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Caritas Pirckheimer

A JOURNAL OF THE REFORMATION YEARS, 1524–1528

Translated by PAUL A. MACKENZIE

Caritas Pirckheimer:
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Library of Medieval Women **ISSN 1369–9652**

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Caritas Pirckheimer:
A Journal of the Reformation Years 1524–1528

Translated from the German with Introduction, Notes and Interpretive Essay

† Paul A. MacKenzie

D.S. BREWER

First published 2006
D. S. Brewer, Cambridge

ISBN 1 84384 076 6

D. S. Brewer is an imprint of Boydell & Brewer Ltd
PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3DF, UK
and of Boydell & Brewer Inc.
668 Mt Hope Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620, USA,
website: www.boydellandbrewer.com

A catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library

This publication is printed on acid-free paper

Printed in Great Britain by
Cambridge University Press

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Acknowledgments

The journal of Caritas Pirckheimer is a text that deserves to be known more widely than it has been up to now. Thanks to Paul A. MacKenzie, that will now be possible. Unfortunately, he did not live long enough to shepherd his book through production. We are fortunate that his wife, Christine MacKenzie, who recognized the importance of Caritas's text, agreed to take Professor MacKenzie's place in ensuring that the manuscript would be prepared, proofs read, and an index compiled to facilitate its production.

Additionally, this project could not have been finished without the help of the secretary of the Language Department at Lycoming College, Lorri Amrom, whose dedication to the project and the typing of the manuscript resulted in the final text. Support from friends and colleagues in the Language Department – especially Garett Heysel for technical assistance, indexing and effort – enabled Christine MacKenzie to see the book to completion. Thanks also go to Lycoming College staff, especially Janet Hurlbert, for her aid in obtaining Interlibrary Loan materials.

Dedicated to his teaching and research, Paul A. MacKenzie always treasured the support of the entire college community as well as (and most especially) that of his family – Christine, his stepson Matthew, and his daughters Kate and Annah.

Christine MacKenzie is grateful to Jane Chance, the editor of the series, and Caroline Palmer, editor of the press, for their support, patience, and encouragement, both to Paul during the writing process and afterwards to her during manuscript preparation and the production of the book.

Jane Chance
Christine MacKenzie
August 2005

Introduction:
The Life and Times of Caritas Pirckheimer of Nürnberg

When Caritas Pirckheimer, abbess of the Nürnberg cloister of St. Clare's, died in 1532, her obituary in the cloister's *Totenbüchlein* included the simple words "a mirror of all piety and learning and a lover of all virtues."[1] The unique role that she played in defending her cloister and her faith during the period when the Reformation was formally accepted by the City Council of Nürnberg in 1525, however, remained largely unappreciated and unknown until the Bamberg archivist Constantin Höfler first published the manuscript of her personal account of that time in 1852, giving it the curious title of *Denkwürdigkeiten* (things worth thinking about).[2] There has never been a complete English translation of this important document.[3] The title *A Journal of the Reformation Years 1524–1528* seemed more appropriate and accurate than a literal translation of Höfler's vague and arcane title.

Barbara[4] Pirckheimer was born on 21 March 1467 in Eichstatt, Germany, the daughter of Dr. Hans Pirckheimer who, like his son and grandsons after him, studied in Italy, eventually earning a doctorate in Padua, Italy. Since Hans was in the service of the Archbishop of Eichstatt, the family lived in that city, although their ties to Nürnberg remained strong. The earliest mention of the family in Nürnberg dates from 1359. Barbara was the first of twelve children born into this

1 Staatsarchiv, Reichsstadt Nürnberg, Kloster St. Klara, Akten und Bände, Rep. 5a, no. 4, prod. 24, *Totenbüchlein Anna Ketzel*, fols. 13v–14r.

2 The complete title was *Der hochberühmten Charitas Pirckheimer, Äbtissin von S. Clara zu Nürnberg, Denkwürdigkeiten aus dem Reformationszeitalter.* Contrary to Höfler's assertion, however, Caritas Pirckheimer was far from being "famous" (*hochberühmt*). It was not until 1961, when Josef Pfanner's critical editions of her letters and the *Denkwürdigkeiten* appeared, that Caritas's importance began to be examined.

3 Francis Mannhardt's translation, *An Heroic Abbess of Reformation Days: The Memoirs of Mother Charitas Pirckheimer, Poor Clare, of Nuremberg* (St. Louis: Central Bureau, CCV of A, 1930) is incomplete and, in addition to its rather dated language, lacks any critical apparatus, which is necessary in order to explain the historical background and significance of the work.

4 Both her mother and paternal grandmother were also named Barbara. As was the custom, she received a new name, Caritas, when she joined St. Clare's.

well-to-do patrician family. Her brother Willibald (1470–1530) was born on 5 December 1470 and was to become the foremost representative of humanism in Germany, a leading figure in Nürnberg's Renaissance and Albrecht Dürer's best friend.[5] Two Pirckheimer children died young. Seven of Barbara's eight sisters were to follow her example and take the veil. Her other sister, Juliane, married Martin Geuder, a high-ranking civic official. Thus the Pirckheimer women followed the two most common "options" for females at that time, marriage and the Church.

Why did Caritas Pirckheimer become a nun? As a child she enjoyed a rather sheltered and care-free life. When Hans Pirckheimer accepted a position as councilor to Duke Albrecht IV of Bavaria, the family moved to Munich. Hans undertook the teaching of his son Willibald himself and, significantly, his daughter Barbara also was permitted to participate. When she was twelve, she was sent to St. Clare's in Nürnberg in order to further her education. In addition to her father's tutoring, she had received instruction in Latin from her aunt and was well-prepared for the convent school. The convent school had earned a reputation for excellence, and the cloister, which had undergone reform not many years earlier, practiced strict observance of the Rule.[6] Also, its library was outstanding, no small consideration for a family as dedicated to learning as the Pirckheimers. In short, it was the perfect "match" for the young woman. Unfortunately, we have no documentation to indicate why Caritas chose the life of a nun rather than marriage. The decision may not have been hers, but her father's. Each novice was expected to bring a "dowry" of sorts for the convent. Perhaps 10 gulden was the customary amount. This was probably less than the dowry a future husband might desire.

5 Albrecht Dürer was Germany's greatest late-medieval artist. His painting, woodcuts, etchings, etc. enable us to visualize his era. Dürer's house in Nürnberg has been carefully restored.

6 The "Rule" consisted of written by-laws, including religious duties, along with the timetable of when they were to be performed. In short, it listed the beliefs and customs of the order. In the fifteenth century there were many attempts to reform the monasteries. Many had become very lax in observing the stated rules and customs of their order. Many abuses of the oath to practice poverty, chastity and obedience were cited. Although some reforms were made, obviously enough abuses remained for the proponents of the "new faith," i.e., Lutheranism, to use them in their attacks on the "old faith" when the Reformation began. One of the most glaring abuses was the relationship between some nuns and priests (or monks).Wood cuts and printed broadsheets show them having sexual intercourse.

Much has been written about the piety of the population of Nürnberg in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.[7] This was demonstrated in a range of areas, from institutional reform, such as that of St. Clare's, to artistic patronage during the Franconian capital's golden age, for example of Veit Stoss's "Annunciation."[8] A list of the artists active in Nurnberg at this time reads like a veritable "Who's Who?" of fifteenth and sixteenth century German art.[9] The Pirckheimer family practiced this aspect of Nürnberg life. After his wife died in 1488, Hans Pirckheimer moved to Nürnberg. In his house opposite the Schöner Brunnen (Beautiful Fountain) he established a large library and, in his capacity as a lawyer, served the community with great dedication. Near the end of his life he entered the Franciscan monastery and died there on 3 May 1501. Thus, it is abundantly clear that Caritas Pirckheimer came from a very devout family in which the obligation to serve God and the community was felt most sincerely.

According to a ruling by the City Council, only daughters of patricians were allowed to enter St. Clare's. Because she was under age, Barbara Pirckheimer petitioned the Franciscan provincial authority for permission to enter the convent early. On account of her striking competency in Latin, her request was granted, and she joined the order at sixteen, receiving the name Caritas. After completing her novitiate, Caritas was assigned the position of head of the girls' school. This was the first step in her exemplary career, which was to culminate in her being unanimously elected abbess at Christmas time 1503, a position she held until her death in 1532.[10] Later Caritas's sister Clara also

7 Gerald Strauss notes, however, that according to the 1449 census Nürnberg counted only 446 clerics for a population of over 20,000. There were, nevertheless, several houses of worship. The two parish churches were St. Sebald and St. Lorenz. Other major churches included St. Aegidius, St. Jacob, Heilig Geist Spital, St. Martha, the Church of Our Lady (Frauenkirche), eight monasteries (Benedictines, Carthusians, Minorite friars, Dominicans, Carmelites, Augustinians, the Order of the Knights of St. John, and the Johannites). There were also two convents, St. Clare's and St. Catherine's. Gerald Strauss, *Nuremberg in the Sixteenth Century*, rev. ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), pp. 155–158.

8 For a detailed account see Paul A. MacKenzie, "Piety and Patronage: Aspects of Nürnberg Cultural and Religious Life 1477–1526. Anton (II) Tucher and Veit Stoss," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 49 (1993), 46–61.

9 An excellent source book for this period is Jeffrey Chipps Smith, *Nürnberg: A Renaissance City, 1500–1618* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983).

10 Electing their own abbess was an example of democracy within the cloister; however, one could search in vain for any signs of democracy in Nürenberg. The city was governed by the patrician class.

became abbess, as did her niece Catherine (Willibald's daughter), who was the very last abbess the cloister was to have.

It is interesting to note that when her brother Willibald learned that she had been elected abbess, he wrote to her (in Latin) saying that he was unsure whether he should congratulate or console her. He shows he is aware of the great burden on her shoulders as well as the dangers yet to come. He advises her to submit to higher authority and asks that God grant her wisdom and love, something which she gives ample evidence of in her journal. In addition, he urges her to be grateful for whatever befalls her. What began as an attempt at humor ends up as a very serious letter in which he evokes the example of Mary Magdalen, who chose to devote her life to serving the Lord. Ending with the motto "Sic itur ad astra" (In this way we reach the stars), Willibald's letter reflects the strong faith which both he and Caritas shared.[11]

Twenty-five years later the sisters of St. Clare's[12] celebrated Caritas's jubilee. Willibald's daughter Catherine, also a member of the convent, wrote to her father and described the celebration. He had supplied a barrel of wine along with his silverware. There was plenty of good food (including white bread and cake!) in addition to the wine, and even dancing.[13] This merry-making, however, made a sharp contrast with everyday life in the cloister. The *Journal* shows that in 1528 morale in the cloister was almost at its lowest ebb due to the changes brought about by the Reformation. The pressure from the City Council was unrelenting. Later Caritas's health began to fail. After another four years, on 19 August 1532, Caritas died. On 10 August 1959, her grave was discovered and later her remains and her tombstone were removed and placed in the floor of St. Clare's to the right of the front altar.[14]

Caritas attained a reputation as one of the most learned women of her time as a result of her study of the classics, the Church Fathers, the Bible and other works that often were made available to her by her brother Willibald, an avid bibliophile and translator with whom she carried on a life-long correspondence. Her letters (often in Latin) reflect the extent to which she devoted herself to the pursuit of knowledge, while at the same time performing her many duties as abbess of St. Clare's.

11 Josef Pfanner, ed., *Caritas Pirckheimer, Quellensammlung, 3. Heft. Briefe 1499–1530* (Landshut: Solanus Druck, 1961), p. 36.

12 At this time they numbered approximately sixty.

13 Pfanner, p. 151.

14 In November 1961 the Archbishop of Bamberg established a commission to resume the efforts first begun in 1932, but thwarted on account of World War II, to gather documentation for the purpose of her canonization.

Erasmus held her up as an example of Germany's most learned women, likening her to England's Margaret More Roper, the daughter of Thomas More. Caritas corresponded with her friend, the Nürnberg humanist Sixtus Tucher, for several years. Although it does not appear that she authored any original compositions or interpretations of works that she had read, one can see the depth of her interests and which classical works she read and loved. Her correspondence with Conrad Celtis, one of Germany's leading intellectuals, provides an excellent example of how she achieved her reputation for learning. Celtis, the Poet Laureate, may have been exaggerating when he called her the German Sappho,[15] but when he sent her a copy of his newly discovered works of Hrotswitha von Gandersheim,[16] it showed his respect for her intellect. Caritas, however, attempted to make it clear to Celtis that any literary activity on her part would only be in the service of God, with the Scriptures as a starting point. This was a limitation to which he did not really want to submit. He also dedicated his poem "Norembergia" to her, and again, in her letter of thanks, she attempts to persuade the poet that he would be better served by leaving secular subjects and turning his attention to the Scriptures. Later Celtis sent her a copy of his *Amores*, a work whose erotic subject matter, however, seems hardly appropriate for a nun.[17]

It is fascinating to note that Caritas often belittles her own scholarly gifts and tries to assume the role of a simple, ignorant woman. This is something she was to do later in her correspondence with the City Council and with Kaspar Nützel, but her quick intelligence almost always breaks out, and she does not hesitate to express her opinion. Such self-effacing behavior tended to be rather formulaic. Typically, the only way a woman could be considered "worthy" of engaging in an intellectual discussion (usually epistolary, especially in the case of nuns), was on account of her piety and chastity, which elevated her to the intellectual level of males for this purpose. If it were not for her reminding her reader of the limitations of her intelligence, it would be

15 Caritas does not seem to have written any poetry. If she did, none of it has survived.

16 Hrotswitha von Gandersheim (935 to after 1000), a nun in the cloister at Gandersheim, wrote several dramas in Latin. The rumor persists, however, that the plays were forgeries. In the series Library of Medieval Women, note the book by Katharina M. Wilson, *Hrotswitha von Gandersheim: A Florilegium of her Works* (Cambridge, UK: D. S. Brewer, 1998)

17 See Stephen L. Wailes, "The Literary Relationship of Conrad Celtis and Caritas Pirckheimer," *Daphnis* 17 (1988), 434–435.

extremely difficult to determine whether the writer was male or female. Needless to say, she proved to be more than equal to any male who attempted to persuade her to compromise any of the positions on which her faith was based. Neither Osiander, Wenzel Linck, nor Melanchthon, to name some of the most important preachers and theologians, was successful in his efforts to convince her to accept the "new teachings" of Lutheranism, renounce her vows and leave the convent.

Caritas and Christoph Scheurl, a well-known councilor and former Professor of Theology at Wittenberg, exchanged many letters. In 1506, he dedicated his work *Die Früchte der Messe* (The Fruits of the Mass) to her. Later, in 1515, he published the correspondence of his uncle Sixtus Tucher with Caritas and Apollonia Tucher between 1498 and 1506 as *Viertzig Sendbriefe* (Forty Letters). This was a "typical" humanistic discussion on matters of religious and moral concern.

As important as her correspondence with her contemporaries was in establishing her reputation as a learned woman, it pales in comparison to the significance of her journal, in which she paints a vivid picture of the very stressful times which befell St. Clare's. This document depicts the time when the Reformation was formally accepted by the City Council, as a result of which the pressure on the convent, its residents and especially its abbess increased almost daily. Caritas Pirckheimer refused to renounce her vows and leave the convent, despite considerable pressure from City Council to do so. Three nuns are forcibly removed by their mothers in one of the most dramatic parts of the *Journal*. Only one nun chose to leave of her own accord. Interestingly, the question arises as to why no fathers participated in "liberating" their daughters, especially since the Biblical principal "Honor thy father and mother" was frequently employed as a valid reason why a nun should leave the convent. One is forced to conclude that the fathers were "too busy," or that participation in such an activity was "below" their rank and unsuitable for a male.

Merry E. Wiesner, one of the foremost scholars of this period, has described women's responses to the Reformation as follows:

> Women were not simply passive recipients of the Reformation message, but left convents, refused to leave convents, preached, prophesied, discussed religion with friends and family, converted their husbands, left their husbands, wrote religious poems, hymns, and polemics, and were martyred on all sides of the religious controversy.[18]

[18] "Beyond Women and the Family: Towards a Gender Analysis of the Reformation," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 18 (1987), 313–314.

Sister Jeanne de Jussie, a nun in the order of St. Clare from Geneva, Switzerland, offers a fascinating parallel to Caritas Pirckheimer in that, like Caritas, she defied the local authorities and left an account of her experiences as a loyal Catholic from 1526 to 1535. Unlike Caritas, however, she departed from Geneva and relocated in Annecy, France, where she later became abbess.[19]

Caritas was no Hildegard von Bingen and left no original works in which she celebrates her religious experience as beautifully as her fellow-nun from the Rhineland. Nor did she ever entertain the idea of becoming an activist like Argula von Grumbach, for example, and engage in a public theological debate. However, she was by no means a passive recipient of the Reformation. She refused to leave the convent, and yet she managed to defend her faith. The most vivid testament of that faith is without question her journal, a collection of commentaries and letters written by her and to her, and which she ordered be copied and collected as a historical record of the cloister's struggle to survive.

The *Journal* consists of 69 "chapters" which deal with the cloister's involvement with the Nürnberg City Council's efforts essentially to force it to accept the religious reforms of Lutheranism.[20] It details the "Religionsgespräch" (religious discussion) that had been held by the City Council from 3 to 14 March 1524, and the formal acceptance of the Reformation by the city fathers. Ostensibly, this gathering served the purpose of discussing or debating a dozen statements dealing with how one would achieve salvation. Representing the "new faith" were twelve highly respected Nürnbergers. The "old faith," however, had far less than twelve representatives. In truth, it was a big charade. The outcome was assured for the "new faith." The Catholic members of the group realized early that they would lose and stopped coming after a few sessions. Consequently, considerable pressure was brought to bear on all the monasteries, and the only monastery that remained was that of the Franciscans. All the others accepted the "new doctrine" and effectively closed.

After St. Catherine's followed the example of the other monasteries and was dissolved, only St. Clare's convent remained open. Those members of the monasteries who chose to remain were typically "pensioned off," while others either became Lutheran preachers or

19 Margaret L. King, *Women of the Renaissance* (Chicago and London: The University Press, 1991), pp. 99–100.

20 For reasons of space I have not included the short summaries of each chapter which are given in most German editions. These are not Caritas's words and thus nothing that she included in the *Journal* has been sacrificed.

simply left the order. Nürnburg as a "free," imperial city enjoyed the advantage of owing allegiance solely to the Emperor. When the city became Lutheran, however, it was forced to walk a precarious and religious tightrope since the Emperor had not accepted Lutheranism and the city did not want to lose the privileges it had enjoyed, many of which allowed the city to grow into a great center of commerce.

The *Journal* documents the period from the spring of 1524 until December of 1528. The last entry is dated 4 December 1528. The cloister had always held a special position in the city, since it was only open to Nürnberg women, and many daughters from the foremost families of the city served in the order. The City Council planned to replace the Franciscans who had been the preachers and confessors to St. Clare's with different preachers who were proponents of the "new doctrine" of Lutheranism. What was probably imagined as a rather simple matter of persuading the nuns to accept the new scheme turned out to be more complicated and problematical than anticipated. Caritas Pirckheimer proved to be a thorn in the side of the City Council. She did not yield to the pressure that was exerted on the convent and showed remarkable courage and determination in defending her sisters' rights to continue to practice their faith as they felt they were entitled to, having made oaths to God alone and not to men. This was a position of independence that was, after all, not so very far removed from some of the fundamental tenets of the new Protestant faith, although it was often clothed in theological language which served to obfuscate the issues rather than highlight their similarities.

The efforts of Kaspar Nützel, the superintendent of St. Clare's who was also a respected member of the City Council and served as its liaison to the convent, to persuade Caritas and her sisters to voluntarily accept the City Council's plans, proved unsuccessful. The 111 sermons from preachers such as Osiander proved fruitless. What we might even call an early attempt at "brain-washing" failed completely. The sisters were not used to such long-winded, dogmatic sermons (some of which lasted for hours) and only sat through them because they were forced to. Neither Caritas nor the other nuns granted their "undivided attention" to them. Indeed, among the "captive audience" they became the object of humor rather than serious discussion, since the sisters could hardly wait for them to be over. Caritas adamantly insisted on choosing their own confessors, instead of those proposed by the City Council, but was unsuccessful in persuading the City Council.

On Good Friday 1525, priests were forbidden to say mass at the convent, and on the Eve of Ascension Day the City Council's order that the new rule be accepted went into effect. The cloister was not closed,

however, but no novices could be accepted, so that the convent would eventually "die out." This is what happened. The most important events described in the *Journal* include the forced removal of three nuns against their will (Chapters 33–34), where the sense of impending doom, possible mob violence and the destruction of the cloister itself make for high drama; Melanchthon's visit (Chapters 46–50) at the end of November 1525, which proved to have a surprisingly positive influence when he recommended to the City Council that they allow the convent to continue to exist; the visitation of the cloister by city councilors in November 1527; Anna Schwarz's decision to leave of her own accord; and the final chapters, which describe the efforts of the cloister to deal with the problem of taxes. It is worth noting that Caritas's last words towards the council were an appeal for God's mercy towards the council and for God's Grace towards her cloister, a sign that her faith remained strong even to the end.

The *Journal* begins in 1524, with a pessimism stemming from a time of great turmoil and prophecies of doom. The Peasants' War had brought about considerable acts of violence, torture, execution and death, and the citizens of Nürnberg had every right to fear that the city might not escape unscathed. With the acceptance of Lutheranism by the City Council in 1524, the fears expressed in the early pages of the *Journal* were largely justified. This dark undercurrent serves to warn of the imminent end of a once glorious and proud era, and this pervades the entire document. Caritas recognized the significance and importance of these years and had these memoirs recorded for posterity. Many of the chapters duplicate letters which can be found elsewhere in her works. The *Journal* thus represents her attempt to offer a history of the period when she defended the cloister in the face of a major attempt to close it and force the members to renounce their vows and accept the doctrine of Lutheranism. This was something which neither she nor her fellow-sisters (with but one exception, Anna Schwarz) agreed to do. It will be shown in the interpretive essay to what extent the relationship between Caritas and Kaspar Nützel grew to reflect a surprising degree of tolerance, respect, and love, despite the growing impatience of the City Council in its efforts to bring a conclusion to what must have seemed a long, dragged-on process. Caritas's occasional displays of humor serve as a welcome contrast to the sometimes dogmatic efforts (as in the case of Wenzel Linck) to use complex theological arguments to wear down her perseverance.

A note about the original manuscripts

There are four manuscripts of the work in the Staatsarchiv Nürnberg: Codices A, B C and D. Codex D is the oldest and Codices B and C are based upon it. Codex A is a pure copy of D. Codex B and Codex C are by different hands. Codex C was probably copied by P. Christianus Koppius, who was the father-confessor of the Bamberg cloister ca. 1628. It contains a list of abbesses of the Nürnberg cloister and their dates of service. Four different hands have been identified. Unfortunately they are also designated A, B, C and D, which tends to obfuscate matters a bit. A fifth hand, E, might be that of Caritas herself, since it appears in marginal notes, corrections and additions.[21] After the Nürnberg cloister had "died out" the manuscript was taken to the cloister of St. Clare in Bamberg. Eventually Codices A–D were returned to Nürnberg and kept in the Staatsarchiv, where they remain today.

21 An excellent discussion of the manuscripts and the different hands can be found in Frumentius Renner, ed., *Die Denkwürdigkeiten der Äbtissin Caritas Pirckheimer* (St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 1982), pp. 164–170.

A Journal of the Reformation Years 1524–1528

Caritas Pirckheimer

Chapter 1

What follows are descriptions of some of the things that happened to our cloister here at Saint Clare's in Nürnberg in those dangerous, rebellious times, along with some letters written at the same time.[1]

We all know that for a very long time it has been prophesied that in the year of our Lord 1524 a great deluge[2] is to occur by which everything on earth will be twisted and changed. And, although this has generally been understood as a flood, experience has taught us that the stars did not indicate water as much as misery, fear and distress, and later, bloodshed. In the year noted above it happened that many things were changed by the new teachings of the Lutherans and much dissension befell the Christian faith. The ceremonies of the Church have been done away with in many instances and the clerical class has been almost completely destroyed in many areas. At that time Christian freedom was being preached as well as the idea that the laws of the Church and even the oaths of religious orders were invalid and no one was obligated to keep them.

And so it happened that many nuns and monks made use of such freedom and ran away from their cloisters and threw off their robes and habits; some married and did whatever they wanted. From this we suffered much distress and affliction. During the day many of the powerful as well as simple people came to their relatives who resided in our cloister. They preached to them and spoke of the new teachings and argued incessantly that the cloistered were damned and subject to temp-

1 This introductory note occurs on the first page of manuscript D only. The collection was obviously compiled shortly after the dates given.

2 The same fear is expressed by Felizitas Grundherr, a nun at St. Clare's, in a letter to her father written in July 1524. See Josef Pfanner, ed., *Caritas Pirckheimer Quellensammlung*, Vol. 3. *Briefe 1498–1530* (Landshut: Solanus Druck, 1966), pp. 249–250.

tations and that it was not possible for them to attain salvation there. We were all damned.[3] Therefore, some wanted to remove their children, sisters and aunts from the cloister by force and with many threats and also with many promises half of which, without doubt, they could hardly keep.

This fighting and quarreling lasted a long time, often with great anger and foul language. Since, however, by God's grace no sister could be persuaded, the Franciscan friars were then blamed and everyone claimed that since they had instructed us it would, therefore, be impossible to convert us to the new teaching as long as we had them as preachers and confessors.

When we learned that the honorable City Council had decided to force us to stop using the Franciscans, I reported this to the convent and sought the sisters' advice. Then they considered what would happen if the cloister were cut off from the usual service of these monks and placed under the control of the wild priests and renegade monks. Not one sister wanted to be subject to the latter. They all agreed to the plan that we should not wait until the fathers were removed from us by force, because then it would not be easy to have them return, even if we complained a great deal. Instead we should submit an appeal and make it abundantly clear to the City Council what burden and injury would result from such a change in the hope that such potential harm to us would touch their hearts.

And so I followed their advice and composed the petition which follows. I read it aloud to the convent. All the sisters, with no exceptions, agreed with it. At the same time they advised me in addition to the petition itself to write to the superintendent[4] and to Hieronymus Ebner[5]

3 This could also mean "crazy" in the sense of "taking leave of one's senses" which is the more modern sense of the German idiom, but in the highly charged rhetoric employed in the Reformation period "damned" seems more accurate.

4 The superintendent (*Pfleger*) Kaspar Nützel was appointed by the City Council and served as the intermediary between the City Council and the convent. It was he who brought the petitions to the City Council and who relayed the decisions of the council to the convent. In many respects the journal reflects the dialogue between Caritas Pirckheimer and Kaspar Nützel.

5 Ebner (1477–1533) was a prominent member of the City Council, a patron of the arts, a friend of Albrecht Dürer and, more important, a member of the Sodalitas Staupitziana, a local group of men who were enthusiastic supporters of the teachings of Johann Staupitz, Luther's mentor in Wittenberg and vicar general of the Augustinian order. The group first met in 1516. In 1517 Wenzel Linck was sent by Staupitz to become leader of the Augustinian church in Nürnberg and meet with this group.