

**READING FOR THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 28 –SISTER COLUMKILLE COLBERT,**  
**PRESIDENT OF IWC FROM 1923-1960 [for whom Colbert Hall is named]**

[Sister Columkille] was born in Waterford, Ireland, and had entered the Congregation at the age of sixteen....When the Catholic University of America began offering classes for Sisters in 1911, she was one of the first members of the Congregation to be sent away to study. She earned her bachelor's degree in 1912...completed her master's degree in Greek and Latin and took over the position of academic dean at the College. In the 1920's ...**she returned to Catholic University and earned her doctorate in Latin and Greek, becoming in 1923 the first Catholic Sister in Texas to hold the degree.**

[When the Administration Building was opened in September 1922], it was described in the Southern Messenger as “the greatest Catholic educational enterprise in the State” with provision “for a student body of five hundred, a prospect not at all remote of realization.” The next year, 1923, Sister Columkille was appointed president, and she was determined to make the prospect come true. **Her long tenure in the office (1923-1960), her strong personality, and her dedication to building a college that would be highly respected not only in Texas but also throughout the country, all contributed to the years of growth and development that followed.**

**What particularly distinguished Sister Columkille as a college administrator was her indomitable will and determination to succeed...**[she] was quick to make a decision and impulsive in her actions....demanding, expecting the highest level of performance from the faculty and administration....always ready to construct a new building, start a new academic program....

In 1928, shortly before the depression spread throughout the country, three new buildings constructed at a cost of \$250,000, were added to the Incarnate Word campus: Dubuis Hall, student dormitory named for the founder of the Congregation, Bishop Claude Marie Dubuis; the Education Hall (now Halligan-Ibbs), a three-story classroom addition to the main building; and the auditorium, used for large student gatherings and public programs. Commencement exercises were held here for the first time in 1929 with thirty-seven students awarded the bachelor's degree....

Sister Columkille, who could be extremely strict in regard to academic standards and student deportment, could also be extremely sensitive to students lacking in financial resources. **“No student will ever be turned away from Incarnate Word College because of her parents' inability to pay the costs of tuition,” she insisted, and throughout the 1930's, she dismissed many unpaid bills.**

[She relentlessly pursued accreditations, especially, by SACS. Many of the buildings on campus were built during her tenure as president].