning the formal healthcare ministry of the Sisters of Charity in Australia. De Lacy was well aware of

