



Documenting the legacy and contribution of the
Congregations of Religious Women and Men in Canada,
their mission in health care, and the founding
and operation of Catholic hospitals.



Retracer l'héritage et la contribution
des congrégations religieuses au Canada,
leur mission en matière de soins de santé ainsi que la fondation
et l'exploitation des hôpitaux catholiques

The Sisters of Service "I have come to serve" From 1922 to the present

by
M.C. Havey

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THE SISTERS OF SERVICE

“I have come to serve”



From 1922 to the present

M.C. Havey

The photograph on the cover documents Sisters Viola Mossey, Irene Faye and Mary Roberts in a wheatfield, near the teaching mission of Sinnett, Saskatchewan in 1942.

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*This history is dedicated to the members of the Institute of the Sisters of
Service of Canada on the occasion of their centenary in 2022*

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M.C. Havey
July 2022

Introduction

The Institute of the Sisters of Service (SOS) was a gamble, a risk and an experiment in the 1920s. As the antithesis of the structured institutional Catholic Church, the institute was founded in 1922 as an untraditional women's missionary community to maintain the Church's presence among Catholic immigrants in Canada.

In some aspects, the SOS captured the atmosphere of the decade after the First World War. The 1920s were an exciting time in Canada. More confident from wartime participation, the country's citizens enjoyed economic prosperity, optimism of the country's future development, and willingness to be innovative in a distinctly Canadian approach. The bold, colourful and stark style of the Canadian landscapes painted by the Group of Seven and other artists typified this attitude. To meet a Canadian need, the Sisters of Service diverged from the customs of a religious habit and a convent. Their missionary life corresponded with a freedom and mobility enjoyed by many women in the postwar era, but not permitted in conventional women religious congregations. Their contemporary clothing, similar to a Red Cross uniform, enhanced this innovative approach.

For the English-speaking Catholic Church, the flood of immigrants and settlers had come too rapidly onto the prairies. The land policies and a transcontinental railway spurred immigration before the First World War. A homesteader received 160 acres for \$10 under the Dominion Lands Act of 1872, which only applied to the prairie provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Clifton Sifton, federal minister in charge of the immigration policy and promotion, set his sights on attracting northern Slavs, the impoverished peasants of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the majority of whom were members of the Eastern or Roman Catholic Church.¹ Between 1901 and 1916, more than a million homesteaders took advantage of the land policy and settled on the prairie provinces. In that period, the population in Saskatchewan jumped to 650,000 in 1916 from 91,000 in 1901.²

The institute's founder and co-founders, born in the latter part of the 19th century, were captivated with the enthusiasm of westward

expansion and nation building. Canadian Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier encapsulated this spirit in his 1904 prediction, declaring that the 20th century shall be the century of Canada and Canadian development. Through the perspective of the founders and the country's colonization policy in the western provinces, the sisters' mission reflected this view of an English-speaking Church and country.

For the initial 40 years, the institute expanded with the support of a close circle of progressive clerics from Eastern Canada, who were appointed by Rome to the newly-created vast archdioceses and dioceses in Western Canada. Christian colonization of Canada was endorsed since all religious faiths preach morality, a stabilizing influence in developing a country. As immigrants from Europe arrived, sharing common beliefs, values and practices of Christianity, the Protestant faiths were more agile and organized in the search for souls. In rural Western Canada, the Methodists, the Presbyterians and the Anglicans established regular faith instruction and gatherings, by sending their religious material and travelling to the settlements. The Catholic Church had trailed the Protestant church organizations outside the cities and towns since the Church's ubiquity depended on a finite number of diocesan priests to serve a vast country. As a partial remedy, Canadian bishops recruited men and women religious congregations with their reliable source of personnel and finances to establish parishes, schools and hospitals, which dotted the prairies.

In an attempt to heighten the immigrants' awareness of the English-speaking Canadian Church, the SOS were mandated to be the presence from the ports to the homesteads. Their enterprising *modus operandi* began with meeting immigrants disembarking at the eastern ports and extended to living in the rural communities, providing teachers, health care and religious instruction.

This history offers a snapshot of the successes and struggles of the 124 permanent members, and some of the other women who joined and left. The pioneer sisters, who entered in the first 15 years and represented half of the total number of women, initiated the SOS steadfast spirit in their missions. At the time of the 1922 founding,

these women had embraced the societal change for women, and the expanded employment opportunities as nurses, teachers, book-keepers, stenographers and office clerks. This advance had rested on the efforts by thousands of middle-class women and their groups to improve society through the enhancement of public health, the spearheading the temperance movement and the right to vote for women. The SOS received assistance from these organizations, and in particular, the Catholic Women's League, to develop their apostolates.

As a new institute of women missionaries, the SOS adapted the practices of religious pathfinders and applied them to the Canadian circumstances. Mother Mary MacKillop, foundress of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart (the Josephites) in Australia, broke the mold of traditional monastic life and administration. To provide education to all the poor, particularly in outlying areas, the Josephites lived in the community rather than in convents and the congregation's constitution required administration by a superior general rather than being subject to the local bishop. In New York City, the Parish Visitors of the Mary Immaculate, who were founded in 1920, dressed in simple black dresses and were dedicated to outreach for those who weren't being reached by the Catholic schools or the Church, especially neglected children.

This is not a definitive history with all-encompassing details. Instead, it outlines the context and general description of the missions and apostolates in two sections. The first section covers the founding, the administration, formation, and the original apostolates of immigration, rural teaching, religious education, women's residences and rural health care. The second section includes an overview of the renewal, adaptation and missions in response to the Second Vatican Council; and the decision of coming to completion.

The narrative features the contributions and achievements of the members through their professional training, pragmatism, and personal qualities of hardiness, buoyancy, dedication, and a sense of humour. It also describes the adventure, excitement and hardships of harsh weather, primitive living quarters and exhaustion.

Decades before the Second Vatican Council, these sisters were part of current society, driving cars, travelling alone on city trollies and buses, shopping for groceries, picking up mail in post office and participating in the communities where they lived. In the years affected by the changes in society, government involvement and the Second Vatican Council, the sisters adjusted as they had in the previous decades to the circumstances across Canada. Now with university degrees and professional qualifications, the sisters were employed in positions, which no longer required the bishops' sanction, and matched their education and credentials. Sisters created individual ministries to provide service where others could not or did not want to go.

Fifty years after entering in 1925, Sister Beatrice DeMarsh expressed the sentiment of the SOS missionary life. "I am certain, in spite of all that ever happened, could have happened, when we hardly knew where the next meal was coming from, or how it would come, all were very happy and would not exchange any one thing for a King's ransom."³

Chapter One

The Founding



Catherine Donnelly, Stornoway, Saskatchewan, 1921

Catherine Donnelly

The seeds of the Sisters of Service were sown under the horizonless sky of southern Alberta. During travels on horseback on the sloping ridges and grasslands, Catherine Donnelly, an Ontario schoolteacher, pondered the lack of signs of religious faith among homesteaders. She was struck by this absence as a volunteer during the influenza pandemic of 1918, when she assisted two families by cooking, nursing, washing laundry, and watering cattle until the family members recovered.¹

This non-existence of religion was far removed from her own upbringing in a devout Irish Catholic farming family in central Ontario. Catherine was astounded by the benign neglect of the Catholic Church in rural areas. "Few of the Catholics got to go mass regularly

and many had become quite indifferent.” She observed with dismay “the great drifting from the Church and the dirth [dearth] of religious knowledge among the children and youth.” “... There seemed to be so much materialism and neglect of religion around us. ... The people lived a Godless life.”² She began to see it as her mission to bring the consolation of faith to the people.

Their Catholic faith is the one treasure these newcomers have brought from the Old Land and heresy, schism and atheism are working hard to rob them of it. ... Who is there going to ensure that they retain their treasure? Not the priests, who are so few, not lay teachers, not any order of nuns working at present.³

Like many Eastern Canadians, she had come to Alberta in an adventurous spirit. With another teacher, she had arrived in August 1918, looking for a position with a good salary. In many respects, Catherine Donnelly, professionally-trained and mobile, was the embodiment of the modern working woman of the early 20th century. She wanted to explore and be independent. Like many, she was attracted to the opportunities of the west. As a descendant of Irish immigrants, she also saw the potential and the hardship of the country through the lens of newcomers. Her paternal grandparents in 1846 had settled with other Catholic immigrants from the northern counties of Ireland on farmland in a section of Adjala Township, Simcoe County. The struggles of clearing land, building dwellings, adjusting to the harsh Central Ontario climate and farm life were eased by the gatherings in “house churches.” Later, the community would establish a mission church to reaffirm, share, and practise their Irish Catholic faith.

At the beginning of the 20th century, nursing and teaching were the dominant, acceptable professions for women. With her mother’s encouragement, Catherine pursued the latter. Educated locally in a one-room public school, and a public high school, she earned a teaching certificate from the Model School at Bradford, Ontario, in 1902 and began a teaching career at the age of 18. She graduated from the Toronto Normal School with a permanent teaching certif-

icate in 1905. That year, her father sold the heavily-mortgaged farm, and the family moved into Alliston, the closest town, after the death of her mother. Catherine's teaching salary became the sole source of income for the family.⁴

Catherine paid the tuition for her sisters to attend St. Joseph's Academy, a private girls' school run by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto (CSJ). Mamie (Mary Loretto), the younger sister, also attended the Toronto Normal School and taught in rural Ontario public schools until entering the St. Joseph's novitiate on 5 July 1917. Given the religious name of Justina, she made first vows in January 1920 and final vows three years later. The other sister, Tess, (Teresa), six years younger than Catherine, left the Academy after a week. The 17-year-old boarded a train to New York City, trained as a nurse at Mount Sinai Hospital, and eventually rose to the position of chief scrub nurse. In 1916, during the First World War, she volunteered to go to France where she met her future husband.

Since 1906, Catherine had been moving each year to another school for a higher salary. By 1918, her yearly salary as teacher-principal of the public school in Penetanguishene had reached the pinnacle of \$925, well above the average of \$580 paid to female teachers in rural Ontario at that time.⁵ Amid the growing controversy about Ontario separate schools, Archbishop Neil McNeil of Toronto asked the Toronto CSJ congregation to take charge of Penetanguishene school since the majority of students were Catholic. On hearing the news of the impending arrival of the St. Joseph's sisters, Catherine and four lay colleagues resigned.⁶ Although she considered applying to another public school board, Catherine was advised that the growing anti-Catholic bias of the Protestant majority would prevent her from obtaining a position of similar salary anywhere in Ontario.⁷

Instead, Catherine and Mary O'Connor, another teacher from the Penetanguishene school, decided to go farther afield to southern Alberta.⁸ They each found jobs in one-room schoolhouses, five miles apart near Erskine. During the first six weeks of the term, the teachers experienced firsthand the lack of services and infrastructure in

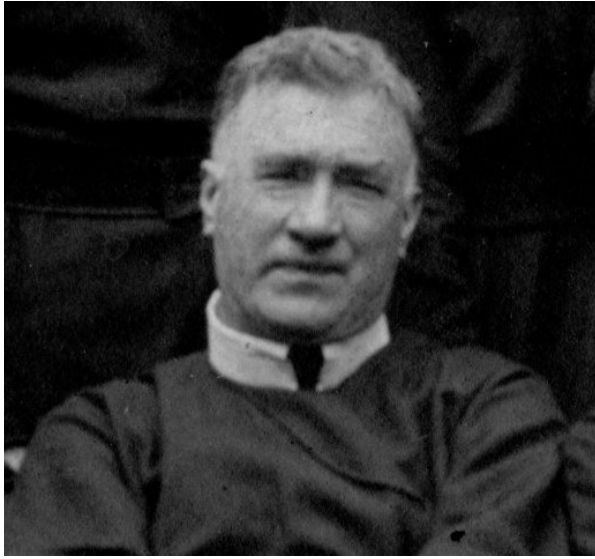
the area. Despite the cheap land, life was difficult. Homesteaders and their families were often separated from their friends and relatives unable to visit because of the absence of roads and bridges.⁹ Many suffered years of hardship and loneliness. The influenza brought by the returning soldiers from Europe spread throughout the district, intensifying the social and economic plight. By mid-November, the schools were closed and the two teachers, who had taken the St. John Ambulance course in Ontario, were accepted as volunteer nurses and undertook home nursing duties.

In these homes, Catherine was dismayed by the Church's neglect of the rural areas.

The people were not visited by clergy or nuns. Religious workers stayed in the cities mostly. Some of the people had been practising Catholics but the struggle for a home absorbed their time, and symbols of religion were out of sight and out of mind ... What I could plainly see was that the Communities of religious women were inclined to stay in the cities and none in the farming districts.¹⁰

The need to revive religious faith and bring education to the children of the settlers suffused Catherine's mind. Her perception of the Church's indifference to the spiritual and educational needs of the rural areas slowly propelled her to envision a non-traditional women's religious community to teach in rural Western Canada. She imagined a community of teachers in one-room schoolhouses during the week and teachers of religion on weekends and summers, as she had experienced in Penetanguishene. During the fall of 1919, Catherine left a teaching position in Coleman, Alberta, to return home to her ailing father, who died on 23 December 1919. Early in 1920, she approached the Peterborough congregation of Sisters of St. Joseph with her ideas since they were planning a teaching mission in Calgary. Catherine travelled to the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Peterborough for an interview, but it was unsuccessful. She left discouraged and in tears.¹¹

Rev. Arthur Coughlan, C.Ss.R.



Toronto Provincial Superior Arthur Coughlan, 1923

On 5 January 1920, Rev. Arthur Coughlan, C.Ss.R., of the Toronto Province of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (the Redemptorists),¹² attended the first profession of vows ceremony of Sister Justina Donnelly, at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto. Well-acquainted and respected by the Toronto St. Joseph's congregation, Father Coughlan was a frequent visitor at the Motherhouse, and was invited as a retreat director and guest at special events. As well, the Redemptorists at their downtown parish of St. Patrick's were selected as confessors and retreat masters for the CSJ and their St. Joseph's Academy students.¹³ A member of his congregation's administrative council since 1915, Father Coughlan participated in the Toronto Province's decisions to expand the missions for English-speaking Canadian Redemptorists. Their missionary zeal aimed to increase the congregation's presence in Western Canada beyond the four parishes they had already established.¹⁴ At the same time, Western Canadian bishops were seeking to recruit religious congregations with their financial resources and personnel to establish parishes, hospitals and schools. The itinerant Redemp-

torist missionaries, known for their skilled preaching, were enlisted also to revive the faith of those who had abandoned or drifted from Catholicism, particularly in outlying areas.

In addition to skilled preaching, Father Coughlan's informality, affability, sense of humour, and initiative contributed to his rise in Toronto. A native of New York City, he credited his Catholic and Protestant childhood companions with giving him insight into life and his mother for his priestly vocation. An altar boy at the Redemptorist parish of St. Alphonsus, he attended the Redemptorist preparatory college, novitiate, and was ordained on 7 December 1892. His early appointments included preaching missions, teaching at the Redemptorist preparatory college, scholarly writing, and parish work. He was recognized for his administrative ability and his mission preaching, "winning souls to God by his scholarly sermons and instructions, his superb tact and his overwhelming kindness."¹⁵

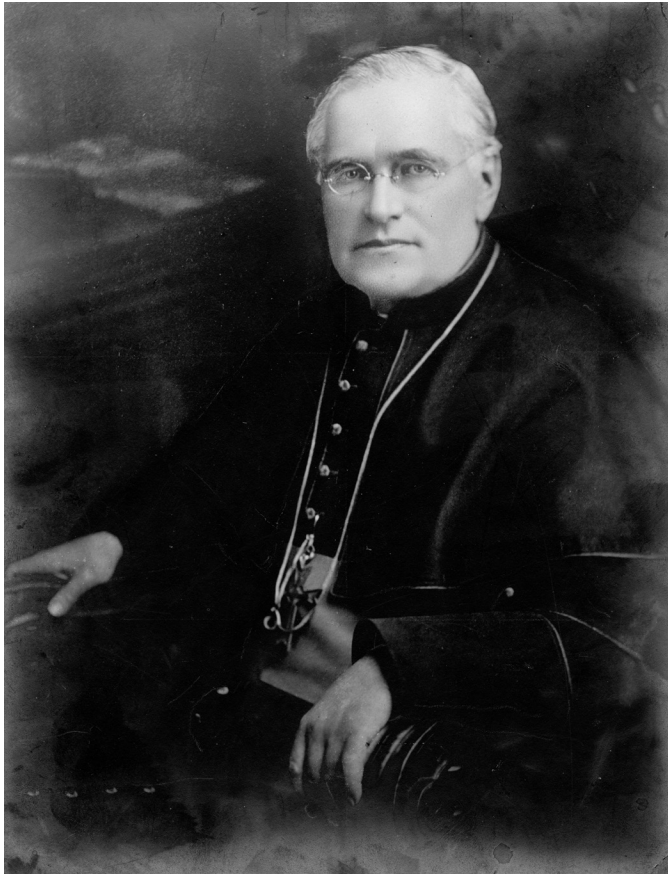
All of these qualities were evident when Father Coughlan came to Toronto in 1913 as pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church and its congregation of Italian immigrants. Under Father Coughlan's administration, and with two Italian Redemptorists as pastoral assistants, the parish flourished. The Italian congregation increased to 2,000 souls in 1916, compared with 1,500 at the English-speaking St. Patrick's. Within two years, he was appointed as rector at St. Patrick's parish and secretary-consultor to the Toronto Vice-Provincial.¹⁶

Sister Justina encouraged Catherine to seek the advice of Father Coughlan, with whom Catherine had spoken to previously and had remembered him as being understanding. After the unsuccessful interview in Peterborough, Catherine requested a meeting with him, and related her observations, experiences, and proposal for a teaching community in Western Canada. Father Coughlan advised her to approach the Toronto St. Joseph sisters, who were planning a novitiate in Vancouver, and commented that working as an individual would have little effect.¹⁷

Shock and chagrin enveloped Catherine. She was torn between his advice and “her prejudice or logical feeling about the cumbersome clothing and the customs of nuns. I felt that charitable, effective work among the abandoned did not depend on copying the quaint, obstructive and anti-approachable dress worn by so many good women. But for me, at the time, there seemed to be no path leading perhaps to some better path, than the joining this Toronto community.”¹⁸ Despite misgivings, she applied to and was accepted by the Toronto sisters, entering on 21 June 1920 at the age of 36, six years beyond the age limit. Although full of praise for Mother Avila, the Novice Mistress at St. Joseph’s-on-the-Lake, Catherine never felt at home with the restrictive traditions and customs, the cloistered atmosphere, and the topics of conversation. Instead, she spoke of the rural west and its great needs and her desire to be there. In December 1920, General Superior Mother Alberta Martin sent for her, and outlined the reasons for Catherine’s unsuitability. Catherine was dismissed from the novitiate. Before Christmas, Catherine again met with Father Coughlan, now the Provincial Superior of the English-speaking Toronto Province. To her surprise, Father Coughlan was amused by her dismissal: “I suppose you talked too much about the West.” Throwing back his head and laughing heartily, he added, “We will start a community of our own, a new community.”¹⁹

Archbishop Neil McNeil

A month later in January 1921, Father Coughlan approached Archbishop McNeil of Toronto to propose a new religious community of women as an antidote to the haunting neglect of Catholic settlers in the west. The archbishop wholeheartedly agreed to this concept of an untraditional women’s community, similar to Sister Mary MacKillop’s in Australia.²⁰ From his own childhood in Cape Breton, he was aware of the Church’s concentration in towns and cities where the largest populations lived. Like Catherine, he knew of the struggles of Catholic immigrants in isolated areas. As the eldest of 11 children, he had heard the stories of his Scottish ancestors, victims of the Highland Clearances, where tenant farmers were evict-



Archbishop Neil McNeil, 1920

ed from the land in favour of raising sheep for the more profitable wool trade. They were “the displaced persons of that time and they came as the refugees from unending rivalries, hates and wars. And they brought with them little more than that for which they fled: their religious faith which was Catholic and their desire for peace, equality of opportunity and their civil liberties.”²¹ Similar to rural Ontario Catholics, faith gatherings were held in houses, often without a priest. Despite the scarcity of priests, the Highland Scottish Catholics prevailed in Nova Scotia.

A gifted student, McNeil studied at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, before entering the seminary in Rome, where he was ordained at the age of 28 on 12 April 1879. Upon re-

turning to Canada, he held appointments at St. Francis Xavier University as a professor, rector, bursar, and author from 1880 to 1891. His pastoral appointments over the next two decades reflected the challenges of building the Catholic Church in Canada and brought him into continuous contact with people from all walks of life. Following a posting as pastor in Arichat, an Acadian community in Cape Breton, he was appointed the missionary bishop of the Vicariate Apostolic, later the Diocese of St. George's, on Newfoundland's west coast. When not travelling on horseback to visit the eight parishes, the many missions or construction camps in the wilderness, he headed a group of men to excavate stone from a local quarry, supervised the installation of a water system, and the construction of a church, convent, and hall. His practicality and initiative were recognized with an appointment in 1910 as the first Canadian-born archbishop in the newly-reorganized Vancouver archdiocese. McNeil arrived in the city to an indebted cathedral, no house, and three parishes with a fourth in the offing. His interest in new settlers was reflected in an August 1912 pastoral letter. Instead of scattering Catholic newcomers among non-Catholics, he proposed that Catholics form group settlements and live in close proximity to their church. He also initiated the opening of a Catholic immigrants' office in Vancouver to serve their needs.²²

Immigration remained a priority since his installation as archbishop of Toronto in December 1912. The archbishop and the Redemptorists attributed the Church's failure in the west to the lack of priests and the successful proselytizing efforts of Protestant faiths. They held particular concern for the Catholic settlers of the Eastern Byzantine rite, known as Ruthenians, a Slavic people from southern Russia, Austria and Hungary. Protestant missionary zeal intensified after the First World War in response to a second wave of western immigration. In a circular letter in the autumn of 1921, Archbishop McNeil wrote to Canadian priests.

In the Ruthenian districts of the West this "missionary spirit" is much in evidence. Recently a Catholic visited a school in Saskatchewan, in which forty Ruthenian children are enrolled. In one cor-

ner of the room he found a pile of Methodist publications, copies of which were also on the desk. ... Protestant propaganda among poor Catholics, especially the Ruthenians in Western Canada is also furthered through hospital service and social work.²³

The best solution, Archbishop McNeil wrote, was “to establish a religious society of women who will meet these proselytizers on their own ground, who will go into these districts to teach and to carry on medical and social work among the poor.” The community, “the Missionary Sisters,” would be the Canadian version of the work of Mother MacKillop in Australia. He added, “New methods will have to be adopted to meet new needs. The ordinary religious rule and religious habit may have to be modified to suit the conditions under which these Sisters will exercise their calling.” He envisioned a modern, practical community of sisters. They would not wait for those in need to come to them; they would go out to the people.²⁴

Over the next 18 months, the archbishop and Father Coughlan included Catherine in the planning of the new community. She suggested the name Sisters of Service, which coincidentally had been the name of a contingent of volunteer nurses in Toronto during the influenza pandemic, and recommended the novice mistress from the Toronto St. Joseph sisters with hopes that Mother Avila would be appointed.²⁵ After Catherine returned to the west to teach from 1921 until 1922, she continued to correspond with the clerics about the details. A proposed visit never materialized to Australia and Mother MacKillop’s community “to get some pointers about their system of rural missionary work.”²⁶ By September 1921, the archbishop had informed Mother Victoria Devine, the new General Superior of Toronto St. Joseph’s sisters, about the new community. Six months later on 2 February 1922, Father Coughlan made an official visit to Mother Victoria, asking for an experienced sister to establish the new community’s novitiate. On the same day, approval was given.²⁷

Both Father Coughlan and Archbishop McNeil were cognizant of the deep spiritual life of the members of the Toronto St. Joseph sisters. As the largest of the nine women’s congregations in Toron-

to, with 333 members in 1920, their Motherhouse occupied a city block, just east of the Ontario legislature and south of St. Michael's College. Since arriving in the city in 1851, their presence was dominant among Catholics through education, health care and social services. This support from a traditional congregation to provide religious formation gave credence to the new proposed community. Moreover, the Toronto sisters had already established four missions in Western Canada and were aware of the scattered presence of the Church, west of the Ontario border.²⁸

Mother Victoria assigned Sister St. Charles McSweeney, mistress of the juniorate, to screen the initial applications and refer candidates to Father Coughlan for an interview. Mother Lidwina Henry, who had been selected as the novice mistress and superior, arrived on the eve of the founding at the newly-purchased Motherhouse at 2 Wellesley Place to meet Catherine Donnelly and the three other candidates.²⁹ The next morning, on 15 August 1922, Archbishop McNeil celebrated a Mass in the Wellesley Place chapel to commemorate the founding of the Institute of the Sisters of Service in the presence of Mother Lidwina, Father Coughlan, and the initial four candidates. The *Toronto Star* marked the occasion in the afternoon edition under the headline "Sisters of Service House Is Dedicated: Will Promote Missionary Work among Immigrants in the West."

For Toronto Catholics, the dedication was newsworthy. In the last six months, the *Star* had reported on the fundraising efforts for the Sisters of Service (SOS) by prominent Catholic women. Acutely aware of the societal changes for women during the last decade, the archbishop had sought the support of progressive-minded women for this untraditional Catholic women's community. A proponent of the women's vote, he was cognizant of the increasing number of working women and their freedom of movement; women travelled alone, drove automobiles, and wore comfortable clothing to suit varied activities.³⁰

On the day of the founding, a committee of the Toronto branch of the Catholic Women's League (CWL) served tea, coffee, and sand-

wiches for guests before a tour of 2 Wellesley Place. This committee, with the archbishop's urging, had been instrumental in fundraising and outfitting the chapel and the house. These lay women, like their Protestant counterparts, sought to widen the safety net of social services for immigrants and children. As a rising new women's organization, the CWL was part of a closely-knit Catholic enclave in predominantly Protestant Toronto that had quickly grown in resources and identity. Barry Hayes, a prosperous Catholic carpet manufacturer, sold his Edwardian spacious home to the Redemptorists to house the novitiate and the headquarters. The Sisters of St. Joseph donated beds, linens, and kitchen utensils to equip the house located in a residential area of the city's business elite on the traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the Credit, Anishnabeg, Chippewa, Haudenosaunee and Wendat peoples.³¹

Mother Lidwina Henry, CSJ

Upon the departure of the afternoon guests, Father Coughlan gave the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and the novitiate under Mother Lidwina began. Her task was to create the novitiate and its internal administration. Although there was no written agreement with the stakeholders (the archbishop and the Redemptorists), Mother Lidwina had complete jurisdiction over the novitiate operations along with the acceptance or rejection of candidates.³² Mother Lidwina, at age 50, brought the essential experience needed as novice mistress: she had been the founding superior in Prince Rupert, British Columbia, one of her congregation's rural, western missions. A Torontonians and a music teacher, she had been an unlikely choice in 1916 to establish a school in this railway and fishing town of 3,000 on Kaien Island near the Alaskan panhandle. Over the three decades since entering at the age of 22 in March 1892, she had taught music and led choirs at her congregation's schools in Toronto as well as in Port Arthur and Barrie, where she also served as local superior. Tall, thin, and pale with thick glasses, Mother Lidwina had exhibited inner strength and perseverance, all qualities necessary for SOS missions.



Mother Lidwina (centre) with first entrants. Josephine Stokes, Catherine Donnelly, Kathleen Schenck and Mary Ann Bridget Burke, on novitiate grounds, Toronto, 1923

Her experiences of living in an isolated town, far from Toronto, provided a guide to establishing a mission and living among the people. Under her direction for six years in Prince Rupert, necessary business tasks were undertaken for legal incorporation, the search for property, financing, and the construction of the convent. The opening of a separate school and its gradual growth drew loud praise from non-Catholics. To sell tickets for a parish bazaar, sisters accompanied lay women to the various lumber and mining camps. Like Catherine Donnelly in Alberta at the time, the sisters cared for the afflicted during the influenza pandemic, including 25 school boarders, and relieved nurses at the local hospital. Two sisters, along with

a lay woman and Bishop Etienne Bunoz of the Prefecture Apostolic of Yukon and Prince Rupert, also travelled to a lumber camp on the Queen Charlotte Islands where they cared for 200 men, none of whom died. Bishop Bunoz paid tribute to her “indefatigable zeal for the glory of God” at a public farewell before she left for Toronto in the summer of 1922, “Not only was this influence felt by our own people but also by those outside the pale of the Catholic Church. Her work had succeeded admirably.”³³

With this pertinent experience as a founding superior of a western mission, she also relied on her 32 years of religious life and the support and advice from her congregational leadership. Until the rules, customs, and constitution of the SOS were drafted, Mother Lidwina was guided by the applicable aspects of her community’s 1914 constitution. Through a prescribed program, the novice mistress formed those under her charge in the spirit of their vocation. Instruction and guidance in the novitiate led to “the knowledge of spiritual things, education of religious life ... the great desire for sanctity and the means to attain it and to perfection through the practice of the great virtues.” To set an example, the novice mistress had to possess the necessary interior life of Christian perfection; to handle situations and personalities, she required a keen knowledge of human nature.³⁴ Mother Lidwina “never hesitated about giving a word of encouragement or praise when the occasion warranted” and was “a firm believer that as religious we should bring dignity into our lives whether it be prayer, work or play,” recalled Sister Kathleen Schenck, the sixth entrant.³⁵ Archbishop McNeil, during his first interview with Mother Lidwina, had observed with a smile, “I am anxious to know whether or not you will be motherly, and I feel confident that you will be.”³⁶

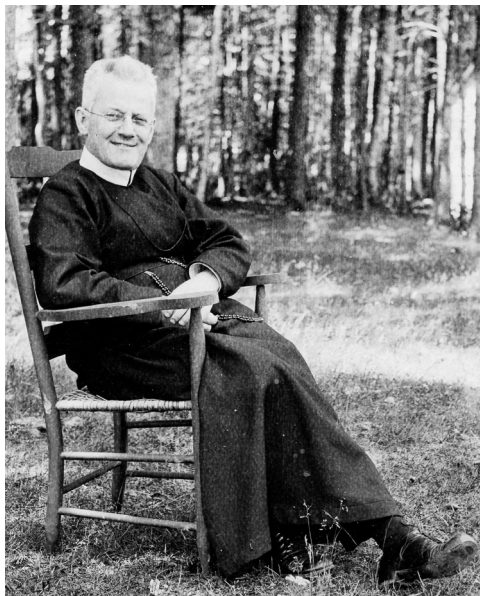
To implement the regimen, she introduced the Order of the Day, adapted from daily schedule of the St. Joseph’s novitiate, which Catherine Donnelly had entered. The ringing of a bell signalled the beginning of various sections of the order of the day.

Order of the Day^{37 37}

6:00 a.m.	Rising bell
6:30 a.m.	Morning prayer in common, followed by half-hour of mediation
7:15 a.m.	Mass in the chapel, followed by Thanksgiving. Mass 7 a.m. on Sundays
7:50 a.m.	Breakfast followed Mass. Priest had breakfast alone in the reception room
9:00 a.m.	Visit to the Blessed Sacrament according to St. Alphonsus with Spiritual Communion and five decades of the Rosary
10:00 a.m.	Class. Mother Lidwina taught meditation and gave conferences, mainly from the life of St. Alphonsus
10:30-11 a.m.	Permitted to talk
11:45 a.m.	Examination of conscience with Angelus, litany of the Blessed Virgin
Noon	Lunch
1-1:30 p.m.	Recreation, usually in Common Room. In summer, on the back lawn
1:30-1:45 p.m.	Spiritual Reading. A designated sister read aloud to the entire community while the other sisters usually did mending or useful needlework
3:30-4 p.m.	Permitted to talk
5-5:30 p.m.	Dinner, usually in silence, except Thursday which was a free day Sunday, speaking allowed at noon and evening meals
7-7:45 p.m.	Recreation. Pleasant relaxing time
9:00 p.m.	Night prayers. Strict silence until the rising bell.

In this novitiate, the instruction of spiritual and religious life was divided among the clergy and Mother Lidwina. For the opening weeks, Father Coughlan, as spiritual director, called frequently, celebrated Mass daily in the chapel, and directed a retreat at the beginning of September. Until his term as Provincial Superior ended in 1927, he also came regularly as the novitiate's confessor to hear confessions. In April 1924 correspondence with the Redemptorist superiors in Rome, he wrote that he was a founder and the main support of the new institute. Emphasizing that the care of the most abandoned souls was the purpose and charism of the Redemptorists, he added that the institute had the approval of the whole hierarchy of Canada and of the Apostolic Delegate, particularly since no other sisters attend "this neglected field."³⁸ Archbishop McNeil assigned his private secretaries as chaplains, who celebrated the daily Mass, holy hours and benediction. In their absence, Redemptorists from St. Patrick's parish were substitutes.³⁹

In the first eight months, postulants, entrants into the novitiate, were addressed as Miss or Mrs. and were distinguished by a black dress and short white veil. During this initial stage, the novice mistress assessed the mental and physical suitability of the postulant and the authenticity of her vocation. Contact with the outside world was restricted, and the postulant was introduced to spiritual training, rules, and customs. Upon entering, most of the candidates had left employed positions as teachers, nurses, clerks, secretaries, and domestic servants. About one quarter of the entrants in this period had emigrated from Great Britain. Aware of their maturity and backgrounds, Mother Lidwina thoughtfully led them from a world of choice and personal freedom to a religious life dedicated to the community's common good, adherence to spiritual exercises, and studies in accordance with traditional novitiate customs.⁴⁰



Rev. George Daly, C.Ss.R., 1921

Rev. George Daly, C.Ss.R.

By the end of 1922, Mother Lidwina had established the novitiate routine through the Order of the Day. Meanwhile, the external tasks of “finding candidates and money” had been placed in the hands of Rev. George Daly, a Redemptorist confrere specifically selected by Father Coughlan, who estimated the Redemptorist involvement would last two years.⁴¹ A Montrealer growing up in a Belgium Redemptorist parish, George Daly entered the Redemptorist novitiate at the age of 16 in St. Trond, Belgium, where he was ordained in 1898. Returning to Canada in 1900, the fluently bilingual Father Daly rose to the position of director at the minor seminary in Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, Quebec. In 1912, he returned to his home parish of St. Ann’s as pastor and was posted in 1915 as rector of the newly-built Holy Rosary Cathedral in Regina. As part of the English-Canadian Redemptorist expansion into Western Canada, he travelled throughout the prairies, preaching parish missions and retreats. Like his Redemptorist confreres, he was trained as a public speaker to be eloquent, dramatic, and uncomplicated. However, his time spent in the Knights of Columbus (K of C) club room in

Regina, and on a campaign platform to sell war bonds, broke Redemptorist rules, and prompted an abrupt reassignment in 1918 as a preaching missionary, stationed at the Redemptorist parish in Saint John, New Brunswick.⁴²

From the western posting, Father Daly shared the views of Archbishop McNeil, Father Coughlan, and Catherine Donnelly on the Church's lack of pastoral care of immigrants and isolated settlers. While in Saint John, Father Daly pursued immigrant issues and met passengers disembarking from ships in the city's harbour. In correspondence with the Parish Visitors of Immaculate Mary and with Mother Mary MacKillop's missionaries, he learned about their alternative approaches. During this time, he also wrote *Catholic Problems in Western Canada*, a book outlining the future strategy of the Canadian Church's expansion in the west, which interested both the archbishop and Father Coughlan.⁴³

Like Mother Lidwina, Father Daly was 50 years old, when he was summoned to Toronto on 22 January 1922 by Father Coughlan, who assured him that his "dark days had passed" in Saint John. With a beaming smile, an outstretched hand, boundless energy, and an apostle's determination along with an executive's organizational skill, Father Daly possessed the entrepreneurial spirit and engaging personality needed for his tasks on behalf of the fledgling community.⁴⁴ Two days after arriving in Toronto, he attended a fundraising event of the Toronto branch of the CWL at Benvenuto, the elegant mansion of entrepreneur Sir William Mackenzie. The bridge and euchre party of 100 tables was organized by Mackenzie's two daughters, and Elizabeth Bethune Kiely, the first woman candidate in an Ontario provincial election, who introduced Father Daly to the patrons. In brief remarks, Father Daly contended that "service" is the modern translation of Christian charity. The proceeds were directed for the chapel furnishings, necessary furniture, and kitchen equipment for the novitiate.⁴⁵

To publicize the work of the Sisters of Service and allay suspicions of its authenticity as a Catholic women's congregation, Father Daly,

blessed with a rich vibrant voice, launched a whirlwind of speaking engagements. A short and stocky priest with a thatch of white hair, he quickly made new contacts and renewed others while accepting speaking invitations to Catholic organizations like the Catholic Truth Society and the CWL. He also met with influential, well-connected friends and financial backers. In April 1924, novitiate annalist Sister Catherine Donnelly recounted his schedule.

Fr. Daly came for an evening visit. We had Night Prayers early and were all assembled in the Common Room to welcome our Father Founder. He arrived about 8 p.m. from Montreal. He was to speak at K of C on Immigration at 2:30 pm. In Windsor, he addressed the CWL and [was] warmly welcomed and [given a] \$100 cheque. He went to Chicago and to Garry, Indiana to visit the catechists of Our Lady of Victory.⁴⁶

These promotional talks successfully inspired a number of women to enter the institute. For instance, Father Daly's address to a CWL meeting in Winnipeg so impressed Catherine Wymbs, the nursing night supervisor at Winnipeg Municipal Hospital, that she arranged a three-month leave of absence from the hospital and entered the novitiate in July 1923 at the age of 42.⁴⁷

To catch the attention of the bishops in Western Canada, he mailed an eleven-page booklet about the new community. From a second-floor office at the Motherhouse, his responsibilities grew as "the main prop."⁴⁸ His zeal was admired by the pioneer sisters. "Nothing seems too hard for him to try, and with all his worries and cares there is always a bright smile and hearty laugh for everyone."⁴⁹

In Father Coughlan's absence, Father Daly also gave talks on spiritual themes, one of which in 1922 on zeal and the welfare of souls was described as "soul-inspiring."⁵⁰ Despite Father Coughlan's praise, concern mounted among Redemptorist superiors in Rome that Father Daly was "the power behind the throne." From the 1923 visitation of Redemptorist Major Patrick Murray to Toronto, complaints continued about Father's Daly being constantly "on the go" to the

detriment of the Redemptorist apostolates of preaching and parishes. The 1924 appointments from Rome attempted to remove him from the SOS with a transfer to Edmonton to establish a parish. In response, Father Coughlan successfully appealed to the Roman superiors to reverse the move, citing Daly's adeptness in managing the finances of the institute and pointing to a \$10,000 loan from the Sisters of Service to the Toronto Province to pay off a loan at a Toronto bank.⁵¹

Despite the misgivings of the Redemptorist superiors, Father Daly had captured the support of the Canadian bishops. A few weeks after the official founding, Archbishop McNeil, in a letter to Daly, analyzed the immigration situation and expressed his hopes for the Sisters of Service.

There are indications that immigrants from continental Europe will soon be coming again for settlement on the land in Canada. Our experience of former movements of this kind points to the need of more systematic care after settlement than the Church has given in the past. Immigrants come as individuals or as separate families. They need to be organized not only to preserve and practise their faith but also to enable them to take their place in the civil life of the nation. Our lack of success with them in the past, as far as it existed, was due in part to insufficient effort to combine social and civic formation with missionary zeal.

I regard the founding of the society known as the Sisters of Service as a very important step towards a solution of the problem of immigration. Its purpose combines the safeguarding of the faith with social and civic betterment from a Canadian point of view. It is constructive work of the best kind. Though originating in Toronto it is not in any sense for Toronto. Its appeal is to the whole Dominion. One needs but two qualities, love of God and love of Canada, to become interested in the success of the Sisters of Service.⁵²

The Untraditional Rule

With this overview, Father Daly began to draft the *Rule of the Institute of the Sisters of Service* as an unconventional women's congregation. Under canon law, the rule provides the spiritual foundation of the work for which a congregation is established. During a trip to Rome in early 1923, the archbishop, as the ecclesiastical head of the SOS, presented the draft rule to the Congregation of the Propagation of Faith for approval. The *raison d'être* for the institute was to restore the faith among Catholics in Western Canada and to counteract the influence of non-Catholic bodies on Catholic immigrants. Father Daly integrated the Redemptorist charism of salvation of the most abandoned souls into the institute's rule. Instead of the goal of attaining Christian perfection, the traditional directive of religious congregations, he stressed the need for flexibility in daily prayers and spiritual devotion. Under the motto "I Have Come to Serve," the Sisters of Service "were to possess the zeal in the outlying districts of our new provinces, where the Church within the country is still in the making." Our Mother of Perpetual Help and St. Alphonsus, the founder of the Redemptorists, were chosen with St. Joseph and St. Teresa, among the patron saints of the community.⁵³

The rule encompassed Catherine Donnelly's exclusive goal of a rural teaching community. In schools, the sisters had to be qualified teachers, taking particular care of immigrant children and were not to administer large boarding schools, academies, or orphanages. However, assistance to immigrants expanded beyond the rural schools. Ambitious apostolates, requested by the archbishop, were added, calling on the sisters to labour as catechists, nurses, and social workers among the most destitute of spiritual help. In these missionary areas, religious education was a priority and was widened to establishing catechism centres beyond the traditional sacramental preparation for children and adults. For health care, the rule incorporated the archbishop's frame of reference "to carry on medical and social work" in small hospitals and dispensaries, to work as public health nurses, and to cooperate with other health agencies. The

social work section broke new ground. Sisters would welcome and direct Catholic immigrants at the ports and train stations to Catholic parishes or agencies, and to the institute's hostels for transient women immigrants in larger centres.⁵⁴

For all religious congregations, the rule outlined the purpose and practices. The vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience were described along with the characteristic virtues of charity, humility, zeal and mortification, the celebration of patrons' feast days, retreats, and the requirements of dress and dowry for postulants. Differing from traditional women's religious congregations, there were no restrictions in age, marital status, and previous admittance to other congregations. The Sisters of Service kept their Christian and family names, and wore a uniform and a plain silver cross. In the missions, the sisters practised modified spiritual exercises and were permitted to travel alone in all modes of transportation.⁵⁵

The Uniform

The institute's name and uniform defined the Sisters of Service. Without reference to Mary, Jesus, a saint or Christian event, the word 'service' denoted a person undertaking work for the general need and Father Daly's modern translation of Christian charity. The sisters were serving the needs of Catholics, and the uniform, both fashionable and functional, was required to remove barriers. The decisions about the uniform came from many. Archbishop McNeil was adamant that "the habit would have to be modified to suit the conditions." He cited the Parish Visitors of Mary Immaculate, founded in 1920 in New York, who wore "a neat well-fitting black uniform." Father Daly chose the colour grey to contrast with the blue uniforms worn by members of the Salvation Army.⁵⁶

By Christmas 1922, a fashionable flowing cape had been made "gratis" by William Etherington, a tailor to the Toronto society women. For the uniform dress, Mother Lidwina, who admitted ignorance of modern fashions, solicited ideas from CWL members, postu-



Sisters Catherine Wymbs, Margaret Guest and Catherine Donnelly in the uniform, August 1923

lants, and novices. Catherine Donnelly proposed a riding skirt, for its comfort when on horseback travelling on the prairies. However, upon visiting Edgeley's, specialists in designing uniforms, Mother Lidwina and Sister Schenck commissioned a uniform in the Duro style which embodied both practicality and contemporary taste. Cut from grey English wool ordered by Father Daly, the skirt had 2 ½-inch wide pleats at the front and back with a slight gathering at the sides to give fullness. Fashionable touches were incorporated with a low waistline and a skirt length eight inches from the floor, and three, small grey-pearl buttons on a tab at the neck between the collar openings. The original linen collar, a replica of the Redemptorist habit collar, was changed a few months later to the collar worn at Eton College, an exclusive boys' private school in England. The style of the uniform, with the exception of a raised waistband and shorter hem, remained unchanged for 40 years. The first uniforms arrived at the novitiate in the spring of 1923.⁵⁷

For shoes, Mother Lidwina, having experienced the walking conditions in Prince Rupert, preferred black Oxfords with a Cuban heel and persuaded Father Daly that a high-laced shoe of 10 or more eyelets was not practical. Mother Lidwina adeptly won the point.

Father, no person in this day and age wears high laced shoes, the Sisters of St. Joseph do not wear them, excepting a few of the older Sisters or those with weak ankles perhaps. I don't think, personally, I could wear high shoes during the heat of summer. The Redemptorists no longer wear them and even today, Father, I notice you have on low shoes.⁵⁸

Hats replaced the religious headdress of a wimple and veil. Much in vogue was the "casual" cloth hat with a rolled brim. Holt Renfrew designed and made similar hats in grey for the sisters, although the company did so only in slack season during the first few years. For Easter bonnets, Mother Lidwina's close friend and milliner, Miss McCracken, created a black sailor hat of fine straw with a slightly rolled brim and finished with a black ribbon band. It received unanimous approval. When the black sailor hats went out of fashion, the



Sisters Florence Regan wearing the blue straw hat, 1930



Sister Eva Chartrand wearing the original straw hat, 1927

sisters began wearing their grey cloth hats with a slightly enlarged circumference throughout the year.⁵⁹ For work or study, the sisters tucked their braided hair under a grey nurses' cap, trimmed with white.⁶⁰ In the hospitals, the sister nurses wore the same 1920s style of uniform as their peers.

On 17 June 1923, the feast of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, the four senior members of the novitiate first wore the full uniform in public to the 8 a.m. Mass at nearby Our Lady of Lourdes Church, nine months after the founding. Wearing the uniform in public also signified their acceptance as novices, the first step of the two years of religious training and studies before professing first vows. In traditional women's congregations, a reception of habit ceremony is more elaborate. The approved postulants enter a church or chapel dressed in formal white wedding gowns as brides of Christ and receive the habit of the congregation and the title of "Sister." In contrast, the SOS held a simple ceremony of blessing and receiving the uniform in the novitiate chapel. By 1924, a combined ceremony was held for those receiving the habit and those professing vows.⁶¹

Preparing for the Missions

The spring of 1923 also heralded Mother Lidwina's relaxation of the order of the day to receive visitors, the majority being clergy. Conveniently located, the novitiate at 2 Wellesley Place was steps from the archbishop's palace at the head of Wellesley Place, a five-minute drive from the St. Joseph's Motherhouse, and 10 minutes by car from the Redemptorists at St. Patrick's. Many visitors offered support and shared insights into missionary life and contemporary issues, while others added to the religious training. During these visits, Mother Lidwina demonstrated for the novices the etiquette of interacting with clergy, from pastors to archbishops. In the first months, local clerics Rev. J.B. Dollard, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Church, and Rev. Henry Carr, CSB, superior of the Congregation of St. Basil, offered assistance. With Father Daly's encouragement, western Canadian bishops came to assess the new institute and the potential

for service in their dioceses, including Archbishops Alfred Sinnott of Winnipeg, Henry O'Leary of Edmonton, and Olivier Mathieu of Regina, along with Bishops Alexander MacDonald of Victoria and Nykyta Budka of Winnipeg. While conducting the 1923 general visitation of Redemptorist provinces in North America, Rector Major Patrick Murray from Rome accompanied Father Coughlan in March to meet briefly with the novices. Another Redemptorist, Bishop Maurice of Roseau, spoke of the lepers and poverty in his diocese in the British West Indies. Chaplain and the archbishop's secretary, Father Joseph Haley regularly came for nightly games of checkers at the novitiate, and practised reading his paper to deliver to a social work conference.⁶²

In the first two years, the Redemptorists and the archbishop utilized every opportunity to familiarize bishops and priests with the institute.⁶³ Sister Schenck described Mother Lidwina's well-oiled response to these visits.

The telephone would ring. There would be a message that Archbishop McNeil would be at the convent for a few minutes with an archbishop or bishop from Western Canada or from the Maritimes. Automatically, there would be a hurried dash to don our highly prized good cloth uniforms. Mother Lidwina would receive the guests and then the bell would summon us to the Common Room.⁶⁴

The archbishop's visitors included Archbishop Andrea Cassulo, the Apostolic Delegate, and Rev. James Tompkins, a founder of the Antigonish Movement, a progressive effort that incorporated adult education, cooperatives, and rural development. Another pioneer, Sister Marguerita Slachta, a founder of the Sisters of Social Service in 1923, spoke of the social and economic turmoil in Europe and her exile from Hungary. Rev. J. Bennett of the English Catholic Immigration Council in Liverpool, England, outlined the necessity of well-organized port work. Russian exile and engaging speaker Baroness de Hueck (Catherine Doherty) began a series of talks in 1922, continuing for the next three years, about the conditions in Russia

and her escape during the Russian Revolution. She also arranged for a friend to teach language classes in German and Russian to prepare the sisters for communicating with Slavic homesteaders.⁶⁵

In the early years, Archbishop McNeil loved “to slip in unawares and find us either at work or at recreation,” according to Sister Schenck.

During the spring and summer of 1923 and 1924, Mother Lidwina and the Sisters would often sit out under the big oak tree on the north side of the lawn. The archbishop would quietly walk down from his residence, at the head of Wellesley Place and join us. During the colder weather, he would come up to the common room. The archbishop was a most unobtrusive man and never talked for the sake of talking. He had an innate zeal for souls, especially for the poor and abandoned.

One evening he told us that every Sister should learn to say “Are you a Catholic?” in every language. It might be the means of saving a soul.

He told of his Cape Breton roots. To offset the appalling shortage of priests and no mass and sacraments, a school teacher contacted the Catholics and arranged that every Sunday they would meet in the home of one of the families. Catholic prayers were said, the Epistle and gospel for the Sunday were read, the rosary recited and hymns sung. In this way the light of faith was kept burning and became an integral part of the lives of the rising generations. He wished the S.O.S. to go and do likewise.⁶⁶

For the priority of religious education, J.F. Power, a superintendent of the Toronto Separate School Board, came weekly in 1923 and 1924, combining religious instruction with pedagogy. Other contributors to the catechetical teaching included Archbishop McNeil, Rev. Michael Kelly, CSB, Jesuits Rev. Henry Cormier, SJ, and Rev. John Filion, SJ, and John M. Bennett, chief inspector of the Toronto Separate School Board. For 30 years one night a week, Bennett introduced the novices to the books, periodicals, and methods of religious instruction. To put this instruction into practice, three novices,

Sisters Catherine Wymbs, Margaret Guest, and Kathleen Schenck, taught catechism classes on Sunday afternoons at St. Dunstan's parish in the city's east end, and later three other novices taught at St. Mary's parish. From the fall of 1923 to April 1924, at the request of Father Haley, novice Sister Catherine Donnelly and another novice taught English night classes to up to 80 Ruthenian men and women at their church.⁶⁷

Mother Lidwina's underlying priority was the building of community life. From her own religious life, she knew the importance of the bonding of purpose through common projects, spiritual exercises, and practices, which defined the essence and success of any congregation. Through the development of meditation and prayers, a spiritual identity, essential in the missions, was created. To strengthen the bonding, Mother Lidwina introduced the traditional novitiate activities of writing and producing in-house concerts and plays for special occasions, especially for the feast day of each sister. In the missions, the sisters would draw on this experience while helping with local events and in schools.

Moreover, the profound support from the Sisters of St. Joseph exemplified how religious women support each other. Mother Lidwina established the novitiate with the assistance of 20 members of her congregation, who came at various times to help. For much of the first two years, Sister Gerarda Casserly served unofficially as an assistant novice mistress, staying regularly at Wellesley Place and providing observations, solace, and support to Mother Lidwina. On her regular trips to the St. Joseph's Motherhouse, Mother Lidwina consulted with and confided in senior sisters about directing the novitiate. For two years, Sister Mechtilde Lecour, general treasurer, supervised the purchase of supplies for the novitiate and made a special allowance of purchasing butter in the first year. Mother Lidwina relied on the help of her brother Jack Henry, a bookkeeper, to keep the household accounts. For her special interest in the novitiate, Sister Mechtilde earned the nickname "grandmother." When she ordered four dressers with mirrors for the novitiate, Father Daly considered the new dressers to be entirely unnecessary for a poor missionary

community and arranged to return them. An orange crate, standing on its end, with one little shelf and a cretonne curtain, served as a dresser for many years.⁶⁸

Similar to other congregations, community spirit was augmented by contributing to the household daily tasks of cleaning and preparing the chapel, answering the door and telephone, cooking meals, washing dishes, and setting and clearing dining tables. Novice Sister Catherine Donnelly was assigned as annalist for a year, chronicling the events, the arrivals and departures for the historical record. Competence in domestic work was necessary for the sisters on the missions when preparing their own meals, housecleaning, and doing laundry. Although each novice was allocated a weekly household chore, all were charged with scouring every surface, dusting, beating rugs, and washing the eight-foot windows at spring, fall, and Christmas. Novice Sister Catherine Wymbs was also assigned to ill novices and postulants either at the novitiate or in hospital.

In further boosting community life, Mother Lidwina inserted the necessary novitiate ingredient of fun and a free day. Occasionally at recreation, Mother Lidwina's spirited piano playing accompanied sing-songs and a marching game to the tune of "The Grand Old Duke of York." As a music teacher, she knew the profound benefits of music, especially in classrooms, catechism lessons, and churches. She arranged for musical training for the novices with Father John Ronan, the rising religious music guru at St. Michael's Cathedral.⁶⁹ During the summer, the sisters enjoyed frequent picnics at Hanlan's Point, Centre Island, and High Park. Most memorable were day-long trips in 1923 and 1924 to the Niagara area. Arranged by Father Daly and Mother Lidwina, the entire novitiate were the guests of Sister Schenck's family, prominent Niagara fruit growers.

These trips also illustrated the importance of family ties. Each sister, after first profession of vows, received permission to visit family and friends. If circumstances allowed, novices returned to their families when a close relative was ill or had died. Family members were welcomed at the novitiate and permitted to stay as overnight guests.

Special visiting arrangements were made for Sisters Donnelly and Schenck whose siblings were members of the St. Joseph's congregation.⁷⁰ For several months Mother Lidwina employed Joe Geraghty, brother of novice Ann Geraghty, until he found full-time work.⁷¹

By late summer 1923, Mother Lidwina, always in delicate health, required regular "rest and a change" from selecting candidates, monitoring their vocational progress, and maintaining the daily household operation. For respite, Mother Lidwina took short-term leaves from the novitiate to stay at her congregation's various houses. Just before Christmas 1923, Mother Lidwina discovered the esteem in which she was held by the 14 novices and postulants. Tucked in her Christmas stocking was a silver watch from jeweller Ryrrie's and a card with the words, "Rev. Mother Lidwina, from S.O.S. Xmas 1923."⁷²

Mother Lidwina raised public awareness of the institute in Toronto and deliberately chose outings to prepare the novices for living among people inside and outside the church walls. Novices accompanied her to attend Toronto Catholic events, including the laying of the cornerstone of the new seminary for the Scarboro Foreign Mission Society, the consecration of Monsignor Thomas Kidd as bishop of Calgary, the opening of the new church of St. Vincent de Paul, and a Mass sung by school children at St. Michael's Cathedral. She took advantage of a variety of opportunities. In May 1924, novices were chosen to attend a music convention, a separate school field day, a concert of sacred music at Massey Hall and a social service conference, where they attracted attention and fielded inquiries about their uniform and their missionary aim.⁷³

During these early years, a major benefactor assisted the institute. Theresa Kormann Small, the widow of Ambrose Small, the missing millionaire and theatre entrepreneur, had been a student boarder at St. Joseph's Academy at the same time as Mother Lidwina attended the school. A frequent visitor to the St. Joseph's Motherhouse, Mrs. Small served as president of St. Joseph's Alumnae Association in 1913. After her husband disappeared in 1919, she gradually emerged from the shadow of allegations regarding her involvement in his

presumed death to become a generous benefactor in the Toronto archdiocese. She was approached by the Archbishop McNeil and Father Coughlan to assist the new missionaries and in early 1924 rekindled her friendship with Mother Lidwina. Mrs. Small donated treats to the novitiate, occasionally attended benediction and holy hours in the chapel and made her car available. However, it was her financial support of \$33,500 for two early western missions and the novitiate that was most appreciated.⁷⁴

Seven Missions Opened, 1924-1926

Coinciding with the open door policy, the Toronto branch of the CWL hosted a bridge party for 80 women, in May 1923 at 2 Wellesley Place for the dual purpose of heightening awareness and raising funds for the future partnership of SOS and the CWL. On the founding's first anniversary, 15 August 1923, some 200 CWL members were joined by well-wishers of clergy, other religious congregations, and the Salvation Army for the official opening of the CWL hostel at 4 Wellesley Place, next door to the Motherhouse and novitiate. Accommodating 20 women, the hostel also served as the headquarters of the Toronto CWL and a social club for immigrant and working women. This project fulfilled an ambition shared by the CWL and the archbishop to provide accommodation and a meeting place for working women. It also began one aspect of the CWL's policy at the founding national convention in 1920 of assisting immigrants.

During the inaugural year, novices attended special events at the hostel, mingling with the young women and learning about hostel management. Indeed, the hostel was the site of the sisters' first immigration-related mission. In late May 1924, two months before the first group of novices were set to profess first vows, Father Daly announced the appointments of Sister Schenk as superior of 4 Wellesley Place and Sister Mary Ann Bridget Burke, the second entrant, as her assistant. On 31 May 1924, the two sisters were walked to the door by Mother Lidwina while the rest of the novitiate household "assembled on the front steps to see them off."⁷⁵

Father Daly also began to select the location and terms of the initial SOS missions from the invitations received from western Canadian bishops. While the first mission, in Toronto, achieved the aims of the archbishop, the initial western mission of a teaching mission in Camp Morton, Manitoba, reflected Catherine Donnelly's goal of teaching in rural western public schools.

On 1 August 1924, the day before the first ceremony of profession of vows, Archbishop McNeil instituted canonically the Sisters of Service as a diocesan congregation under his authority as the Toronto archbishop. Under canon law, he proclaimed the name as the Institute of the Sisters of Service, the purpose of its establishment, and the privilege of taking the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. While the decree invoked provisional permission to approve the founding, explanations were required to allay the objections of the bureaucracy of the Sacred Congregation of Religious in Rome. The queries revolved around the name with the word "service," the reasons for the unusual dress, and the institute's financial security, which consisted of \$11,600 from the Redemptorists and \$4,580 from the CWL. Accepting the clarifications, on 19 January 1925 the Sacred Congregation of the Religious granted Archbishop McNeil the right to institute the Sisters of Service canonically and permanently as a diocesan right.⁷⁶

On 2 August 1924, the feast of St. Alphonsus, Archbishop McNeil received the first vows, which he had written for the six novices: Catherine Donnelly, Mary Ann Bridget Burke, Josephine Stokes, Kathleen Schenck, Catherine Wymbs, and Ann Geraghty. At the ceremony, each sister received a simple silver cross to wear around their neck. Like Sister Schenck, some novices in their second year of study had been appointed to the missions before taking their first vows. Under the rule, sisters received approval to renew their vows twice in a five-year period before receiving permission to profess final perpetual vows. At that ceremony, they would receive a silver ring and choose a religious motto.⁷⁷

Less than a week later, accompanied by Mother Lidwina and the four other newly-professed sisters, Mrs. Small drove Sisters Donnelly and Wymbs to Union Station to board a train to Camp Morton. The annalist wrote, "Sister Donnelly seemed happy to getting to work but Sister Wymbs seemed very lonely."⁷⁸ Sister Guest joined the mission six weeks later after professing her first vows in a second ceremony. By the end of 1925, three more missions had opened. In late January, Mother Lidwina bid farewell to three newly-professed sisters assigned to begin a catechetical house in Edmonton to teach children in the city's outlying areas at the request of Edmonton Archbishop Henry O'Leary. Six months later, two sisters travelled to Saskatchewan to begin the first summer catechetical tour. On 3 September, three sisters and Mother Lidwina left for Halifax to begin the fourth mission, which combined Archbishop McNeil's immigration goals of a women's hostel and port work with the CWL. In December, sisters treated the first patient in a 10-bed cottage hospital, newly-opened in Vilna, Alberta. The sixth and seventh missions, women's hostels established in collaboration with the CWL, opened in 1926, in Winnipeg and in Montreal. The successive openings of the missions were documented in the pages of *The Field at Home*, a quarterly illustrated magazine, which Father Daly initiated to publicize the new community's missions. The first issue, published in October 1924, featured a group photo of 13 novices and four postulants outside the Motherhouse, the three sisters dressed in full uniform before departing for Camp Morton, and a group photo of the 50 women gathered at the Toronto hostel.⁷⁹

Mother Othilia Maguire, CSJ

By the middle of 1926, Mother Lidwina was exhausted and was succeeded by Sister Othilia Maguire as novice mistress and superior in July 1926. Having replaced Sister Gerarda at the novitiate from September 1925 to January 1926, Mother Othilia required no period of transition. Similar to Mother Lidwina, she was a teacher and an experienced local superior at the teaching missions of Lafontaine, Barrie, the Motherhouse, St. Jo-



Mother Othilia visiting Sisters Catherine Wymbs, Mary Ann Bridget Burke, Catherine Donnelly and Ida Pickup, Vilna, Alberta, June 1928

seph's-on-the-Lake novitiate, and House of Providence.⁸⁰ Within three months of her arrival, the eighth mission, a second small hospital, was opened in the central Alberta town of Edson. In February 1927, Mother Othilia embarked on the first series of visitations, journeying to Halifax and Montreal, and at the end of May to the five western missions. Her vast experience as a superior benefitted the pioneer sisters in these inaugural missions, as she advised them on financial, spiritual, and personal matters.

Mother Othilia inherited 25 postulants and novices, and a set novitiate routine. Magdalen Barton, a clerk in a Toronto drug store who had entered the novitiate in April 1927, recounted the precision of procedures on her arrival: the postulant's dress, direction under

a senior novice, household chores, learning the Gregorian chant, courses on teaching religion, studies to provide scope for mental gymnastics, and recreation.⁸¹

Mother Othilia also took charge of a novitiate short of space. As a remedy, Mrs. Small purchased a 20-room house as a new novitiate for the price of \$25,000 in the wealthy neighbourhood of Rosedale on the traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the Credit, Anishnabeg, Chippewa, Haudenosaunee and Wendat peoples. The novitiate was occupied officially on 15 October 1927, the feast of St. Teresa. Shortly after the sisters moved into the larger house, Mother Othilia was succeeded as superior of the Motherhouse by Sister Florence Regan, superior of the catechetical mission in Edmonton, who returned to her hometown of Toronto three days before Christmas.⁸² During the winter, Mother Othilia mentored Sister Regan in the responsibilities and duties of leadership, and the pair left on the annual visitation of the Montreal and Halifax missions. By mid-April, the archbishop had recalled Sister Guest, a founding sister and teacher in Camp Morton, to assume the position of novice mistress. In her final months, Mother Othilia continued to travel. On May 1, she escorted newly-professed Sister Mary Fitzgerald to Quebec City, where the SOS were engaged to meet immigrants under the direction of port chaplain Abbé Philippe Casgrain. After a brief stop in Toronto, Mother Othilia began the second visitation of the western missions. While she completed the final visitations, the official change in administration occurred.

On 17 June 1928, the feast of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, the three sisters appointed by the archbishop took office. The previous night, Mother Lidwina had decorated the Motherhouse chapel in honour of the occasion. After Father's Daly's celebration of the Mass, Mother Lidwina and Father Daly greeted and congratulated the archbishop's appointments of the administration: Sister General Florence Regan, and councillors Sisters Kathleen Schenck and Carmel Egan, superior of the Montreal hostel. A feast day breakfast was served on a table, decorated in the institute's colours of blue and silver, and was followed by reminiscences and laughter as Father Daly and Mother

Lidwina described incidents in the first days and years. Later, Redemptorist Provincial Superior Gerald Murray, Father Coughlan's successor, gave benediction at the novitiate chapel in the presence of many Sisters of St. Joseph, including Mother Lidwina, Sister St. Charles, and Sister Mechtilde, as well as Father Haley and Mrs. Small.⁸³ Sister Catherine Donnelly was not considered for an administrative role. Father Coughlan advised her, "You stay back in the corner like an old broom."⁸⁴ At the end of her western visitation, Mother Othilia returned to the novitiate on 23 June, accompanied by Margaret Murphy, a future entrant. A few days later, she started her appointment as superior of St. Michael's Hospital, the CSJ downtown Toronto hospital.⁸⁵

During their combined six years as superiors, Mothers Lidwina and Othilia oversaw the entry of 94 women into this missionary institute, balancing practical matters with firm grounding in a religious and spiritual life. A third of the entrants professed first vows and were appointed almost immediately to the eight new missions. In light of the background of the novices and the urgency of mission openings, Mother Lidwina harmonized the formation of entrants as religious women rooted in the spiritual practices of the congregation with the skills they would need for mission life. In a more administrative role, Mother Othilia solidified the novitiate rules and customs, and supported the newly-professed sisters in their new missions with advice and encouragement through correspondence and in-person visitations. Through the rule, the spiritual direction of the archbishop and the Redemptorists, the novitiate was molded to practice religious life in rural missions, women's hostels, and ports for the next 50 years. In a 1928 letter, the Sisters of Service expressed their profound appreciation to Mother Victoria.

Many are the golden links which bind us to you in gratitude, not least of which is the mothering of our little community. For we know that in giving us such mothers, you gave us of your best, a fact well-realized and deeply appreciated.⁸⁶

Chapter Two

The Big Maps:
Implementing the
Founding Vision



The Motherhouse at 2 Wellesley Place, Toronto, 1963

Father Daly

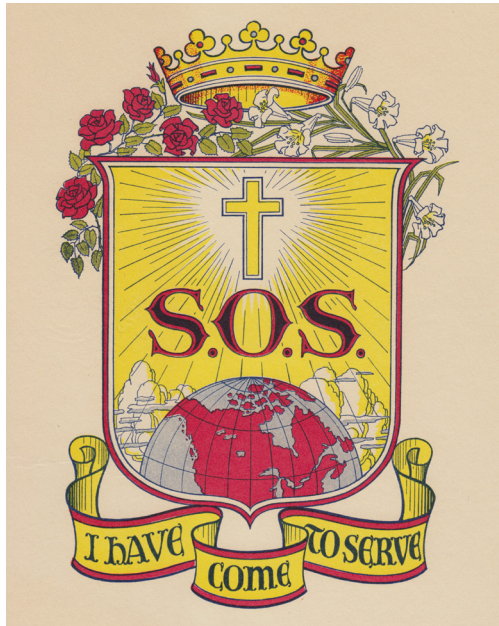
Since 1922, Father Daly gradually assumed the overall direction and financial management of the institute from his second-floor office at the Motherhouse, as Father Coughlan and the archbishop were occupied with their own organizational expansions. The sparsely-furnished office, containing a tidy desk and a 500-pound safe, which had arrived on a hoist through the window, mirrored his agile management style, which was captured by a motto framed on a wall.

**Look at big maps!
Take the long view!**

**Don't tie yourselves down with too many written rules and customs
Always remain flexible**

With this credo, Father Daly moved at a rapid pace to attract vocations, financial support, and attention for the institute's future expansion. He acknowledged criticism of the speedy opening of 10 mission houses in 10 years, but contended he wanted to utilize his western ecclesiastical contacts immediately in these dioceses to open missions.¹ Through these connections, the sisters in the missions received cooperation from bishops and clergy. Father Daly, however, depended mostly on the Redemptorists. The annals in all SOS missions recorded the names of Redemptorist confreres who celebrated Mass in their chapels, gave yearly eight-day retreats, offered impromptu spiritual guidance, and practical advice during visits. In return, the sisters provided catechetical instruction in many of the 16 Redemptorist parishes west of the Ontario border. The Redemptorist connection also generated vocations. Of the 124 permanent members of the SOS, 30 sisters attributed the development of their vocation to a Redemptorist priest or family member.²

In seeking vocations and donors, Father Daly also made use of his polished writing skills, garnered from the publication of two books: *Catholic Problems in Western Canada* in 1921 and *Catholic Action in 1927*.³ He wrote the content for 70 professionally designed brochures and many articles for *The Field at Home*, the institute's quarterly missionary magazine. In the April 1934 issue, the coat of arms, derived from the cover of the magazine, appeared for the first time, bearing a terrestrial globe and a faint outline of a map of Canada, S.O.S. initials, the cross as a sign of redemption and holy faith, with the motto "I Have Come to Serve." Under Father Daly's guidance, the magazine evolved into the institute's official means of communication with the public. Professionally designed and printed, it featured articles written by sisters and illustrated with photographs of catechetical and mission adventures. Each issue also contained Father Daly's column, "At Headquarters", announcements of professions, deaths, a list of donors, along with fundraising appeals. After eight years as editor, Father Daly selected Sister Carolyn Albury, a former newspaper office secretary-stenographer, as his successor, a position she held for 22 years until 1954. In their correspondence with the missions,



Coat of arms, 1934



The front cover of The Field at Home from 1929 until 1958

both Sister Albury and Father Daly reminded the sisters to write and make use of the mission camera to document their work. Originally, *The Field at Home* was circulated *gratis* to parishes and donors, but later circulation was replaced by paid subscriptions. Although Father Daly wanted the magazine in the hands of every Canadian Catholic, circulation fell short of his goal, reaching a peak of 4,000. However, seven of the 124 life members credited articles in *The Field at Home* to directing their vocations to the SOS.⁴

In 1927, Father Daly replaced Father Coughlan as spiritual director and stressed spiritual development during his talks and conferences at the novitiate. “He pictured for us the thousands of people in areas remote from the Church, in need of our spiritual help,” Sister Alice Walsh wrote, “We were on fire to be out and doing. But with the appeal came the warning: ‘Weaklings will not stand the test of the missions. Your contact will be fruitful just inasmuch as you are in habitual contact with our Divine Saviour, no more, no less.’”⁵ He emphasized that “a religious is a soul who has as her object in life the pursuance of Christian perfection ... The motive that leads to Christian perfection is the love of God and for the love of God.”⁶

On the topic of spirituality, he concentrated on the virtues of zeal, charity, humility, and perseverance. Most important was prayer, which he described as “the elevation of the soul to God.” In underscoring the necessity and importance of prayer, especially to Mary, Father Daly recalled his tormented vocational crisis while a 16-year-old novice in Belgium, and its resolution through fervent prayers to Mary, “who saves you in the hour of danger.”⁷ In outlining the sisters’ opportunity to save souls, he noted that a priest in the west “is limited to the contact of 50 families. He meets those people and their children ... Naturally he has the power of the Priesthood, but from your influence you will come in contact with more people, and if your life is good, there is no limit to what you can do, and all will depend on your virtue.”⁸

Until the 1960s and the changes following the Second Vatican Council, Father Daly’s imprint of Redemptorist spirituality was the

institute's spiritual cornerstone. The writings and spiritual teachings of St. Alphonsus, the founder of the Redemptorists, formed the basis of the novitiate training. In 1938, each sister received from Father Daly a copy of St. Alphonsus' writings on prayer as fundamental in the work of Christian and religious perfection.⁹ He arranged for the icon of Mother of Perpetual Help to be placed in all mission houses as part of the Redemptorist responsibility levied by Pope Pius IX in 1866 to make the icon known to the world. The sisters shared the Redemptorist devotion to Our Mother of Perpetual Help and the observance of her June feast day. *The Community Prayers*, which received Archbishop McNeil's imprimatur in 1932, were interspersed with references to St. Alphonsus and Mother of Perpetual Help.

Father Daly's circular letters to the sisters covered spiritual topics as well as changes to the institute's governance, and acknowledgements of deaths and benefactors. In his many short personal notes and letters to individual sisters, Father Daly expressed sympathy on the death of a family member or congratulations on an appointment or accomplishment. Many sisters sought his guidance on personal and institute matters. Although his patriarchal manner of addressing sisters in his personal notes as "my dear child" reflected a 19th century priestly formation, there was an ease in his presence. During a novitiate talk, he confessed, "I live for you."¹⁰

Regular visits to the missions reflected his profound concern for each sister's well-being as well as the progress of the missions. In these brief and cheerful visits, he would settle into an armchair and relay the news of the Motherhouse, the novitiate, the postulants, and the new missions. Sister Alice Walsh cherished the travels with him by car to outlying missions. "Those matchless hours would be filled with happy conversations, much good humour, several rosaries, the litany of the Saints for the crops, and other prayers for worldwide intentions."¹¹ Always progressive in taking advantage of modern technology and transportation, he boarded his first airplane in the late 1930s. Travels to Europe and United States also fuelled Father' Daly's hobby of stamp collecting.



Sisters Madge Barton (left) and Celestine Reinhardt with Father George Daly on his visit to their teaching mission with St. Ignatius church in the background, Sinnett, Saskatchewan, 1944

As a financial manager, Father Daly excelled. Influenced perhaps by his banker father, he took the long financial view, consolidating debt incurred from the early missions by arranging to issue bonds to raise funds. By 1951, when the bonds came due, the institute was debt-free.¹² His reputation as a fundraiser preceded him when visiting well-to-do Catholics. Sister Mechtilde O'Mara, CSJ, quipped that the family pulled out a cheque book in anticipation of Father Daly's visit. His purpose was clear. "There is nothing I love so much as to get money and give it to you," he told a meeting of the sisters."¹³

Despite the challenges of fundraising, more than 500 benefactors were listed in Father Daly's financial files between 1922 and 1951. At the top of the impressive list of prominent Catholic benefactors was Senator Frank O'Connor, the founder of Laura Secord Candy Stores, who donated a total of \$66,639.04.¹⁴ William H. Regnery, a Chicago business associate of the Daly family window shades business in Montreal, donated \$28,849.27 over three decades. In 1923, Regnery provided the funding for the \$50,000 mortgages on 2 and 4 Wellesley Place.¹⁵ For those of limited means, he devised "Dime Savers," a cardboard booklet mailed to their homes with 30 slots to insert coins. In each issue of *The Field at Home*, Father Daly recognized all benefactors and their donations, from one dollar to several hundred. For long-term and future giving, he created an annuity plan and promoted beneficiary clauses in wills.

However, there were financial disappointments. A targeted fundraising campaign in 1939 collected less than \$500 after paying the expenses of the Canadian branch of Maier and Hubbard, a Chicago public relations firm.¹⁶ Mrs. Small's financial bequest to the SOS never materialized. Nineteen years of litigation over her will ended with a court judgment in 1954 excluding the institute from receiving the \$100,000 bequeathed in her will. The judgment stated that the estate did not contain sufficient funds, and other beneficiaries were given priority. A painting, which her husband had purchased and was allegedly by Flemish artist Peter Paul Rubens, was left to the institute along with other religious art. The "Rubens" painting hung in the novitiate while Father Daly unsuccessfully spent a de-

cade pursuing its authenticity. Later, it was sold by a Toronto auction house.¹⁷

The Catholic Women's League

Through Father Daly's advocacy, the Catholic Women's League (CWL) emerged as a prominent benefactor through ongoing fundraising efforts, and as a partner at the SOS immigration missions. The strength and potential of the CWL were evident at its first fundraising bridge party for the sisters, held in January 1922 at Benvenuto, the estate of Sir William Mackenzie, a railway contractor. From its origins in England, the CWL under their motto "For God and Country" evolved into a vigorous advocate organization, dedicated to bolstering the social safety net for immigrants, women and children. Its emergence coincided with the proliferation of women's organizations in the first two decades of the 20th century. The First World War had united women who entered the workforce while men joined the Canadian war effort. The first Canadian branch was



A secondary motto of the SOS to link with the CWL axiom of "For God and Country." This SOS motto was published in The Field at Home from 1928 until 1960.

formed in Edmonton in 1912, followed by the Toronto branch in 1918. In response to Pope Pius XI's fostering the participation of lay people throughout the Catholic Church through Catholic Action. The CWL's Edmonton branch opened Rosary Hall to provide protection and support to women and girls by offering safe and affordable accommodation and free job placement services. In 1920, members attended a convention to create a national organization.

Archbishop McNeil and Father Daly approached the Toronto CWL for moral and financial support of the Sisters of Service. Bellelle Guerin, the first national president, outlined the CWL immigration objectives at the convention in 1921.

Catholic immigrants are cast upon our shores without friends, without means, bewildered at the vastness of the country they have come to, bedazzled by the greatness and wealth of our people, they pass in among the multitudes, are absorbed by our population, and we seldom know what has become of them. ... The Catholic Women's League has already taken some means of meeting Catholic immigrants on the arrival of the ships and we have a dream ... that in every city the CWL should have an Immigration Committee, making a chain from Atlantic to the Pacific.¹⁸

At the 1922 convention, Gertrude Lawler, the founding president of the Toronto branch, moved that the CWL adopt, as a national undertaking, the work of the Sisters of Service for "the preservation of the Faith and Nationalization of New Canadians." Subsequently, she headed the league's Sisters of Service committee in its initial phase.

Over the next three decades, Father Daly accepted speaking invitations to report on the SOS activities and encourage the continued CWL's support. In following Father Daly's lead, sisters attended both meetings and conventions, often as guest speakers, to communicate the progress of their works. To become acquainted with current social problems, Sisters Carmel Egan and Mary Rodgers in June 1925 represented the institute at the CWL convention in Hamilton, which featured a lecture by Charlotte Whitton, director for 20 years of the Canadian Council on Child Welfare. When a new mission

was opened in a city, CWL members welcomed the sisters at the train station. In the following weeks, local CWL members provided drives for the sisters as well as meals and furnishings for the new residence. The CWL's financial generosity was unparalleled with total donations of \$125,820.70 between May 1923 and December 1951.¹⁹ Mindful of the poverty in rural Canada, CWL branches, particularly in the southwestern Ontario communities of Chatham and London, collected clothing and toys for the SOS missions in Western Canada. The sisters distributed the clothes to families throughout the year, and toys at Christmas for school children.

Sister Florence MacNeil

From her second-floor office, Sister Florence MacNeil expertly managed the dual tasks as bookkeeper and Father Daly's secretary. She was appointed in 1934, and like Sister Albury, was chosen for her qualifications and experience. A Cape Breton teacher, she had switched careers, enrolling in a business course at Bundett College in Boston, and then worked in that city for almost five years as a bookkeeper and stenographer. She joined the institute on 2 August 1931 at the age of 25, along with her sister Mary, who died just before Florence professed first vows on 2 February 1933. Sister MacNeil's one-year appointment to the Toronto women's hostel ended with a short walk across the lawn to the Motherhouse. Although the lure of the missions had attracted her to the Sisters of Service, her talents were most needed at the Motherhouse. She exhibited the discretion, competency, and cordiality that Father Daly sought in a trusted secretary. Sister MacNeil was "keeping the home fires burning" while he travelled on SOS and Redemptorist business. "I can safely say that her figures are always correct," he stated.²⁰ She also contributed as an elected member of the General Council for two consecutive terms from 1948 until 1960, as procurator-general-treasurer, and as superior of the Motherhouse. In all positions, she welcomed visitors with graciousness, warmth, and a friendly smile.²¹

Sister General Florence Regan

After the celebrations on 17 June 1928, the task of self-government began with the departure of the Sisters of St. Joseph. From the oak-panelled reception hall, Sister General Florence Regan walked up the grand staircase to the second floor of the Motherhouse and into her office. The pioneer sisters of the first six years were taking charge of administering and implementing the vision. Entering at the age of 36 in January 1925, Sister Regan had impressed Archbishop McNeil and Father Daly. A Torontonion, she brought much-needed business experience, having worked for 15 years at Imperial Oil, where she rose to the position of executive secretary. Shortly after professing first vows on 24 June 1926, she travelled to Western Canada as the superior of the loosely-defined mission to teach catechism to Edmonton-area children. Her secretarial and organizational skills were useful in starting the rapidly-developing religious correspondence school, a new venture of sending catechism lessons by mail. At the request of Archbishop Olivier Mathieu of Regina, she and Sister Mary Rodgers embarked on the second summer tour of teaching catechism to children in Saskatchewan in the summer of 1927. Due to the early successes of the new religious correspondence school and the summer teaching, Sister Regan was tapped as superior of the Motherhouse and introduced to the general administration by Mother Othilia.

As Sister General, Sister Regan was intricately involved in the building, planning, and expanding the community throughout Canada. In April 1931, at the end of her first term, Archbishop McNeil and Father Daly requested the 32 sisters who had professed vows to vote on whether Sister Regan and the General Council, composed of Sisters Kathleen Schenck and Carmel Egan, should continue for another three-year term. By a large majority, the sisters voted in favour of a second term.²² Two months later, on 15 August 1931, a milestone was reached when Archbishop McNeil received the final vows of the first group of sisters, including Sister Regan and her council members in the Motherhouse chapel. The institute gained a sense



Sister Florence Regan in her office at the Motherhouse, Toronto, 1932

of permanence when these eight sisters vowed their life-long commitment.²³ Days before his death in May 1934, Archbishop McNeil re-appointed Sister Regan and the council for a third term, after considering the institute was ill-prepared to hold a General Chapter and elections for the purpose of electing a Sister General and Council, without the final approval from Rome of the institute's rules and constitutions.²⁴

From 1928 until 1937 under Sister Regan, the institute expanded. Women's hostels in Vancouver, Edmonton and Ottawa were opened, as well as a rural teaching mission in St. Brides, Alberta, and a 1934 catechetical mission in Regina. Two new hospitals were built in Alberta replacing the original frame buildings in Vilna and Edson. The General Council made crucial decisions about personnel; on almost every agenda, the council voted to approve candidates entering the novitiate and their futures as Sisters of Service. Based on reports from the novitiate, the council decided on the dismissals of postulants, novices, and sisters who had professed initial vows and the renewal of vows. Some were found unsuitable as missionaries, due to poor health or a weak vocation. Others left the novitiate on their

own accord to help their families in times of sickness and death. All appointments of sisters to the missions fell under the council's authority and were communicated, among other announcements, in the Sister General's circular letter.²⁵ Sister Regan visited the missions every year, travelling long, weary days and nights in old-fashioned Pullman cars. On these visits, she spent time with the sisters, inspecting their living conditions and learning about specific aspects of the mission. She also met local people and admired the country's natural beauty.

As members of the corporate board (Sisters of Service of Canada), the General Council approved property purchases and other financial transactions, such as the issuing of bonds.²⁶ The institute's rapid expansion compounded the administrative workload, and Sister Regan admitted that those nine years "were unbelievably hard."²⁷ Sister Patricia Burke, a successor as Sister General, paid tribute to Sister Regan:

She was part of those early struggles, the personality clashes, the politics ... as a new and different community with a unique Mission and life style, without a blueprint with a cast of strong characters. ... Her calmness under pressure, her cheerfulness, integrity and great spiritual depth enabled her to calm the waters and stay the course. Florence devoted her entire life to the government and administration of the Sisters of Service. She helped shape and influence our institute – our values and traditions.

In those early days, she was the representative of the community, a role she played with grace and dignity. She was in every way a woman of her time, a stickler for etiquette, decorum and propriety – modeling appropriate behaviour for her Sisters and proper protocol for the community.²⁸



The Novitiate – 60 Glen Road

Sister Regan paid particular attention to the novitiate at 60 Glen Road, whose members represented the future growth of the institute. In this three-storey, 20-room Victorian mansion, women prepared for a missionary life, unlike the privileged lives of other residents in this wealthy Rosedale neighbourhood. Similar to the first group of entrants who joined between 1922 and 1928, the candidates—teachers, office workers, and nurses—submitted medical tests, letters of reference by clergy, and certificates of Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation. The numbers were encouraging, of up to six women entering at each of the two specific dates of January 21, the feast of St. Agnes, and August 2, the feast day of St. Alphonsus. Although the tree-lined setting of Glen Road was serene, their arrival was emotional; they were leaving behind family, friends, and fiancés, as well as security and control over their lives. A few candidates crossed the threshold holding back tears, and many had doubts. Sister Helen Hayes arrived in January 1949, having purchased a first-class train ticket from Vancouver in the expectation of enjoying the trip and returning home. Despite her misgivings, she found a peace “that convinced me that I had found my calling, so I wrote [to] my boyfriend, calling off any plans for marriage.”²⁹

Sister Margaret Guest, the novice mistress since April 1928, continued the less strict observation of rules and customs of Mother Lidwina, under whose novitiate she had entered in September 1923. Informally, she was known as Sister Mistress. Likely influenced by her four years as a teacher in Camp Morton, Manitoba, Sister Guest encouraged the bonding of community spirit and the unity of purpose so needed in the isolated missions. As under the St. Joseph sisters, practical household tasks built community life as did fun-filled, lively recreation and the production of in-house plays and concerts. Mother Lidwina's initial arrangement of musical instruction with Father Ronan of St. Michael's Cathedral continued, and the sounds of the practising novitiate choir filled the house. Relaxation at day-long picnics in High Park and Centre Island broke the daily routine as did making impromptu snow figures after a heavy snowfall. To celebrate special occasions, the novices decorated the house and helped with the meals for individual sisters' and religious feast days. For extraordinary events, the entire novitiate gathered to listen to historic radio broadcasts, including King George V's silver jubilee broadcast in 1935 and, a year later, the abdication speech of his son, King Edward VIII. Outings were confined to Catholic events at churches and schools, attending Mass at Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Basil's churches, and wrapping issues of *The Field at Home* for mailing.³⁰

Teaching catechism, the basic elements and practices of the Catholic faith, was a priority for each sister. Training as catechetists continued with weekly lessons by J.M. Bennett to combine the practical methods of catechetical teaching with contemporary child psychology and the science of teaching catechism. To ensure Catholic doctrine was followed, Sister Guest enhanced her own knowledge by attending a catechetical course, organized by Bishop Michael Fallon of the London diocese. She and Sister Regan visited the Society of Missionary Catechists of Our Blessed Lady of Victory, in Huntingdon, Indiana, to exchange ideas. However, it was from articles in *The Field at Home* that novices learned about the reality of catechetical teaching, both the hardships and amusing anecdotes. Sister Cather-



Sister Mistress Margaret Guest, (centre right), novices, postulants and snowman, Toronto, 1936

ine Donnelly gave talks in 1935 and 1937 to the novices, expanding on a three-page, illustrated account in the magazine's October 1934 issue about the Cariboo catechetical tours in the British Columbia interior. The newly-formed novitiate study club heard papers presented by Sister Regan and Motherhouse sisters on church topics. Other practices continued, such as German language classes, talks by Bishop Alexander MacDonald of Victoria, and devotional processions for Marian and liturgical events initiated by Mother Othilia.³¹

The sisters welcomed frequent visitors. Father Daly came several times a week, celebrating Mass, giving benediction, and bringing guests. Father Daly lived at St. Patrick's rectory, the Redemptorist headquarters, and not surprisingly, the Redemptorists were omnipresent in the sisters' lives. Every Toronto and out-of-town Redemptorist either called or celebrated Mass in the chapel, including Provincial Superior Gerald Murray and his successor, Peter Costello. Before novices were approved for the first profession of vows, senior Redemptorists conducted the canonical examination, and for three decades until 1964, Redemptorist Provincial Superiors received the profession of vows in the novitiate chapel. Redemptorists were the novitiate's chaplains and confessors, and prominent Redemptorist



Sister Pauline Coates and the novitiate choir, Toronto, 1935

preachers were selected as retreat masters. Father Achille Delaere, a Redemptorist among the Ukrainian settlers in Saskatchewan, brought not only elaborate vestments to offer Mass in the Byzantine rite but tales of his missionary life. In return, novices and postulants attended Mass at St. Patrick's and frequented parish concerts and plays. On a visit, Apostolate Delegate Andrea Cassulo expressed much hope that the Sisters of Service would be stationed all over Canada. However, not all clerics approved. Sister Guest took to task a priest from the United States, who described the sisters in their grey uniforms as Methodist deaconesses. "Father," she replied, "we were always taught from the earliest days that the habit didn't make the religious."³²

Although Archbishop McNeil's headquarters at Wellesley Place was only a five-minute drive away, he visited less frequently after the



Game on the novitiate badminton court, Toronto, 1935

novitiate moved to Glen Road. He continued to introduce special visitors, including his sister, a member of the Congregation of Notre Dame, and to come and answer questions of faith and morals. The archbishop was informed of the background of new candidates. On one visit, he comforted a homesick Veronica Gillis, a Newfoundland teacher from the western diocese of St. George's, sitting with her to inquire about many people in his former diocese.³³ Jesuit William Hingston, SJ, a distinguished educator and a friend of the archbishop, visited regularly for two decades, directing retreats, giving talks and celebrating Mass in the chapel even on March 16, the feast of the Jesuit Canadian Martyrs. Mothers Lidwina and Othilia were welcomed warmly and enjoyed relating anecdotes of their novitiates in the first six years.

From her home diagonally across the Glen Road novitiate, Theresa Small was a regular visitor, joining the sisters for Christmas breakfast and bringing friends for visits, including a Loretto sister from

Kentucky. As in the past, she accompanied sisters to Catholic events, and purchased household gifts, including chairs, vases, a stove, and religious statutes. To provide entertainment, she donated a radio, a gramophone, a box of costumes, and a badminton set. Outdoor recreation in the spring, summer and fall centred on badminton games, with enthusiasm for badminton playing heightened at the time of a novitiate badminton tournament.³⁴ A few months before Mrs. Small died in May 1935, the novices threw a medal of St. Joseph, the patron saint of real estate, over the fence to the next door neighbour's backyard to ensure the successful sale of the property to the institute. It worked. The property was purchased in 1936.³⁵

Sister Veronica Gillis, the sister mistress from 1937 until 1945, continued the established system of religious formation that she had received having entered in 1932. On 15 August 1939, she professed final vows in the novitiate chapel in the presence of her novices and postulants.³⁶ She initiated first aid training and encouraged novices to attend Toronto events for youth, such as the founding conference of the Catholic Youth Organization and organizational sessions for Girl Guides. Sister Gillis put their artistic talents to use, creating displays on the institute's missionary works for the Jesuit missionary exhibit in 1941 and for the Canadian National Missionary Exhibition and Convention in 1943, held at Varsity Arena on the grounds of the University of Toronto. Before Christmas, novices made festive cards for the children in the SOS Ontario teaching missions of Christian Island and Wexford, and for the Catholic Central Bureau in Winnipeg, where the sisters worked. When Sister Regan moved to the novitiate in 1943 from the Motherhouse, she acted as a mentor to the postulants and novices, connecting them with visiting pioneer sisters and founding influences and traditions.

During the war years, the sisters prayed for peace while obeying the city's nightly rules, drawing black curtains across the windows. The novitiate gathered to listen to radio war broadcasts of British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King, and U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt as well as the popular *Catholic Hour*, hosted by Monsignor Fulton Sheen. News outside the

semi-cloistered novitiate also came from novice and nurse Brigid Knopic. During her novitiate years of 1941 until 1943, she walked alone to a neighbour's house every day to administer medication and while there, she would glance at the daily newspaper pages, forbidden reading by novices.³⁷

Sister Domitilla Morrison, the Sister Mistress from 1945 to 1954, further emphasized catechetical teaching. She introduced classes in bible history and music, drawing on her mission assignments as a teacher at Camp Morton and as a founding superior of the catechetical mission in Fargo, North Dakota. Sister Morrison exemplified the need to support other religious communities when the cloistered nuns of the Order of the Most Holy Redeemer (the Redemptoristines) immigrated from England in 1947 at the invitation of the Redemptorists. While the four Redemptoristines stayed at the novitiate, the novices cleaned the newly-acquired convent, located on St. George Street near the University of Toronto. During his 1951 visitation, Redemptorist Superior General Leonard Buys came to the novitiate and was photographed encircled by the two women's communities associated with the Redemptorists.³⁸ Redemptorist Novice Master Cornelius McElligott also gave talks on religious life during the 1950s.

For the first three decades, Sister Mistresses welcomed 230 candidates to the Glen Road novitiate. Between 1928 and 1960, about 40 per cent of the women who entered professed final vows and remained as members with the years during the Depression and world war attracting the most vocations. Ironically, in the decade of the 1950s, considered the golden age of Christian church attendance, only 13 of 56 women who entered, remained as perpetually vowed sisters.³⁹

The Chapters and the Sisters Generals

By 1934, the last component of the ecclesiastical founding was completed. Father Daly had prepared the final version of the *Rules and Constitutions* for approval by the archbishop and later by papal authorities in Rome. Archbishop McNeil's approval was recorded on 19 May 1934 from a hospital bed, six days before he died. Upon that authority, each sister received a 100-page bound copy on 2 August 1934. In a circular letter, Father Daly reiterated that the institute "is essentially a missionary order ... The very nature of our work calls for a certain measure of adaptability ... It has been framed with the view of safeguarding this essential feature" and modified by "the fruit of experience."⁴⁰

The first 37 pages confirmed the rules for postulants, novices, and the profession of vows as well as for religious, educational, and welfare work. The requirements of religious life—spiritual exercises, order of the day, retreats, and the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience—were described in detail. Two new sections were added. Under governance, the functions and elections of the General Chapter were defined, along with the qualifications and responsibilities of the Sister General, the councillors, mistress of novices, procurator general, and local superiors. The last 33 pages contained papal decrees pertaining to religious communities and sacramental observances.⁴¹

In March 1936, Father Daly personally delivered the SOS *Rules and Constitutions* to the Sacred Congregation of Religious on behalf of Toronto Archbishop James McGuigan. At the same time, he attended the Redemptorist General Chapter in Rome and was appointed subsequently as one of two consultors (advisors) to the newly appointed Toronto Provincial Superior James Fuller. The superiors in Rome recognized Father Daly's experience and ability to assist in the further expansion of the 250-member English-Canadian province, despite criticism of his "freelancing" tendencies beyond the duties as a Redemptorist.⁴² It took another year before the final approval of the

rules and constitutions was received from Rome, and it came with a caveat. If the institute applied for pontifical designation, the Sacred Congregation of Religious insisted that the institute have five houses in the Toronto archdiocese, where the Motherhouse was situated.⁴³

The final approval of the rules and constitutions was obtained 15 years after the founding and a month before the commencement of the First General Chapter on 21 May 1937, another major step in the institute's self-government. Fifteen delegates were elected to represent the institute's 90 members at the Chapter held at the Motherhouse. Following the protocols of other religious congregations, the Chapter delegates were called to elect a Sister General and a General Council, as well as to discuss matters of the institute. Since its founding in 1922, the institute had grown to 13 missions, a novitiate, and a membership of 39 sisters who had professed final vows, 31 with temporary vows, 14 novices, and six postulants.

In a frank address to the Chapter delegates, Father Daly admitted that not being well known among clergy, religious, and laity had posed challenges for the institute. "There was a sort of suspicion of us ... We have weathered the storm." At 65, he confessed to being less energetic and buoyant and intended "to gradually withdraw from the interior administration of the institute and leave that to Sister General and her Council." He added, "You can now stand on your feet but I will do my best to put you on a sound financial basis ... Each one has ideas to contribute to the common good, but you are big enough to pool them and make the most of them for the greater good." In surmounting difficulties, he acknowledged the deficiency of humans and the weakness of the "human element in the church." For the future, he cautioned against a centralized government and the ambition to build bigger facilities, such as hospitals, and to let others do so. "A community has an unconscious pride and an unconscious desire for possession, and that is what brought on the Reformation, that grasping spirit that grows and grows and grows." Instead, he asserted, "You have your own spirit" as missionaries and "a pioneer spirit to keep in mind the big mission field of the West." In closing, he noted that "one of the greatest rewards of



Sisters attending General Chapter 1937: Front Row (l-r): Sisters Kathleen Schenck, Carolyn Albury, Sister General Margaret Guest, Father Daly, Sisters Florence Regan, Carmel Egan, Agnes Black. Centre Row: Sisters Mary Szostak, Frances Church, Catherine Donnelly, Agnes Brunning, Mary Quinn, Catherine Wymbs, Teresa Chisholm, Patricia Williams. Back row: Sisters Eva Chartrand, Gertrude Walsh, Agnes Dwyer, Mary Fitzmaurice, Magdalen Barton, Margaret Muldoon

your devotedness and your zeal ... has been not a breath of scandal come over the Sisters of Service. Guard that all your life. It is the best asset you have.”⁴⁴

Father Coughlan, semi-retired at a Redemptorist preparatory college in Pennsylvania, was invited to direct the pre-Chapter retreat. Fittingly, he presided over the Chapter, advising delegates to make decisions only in the best interests of the community, and to elect councillors, who were not needed in the missions. The elections affirmed Father Coughlan’s advice when sisters in Toronto with institutional knowledge and experience were chosen. Sister Margaret Guest, the novice mistress, was elected as Sister General, and was joined on the General Council by Sister Regan, the first Sister General, and Sister Albury, the editor of *The Field at Home*. The terms were set at six years. The council membership remained stable when Sisters Regan and Albury were elected for two more consecutive terms, until 1954. Both sisters also were appointed as superior of the Motherhouse: Sister Regan from 1937 until 1943, and Sister Albury from 1948 to 1954.

From her nine years at the novitiate, Sister Guest had earned a reputation as a good listener with a sense of humour. She insisted that the sisters be independent. “Her Sisters of Service were not to expect others to put themselves out for us just because we were religious,” Sister Ella Zink noted. “She helped us to be womanly women, to relate to others easily and unaffectedly but always as religious; ... she was years ahead of her time and has always remained so.”⁴⁵ Sister Guest’s interest in rural education never waned, and in 1941 she presented a paper on this topic at the Catholic Rural Conference Convention in Indiana. Under her two terms as Sister General, six of the eight new missions were dedicated to rural teaching: Marquis and Bergfield, Saskatchewan (1938); Wexford, Ontario (1939); Sinnett, Saskatchewan (1940); Christian Island, Ontario (1941); and Rycroft, Alberta (1944). A catechetical mission was founded in Fargo, North Dakota (1939), and a university women’s residence in Saskatoon (1946). Two larger houses were purchased for hostels in Montreal and Halifax.

As novice mistress, Sister Guest was well aware of the need to upgrade sisters' education, as some had not completed high school. She encouraged novices and professed sisters to enroll in night and summer classes at Toronto high schools and to take high school credits while posted to the missions. Sister Catherine Donnelly taught high school subjects to Sisters Irene Faye and Leona Trautman while all three were assigned to the Regina catechetical house. Sisters with high school certificates pursued teaching qualifications at the Normal Schools in Edmonton, Winnipeg, and Toronto, and others trained as nurses at Misericordia Hospital in Edmonton. Sister teachers obtained university degrees through correspondence and summer classes. To become more acquainted with novices and postulants, Sister General Guest spent evenings at the novitiate, reading letters received from the sisters in the missions and talking about rural education.⁴⁶

By the General Chapter in July 1943, the delegates expressed confidence in taking charge of their own matters. Three hundred resolutions were submitted to the Chapter, with some proposing revisions to the rules and to the institute's current customs. The resolutions, comments, and suggestions spanned a range of topics, including the style of the uniform, hats, hairpins, hairnets, wrist watches, spiritual exercises, permissions, penances, letter writing, recreation, meals, silence, vows, novitiate, local superiors, and education. In defence, Father Daly remarked, "I know we will never be able to suppress all criticism. They say it is the indoor sport of religious orders ... Very often in your weekly confession you have to accuse yourself of criticising authority. I know I do it. And I am seventy years old ... It is human nature ... It is not an easy thing for a higher superior to keep an equal balance and try to be fair to everybody."⁴⁷

From the submitted resolutions, the Chapter approved changes to the wording of nine rules and renamed the hostels "residential clubs." None of these changes required ecclesiastical approval according to Redemptorist Father Paul Collison, a canon lawyer who attended the Chapter as an advisor.⁴⁸ On the matter of gaining the

status of pontifical institute, he cautioned it would be a slow process of many years, much paperwork and bureaucracy. In the next decade, papal approbation for the institute was not pursued when the institute was unable to achieve the required membership of 150 sisters. Sister Guest was re-elected as Sister General, and two additional councillors were elected to represent the hospitals and the residential clubs: Sister Mary Quinn, a nurse from Saint John, New Brunswick, and Sister Frances Church, a founding superior of three residential clubs. They joined the re-elected Sisters Regan and Albury on the General Council.

Sister Quinn, in garnering the second-highest number of votes, became Assistant Sister General. Well-known to the sisters from conducting the annual visitation in 1941 on behalf of Sister Guest, Sister Quinn had earned respect for her 14 years of skillful nursing and management at the institute's two rural Alberta hospitals. Straightforward, balanced, and with a sense of humour, she was approachable and had a lifelong connection to the Redemptorists, growing up in their Saint John parish of St. Peter's. In his posting there, Father Daly remembered her as a teenager before she entered at the age of 25 in February 1925.⁴⁹

Following the Chapter meeting, Sister Quinn moved into the Motherhouse, giving Sister Guest an opportunity to visit the missions from November 1943 until March 1944. In particular, the Saskatchewan teaching missions and a larger house in Halifax required attention. In 1946 Sister Guest entrusted the annual visitation to Sister Gertrude Walsh so that she could return to Halifax for six months to assist Sister Superior Mary Szostak in managing the extensive renovations. The house needed complete rewiring, the plumbing replaced, a new furnace, and a sewer connection, but postwar shortages in building materials delayed progress. Thirty-five women lived at the residential club in the midst of the dust and noise of tradesmen and their equipment.

Father Daly, the financial manager, disapproved of the costly renovations. "This is one of the reasons why I am so reluctant to spend



Sister Mary Quinn
Assistant Sister General, 1943-1948
Sister General, 1948-1960

so much money on an old house,"⁵⁰ he wrote to Sister Szostak. Prolonged tension between Father Daly and Sister Guest affected the entire community. After a year of stress and tension, Sister Guest collapsed in the spring of 1947, in Edson. She was treated there at St. John's Hospital while Sister Quinn assumed many of the administrative duties. The illness prevented Sister General Guest from attending the 25th anniversary celebration of the institute's founding, held at the Motherhouse. A jubilee Mass was celebrated by Father Daly in the chapel, with the newly-appointed Redemptorist Provincial Superior Daniel Ehman in the sanctuary. A luncheon was served in the reception room, decorated with blue streamers and silver bells. The place cards for the 40 sisters and Mother Lidwina were shaped like bluebells, bearing a silver "25" in the centre of a wreath of silver leaves.⁵¹

The following year in March, Sister Guest resigned as Sister General, a year before her term ended. A General Chapter was called to elect a new Sister General. Meanwhile, Sister Guest's illness prompted a

call for the departure of Father Daly, especially among the sisters in Edson, where she recovered. At the 1948 Chapter meeting, Father Daly told the delegates, "For 26 years, I have carried your responsibilities," he told the delegates. "The future will be in your hands. Be prudent and fearless."⁵² He also addressed his critics, stating that he kept his hand on the finances because he had contracted the debts. He urged the sisters to be united in purpose:

It is a very important matter of conscience to elect those whom you feel will preserve unity in the Community and who will keep things going on the right track. There is not perhaps enough unity among the Sisters. I trust that this is caused only from youth and from the great distances that separate us all. You never see one another except at a time like this to exchange ideas and views. Therefore, there is a tendency to develop along different lines and that causes disunity. Unity of purpose can be obtained by following the rule. I think that disunity is a product of the rapid growth and youthfulness of our community.⁵³

The Chapter delegates presented a tribute to Father Daly, expressing their "gratitude, affection and loyalty" while also acknowledging the conflict. "The past twenty-five years were not all sunshine. Crosses. Conflicts and misunderstandings were not lacking. But now the clouds are lifted. The Institute to which you have given yourself so devotedly appears to be firmly and radiant with life."⁵⁴ Nevertheless, Father Daly continued annual visits to the missions until 1951 and encouraged the ongoing connection with the Redemptorists.

The tribute also signified a further transition. A total of 23 recommendations were heard at the Chapter to address issues of governance, spiritual exercises, formation, the uniform, and even the community's official name. A reactionary resolution to abandon their hats in favour of a short veil was defeated. In proactive measures, the Chapter delegates agreed to ensure more training for sisters in all fields and to appoint a sister to campaign and advertise for vocations, a recognition of passing the torch from Father Daly.⁵⁵ In light of the Daly tensions, the institute's founding was examined.

Sister Donnelly was known as the first Sister of Service, and over the years she had told sisters about her early role in the founding. At the Chapter meeting, excerpts were read from the annals, which recorded Archbishop McNeil's desire that Fathers Coughlan and Daly be declared as co-founders. The Chapter endorsed the historical record in the following resolution: "Sister Catherine Donnelly was the first Sister of Service and she had suggested the idea of mission work in the West by teaching sisters, but she is not the foundress of the community."⁵⁶

For the next 12 years, in her two terms as Sister General, Sister Quinn directed the institute with a calm and steady hand. She had a friendlier relationship with Father Daly, who sometimes addressed her as Mary in correspondence. Contemporaries of Sister Quinn, Sister Agnes Dwyer, a teacher, and Sister Florence MacNeil, were elected as councillors in the 1948 Chapter. In their first term from 1948 to 1954, the General Council approved the opening of northern Alberta teaching missions in Peace River (1951) and Manning (1952), and a residential club in St. John's, Newfoundland (1953). With these additions and the withdrawal from the Wexford school, just east of Toronto, the missions totalled to 20 and the membership had increased to 116 professed sisters. At the Chapter of 1954, Sisters Mary O'Kane and Veronica Gillis, both superiors of residential clubs, were elected to the General Council, which later agreed to the modernization of the residential clubs in Winnipeg, Edmonton, and Vancouver. Sister Albury, as the extraordinary visitor representing Sister Quinn in the spring of 1956, travelled to the missions at the ports, nine residential clubs, six teaching missions, three catechetical missions, and the two Alberta hospitals. Noting the changes and improvements in transportation as part of the economic boom in post-war Canada, Sister Albury related a sense of accomplishment about the sisters in the missions.⁵⁷

While Sister Albury was travelling, the era of the Big Maps ended on 3 June 1956, the day of Father Daly's death. After months of declining health, he was admitted in March to St. Michael's Hospital, where he suffered a stroke and died two weeks later at the age of



Sisters at the burial of Father Daly while Redemptorist Provincial Superior Arthur Ryan reads prayers at Mount Hope cemetery, Toronto, June 1956

83. At his death were Sister Ella Zink and Father John Lockwood, a future Redemptorist Provincial Superior, although many sisters and Redemptorist confreres had kept vigil at his bedside during the last days. Father Daly's legacy already had been recognized during the golden anniversaries of his religious profession in 1940 and ordination in 1948. Both events attracted some 200 clerics—archbishops, bishops, diocesan priests, and Redemptorist confreres. During the 1948 jubilee Mass, Winnipeg Archbishop Gerald Murray, C.Ss.R. praised Father Daly as a constant guide and friend, who dispensed encouragement, inspiration, and spiritual help. After Father Daly's death, tributes from church leaders poured in. The entire front page of *The Canadian Register* was devoted to his accomplishments. Monsignor J. A. McDonagh, president of the Catholic Church Extension Society described Father Daly as "the Apostle of the Home Missions in Canada." The monsignor attributed the success of the institute to Father Daly's practical idealism and praised his continued enthusiasm and politeness to rich and poor as a Christian gentleman and priest.⁵⁸ Cardinal McGuigan sang the requiem Mass in St. Patrick's

Church, which was filled with family, friends, 26 Sisters of Service, 60 Redemptorists, diocesan priests and members of other religious congregations. The cardinal characterized Father Daly as a national figure in the Church and in Canada. Father Daly's body was buried in the Redemptorist plot in Mount Hope cemetery near the institute's plot, which had been purchased after the death of Sister Mary MacNeil in 1933.⁵⁹

Upon Father Daly's death, Sister Quinn ushered the administration into full self-government. With the institute on a sound financial footing, she focused on the continued education of the sisters. In the 1959-1960 academic year, seven sisters were studying for academic degrees or professional training. During the previous six years, three sisters had earned bachelor of arts degrees, three had obtained bachelors of education degrees, another three, certificates in social work, and one sister had completed a certificate as a medical record librarian. The 1959 statistical report recorded a decrease in the number of young women staying in the nine residential clubs and fewer immigrant ships arriving at the ports. Increases were reported in patient admissions at the Edson and Vilna hospitals, in enrollment for the three religious correspondence schools and in the number of summer religious vacation schools.⁶⁰

In the first four decades, the institute had fulfilled its charism of the salvation of the most abandoned souls and the preservation of the faith in the outlying districts of the western provinces. The lack of a large number of vocations confined the institute to a select number of dioceses and to decline 76 other requests for teachers and nurses in Canada and the U.S.⁶¹ While Father Daly's credo of the Big Maps never was realized in missions, much had been achieved for thousands of Canadians in rural areas through education and health care, settlement work at the ports, and in the women's residences. When Sister Quinn's second term ended in 1960, an era of change inside and outside the Church was beginning, and adjusting to changing times would be the task for the next 50 years.

Chapter Three

The Ports

To receive the Catholic immigrants at our ports and stations and direct them so that they will keep in touch with the Church in the land of their adoption...

Rules and Constitutions of the Sisters of Service, 1922, 1934

In March 1925, when Archbishop McNeil spoke “of the sisters doing dock work in Halifax,”¹ and with those words, he heralded the institute’s innovative immigration apostolate at Canada’s eastern ports of entry. Six months later, that aim was realized in Halifax when three sisters met their first ship to assist its passengers. For the next four decades, 20 sisters, wearing their distinctive grey uniforms, welcomed thousands of immigrants at the ports of Halifax, Montreal, Quebec City, and Saint John. “Every immigrant who steps onto foreign soil suffers psychological shock – the shock of reality,” Sister Florence Kelly wrote in *The Field at Home*. “Gone is the security of the homeland, even of the ship. A new land, a new language perhaps, a new way of life must be faced – alone! The Catholic reception service must cushion the shock, it must provide the migrant with a feeling of material and spiritual security.”²

From an organized protocol, the sisters represented a comforting Catholic presence to disoriented and apprehensive immigrants disembarking from ships. In their rule, the sisters were called “to receive the Catholic Immigrants at our ports and stations and direct them so that they will keep in touch with the Church.”³ In practice, they connected with each newcomer through a smile, a greeting in many languages, and with practical help to find luggage and trains for their continued journey. Father Daly’s goal for the sisters at the ports was simple. “This first contact of the Church with her migrating children is invaluable. This is particularly true of immigrants from Continental Europe who are a prey to proselytizing agencies as soon as they land or settle in Canada.”⁴ Moreover, Father Daly held a wider purpose. “Our ambition has always been to make a contribution to our dear country, by helping our Government to solve one of its most important problems [of immigration].”⁵

At the ports, the sisters, with the efforts of CWL members, sought

Catholic immigrants and forwarded their names to the diocese to which they were destined. Although the number of immigrants dwindled in the 1930s with the onset of the country's economic depression and its consequential unemployment, the sisters remained a constant presence at the ports and train stations of Halifax and Montreal during those years. In the postwar period from 1945, the sisters returned to the docks to greet the arrival of war brides, the Displaced Persons (DPs) who began to arrive in 1947, and the large influx of immigrants in the 1950s.⁶ The sisters were joined at the ports by other Catholic organizations formed during the interwar years. At the height of post-war immigration, from 1950 and 1955, the sisters referred 80 per cent of the 235,728 arriving Catholics to dioceses across the country.⁷ They continued to welcome and support immigrants at the ports until airplanes replaced ships as the primary means of entry into Canada.

Halifax

SISTERS OF SERVICE OF CANADA

In commemoration of the ministry of the Sisters of Service
to immigrants arriving at Pier 21, Halifax Nova Scotia.

1928-1971

Plaque in the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21.⁸

On 1 October 1925, less than a month after coming to Halifax, Sisters Carmel Egan, Clara Graf, and Irene Stafford began the institute's official pier work at the city's ice-free, deep water harbour. That day, accompanied by a CWL member, the sisters met the passengers of the Pittsburgh, and in so doing, carried out the archbishop's aim for a new apostolate. In the first two months, the sisters welcomed 210 Catholic passengers.⁹ By mid-summer of 1926, pier work had become a familiar routine, as recorded in the annals.

All the steamships arriving in Halifax had been met sometimes late in the evening necessitating long hours at the port well into the



SOS brochure of Port Work, 1950

night. Many complicated cases had been handled, a number of girls were married, others, detained were visited and on Sundays taken out to Mass. Cases of mixed marriages often caused considerable trouble as the sisters were obliged to see that they were married by a priest. A few deaths occurred and many sick persons in hospitals had to be visited and assisted. Added to this, the girls remaining in Halifax were cared for at the hostel and positions were found for them. A system of “follow-up” work had been drawn up and after each boat the sisters would spend long hours referring names of Catholic girls to secretaries of the CWL located in various town and cities of Canada where they would be visited and assisted.¹⁰

In 1928, new government port facilities were completed, housing an immigrant assembly hall and shed, medical and detention quarters, as well, a vital railway line to the new modern piers was built. Adjacent to Pier 21, the docking pier for immigrant passenger ships, was a two-storey, brick annex building connected by an overhead

walkway, through which immigrants walked from customs to the trains that took them across Canada. Besides the customs office, the building contained a railway ticket office and a telegraph office, as well as allocated areas for immigration charities and faith representatives such as the Sisters of Service. Long railway platforms on both sides of the annex served five express tracks for the special immigrant passenger trains, made up of dozens of cars taking passengers from Halifax across Canada.¹¹

After an interview with immigration officials, passengers, many of whom were attracted to Canada under the Empire Settlement Act of 1922, proceeded to their destinations. This agreement between the British government and several Commonwealth countries was designed to facilitate the resettlement of agriculturalists, farm labourers, domestic workers, and juvenile immigrants throughout the British Empire. Once the passengers received clearance from immigration officials, they were welcomed by the sisters, along with other church representatives and the Red Cross, before boarding the western-bound trains. The sisters obtained the names of Catholics from the ship's manifest; over time, they refined referral procedures to alert the dioceses of the Catholics' final destination. The sisters found baggage, sent telegrams, made telephone calls, procured food, distributed newspapers, magazines, and Catholic literature in several languages, as well as rosaries, medals, religious cards, and prayer books. In the postwar wave of immigration between 1925 and 1932, the sisters met 1,288 ships with 101,714 Catholics on board.¹²

The improved docking and immigration facilities at the Halifax harbour attracted increased maritime traffic, especially from continental Europe. Two newly professed sisters, fluent in Eastern European languages, made an immense difference by addressing the passengers in a language they understood. Sister Mary Szostak, who was born in Lviv, Austria, now Ukraine, came to Winnipeg as an eight-year-old with her family in 1913. She was posted to the Halifax mission just after professing first vows in February 1929. Likely influenced by her own immigrant experience, she knew exactly what immigrants needed, and her services were in much demand.



*Sister Mary Szostak and immigrant woman, Halifax
Pier 21, 1930*

After summer port work in Quebec City from 1929 to 1931, she assisted in the winter shipping season at Pier 21 from 1929 to 1934. “In those days immigration was at flood tide,” Father Daly wrote, “and Sister’s knowledge of various European languages made her of invaluable assistance at the ports and at the railway stations, where she befriended and assisted hundreds of new arrivals from Europe and the British Isles. What a joy it was to [the] bewildered arrivals in a strange land to receive a smiling welcome and greeting in their own tongue from a Catholic Sister!”¹³ Upon arriving in 1932, Katharina Kluttermann was met by a sister “who assisted me in every way possible, welcomed me and did everything so that I would have a safe and pleasant journey.”¹⁴ By telegram, the sisters arranged short-term accommodation for her at the institute’s women’s residence in Toronto.

In August 1934, Sister Josephine Dulaska, also just newly professed, arrived to replace Sister Szostak. Fluent in eight languages, including Polish, Ukrainian, and Slovak, she was an immediate asset to the immigrants arriving from Slovakia, Poland, Germany, Ukraine,



Sister Josephine Dulaska and immigrants, Halifax Pier 21, 1935

Yugoslavia, Hungary, and Greece. Sister Dulaska was born in the rural village of Rochester, Alberta, to a Polish father and eastern Slavic mother. Assigned to Halifax until 1942 and again after the war for 15 years, she was a tireless worker, waiting for the ships to arrive, welcoming and helping the European immigrants. Multilingual and with a gentle demeanour, she acted as a bridge between unfamiliar Canadian practices and old-world conditions, offering sympathy and kindness. Sister General Helen Hayes, years later, praised Sister Dulaska's dedication. "Anyone who worked with Sister recalls that she was a zealous worker. There were no union hours when the boats were coming in those days. Sister's gift of languages kept her busy."¹⁵

Away from the port, the sisters were attentive to women placed in the government accommodation quarters, when they were delayed due to minor issues, or detained for security reasons. The sisters arranged for Mass at the pier and bought some to the Halifax residence for Christmas Mass and breakfast. The sisters co-ordinated port social services with the CWL, who received the sisters' immi-

gration reports at their meetings and at annual provincial conventions. Meanwhile, Father Daly used his connections and lobbied the Canadian Knights of Columbus (K of C) for financial assistance, particularly among Halifax members helping with difficult and complicated immigrant cases.¹⁶

At the end of the Second World War, the sisters resumed their immigration work when Pier 21 reopened in 1946, meeting 17 ships and 2,534 war brides, and referring 2,290 Catholic names.¹⁷ Although Sister General Quinn cautioned that “the general trend of public opinion in Canada is against mass immigration,”¹⁸ the Canadian government countered that trend by announcing the National Employment Service in 1947, an employment program to bring displaced persons (DPs) from their war-torn European countries to Canada as contract workers. Most signed one-year agreements to meet specific labour needs in Canada’s burgeoning economy, particularly in mining, logging, agriculture, needle trades, and domestic service. The first DPs arrived within a few months, and by 1951 more than 157,000 refugees had come to Canada. In 1947, after spending the war years in Western Canada, Sister Dulaska returned to Pier 21 to assist the Eastern European DPs. Although the largest groups were Polish and Ukrainian, other passengers included Holocaust survivors and Eastern Europeans leaving their countries in response to the formation of the Soviet Union.¹⁹ For the DPs, Father Daly underlined the basic aim of the sister port workers “to give them some little sense of security in their new country.”²⁰

Employing the now established port practice, Sister Dulaska was helped by Sister Rosemarie Jansen, who was fluent in German having grown up in the German-Russian settlement of Denzil, Saskatchewan. The sisters went to each passenger individually and checked their destinations and faith affiliation for later referrals to the Roman and Eastern Rite Catholic dioceses. A woman travelling with young children or alone was given a card with the contact information of the institute’s residences across the country. A member of the CWL distributed reading materials as well as rosaries and medals. While in cooperation with the CWL representative at the port, the sisters

operated “all immigration work on our own authority.”²¹

A larger house was purchased in 1941 and the sisters lived just a five-minute walk from Pier 21. From the top floor, they could watch the ships arriving. In 1947 Sister Duluska met nine ships carrying 2,449 Catholics passengers; the number jumped in the following year to 52 ships with 12,373 Catholics on board, of whom 1,125 were referred to the dioceses. For the next five years, between 170 and 200 ships arrived annually. In 1951, 186 ships docked, and 80 per cent of the 54,371 Catholic passengers were referred to dioceses. In that year, the sisters made 94 visits to the detention quarters; they also distributed 20,831 newspapers, magazines, leaflets, religious cards, rosaries, medals, and prayer books.²²

SOS Statistics of ships and Catholic passengers, Pier 21 1948-1958 ²³

Year	Ships met	Catholic passengers assisted	Persons and families referred	Visits to detention quarters
1948	98	23,529	3,362	33
1949	77	21,371	6,813	101
1950	94	17,216	12,796	67
1951	186	54,371	40,387	94
1952	200	38,949	–	95
1953	193	31,852	30,476	88
1954	183	28,113	27,474	75
1955	170	24,989	19,265	–
1956	168	27,983	27,476	137
1957	154	28,737	25,061	–
1958	130	22,676	22,323	99

Courtesy of Ellie Barton

Special arrangements were made for Catholic orphans, who were transferred through the Immigrant Aid Society of Canadian Catholic Conference in Ottawa. On a respite from nursing in Alberta, Sister Agnes Brunning was assigned to Halifax from 1947 to 1952,

and became a specialist, accompanying orphans on trains to Montreal or entertaining them before the trip.²⁴ The K of C participated, supplying oranges, apples, candy and stationery to the travellers in the 1950s. CWL members sold stamps and distributed holy pictures and medals in the social service centre, where the sisters were allotted office space. At Christmas, a tree was erected in the centre and each child was given a toy.

Sister Dulaska's diligence and dedication drew praise. Father Daly considered her as "one of the most efficient workers we have at the port. She knows her business."²⁵ Similarly, Sister Veronica Gillis, superior of the Halifax mission from 1945 until 1953, wrote of Sister Dulaska's long days. "Often she is out till late at night. They are not allowed to take the books out of the Social Service room, so all the typing must be done there [for referrals] ... She has the referring down to such a science."²⁶ In late August 1951, during the height of postwar immigration, Sister Florence Kelly, fluent in German, joined Sister Dulaska as the second full-time port worker. Sister Kelly possessed a capacity to calm the distraught and overcome difficulties, likely gained from her appointments at the Montreal and Toronto women's residences after first vows in February 1945. "Sister Kelly is a grand Port Worker," Sister Gillis told Sister Florence Regan. "They like her very much and she is an exact worker. Out to help."²⁷ Sister Gillis recounted the long hours of Sisters Dulaska and Kelly.

On the two days before Christmas we had four boats. The Sisters worked until 1130 [p.m.] Christmas Eve but the last train did not go till 2:00 AM. The officials hoped they would be through by midnight and come to our house for Mass but it did not work. Approx 2,000 immigrants are landing today ... One has only to go to the port to see what it means to those poor people.²⁸

In 1955 Sister Kelly was assigned to Montreal, and Sister Salvatrice (Sally) Liota, the daughter of Italian immigrants, moved to Halifax to assist with the rising number of Italian immigrants.²⁹ This would be her niche for the next 14 years. Born in Hamilton, she worked



Sisters Florence Kelly and Sister Josephine Dulaska in the background at the Catholic Port Workers office, Pier 21, 1952

as a supervisor at White Radio Ltd., a manufacturer of radio parts, before entering community. Sister Liota had gained five years of port work experience at her first mission from 1950 to 1955 in Montreal. Her empathy was evident from her first visit to Pier 21 in August 1955. “What I felt when I looked through the chicken wire and saw the immigrants sitting there, waiting to be interviewed by the immigration officers, to have their passports examined and the look of apprehension on all their faces. I don’t think I saw a smiling face. I just saw one load of anxiety.”³⁰

At the end of 1956, the first 658 Hungarian refugees arrived at Pier 21 after the 12-day Hungarian Revolution was crushed by Soviet Union troops. The November protesters had called for a democratically elected government to replace the Communist regime, and the withdrawal of Soviet troops.³¹ The Soviet crackdown compelled more than 37,500 Hungarians, with the majority travelling to Ontario, to seek refuge in Canada. The refugees in Halifax attended a special memorial Mass at St. Mary’s Basilica for the Hungarians

who had died while trying to escape, and afterwards, the Mass, the sisters served lunch to 150 Hungarians.³² The sisters also distributed 1,000 packages of cigarettes, supplied sweets, and entertained the children at a Hungarian picnic sponsored by the CWL and the K of C. During this time, Adua Zampese, a future SOS entrant, passed through Pier 21 in February 1957 from Italy, with her brother Sergio, en route to Saskatchewan to be reunited with their father.

Throughout those years, the sisters, with their multilingual fluency, were often called to interpret at detention cases, at hospitals or clinics, and to simply help immigrants purchase food and direct them to the proper coaches on the westward-bound trains. By the 1960s, immigrants began to arrive by airplane. In 1961, only 86 ships arrived carrying 9,727 Catholic passengers in comparison to the assistance given to 138 Catholics on 64 airplane flights. As a result of the declining number of ships, Sister Dulaska departed Pier 21 in 1962 and returned to Western Canada, leaving Sister Liota as the sole port worker.³³ By 1964, she met an average of five ships a month with 500 Catholic immigrants on board, working four days each week to arrange further transportation, interpret at hospitals and clinics, assist with applications for citizenship, all in aid of the first hurdles of adjustment to a new country.³⁴

With the numbers diminishing to 1,726 Catholic immigrants on 11 ships in 1967, Sister Liota proceeded to send the names of passengers of other faiths to their respective organizations. In that same year, the federal department of immigration eliminated passengers' nationality and religion on a ship's manifest, citing privacy of personal information. Without the right to question a passenger's religion or nationality, Sister Liota wrote the destination addresses of 500 Italians whom she encountered at the port during the spring of 1967.³⁵ More than a thousand Italians had settled in the Halifax area by the mid-1960s, and Sister Liota devoted herself to this community, organizing picnics, a bowling league, dances, Italian-language films, and an Italian choir. She "was their mother, advisor, friend and advocate,"³⁶ observed Sister Adua Zampese, who returned 10 years later in 1967 to Pier 21 to assist Sister Liota.



Sister Sally Liota and immigrants, Halifax Pier 21, 1958

Her all-encompassing care of the Italian community was recognized in 1965 with a citation from Pope Paul VI for “the generous work you are fulfilling with the spiritual example of Christian charity in favour of the immigrants landing at the port of Halifax.”³⁷ The following year, Sister Liota was named director of the Catholic Immigration Office of the Halifax archdiocese. She spent approximately eight hours at the port for each ship when assisted by three seminarians and students from Bishop Burke House and St. Mary’s University. In recognition of her work among the city’s immigrants, Archbishop James Hayes of Halifax bestowed on her the Archdiocesan Medal of Merit in 1969, at the end of her Halifax ministry. Two weeks after her death in 2007, more than 100 members of the Italian community in the Halifax area attended a memorial Mass, celebrated by retired Halifax Archbishop Hayes.³⁸

The institute’s immigration and port work at Pier 21 officially ended in September 1970 on the recommendation by Sister Kelly, who replaced Sister Liota as director of the immigration office. The CWL agreed to stay at the port until it closed in 1971.

On a sunny Sunday morning in August 1981, assistance to immigrants re-emerged when 10 Polish seamen jumped ship in Halifax. After hiding for two days in nearby Point Pleasant Park until their ship had sailed, the sailors were found by police and brought to the sisters’ residence. The superior, Polish-speaking Sister Lydia Tyszko, the daughter of Polish immigrants, welcomed the young men and served them breakfast. “I thought we would never be able to supply them enough bacon and eggs,” Sister Tyszko admitted. “They hadn’t eaten very much since the previous Friday so, as you can imagine, they were very hungry.”³⁹ She helped the men apply for permanent residence status, enroll in language schools, and find work. Sister Tyszko remained in their lives as chaplain to the Halifax Polish community from 1982 until 1987. “She was fair, straightforward and warm – but very strict,” Andrew Dzielak, one of the sailors, recalled in a newspaper interview. “If she wouldn’t have been in Halifax to help, it would have been much more difficult for us.”⁴⁰



Sister Lydia Tyszko and Polish sailors, Halifax, 1981

In the final era of the institute's immigration work in Halifax, Sister Joan Coffey began helping a group of refugees who had come to St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica in the city's downtown. In 1990, she became co-ordinator of refugee and immigrant resettlement services for the Halifax archdiocese. A tireless advocate, Sister Coffey assisted refugees, whether ship jumpers or stowaways, and described herself as "a buffer between the boys and the system."⁴¹ Sister Coffey found friendly landlords and generous citizens whose donations of clothing, furniture, bedding, household appliances, and food helped give the refugees a new start in Canada. While applauding local support, she publicly criticized the federal government's new legislation in 1993. "The bill was supposed to make improvements in dealing with the refugee problem, but it hasn't helped a bit," Sister Coffey is quoted in a newspaper interview. "I don't think a refugee ever takes a job away from a Canadian. They get the jobs that other people don't want to do."⁴²

Pier 21 was designated a national historic site in 1996 for its role in 20th century Canadian immigration in the aftermath of the two world wars. Researchers from Pier 21 came to the institute's



The Pier 21 exhibit of the SOS at the Canadian Museum of Immigration, Halifax, 2000

archives and copied all the pertinent documents and photographs for the museum's records. On 1 July 1999, 17 sisters attended the opening of the national historic site as honoured guests, and viewed the exhibit entitled "Sisters of Seaport" mounted in tribute. Later, a plaque was installed in the museum with the names of the 13 sister port workers: Sisters Agnes Black, Frances Church, Josephine Dulaska, Carmel Egan, Lidwina Furman, Clara Graf, Rosemarie Jansen, Florence Kelly, Salvatrice Liota, Mary Long, Florence Smith, Irene Stafford, and Mary Szostak.

Montreal

Two days after taking charge of the CWL Montreal hostel on 26 October 1926, Sister Kathleen Schenck and a CWL port worker began a CWL-SOS immigration project, meeting their first train at the city's CPR station, which served as the railway headquarters from 1889 to

1996. Among the travellers they assisted, was a distressed, penniless woman going to Sister Schenck's hometown of St. Catharines. A group of 11 people, including some men and boys, who were waiting several hours for a train, were invited to the hostel for a meal. "It is great work indeed for these poor people seem absolutely bewildered," Sister Schenck wrote.⁴³

The sisters initially met three or four trains a day at either the CPR Windsor station or the CNR Bonaventure station with passengers arriving from the ports of Quebec City or Halifax. The sisters supported Catholic Immigrant Services by distributing pamphlets listing the addresses of priests and parishes across Canada.⁴⁴ Similarly to Halifax, sisters visited the detention quarters weekly and took women and girls detained on non-criminal charges to Mass on Sundays. Baby clothes, groceries, literature, and religious articles, donated by CWL subdivisions, were distributed at the detention home.⁴⁵ In the first full year between May 1927 and April 1928, the sisters assisted passengers travelling on the 320 trains from Quebec City, and 13 ships at the city's port, open only seven months from spring thaw until the autumn freeze-up. The numbers remained consistent until the empire settlement scheme ended in 1931. Sister Szostak's appointment to Montreal in 1935 coincided with the advent of Eastern European immigrants. That year, 114 trains and 104 ocean liners arrived in Montreal carrying immigrants from Poland, Ukraine, Slovakia, Hungary, Germany, and Czechoslovakia. Her multi-language fluency benefitted these passengers in interpreting, sending telegrams, securing food, and notifying the parish priest.⁴⁶

On the eve of the Second World War, she met the first 84 Sudetan refugees, representing 25 families, who arrived in Montreal by train on April 17, after disembarking at the ice-free port of Saint John, New Brunswick. The Sudetans fled their homes after the 1938 Munich Agreement between the governments of the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and Germany. Under the agreement, Sudetanland, the historical German name for the northern, southern, and western areas of the former Czechoslovakia, was transferred to Germany, in the hope of preventing war. The British government financed the



Sister Katharina Klutterman and the Sudetan refugees at the train station, Montreal, 1939

move of 1,043 refugees to farmland in northeastern Saskatchewan and Dawson Creek, British Columbia, where the Redemptorists had established a parish in 1936. During a stop at the Montreal train station, the sisters distributed clothes and food to the families for the journey.⁴⁷ A few months later, a Sudetan woman wrote of their new life. "We arrived safely and we have been on our own farm for eight weeks. The Sister who helped us in Montreal and who spoke German to us and the children, gave us holy pictures. We have them still and are proud of them."⁴⁸ Subsequent Sudetan exiles were greeted by Sister Klutterman, who had been welcomed by the sisters at Pier 21, and had then entered in 1937. "The Sisters of Service were my only choice," she explained, "as I wanted to help my own country people in a very trying time of a new start in a strange land."⁴⁹ Assigned to port work, and based at the Montreal mission for the next 16 years, she presented a warm, and welcoming figure at the train stations and ports.



Sisters Katharina Kluttermann (left), Nora FitzPatrick (right) and women at the federal hostel, St. Paul L'Ermite, Quebec, 1948

With the arrival of the DPs, Sister Kluttermann and Sister Nora FitzPatrick commuted regularly to a hostel operated by the federal department of labour in St. Paul L'Ermite, 30 miles (48 kilometres) east of Montreal. The hostel opened in December 1947 as a Montreal receiving depot for up to 500 young women and families at a time from Pier 21. Sister FitzPatrick described the scene. "It is a sight one can never forget to see these people arrive at St. Paul. They carry all their worldly possessions on their backs and it is very touching to see a man with luggage strapped back and front, trying to hold the hand of his young son or daughter."⁵⁰ In 1948, the two sisters made 46 day trips to interpret, translate, counsel, and locate relatives, assisting the National Employment Service in the welfare and adjustment of DPs.⁵¹

Although the sisters met immigrants at the city's Dorval Airport in 1949, dockside reception continued with the arrival of ocean liners, and trains from Halifax, Quebec City, and Saint John. Before her

appointment to Halifax, Sister Liota helped the Italian passengers. In a single day, she carried out the entire port protocol when she met an Italian girl, brought her to the SOS residence and gave her clothes, a meal, and a lunch for the train journey to a western destination. With two train stations and a port to meet Catholic immigrants, the sisters devised a shift schedule to relieve the long hours whereby one sister replaced another during a particular busy day. In 1955, the sisters assisted 7,392 Catholic passengers from 95 ships and 29 boat trains, referring names from the ports of Quebec City and Saint John not only to chancery offices but also to cultural organizations in Ontario.⁵² Every Catholic immigrant met by a Montreal sister was given a pamphlet containing Catholic addresses.

Later in the 1950s, young women travelling by ship received short-term accommodation at the Montreal residence and assistance in finding employment and a permanent residence. The sisters accepted requests from Catholic Immigrant Services to assist in refugee cases and provide accommodation from Travellers' Aid and the YWCA. "The immigrants are more self-established than in earlier years," Sister Superior Mary Fitzmaurice observed in a report. "Nevertheless, counselling and encouragement is still as necessary. The arriving refugees are always in need of all kinds of assistance."⁵³ Families returned regularly to thank the sisters for helping them on their arrival in Canada. By the mid-1960s, the churches had developed an ecumenical approach to welcoming and supporting immigrants, and Sister Jansen belonged to an interfaith welcoming committee.⁵⁴

Quebec City

By the 1920s, Quebec City, an immigration entry point for more than a century, had integrated this function with its primary role of exporting grain. British citizens were attracted to Canadian employment prospects under the Empire Settlement Act of 1922, and the majority entered Canada through Quebec City. At the request of the Quebec City branch of the CWL and with the permission of Quebec archbishop Felix-Raymond-Marie Rouleau, OP, Sisters

Carmel Egan and Lidwina Furman left Halifax for Quebec City in May 1927 to begin meeting passenger ships once the port reopened after the break-up of winter ice.⁵⁵ The sisters paid particular attention to young women from the British Isles, who took advantage of the opportunities for domestic servants in order to work for a year in Canada. Many had written the institute's residences in Montreal, Toronto, and Winnipeg on their immigration forms as their Canadian destinations.⁵⁶

Under Quebec immigration procedure, travellers were checked initially for any sign of illness at La Grosse Île Quarantine. After medical clearance, the immigrants proceeded to the port where they were sorted on the basis of destination and nationality. After a second medical check, passengers were admitted by immigration officials into the ground floor of the immigration hall, where the Red Cross, YMCA and YWCA, and religious organizations occupied stations. The sisters assisted port chaplain Abbé Philippe Casgrain, founder of the Catholic Emigration Society, following procedures set at Halifax's Pier 21. Three hours before passengers boarded a train, the sisters obtained the passenger list, found the names of Catholic passengers, and attempted to greet as many as possible in their native language while distributing pamphlets printed in various languages and newspapers. In the 1927 season alone, a total of 15,201 Catholics arrived on 129 ships, and 9,257 names were secured from the passenger list for referral to a priest or a CWL branch across the country.

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Since the Quebec City port season, like that in Montreal, depended on the freezing and thawing of the ice, the sisters were assigned from the missions in Halifax or Montreal to Quebec City, where they lived in temporary quarters. In early spring of 1927, Sisters Egan and Furman accepted the invitation of Hilda Parkins, head of the CWL immigration committee, to live in her home, located in the old city just steps to the port. During the summer tourist season when she converted the house into a tea room and rented rooms, the sisters, on the advice of Father Coughlan, the former provincial superior and now pastor of the Redemptorist English-speaking parish



Sister Agnes Black and young immigrant on the outdoor roof of the detention quarter, Quebec City, 1930

of St. Patrick's, moved to The Foyer, a boarding house. For the other years, the sisters lived with other religious congregations in the city's Grande Allee area.⁵⁸

Sister Szostak from the Halifax mission and Sister Agnes Black, from the Montreal hostel, were assigned for the three port seasons between 1929 and 1931. Abbe Casgrain expressed his deep appreciation of their excellent work. "They have been of invaluable assistance to me in every way and were always punctual in arriving and the last to leave the [immigration] shed."⁵⁹ Father Daly commended their flexibility. "The Sisters move in and out among the people, acting as interpreter, listening to sad stories, giving advice and answering dozens of questions."⁶⁰ During the 1929 peak season from 26 April to 25 November, 186 ships docked and the sisters referred 5,908 of the 22,401 Catholics, visited the detention centre on 173 occasions, arranged the marriage of two couples, and distributed 15,613 pieces of literature and 8,000 holy cards, rosaries, and medals. In the final year, 1931, the empire settlement scheme ended and their statistics dwindled as a result. That year, the sisters referred only 973 of the 2,052 Catholics from 139 ships and made 29 visits to hospitals, 72 to the detention quarters, and 91 to immigrant families.⁶¹

After the Second World War, the sisters returned to port work. In 1949, Sister Dulaska, seconded from Halifax, met the ships during July and August. That year, two sisters accompanied 30 orphans from Quebec City to Toronto under the DPs program of the Canadian Catholic Conference.⁶² The following year, Sister General Quinn felt that the number of immigrants arriving in Quebec City did not warrant the appointment of a full-time sister, as most of the ocean liners docked in Halifax. Thus, Sister Klutterman commuted to Quebec City from Montreal until 1956 to meet the ships; in 1954, she assisted 6,706 Catholic passengers from 44 ships. The CWL representative obtained the names Catholic immigrants, which were relayed to the Montreal mission and its referral service. A sister from Montreal continued to receive immigrants until 1966.⁶³

Saint John

Just as in Quebec City and Montreal, the New Brunswick port of Saint John was an entrance point for British and Irish immigrants. This influx had begun with the migration of United Empire Loyalists in 1783 and continued in the mid-19th century as a result of the Irish potato famine. Father Daly first visited the port to meet the incoming passengers during his four-year appointment to the Saint John after the First World War.

In October 1946, Genevieve Dever, a Saint John CWL member intent on starting an immigration project, came to Halifax to observe the sisters at Pier 21 and learn about immigration welcoming procedures. When a new immigration terminal in West Saint John was completed in 1950, ships carrying DPs entered the ice-free harbour and the city's CWL branch formally established the immigration committee. With the support of Bishop P.A. Bray, arrangements were made for Sister Kluttermann to meet the ships in Saint John starting in the 1951 winter port season. Like the Halifax terminal, the port was fitted with a social service room for church organizations, and the trains lined up alongside the terminal to carry the refugees to Montreal and Toronto.⁶⁴

As one of the few admitted to the baggage room, Sister Kluttermann met the passengers and helped with foreign currency exchange and, for those travelling farther, ticket purchases. For the customs and CPR officers, she served as an interpreter. Meanwhile, members of the CWL typed the referral information of up to 200 Catholic immigrants on the ship for Sister Kluttermann to take the referral lists to Montreal. When the final immigrant had cleared the government entry process, Sister Kluttermann boarded the immigrants' train to Montreal. Walking through the train coaches, she entertained the children and brought the worried adults hope, consolation, and comfort. In 1954, Sister Kluttermann met 10 ships and assisted 949 Catholic passengers, compared with four ships and 896 Catholic passengers a year later.⁶⁵ Genevieve Dever, now the immigration

convenor of the New Brunswick CWL provincial council, paid tribute to Sister Kluttermann's "genial, gracious manner, [which] renders a service towering over all other organizations and has broken down barriers of bigotry with her helpful and able assistance to all classes and creeds."⁶⁶ When Sister Kluttermann was transferred to the Motherhouse in 1956, a sister from Montreal continued the round trips until 1966.

Port work was the most unique of the SOS apostolates and symbolized the unconventional nature of the Sisters of Service. Wearing their grey uniforms, sisters worked side by side with volunteers from other religious faiths and charitable organizations to help immigrants arriving in Canada. Without a doubt, the small number of port sisters reached the largest number of Catholics while confined to greeting passengers for a few hours in the immigration halls and train stations before their journeys continued west. Through their kindness, diplomacy, sympathy, and overall helpfulness, a welcoming impact was made fostering a sense of belonging to the Church and their new country.

Chapter Four

In the Rural Schools

To take charge of schools, as qualified teachers in the Province in which they live. To take particular care of the children of immigrants.

Rules and Constitutions of the Sisters of Service, 1922, 1934

When Sister Catherine Donnelly boarded a train for Camp Morton, Manitoba, in August 1924, she had achieved her main objective for the SOS to teach the children of settlers in the rural public schools. For this goal, she had been resolute, rejecting an initial proposal that the first western teaching mission be in a Manitoba Indigenous school. “No. That is not our work. It must be an ordinary school,”¹ she told Mother Lidwina. Formed by her past teaching experience, Sister Donnelly wrote in 1960 that the goal of the SOS teacher in a rural public school is “to develop, in every pupil, character and good citizenship. The basis of this character formation is the Sister’s own professional competency, her knowledge of Christian principles and her own Christian character.”²

Archbishop McNeil understood the crucial role of women teachers in rural education. In his September 1921 letter to clergy, he quoted Alice Stuart Massey’s book, *Occupations for Trained Women in Canada*. “In ‘foreign’ districts, on the prairies, in the mining camps and throughout the frontier regions, women with genuine missionary spirit cannot accomplish more effective work than here.”³ He urged clergy to financially support a new women’s missionary community to be founded for the purpose of supplying Catholic teachers in remote districts.

The initial teaching missions were based on Sister Donnelly’s own experience in Penetanguishene, Ontario. Each mission had a dual purpose: to teach secular curriculum in public schools, and to instruct children in the Catholic catechism, the basic tenets and practices of the faith, after school and on weekends. SOS teachers wore no crosses or headdresses in school, and were guaranteed a salary comparable to that of lay teachers of similar qualifications. Their salaries not only provided for their own living expenses, but also supplied income for immigration and hospital missions. In these early teaching missions, sisters endured hardship, adapting to difficult

living quarters, unpredictable weather, and the vagaries of school trustee and clergy politics. Mission locations were selected by the archbishops of Winnipeg, Edmonton, Regina, and Toronto and by the bishop of Grouard, Alberta. The first teaching mission in Camp Morton was Sister Donnelly's epitome of her goal to teach immigrant children in rural public schools.⁴ Although rural teaching began in accordance with Sister Donnelly's vision, in subsequent missions – 17 in all – the sisters would adjust to local circumstances with innovation and ingenuity both inside and outside the classroom.



Sister Catherine Donnelly sits in front of the house, 1925

Camp Morton, Manitoba, 1924-1988

On 11 August 1924, Sisters Catherine Donnelly and Catherine Wymbs arrived by train from Winnipeg to this farming settlement and summer camp on Treaty 1 Territory located on the southwestern shore of Lake Winnipeg. In assessing Camp Morton as a suitable rural teaching location, Father Daly observed, "We could not have chosen a better place."⁵ It was the test case for future western missions and consequently much attention, support, and coordination were devoted to its launching and development. This district possessed the ideal requirements for a SOS teaching mission. First

settled by Icelanders in 1870, the majority of homesteaders since the turn of the 20th century had come from Gallica, Central Europe; most were German, Polish, or Ukrainian Catholics. The archdiocese had transformed 126 acres on the shore of Lake Winnipeg, purchased by Monsignor Thomas Morton, the rector of St. Mary's Cathedral in Winnipeg, into a summer camp, especially for children. The village, originally named after an early postmaster, was renamed Camp Morton after the monsignor, who designed a series of gardens, walkways, and ornate buildings, including a castle in a medieval style on the camp grounds.⁶

The sisters were invited to establish a teaching mission by Archbishop Alfred Arthur Sinnott, one of the English-speaking Maritimes-born clerics assigned to Western Canada.⁷ In response, Father Daly scrutinized the area in May 1924, visiting 12 schools, seeing the poverty of "little fellows in their bare feet,"⁸ and meeting with local school board trustees to hear the offers of salaries and accommodation. While in Winnipeg, he received assurances from the Deputy Minister of Education that the out-of-province teaching certificates met Manitoba standards.⁹ Since 1890, the province had maintained a non-sectarian school system, and members of religious congregations were permitted to teach in public schools if desired by a majority of the residents in a school district.

Temporarily settled in an old farmhouse, Sister Donnelly began teaching on August 19 to the 25 students at King Edward School No.1, a mile from the village. Sister Wymbs as the district nurse put into practice, examining patients at the farmhouse and making home visits. Two weeks after the sisters' arrival, Father Daly returned to direct a retreat at the camp for 50 men from Winnipeg. During the retreat, Father Daly promoted the institute and inspired the men to strike a committee to collect winter clothing, socks, and sweaters for the children before the arrival of cold weather. A week later, the CWL in Winnipeg donated rosaries, medals, and holy pictures for the children.¹⁰

For the next four months, the sisters received constant support.



King Edward School No 1, 1924

Clergy visited, in particular Archbishop Sinnott, who came almost weekly to his cottage on the camp grounds, as well as Father Coughlan stopped by while on a visitation tour of the five Redemptorist houses in Western Canada. Father Daly corresponded regularly offering advice and reminders of their responsibilities as pioneer sisters.

... Keep before your eyes always the words of Mother MacKillop "Never see an evil without trying to remedy it." Be always kind in your dealings with people no matter how rough or uncouth you may find them. Always have in your mind the example of the Master, who was kind and gentle with everyone. Do perfectly what you have to do in your sphere of activity as teacher or nurse, but never forget the great spiritual background on which you will work. The love of souls and love of Church should be uppermost in your mind. Remember that with you the great work of the S.O.S. is on trial, and I am sure that by your charity, your mutual co-operation and your spirit of prayer and sacrifice you will make that trial a success. Your success will be so that the demand for Sisters of Service will grow throughout the country.

... Be kind to one another, remember that charity is a great virtue of the Master our Divine example. Be faithful to your rule

and never forget that the spirit of prayer should accompany you throughout the day.

At the foot of Our Lady of Peace in the hallway of the Mother-house there burns a light to remind the sisters that they are to think of you and pray often for the absent ones so that you may say that you are continually in our minds.¹¹

In early October, following her profession of first vows, Sister Margaret Guest, a teacher at rural schools in New Brunswick, joined the mission to teach 36 students at King Edward School No 2. Shortly afterwards, Father Daly sent a copy of an article from *The Orange Sentinel* critical of the SOS mission in Manitoba. He warned of “the animosity that the enemies of the Church have developed or are trying to develop among the Manitoba people against our foundation at Morton ... It is essential therefore that nobody should be able to ‘get anything on you’ while you are teaching in the public schools ... Do not be alarmed at this outburst of bigotry.”¹²

Meanwhile, plans were underway to construct the sisters’ house with a \$3,500 donation from Theresa Small and \$500 donation from Toronto supporter Hazel Cue for the chapel. Father Daly cautioned the sisters to “go quietly and just get the strict necessities” in furnishing the house, adding that the electricity installation should include an outlet for the radio donated by Beaupre Province Redemptorists at Ste-Anne-des-Chenes parish west of Winnipeg.¹³ Archbishop McNeil and the Redemptorists at their preparatory college near Brockville, Ontario, donated books for a free lending library at the house.

Just before Christmas, and in time for Mother Lidwina’s visitation, the house was ready for the official blessing and opening. Accompanied by Sister Gerarda and Sister Schenck, Mother Lidwina met the three Camp Morton sisters in Winnipeg on 30 December, and together they attended an afternoon reception at the archbishop’s residence. In honour of the SOS, Archbishop Sinnott had invited prominent lay people, including CWL members, as well as representatives of the six established religious congregations to welcome

the new community. Deemed as a great success, the reception garnered enough donations to finance a furnace for the Camp Morton house. The next day, Archbishop Sinnott and Rev. Edward Meehan, of the Redemptorist parish of St. Alphonsus in nearby East Kil-donan, took the train with Mother Lidwina and Sister Gerarda, as well as the Provincial and her companion of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary for the official opening of Camp Morton. At the house that evening, the archbishop carried mattresses from the cold second floor so all the sisters could sleep downstairs near the warmth of the stoves.¹⁴

During the visitation, Mother Lidwina collected impressions, insights, and suggestions for Father Daly's review as he composed the institute's rules and constitutions. She visited Sister Donnelly's school, where the children presented a special musical program. That evening, she entertained parents, children, and young people at the organ, and was accompanied by the singing and violin playing of Father Macieszek, the newly-appointed parish priest. "The music was inspiring," Sister Donnelly recounted in the annals. Despite a telegram from the archbishop, asking for an extension of Mother Lidwina's stay, she was unable to do so as she was needed in Toronto to sign the incorporation papers of the Sisters of Service. Sister Donnelly hitched Pat, one of the mission's horses, onto the sleigh to take the trunks to the train station. Sister Wymbs and Mother Lidwina arrived at the station in time to climb onto the train to Winnipeg.¹⁵

Initial reports illustrated progress to bring the faith to children and families. By the end of 1924, 51 children from King Edward School No. 2 were attending Sunday School. Archbishop Sinnott was pleased. The Sisters "have gone about their work quietly and unostentatiously and as a consequence they have gained the confidence and esteem of every parent and ratepayer of the district," he wrote. He hoped that the sisters would act as a bridge for new Canadians in reconciling and binding together "all that is best and worthwhile in national and religious inheritance with what this country offers in prosperity, liberty and established self-government."¹⁶



Sister Mary Ann Bridget Burke travelling in the buggy, Camp Morton, 1925

However, the archbishop's hopes were jeopardized when the school trustees decided not to renew the contracts of the sister teachers in June 1926. Blame was placed on Sister Donnelly for reports of unauthorized school dances and other matters that reached government officials in the provincial education department and reflected poorly on the trustees' oversight. In resolving the issue, the archbishop arranged for Sister Donnelly's transfer to Vilna, Alberta, while Sister Guest remained to teach.¹⁷

With the arrival in 1925 of Sister Mary Ann Bridget Burke, an excellent housekeeper, the sisters assumed the care of the poorly-heated church in Camp Morton. A church choir, organized in 1930 by Sister Madgalen Barton, sang the Mass of the Angels each Sunday. Sister Lidwina Furman, a Polish immigrant with knowledge of Eastern European languages, established a women's club and later a girls' club, which met monthly in King Edward School No. 1. She also conducted Sunday Schools in Foley and Winnipeg Beach. Other sisters instructed catechism for 30 minutes after school to prepare children for First Communion and Confirmation sacraments. The sisters travelled regularly to Fraserwood, Felsendorf, Finns, and Meleb, where they also organized choirs.¹⁸

For many years, the mission kept watch dogs. Sister Margaret



Sister Irene Faye and students outside King Edward School No. 1, Camp Morton, 1946

O'Reilly, an immigrant from Glasgow, Scotland, who was in charge of the Camp Morton choir and glee club in the 1930s, loved her walks through the woods with Shadow, the dog, on her way to buy fresh fish. "I would sing to my heart's content: Oh woods, oh trees and lake give praise to your Creator for making you so beautiful and filling my heart with joy."¹⁹ The teachers with whom she lived remembered fondly her cheery greeting of "Welcome home, Ducky, how was your day?"

During the first few years, the sisters travelled by horse-drawn buggy or cutter to the schools. During severe winter weather, they boarded at a farm near the schools.²⁰ Sister Alice Walsh, a teacher from Nova Scotia who taught at King Edward School No. 2, remembered walking the two miles to the school in frigid temperatures because it was too cold for Nellie, a horse retired from pulling Eaton's department store vans in Winnipeg. Some sisters learned to drive the mission's Chevrolet, which was donated in 1929, and used only in the months without muddy roads, snowfall, and frigid weather.

After the teachers' contracts were resolved in 1926, respect for the



Sister Alice Walsh and students, Berlo School, 1941

sisters and their teaching methods grew and this was confirmed by the invitation of the Berlo district school trustees to teach in their Bismark school, named after Otto von Bismarck, the 19th century German chancellor. In August 1937, Sister Walsh, with six years' experience at King Edward School No. 2, was posted to Berlo, on Treaty 1 Territory, a German-speaking Catholic village six miles (9.6 kilometres) northwest of Camp Morton. Sister Walsh found that the students, mostly German and Ukrainian, held the teacher in awe and greatly enjoyed story time. "A great treat for the children was fifteen minutes before lunch, I used to read them a story of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn from the children's classics. There was dead silence."²¹

Another sister lived in the cottage, provided for the teacher and adjacent to the school. Sister Mary Jackson, who had taught in a small Nova Scotia fishing village before entering the novitiate, commuted to King Edward School No. 2, midway between Berlo and Camp Morton. Until snowfall or frigid temperatures, Sister Jackson rode a bicycle to school; in winter, she paid \$1.50 a round trip to be transported in the relative comfort of a caboose, heated with a wood stove, and driven by a farmer. In the annals, Sister Jackson related the sisters' division of indoor and outdoor chores, from filling kettles



Berlo Poultry Club: Sisters Rita MacLellan, Ruth Mill. Irene Faye and Leona Trautman with Berlo Club members and the judges at Achievement Day, 1946

and water pails, to coping with smoking pipes of the wood-burning stoves. They gratefully received eggs, meat, vegetables, milk, butter, and cream from neighbours and students' parents.²²

The sisters devised extracurricular activities that had universal appeal and catered to the children's farming background. Under Sister Walsh's guidance, the Bismark school choir practised at the cottage on Tuesday nights in preparation for the Christmas concert.²³ Sister Rita MacLellan, who grew up in the rural community of Indian River, PEI, organized the Berlo Boosters' Boys Poultry Club with the assistance of the federal agriculture representative. In early May 1944, up to 500 day-old chicks were delivered to the school for the boys to raise over the summer and to exhibit at the September Achievement Day in a variety of categories.²⁴ Held annually in the Camp Morton hall, later Achievement Days also featured gardening, acrobatics and girls' sewing under the tutelage of Sister Leona Trautman. The sisters provided expertise and venues for the boys' and girls' clubs, which became 4-H clubs in 1952.²⁵

The year 1949 brought changes. The school was destroyed by fire in June and was renamed the Berlo school in August before classes resumed in an abandoned two-room log house. Dissatisfaction over the school name, possibly due to anti-German sentiment aris-



Sister Lena Renaud at bat on the grounds of King Edward School No. 2, 1961

ing during two world wars, led to the change. A newly constructed school, equipped with running water, indoor toilets, and oil heating, opened in 1951. Sister Lena Renaud, who grew up on a farm outside of Windsor, Ontario, brought practical education to Berlo school from 1960 to 1967, after teaching at King Edward School No. 2. She coached hockey and baseball teams and directed 4-H club activities, including carpentry. Under her guidance, the students made totem poles, bird houses, benches, and scores of original lawn decorations over the years. When Berlo school was closed in 1967 and the students were transported by bus to the regional school in Gimli, Sister Renaud also transferred to that school, where she taught until retirement in 1983.²⁶

Sister Renaud personified Sister Donnelly's ideal of a Sister of Service who integrated rural teaching with civic activism. This dual role was captured in a 1980 CBC episode of *Man Alive*, a television program about faith and spirituality. Although Sister Donnelly was the subject of the episode, titled "You've Come a Long Way, Sister," the film crew followed Sister Renaud, wearing a ball cap over her closely-cropped hair, as she drove a truck to help neighbours in the Camp Morton area. Sister Renaud was a member of the Canadian Association for Retarded Children and an executive member of the Gimli Branch of the Manitoba Teachers Society. She received a

centennial medal from the Manitoba History Society in 1971 and a Gimli Community Service Award in 1972. The award read, “As a teacher, she was unequalled. She could give in two weeks what other teachers would give their students in one year ... When a young woman was dying of cancer, Sister Renaud, over and above her normal teaching duties at Gimli, looked after the would-be orphans, prepared meals for them and took personal care of the patient until she died.”²⁷

In 1956, Sister Donnelly retired at the age of 72 and returned to her first western mission for the next 25 years. She continued to teach, tutoring three younger sisters (Marilyn Gillespie, Mary Halder, and Isabel Ellis), who were earning high school credits. Other sisters became acquainted with Sister Donnelly on their visits to Camp Morton during the summer months. Sister Lita Camozzi, a teacher at King Edward School No. 2 in the 1960s, recalled Sister Donnelly’s countrywoman traits of revelling in the fresh air, pure water and black earth. But also, “she seemed to surround herself with papers, books, letters, pencils and paper.”²⁸ Fittingly, Sister Mary Ann Bridget Burke, the second entrant and the mission’s first housekeeper, returned in 1955 until her death 12 years later. Sister Camozzi fondly remembered Sister Burke.

Sister Burke prayed constantly. I am sure our carrots were prayed over during the scrubbing, boiling, draining and serving. Her thrust, as cook, was to strengthen us for God’s work in the classroom. Whatever we liked, she prayed about. This extended to Sister Renaud’s favourite ball or hockey teams. She prayed regularly for George, the bus driver from Riverton to Winnipeg. Little did George know of her intercessions for him during winter storms.²⁹

In a second assignment to Camp Morton in 1960, Sister MacLellan observed the economic progress of the area, particularly for the farmers. The economic boom of the 1950s had translated into increased government funding for infrastructure – the paving of roads and the building of hospitals and schools. Under provincial consolidation of schools, the one-room, ungraded schoolhouses of King Edward

School No. 1 and No. 2, and the Berlo school, were closed in 1967, and students attended schools in Gimli under the Evergreen School Division No. 22.

The Camp Morton experiment had succeeded; the mission lasted 43 years, ending when Sisters Renaud and Margaret Murphy were transferred to Toronto in 1988. Over the years, 31 sisters had taught in the three rural schools while another 14 sisters served the missions as district nurses, housekeepers, catechists, and students, living among the people while providing catechetical instruction and sacramental preparation. Camp Morton emerged as the iconic rural teaching mission of taking charge of schools to teach settlers' children in outlying areas.

Archdiocese of Edmonton

Father Daly's ambitious plans were matched by those of early supporter Archbishop Henry O'Leary of Edmonton, who once declared that he wanted 200 sisters in his archdiocese. During a visit to the novitiate in July 1923, he spoke of the vastness of the Edmonton archdiocese and the scattered Catholic population, and fired up the novices "with a great desire to become missionaries."³⁰ The archbishop shared the same concern of Archbishop McNeil and Father Daly about the conversion of Ruthenians to Protestantism. A Maritimer, like Archbishop Sinnott, O'Leary, with a reputation as a "great talker" and a nickname of "the builder," rose rapidly in the Canadian ecclesiastical hierarchy after his 1901 ordination. He served eight years as bishop of Charlottetown until 1920, and his appointment in Edmonton. That year, the census of the Catholic population of greater Edmonton showed that the French-speaking Catholics had slipped to 38 per cent of the diocese. This demographic change signalled the need for more English-speaking priests and religious. O'Leary subscribed to the view that English was the dominant language and that the children of non-English-speaking colonists would speak English.³¹ He also believed that "what children receive at school, reaches the families, makes God and the Catholic faith better known and lived."³² Working with limited means, O'Leary

expanded the number of Catholic schools in Edmonton by inviting members of English-speaking congregations from Eastern Canada to teach in these schools as well as in the archdiocese's rural areas.³³

In heeding the archbishop's call, the institute supplied teachers in three locations of Vilna, St. Brides and Dunvegan as well as a catechetical centre in the archdiocese. Four decades later, sisters returned to teach in public schools in the northern part of the archdiocese.

Vilna, Alberta 1926-1929

Although the November 1925 opening of the institute's hospital in Vilna on the territorial lands of Treaty 6, was the focal point of the mission, Archbishop O'Leary began to negotiate with the local trustees for a SOS to teach in the village's public school. Aware of the cultural rivalries within the archdiocese, he seized on this opportunity to broaden the presence of the English-speaking church among the 200 Ukrainians, Poles, and Romanians. In February 1926, Sister Josephine Fallon, an experienced teacher from London, Ontario, who had lived at the novitiate for only six months, began to teach in the school. At the end of school year, she was appointed to Camp Morton as the solution to the delicate situation of the renewal of the teachers' contracts there. Fresh from a summer university course in Edmonton, Sister Donnelly, in turn, replaced Sister Fallon in Vilna. Along with teaching senior students in Grades 5 to 11 and serving as the school principal, Sister Donnelly was the superior and administrator of the hospital. As the number of patients grew and a larger hospital was planned, another sister arrived to assume the hospital responsibilities. Starting in September 1927, Sister Donnelly taught Grades 4 to 8, and 9 to 11, and was supported by a lay teacher teaching the earlier grades. At the end of June 1929, Sister Donnelly was exhausted from teaching and left Vilna for the Edmonton catechetical mission.³⁴

St. Brides, Alberta 1930-1933

Sisters Donnelly and Fallon, along with housekeeper Sister Mary Ann Bridget Burke, arrived in August 1930 to open the third teaching mission amid a central Alberta farming settlement within Treaty 6 Territory. The Soldiers' Settlement Board, which managed the settlement, had sought a teaching principal and two sisters to instruct some 100 students in the newly-built, three-room Celtic Public School. On behalf of the sisters, Archbishop O'Leary negotiated salaries of \$1,000 each with the local school trustees. The majority of the 50 families had emigrated three years previously with Father W.M. McPhee from the northern counties of Ireland, accompanied by a few from England and Scotland. Purchased from the Saddle Lake reserve, the 8,000-acre settlement was intended for members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force following the First World War. For two years, the three sisters lived in a small rented house, a mile from the school. In 1932, they moved into a teacherage that had been constructed with donations of \$500 from the Catholic Church Extension Society and another \$1,000 secured by Father Daly.³⁵

At the beginning of the first school year, Sister Donnelly described the students as possessing good spirit but were academically delayed from missing schooling during the years of immigrating and settling on the farms. Along with the catch-up lessons, Sister Donnelly introduced some fun. From Eaton's mail-in catalogue, she purchased calling cards for dance steps, and the children performed the dance at their first school concert. From the Motherhouse, she requested scripts from the novitiate to introduce the older students to the fun and skills of producing a play. When winter arrived, and some children came to school still wearing summer clothes, the poverty of their families became more evident. Sister Donnelly asked Sister General Regan to appeal to the CWL for donations of winter clothing so the children would not miss school. Ontario CWL subdivisions in London and Chatham sent large boxes filled with warm clothes, shoes, stockings, outer garments, toys, candy and a Christmas gift for each child.³⁶



Sister Margaret O'Reilly outside the teacherage, St. Brides, 1931

As the Depression continued, prices for the settlers' crops declined steadily. Sister Donnelly notified the Motherhouse that few were able to pay their taxes and the two teaching sisters had received only one-third of their salaries during the first six months. Despite their hardships and in appreciation, some settlers delivered chickens and vegetables to the sisters at Christmas.³⁷ The poverty and the issue of the sisters' salaries continued. In the school trustees' election of April 1933, a slate of candidates of an Englishman, a Scot, and a Ukrainian defeated the three Irish candidates by an appealing winning platform of lowering taxes by decreasing the teachers' salaries. Sister Donnelly and the archbishop objected. Nevertheless, on the last day of school, the sisters were informed that their contracts were terminated. After three years of teaching at Celtic school, the sisters closed the mission and departed.³⁸



Students arrive to school on their horses, St. Brides, 1932

Edmonton-Dunvegan, 1937-1945

As part of the expanding Edmonton Catholic school system, Sister Patricia McConway commuted in the fall of 1937 by trolley car northwest to the Dunvegan Yards school. Located on Treaty 6 Territory, near the main Edmonton railway hub, the one-room school was opened initially for elementary grades but with an option for Grades 7 through 9 as enrollment warranted. This was her first teaching assignment after graduating in June 1937 with a first-class Province of Alberta teacher's certificate. An immigrant from Glasgow, Scotland, she brought to the classroom her literary and artistic talent, which she had displayed in the novitiate. During the next eight years, Sister McConway's novel teaching style by the holistic enterprise method "attracted such comment that observers from the department of education and the public school were beating a path out [to] the St. Albert Trail to see her program in action. Our trustees were so proud they paid Sister a bonus of \$50, and would have shown further appreciation by putting electric lights in her school, but it was too far beyond the power lines."³⁹ Sister McConway, who lived at the SOS catechetical mission on 85th Street in Edmonton, frequently attended the weekend Mass and community events held in the school building, which also served as the St. Joseph mission church under the pastoral care of the priests of the city's Jesuit College.

Like other sister teachers, she encountered extraordinary circumstances. At the beginning of the 1942 academic year, the wartime

scarcity of text books was solved when she closed the school at three o'clock and then hurried downtown to Eaton's department store to purchase as many textbooks as she could. In mid-November of that year, she discovered the body of the school caretaker, who had died of heart failure in the school's basement. A snowstorm the following day forced her to stay overnight in the school. The presence of the SOS at the school ended when Sister McConway transferred to another school upon leaving the institute.⁴⁰

Rich Valley and Onoway, Alberta 1962-1988

The combined central Alberta missions of Rich Valley and Onoway opened as a result of Father Michael Blanch. As pastor of St. Rose of Lima Church in Onoway, he had sought a SOS teacher after Sister Mary Jackson directed a religious vacation school in the summer of 1961. Edmonton Archbishop John Hugh MacDonald approved Father Blanch's request and a sister was assigned to the public school in Rich Valley, north of Onoway on Treaty 6 Territory on the traditional lands of the Nakota Sious Nation. The teaching mission opened in August 1962 when two sisters moved into a house rented from the school board. Sister Rita Deighan, who was hired by the Lac Ste. Anne School Division, taught Grades 4 and 5 in the eight-room school, while Sister Ann McPhee attended the local high school to complete her own high school credits. The sisters assisted Father Blanch with parish visiting, taught weekly religion classes, and conducted summer religious vacation schools in Onoway and its mission church in Lac La Nonne. When the General Council decided to move the mission to Onoway, a petition of 15 Catholic parents in June 1964 persuaded the council to permit Sister Deighan to teach in the Rich Valley school for another academic year. Since a house had been acquired in Onoway, Sister Deighan commuted daily to the Rich Valley school until June 1965.⁴¹

The arrival of Sister Bernice Anstett in September 1964 signalled the start of her era of more than two decades at Onoway Elementary Public School. Sister Anstett, fresh from graduation with a first-class



Sister Bernice Anstett and student, Onoway, 1980

teaching certificate, stepped into the Grade 1 class as the first member of a religious community to teach in the school. Her teaching ability impressed Superintendent Robert Toews, who selected her to open the first Opportunity Room in 1967, a classroom for students with learning disabilities. Over the years, she took students on field trips to birdwatch or to enjoy picnics in local parks. Her thoughtful approach prepared students for life beyond the subjects of math, science, and reading. The superintendent praised her in a report.

I have been in your room on several occasions and I am thrilled with everything associated with the Opportunity classrooms. The children seem to be happy and most of them are adjusting very well to the new classroom. One father in Rich Valley made the observation that his girl had learned more in one month in your

classroom than in the entire previous year.⁴²

Sister Colleen Young, an experienced primary school teacher, was hired in 1967 to teach Grade 5. From a musical family background, she played the classroom's old piano to teach music and other material relating to the curriculum. To fulfill the Alberta teaching requirements, both sisters earned bachelor of education degrees from the University of Alberta in 1974. For the degree, Sister Young specialized in early childhood education, putting into practice a new activity-based approach to language arts learning. Sister Young explained.

This half day, daily program facilitated a certain amount of movement for these most inquisitive, eager to learn youngsters in a self-selected, self-directed learning environment. Children fostered responsible use of time, planning and recording their daily accomplishments, proceeding at their own pace and academic level; thus this type of program required extensive manipulative materials ... That was a purposeful learning environment: kids achieving, successful academic progress and I thought I'd found my niche. So these years were amongst the most challenging and rewarding of my teaching career. They are the strongest memories.⁴³

The sisters lived in a house belonging to St. Rose of Lima parish, of which they were an integral part. Sister Anstett led the congregational singing and co-ordinated religious instruction; Sister Young played the organ at Onoway church and its two mission churches. Sister Anstett savoured the solace of nature, walking their two dogs, strolling in the woods and collecting mushrooms. Nature was featured in her submission of the winning name of Beaupre Court for the town's first seniors' home. In choosing Beaupre, she translated it from the ancient French to mean "lovely good, rich or lush meadow." Sister Anstett, also the secretary of the local branch of the teachers' union, retired from teaching in 1985 and left Onoway a year later. Before Sister Young closed the mission on 30 June 1988, heartfelt tributes were voiced from students, teachers, civic officials,

and parish members, praising her “dedication and varied talents ... always put to the service of her local community.”⁴⁴

Archdiocese of Regina

Midway during Saskatchewan’s devastating Depression decade, 2,000 people gathered on 25 September 1935 at the train depot to welcome the new archbishop of Regina. Peter Joseph Monahan, born and ordained in Quebec, had been the bishop of Calgary for the past three years, where he had earned a reputation for administrative and financial acumen. In Regina he inherited a grave economic situation. Years of crop failures, stemming from drought, hail, and grasshopper infestations, had coincided with a lapse in faith in the wheat-growing farming communities of Saskatchewan. To renew the faith and promote education, the archbishop and local priests sought SOS teachers to work under the local school trustees in remote farming areas. In accepting these requests, the General Council put aside the decision of the Chapter in 1937 to pause the establishment of new missions. As in Camp Morton and St. Brides, Sister Catherine Donnelly initiated the opening of teaching missions at Bergfield, Marquis, and Sinnett. For her, the isolated, ill-equipped schools, primitive living quarters, and bitterly cold winters were part of the challenges of rural teaching. In addition to teaching, the sisters organized and directed church choirs and taught catechism. While encountering generosity, appreciation, and friendliness from some, the sisters also faced indifference from others. Yet they persevered in two of the missions until the introduction of regional schools, which signalled the end of SOS rural prairie teaching missions.⁴⁵

Bergfield, Saskatchewan 1938-1948

In early August 1938, Sister Catherine Donnelly prepared for the opening of the mission in Bergfield, a hamlet hidden among the hills (coulees) on Treaty 4 Territory, just north of the Montana border. This farming district, one of the poorest in the province, was centred in the town of Minton with its post office, railway station,

and grain elevators. The public schools in the hamlets of Bergfield, Diamond Crossing, and Jutland were a few miles apart. At Father Daly's request, Sister Donnelly brought mattresses, bedding, and other supplies, signed the teacher's contract, and the next day began teaching 20 students in Bergfield at the Diamond Coulee school until Sister Mary Jackson, the permanent teacher, arrived 10 days later. Sister Jackson closed the school to clean and rearrange the classroom, with help from students, and returned to Regina before the start of the school year.⁴⁶

To begin their assignments in early September, Sister Jackson and Sister Margaret Morgan, the housekeeper and catechist, travelled taking turns driving the community's vintage Ford car 100 miles southeast from Regina to Bergfield. The teaching mission, initially described by Sister Morgan as "truly the most abandoned," was established by Archbishop Monahan upon the suggestion of Father Aloysius Beechey, the Minton parish priest. The two-room teaching room contained a large open room with a Quebec stove, a rocking chair, a round table, two folding chairs and school desks, and a bedroom with another stove for winter. Sister Morgan fashioned washstands from boxes and created a little shrine for prayers, and "so by degrees, the place will take on a respectable look ... Cheerfulness and courage are the virtues most needed here ... The people have been wonderfully kind to us – eggs, bread, butter, meat, potatoes and all kinds of pickles and preserves."⁴⁷ Coal was retrieved by digging and water was hauled from a well a half mile down the valley.

A week after the start of the school year, Sister Jackson received permission from the school trustees to teach religion during the last 30 minutes of the school day. Only a fraction of the 250 families in the area were practising Catholics. Father Beechey immediately assigned the sisters to start weekend catechism instruction before Mass at Minton and after Mass at Diamond Crossing, a distance of 15 miles apart. Sister Agnes Dwyer, who also had taught in St. Brides and Camp Morton, joined the mission in the summer of 1940 to replace Sister Jackson, and benefitted from improved accommodation when the sisters moved into the former RCMP barracks at Di-



Sisters Margaret Morgan and Mary Jackson outside their house, Bergfield, 1938

among Crossing. Sister Donnelly, now a specialist in high school curriculum, taught Grade 9 students in a small room at the barracks from October 1943 until the spring 1944.⁴⁸

Upon Sister Jackson's return in 1945, Sister Bernice Anstett as housekeeper and catechist, broadened her understanding of an isolated farming community. An accounting clerk from Kitchener, Ontario, Sister Anstett tackled household tasks of canning, chopping wood, cleaning and painting, and came to appreciate the rural landscape and outdoor spaces along with the interdependence of some farm families and the sisters. She also assumed direction of the choir in Minton, catechism classes and sacramental preparation at the missions of Lake Alma, Ratcliffe, and Gladmar on weekends. During the mission's final year, Sister Donnelly had returned to the Diamond Coulee school at the end of sisters teaching in rural one-room schools. Sister Jackson expressed the frustration with this mission.

The parents are not very interested in it (the school) and ... They like having the sisters because they couldn't get any other teacher to stay About half of the pupils don't practice their religion nor the parents either, of course. It's an awful grind teaching theory day after day, and no one living it. Eg. You may stress not eating meat on Friday, and at the same time the odour of garlic sausage would knock you over ... Personally, regarding the school and the sacrifices we have to make to be here, I'm just about convinced

that we're wasting our time ... After experiencing three years of so much isolation and such uphill work in the school, I realize, as I never did before that this life is a great strain mentally, spiritually, and physically and if we want the sisters to do properly the work they are here for, that the hit & miss method won't work.⁴⁹

For a decade, the four teachers and six sisters as housekeeper-catechists endured long hard winters and the absence of Mass and the sacraments. The mission was closed in 1948 when the students of the two rural schools of Diamond Coulee and Jutland were transported by bus to Minton.

Marquis, Saskatchewan 1938-1943

After completing the initial tasks of opening the Bergfield mission, Sister Catherine Donnelly proceeded in 1938 to Marquis, a town in the wheat-growing area of southcentral Saskatchewan within Treaty 4 Territory, also stricken by drought and dust storms. In the previous summer, two sisters conducting two weeks of catechetical lessons had impressed Father Joseph Lukas, pastor of the town's St. John church. Like Father Beechey, he requested approval from Archbishop Monahan to seek a SOS teacher at \$600 a year to teach at St. Mark's Roman Catholic School. An agreement was reached with Father Lukas, Father Daly, and Sister General Margaret Guest, and the mission began with the appointment of Sister Donnelly at Father Daly's request.⁵⁰

On 19 August, she began teaching Grades 1 to 8 at St. Mark's school and also arranged further studies for Sisters Irene Faye and Leona Trautman at Marquis. "I wanted above everything else, to educate young SOS teachers and to open rural school missions – the aim which had given birth to the SOS Community," Sister Donnelly wrote.⁵¹ The two sister students joined the Grade 12 class at Marquis High School at a yearly tuition of \$25 and were taught by the school's principal, Morrison Sillery. Although a United Church congregant, he developed a friendly relationship with the sisters, even to the extent of building an altar and a tabernacle for their chapel.



Sister Catherine Donnelly and students, Marquis, 1938

The Catholic school board did not treat the sisters with similar respect and cordiality. To relieve that school board of the cost of the yearly \$25 tuition each for the 12 Catholic students enrolled at the public high school, Sister Donnelly added a Grade 9 class in St. Mark's school. When she approached the school board to extend Grade 10 at St. Mark's, Sister Donnelly "received no co-operation whatever and no courtesy. The chairman lived two doors from our house and I never met him. There was no teamwork between the Board and the pastor and no help for the teacher."⁵²

Like the other rural teaching missions, living quarters were sparse. The three sisters lived in a small house next to the United Church. "There was no furniture in the rented house," Sister Donnelly wrote. "We sat on apple boxes, had a small kitchen table and managed now and then to get an extra bit of furniture. ... Mrs. Contini, an Italian woman of the village, often brought us some food or groceries. There was a cistern outside for rain water but no drinking water. The students brought a supply of drinking water from Mrs. Contini's place on Saturdays and we had a borrowed can or tank to hold the week's supply."⁵³ In later years, Mrs. Contini and other friends

donated homemade baking, root vegetables, meat, and always eggs.

Sister Madgalen Barton, a teacher in Camp Morton who succeeded Sister Donnelly, received praise from the provincial education superintendent for her interesting, well-prepared lessons. In the mission's final year, Sister Hermine LaMothe, who had served as bookkeeper in the Alberta hospitals, joined the mission as a housekeeper, catechist, community worker and substitute teacher. She taught the boys how to tie the various knots as the cub scout leader, distributed clothes sent from Ontario CWL branches, visited families, helped the elderly, and applied first aid in medical emergencies. She also conducted one-week summer catechetical classes in the four neighbouring areas of Central Butte, Aquadell, Dumas, and Wawota for children of German, Irish, French, and English backgrounds.⁵⁴ For three weeks, she took charge of the classroom as a substitute teacher while Sister Barton recovered from an infection in hospital. "I had not left any instructions about school operation," Sister Barton recalled. "Sister LaMothe rose to the occasion, used her own initiative and ingenuity and kept that school of 27 students from Grades 1-8 in operation, controlled everything well."⁵⁵

The Catholic trustees had been slow to act on several matters, in particular the construction of a new outhouse for the teacherage to replace the one blown away in a spring windstorm. During her visitation in May 1943, Sister General Guest told the pastor that there was not enough missionary work for the sisters and the parish's spirit had not improved to help the sisters. "The people of Marquis do not deserve the Sisters. They showed themselves rather shabby in their dealings with you," Father Daly wrote to Sister Barton. "She (Sister General) had made up her mind to not allow the Sisters to be belittled by an ungrateful parish."⁵⁶ The sisters departed in September 1943 after eight sisters had served for five years.

Sinnett, Saskatchewan 1940-1969

In view of the sisters' situation in Marquis, Archbishop Monahan decided on Sinnett as the location of a much-needed continuation school of Grades 8 to 12 under a Catholic school board. After two years in Marquis, Sister Catherine Donnelly was asked to start her sixth rural teaching mission. Known as the Irish Colony, Sinnett was founded within Treaty 6 Territory in 1905, when Jesuit Father John Sinnett led eight Irish homesteaders to the area, north of Regina. In tribute to the Jesuits' founder, Father Sinnett named the parish after St. Ignatius of Loyola and the school as Loyola.⁵⁷

On 23 August 1940, Sister Donnelly entered the new Loyola Continuation School to find the priest's housekeeper busily painting the classroom walls. Sister Donnelly and her sister student moved into the building, the original St. Ignatius church and a mile from the village. As part of the routine in setting up a teaching mission, they cleaned and arranged the classroom and the living quarters, in this case, located behind a walled section at the front of the church. With the classroom cleaning still unfinished, and during a September heatwave of temperatures up to 40°C, Sister Donnelly held the first classes for the 13 students outside on the grass. Since Loyola school was the first secondary school in the area, it qualified for a government grant. The priest's housekeeper and the sister student were enrolled in the school to bring the number of students to 15, the minimum number to be assured of the grant. Without the grant, Sister Donnelly's annual salary of \$700 would be paid by the local taxpayers, a situation she wanted to avoid.⁵⁸

For the first term, Sister Donnelly, while assuming a heavy teaching load, was able to organize a school concert. Later that fall, Sister Mary Phillips, a music teacher, arrived to share the workload. Ironically, after the warm start, cold weather came early to expose the lack of heating in the school. A small stove was installed, and being without pipes, it continuously smoked and snow blew through the window frames in the kitchen and classrooms. Meanwhile, the



Sisters Mary Roberts and Viola Mossey chopping ice for water with the school in the background, Sinnett, 1942

students took class time to build an outhouse and a nearby shed to house their horses.⁵⁹

After three months, Sister Donnelly, now 55 years old, was replaced by Sister Irene Faye, her former student in Regina and Marquis, and now a qualified teacher. By the fall of 1941, the enrolment had risen to 20 students and school inspector P.B. Murphy noted other signs of progress: “The general standard of the school has improved in marked degree ... Sister Faye has the complete confidence and co-operation of her students. The teacher is energetic and competent.”⁶⁰ Sister Mary Roberts, who completed her high school certificate under Sister Donnelly in Marquis, helped in teaching some subjects in Grades 8 to 10. Meanwhile, Sister Viola Mossey, fresh from taking first vows in February 1942, joined the mission as a housekeeper while studying high school subjects, as five other sisters did at the school in the 1940s.⁶¹ Outside the classroom, the sisters taught catechism after school and on Sundays, organized and directed choirs, cared for the church sacristy, and distributed Catholic literature and winter clothes, sent by the CWL branch in Chatham, Ontario.⁶²

Just as in the other southern Saskatchewan teaching missions, the sisters resided amid poverty. “We were very poor; the teachers were

not getting paid at that time,” Sister Mossey recalled. “But they [the farmers] were just as poor as we were.”⁶³ The farmers donated vegetables, milk, and eggs, but meat was scarce. One day, Sister Mossey glanced at the school cat, Gibbs, and said aloud to no one in particular, “‘If we don’t get some meat one of these days, I’m going to cut a leg off Gibbs.’ Somebody told Father [J.F.] Volk, who was the pastor, and he went into town that day and bought us a roast of beef.”⁶⁴

Postwar years brought changes. The continuation school was closed in 1948 and was replaced by a building, towed 25 miles to Sinnett from the RCAF Air Base in Dafoe. The building was converted into a three-room schoolhouse to accommodate both elementary and high school classes. The three sister teachers, still living in the vacant continuation school, walked 30 minutes into the village of Sinnett to teach. Despite persistent lobbying by Sister Barton, the local superior, Sister General Mary Quinn threatened the sisters’ resignations to spur the school trustees to provide suitable accommodation in the village for the sisters. While departing Sinnett after her visitation in December 1948, Sister Quinn observed six men beginning to renovate the village’s former junior school as a teacherage, which was ready for the three sisters before school reopened in January 1949.⁶⁵

The growing economic prosperity of the 1950s coincided with ever-expanding pursuits and interests among the 75 students. With the sisters’ help, students participated in drama festivals, joined the Sinnett Shamrocks hockey team and the Loyola baseball team, competed in track and field days and played in a rhythm band. They also raised funds for charities, veterans’ poppies, food parcels for Europe, and the Red Cross. To these activities, the sisters added the care of St. Ignatius Church and the assistance with 4-H club meetings, sewing projects, boys’ grain club, and public speaking events. In the summers, the Sinnett sisters conducted religious vacation schools in Leroy, Lanigan, Jansen, Wynyard, and Govan and crossed into the Manitoba communities of Swan River, Bowsman, Birch River, and Bellsite.⁶⁶

The paving of roads by the Saskatchewan government made other



Sister Joan Coffey and students at the Lanigan high school, 1966

communities more accessible and led to the gradual amalgamation of schools, administration, and services. In 1964 when the senior students were bussed eight miles to the larger Lanigan Central High School, the sisters monitored the Sinnett bus stop. Sister Joan Coffey, who had taught high school classes in Sinnett, commuted to the Lanigan school to teach home economics and English literature, and to work as a guidance counsellor. At the insistence of the Lutheran delegation to the school board, she wore contemporary clothes and no “religious garb.”⁶⁷

Changes in the educational system entailed a deluge of meetings, and in 1965 the sisters attended 25 meetings in a three-week period.⁶⁸ Four years later, in June 1969, the Sinnett elementary school was closed despite its current teaching practices and curriculum. All 53 students were transported by bus to Lanigan, which had grown and prospered since the 1963 with the discovery of the richest and purest deposits of potash in the province; the mine was located just west of the town. The efforts of 22 sisters at the mission are honoured on a brass plaque erected on the site of the vanished village of Sinnett.

Archdiocese of Toronto

The two teaching missions established in the Toronto archdiocese differed from the rural schools in Western Canada. Both these missions were opened to comply with the necessary requirements for a

pontifical designation from Rome. When the rules and constitutions received final approval in 1937, the Sacred Congregation of the Religious defined the conditions, which dictated five missions/houses in the diocese where the Motherhouse was located. Achieving papal approbation would allow greater financial independence and a direct line of communication with Rome. Toronto Archbishop James McGuigan encouraged the pursuit of two further missions and was assisted by John M. Bennett, chief inspector of the Toronto Separate School Board and teacher of catechetics at the novitiate since 1923. He was instrumental in convincing the General Council to accept the two missions of Wexford and Christian Island.

Wexford, Ontario 1939-1949

Two sisters commuted daily to teach in a two-room school situated among market gardens in the Scarborough Township village of Wexford, east of the Toronto city limits on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples. With the departure of the Catholic teacher in 1939, Bennett successfully appealed to the General Council, which agreed to supply two teachers. The school was connected to Theresa Small and Senator Frank O'Connor, both generous benefactors of the sisters. O'Connor, who lived nearby on a 600-acre farm, had purchased 2.5 acres of land on which a vacant Methodist church stood. Donated to the Toronto archdiocese, the church was renovated and opened in June 1932 named Precious Blood, at his request. Two years later, O'Connor, financed the construction of a school next to the church, naming it St. Theresa in honour of Mrs. Small, who died the following year. The school was overseen by Rev. Francis Bennett, the first resident pastor of the adjacent Precious Blood church.⁶⁹

On the first day of the school term, the school inspector drove Sisters Anna Coughlin and Anne O'Connor the 11 miles (18 kilometres) to the school, and helped them to organize the classroom. Sister Coughlin, a teacher from southwestern Ontario, received two

appointments as the senior room teacher, while Sister O'Connor from Whitby, Ontario, was in charge of the junior room from 1939 to 1946. Like Sister McConway in Edmonton, the two sisters, who lived at the Motherhouse, used public transportation of a streetcar and a bus to arrive an hour later, just in time for the 8:15 a.m. Mass in the adjacent church. For extracurricular activities, the sisters encouraged the students to develop exhibits for country school fairs, displaying handicrafts of patchwork quilts, wooden toys, and school projects. On Sundays, the sisters returned to teach catechism and to participate in parish events. In July 1942, the two sisters conducted a two-week religious vacation school. When Father Bennett's request was declined for a third SOS teacher for the fall of 1949, the sisters withdrew and were replaced by teachers from the Congregation of Sisters of Notre Dame.⁷⁰

Christian Island, Ontario 1941-1968

Sitting on their luggage on a cold morning in November 1941, Sisters Agnes Black and Dorothy Daley crossed Georgian Bay in a small motor boat to begin the teaching mission on Christian Island on the lands of Beausoleil First Nation of the Ojibwa. In late October 1941, John Bennett had asked Sister General Margaret Guest for two sisters to teach at the Catholic Indian Day School, which had no Catholic teacher. Within days, the General Council approved the request. In deciding on this mission, the General Council put aside Sister Catherine Donnelly's dictum of teaching only the children of settlers. With the arrival of the sisters, Catholic children were transferred from the island's other Indian Day school under the United Church of Canada to the Catholic Indian Day School.

Like their United Church colleagues, the sisters signed a contract with the Indian Affairs branch of the federal government to teach at the school, established in 1934 in response to appeals from Bennett and Jesuit Father Oscar Labelle, whose pastoral territory included Christian Island.⁷¹ Unlike the conditions at the prairie teaching missions, the sisters' living quarters were comfortable. The small sitting



Sister Dorothy Daley rides in dog sleigh, Christian Island, 1942

room, kitchenette, and two bedrooms were attached by a hallway to the newly-built school. Sister Black, an experienced teacher in Montreal, taught the academic lessons, while Sister Daley, also the housekeeper, directed classes in music, home economics, and crafts. Her successor, Sister Marie Anne Paradis taught choral singing, and was followed by Sister Florence Kelly, who encouraged music, promoted sports and the outdoors, taking students skating and cheering them at ball games.⁷²

The sisters had daily contact with the Indian agent, who lived on the island. As a federal school, the Indian Affairs branch supplied all the books and food. Like the prairie missions, poverty was ubiquitous. Christian Island was ranked by the Indian Affairs branch as one of the poorest reserves, and to enhance the health of students, the branch supplied daily a tablespoon of cod liver oil, hot milk made from powder, and healthy thick cookies.

Sister Mary Jackson with prior postings in Berlo and Bergfield, did much to set professional teaching standards by keeping records



School and St. Theresa's church, Christian Island, 1941

during her appointment between 1943 and 1945. She introduced extracurricular social and school events, such as the annual fall fair, school concerts and the 4-H club. A small chapel was set up in an alcove in the schoolroom.⁷³ In 1946, Sister Rosemarie Hudon added an Education Day on Mother's Day, issuing an invitation to all mothers to view their children's school work and entertainment. In her two appointments, Sister Leona Trautman introduced the popular craft of making and decorating wooden puppets. The puppets and their creators entertained at island events along with the harmonica band, which was organized by Sister Anna Coughlin and won a competition at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto. Similar to western missions, the sisters in the absence of a priest attended Sunday prayers, which were recited in the island's St. Theresa's Church, at first predominately in the Ojibwe language and later led by the sisters. As in the other missions, they visited the sick, prayed for the dying, officiated at wakes and occasionally at funerals. The sisters also received many visitors driving the two hours from Toronto during the summer months.⁷⁴

After fire destroyed the United Church school building in 1960, the government purchased prefabricated school buildings and an extra



Sister Margaret MacMillan in the classroom, Christian Island, 1954

building as the sisters' new residence. Gradually, these buildings were installed with electric power, telephones, an oil burning furnace, hot and cold running water, flush toilets and a television in the classroom for school programming and historic events. As part of the changes in the 1960s, Indigenous students in Grades 7 and 8 were enrolled in a separate school across Georgian Bay, in Midland, living with "white families." While some students remained in Midland for high school, others attended the industrial residential schools in Spanish, Ontario, a five-hour drive north of the island. The subsequent drop in enrolment at the Catholic school occurred at the time of the growing Indigenous movement for self-rule along with resentment of the imposition of non-Indigenous religious and secular values. As a result, the sisters closed the mission on Christian Island at the end of June 1968, and were replaced by a married Catholic couple. Over the 27 years, 10 sister teachers and nine assistant sisters had served at the Indian Day School, which the federal government closed in June 1972.⁷⁵

Apostolic Vicariate of Grouard, Alberta

Just as Archbishop O’Leary had been 20 years earlier, Bishop Henri Routhier, OMI, of the northern Alberta Apostolic Vicariate of Grouard, was a builder of the Catholic school system. “Whenever we have established Catholic schools, we have everywhere seen in a short time an influx of good Catholic families and [the] return to the practice of their religion,” he wrote in a letter to Sister General Mary Quinn.⁷⁶ Unlike the Eastern Canadian-born bishops, Henri Routhier was born in southern Alberta and was a member of a religious congregation, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI).⁷⁷ As pastor and superior provincial from 1938 to 1944 of the OMI Province of Alberta-Saskatchewan, he had lived the missionary challenges of the Oblates, who had provided priests, brothers, and bishops across the west since their 1841 arrival in Canada from France. Appointed in 1944 as vicar of missions under Bishop Ubald Langlois and elevated as bishop in 1953, he laid the foundations that enabled Catholic schools to meet the educational needs arising from the increasing prosperity in northern Alberta. Following the historic 1947 discovery of oil in Leduc field, the province shifted from agriculture to a developing oil-based economy.

Well acquainted with the sisters’ versatility, Bishop Routhier sought them as teachers and catechists, appreciating their ability to integrate with communities and adapt to local conditions. As in the other teaching missions, the sisters in Rycroft, Peace River, and Manning organized and directed school concerts, awards nights, and open houses, and took on community work. They delivered Christmas gifts to children, distributed Catholic literature and clothing sent from Ontario branches of the CWL, made hospital and family visits, and served as church sacristans, choir directors, and organists. In the 1960s, postwar economic prosperity and government funding transformed the education system with newly built schools and enhanced teaching qualifications. The sisters in the isolated rural locations of Hawk Hills, High Level, and Faust encountered new contemporary issues of mobile housing, growing oil-based communities, and In-

digenous education. By the time Bishop Routhier retired in 1972, the sisters had closed their early missions in Rycroft, Manning, and Peace River, while the later rural teaching missions of Hawk Hills, High Level, and Faust continued.

Rycroft, Alberta 1944-1972

In May 1943, Father Joseph Paquin, OMI, met by chance Toronto Redemptorist Provincial Superior James Fuller at the Rycroft railway station on Treaty 8 Territory. Father Fuller was awaiting a train to Grande Prairie on a visitation tour of the Redemptorist parish. Father Paquin, who had been appointed as resident priest the previous year, took this opportunity to raise the subject of a SOS teaching mission and potential accommodation in the village. Father Fuller promised to inquire about the sisters teaching at the local public school under the Spirit River School Division. In addition, a much-needed student boarding house for out-of-town students would be their responsibility, thus guaranteeing the existence of the village high school.⁷⁸

Shortly after Father Routhier was installed as Vicar of Missions in 1944, the sisters were invited to establish a mission in Rycroft by his ecclesiastical bishop, Ubald Langlois. First occupied by settlers at the turn of the 20th century, the village, originally called Spirit River, was renamed Roycroft after one of the first three non-Indigenous citizens, and then altered to Rycroft in 1933. This railway centre was nestled amid the farms of Croatians, Ukrainians, French, and English settlers, most of whom were non-practising Catholics. Father Paquin lived in the basement of the St. Peter and Paul Church, which was built in 1943 and dedicated in June 1944, the year of the village's incorporation.⁷⁹

After receiving this request, Assistant Sister General Mary Quinn visited Rycroft, the hub of Peace River, leaving with a favourable impression. The institute purchased a large vacant house and arranged renovations for a combined sisters' residence and dormitory



*Sister Mary MacDougall, Bishop Henri Routhier,
Rycroft, 1948*

for 20 out-of-town Catholic and non-Catholic students. On 29 September 1944, the feast of St. Michael, Father Paquin met the train carrying Sisters Quinn, Waltrude Donnelly, and Agnes Brunning, superior at St. John's Hospital in Edson, to set up the mission. At Rycroft Public School, Sister Donnelly began teaching a class of 30 in a combined Grade 1 and 2, while the first three boarders moved into St. Michael's dormitory. The sisters received a warm welcome from many families, who brought food, vegetables, and household gifts, and from a neighbour who offered the use of her washing machine.⁸⁰

The dormitory housed both boys and girls of school age who lived too far from a rural school or a daily van route to attend school regularly. They stayed in the dormitory on weeknights for a fee of \$10 a month, with some families paying whatever they could afford. In special circumstances, students remained on the weekend. During the week, students were expected to help with daily household tasks by making their own beds, doing dishes, sweeping, dusting, and bringing in wood. In the winter, Sister Superior Mary Phillips observed, "The boys could skate ten hours a day."⁸¹ Housemother Sis-



At St. Michael's Dormitory (left) and St. Peter and Paul Church (right), Rycroft, 1953

ter Margaret Ready from 1952 until 1955 prepared a pre-bed snack of cereal and milk for the younger children, “then it is upstairs to bed and story time, which generally ends up with question time.”⁸² As in all rural missions, water was a precious commodity. Rain water was collected, and drinking water was purchased at 65 cents a barrel. Although the mission was answering a need, it was considered a singular situation. In the 1948 Chapter meeting, delegates decided that the rule was not to be revised “to take charge of dormitories for children in rural districts.”⁸³

Father Paquin looked after the spiritual needs of the students, with daily morning Mass, benediction, and stations of the cross and the evening recitation of the rosary. In 1953, a Catholic Youth Organization was formed and meetings were held in the dormitory including study clubs and singing sessions and dances, assisted by Sister Irene Faye. Sister Mary MacDougall, the first superior from 1945 until 1950, taught music lessons and organized Our Lady's Sodality for girls. The generous supply of cookies from Sister Josephine Dulaska was popular, particularly with the boys of the Knights of the Altar. The church basement housed a library as well as a meeting place for the Junior Red Cross group. Young woodworkers, under Sister Rosemarie Hudon and Father Paquin, crafted door stops, teapot stands, and plaques for the parish bazaar. In the summer of 1964,



Sister Rosemarie Hudon and students' boots drying from gumbo (mud) after the walk to Silverwood school, 1953

Sister Phillips chaired a Junior Red Cross study week at the Banff School of Fine Arts and attended a study week of the Social Studies Council of the Alberta Teachers Association.⁸⁴

During the operation of the dormitory, five sisters were assigned to the mission; two taught in the seven-room public school – one in a primary classroom and one in Grade 9. Sister Catherine Donnelly taught Grade 9 students in the junior high school section from September 1952 to June 1956, until her retirement at the age of 72. In the elementary school, Sister Florence MacDougall's classes in the 1950s won a number of awards in music festivals. Sister Hudon organized glee clubs and plays, with one winning honours in a drama festival. By 1955, regular school bus service was available for the students, and the dormitory closed but continued as the sisters' residence.

Meanwhile, Sister Hudon had been teaching Grades 1-8 in the one-room, ungraded school in Silverwood, five miles away. She commuted on the school bus for four years, until Silverwood was amalgamated with the Rycroft school in 1953. Although Rycroft was a public school, catechism was taught for 30 minutes each day to 85 Catholic children, one-third of the enrolment. In the summer, religious vacation schools were held in Rycroft, Ester (Silverwood), Woking, and Wanham.⁸⁵

Sisters Barton and Alice Walsh, both at retirement age, were the last teachers at Rycroft public school when the mission closed in the summer of 1972. A total of 32 sisters served in Rycroft: six in elementary, six in junior high, and four in senior high school. Coincidentally, the house was sold to the original owner's son. Sisters Barton and Dulaska returned to the district for a year, from 1974 to 1975, living in an apartment in nearby Spirit River while Sister Barton taught at the local school. Active members of the Rycroft Historical Society, the pair visited many pioneer families and assisted in writing the history of the area's early days.

Peace River, Alberta 1950-1969

Despite a recommendation of the 1948 Chapter not to open more missions, the request from Bishop Routhier three months later for the sisters to come to Peace River on Treaty 8 Territory drew immediate approval. But the absence of a parish priest to care for the 450 Catholics in the town and surrounding region delayed the arrangements for the new mission. In a letter to Sister General Mary Quinn, the bishop outlined his concern about the lukewarm Catholics, in particular the Métis, and the necessity of establishing a Catholic school, since the Protestant public school board would not accept a religious sister on staff. He asked the sisters to conduct a census of the population, and to teach catechism and music in this picturesque region of excellent farmland. Originally the site of a Hudson's Bay trading post, the town, along the banks of the Peace River, was developed after the railway connection in 1916. Father Albert Bouchard, OMI, was appointed in November 1949 as the new pastor of Our Lady of Peace Church, with added responsibility of building a Catholic school in the town.⁸⁶

To gain support for the school, the negative or indifferent attitudes toward a stronger Catholic presence required change. When the two sisters arrived in early September 1950, the population of 1,500 was primarily dominated by non-Catholics, particularly by Anglicans



Sister Gertrude Walsh on a visiting tour, Peace River, 1951

whose bishop resided in the town. Sister Mary MacDougall, former superior of Rycroft, and Sister Gertrude Walsh, a catechist, social worker, and nurse with an abundance of Irish charm, soon demonstrated the advantages of religious sisters. In the first four months, they visited 90 families and 106 hospital patients, and held weekly catechism classes in the church basement. Sister MacDougall also provided music instruction in their residence, where she gave 96 lessons.⁸⁷

The bishop's strategy succeeded. In 1952, a one-room, Catholic separate school was opened in a poor section, the Flats, under a Catholic district school district, and Sisters Irene Faye and Waltrude Donnelly were hired to teach 36 students in Grades 1 to 6. The following year, two more classes were opened in the basement of St. James Church totally 65 students in Grades 1 to 9. Meanwhile, outside the classroom, the two sisters won \$580, and notoriety by answering a jingle correctly on the local radio station.⁸⁸ In 1954, the newly constructed Immaculate Conception Separate School opened, and the growing enrolment of up to 180 students led to the addition of four more classrooms in 1958, including a science lab, a typing room, and a teachers' staff room. Sister Faye, who had taught in six of the western teaching missions and later served as successional principal from 1955 to 1957 enjoyed the simple scene on the country school



Sister Ruth Mill and students in chemistry lab, Peace River, 1960

skating rink at recess and at lunch. “They [the students] are anxious to get out and skate. It is fun watching the wee ones learning. They fall and laugh and get up and keep going ... The boys play hockey during the PT periods and Father Gendre puts on his skates and referees.”⁸⁹ Sister Ruth Mill relished the school’s science laboratory in comparison with the limited equipment in Sinnett, where she had taught for six years.

Sister Margaret Denis, who was instrumental in the opening of Glenmary High School for Grades 7 to 11 in January 1963, introduced an innovative teaching approach at Immaculate Conception. In an attempt for more individualized instruction, students moved each morning from the homeroom to other classrooms where instruction on a specific subject, such as mathematics or reading, was tailored to their learning ability. In the afternoon, they returned to their home classroom.⁹⁰ By January 1965, 85 students were enrolled at Glenmary, where sculptures, modern art, and a symphony of colours decorated the halls in the first phase of the three-classroom school.⁹¹ As superior of the mission from 1956 to 1967, Sister Rita Sullivan visited the sick and needy, and always had a bag of treats for the children. After almost two decades and 17 sisters, the Peace Riv-

er teaching mission closed in 1969 when the two sisters at Immaculate Conception school and one at Glenmary High School departed.

Manning, Alberta 1951-1980

A temporary four-month teaching assignment in the fall of 1951 brought Sister Barton to Manning on Treaty 8 Territory to teach Grades 3 and 4 at Rosary School. In a summer visit to the Toronto Motherhouse, Bishop Routhier made a personal appeal for the SOS to replace the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary from Prince Albert Saskatchewan at Manning school, as “he feels we [the SOS] would be more likely to get vocations there.”⁹² The village of Manning, which was named after Ernest Manning, elected as Alberta premier in 1943, had attracted immigrants from Germany, Hungary, and Poland to settle on farmland under the Soldier Settlement Board, just as in St. Brides 20 years earlier. This new farming centre, a six-hour drive north of Edmonton, drew praise for a contemporary design that featured wide streets and modern stores.

As in Peace River, a Protestant majority dominated Manning. Unsuccessful attempts for religious sisters to teach in the Manning public school led Catholics to finance and build their own school. The pastor of St. James Church, Father de Champlain, worked alongside men of the parish in the bush, cutting, sawing, and planing lumber to build Rosary School, which opened in 1949. After the General Council agreed to the bishop’s request, Sisters Mary MacDougall and Agnes Black arrived in August 1952, moving into the old rectory, the former living quarters of the Presentation Sisters. Sister MacDougall, who came directly from Peace River, was enthusiastic.

Never did missionaries receive a warmer welcome than we. ... The Catholics of three parishes, Manning, Notikewin and North Star, left nothing undone to show their appreciation for having Sisters in their midst. Not a week passed that we did not have proof of this; someone at the convent door with a gift for the Sisters, ranging from a small jar of preserved wild strawberries to a large side of pork.⁹³



Sister Joan Coffey teaching high school students in Rosary School, Manning, 1956

Sister Black, the only religious of the five teachers, taught 32 students in a combined Grades 1 and 2. The school, consisting of four classrooms and a cottage classroom, offered Grades 1-12 and attracted an enrolment of 174 students, many of whom were transported in 10 vans from the parishes of Notikewin and North Star. In October 1955, Bishop Routhier saw tangible progress toward a Catholic school system when he officially blessed and opened an addition to Rosary School, an auditorium and a projection room. A year later, the first Grade 12 class graduated.⁹⁴

Spring thaw in northern Alberta played havoc with the school day. Students who walked to school were invariably late, their boots slipping in the all-pervasive gumbo, a fine-grained, silty soil that turned into waxy, sticky mud in the rain. Sister Rosemarie Hudon, who contended with the same battle for four years as principal of Rycroft-Silverwood school, reminisced about the muck: “[It] adheres with grim tenacity to everything it touches ... The first teacher to arrive takes up her position at the door and begins this sing song ‘Take off your rubbers.’ When it dries, it soon drops off in chunks.”⁹⁵

During her eight years in Peace River, Sister MacDougall was an inspiration to her music students. Danielle Fortosky remembered Sister MacDougall “so fondly for her wonderful piano lessons. I am forever grateful for her instruction ... and wanted to learn the Moonlight Sonata at the age of 8. By the age of 10, thanks to her, I had mastered the first and second movements and well into the third movement when we moved away.” During this period, Sister MacDougall was enrolled in teacher training and university entrance courses as well as practising the piano for the Royal Conservatory piano examinations.⁹⁶ Fiddle and guitar music was at the centre of the Hartman family, who attended Rosary school, and Anita Hartman, one of 18 children, returned to teach at Rosary School for two years before entering the Toronto novitiate in 1950.⁹⁷

Shortly after his arrival as pastor in 1959, Father Jack Hermann, OMI, became first acquainted with the sisters in their garden, while they coped with the outdated sewage system. Without delay, he or-

ganized parish volunteers to construct a new brick residence to accommodate five sisters and visitors. A year later, Sister Anna Green, also a piano teacher, converted the basement into an art studio and taught oil painting to local women for 20 years. A member of the Peace Region Arts Council, Sister Green also taught pastel art to the Grade 6 pupils, and every Tuesday evening she instructed three high school students and up to five adults. Sister Green and superior Sister Rita MacLellan, also the parish sacristan, were active members of the parish CWL.

In June 1980, with fewer SOS teachers, the teaching mission ended after 28 years. Sixteen sisters had served the community, and nine attended the farewell reception, filled with almost three decades of reminiscences. Sister Green observed later, “Over the years I learned to appreciate the good people of Manning, the beauty of North Peace and the early days are now stored in my treasure house of memories.”⁹⁸

Hawk Hills, Alberta 1965-1977

In April 1965, a petition signed by 20 parents in Hawk Hills, a farming region on Treaty 8 Territory, was presented to Bishop Routhier, requesting the SOS to come to Hawk Hills Public School. The petition stated that the sisters will “ensure that our little ones receive an adequate instruction of religious education, of which they are presently deprived ... [and] enhance our school by moulding our little ones to become dedicated and responsible members of the Catholic laity in the years ahead.”⁹⁹ To Sister General Agnes Dwyer, Bishop Routhier described the area as a newly settled farming district with a majority of Catholic families of German descent. “It is, of course, important that from the start they be maintained in the faith, if we are to keep them.”¹⁰⁰

Sisters Agnes Black and Waltrude Donnelly, both of whom had taught in the Peace River area schools of Manning and Rycroft, arrived in September 1965 to teach at the Hawk Hills school, under the



The mobile home, the accommodation for the teachers, Hawk Hills, 1973

Peace River School District. Located in Hotchkiss on the Mackenzie Highway, the two-room school consisted of 35 pupils from Grades 1 to 8. However, Protestant parents objected to having two Roman Catholic religious sisters teaching their children, and so Sister Black did not return in the fall of 1966.

That November, the school was destroyed by fire and was replaced with a portable classroom.¹⁰¹ For two years, Sister Donnelly lived alone in a mobile home, the new type of accommodation for the sisters. In 1968, she was joined by Sister Celestine Reinhardt, who had taught in Camp Morton, Peace River, and Manning. On Friday evenings, the Hawk Hills sisters drove 30 minutes southward to stay the weekends in Manning, the hub of the community's northern Alberta missions. Sister Barton attributed their acceptance of the deprivations of trailer living to the hardships both had experienced during the Depression.

The teachers resolved to provide, as much as possible, the opportunities available in larger schools. Whenever there were provincial or national school contests, Sister Reinhardt encouraged and supported her students to participate, resulting in prize-winning entries in national poster contests, including the Canadian Cancer Society in

1973. Sister Barton contended that this involvement was a valuable experience for these country students, “giving them confidence and a sense of pride and achievement, [and] it broadened their vision of Canada ... Through a dedicated teacher, the schoolhouse is the heart of a small community. School life which draws from home life, pulses with community activities. The teacher is the key person and often a catalyst, judge, counsellor and comforter.”¹⁰² When she retired in 1976, Sister Donnelly only had missed two days of teaching. Sister Reinhardt retired a year later, in June 1977, when the Hawk Hills school was closed and the students travelled by bus to Manning.¹⁰³

High Level, Alberta 1969-1984

With a swelling population resulting from an expanding oil industry, Archbishop Routhier asked for sister teachers at High Level Public School under the Fort Vermilion School District. Development in this northwestern Alberta area on Treaty 8 Territory had grown steadily since the opening of the Mackenzie Highway in 1948 and the arrival of the Great Slave Lake Railway in November 1963. The pace of development quickened with the discovery of oil in Rainbow Lake in 1964, and High Level became the centre for 50 oil industry service companies. Veteran educators Sisters Mary MacDougall and Florence MacDougall (no relation) arrived in late summer 1969 to teach in this community of 2,400. The newly-built school of 27 classrooms boasted an enrolment of 540 pupils for Grades 1 to 9, and religious instruction for 78 students was permitted during three periods a week.

Sister Mary MacDougall taught Grades 7 and 8. Sister Florence MacDougall, the Grade 1 teacher and a primary education specialist, brought an expertise, honed in Rycroft, Manning, and Peace River schools, in achieving early reading success among her students. Sister MacDougall “had a great love for, and understanding of little children,” noted Sister Barton.¹⁰⁴ In the art of teaching reading, Sister MacDougall shared her techniques and experiences with a



Sister Florence MacDougall and Grade 1 student, High Level, 1980

number of neophyte teachers. Sister Catherine Schmeltzer assessed Sister MacDougall's success in the classroom.¹⁰⁵

Those who observed Sister MacDougall with her students at work were impressed with the joyful atmosphere that pervaded her classroom. They were also amazed at the personal responsibility shown by such young students and at their ability to think for themselves. One was aware that the attitudes and deportment of the children were, in part, a reflection of their teacher.

Retiring at the age of 75, Sister Florence McDougall did not miss one day of school and was awarded a 10-year perfect attendance plaque. So great was the esteem for Sister MacDougall that a new primary school in High Level was named in her honour. The Florence MacDougall Community School officially opened in December 1983, two years after her death. A school crest was designed with two Scottish dancers and the motto "a hundred thousand welcomes." Her nephew, Dr. David MacDougall, played the bagpipes to lead the main speakers into the hall, accompanied by majorettes dressed in kilts of the MacDougall tartan. A year later, the mission was closed.¹⁰⁶

Faust, Alberta 1969-1974

In what would be his final request for SOS teachers, Archbishop Routhier invited two sisters to Faust, a Cree-Métis poverty-stricken community on Treaty 8 Territory near the shores of Lesser Slave Lake. Sisters Agnes Black and Mary Phillips drove to the isolated community in August 1969. Sister Phillips, a teacher in Rycroft for 12 years, was hired to teach Grade 1 in Faust Public School under the High Prairie School District. Sister Black, a pioneer who had entered the novitiate in 1927, came as a companion after retiring from teaching at the age of 73. As in Hawk Hills, the sisters lived in a mobile home in Faust which was rented from the school board. At the end of her one-year contract, Sister Phillips transferred to teach at the public school in nearby Joussard, following the closure of St. Bruno's residential school in 1969. To improve the linguistic skills of Indigenous children, Sister Phillips developed early childhood education programs. In 1970, she was awarded the Hilroy Fellowship to create a language program to assist First Nations and Métis students through the use of videotaping children on field trips to bring these experiences into the classroom.¹⁰⁷

In Faust, Sister Phillips became involved in projects to help children, youth, and women. She was instrumental in seeking government funds for "Up With People," a group of 50 youth, who met weekly to practise singing; they also held formal meetings and social events. The group sang in other localities, attended workshops, and went on camping trips to broaden their horizons. Sister Phillips also helped to establish the Faust Action Council for Education, which introduced a preschool program for First Nations children. In early 1974, the mission was closed when she moved to Fort McMurray to a school board position to develop early childhood education.

The rural teaching missions in Western Canada, Sister Catherine Donnelly's apostolate, were the most challenging for the sisters in the first two decades of the institute. They experienced primitive living quarters, harsh weather of blizzards, cold temperatures and

extreme heat, and taught in ill-equipped one-room schoolhouses. While some appreciated the dedication of the sisters, others in these farming communities placed other priorities in their struggles to survive drought, dust storms, poverty, and low yields and prices for their crops. The lack of community support prompted the ending of some missions in a dispirited manner.

Missions after 1940 reflected different realities. The post-war economic boom led to improvements in living conditions and education. The ungraded one-room school was replaced by larger schools and later well-equipped regional high schools. In departing from the original apostolate of teaching, solely in public schools, sisters enabled the creation of Catholic schools in the first three Grouard teaching missions. The sister teachers quickly adapted to new educational situations and teacher qualifications, and enlivened the extracurricular activities by their organization and participation. From the 17 missions, teaching evolved as the most enduring apostolate with the largest number of missions.

Chapter Five

Keeping the Faith:
Religious Education

To establish catechism centres, particularly in locations where the children frequent public schools; To instruct in catechism by mail, children and people who live far from the Church and out of regular contact with a priest; To prepare children for their First Communion and Confirmation.

Rules and Constitutions of the Sisters of Service, 1922, 1934

Keeping the faith among Catholics was the underlying priority of the Sisters of Service for the first 40 years of its establishment. This goal was first advanced in 1923 when three novices began teaching in two Toronto selected parishes. The hasty establishment of the third mission in January 1925, a catechetical centre in Edmonton, held the potential for reaching the largest numbers of Catholics to preserve and grow the faith. Out of practical necessity, the sisters created a novel blend of religious correspondence schools and summer catechetical tours to instruct children. As the first catechetical centre in English-speaking Canada, with episcopal approval, the Edmonton mission and its success gave rise to catechetical centres in Regina and Fargo, North Dakota. The sisters specifically focussed on families and their children who attended public schools for religious instruction through correspondence schools, summer catechetical tours, and religious vacation schools. The aim was “to keep alive the spark of Faith in homes out of contact with the Church. As long as the family continues to correspond with us, we feel that link which binds them to the Church still holds. Their faith is being strengthened, unknown to themselves. If the parents are of the type who are interested in their children’s education, they will make it their concern to see that the children know the lesson properly before they begin to answer the questions.”¹

The institute’s unique approach was drawn in particular from Archbishop McNeil’s desire to go and find those faltering in the Catholic faith. Under the direction of the local clergy, the sisters located prospective students from personal visits and pastors’ lists. The curriculum of their lessons constantly underwent adjustments and improvements to remain current under the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD), a catechesis program of the Catholic Church, which had been in place since the 16th century. From his experi-

ence as a university instructor/lecturer, a Cape Breton pastor, and as a missionary bishop in Newfoundland, Archbishop McNeil held strong views on teaching catechism, which he imparted to the sisters and other teaching congregations. In their courses, the sisters adopted his belief that the purpose of catechism, a series of fixed questions and answers, was to teach the child religion, not theology. Theology, the archbishop contended, was theory and religion was practice. He thought “it stupid to make children memorize words they could not understand. He dismissed the idea that they might come to understand the words in later life ... The child learns from the concrete, not from the abstract, and therefore should be taught by the means of examples, not definitions.”²

While the correspondence schools required a structured and disciplined organization to send, receive, and mark the thousands of lessons, the summer tours to rural areas were relaxed in format and presentation, often held in fields or under tree boughs. These tours invigorated the sisters, who embraced the life and adventures found in the remote western districts of Canada. The catechetical missions reflected the essence of the institute and the sisters. As Blanche Cossette of St. Anthony’s parish in Fargo observed, “They were real persons and they taught and lived Catholic Christianity. We worked together, we, the laymen and laywomen, sisters and priests, teaching our children. We discovered we are all human, each with our own human short-comings, and we all belonged to the Body of Christ.”³

Edmonton, 1925-1971

In 1924, a frustrated Archbishop Henry O’Leary, intent on assigning the institute’s newly-professed sisters to catechetical tasks in Edmonton, had not received a response from Archbishop McNeil. Instead, he encouraged Father Peter Hughes, his special adviser and itinerant missionary in the archdiocese, to intercede through Father Daly. Father Hughes, former secretary to Archbishop O’Leary in Charlottetown, stressed to Father Daly in correspondence the urgency of the situation in Edmonton.



Exterior of the catechetical centre on 85th Street, Edmonton, 1940

At least one-third of our Catholics will be lost and the sisters' catechetical work would salvage about 500 children, who are attending public schools and Protestant Sunday Schools. ... So far, no red tape – but send the Sisters along pronto ... If you can interest anyone who has too much money ... you can send the cheque along. I am going to be broke very soon.⁴

In answering this plea, Archbishop McNeil approved the immediate appointment of newly-professed Sisters Catherine McNally, Ann Geraghty and Josephine Stokes to Edmonton. Arriving before dawn at the Edmonton train station on 25 January 1925, a cold Sunday morning, the trio was welcomed by Margaret Duggan, CWL national president, and her husband. The couple chauffeured the sisters to their temporary accommodation just in time for 7 a.m. Mass at Rosary Hall, a CWL hostel established in 1916 for working women, under the administration of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul of Kingston, Ontario.⁵

When Archbishop O'Leary met the sisters two days later, he prioritized their assignments to first visit families, particularly those of immigrants, and then organize religious instruction for children at-

tending public school. Under instructions from Father Hughes, the sisters did not identify themselves, while conducting a door-to-door census of Catholics living in the city parishes. Since their religious uniforms resembled more closely those of the district or Red Cross nurses, this strategy led to success. By mid-April, the sisters had canvassed 3,111 homes to obtain names, and had organized religion classes for Catholic children attending public schools. Meanwhile, the CWL continued to assist with practical donations to help furnish the sisters' temporary accommodation. A creation by Mrs. Duggan of a simple purple bag with a draw string was passed under the table during CWL meetings so members privately could drop their donations before pulling the drawstring. At Easter, Mrs. Duggan presented a cheque for \$191. In a six-month report sent to Archbishop McNeil, the sisters had made 131 homes visits, including the start-up of a catechism class for 23 children in a private home in the Ross Flats poor section of the city. Four parishes also were holding religion classes for 504 children with lay catechists teaching in two of the parishes. Two sisters were enrolled in Polish language classes and another sister was learning Ukrainian to communicate better with some of the newly-arrived immigrants. In the parish of St. Mary's in Beverly, just north of the city, the sisters held sewing classes for up to 15 women to make themselves known and ignite interest in returning to the Church.⁶

In their first rural venture, Sisters Catherine McNally and Mary Rodgers set out in October for the southern Alberta area of Stettler and Big Valley, where Catherine Donnelly had taught in 1918. Greeted at the train station by the local CWL president, the sisters boarded with another CWL member while they instructed children and adults who were interested in learning about the faith. Upon returning from Stettler, the sisters moved into a house purchased in October 1925 within Treaty 6 Territory and the Métis homelands. The location at 11837-85th Street was ideal, next door to the Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception of Saint John and across the street from the Redemptorist parish of St. Alphonsus.⁷ During the summer of 1929, the attic and basement were renovated, and later an addition of a large office was constructed.



Sisters Edith Wayland and Mary Fitzgerald work on remailing Catholic literature, Edmonton, 1933

From the wood framed, two-storey house on 85th Street, the sisters initiated and expanded their first religious correspondence school, the remailing of Catholic literature, and child-centred devotional groups. In the summers, sisters left their desks to meet and teach their correspondence students as well as new students in remote locations of the western provinces. To provide a sense of belonging for children in isolated rural areas, Superior Sister Monica Meade, acting on a request by Archbishop McNeil in 1928, organized the Young Missionaries of Christ the King (YMCK). The organization was patterned after the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade, which had originated in the United States and was flourishing in Catholic schools. The members pledged their loyalty to Christ the King, wore a distinctive badge, practised their faith through prescribed prayers, and supported the institute's western missions. In a few months, almost 100 members were added to the correspondence school list. Eastern Canadian units helped with fundraising by collecting cancelled stamps to be sold for cash and pledging one-cent stamps for mailing Catholic magazines.⁸

In 1928 and 1929, the sisters had remailed 7,147 magazines to Catholic families. While on a train to Vancouver, Sister Teresa Chisholm witnessed the power of the printed word. As the train swayed through a sparsely settled district of British Columbia, a distant home in an

open field caught her eye. A mother with three children watched the train go by from the doorstep while a farmer worked in a field near the track. Suddenly, a newspaper shot from the train and landed near the man's feet. He smiled with pleasure and waved his thanks. When the train swayed closer, Sister Chisholm saw the children gathering around to see the newspaper pages. This incident reinforced her determination to expand the remailing of Catholic periodicals. On her return to Edmonton, a plan was devised to encourage Catholics to adopt a family to send Catholic literature. Permission in 1935 to use the reduced postage rate for news dealers was granted to mail six Catholic Canadian newspapers and 16 magazines. An appeal to adopt a family to remail literature was published in *The Field at Home* and Catholic papers in October 1938.⁹

On 85th Street, the sisters enjoyed a friendly relationship with their neighbours, spending their first Christmas dinner with the Sisters of Charity and receiving the next year's Christmas dinner from the kitchen of the Redemptorists' rectory. A number of religious endeavours were exchanged with the Redemptorists. The sisters assisted with catechism classes at the Redemptorist mission churches, while the Redemptorists directed retreats at the 85th Street house as well as at the institute's hospitals in Vilna and Edson. Boys from St. Alphonsus school were recruited to take bundles of religious magazines to the post office for remailing.¹⁰

The sisters also taught at the children's section of University Hospital, at the Canadian Armed Forces base at Griesbach, near Edmonton, and the Air Force base at Namao.¹¹ Over 42 years, 40 sisters, including Sister Catherine Donnelly on three occasions, were appointed to the 85th Street house, which also served as a hospitality centre for visiting SOS and for other women religious congregations. The closing of the 85th Street catechetical mission in 1967 coincided with changes to religious education related to the Second Vatican Council, and the costly renovations required to meet the city's building code.

Regina, 1934-1971

Amid crop failure, drought, and a plague of grasshoppers on Saskatchewan farms in 1934, a second catechetical centre was approved following a request from Archbishop James McGuigan of Regina. Sister Madgalen Barton, a Camp Morton teacher, and Sister Eva Chartrand, superior of the Winnipeg women's residence, arrived in Regina on 3 September to begin the preparations. In stepping off the train, they were welcomed by Father Hughes, now rector of Holy Rosary Cathedral, where coincidentally Father Daly had been rector during the First World War. Father Hughes, who had come to Regina in 1930 with Archbishop McGuigan, drove the sisters to their newly-purchased house at 2220 Cameron Street within Treaty 4 Territory. The two-storey house, the former convent of the Sisters of St. Louis, was an excellent location, a few minutes' walk to the cathedral. The following day, the sisters embarked on a downtown shopping trip to Eaton's and Simpson's department stores and met up with the CWL diocesan president, who drove the parcels-laden sisters to their house. Sister General Regan travelled to Regina from Toronto to help with house cleaning before the official mission opening on 8 September, with Mass celebrated by Father Hughes. The correspondence school was an integral part of Archbishop McGuigan's promotion of religious education. It followed the curriculum and practices of the Edmonton school, whose developments the archbishop had watched closely while serving in Edmonton. Ironically four months after the sisters' arrival, he was appointed as archbishop of Toronto.¹²

Renovations to create an office for the correspondence school began while the sisters resumed the scrubbing, painting, and papering of the walls, and even harvested the potatoes in the garden. Sisters Barton and Marie Anne Paradis compiled a list of names of 5,000 children, who had attended religious vacation schools the previous summer in the archdiocese of Regina. Edmonton correspondence students in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and northern Ontario were transferred to the Regina school. From these lists, a registration form was sent to



Exterior of the catechetical centre on 2220 Cameron Street, 1940

the families. The school was an immediate success with the sisters correcting 12,101 lessons between October 1934 and May 1935.¹³

With the growing workload, the appointment of a sister with office experience was timely. Sister Mary Regan arrived in May 1935, bringing practical business experience as a typist at Manufacturers Life Insurance Company in Toronto, before entering the novitiate at the age of 36. A cousin of Sister Florence Regan, Sister Mary Regan held a deep commitment to teaching children the basics of their faith, having learned Catholic prayers and practices from her mother and sister. In the Regina mission, she created an efficient office procedure and filing system and answered the business correspondence. During her four postings at the Regina school, she marked the lessons and taught catechism during the summers in 10 rural communities in Alberta and 18 in Saskatchewan.¹⁴ To assist with the school's office work, members of the junior CWL from three city parishes volunteered twice a week for a period of two hours, folding lessons and tests, and stamping names on wrappers with the addressograph for the remailing of Catholic literature.¹⁵

Sister Alice Walsh, between teaching postings in Camp Morton,



Sisters at the Regina mission, 1936. (l-r) Sisters Marie Anne Paradis, Catherine Donnelly, Mary Regan, Magdalen Barton, Gertrude Walsh; Alice Walsh in front.

joined the mission in February 1935, and added other ministry endeavours. Her writing talent was enlisted to edit the children's page of the *Salve Regina Quarterly*, the archdiocesan paper. At the request of the now Monsignor Hughes, the sister teachers prepared the archdiocesan catechetical examinations of junior, intermediate and senior levels. These experienced sisters also were recruited to assist at the Regina Normal School, instructing student teachers in a weekly course of teaching religion and apologetics, a branch of theology devoted to the defence of the divine origin and authority of Christianity. The sisters travelled to Moose Jaw to present a talk to 50 Normal School students and adults about the correspondence school at the request of Father Leo Sexsmith, C.Ss.R., pastor of the city's St. Joseph's parish. For young working women away from home, the sisters established St. Martha's Guild, a social club whose members met at the Cameron Street house, and arranged social gatherings and events, such as a nativity play in 1936.¹⁶

When teachers were needed in the new teaching missions in the 1930s, sister catechists, such as Sister Regan, were an integral members of the Regina mission. Sister Margaret Morgan, who had been



Exterior of new SOS residence and religious school of correspondence, Regina, 1962

posted in the first year of the Bergfield teaching mission, was a dedicated member of the catechetical mission houses for more than four decades, working in Regina for 27 years and then in Edmonton for 13 years. A petite figure from Liverpool, England, she possessed a hardy stamina, which was tested during the summer catechetical tours that included 32 locations in Alberta, 29 in Saskatchewan, and three in Manitoba.¹⁷

Similarly petite in stature and large in dedication, Sister Rita Hurley, an office clerk from Saint John, corrected lessons in Regina for 15 years and two years in Edmonton. She also taught summer courses in the religious vacation schools, and prepared children for receiving the sacraments in 40 communities in Saskatchewan, 14 in Alberta, and five in British Columbia. “Thousands of baptized children lack proper religious training,” she wrote. “Many attend public school, where no religious instruction is given and lack the opportunity of assisting at Holy Mass regularly. Instructions are necessary to make them better Catholics.” Other assignments combined her clerical and teaching skills at the Toronto archdiocesan office of the Propagation of the Faith, in a children’s hospital in St. John’s, and at Sacred Heart parish, Edson.¹⁸

From 1945 to 1960, the Regina archbishops publicly acknowledged the sisters' missionary contributions, listing the SOS as recipients of the yearly archdiocesan fundraising campaign. While Archbishop Monahan, in the 1940s had deemed the correspondence school space as inadequate, it took two decades before plans and blueprints replaced wishful thinking. Under the mandate of Archbishop Michael O'Neill, Father Walter Wadey, the cathedral's rector, supervised the construction of a building designed to accommodate the school and the sisters' residence. The archdiocese donated \$100,000, almost 60 per cent of the cost. Built on the school's original site, the contemporary-style house, which was enclosed by monastery-like wall, contained offices, a large basement storage room with shelves for the lessons, and a large dining and living room for hosting groups. Opened in 1962, the centre provided the space to accommodate the varied changes to religious education during the next three decades.¹⁹

The Religious Correspondence Schools

After returning from Stettler in October 1925, Sister McNally, distressed at not be able to complete her religion classes, typed and mailed the remaining lessons. In a report to Archbishop McNeil, she suggested starting "a correspondence course in Christian doctrine" to isolated families.²⁰ Her proposal resembled *Sunday School by Post*, started by the Anglican Church in 1907, and a limited catechism course by mail undertaken by the Sisters of St. Benedict. By 1929, the Anglican initiative had grown to 20,000 members in the west, who were receiving instructional material to conduct Sunday schools in schoolhouses or homes in the absence of a church.²¹ In December 1925, Father Daly advised Sister McNally to approach Father James McGuigan, vicar of the archdiocese of Edmonton, about her proposal for a correspondence course in catechism for the Catholics in outlying districts.²²

In gaining the approval of Edmonton Archbishop O'Leary, Sister McNally composed simple lessons with explanations of the Cath-

olic faith and accompanying questions for the student to answer. She typed the lessons, made as many carbon copies as possible, and sent them to families in the Stettler area. When the news spread of this program of religious education by correspondence, pastors in several rural towns sent names of children to be enrolled in this method. Through the Sisters of Providence at Rosary Hall, the sisters contacted the Catholic Business Girls Club, whose members volunteered to type the lessons.²³

By adapting the popular and successful form of long-distance education, the correspondence school overcame the obstacles of rural teaching encumbered by the vastness of the territory and poor transportation between the communities. The Anglicans had begun using this method in response to the problem of absenteeism among many Sunday school pupils in the diocese of Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan. The Anglican Sisters of St. John the Divine took charge of this correspondence work in Regina in 1926 and operated the program for the next 25 years. In soliciting names for the Regina school, Sister Barton received a list of 275 Catholic children enrolled in the Anglican school. Meanwhile, Father Daly studied the Anglican system to suggest adaptations.²⁴

In the summer of 1926, Sister Florence Regan succeeded Sister McNally in Edmonton. Under Sister Regan's experienced office management, the Edmonton mission flourished. A mimeograph and addressograph machine, which speedily duplicated lessons and letters, was delivered to the catechetical centre following a donation appeal published in *The Field at Home*. She also kept in touch with the CWL, the main source of the financial support, through addresses to their local meetings and provincial convention, reporting on the steady increase of the correspondence school enrolment. During the six-month experimental stage, the sisters corrected 1,685 lessons of the 2,819 mailed lessons, and received financial security with a \$100 monthly donation from Senator Frank O'Connor through the Catholic Church Extension Society.²⁵



Sisters Margaret Murphy and Gertrude Walsh (left) and Margaret Morgan (extreme right) in correspondence school office, Edmonton, 1932

The success of the Edmonton correspondence school warranted the purchase in 1927 of the catechetical lessons created by Monsignor Victor Day of Helena, Montana. By 1929, the 2,000 children enrolled in the correspondence school were sent these lessons, question sheets, and outline pictures, which covered the Apostles' Creed, the Sacraments, and First Communion.²⁶ A year later, registration had risen to 3,000 children from 750 families with an average of four children enrolled from each family. "We also send reading matter to these families. We have another list of between 300-400 families to whom we send literature, but who do not require lessons," Sister Chisholm reported to Archbishop McNeil.²⁷

The correspondence school offered an innovative and timely solution to families, who had "had little contact with the parish priest on account of long distances, road conditions and lack of transportation," noted Sister Morgan. "Our working space was very limited as we had to use the small dining room table for the work of sending out lessons, correcting lessons, wrapping papers and parcelling library books to send to the families."²⁸ Sister Black, superior in Halifax in the early 1930s, suggested a purse-sized leaflet, advertising the

catechetical school “that would appeal to mothers when they find themselves far from Church and school.”²⁹

In receiving student answers to lessons, Sister Alice Walsh described the teacher’s double-edged sword – as a penitential exercise in correction, and a positive exercise in watching student improvement. The answer sheets, she observed, possessed a charming personality with enclosures of cookie crumbs, grain kernels, tobacco and a hole burnt in the middle. Some responses brought smiles, including the elevation of St. Patrick to the third person in the Trinity and the devil’s chief work as shovelling coal.³⁰ Father Daly stressed that corrected lessons should carry a personal touch, “a word of praise or if necessary, a veiled reproach.”³¹ Sister Mary Harding, who corrected lessons at the Regina school from 1948 to 1956, explained the system. “There were six of us correcting lessons all the time. We sent them out as quickly as we could and sent the next lessons with them,” she also noted the benefits. “We would get nice little letters from the kids. I really enjoyed correcting the lessons. They would write little notes about what they were doing at home.”³²

By 1940, the enrolment in the six-year-old Regina school had grown to 7,000 students, encompassing families from the Saskatchewan dioceses of Gravelbourg, Prince Albert and Saskatoon as well as the Abbacy of St. Peter’s, Muenster. In seeing the school’s success, dioceses set up their own courses, and students in the SOS school were transferred to the new correspondence schools. The Ursuline Sisters of Bruno established a school for the St. Peter’s Abbacy in 1936, and the Sisters of Jesus and Mary followed suit for the Gravelbourg diocese in 1948 as did the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary for the Prince Alberta diocese in 1950s.³³

To teach correspondence students about the liturgical seasons and the Bible, Sister Gertrude Walsh wrote newsletters entitled *Child’s Pal* for Christmas, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost as well as six lessons from *Brief History of the Old Testament* out of the Edmonton school between 1934 and 1937.³⁴ Christmas letters from the bishops, mailed through the correspondence schools, created a sense of belonging,



Sisters work at the correspondence school, Regina, 1953. Front row: (l-r) Sisters Mary Harding, Evelyn Murphy. Back row: Sisters Winnifred Ingrouville, Ella Deland (standing), Margaret Morgan, Eileen Bridgeo.

as did a Marian Club initiated by the Regina sisters in 1935. The club was renamed Marian Crusade under the motto “All for Jesus through Mary.” In the interwar years, this crusade fostered devotion to Mary, the Blessed Mother, and fitted with the Church’s devotional exercises of novenas, 40 hours, holy hours, benediction, and processions to enhance the faith. The crusade encouraged the children in their studies and united them in prayer. Crusaders were required to recite three daily prayers of “Hail Mary” and to perform a kind act each day in her honour. In May 1936, Sister Alice Walsh organized a procession of Marian Crusaders at the newly formed Regina parish of Canadian Martyrs.³⁵

By the 1937 General Chapter meeting, the crusader membership had reached 5,000 and the chapter delegates decided that the institute would promote in favour of the Marian Crusade rather than Young Members of Christ the King, a similar devotional youth organization that had only 100 members. Sisters on summer catechetical tours were asked to organize a branch of the Marian Crusade in each parish, and some crusaders wore their badges to the summer school. The sisters created junior and senior contests for the crusaders, and the junior CWL members in Regina took charge of judging and selecting the winners.³⁶ In a further promotional of Marian devotion, Sister Alice Walsh received approval from Father Daniel Lord, SJ, to write six junior lessons under the title of *The Story of the Blessed Virgin and The Story of the Guardian Angels* from his book, *The Blessed Virgin*.³⁷

While the courses were free, appeals were made to families for financial contributions, such as \$1 for stamps to instruct a child for First Communion, or \$5 for stamps to enroll one child in the entire seven-year catechetical course. Other donations came from Apostolate Delegate Andrea Cassulo in Ottawa, seminaries, sodalities, students, the institute’s residential clubs and the 1939 Lenten stamp appeal, which amounted to \$569.33 from Regina.

Despite ongoing financial worries, the sisters appreciated the letters received from families, which demonstrated that the courses were meeting a felt need. “It is especially a benefit to country folk (like

myself) who can get to Church only once during the winter,” one writer noted. Another confirmed the convenience of home study. “We can study it any time and learn; but if we had to go to a place where catechism is taught, we might not be able to attend regularly.” The basic aim was realized from the comment, “There are certain things about the Church that we should know and would not know unless we took religious instructions by mail.” A family near Yellowknife remarked, “We are living out in an isolated bush camp 50 miles from town. Our only contact with the outside is by a small bush plane. It brings your interesting lessons. Both boys enjoy them.”³⁸

During the first 14 years, the priority was placed on the setting up the program. Little course revision was undertaken since they were similar to the curriculum used in the Catholic schools. Much of the content was contained in the catechism’s questions and answers, expressed in precise theological phrases that had been denounced by Archbishop McNeil as “stupid.” The sisters had received some criticism about the difficult, abstract, and philosophical vocabulary in Monsignor Day’s senior lessons. As a remedy, the sisters received permission in 1938 to switch to another series, *Jesus and I* by Father A.J. Heeg, SJ, which had been acclaimed enthusiastically in Catholic schools. The series followed a biblical approach and presented the “Good News of Jesus Christ” and salvation in simple language accompanied by colourful lifelike illustrations. A lesson about Jesus’ teaching was connected with the catechism’s summary of the principal truths of faith.³⁹

This emphasis on the bible provided a foundation for the future development of all religious teaching by the Sisters of Service. Regina Archbishop Peter Monahan encouraged Sister Barton to collaborate with Father Heeg in adapting the *Jesus and I* series for the First Communion correspondence lessons and offered to assist with the cost. This adaptation rearranged the text into 18 four-page booklets and accompanying question sheets of 25 questions, and formed the foundation for all future correspondence courses. Each lesson contained an outline of a picture based on scripture and a colouring game. The course prepared students not only for the sacraments

of First Confession and First Communion but also for subsequent instruction. The series was considered a good reference for adult converts as well. In November 1938, the sisters advised Archbishop Monahan of the progress of the adapted *Jesus and I* course and ordered the printing of 2,000 lessons each for the two Canadian correspondence schools. In 1940, the Archdiocese of St. Louis, Missouri, also started to use the adapted courses.⁴⁰

Sister Barton continued catechetical innovation. With the blessing of Archbishop Monahan and the author, she modified a series of pamphlets from the *King's Series* by Father William Raemers, C.Ss.R., and added illustrated stories into the correspondence lessons. Father A. McGolrick, the Regina diocesan censor and professor at the Regina Cleri Seminary, acted as the proof reader, and Sister Mary Regan typed the lessons. In 1939, this course of 28 illustrated lessons was completed, imprimatured by Archbishop Monahan, and copyrighted under the title *Queen of the Prairies Series*. The series, which was used until 1965, was requested by Ontario Catholic schools and was also translated into French.⁴¹ With the permission of the authors, Fathers G. Allard and Heeg, *The Story of the Mass* was adapted by Sister Mary Fitzgerald into 10 illustrated lessons entitled *The Mass*.⁴²

At the 1943 Chapter meeting, the delegates agreed on a name change to "Religious Schools of Correspondence" and on the schools' fundamental courses. Use of outlines of pictures for younger children also was adopted along with the issuing of certificates at the completion of the lessons. The certificates were suggested by Father Henry Carr, CSB, an early visitor to the novitiate and the president of St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon.⁴³

Course updates were constant. In the 1950s, a new kerygmatic method developed by Father Johannes Hofinger, SJ, spread among religious education circles as an improvement on the catechism. Derived from the Greek word *kerygma*, meaning proclamation, it stressed the joyful announcing of the Good News of Christ, the gospel and salvation, as a call to respond to God's love with faith and love, a further advance on Heeg's approach. An increased interest in bibli-



"Honor thy father and thy mother."

An excerpt from The Commandments of the Illustrated Catechism series, by Father A.J. Hegg, SJ., 1945

cal and liturgical studies as sources of spiritual growth led catechists to include the Bible and liturgy in their religion classes. When the kerygmatic method was introduced, parents were not informed and became distressed that their children could not recite from memory the answers that they had learned in their catechism classes. In response, the sisters introduced Heeg's new publication, *The Illustrated Catechism*, a revised version of the *Baltimore Catechism*, which followed the kerygmatic approach. In 1950, Sister Agnes Dwyer at the Fargo school requested questions to accompany *The Illustrated Catechism*. At Father Heeg's urging, Sister Margaret Morgan in Regina created a set of questions and answers for a correspondence course, which he praised. "It represents a great deal of work as is evident from the thoroughness which it shows."⁴⁴ The sisters' successful adaptations of *Jesus and I* and *The Illustrated Catechism* were used extensively in Canada and the United States.⁴⁵



Sister Mary Jackson at work in the Edmonton school, and Sister Lidwina Furman in the background, 1944

In another collaboration, Father Heeg and Sister Mary Jackson of the Edmonton correspondence school adapted correspondence courses from Heeg's texts on *The Apostles' Creed*, *Sacraments* and *The Commandments* for intermediate students (Grades 4-8) and senior students (Grades 9-12). A school teacher who had taught in Berlo, Bergfield, Camp Morton, and Christian Island, Sister Jackson was introduced to the institute's correspondence curriculum during a four-month stay at the Regina mission in 1938. She joined the Edmonton mission in 1949 until 1953. Her collaboration with Father Heeg during this time ushered in a new era of lessons. She also wrote a beginner's course on *The Sign of the Cross* and *First Communion*, which were used until 1965. Her later comprehensive lessons, *The Social Teachings of the Church* for Grades 10 to 12, were based on the papal encyclicals and her studies on the Church's social doctrine at St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia. Sister Jackson admitted that in writing all of these lessons, "I sweated over every word."⁴⁶



Sister Agnes Hearn and students, Crescent Lake, SK, 1945

Statistics on the religious schools of correspondence showed increasing enrolments in the 1950s with 72,892 lessons were corrected in 1953 to 103,344 in 1959. However, a report to the 1966 Chapter indicated a sharp decline in enrolment: 3,592 in the Regina archdiocese, 694 in Saskatoon, and 2,800 in the Edmonton, which encompassed students in Alberta, British Columbia, and the Northwest Territories.⁴⁷ Father Walter Fitzgerald, director of religious education at the Edmonton archdiocese, formed a catechetical team in 1967 to determine the feasibility of establishing rural parish schools. That same year, the sisters decided to close the catechetical mission, and purchased a new house to accommodate the Edmonton sisters. After consultation with the sisters, Edmonton Archbishop Anthony Jordan took over the correspondence work as an agency of the archdiocese moving it to O'Leary Hall on the lower level of St. Joseph's Basilica. Sisters Agnes Hearn, Margaret Morgan, and Edith Wayland were assigned to continue the correspondence work at the new location until correspondence courses ended in 1971 with the amalgamation of two correspondence schools in Regina under the National Office of Religious Education.⁴⁸

Religious Vacation Schools

Without doubt, the sisters looked forward to the religious vacation schools, realizing the institute's underlying aim as travelling mis-

sionaries to teach children, who would become the Church of tomorrow. For 40 years in more than 300 locations, every available sister was booked on these summer catechetical tours to teach the faith and to prepare hundreds of children to receive First Communion and Confirmation. Each town, village, church, and house encountered the inherent, adventurous spirit of the sisters.

The tours first started on a limited basis in 1926. Acting on the advice of Father Daly and Father McGuigan, the sisters in Edmonton contacted selected rural pastors in Alberta, offering to teach catechism during the summer months. At Spruce Grove, Warrickville, Kitscoty, Lloydminster, and Hastings Lake, classes of 15 to 28 children learned catechism, sang hymns, played games, and attended Mass and benediction.⁴⁹ The following summer, a longer and more ambitious tour of six weeks in rural Saskatchewan unfolded for Sisters Regan and Rodgers.⁵⁰ Sister Regan wrote of their aim: “Go into the by-ways and seek out the little ones who were not so fortunate as to attend a Catholic day school or Sunday school, and who, on account of existing circumstances, received very little instruction in their religion.”⁵¹ In all the tours, the sisters made certain that summer fun – picnics, games, and where possible, swimming – was integral to the summer school.

By 1929, three pairs of sisters were assigned to summer religious schools in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. On these tours, the sisters began to meet some of their students enrolled in the three-year-old correspondence school, and to visit other families and prospective students. Sisters Magdalen Barton and Teresa Chisholm described the informal nature of the religious vacation school in the central Alberta area of Clyde.

After each day’s visiting, we were glad to get “home” to our little sacristy room behind the altar of the old log church. Here, we had two shake-down beds. There were no locks on the doors. We hung our rosaries over the door latches and put our trust in God. It was great to have a quiet place to say our prayers. After a few days of visiting these scattered homes, we prepared to teach the children at the church and to prepare them for the sacraments ... Twenty-five arrived the first day – some on



The Saint George van as depicted in The Field at Home, 1932

horseback, some in wagons, many walked several miles.⁵²

During that summer, Sisters Alice Walsh and Gertrude Walsh tackled a six-week tour of the outlying locations of the Redemptorist parish in Yorktown, Saskatchewan. In Gladwin, 28 children attended after Father George Fee announced at the monthly Mass that the sisters were coming.

They [the children] came in the morning, brought their lunch and stayed until late afternoon. We distribute catechisms, prayer beads and medals, sending in their names to the sisters to be enrolled in the correspondence lessons, organized a YMCK group. Closed the week with a picnic for the children. Staying in a three-room log house with a family. Driving on a narrow trail, the car went over a slight embankment, no amount of pushing would not budge it. Sitting on the car's running board and no sooner stopped saying the rosary with intense fervour, a farmer leading a horse, who pulled the car onto the road. We did not tell him that he was a gift from heaven.

The six weeks sped on. During that time, we taught in nine districts and contacted 200 children. ... We have been face-to-face with real facts. We have seen conditions exactly as they are, and we know that they are deplorable. We have met children of sixteen who have not yet made their First Communion, and who have no idea of what the Mass means. We have lived right in with the people, and have, therefore, a very clear knowledge of their sufferings and their difficulties.⁵³

Meanwhile in Manitoba, Sister Catherine Donnelly, teaching at the Vilna public school, and Sister Frances Church, superior of the Winnipeg residence, journeyed to six different locations. In Roblin, the unfinished church had been deemed unfit for winter, and only a few people with cars could get to the next closest church. "So people have given up going to Mass, and the three or four children get no religious teaching except from the Salvation Army located in that town, or from some other non-Catholic organization," Sister Donnelly observed. "There is every evidence of irregular attendance at school, and the consequent backwardness of the children makes teaching of catechism difficult."⁵⁴ The sisters obtained the children's names to receive lessons from the Edmonton correspondence school.

The next summer, Sisters Barton and Chisholm were assigned to the Alberta coal-mining area south of Edson and arrived in Cadomin on 11 August 1930. The lessons were well attended by enthusiastic children, particularly attracted by the prospect of winning prizes. Sitting on a high plateau surrounded by mountains, Sister Barton considered the summer experience. "I think of how privileged I am to have been here. I have gained a great deal spiritually, mentally and physically."⁵⁵ On the last evening in the coal mining camp of Mountain Park, the sisters, with two young guides, climbed Mount Harris. Past the exquisite wild mountain flowers and unusual vegetation, they "scrambled over shale until we reached the very top. The sun was just setting over the encircling snow-capped peaks. From the summit, what a magnificent never-to-be-forgotten view! The camp far below was but a tiny speck!"⁵⁶

To meet the demands of travel to isolated areas, Father Daly solicited donations and arranged for a custom caravan built by Wilson



Sister Rita Hurley, First Communicants, friends and family, Lauderdale, AB, 1941

Motors Body Company of Canada Ltd., a Toronto firm specializing in streamlined delivery vans and tractor trailers. The idea for the mission van likely was triggered by a 1929 newspaper article about nine caravans used by the Anglican Church to cover an average of 2,000 miles through the prairies to start Sunday Schools. Initiated in 1920, the caravans with a driver and a teacher travelled through the country to hold meetings and visit settlers to enrol their children in the *Sunday School by Post*.⁵⁷ Similarly, the institute's van was built on a Chevrolet truck chassis for \$1,700 and was equipped with space to sleep and eat, and replaced the unreliable accommodation. On the doors, the words, *Sisters of Service, I Have Come to Serve* and *Saint George*, were inscribed. Blessed in October 1931 by Archbishop McNeil in front of St. Michael's Cathedral, the van was exhibited the following day on the university grounds of St. Michael's College during a rally of the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade. Two weeks later, two Scarboro Foreign Mission Society priests, bound for the China missions, drove the van to the Vancouver residence. Gas for the 3,000-mile (4,800 kilometre) journey cost \$61.74.⁵⁸

Sisters Church and newly professed Sister Margaret Murphy embarked on the van's inaugural catechetical excursion in May 1932 on Vancouver Island at the request of Victoria Bishop Gerald Murray, a former Redemptorist Provincial Superior. The two sisters in the



Sister Catherine Donnelly, axe in hand, chops a tree to clear a road, near Springhouse, BC, May 1934. The Essex Super Six automobile is in the foreground.

van collected children for the day-long lessons. In the evening they cooked their meal on a small stove and slept in the van. However, Sister Church's expert driving of the treacherous narrow roads did not ease the anxiety of her passenger. "Will I ever forget the swaying of the van negotiating the hairpin curves? Sister instructed me well. 'Pray the rosary, and don't you ever scream!'" Sister Murphy recalled. "When we began to roll backwards on a curved hill, my only reaction was a fervent 'St. Christopher, do your stuff.'"⁵⁹ During the school year, the van was borrowed by the Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of Pembroke, Ontario to transport children to the Chinese Catholic Centre in Vancouver.

A second catechetical vehicle, a house-trailer, was the gift of the CWL of the Redemptorist parish of St. Peter's in Saint John. Attached to a car, the trailer, named St. Peter's van, also contained beds and a convenient kitchenette. Blessed by Archbishop Sinnott in June 1933, the van was the month-long home of Sister Alice Walsh and Sister Mistress Margaret Guest during the catechetical tour of Manitoba.⁶⁰

Neither of these vans was used on the spring and summer tours of Sisters Catherine Donnelly and Irene Faye in 1934 and 1936. Instead, on both occasions, they travelled in an Essex Super-Six au-

tomobile to Father A.L. McIntyre's parish, located within in the Cariboo district, a rugged ranching region in the central interior of British Columbia. This car had been used in 1930 by Sisters Church and McConway on a similar Cariboo tour. Sister Donnelly, now 50 years old and based at the Edmonton catechetical centre, was matched with the much younger Sister Faye assigned to the Vancouver mission. When not boarding with local families, they camped in the wilderness, folding the car seats into a bed.

From a prearranged timetable of two-week sessions in each location, the sisters taught catechism in the local schoolhouses and sometimes in open fields. Sister Faye used singing to capture the interest of the children, and rehearsed hymns for the forthcoming Mass at the end of the two weeks. Occasionally, Sister Donnelly also found time to call on other settlers in the area, including non-Catholic families. In arranging for a baptism, the two sisters on horseback accompanied three other women to visit an infant and her mother on an isolated sheep ranch, which was only accessible by a narrow stony trail. The younger Sister Faye wore trousers underneath her uniform while Sister Donnelly, an experienced rider, draped a wide black scarf across the saddle; her legs hung down on either side with the ends of the scarf folded loosely and pinned at the ankles in makeshift stirrups. From her writings, Sister Donnelly was invigorated by the challenges, adventures, and achievements to teach the faith to these settlers' children. The twin summer tours demonstrated her vision of the community as itinerant teachers of the faith.⁶¹

Following the two tours by Sisters Donnelly and Faye, Sister Winnifred Ingrouville and her portable organ travelled in four British Columbia summer tours, teaching catechism and preparing children to receive the sacraments. In a letter written after the 1937 Cariboo tour, she reported, "We had our small organ with us, and the children were delighted when it was time for choir practice. We had hymns on Sunday at Mass also. The children would say as we came along: 'Here comes Father with his church in his suitcase and the Sisters with the organ in their suitcase.'"⁶²



Sister Margaret Morgan and First Communion class, Kennedy, SK, 1950

Religious vacation schools In the Regina archdiocese were already well-organized as Sister Barton discovered in May 1935 when Father J.E. Cahill, chancellor, called a business meeting. Under the practices initiated by Archbishop McGuigan, a three-week course consisted of either the Apostles' Creed, the sacraments, the commandments, or First Communion preparation. Conducted by priests, seminarians, sisters, and lay catechists, the summer schools continued in 27 regional centres until the middle of the 1960s. For the first three years, three CWL subdivisions and high school students from Sacred Heart Academy, a private school under the Sisters of Our Lady of the Mission, prepared the project books. A sister went from parish to parish to direct the preparation of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) kits for teachers and workbooks for 3,000 students.⁶³

For the 1935 assignments from the Regina archdiocese, the sisters travelled again to the Redemptorist parish in Yorkton. Sister Barton reported on the choirs organized by Sister Paradis and on meetings with families.

We visited many families, mostly in the evenings, and incidentally, learned to discuss the crops in a fairly intelligent way. It was really a pleasure to talk to the farm people. They are very frank and sin-

cere. They certainly toil from sunrise to sunset. We can learn many lessons in industry from them. The people everywhere received us well and seemed most grateful for our interest in their children.⁶⁴

Sister Alice Walsh described travelling from village to village with large rolls of coloured illustrations of biblical stories and parables, the rosary, and the sacraments as “six weeks of talking and laughing and singing with children we have learned to know and love through the correspondence classes, six weeks of golden summery days; of long buggy rides across the prairies; of sweet clover perfumed air; of new surroundings, new people, new customs.”⁶⁵

The religious vacation school in Tupper Creek, British Columbia, where German Sudetan refugees settled in 1940, manifested the institute’s early goals to be the Church’s presence from the ports to the homesteads. Father Joseph Owens, C.Ss.R. requested two sisters to reinforce his weekly teaching of Sudetan children. While the settlers put much energy into clearing the land, he wanted their faith “to be a source of strength and consolation in their efforts to build up new homes to replace those they had lost in Europe.”⁶⁶ However, he had encountered the settlers’ anti-clerical prejudice, which had festered in Sudetanland. With the approval of Bishop Ubald Langlois, vicar apostolic of Grouard, two sisters arrived on July 7. When they visited the settlers in their homes to explain the purpose of the summer school, the Sudetans recognized the uniform as worn by the same sisters who had greeted them at the ports and train stations on their arrival in Canada. The Sudetans welcomed the sisters, who extended religious instruction to the evenings in order to visit children who lived some distance from the church. Father Owens recalled that the many flowers on the altar on the day of First Communion “brought an atmosphere of spiritual joy, even in the most humble of churches.”⁶⁷

The summer tours flourished into the 1960s, reaching a peak of 72 religious vacation schools, instructing 2,623 students, and visiting 739 families in 1959.⁶⁸ The final catechetical tour was held in 1967 following the building of more churches, and the growth of Catholic school systems.

Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD)

The religious correspondence and vacation schools were apostolates of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD), a organization evolved from the Council of Trent (1545-1563) as the Church's formal official organization dedicated to religious education. – yet the Sisters were forefront on the prairies for religious education. In 1935, a decree of the Sacred Congregation of the Sacraments in Rome specified that catechetical offices be created in each diocese and that each parish establish CCD instruction of Catholic children attending public schools and adults new to the faith.⁶⁹ In support to bishops in fulfilling this decree, the sisters directed CCD offices in Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Nelson, BC and Grand Forks, North Dakota. Toronto Archbishop McGuigan organized an archdiocesan CCD convention in January 1937, in which he stressed that the greatest enemy of the Catholic faith was “ignorance of her doctrines, her ideals and her great influence on the souls of all through her Sacraments and Sacred Liturgy.”⁷⁰

Sister Monica Meade, an informal promoter of CCD, was considered the guiding spirit of catechetical and group work in the Winnipeg archdiocese during her seven years until 1948 at its Catholic Central Bureau. She organized and directed the Marian Clubs and Sunday school centres for Catholic children attending public schools. Sister Alice Walsh worked in the Winnipeg CCD office for 14 years until 1966, and with Sister Rosemarie Hudon, from 1957 to 1961, arranged religious vacation schools and religion classes for public school children; trained, aided, and assigned catechists to those classes; and distributed CCD material to pastors, Catholic Youth Organization leaders, Catholic Action, and study groups.⁷¹

In 1952, Edmonton Archbishop Hugh MacDonald organized a regional CCD congress to promote religious education, and Sister Mary Jackson addressed the congress, outlining the CCD work of the SOS correspondence schools. A year later, Archbishop Mac-

Donald selected her to establish and administer a CCD office and to organize religious education in the archdiocese's parishes. In the summer of 1954, Sisters Jackson and Alice Walsh attended a CCD course at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. When Sister Jackson returned, Archbishop MacDonald also placed her in charge of the Catholic Information Centre in Edmonton.⁷²

In advance of a CCD program, Bishop Philip Pocock of Saskatoon requested a Sister of Service in the spring of 1951 to conduct a diocesan needs survey. The appointee, Sister Rita MacLellan, left her teaching position at Berlo and enrolled in the CCD program of the Franciscan Sisters of Baker City, Oregon. That September, she addressed a meeting of the diocesan priests to outline the CCD program, and visited every parish, public school, and Catholic school to obtain the names of all Catholic children. Following the survey, she was in charge of the diocesan CCD office for three years to start classes for children attending public schools, train and assist lay catechists, and provide CCD material to parishes throughout the diocese.⁷³

At the encouragement of the General Council, sisters studied new teaching approaches to scripture, theology, church history, liturgy and catechetics during the 1950s when CCD was being promoted in dioceses throughout Canada. Sister Frances Coffey, who attended the CCD's leadership course with Sister Alice Walsh at Catholic University in 1956, and Sister Carmelita Camozzi, established the CCD office in the diocese of Nelson, BC at the invitation of Bishop Emmett Doyle in 1962. The pair visited many families in each parish, organized parish schools of religion, and prepared catechists to teach religion. For the next four summers, Sister Coffey returned to the university to complete a masters of theology degree in 1966. For seven years, six sisters worked in the Nelson diocesan office.⁷⁴

Diocese of Fargo, North Dakota

Fargo, 1939-1962

Father Coughlan fostered an ambition for the institute to expand into the United States, believing that many young women would be attracted to the institute “to do for neglected souls what other sisterhoods cannot or will not do.”⁷⁵ In March 1937, Father Daly received a request from Father William Mulloy, president of the U.S. National Catholic Rural Life Conference, for sisters to come to Fargo, North Dakota. Father Mulloy had met two sisters in Western Canada whose spirit and zeal “has left a lasting impression upon me ... and there is a place in our rural diocese (Fargo) for this community.”⁷⁶ A month later, Sisters Barton and Leona Trautman continued to impress the Americans when they spoke about their catechetical work at a meeting in Father Mulloy’s parish of Grafton, North Dakota. A year later, Sister Barton accompanied Sister General Margaret Guest on a fact-finding and feasibility tour of the Fargo diocese as well as participating in sessions at the annual Catholic Rural Life Conference. With urging from Archbishop McGuigan and Father Daly, the General Council accepted the invitation of Fargo Bishop Aloysius Muench in 1939 to establish a CCD religious education mission in the diocese. Under a contract with the diocese, the council insisted on each sister receiving a salary, of \$25 per month in line with institute’s policy of payment. High hopes were raised for American vocations to the institute’s untraditional religious life with an expansion in the U.S.⁷⁷

Chauffeured by Father Molloy, three sisters left Winnipeg on 20 August 1939 and crossed the North Dakota border on the day-long trip by car to Fargo. Upon arriving, founding superior Sister Domitilla Morrison, Sister Edith Wayland, and Sister Mary O’Kane were greeted with Bishop Muench’s “outstretched hand and welcoming fatherly smile.”⁷⁸ For the first two months, they stayed at St. John’s Hospital, at the convent of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. The sisters travelled to parishes throughout the diocese on an infor-

mal speaking and information-gathering tour. Sister Superior Morrison, a former office clerk from North Sydney, Nova Scotia, had the necessary organizational ability and experience for this mission acquired during her appointments in two women's residences and in Camp Morton as a teacher.

A census of a city parish jointly undertaken by the sisters and members of the Legion of Mary uncovered the poor, the sick, and non-practising Catholics within the parish boundaries. That spring, the sisters opened a mission centre for children whose parents had drifted from the faith. It was located in two small basement rooms of a rooming house located in the poorest section of the city. These children were taken to Sunday Mass, and participated in social activities such outings to see movies, and take part in Halloween and Christmas parties. During the first summer of vacation schools, the sisters instructed 230 children, 37 of whom made their First Communion, and taught 29 boys to serve Mass. In one parish, a unit of the CYO for high school students was organized, and in another, a Legion of Mary was formed, and a lay catechist volunteered to teach catechism weekly at a public school. In a third parish, the sisters visited 454 Catholic and non-Catholic families to complete a religious survey. "At one home, we encountered a kindly old gentleman who gave us enough information to assure us there was 'no Catholic blood' in his family. As we were about to leave, we said to him, 'Are there any Catholics around here?' Very startled, he replied, 'My God, I hope not!'"⁷⁹

A correspondence school with a similar curriculum as their Canadian counterpart began in October 1941 in a large house at 401, Seventh Avenue South, in Fargo which the diocese had purchased for that purpose. The first enrolment was limited to 135 students from the six rural districts, who had attended the vacation schools run by the sisters. By 1943, the correspondence courses reached 620 students, who were graded according to regular classes from Grades 1 to 12. Assistance came from the Junior Legion of Mary of St. Anthony's parish, where the sisters were members, and 20 senior girls of the parish school folded, sorted, and arranged lessons, stuffed enve-



Catechetical centre in Fargo, 1941

lopes, and mailed the yearly financial appeal. High school volunteers from helped with typing and setting up lessons while four parents typed, filed, and corrected lessons. Grocery showers were held by St. Mary's Guild and St. Ansgar's League and children collected money through their mission clubs for stamps to mail the lessons.⁸⁰ Meanwhile in the basement of the house, the sisters organized after-school classes in religion and crafts. A Marian Club, a replica of the one in Regina, was established, and members gathered for weekly social events and monthly meetings.⁸¹

Meanwhile, the city religion classes that first attracted 200 children in 1942 jumped to 472 in 1945. Similarly, attendance almost doubled to 222 in 1943, and again in 1945 when 392 students enrolled in 12 locations. For the larger number of classes, lay catechists assisted and additional sisters came from Canada.⁸² When Sister Morrison's term ended in 1945 with an appointment as novice mistress in Toronto, the six-year growth of the catechetical mission was published in the *Catholic Action News*. A total of 50 religious vacation schools had been held; 1,729 children attended city religious instructions; 252 were prepared for First Communion, and 253 for Confirmation. Over the same period, 2,821 students were enrolled in the correspondence school, and the sisters visited 1,721 families and 442 hospital patients.⁸³



Sister Domitilla Morrison and catechetical students, St. John's, ND, 1943

New elements of the mission evolved under Sister Morrison's successor, Sister Agnes Dwyer, an experienced teacher in prairie rural schools. At the request of Bishop Muench, she prepared an illustrated children's book for mothers of preschoolers. She selected 40 coloured illustrations depicting the life of Christ from infancy to the ascension and wrote simple instructions for each one. Mother-teacher clubs were encouraged to use Sister Dwyer's manual.⁸⁴ Upon a request by the city's Catholic Welfare Bureau, Sister Lydia Tyszko joined the staff in September 1946 for three years and also helped with the catechetical program on weekends and during the summer.⁸⁵ Starting in 1946, a sister taught religion and directed the choir in Argusville, southeast of Fargo.

Throughout the 1950s, the catechetical numbers of the correspondence school increased steadily. In 1951, 12,878 lessons were corrected out of the 22,974 mailed and 461 children were instructed in 13 religious vacation schools. In 1955, a total of 17,025 lessons were corrected of the 17,783 mailed lessons, and 341 children attended nine religious vacation schools. In comparison, a total of 18,844 of the 20,215 mailed lessons were corrected, and 295 children were instructed in seven religious vacation schools in 1960.⁸⁶

In October 1961, Bishop Leo Dworschak, the successor to Bishop Muench, announced the establishment of a diocesan CCD office within a year. The withdrawal of 19 Sisters of Presentation from parochial schools in order to upgrade their teaching qualifications highlighted the urgent need for CCD. The catechism program was introduced in the city's parish schools of religion all within the bishop's tight schedule of one year. Many members of religious communities, including Sisters Margaret Ready, Hilda Lunney, and Morrison (who returned in 1958), attended the month-long CCD summer school. Sisters Morrison and Ready became involved in the teacher-training program, directing a course for parents of First Communicants. At St. Anthony's parish, Sister Morrison was named as supervisor of the parish school of religion, which officially opened in September 1962 and involved 317 children, 34 teachers, helpers, secretaries, and interested parents. At the end of April 1963, the correspondence work was discontinued in favour of CCD teacher training. To accommodate this shift in priorities, the sisters moved to the diocesan education office in Grand Forks, ending 14 years and the efforts of 17 sisters in Fargo.⁸⁷

Grand Forks, 1963-1968

The quartet of Sisters Morrison, Ready, Rosemarie Hudon, and Eileen Bridgeo moved to Grand Forks in July 1963 and into a former rectory at 918 Columbia Road. In time for the fall schedule, Sister Morrison, the office manager, Sister Ready, and secretary Betty Metcalfe set up the office. Sisters Ready and Hudon led workshops about the catechetical programs for lay religion teachers in the northern part of the diocese. Sister Morrison managed the CCD office and Religion Information Center until 1966, when Sister Ready succeeded her. Sister Hudon, joined by Sister Helen Hayes, delivered up to eight lectures a week to lay religion teachers. Sister Hayes added a popular musical element at folk Masses, playing the guitar and also her small portable organ brought from Canada. Elected to the diocese's Pastoral and Apostolic Council, she was also a member of the National Council of Family Relations.⁸⁸ In February 1968,

Sister Hayes was named as the diocese's acting director of religious education.

Due to pressing requests for the sisters in Canada, the General Council decided to close the mission in the Fargo diocese at the end of June 1968, with Sister Hayes continuing on for one additional year to assist with the CCD work. Despite petitions filled with signatures of priests, sisters, and laity requesting that Sister Hayes remain, the mission ended in May 1969. Sisters Ready, Hudon, and Hayes attended a testimonial dinner in honour of the institute's 30 years and the 21 sisters ministering in the Fargo diocese and in 285 rural areas, where families had received the correspondence lessons.⁸⁹

The Sisters of Service taught the Catholic faith to so many western families at a time when pioneering Catholic settlers were often isolated from the Church. The generalized wording of the rule and the flexibility of movement gave the sisters wide scope to create, organize and deliver religious education. The sisters were energized with the challenges of developing and marking the lessons while keeping the faith among the isolated rural students. The summer catechetical tours offered the sisters a more personal connection with the students and their families as well as the opportunity to enjoy contemporary life. In all aspects of the religious education program, sisters relied on lay people from businesswomen, CWL members, Legion of Mary, high school students and farm families to help them carry out their apostolate.

Chapter Six

Home Away from
Home:
The Women's
Residences

To institute hostels in the large distributing centres for Catholic women, principally immigrants, place them in suitable places of employment, and keep in constant touch with them in view of their spiritual welfare.

To help the immigrants to understand their new environment, teach them the elements of true citizenship; and assist them in every possible way during this crucial and trying time.

To institute Residential Clubs for Catholic women, principally immigrants and single unattached Catholic young women whose homes are not in the centre in which the club is located; to place these women in suitable employment and keep in touch with them in view of their spiritual welfare.

Rules and Constitutions of the Sisters of Service, 1922, 1934, 1948

While Archbishop of Vancouver, Neil McNeil held a particular sympathy for the young women who were attracted to the cities in great numbers to work as clerks, stenographers, and bookkeepers. With the best boarding and apartment houses beyond their financial means, the archbishop expressed concern of their social isolation, of women staying in a lonely room, sowing the seeds of despair and or perhaps to Communism. In October 1912, he urged businessmen to build accommodation for female workers as a business project, similar to one in New York City.¹

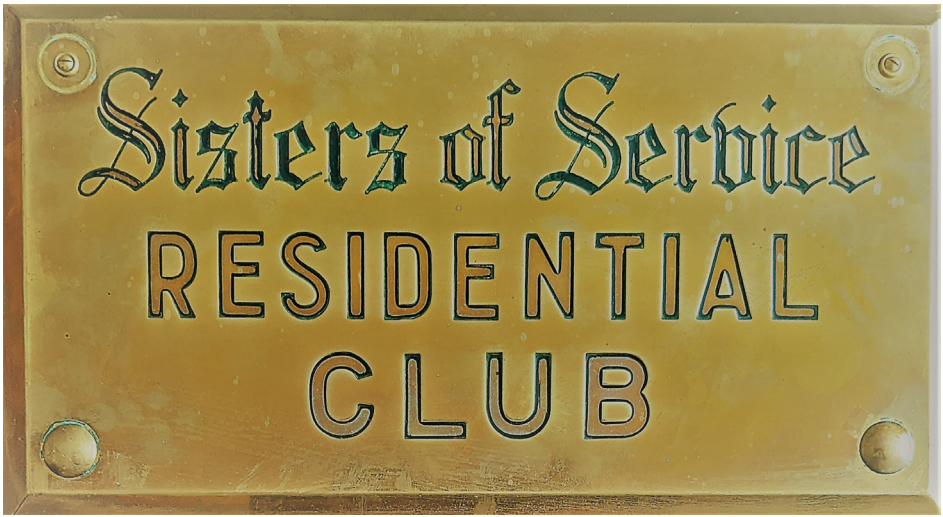
In the early 20th century, safe accommodation emerged as a social issue for young women working in cities. These trained office workers welcomed technological changes, especially the telephone and the typewriter, which had replaced personal, handwritten business correspondence. Women workers became a necessity during the First World War as men joined the Canadian war effort on the battlefields. The war and women's suffrage energized and united women, accelerating the movement towards making women's presence in the workforce visible, more acceptable, and mobile. It was from this demographic of young working women that the Sisters of Service attracted the majority of their entrants.

Early in the founding, Father Daly approached McNeil, now the archbishop of Toronto, about opening a Catholic hostel as an alter-

native to the downtown Toronto Canadian Women's Hostel, government-sponsored lodging for immigrants from the British Isles. Under the Empire Settlement Act, passed in 1922, Canadian women's hostels received a grant and a per diem allowance, an amount covering 24 to 48 hours of free accommodation, for each immigrant seeking employment. Federal employment bureaus assisted in placing immigrants with employers.²

As immigration numbers climbed as the result of the 1922 empire settlement plan, the urgency of establishing hostels for female immigrants seeking employment as domestic servants took priority for Father Daly. In the previous decade, a series of Catholic boarding houses solely for working women, under the name of Rosary Hall, had been opened in eight cities, including Toronto, Ottawa, and Edmonton.³ The plight of unaccompanied immigrant women, Father Daly believed, required immediate attention by the Church and the country. "Of all those who come to our country there are none ... more exposed to danger and in need of help and protection,"⁴ he wrote.

The CWL was a willing partner in this endeavour, formalizing its commitment at the 1922 convention with a declaration to support the SOS "as one of its national works."⁵ The opening of the six SOS hostels in Toronto, Halifax, Montreal, Winnipeg, Edmonton, and Vancouver were coordinated with the CWL branches in those cities. Each hostel provided an employment placement service and was recommended by Catholic emigration organizations in Great Britain. Lady Margaret Kerr of the Catholic Enquiry Office in Edinburgh, Scotland, had toured Canada in 1930 to interview Scottish women who were assisted by the office. She reported to Father Daly that the SOS hostels as "quite the best among the many which Canada has opened to befriend the girls."⁶ She added, "I heard nothing but the most enthusiastic gratitude from the girls for the sympathy [and] interest shown them by the Sisters in all their joys [and] troubles. I have received many letters from the parents of your new Canadians telling me how they thank God for the Sisters of Service."⁷



Brass plate from the residential club in Vancouver

The Canadian government's assisted settlement program came to an end with the onset of the Depression.⁸ As a result of the drop in immigration, the SOS extended hospitality to young Canadian women from towns and farms who came to the cities seeking work as domestic servants. The three residences established in Ottawa, Saskatoon, and St. John's provided accommodation for students. In each house, the sisters created a homelike atmosphere, "a home away from home," counselled the young women, allaying their anxieties, and introduced life skills. While the residences shared a similar aim, each developed autonomously under the direction of the sister superior and was influenced by its location.

In accordance with the rule, the sisters ensured that the residences became social centres, open to both current and former residents, who formed residential clubs under the patronage of St. Anthony. Former residents returned on their days off to socialize and join the activities, classes, and study clubs. Residents and club members were offered the opportunity to practice the faith by attending Mass, benediction, and recitation of the rosary in the residence chapel and joining the retreats, days of recollection, pilgrimages to a shrine, and devotional processions.

When the federal grant and per diem allowance ended in 1930, the hostels were accepted as member agencies of local umbrella charitable organizations, including Red Feather, Community Chest, United Community Fund, and later, United Appeal. Despite the economic depression of the 1930s, domestic workers continued to be in demand and the sisters introduced training courses in domestic services at the hostels. In Winnipeg, and later Montreal, the sisters also screened prospective employers. Inside and outside the residences, the sisters performed acts of charity by distributing clothes and visiting the sick and imprisoned. The residential club members helped the SOS western missions by remailing Catholic literature and sending small donations. On the weekends, the sisters taught religion classes to students of local public schools.

In the discussion about residences during the 1943 Chapter meeting, the delegates approved the name change to the “Sisters of Service Residential Clubs” to better reflect their essence. At the next Chapter meeting in 1948, the delegates changed the rule to read: “To institute Residential Clubs for Catholic women, principally immigrants and single unattached Catholic young women whose homes are not in the centre in which the club is located; to place these women in suitable employment and keep in touch with them in view of their spiritual welfare.”⁹ During that Chapter, the policies of the residences were tightened and clarified.

The clubs do not accept, pregnant girls, girls of social diseases, girls afflicted with epileptic seizures and mental illness. “Home away from home” to a girl coming to the city to earn her living between 16 and 40. The Sisters of Service are justified in receiving public funds to aid the work of prevention and rehabilitation. Other agencies were sought if a girl became “incorrigible.” Sisters with an aptitude for social service work should be given a professional training.¹⁰

In the postwar era, the arrival of displaced persons (DPs) under the national employment program from the refugee camps in Europe revived the settlement element of the rule. Although DPs were

supplied accommodation by their employers, the residential clubs opened their doors to the DPs, who joined in the social events, took English language courses, and organized their own gatherings.

Most sisters were appointed to one of the residences as a first assignment. The residence work, which consumed one-third of the SOS personnel, called for household and nurturing skills, and provided opportunities to enhance sisters' administrative abilities. Through daily contact with the young women, the sisters remained in touch with contemporary issues affecting women's lives. Sister Rita Sullivan, appointed to the Halifax residence from 1982 to 1991, recalled, "I liked the girls. They reminded me of myself at that age."¹¹ The sisters possessed pride of ownership in the houses, updating the interior and exterior, shopping for household items like linens, drapery fabric, and kitchen appliances, and undertaking major renovations and additions. In the 1950s, ladies' auxiliaries, composed of SOS family and friends, emerged as the main fundraisers for these projects.

During the postwar decades, the residence sisters adapted to changing circumstances and kept pace with modern young women. Eventually, there were only a few obligatory rules including mealtimes, evening curfew, and no smoking and drinking. The 1966 Chapter strongly recommended that residences be retained as a vital part of SOS apostolate. However, as Sister General Mary Reansbury observed, "Unless something is done to update this apostolate, it will phase out in spite of us."¹²

Indeed, the era of the women's residences ended as swiftly as it had begun in 1923. Between 1967 and 1973, eight of the nine residences were closed. Costly renovations and repairs to five of the older houses contributed to their demise as did the steady decline of available sisters. No new sisters were entering this social services field with the appropriate professional training, to replace the experienced sisters who were ill, retiring, or training in another area of work. In 1968, 39 sisters were assigned to the residences, and over half (21 sisters) were 50 years and older. Only four sisters were in the 20 to

30 age group.¹³ The original aim of the residences as a short-term shelter and protection for Catholic women immigrants had shifted in the 1930s to care for young women from rural areas who were leaving home and seeking work in the cities. By the 1960s, however, most residents were students from a variety of backgrounds, no longer inclusive to Catholics and to short stays. The legacy of the residential clubs is acknowledged in the heritage designation of four of the houses.

Toronto, 1923-1968

The location of a women's hostel in a wealthy residential area of Toronto was an unlikely start for an institute dedicated to the most abandoned but Sister Kathleen Schenck, the superior of the institute's first mission, was undeterred. As a former window dresser for a department store, she created a homelike, welcoming atmosphere in the hostel that would be replicated in residences across the country. In the hostel's first year under the management of the CWL, the majority of the 40 residents had arrived to seek jobs as domestic servants under the empire settlement scheme. As part of this policy, the government reimbursed immigrants for the cost of travel (£3.5 in 1923) and paid for two nights' accommodation at the Toronto hostel. In a 1926 federal report on immigration and colonization, the hostel was acknowledged and praised, "The Sisters of Service have been especially successful in their work amongst girls."¹⁴ The hostel's register in 1929 listed more than 400 names of women from Scotland, Ireland, and England who had landed in the port of Quebec City. An in-house employment service quickly placed them with prospective employers in private homes or with other religious congregations.¹⁵

When the numbers of immigrants declined steadily in the hostel to only 100 in 1930, Sister Schenck therefore turned her attention to the immigrant programs at the Catholic Settlement House, a social and cultural centre adjacent to the Redemptorist St. Patrick's Church. For two years until 1933, she and Sister Pauline Coates assisted the German-speaking Catholics in adjusting to Canadian



Front exterior of 4 Wellesley Place, Toronto, 1940

urban life. Settlement House offered pastoral care along with kindergarten, day care, language classes, social events and a library for the German immigrants, who were unwelcomed after the death and injury of 240,000 Canadian soldiers in the First World War. Although long hours, Sister Coates described this hands-on assignment of visiting homes, providing after school care for children and classes for women, and along with organizing concerts “as the work I loved the most.”¹⁶

When British immigration eased, the bedrooms at 4 Wellesley were shared by young women coming from towns and farms to work in the city, usually as domestic servants. Since a majority of the newly-formed St. Anthony’s club members were employed as maids, the club organized the first Domestic Workers’ Convention in Canada. The four-day conference in April 1938 attracted 120 club members, who attended the opening Mass, a banquet, and presented reports from affiliated clubs in Winnipeg, Edmonton, and Ottawa. An evening session of 160 employers and employees discussed workplace issues, provincial training courses, federal employment services, and the process of applying for a job. A paper by the club president



Sister Kathleen Schenck, former resident and their children on the residence ground, Toronto, 1934



Residence picnic on the grounds of Senator O'Connor's estate with Sisters Joan Coffey and Nora FitzPatrick in the background, Toronto, 1952

recommended that employers set standard hours as well as provide comfortable quarters and suitable workplace equipment. For the woman domestic servant, the convention, which also included an exhibit of home cooking and crafts, conveyed a greater appreciation of her work. Perhaps for the first time, these women realized that they had “a place in society.”¹⁷

The club’s first British immigrants, now married women, took the nickname of The Madonnas and met weekly for 30 years, learning to sew children’s clothes, knitting, praying before Our Lady’s shrine, and singing. In the annals, it was noted, “They have been faithful through the years ... They do enjoy coming and relive again and again the first days when they came to Canada.”¹⁸ In 1943 the club held a reunion tea to coincide with the Chapter meeting to rekindle friendships with out-of-town sisters.¹⁹ The tea became an annual event.

During the war, the night curfew limited evening outings, which led to permitting boyfriends into the hostel for visits. Each evening, a sister waited for the return of women working shifts to midnight at the ammunition plants and other factories. Club members participated in the war effort by writing letters and knitting items for soldiers, along with supporting the sisters by remailing Catholic literature to 20 Newfoundland families and collecting Lenten alms for catechetical work. The sisters arranged a club picnic at Maryvale, Senator O’Connor’s farm, inherited by the Brothers of Christian Schools after his death. A war wedding of Nellie Minnehan in November 1942 showed the all-encompassing care of Sister Superior Eva Chartrand. “Her home is in Ireland, so Sr. Superior was her mother for the day, dressed her, and had to sew elastic on her slippers at the last moment so she wouldn’t lose them, saw her into a taxi, then went through the lane and was at the church (Our Lady of Lourdes) to receive her.”²⁰

From 1943 until 1949, Sister Superior Frances Church conveyed her love of music, including organizing a concert of the newly-formed club strings orchestra in 1944. She also encouraged discussion and

resilience among the women in preparing for postwar challenges. A club debate was held on the issue of whether women should work after the war; the affirmative side won. At the end of the war, wages dropped in the war plants and the women were pinched to manage on \$17 or \$18 a week. Sister Church focused the sewing classes on dressmaking from the patterns she had collected.²¹

In October 1947, the first DPs arrived for a social, enjoying the music of the Wurlitzer, the jukebox of the Big Band era. The reception rooms were also opened for a Slovenia group that met every Thursday afternoon in 1948. Throughout the next few years at the request of the department of labour, the sisters met and helped DPs at Union Station during the hours between train connections. Some DPs stayed overnight at the residence.²²

In the 1950s, a ladies' auxiliary was formed from sisters' family members and club members. The auxiliary held successful fund-raising events, including a toy shower for the Rycroft teaching mission, bridge parties, a spring tea, and an annual garden party that was attended in 1957 by Toronto Mayor Nathan Phillips and his wife. After a successful card party in 1964, the auxiliary presented the sisters with a cheque for \$1,000 as a down payment towards a new car.²³ Club members also contributed by selling Christmas cards to purchase a television, installed in the residence just before Christmas 1954.²⁴ The club members made day-long pilgrimages in 1955 and 1956 to Martyrs' Shrine in Midland, Ontario, chauffeured by boyfriends in six cars. The sisters continued to visit former residents while in hospital, and teach summer and winter religion classes in the surrounding areas of Weston, Wexford, Schomberg, Brechin, Brampton, Woodbridge, Downsview, and in the Redemptorist parish of Our Lady of Assumption.

During the 1960s, many residents stayed for 18 months while studying at St. Joseph's Commercial High School or while taking courses to become registered nursing assistants. In response to contemporary interests, less formal events such as a hootenanny and garden barbeques were being held; a 12-week Christopher leadership course



Sister Mary O'Kane and partygoers at the residence, 1959

and discussion groups regarding courtship and marriage were offered, and the Young Christian Workers met weekly at the club. Relationships, social development and preparation for the future were emphasized in lectures attended by about 35 on the role of women, the physical and psychology of men and women, friendship at work and home and leisure time. In view of the changing society, Sister Catherine (Cassie) Moriarity, sat on the board of the YWCA and attended courses in social work and food services. Sister Hilda Lunney introduced the folk Mass at the residence. She invited residents to accompany her on visits to nursing homes; they also cleaned a church on Centre Island. As immigration, economic prosperity, and urban problems of drugs and integration of non-white immigrants grew in Toronto, the General Council declined a proposal for a new SOS residence for working women from the Social Planning Council of Toronto in 1962.²⁵

The four decades on Wellesley Place ended when the Motherhouse and the residence were sold in 1968 as part of the expansion plans of the adjacent Wellesley Hospital. The farewell party for club mem-

bers, *Last Bash at Stop 4*, on 19 April 1968 went on until 2:20 a.m. A month later, the auxiliary hosted 200 guests at a farewell tea. That evening, the Madonnas gathered around Sister Schenck, and “there were tears in many eyes as they sang the songs they sang so many years ago when they came to No. 4.”²⁶ On the closing day for the residence, the front hall was filled with luggage as the residents looked for souvenirs that had meaning for them. The sisters departed on 30 June 1968. The house was designated a historical property in 2002.

Halifax

42 Morris Street, 1925-1941

Justice N.H. Meagher of the Nova Scotia Supreme Court and a CWL committee met the train that brought Mother Lidwina and three sisters to Halifax on 5 September 1925 – the beginning of the institute’s seven decades in the city. The speedy opening of the hostel was made possible by Judge Meagher, uncle of Archbishop McNeil, who donated his family home at 42 Morris Street to the SOS on the ancestral and traditional lands of the Mi’kmaq people “for the purpose of conducting a hostel for immigrant girls’ activities to be chiefly directed to the work of immigration.”²⁷ In taking possession of the empty two-storey house in the city’s downtown, the sisters benefitted from the generous gifts of linens, china, cash, along with a hamper of fruit from the Sisters of Charity, and the offer to do laundry from the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. The CWL donated four white hospital cots, three tables, dishes, pots and pans, and kitchen chairs. Its members also held a bridge party and two garden parties on the hostel grounds, raising a total of \$510. Judge Meagher kept the larder supplied with fresh eggs, roast beef, and other dainties. During a mid-October visit, Father James Cloran, C.Ss.R., pastor of St. Peter’s Church in Saint John, paid for a painter to decorate a room for the chapel as well as the entrance, front stairs, and floors. A month after Father Daly’s November visit, Archbishop E.J. McCarthy of Halifax blessed the house and chapel on 13 December in the presence of the three sisters, clerics, CWL members, and Judge Meagher.²⁸



Sisters in front of the first residence at 42 Morris Street, 1926

While immigrants were welcomed at the pier, few of the hostel's 15 beds were occupied. To keep in contact with the immigrant women who remained in the city, the sisters hosted picnics and Christmas parties. On Christmas Day in 1929, the sisters assembled a group of immigrants for Mass and a grand party. Within the city's Catholic enclave, however, it was the sisters' charitable work – visiting the poor in their homes, the sick in hospitals, and senior residents at City Home – that earned recognition. Each day, one of the sisters bundled clothing to give to the poor, who came to their door. Their work widened to caring for discharged hospital patients, making mental health or social work calls, and helping families on relief, even short-term care of infants. When Judge Meagher died on 25 August 1932, his three-day wake was held in his former home.²⁹

When immigration slowed in 1930, the sisters sought young women coming into the city for work to live at the hostel. With five boarders in October 1932, the sisters visited 39 city restaurants and cafes to study the conditions of girl workers and to leave information cards

about the hostel.³⁰

A few weeks later, young women who had seen the cards, gathered at the hostel for the Halloween party. The sisters asked for their names and contact information for future events, including a light breakfast after Christmas Mass. By the winter of 1933, the hostel annuals recorded good attendance for the dancing and games on Thursdays and Sundays, held even in Lent. “For some of them, the hours they spend here are the only bright carefree spots in their lives. God understands.”³¹ Sewing, nursing, and cooking classes were added in 1935 as well as a study club and a Mother’s Club of 28 members making quilts in 1937.³² On school days, as many as 25 children received a substantial noontime meal in the kitchen, nicknamed Our Lady’s Pantry. The children washed and dried the dishes and often received clothing before returning to a nearby Catholic school.³³ Meanwhile, the sisters maintained close ties with the CWL by submitting annual reports and speaking at local meetings and the annual provincial convention. For some hostel events, the CWL provided refreshments and prizes.

2 Tobin Street, 1941-1991

During the Second World War, the population in Halifax swelled with war-related employment, causing a scarcity of housing, especially for young women leaving the farms and small towns to find work in the city. This housing crisis prompted the sale of 42 Morris Street and the purchase of 2 Tobin Street in 1941 and the adjacent property at 8 Tobin Street, which quadrupled the hostel’s capacity to 80 beds. Purchased from the prominent Donohue family, the house stood on the site of the first Mass offered in Halifax and across from Pier 21.³⁴ With the larger numbers, the club expanded its activities with dramatic productions, dances, and a knitting circle.³⁵ A year-long building renovation at 2 Tobin was undertaken in 1946 to install new chimneys, furnace boilers, and a fire escape. The basement was gutted; stairs were installed to reach the attic floor; bathrooms were added; and the chapel was enlarged.³⁶ But by the end of the decade, war-related employment had decreased and subsequently their



Depiction of 2 Tobin Street by artist Carole June Fraser of Halifax

hostel numbers. In 1949 the house at 8 Tobin was sold, limiting the living quarters to 39 residents and four sisters at 2 Tobin Street.

Beginning in 1948 with the arrival of DPs, the residence emerged as a social centre for them. The sisters immediately contacted young women DPs, who stayed in Halifax to make certain they had friends in the city, and that they were aware of the club's social events, classes and connection to the Catholic faith. A total of 28 group classes and 92 private instructions for English language were held at the club. Sister Dulaska acted as interpreter for officials of the federal employment service and for employers, who came to Tobin Street to meet future employees under the federal employment plan. For spiritual welfare, the sisters distributed mimeographed sheets in many European languages providing times and locales for confession and Sunday Mass. The CWL provided refreshments for five DP parties in 1949, and a Polish couple even held their wedding breakfast at the club. Almost every week, single immigrants dropped in for an evening of dancing and music. At their 1952 November social, a group of Dutch DPs recorded messages to families in their homeland, including one from Sister Superior Veronica Gillis, which was aired on the radio in Holland at Christmas. Early the following year, the Dutch group gathered to make plans to help their families in



Residence party for DPs, Halifax, 1949

Holland in the aftermath of a fierce storm that flooded large parts of the country. The club became the site of monthly meetings for Hungarian refugees in 1957. During this period, the sisters helped with telephone calls, interpreting, making contacts for new arrivals, and providing food, clothing, furniture, and household equipment to poor immigrant families. For refugees staying in the detention centre, the sisters also brought clothes for their release.³⁷

Meanwhile, the sisters continued catechetical instruction, conducting religious vacation schools for as many as 150 children of St. Mary's cathedral parish at St. Joseph's Camp at Medford Beach.³⁸ They also taught weekly catechism classes in the nearby communities of Caledonia, Maitland, and South Brookfield. The sisters encouraged the young women living at the residence to help with home visits, taking food to the aged and sick, teaching catechism lessons and prayers. "We think that having the girls enter into our work, will foster a better understanding of our lives and maybe, some vocations," Sister Superior Agnes Black reported the residence's atmosphere in 1953.³⁹

Two-thirds of the girls have changed from September-December, the discipline is good since the change, there is a quiet, happy spirit in the house since the change. The parties for the girls are free, no tickets but



Residence dining room, Halifax, 1950

everyone paid for refreshments. At Christmas, we had three Masses at midnight. Breakfast was served to about 25 people, men and women of various ages and nationalities, all away from home and alone. For New Year's Eve, girls went to midnight shows or formal ball at the hotel across the park. Those in house joined the sisters in a kitchen party.⁴⁰

In the 1950s, the residence also accommodated Sisters Lydia Tyszko, Patricia Burke, and Agnes Sheehan while they were students at the Maritime School of Social Work. Sister Bertha Jackson took charge of the Vincentian shop in 1961 as the Halifax archdiocese's central hub for distributing used clothes and furnishings. For assistance in overseeing the residence, a board of directors and advisory committee was struck in 1964.

A survey of the residents in 1970 showed that the majority were young Catholic women from the three Maritime provinces who had been referred by friends. They stayed an average of five months while attending hairdressing courses or working in offices.⁴¹ Two golden anniversaries were celebrated by the Sisters of Service: in 1972, the institute's founding; and in 1976, the establishment of the Halifax residence. On both occasions, special Masses were celebrated and informal receptions were held at the residence to greet clergy, former residents, and friends. The historic nature of the residence's



Sister Hilda Lunney at residence Halloween party, Halifax, 1986

site was acknowledged on 22 August 1984 when Archbishop James Hayes of Halifax offered a Mass on the grounds in the presence of 200 guests, including Lieutenant-Governor Allen Abram and the Donohue family, the original owners of the house. The date was selected to also honour the 200th anniversary of the establishment of the parish of St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica.⁴²

Sister Hilda Lunney of Saint John welcomed the opportunity to return to the Maritimes as superior of the Halifax residence from 1985 until 1991. Sisters Lunney, Rita Sullivan, and Joan Coffey maintained the residence life for the 36 residents, blending a Christian atmosphere with festive parties, helpful advice, laughter, support, and stability. In 1991 with the majority of residents being university students, rather than working women, and expensive renovations required for the building, the General Council decided to close the residence on 30 June 1991, ending an era of 65 years and the presence of 60 sisters.⁴³

Winnipeg, 1926-1972

A few months after the Halifax residence opened, the Winnipeg branch of the CWL started negotiations with Father Daly to estab-

lish a hostel for Catholic women in that city. In February 1926, the CWL purchased a large three-storey residential home at 62 Hargrave Street on the traditional lands of the Anishinabe (Ojibway), Ininew (Cree), Oji-Cree, Dene, and Dakota, and the Birthplace of the Métis Nation. Archbishop Sinnott provided a loan for \$12,000, the selling price of the former home of Capel Tilt, president of the Tilt Grain Company and a prominent figure in the city's grain trade. The spacious home with double drawing rooms, a large central reception area, and bedrooms for 20 hostel beds initially served as the official CWL office, similar to the Toronto hostel. At the archbishop's request, Sister Superior Frances Church was placed in charge of managing the hostel when arriving with Sister Agnes Brunning, the district nurse at Camp Morton, in April 1926. From her own experience, Sister Church understood the anxieties of a newly-immigrant. Born in London, England, she was blessed with a beautiful voice, singing with a choir at Royal Albert Hall. During the First World War, she served with the Women's Land Army on a farm in Sussex, where she played the organ at the local Church of England (Anglican) church. Upon coming to Canada in 1921, she converted to Catholicism, and entered the SOS on 7 September 1924.⁴⁴

In Winnipeg, she introduced a similar hostel living as in Halifax, where she had been posted the previous four months. Immigrants were met at the train station and were accommodated for a short period until appropriate domestic service employment was secured. Although the majority were British immigrants, Sister Church held a weekly English language class for German and Hungarian girls placed in English-speaking homes. By the time of her departure in March 1929, St. Anthony's club had been formed as a social centre for the 24 members to gather on their days off.⁴⁵

In 1932, Sister Superior Eva Chartrand, with postings at the Montreal and Edmonton hostels, utilized her small business expertise as a former owner of a milliner shop. Her efficient and organized management was well underway when the CWL transferred the property to the institute in December 1934. She introduced practical domestic training for the daughters of immigrants, who had come



Sisters Margaret Morgan and Mary Fitzgerald on the steps of 62 Hargrave Street, Winnipeg, 1932

to the city to work as domestic servants. Sister Leona Trautman, assigned to the residence for two years until 1937, outlined the Sister Chartrand's training.

Then one day in early spring, Sister Chartrand decided she was going to make a change. She would not place a single girl for three weeks. During that time, each Sister was to take four girls to train. Sister (Agnes) Hearn taught her group simple cooking. I taught my girls to set and wait on table. Another Sister showed her group how to properly make beds with square corners and to hang clothes. A fourth Sister taught them to clean, wax and polish floors and to dust. This training went from Monday to Saturday night and we switched groups until all 28 girls were trained in ordinary house work duties. When Sister Chartrand thought the girls were well-prepared, she began phoning the women, who had asked to employ girls for house work, stating that 'our girls are well-trained

and know how to do house work. I know them to be honest and upright.”⁴⁶

Due to the training, Sister Chartrand negotiated higher pay for the domestic service workers, raising the monthly salaries to \$12, \$15, and \$20 for a cook-maid. Sister Chartrand placed 220 young women in positions, and 143 attended the in-residence cooking classes between June 1934 and May 1935.

During the evenings in that same period, the club offered four plays, two concerts, five whist parties, two movies as well as parties for Valentine’s Day, Halloween and Christmas. Daily catechism classes were held along with Christian doctrine classes each Sunday and a May procession in honour of Our Lady.⁴⁷ In 1937, the St. Anthony’s club boasted a membership of 100, study club on Sunday evenings and held annual exhibit with prizes for culinary, sewing and needlework, artwork of in all media.⁴⁸ In summer of 1938, a baseball team was formed under the name of St. Anthony’s Brown Birds. Wearing a uniform of a brown tunic, the club’s colour, the team, with the enthusiastic support of Sister Leona Rose, practised at a nearby baseball diamond, and played 10 games in the first season. A bus was hired to travel to some baseball fields outside the city, and the coach arranged for winter sports to keep the team fit for the upcoming baseball season. After three years, the Brown Birds joined the newly-formed Catholic Softball League in the city.⁴⁹

At the start of the Second World War, Sister Chartrand completed a civil defence course as a volunteer worker in the city before her appointment as superior of the Toronto residence. The war years presented challenges of rations and factory shifts, and every available corner was used to house the essential war workers.⁵⁰ The club provided the much-needed respite with games of baseball and bowling, music from the club piano, phonograph player and a Wurlitzer; crafts and sewing classes, and outings to the legislature, museum, art gallery and to picnics at Camp Morton.⁵¹

While living at the residence, Sister Monica Meade worked for sev-



Sister Leona Rose (centre) and members of the Brown Birds baseball team, Winnipeg, 1939

en years until 1948, directing the activities of the Catholic Central Bureau, the social agency of the Winnipeg archdiocese. Adjacent to St. Mary's Cathedral, the bureau provided Catholics with advice on family problems of broken marriages and child care, and links to the city's other social agencies. Volunteers from the Legion of Mary and St. Vincent de Paul Society collected, mended and distributed clothes throughout the archdiocese. Under Sister Meade, more services were added. Staff volunteers held social evenings, sponsored by the CWL, for the elderly, visited the families, the poor and the lonely, helped with office tasks, taught Sunday catechetical classes, and led meetings of boy scouts and girl guides meetings in five different parts of the city.⁵²

Similar to the other residences, the sisters met every train carrying DPs at the train station, providing accommodation on occasion and following up with each woman who remained in the city. A weekly class in English and citizenship was held and DP gatherings in the club were frequent.⁵³ In 1951, the residence's 25th anniversary coincided with a celebration of Sister Church's silver jubilee. Many of the guests were "the old girls who arrived in Canada from the Old Country in 1926, talked over those days of long ago and sang again the songs they sang when the hostel was their only home in a new



Sister Evelyn Murphy and wedding party on the residence steps, Winnipeg, 1944

country.”⁵⁴

An advisory board was created in 1958 to guide on administration, public relations and finances of the construction of a two-storey addition to the house. In that year, a study conducted by the Welfare Council of Greater Winnipeg outlined the increased need for women’s housing. A women’s auxiliary was established to raise funds for a building project. The following year, renovations began on the chapel, sacristy and sisters quarters, and construction of an addition to create accommodation for 50 young women between the ages of 16 and 25. The modern setting included semi-private bedrooms, a spacious lounge, updated food service and a dining room, which was used as meeting and craft rooms. The two-storey addition and renovated house were ready for occupancy in March 1960. In the new facility, regulations for dress code, spiritual obligations and tidiness of rooms were issued and emphasis was placed on “the growth, development, maturity, improved functioning of single girls who are by some circumstance living away from their home.”⁵⁵

As the 1960s progressed, the majority of the residents were teenage students attending academic and vocational schools, and requiring financial assistance. However, Adua Zampese, a future entrant,



Sister Agnes Sheehan at residence dinner, Winnipeg, 1965

worked as a custom seamstress at the downtown Eaton's store, and stayed at the residence while reflecting on a religious vocation. "I went to stay at the residence, even though I had made arrangements to join a religious community (Sisters of St. Elizabeth) in Saskatchewan. When I met the SOS, I knew somehow God was telling me, you will fit better in this community."⁵⁶

The shortage of sisters for the residence appointments and the changing needs of the young women prompted the General Council to close the residence in June 1973 following the service of 30 sisters over 46 years. When the residence closed, it was leased to the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation for five years at \$1 a year. The YWCA undertook the operation of Hargrave House as a YWCA-SOS joint project. Sister Agnes Sheehan, who served as the superior during the construction and the residence's social worker until 1968, remained as director of the Hargrave House for the next five years.⁵⁷

Montreal, 1926-1973

450 Lagauchetiere Street West, 1926-1928

As early as January 1924, the CWL branch in Montreal proposed that the institute take charge of their hostel on the traditional territory of

the Kanien'kehà:ka. Known as the Loretto Community House, the two-storey row house at 450 Lagauchetiere Street West was about two blocks from the port of Montreal near the Basilica de Notre Dame. The official invitation was extended in August 1926 following the approval of Montreal Archbishop Georges Gauthier, known to be sympathetic towards a greater presence of women and the laity in the activities of the Church.⁵⁸ An agreement was struck with Father Daly, calling for the CWL to assume the expenses of rent, food, electricity, heat, telephone, and a cook, and the SOS to receive \$100 a month to manage the house. On 28 October 1926, Sisters Kathleen Schenck, superior of the Toronto hostel, and Monica Meade were greeted at the train station by the CWL president and members of the CWL immigration and travellers' aid committee. On entering the house, Sister Meade found it dreary and ill-equipped. "I must confess that when I first saw it, my heart sank, and when Sister Schenck whispered to me in fun, 'Let's run,' I said 'Yes, let's.' But we didn't and are still here."⁵⁹ Sister Schenck made another observation.

Several people had mentioned to us about the girls leaning out of the hostel windows. When I saw the size of the reception room and the dining room and heard of the number of meals served etc, I came to the conclusion it was about the only alternative the girls had.⁶⁰

Within a few months, the sisters arranged social functions for young women to offset the influences of dance halls and other public amusements. The Christmas party in 1926 was crowded to capacity, and each of the 140 attendees received a gift and a packet of candy. Similarly crowded parties were held on St. Patrick's Day and Easter Monday. Special feast days were observed with visits to St. Joseph's Oratory, talks by local clergy, including Redemptorists at St. Ann's parish, and a three-day retreat directed by Father Daly. Eveleen Donnelly, an English immigrant and future entrant, attended these early events. In the first year, 120 women took advantage of the free night school classes in reading, writing, arithmetic, sewing, singing, as well as French classes offered by the Sisters of Sacred Heart. Some completed the full course and received diplomas. A residential club



The first hostel, Montreal, 1926

of 300 members was formed, holding its first meeting in September 1927. It organized a canteen to sell tea and biscuits at 10 cents, with the proceeds used to make the hostel brighter and more homelike.⁶¹ The sisters met immigrant passengers at the railway station, while a CWL immigration committee member answered correspondence from the Department of Immigration and Colonization concerning women from the British Isles and the Irish Free State missing trains or “making Canada a mere stepping stone into the States.”⁶²

3424 Drummond Street, 1928-1934

Inadequate space at the Lagauchetiere hostel prompted a move in May 1928 to a larger, rented three-storey townhouse that accommodated 20 women. Located at 3424 Drummond Street, close to McGill University, the hostel was immediately busy. In its first year, an average of 110 inquiries a month were received for domestic servants, and the club membership rose to 400. Over 300 women lived

at the hostel during the first two years. Archbishops McNeil and William Duke of Vancouver, and Abbe Phillipe Casgrain of Quebec City, visited to inspect the hostel.

The night school classes continued, as did the parties attracting more than 180 to each event along with 10 wedding breakfasts. During the first two years on Drummond Street, more than 300 women had lived at the hostel. The sisters had cared for the sick at the hostel, visited the sick in hospitals and detention homes, and arranged for the funerals of two women. Carolyn Albury, who was staying at the residence in 1928, returned from her secretarial position work one day and collapsed. "I was so grateful for their selfless devotion to a sick stranger,"⁶³ she recalled, entering the community in 1929.

Social and religious events continued. Three mixed dances attracted 220 to each. Babies of married club members were blessed in the chapel on Mother's Day in 1932, and a mothers' club began shortly afterwards. Other activities were added, including the May procession and crowning of Mary, sewing classes, regular times for confessions, a choir, and a toy shower for the children in Camp Morton. Some of these events attracted Mary O'Kane, a Scottish immigrant and a future SOS. In 1934, the name was changed to Catholic Women's Hostel, and the SOS assumed complete financial responsibility of the hostel.⁶⁴

From February 1928, the sisters expanded their settlement efforts beyond the hostel, making follow-up visits and telephone calls to Catholic immigrants. In some instances they found families living in deplorable conditions owing to unemployment and overcrowding. During the early years of the Depression, hundreds received food and clothes from the hostel. This aid was recognized by a \$1,000 grant in 1928 from the Quebec government and by the Federation of Catholic Charities, which accepted the hostel in 1930 as a member agency that lasted for the next 42 years.⁶⁵



Sisters Eva Chartrand, Margaret O'Hare and Carmel Egan with residents and friends the steps of the second hostel, Montreal, 1930



Social gathering at Drummond Street hostel, Montreal, 1930

1923 Dorchester Street West, 1934-1973

The growing activities and full responsibility of the residential club led to the institute's purchase of a gracious 19th century mansion at 1923 Dorchester Street West. Sister Schenck, who had returned to Montreal as superior after an absence of four years, took charge of the eastern half of a semi-detached residence, which had been built in 1874 and owned by CPR presidents William Van Horne and Lord Thomas Shaughnessy.⁶⁶ After Lord Shaughnessy's death in 1923, the house was converted into St. Mary's Hospital, a convalescent home for 20 patients. These patients were transferred into waiting ambulances and taxis to the new hospital a few days before the SOS took possession on 1 December 1934. The formal opening, described as a grand occasion, was attended by 500 guests in January 1935. The doubling of the number of beds to 40 filled a gap in women's housing when the federal government's Canadian Women's Hostel in Montreal closed in March 1936.⁶⁷

Every Sunday and Thursday evening up to 120 members gathered for social events. A Christmas play was staged, badminton games played on the grounds, and sleigh rides organized in the winter. In the chapel, daily Mass was celebrated, benediction was held on Sunday evening, and the rosary was recited daily. A Redemptorist from St. Ann's parish heard weekly confessions. Based on a study of transients to the city, the CWL changed the name to the Catholic Women's League Residential Club in 1935 because the word *hostel* was associated with a place of refuge and proved to be detrimental to the work. Instead, the club existed to help unprotected Canadian girls, mainly from the Maritime provinces, and became "home" in the days of loneliness. "There, on her afternoons and evenings 'off,' she makes new friends with whom she soon has much in common," a brochure stated. "Best of all, she finds in the Sisters of Service all the motherly interest and solicitude so needful for girls away from home influences."⁶⁸

The slow rate of immigration and high unemployment during the



The east and west side of the Dorchester Street residence, Montreal, 1948

Depression gave rise to a Quebec government program to supply the demand for domestic servants by funding training courses for women between 16 and 30 on relief. Under the direction of Sister Mary Szostak, the first class of 18 girls from families on relief were enrolled in the four- to eight-week course at Dorchester Street. A graduate dietician delivered practical training in cooking, housework, and sewing, as well as the etiquette of waiting on tables and answering the door and telephone. A registered nurse instructed the home-nursing course, and students were taken downtown and taught the art of shopping. The government program included extra money for the students' recreation, and an instructor directed the students two mornings a week in the gym and swimming pool at the nearby Knights of Columbus facility. After completing training in the Catholic and YWCA classes, students attended a graduation ceremony at the Windsor Hotel, and each graduate received a pin and a certificate. At the residence, the sisters conducted a special ceremony for the graduates on Easter Monday with benediction. The class presented the domestic science teacher with an umbrella and a



Sister Mary Szostak and cooking class in the residence, Montreal, 1939

demonstration of gym exercises was followed by games, singing, and dancing. Two more classes were scheduled, and the sisters created an employment bureau, similar to the one in Winnipeg. A sister investigated the home prior to hiring and accompanied the young women to a bank to open a savings account. “In many cases, the whole outlook on life seemed to be changed for the better at the completion of the course.”⁶⁹

One of the volunteers at the employment bureau, Ann O’Brien, was noted for her executive ability. A year after the death of her husband, William O’Brien, a Montreal businessman, Ann entered the novitiate in August 1940. “My decision to join the Sisters of Service was made practically overnight,” Ann recalled. “Some of my friends doubted my sanity. I had done volunteer work with [the] women’s club and had become keenly aware of the deep satisfaction this work gave me. If I was to do a life job, then this was it.”⁷⁰

In 1938, club members launched a remailing blitz of 1,043 packages during the first four months and formed a company of Rangers for the younger girls 15 to 17 years, who were trained in the various

branches of the Girl Guides. For girls, ages 6 to 17 years, the sisters started a club in 1940 to provide recreation at Goose Village, part of the Montreal Redemptorist parish of St. Ann's.⁷¹

To meet their growing needs, the west side of the mansion was purchased in September 1940 at an attractive price. Similar to the east side, it had been owned by CPR business magnates, including Donald Smith, known as Lord Strathcona. Co-founder of the CPR, Lord Strathcona drove the last spike at Craigellachie, British Columbia, to open railway to the Pacific Ocean. In that house, he had hosted the future King George V and Queen Mary during an overnight stay in 1901. The sisters purchased the house from Hugh Graham, Lord Atholston, owner of the *Montreal Star*; who had transformed it into a Presbyterian home for the elderly, under the name of My Mother's Home in memory of his mother. The newly combined residence provided rooms for 80 residents and eased the housing shortage for women coming into the city to secure employment in safe surroundings.⁷² Alena Bryden found this place of haven and support when she moved from Christmas Island on Cape Breton Island and later entered the novitiate in 1945. When Sister Schenck was transferred to the Vancouver residence as superior in 1943, Eileen Bridgeo, another future SOS from New Brunswick, expressed the gratitude and sincere appreciation "of the club girls who know and love you, for whom you have provided a home that embodies all that is contained in that phrase so full of meaning – a home away from home. Here, many a girl far from home – whether from Canada or the Old Land from the East or the West, has met with a hearty welcome and motherly care." Sister Schenck replied, "Where there was love, there was no labour."⁷³

After the war, DPs gathered at the club at least three times a week to attend the three classes in English language instruction that attracted up to 150 women weekly. The sisters acted as interpreters for DP employers and paid the postage for the food parcels that the DPs wrapped to be sent to their families back home. Montrealers, Sisters Evelyn Murphy and Margaret Muldoon, the residence's book keeper for 17 years, enjoyed the added activities of weaving and the



Sister Katharina Klutterman helps with the wrapping of parcels, destined for Europe, Montreal, 1948

mounting of dramatic productions. Club members also joined the congregational recitation of the rosary, broadcast from the Redemptorist St. Ann's church over radio station CHLP.⁷⁴

When the DP program ended, city agencies put in place a coordinated plan to assist women. In 1957, 210 women arrived at the port and stayed at the residence as their first temporary stop. Assistance for housing and employment came from the other immigration agencies, such as the federal immigration department offering emergency housing, the Christian Family Group, and the Catholic Girls Information Bureau.⁷⁵ That year, the residence housed the wedding receptions of nine brides who had been met at the port and spent time in the club.

For Sister Superior Mary Fitzmaurice in 1958, "the days are so full. One gets weary at times."⁷⁶ Her reports listed ambitious club events of skating parties at Beaver Lake, ski trips to the Laurentians, picnics to Plattsburg, New York, and entertainment every Sunday night followed by canteen. Montreal Bishop Lawrence Whalen, a former residence chaplain, celebrated midnight Mass the following year in



May procession on residence grounds, Montreal, 1952. (l-r) Sisters Agnes Sheehan, Rose Jolicoeur, Katharina Kluttermann, Sally Liota, Ann Geraghty, and Agnes Hearn.

the chapel and 100 people were served breakfast.⁷⁷ Some of these activities were enjoyed by Carmelita (Lita) Camozzi, a future entrant, when she lived at the residence while selling toys at Morgan's department store during the Christmas season. The residence's spacious reception rooms held the meetings of other groups, particularly the Sisters of Service Auxiliary, which was founded in 1949.

As the largest SOS residence in physical size and in bed capacity, seven sisters were assigned to its management. Sisters, who were enrolled at St. Joseph's Teachers' College, also lived at the residence as did Father Daly's sister and Sister Agnes Sheehan's mother. The sisters handled a variety of situations, even matchmaking – a 50-year-old Scottish bachelor hounded Sister Mary O'Kane to find him a wife. Finally, she and Sister Florence Kelly arranged that he meet a 50-year-old Romanian widow, "who was very well-preserved and looking for a husband. We are going to have fun over this," Sister O'Kane wrote.⁷⁸

As a non-treatment agency, the residence served a normal population of young working women who needed a basic level of protection. In 1962, its reputation for safety was shattered early Sunday morning on the Labour Day weekend. Lorraine Kenny, a shop clerk from North Sydney, Cape Breton Island, was shot and killed when she entered her third-floor room. A man with a .303 rifle had climbed an outdoor fire escape and hid in her darkened room, waiting for another girl, who lived across the hall and with whom he had quarrelled. Hours after the death, a 32-year-old man from Alexandria, Ontario, was arrested near the provincial border in Lancaster, Ontario. Later he testified that she had shoved the door, knocking him off balance and the gun went off.⁷⁹

The sisters in residences had not received social work training, and instead had relied on their personal kindness, experience, and understanding. After this tragedy, Sister Fitzmaurice noted the mental stability in some residents, in particular a 15-year-old girl who had been transferred from another social agency in Montreal to stay at the house, and several “who are emotionally disturbed, yet not requiring hospitalization, require hours of counselling and service.”⁸⁰ Sister Rita Patenaude, who was assigned to that residence for 14 years, noted that sisters began working together rather in isolation on each side of the residence.⁸¹

Club activities expanded to showing films and slides and club members played tennis, went bowling, held square dances, organized lectures, and participated in study groups. They also helped with fundraising campaigns for the Combined Health Appeal, Red Cross, Crippled Children’s tag day, and Federation of Catholic Charities. At the same time, the sisters participated in meetings of the auxiliary, Travellers’ Aid, Christian Family Movement, Catholic Girls Information Bureau, Provincial Welfare Council, and Legion of Mary.⁸²

Following Vatican II, many of the activities in 1966 were centred around Newman Club, the Catholic campus ministry at McGill University, and the eucharistic celebration in the form of a folk Mass

attracted the largest participation in the residence. Sister Rita Patenaude, who learned to play a guitar in a year, spearheaded the new celebration. "Folk songs say what we want them to say. "They're songs of people, so it is very fitting to use folk hymns in the church. But it should be done with respect and dignity."⁸³ Sister Patenaude's guitar apostolate included meeting and working with English-speaking seminarians, participating in parish and ecumenical activities, and visiting John F. Kennedy High School. Cardinal Paul-Emile Léger requested that Sister Edna Deland be invited to attend a meeting of *Expo Pastorale 1967* to represent English-speaking communities in Quebec. Her task was to ensure that Expo 67 in Montreal would be accessible to everyone whose first language was English, whether they were rich or poor, sick or disabled. Later, she translated the French text of the documentary that accompanied the slides shown in the Expo pavilions into English.⁸⁴

Cardinal Léger foreshadowed the departure of the sisters when in January 1965 he alerted Sister Deland of the city's infrastructure plans around the Dorchester Street residence. An extensive road building project had isolated the house when a small portion of the property was expropriated and buildings on either side were demolished. Further setbacks occurred. As a social agency, the residence had lost its prominence and the Federation of Catholic Charities in September 1972 decided to end their annual grant of \$15,000 and no funding was available from the Quebec or city government. Consequently, the General Council arranged for a real estate evaluation of the houses. When the fire department ordered a sprinkler system, and further road repairs disrupted access to the house, the General Council decided to close the mission on 30 June 1973. The Van Horne/Shaghnessy mansion was declared a historic site in February 1974 when a developer, from whom the SOS had accepted a conditional offer, applied for a permit to demolish the mansions and erect a high rise in its place. Instead, the property was purchased by Phyllis Lambert, daughter of Samuel Bronfman, founder of Seagram Company Ltd., and became the headquarters for the Canadian Centre for Architecture, which she founded in 1979.⁸⁵

Edmonton, 1929-1967

Archbishop O'Leary was so anxious to have a SOS hostel for Catholic immigrant women in Edmonton that he purchased a 21-room house almost six months before the arrival of Sisters Monica Meade and Eva Chartrand. Unlike the four other SOS hostels, the CWL did not initiate the project. Their interests were committed to Rosary Hall, founded in 1916 as a residence for teachers, business women, and students under the administration of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul of Kingston, Ontario. CWL national president Margaret Duggan acknowledged that female immigrants had no place to stay on their arrival and offered \$1,000 a year to support the SOS hostel. A year earlier, the Anglican Church had established St. Catherine's Girls hostel, but it was also for business girls and students.

The house, purchased in December 1928 by Archbishop O'Leary, subsequently received government approval and funding as a hostel for immigrants. He was repaid by a \$10,000 loan from the Redemptorist Toronto Province and ownership was transferred to the Sisters of Service. On 9 May 1929 Sisters Meade and Chartrand took possession of the house, which was centrally located at 9919 - 105th Street within Treaty 6 Territory and Métis homelands. Painted in a cream shade with green trim, the three-storey frame house featured a wide, wrap-around verandah. On 21 May, the archbishop blessed the house, and the Edmonton branch of the CWL organized a tea and provisions shower and continued to hold fundraising events for the 39 years of the mission. The hostel's 12 beds were generally occupied by the daughters of settlers from the surrounding rural areas, who sought employment as domestic servants. Sister Catherine Donnelly, assigned to the catechetical centre in 1930, organized night classes in English at the hostel for 29 young female immigrants.⁸⁶

A club was formed and, in 1933, a party was held to which boys were invited. As the smallest hostel, it became a training ground for



Exterior of the residence on 105th Street, Edmonton, 1940

future superiors of the residential clubs. Sister Mary Fitzmaurice mentored Sister Mary O’Kane, who was praised as a good manager, and was later appointed as superior of the residences in Edmonton, St. John’s, and Toronto. Sister O’Kane, in turn, guided Sister Catherine Schmeltzer, who was posted as superior in the residences in Edmonton, Winnipeg, and Halifax. During the war, Sister Superior Mary MacDougall tutored Sisters Edna and Ella Deland, who each received three appointments as superiors, and encouraged them in their wartime project to grow a Victory Garden and can the produce.⁸⁷

From 1948 onward, some 30 DPs met every Thursday afternoon at the club, staying for supper, singing, and dancing with their friends. When the first one-year contracts as domestic servants ended, Archbishop John Hugh MacDonald and CWL members witnessed a ceremony in the club of five DPs who received completion certificates from officials for the National Employment Service. Polish and Latvian DPs gathered for meetings, and the Latvians assembled for a weekly Mass and often for a communion breakfast. On one occa-



Sisters Agnes Hearn (left) and Eva Chartrand with immigrant women on residence's front steps, Edmonton, 1930



Sister Mary O'Kane and Latvian group on the residence's front steps, Edmonton, 1950



Sister Bernice Anstett and residents at the display of their leather crafts, Edmonton, 1958

sion Archbishop MacDonald offered a special Mass in the chapel for the Latvians. The sisters helped immigrant families, distributing food and clothing, which had been donated by various CWL subdivisions.⁸⁸

The club members were engaged with the city's Catholic community, singing in the choir at St. Joseph's Cathedral, presenting a donation to St. Joseph's Seminary, and serving refreshments at the opening of St. Joseph's Hospital. After the influx of DPs gradually declined, house renovations in 1956 more than doubled the beds to 27, and included private rooms with ensuite bathrooms for each sister, guest rooms and a large room that served as a refectory, common room, and working space for laundry and sewing. Weekly classes in leathercraft – carving and tooling wallets, purses, and key cases – were popular.⁸⁹

The sisters also spent many hours each week instructing converts and teaching in the religious vacation schools. Mary Halder, a correspondence student and future SOS, attended the religious vacation school at Lac la Nonne, Alberta, where she was prepared for First Communion in 1947 and Confirmation in 1948. Later, she lived at the residence while attending Grade 11 at St. Mary's High School. In the 1960s, residence stays ranged from four months to two years for young women between 17 and 25, who were working or taking

short-term business courses. Six-week courses on life skills were offered on topics of social etiquette, marriage and budgeting. Marilyn MacDonald, another future entrant, lived in a small room under the kitchen while working at Alberta Government Telephones. She recalled hearing the sisters enjoying some time together in the kitchen before going to bed. "They sounded like they were having fun."⁹⁰

In 1962, the Edmonton archdiocese expanded its delivery of social services and Sister Florence Kelly and Sister Lydia Tyszko joined the staff of the newly opened Catholic Immigrant Services and Catholic Family and Child Services, respectively, and moved into the residence. Sister Kelly also set up a St. Vincent de Paul store for the city's poor and took on the responsibility of Catholic Charities' Christmas hampers for three years. Sister Mary Jackson also resided at the house, as did Sister Viola Mossey, who coordinated religious education at the school for the deaf, arranging sign language instruction and a signing Sunday Mass.⁹¹

The future of the residence was settled when the city licence expired on 30 April 1967 and renewal depended on costly rewiring of the old house. Since Rosary Hall continued to operate with a capacity of 55 beds and attracted the same type of resident, the General Council decided to close the residence on 30 June 1967. The sisters remained in the building until January 1968 when they moved into a community house at 134419-103 Street for all sisters living in Edmonton.⁹²



Sister Alice Walsh in front of the residence, Vancouver, 1941

Vancouver, 1929-1972

After three years as the founding superior of the Winnipeg hostel, Sister Church moved further westward to tackle the challenge of administering an existing hostel. In 1928, the ladies' auxiliary at Holy Rosary Cathedral in Vancouver had started a mission at 1290 Robson Street near the cathedral. Under the supervision of the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement, the mission offered catechism classes and English-language instruction for Japanese and Italian immigrants. That same year, the CWL in Vancouver, desirous to open a hostel for immigrant women in partnership with the SOS, approached Father Daly. Archbishop Timothy Casey of Vancouver delayed a decision for a year but Coadjutor Archbishop William Duke officially notified the SOS in July 1929 to take charge of the Robson Street hostel "for the reception of immigrant girls."⁹³ Sisters Church and Gertrude Walsh were appointed to assume the transfer from the Atonement Sisters, arriving on 15 October 1929. "The opening of this mission is one of the dreams of my life," Father Daly wrote. "The S.O.S. is now on the Pacific Coast."⁹⁴

The rented house on Robson, under the name Catholic Women's Hostel of St. Anthony, accommodated 20 women but, its location



Father Daly visits during outdoor tea with Sisters Mary Ann Bridget Burke and Margaret O'Hare in the background, 1939

was too costly to access public transit. A larger house in a more suitable locale was purchased in April 1930 with the help of a \$5,000 donation from a wealthy widow, who was an admirer of Sister Church's musical talent. For the first six years, the CWL paid the interest on the mortgage, property taxes, and water rates for the 14-room house at 1715 Eleventh Avenue on the unceded traditional territories of the $x^w m\theta k^w \acute{a}y\grave{a}m$ (Musqueam), $Skwxwú7mesh$ (Squamish), and $s\acute{a}lilw\acute{e}t\acute{a}ł$ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.⁹⁵ Built in 1911 for W.C. Hodgson when he worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway, the house spanned two lots and offered spacious reception rooms for the club members. When the sisters moved into the house in July, they received a gift of a brass plate, inscribed with *Sisters of Service, Catholic Women's Hostel*, from Father Kenneth Kennedy, C.Ss.R., pastor of the nearby Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church.

In the first six months, immigration slowed; the sisters met only six trains and two ships. In the meantime, the sisters broadened their mandate by providing rooms and employment services for all young women. A club was formed in 1933 and met every Tuesday evening, often to sew, knit, draw, play cards, and make toys. Sister Church enhanced the club activities by organizing an orchestra and a choir. In 1937, Sister Nurse Agnes Brunning, on a year-long respite from the Alberta hospitals, taught the senior Red Cross home nursing course to 26 women and girls. A number of inexperienced young girls were



Sister Lydia Tyszko and English language class at the residence, Vancouver, 1952



Sister Lydia Tyszko and Matilda Grace at a residence bridal shower, Vancouver, 1953

trained in household sciences, and others went to classes for shorthand and typing. A Redemptorist from their parish came to the club during the week to celebrate Mass for club members working in domestic service who missed Sunday Mass.⁹⁶

During the war, women working in war-related jobs filled the residence. In the postwar years, DPs gathered on Thursdays in the club rooms to visit and enjoy the planned programs of movies, musicals, and sing songs. The Polish DPs were the most active, serving their traditional supper on Christmas Eve, and eventually forming their own club. The sisters participated in a local committee, composed of representatives of the federal labour department, the CWL, and YWCA, to provide housing and care for the 40 new DP domestic servants each year. Committee members met the trains and held monthly meetings to follow and support the DPs' progress with citizenship and English language classes. To mark the achievement of completing the DP contract, Vancouver Mayor Charles Edwin Thompson came to the club to present the certificates in 1949. A year later, a silver maple leaf lapel pin was given to the first female DP to receive Canadian citizenship. In expressing their appreciation, a group of Polish DPs, who recited the rosary and sang hymns in Polish, presented the sisters with a cheque to purchase of a set of white vestments.⁹⁷

In the postwar period, a club newsletter was printed sharing news about the residents, club activities, upcoming wedding showers and reports on the baseball teams. A 1954 newsletter reported on the forming of a women's auxiliary composed of 80 former residents. From the mid-1950s until 1972, Sister Matilda Grace, a bookkeeper, and Sister Rose Jolicoeur, a retired registered nurse from the Alberta hospitals, set a cheerful tone in the house with their laughter and happy dispositions. The two sisters counselled and helped a generation of young women. Sister Anna Green, who enjoyed the social life of the residential clubs, was a zealous teacher of religion on weekends at the Polish parish of St. Casmir's Church as well as at St. Joseph's Parish and St. Monica's Parish on Lulu Island.

In the 1960s, the residence opened its doors to ecumenism and people of other faiths and cultures. Indigenous students pursuing university and nursing studies at Vancouver Vocational Institute formed the Catholic Indian Study and Leadership Club in 1961 and met at the club on Tuesday nights.⁹⁸ By 1967, when Vancouver sculptor Elek Imredy created a simple statue of the Madonna for the grotto on the grounds, the residents were an international assembly of young women students from South America, Japan, and Taiwan. A Parisian cook turned simple meals into gourmet fare. Sister Superior Isabel Ellis acknowledged the emergence of ecumenism and the fading Catholic imprint as residents of the recent years had been Muslims, Buddhists, or Shintoists. "We are only interested whether a girl needs shelter," said Sister Superior Isabel Ellis. "She may worship as she pleases."⁹⁹ The Vancouver residence closed on 30 June 1972, with 17 women in residence, due to a lack of sisters for residence missions.

Ottawa, 1932-1968

As in Vancouver, the Sisters of Service assumed the management of an established hostel in Ottawa. Sister Carmel Egan, a former civil servant at the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, and Sister Mary Rodgers, a pioneer sister in three earlier missions, arrived in October 1932 to take possession of Rosary Hall. The three-storey brick house at 478 Albert Street on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishnaabeg was a prime downtown location, on the highest point in the city and with an excellent view of the Laurentian Mountains across the Ottawa River. The Rosary Hall Association, formed in 1918 by a group of local women and CWL members, purchased the Albert Street house in 1923 as temporary housing for single women. A year later, immigrants under the empire settlement scheme were given accommodation, and as their numbers grew, the rooms available for single Canadian women dwindled. In 1931, the association asked Archbishop Guillaume Forbes of Ottawa to invite the SOS to take over Rosary Hall and provide immigration and settlement services. With his approval, the association decided to transfer ownership of the debt-free house to the SOS. During a



The front exterior of Rosary Hall, Ottawa

well-attended ceremony in St. Patrick's parish hall, the sisters were welcomed on 18 November by Ottawa Mayor John J. Allen and were blessed by Archbishop Forbes. Sister General Florence Regan was handed the keys to the house.¹⁰⁰

The spacious house contained the appropriate features for a SOS residential club. Built as a home in 1874 for Thomas Seaton Scott, the first Dominion architect and designer of the parliamentary library, the fully-furnished house contained a large living room and library, dining room, a piano, Victrola and 20 beds of solid iron bedsteads. The proceeds of CWL fundraising events assisted the Marian club, which grew to 126 members from the nucleus of 45 Old Country girls and augmented by the addition of Canadians also employed in domestic service. During the winters, the members danced, sang in the glee club, or attended classes in sewing, French, and Christian doctrine. A club for married women and mothers met weekly and



Sisters Dorothy Daley and Anna Green at the piano in the residence lounge, Ottawa, 1934

held an annual party on Mother's Day. A fundraising concert in May 1935 included a three-act comedy, a minuet, a tableau, and numbers by the glee club. During Sister Church's appointment from 1937 until 1939, she organized an 18-piece orchestra of members. A dressmaking class was initiated, and Sister Ida Pickup, a retired hospital nurse, taught the art of fancy needle work.¹⁰¹

During the summers of 1936 and 1937, two sisters assumed the management of a camp for two groups of 16 girls, whose parents were on relief. Swimming, rowing, hiking, camp fires, crafts, knitting, and kitchen duty were mixed with prayers, hymn singing, and Mass at a nearby church. The month-long camp, under the direction of the Business and Professional Women's division of the CWL, gave the girls "regular hours, good environment, [and] directed play ... to develop character and muscle."¹⁰² During the winters, the campers met on Friday evenings in the residence and started their own junior club to make a patchwork quilt. The sisters also instructed Catholic students attending public schools in preparation to receive the sacraments.¹⁰³



Sister Nora FitzPatrick and residence orchestra in practice under the direction of conductor Mr. Atasa, Ottawa, 1946

At the outbreak of the Second World War, women from all parts of Canada came to Ottawa to work in plants and government offices. Sister Nora FitzPatrick, who lived at the residence, was employed at the city's housing registry, which found accommodation for women war workers, and she specifically looked after the interests of English-speaking women. Under Sister Szostak, superior from 1939 to 1943, *The Scroll* newsletter was begun, club members knitted for the Red Cross, and St. Anthony's club orchestra entertained at a club dinner in nearby St. Patrick's hall.¹⁰⁴ The DPs accepted the open invitation to come to the club, visiting regularly, in particular for social occasions. In 1948, the Polish Veterans Choir held their weekly practice in the house; later Czechoslovakians gathered to commemorate their national holiday and the death of their former president, who was killed by the Communists in 1952. The Ottawa Lithuanian Club celebrated their Independence Day, singing *O Canada* and their national anthem.¹⁰⁵

Sister Mary Corke, serving from 1943 to 1956, found her niche in the Ottawa residence. Following the war, many young women 17 to 21 years old came to Rosary Hall, from the towns and farms in



Sisters Mary Corke, Frances Church, Margaret O'Hare and Lithuanians celebrating their national holiday, 1953

the Ottawa Valley to work and study in short business courses and move towards independent living. From 1951 to 1968, Sister Margaret O'Hare, who grew up in the Ottawa Valley, brought comfort as a cook of familiar meals and a baker of delicious pies. As superior from 1950 until 1956, Sister Corke presented a way of life to young working women Rita Patenaude, Anna McNally, and Catharine Moriarity, who entered the SOS, and to Sister Clarice Garvey who joined Our Lady's Missionaries. A young woman recalled Sister Corke's help:

She was so good to me when I arrived in Ottawa – 18 years old – never been in a city before, had not ridden a street car, elevator or escalator, had never been in an office or eaten in a busy cafeteria. She was very patient with me and was so kind. I was so homesick and she would sit with me – crying my eyes out. I soon settled into Rosary Hall and met new friends. You never forget someone like Sister Corke.¹⁰⁶

Rosary Hall received two vice-regal visitors. In 1923, Lady Byng,



Sister Ella Deland entertains Pauline Vanier at tea, Ottawa, 1966

wife of Governor General Byng, visited the house and four decades later, in May 1966, Madame Pauline Vanier, wife of Governor General Georges Vanier, was welcomed by Sister Superior Ella Deland to the annual CWL tea in benefit for Rosary Hall.¹⁰⁷ Sister Deland, who had been posted twice to the residence as superior, “was very loved by the girls, very agreeable with them.”¹⁰⁸ Of the residences and the young women, Sister Deland observed, “I liked them. I think they kept us young.”¹⁰⁹

As in the Edmonton residence, the costly renovations of a firewall and alarms ordered by the fire department in May 1968 led the General Council’s decision to close the Ottawa residence. Upon learning of its decision on 17 June, Sister Deland gathered the residents to announce the closing, and “there were tears on both sides.”¹¹⁰ After 44 years and the service of 22 sisters, the residential club closed in late August 1968. In 2013, the house was designated a heritage property as an excellent example of Second Empire architecture.¹¹¹



Sister Rita MacLellan and visitor in front of the residence, Saskatoon, 1952.

Saskatoon, 1946-1971

Perched on a hill overlooking the Saskatchewan River, the classic centre-hall brick residence at 942 Saskatchewan Crescent East, was an anomaly to the institute's residences. Purchased in 1946, the gracious home within Treaty 6 Territory and the Metis homeland was planned originally to be the headquarters for SOS social workers in the Diocese of Saskatoon.¹¹² Since 1942, Sister Gertrude Walsh, a recent nursing graduate of Misericordia Hospital, had filled the position of welfare worker at the Catholic Welfare Society at the request of its founder, Bishop Gerald Murray, appointed as the first bishop of the diocese in 1934. She set a new path as the first sister to live outside an institute community, living at Rosary Hall under the direction of the Sisters of Sion. Sister Walsh travelled by streetcar or bus to visit Catholic families, usually one parent coping with children, and a lack of basic necessities in cramped accommodation. She noted that her "uniform aroused much curiosity and prompted many questions," including from a non-Catholic clergyman, who "expressed his great surprise that it was possible for Catholic Sisters to dress as we do."¹¹³

Her replacement in 1946, Sister Ann O'Brien, a graduate of the School of Social Work at the University of Manitoba, took possession of the house keys on 1 April. For three decades until retirement



Sister Ann O'Brien in her car, Saskatoon, 1955.

in 1973, she held positions of director of the social agency, and later executive director of its successor, Catholic Family Services. Sister Carolyn Albury observed during her 1956 visitation, “Everyone in Saskatoon knows Sister O’Brien.”¹¹⁴ A widow, who entered the novitiate at the age of 45, Sister O’Brien travelled by car, which she parked illegally at many home and school visits. A diminutive figure of under five feet, she refused to pay the small mountain of tickets, telling police not to place tickets on the car, considering her errands of mercy. The tickets ended. With a ready wit and lively sense of humour, she was known also for caustic, straightforward comments. Sister Florence Kelly observed, “Sister O’Brien is quite a character ... She could always tell you off if you weren’t doing what she approved of, but she did an incredible amount of generous and humanitarian work in Saskatoon and is remembered well as one who gave of herself, particularly to those less fortunate.”¹¹⁵

As the attendance officer for the Saskatoon Separate School Board, Sister O’Brien was a familiar figure in the schools as a friend and counsellor to students and teachers. On Saturday evenings, she served dinner on her own china to the clergy, including bishops, to whom she was a confidante and advisor. For this dedication and work among Saskatoon agencies and organizations, many honours

followed: Distinguished Public Service Award – City of Saskatoon, 1966; Saskatoon's 60th birthday Citizen's award, 1966; Kiwanis Club award for Outstanding work in the community, 1967; International Award for Community Service – International Association of Cosmopolitan Clubs, 1968; Knights of Columbus State Ecumenical Award, 1973; and Saskatoon Citizen of the Year, 1974. Upon her retirement in 1976, the Catholic Family Services board and other citizens, established the Sister Ann O'Brien Scholarship in social work for graduate or postgraduate Saskatchewan students to commemorate her service and dedication to family social work. In Saskatchewan's jubilee year, she was included in *Notable Saskatchewan Women 1905 –1980*, a book published by the provincial government. In 2004, an entry about her contribution was published in the *Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan*. Other city honours were bestowed, including the naming of the French immersion school as Ecole Sister O'Brien School by the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools as well as city streets: O'Brien Crescent, O'Brien Terrace, and O'Brien Court. Along with social work, she was appointed twice as superior of the Saskatoon residence.¹¹⁶

Mindful of the postwar popularity of university education, Bishop Philip Pocock, the first bishop's successor, requested that the newly-purchased house be converted into a residence for women university students. The house was ideally located for this purpose, a short walk to the campus of the University of Saskatchewan and St. Thomas More College, the federated Catholic college under principal Father Henry Carr. The university residence accommodated up to 15 female students from farms and small towns, whose main social activities were associated with the college's Newman Club and its bowling league, choir, glee club, and dramatic productions. Although in-house events were limited to a New Year's Eve dinner and parties on Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, and Halloween, the sisters honoured those graduating each year with a special dinner.¹¹⁷

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the sisters taught English language classes in the residence to DPs. One of the refugees, Father Joseph Bisztyo, a Hungarian priest and professor who left Europe during



Sister Edna Deland and university students in the living room, 1953

the Second World War, received private lessons from Sister Superior Edna Deland. Father Bisztyo taught courses in the philosophy of religion, Christianity, European existentialism, and ethics at St. Thomas More College for 26 years.

Similar to Sister O'Brien, Sister Rita MacLellan worked outside the residence, setting up the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) program in the diocese. Sister Patricia Burke, a graduate of the Maritime School of Social Work, joined the Catholic Welfare Society as a social worker from 1958 to 1966 under Sister O'Brien. During this time, Sister Burke earned a bachelor of arts in psychology from the University of Saskatchewan in 1964 and a professional teaching certificate from the department of education in Regina. Other sisters studied at the university, the Normal School, and the school of nursing at St. Paul's Hospital. Sister Anna McNally earned undergraduate degrees in arts and education at the University of Saskatchewan and remained in the city, teaching in two schools. She remained in the city, teaching in two schools with the Saskatoon Separate School Board. In the summers, rural teachers also stayed at the residence

while attending six weeks of university summer school or Normal School courses.¹¹⁸

Sister Isabel Ellis, the housemother for a decade (1958-1968), was described as serene, gracious, never hurried or flustered. The stool beside the counter in her spotless kitchen was considered the most important piece of furniture in the house. "Almost anytime, after classes at the university, someone or other of the girls can be found sitting on the stool, munching a cookie and talking, talking, talking into Sister's sympathetic and understanding ear."¹¹⁹

The residence was closed in 1971 and sold to the Sisters of St. Elizabeth. Sister O'Brien left the city in 1977, joining the retired sisters in St. Catharines. In 1996, Sister General McNally represented the institute at St. Thomas More College at its ceremony to honour the dedicated service of women religious.¹²⁰

St. John's, 1953-1973

Four years after Newfoundland entered Confederation, the institute accepted an invitation in 1952 to open a residence for working women coming to St. John's. Archbishop P.J. Skinner, CJM (Congregation of Jesus and Mary), who was appointed auxiliary bishop of St. John's in 1950 and archbishop a year later, had selected the SOS to participate in his social welfare program. He wanted the sisters to visit the poorer sections of the city and outlying parishes, and to establish a hostel for young working women, especially from the outports, "who are so often strange in the City, and who need the protection of [a] good, wholesome environment, and good companionship."¹²¹ During an advance trip in the summer of 1953, Sister General Mary Quinn and Sister Florence MacNeil were overwhelmed by the welcome from Archbishop Skinner, who showed them the historic house purchased for the hostel.¹²²

On 25 September 1953, following an 86-hour journey from Montreal, including the overnight ferry to Port aux Basques from North Sydney, Sisters Mary O'Kane and Frances Church, and newly-pro-



Sisters and residents, St. John's, 1954 (l-r) Sisters Nora FitzPatrick, Frances Church, Edna Deland, (centre), Theresa Duffley (top)



Exterior view of the house at 7 Garrison Hill

fessed Sister Theresa Duffley, were met by a reception committee – “a huddle of black suits and a sea of black hats” – belonging to Archbishop Skinner and the city pastors. The archbishop announced the sisters’ arrival from the cathedral pulpit the next morning, as did the city pastors at their churches. Their arrival was also heralded in newspaper articles and on the radio. A week later, the sisters took possession of the three-storey frame house at 7 Garrison Hill, once owned by the Parker family, one of the city’s merchant families. Well situated, the house on the ancestral homelands of the Beothuk was down the hill from the Cathedral of St. John Baptist. For a month, the sound of workers’ hammers, chisels and saws in converting the family dwelling into a hostel was blended with the ringing of the doorbell and the voices of gift bearers. The house was furnished through the generosity of clergy, the religious communities of Sisters of Mercy and the Sisters of the Presentation, a kitchen and pantry shower by the cathedral parish. By 11 November, when the archbishop officially blessed the house, 20 girls as young as 17 years old were living in the residence. The SOS purchased the house a year



Sister Alena Bryden accepts a cheque from the women's auxiliary, St. John's, 1966

later.¹²³

Gradually, the Newfoundland liveliness and ditties enveloped the sisters. The young women residents paid special attention to the orphans at St. Michael's in Belvedere under the Sisters of Mercy, treating 22 senior girls to a movie, then to a party and lunch at the residence. After the sudden death of Sister Church on 21 December 1955, a steady stream of mourners offered condolences at the wake held in the residence, and the young women residents recited the rosary and kept watch during the night. Mourning clergy, members of other religious communities, and former and present residents attended the solemn funeral Mass, sung by the priests' choir, at the basilica. Sister Church's body was buried in the plot of the Sisters of Mercy in the city's Belvedere cemetery.¹²⁴

To encourage community support, Sister Superior Nora FitzPatrick organized a ladies' auxiliary in late November 1955. Gaining a membership of more than 200 women, the auxiliary organized fundraising events such as fashion shows, bridge and auction parties, raffles, and an annual mammoth cardholding membership tea. By the late

1960s, as in the other SOS residences, the majority of residents were students enrolled at the Trades College or Memorial University. The few house rules pertained to mealtimes and a midnight curfew. The original purpose of a residence – to provide a bridge for young women from home life in the outposts to independent living – had dimmed.¹²⁵ The residence closed after 20 years at the end of June 1973. The property was purchased by a Parker granddaughter and received heritage designation in 2017.

The residences served many aspects of the original rule. During the years of the employment settlement scheme, the hostels almost solely accommodated immigrant women. The 1930s saw the emergence of the residential clubs as social centres for working women, and as a place of training and placement of domestic workers. The arrival of the DPs brought back the immigration aspect and the activities of the residential clubs introduced social and cultural elements of Canadian life. In later years, the residences provided accommodation for full-time university students as in Saskatoon, and college and vocational students in other residences. Although renovations and additions in the 1950s modernized three western residences, the cost of upgrading other houses and the changing needs of this apostolate led to the closing of eight residences.

Chapter Seven

District Nursing and
the Alberta Hospitals

*As Nurses, to establish small hospitals and dispensaries to provide the poor with medical care.
To visit the sick at home.*

Rules and Constitutions of the Sisters of Service, 1922, 1934

District Nurses in Manitoba

In the fall of 1924 when Sister Catherine Wymbs treated her first patient in Camp Morton, Manitoba, she was following in the footsteps of centuries of religious women healers. Inside and outside convents and their hospitals, women have cared for the sick as herbalists, caregivers and midwives. Since the establishment of nursing as a profession in the 19th century in North America, women religious congregations in Canada have opened hospitals, staffed with their own sisters, who were trained in their schools of nursing. Accordingly, the 1922 and 1934 Rules stated the role of the SOS “as nurses, to establish small hospitals and dispensaries to provide the poor with medical care.”¹

This first venture into rural nursing matched perfectly their aim to open missions in settlements of Catholic immigrants from the former Austrian-Hungarian empire. Sister Wymbs, as a district nurse, examined patients in the sisters’ living quarters or hitched the horse and wagon to visit homes. Within a year, her skills were needed as the founding superior at the institute’s first cottage hospital in Vilna. Her successor, Sister Agnes Brunning, a registered nurse graduate of Hamilton’s St. Joseph’s Hospital School of Nursing, added to Sister Wymbs’ growing patients’ list. Preferred to the local doctor in Gimli, in whom the people lacked confidence, Sister Brunning made many home visits. Besides medicine, she brought needed clothes and reading material to the two or three dwellings. Beds sometimes consisted of old clothes or hay piled on earthen floors. She noticed on entering the cottage in winter, “the families were seated around on benches and seemed to have nothing to do except their few chores. They seemed to have no reading material.”²

A call for the sister nurse might mean a journey, day or night, by horse and buggy. Sister Brunning’s greatest privilege was accompa-



*Sister Catherine Donnelly stands with Sister Agnes Brunning
in the buggy, Camp Morton, 1925*

nying or driving a priest to visit the sick. “In the winter, it was bitterly cold driving and no amount of clothing could keep out the wind,” Sister Brunning recalled of her two Camp Morton winters. “The roads in the spring and fall were so muddy with such deep ruts [We travelled] with the constant fear the wheels of the buggy [would] be broken off. A good buggy and cutter was bought by a Catholic Action group of men in Winnipeg.”³ On one occasion, her usual concerns about possible coyotes or wolves encounters and finding the right direction on the similar-looking roads slipped away unintentionally. Having been up all night, Sister Brunning left the Lutheran minister’s house in early morning after caring for his wife and delivering a new baby, climbed into the buggy and headed back to the sisters’ cottage. Within a few minutes, she fell asleep and “woke up at dawn with the horse standing beside the mission’s barn, patiently waiting to be unharnessed and fed.”⁴

In 1932 with the arrival of Sister Lidwina Furman, home visits resumed. Although not a trained nurse, Sister Furman had gained practical nursing experience, including as a midwife, from living on the family homestead in Saskatchewan. Her family had emigrated from Poland, and she understood European languages, an asset when visiting families. Sister Furman’s services ended in January 1940 when the 40-bed Johnson Memorial Hospital, operated by the Sisters of St. Benedict, opened in Gimli.⁵

Hospitals in Alberta

In quick succession, the apostolate to establish “small hospitals” came to fruition in 1925 and 1926 with the opening of cottage hospitals in Vilna and Edson, small villages in central Alberta. Archbishop Henry O’Leary of Edmonton promoted this objective in his dealings with the episcopacy and other religious congregations. In explaining the need for rural hospitals to the apostolate delegate, Archbishop McNeil noted that Catholic hospitals in the cities could be self-supporting but that Protestant faiths “place many small hospitals in rural districts in the midst of Catholic populations, thus gaining the good will of our people. Through the Sisters of Service, we hope to compete with Protestants in hospital service.”⁶ Father Daly agreed that the rapid expansion of the larger hospitals in the cities “absorbed our forces ... We seem to have left the rural field to non-Catholic organizations. These various churches have dotted the western field with small hospital units to meet the needs of the new settlers. The institute will not accept large institutions in towns and cities. It is essentially a missionary endeavour.”⁷

In tours of the sprawling Edmonton archdiocese, Archbishop O’Leary had assessed its rural health care needs. During the 1920s, he successfully persuaded four well-established Eastern Canadian English-speaking women’s congregations to own and operate rural hospitals, joining the eight hospitals of the French-speaking congregations. By 1930, ten English-speaking hospitals were established, including the two Sisters of Service cottage hospitals.⁸

For the next 40 years, the nursing sisters crisscrossed central Alberta en route to their alternating appointments at their hospitals in Vilna and Edson. Like their grey uniform, the nursing uniform was adopted from a contemporary-style, grey cotton dress with a white apron with a bib front, similar to the Red Cross and First World War nurses, and a grey nurses’ cap. Lay nurses were hired temporarily from the General and Misericordia hospitals in Edmonton to supplement nursing care at the cottage hospitals. During these years, four sisters

(Bertha Jackson, Mary Roberts, Lydia Tyler and Gertrude Walsh) received their nursing training at Misericordia Hospital while others upgraded their professional qualifications in nursing, x-ray and laboratory technology, and medical records.

The original hospital buildings in Edson and Vilna were replaced with new facilities, which represented Father Daly's only building projects. In the first decades, the financing of the hospitals' operations was an onerous challenge. Correspondence between the hospital superiors and Father Daly revealed constant concerns about banking matters, building repairs, the payment of patient fees in farm produce, and grants offered by governments and municipalities. The financial responsibility of a hospital and the limited number of sister nurses likely resulted in a recommendation to the 1943 Chapter that no other hospital be accepted.⁹ Despite Father Daly's financial acumen, the onus of running the two hospitals rested with the sisters until the Alberta Hospitalization Benefits Plan came into effect on 1 April 1958. The plan covered operating costs, including patient fees, but not capital costs. Between 1958 and 1970, the federal government successfully established national health care policies.¹⁰

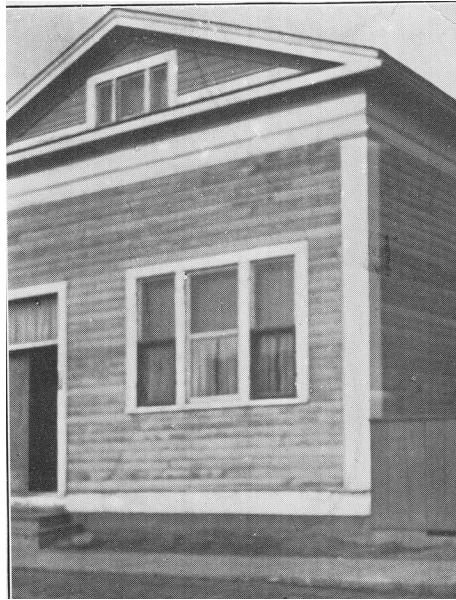
However, government financing was accompanied by regulations, oversight, and planning. At the 1966 Chapter, a report of the committee on nursing noted the conflict and concern of religious congregations in health care. While committed to the needs of modern society in a manner combining scientific excellence and Christian compassion, a Catholic hospital balanced giving spiritual nourishment to a patient along with medical care, through continuous education and constant conforming to government regulations. By the end of the 1960s, the Alberta government had assumed the responsibility for rural health care with the creation of health districts. The institute's original goal was achieved and the sisters withdrew from both hospitals.

Our Lady's Hospital, Vilna, 1925-1970

As the seventh mission, Our Lady's Hospital was a sequel to the combined efforts of Father Daly and Father Peter Hughes in opening the Edmonton catechetical mission in January 1925. The hospital and the Edmonton house had stemmed from Father Hughes' request for the Sisters of Service to start missionary work in Alberta. As the archbishop's eyes and ears, Father Hughes had received a special assignment as an itinerant missionary and director of the Ukrainian Catholic Institute, which offered a solid Ukrainian and religious education and other endeavours to the Ruthenians. While searching for a potential hospital site in September 1925, Fathers Daly and Hughes visited the village of Vilna, nestled in a farming community of central European settlers. After inspecting an empty derelict building on the main street, the pair held a public meeting in which the villagers agreed to help pay for the remodelling of the building into a hospital. Based on this agreement, Father Daly purchased the building, a closed branch of the Canadian Bank of Commerce for \$1,500.¹¹

Vilna within the Treaty 6 Territory grew in population when the Canadian National Railway in 1919 laid track to the area connecting it to Edmonton, 75 miles (121 kilometres) to the southwest. A year later, the villagers voted to name it after the historic city of Vilnius, Lithuania. It had the amenities of a hardware store, butcher shop, hotel, post office, pool hall and dance hall, but moonshining was a profitable but dangerous business in the early years of Prohibition.¹²

Pioneer Sisters Catherine Wymbs and Ann Geraghty arrived on 2 November 1925 and started cleaning the vacant Main Street building, staying in the village's hotel until it was habitable. The dirt and primitive conditions were no match for Sister Wymbs, a member of the Canadian Army Medical Corps during the First World War. A nurse in French and English field hospitals, she remained overseas for a year after the Armistice to continue nursing during the flu epidemic, and received a medal of honour from the French government.



Exterior of the first Our Lady's Hospital, Vilna, 1927

From the start, the two sisters were welcomed by the community. In their first week, they were driven eight miles to a farmhouse, where Mass was celebrated once a month. Afterwards, they sat down to a much-appreciated dinner of soup, fruit, cream, and cakes. Although the mother and daughter-in-law of the house did not speak English, others did, and the sisters were laden with potatoes and vegetables to take back to the hospital. Before the hospital opened, Father Hughes drove the sisters to visit families caring for ill members at home. One of the families presented a statue of Our Lady, which the sisters placed in a window above the hospital entrance.¹³

In a letter to Sister Wymbs, Father Daly urged patience in collecting payments: "Go quietly. Do not hurry ... try to collect money from the people as they promised."¹⁴ To get her bearings, he recommended that she get acquainted with the Department of Health in Edmonton and visit the small hospitals. "Always seek refuge in prayer," he advised, "and look ahead ten years from this when your humble beginnings will have become a factor for good to the community around you."¹⁵

After the two months of renovations, the sisters received a Ukrainian boy on 12 December as their first patient. The small two-storey hospital opened with a doctor's office, a two-bed women's ward, a three-bed men's ward, an operating room, a second-floor maternity ward, and a nursery. The sisters slept in cubicles under the eaves, separated from the wards by curtains. In these pioneer days, there was no running water or indoor plumbing, lighting was by coal oil lamps, and heating was by kitchen coal and wood-burning stove.¹⁶ Nursing Sister Beatrice DeMarsh arrived in August 1926 to find a visiting priest whittling wood chips for the stove while chatting with Sister Wymbs. He had celebrated the monthly Mass in the sister's chapel in the absence of a church and a resident priest. The following day, Sister DeMarsh received a tour of the hospital.

There was a well in the backyard and we used all the water it contained for bathing patients, cleaning, toilet facilities and laundry which was done in the kitchen with old-fashioned tubs and a wash board. When the well dried up, the water was carried from either the railroad station or the main street well – a goodly distance to carry two pails of water at a time.¹⁷

Resourcefulness and a good sense of humour were the hallmarks of the pioneer sisters in Vilna. Sister DeMarsh cured a seriously ill pneumonia patient with an onion poultice containing lard, sliced onions, and a teaspoon of turpentine, which she placed on the patient's back and front. Sister Wymbs "brought a generous happy personality and infectious laugh and a great sense of humour. She was always ready to see the amusing side of life and enjoy a good joke on herself. Sister loved people and especially the young."¹⁸

For 22 years, Sister Stella Dube nursed while upgrading her skills as a registered x-ray technician and electrocardiograph operator. Sister Ella Zink praised Sister Dube's superb care of seriously ill patients by easing their pain and discomfort.¹⁹ In a speech to a convention of the Alberta Nurses Association, Sister Dube expressed her conviction that a nurse "has an excellent opportunity for giving psychological help to a soul tried by sorrow as well as physical pain."²⁰



Top: Cow and Sisters in front of the Our Lady's Hospital, 1931. Middle Left: Sisters Beatrice DeMarsh and Ida Pickup with hospital chickens, 1931. Middle Right: Sisters Stella Dube, Marian Haut and winter cutter, 1943. Bottom: Sisters Mary Roberts and Helen Hayes skate on pond near the hospital, 1956.

In May 1926, Dr. W.W. Eadie took up practice as the hospital doctor and surgeon and within two years of operation, the hospital on Main Street was deemed inadequate. Four acres of land were purchased for \$300 just outside the village for a new hospital. Father Daly obtained donations and bequests to offset some of the \$25,000 construction costs, including \$1,500 from the Catholic Church Extension Society for the hospital chapel, which was to be named after the donor. Before the official opening, Father Hughes blessed the new two-storey stucco hospital. A new statue of Our Lady, a gift from the Sisters of the Precious Blood in Edmonton, was placed in a niche in a window over the entrance. The day before the hospital officially opened on 27 December 1928, farmers came with horses and wagons and spent five hours moving patients and equipment, setting up the stove, and placing the furniture.

The next morning, all was in place when Dr. Eadie made his rounds. Equipped with running water, a generating plant for electricity, and a sewage system along with an x-ray and operating room, the hospital could accommodate up to 20 patients in three private rooms, a women's ward, a children's ward, and a maternity ward. In the 1930s when money was scarce, some patients paid in produce, grain, wood, and labour.²¹ To become self-sufficient and provide milk and eggs for patients, the sisters converted the acres surrounding the hospital into a small farm with livestock and summer vegetables. They all became adept at farm chores, including milking. Sister Marie Anne Paradis grew tired of remonstrating with a neighbouring cow, which regularly wandered onto the hospital property. One day she simply went out with a pail and a stool and milked the culprit. The Edmonton–St. Paul train passed by and the engineer, fireman, and crew shouted and waved. Unabashed, she waved back and continued with the milking. The cow never came back!²²

Besides farming, the sisters performed extra duties, preparing bodies for funerals, examining 45 people in a tuberculosis clinic in 1937, and visiting the Cree band at Goodfish Lake reserve. Appendectomies were frequent emergency surgeries with some patients driving



Sister Martha Knechtel and patient, Vilna, 1956

a distance of an hour. If a patient came at night, the bells of the horse-drawn wagon or stoneboat (sled) alerted the nurses. Busy days for the seven sisters were captured in the entry for 18 March 1935.

A maternity case on – door bell rings, nurse goes, another patient, maternity case, where to put her? Patient takes Sister (Rose) Jolicoeur's bed. One baby born at 4:30, the other at 5 ... A crib taken down from the attic, we have three children. Eighteen patients altogether. No beds available, only cots. Father Daly arrives on the afternoon train, we are glad to see him. The big question: Where to put him?²³

On less hectic days, the sisters cherished outdoor gatherings around a campfire, picking berries, and picnics at Long Lake. The annalist also noted skating on the pond in winter temperatures of -40°F and the opening of deer and moose season, when the pastor, appointed in 1927, took hunting holidays. Living in a farming community with a fixed population, the sisters participated in community events, attending and learning the responses of Ukrainian Masses, including Midnight Mass, and enjoying the hearty breakfast afterward. In re-

turn, the married Ukrainian priest, knowledgeable in many languages, translated documents for hospital patients. Sister Martha Knechtel, who had worked in the hospital as a freshly graduated nurse before entering, presided over the mandatory first aid course for the local Boy Scout troop, examining the bandages, knots, and slings.²⁴

Strong community ties with the hospital were affirmed on Hospital Day. First held in August 1935 on the hospital grounds to honour the silver jubilee of King George V on the British throne, Hospital Day attracted villagers and farmers. The entertainment featured a baby show in two classes, 1 to 6 months old and 6 to 12 months, a softball game, the raising of the flag, a dance, and fireworks. Ten years later in another unifying effort, Sister Brunning, in her second appointment as superior, chaired a meeting to establish a hospital women's auxiliary. The subsequent organization held fall bazaars, card parties, dances, sales of cookbooks and souvenir teaspoons, with all proceeds benefitting the hospital. An incubator and a basal metabolic rate machine along with furnishings of beds, tables, lamps, curtains, fixtures, and hallway linoleum improved the facilities. At Christmas time, each patient received treats. Sister Eveleen Donnelly assisted the auxiliary during her 25 years at the hospital, rolling bandages and helping at the annual Hospital Day. Her dry sense of humour and flare for mimicry, delivered in her native Lancaster dialect, enlivened these occasions.²⁵

Outside the hospital, the sisters maintained a strong presence in the parish life of Sacred Heart church, built in the 1930s. Sisters played the organ at weddings, sang the requiem at funeral Masses, directed choirs, especially at Christmas and Easter, and taught weekly religion classes and religious vacation schools in the area. In the late 1930s and 1940s, children from the rural areas, who were preparing for the sacraments, stayed at the hospital for a week. To involve teenage girls, a Sodality of Children of Mary, a devotional group, was formed in 1930, and Sister Lidwina Furman established the Loyal Canadian girls club in the early 1930s. On frigid winter mornings, pastor Father Norbert Schmeltzer in the 1930s, the brother of Sister Catherine Schmeltzer, celebrated Mass in the hospital chapel rather



Sister Brigid Knopic (centre) at Hospital Day, Vilna, 1965

than the cold church. In his absence, the sisters went to the rectory to listened to the radio. During the Depression, the sisters distributed clothes and toys, which had been collected and sent by the CWL in Chatham, Ontario.²⁶

After Dr. Eadie's departure in 1942 to Alexandria Hospital in Edmonton, the sisters ministered to the sick for three years with the help of Dr. Albert Dobson of nearby Smoky Lake. Called on emergencies, he also came to hold hospital office hours and to attend to outpatients, and maternity patients. In other circumstances, he instructed a nurse on the appropriate medical treatment by telephone. During the diphtheria outbreak in the middle of the Second World War, the sisters visited homes to administer vaccines and provide nursing care. At the end of the war, Dr. P.W. Frobb, a Polish-speaking graduate of the University of Alberta and a war veteran, set up

medical practice in Vilna and assumed the diagnostic, obstetrics, and orthopaedics care in the hospital.²⁷

In 1945, an advisory board was created to assist the hospital administer the changes introduced by the municipalities and the provincial department of health. In the early 1950s, the hospital was linked to the municipal water system and to Canadian Utilities for electricity, phasing out the generating plant and the farm. Meanwhile, the sisters continued to upgrade their medical qualifications, attending courses to obtain certificates as x-ray and laboratory technicians and as midwives. With the introduction of hospital insurance in 1958, government funding covered patient fees. Admissions remained stable with a total of 613 patients in 1959 compared with 504 six years earlier. However, by 1967, the hospital facilities were inadequate to offer increased radiology and laboratory services, and government aid was unavailable to build or renovate the Vilna hospital. Prior to government funding, sister administrators of Catholic hospitals, had almost complete autonomy in their own hospitals and found adaptation to the new system and the required government permissions frustrating. Sister Jeanette Kinch, as the hospital's secretary-treasurer, met the new bureaucratic challenges, earning certificates in hospital organization and management. The future of the Vilna hospital, with 520 patient admissions in 1965, was discussed at the 1966 Chapter meeting. The Alberta government had rejected a proposed addition to the Vilna hospital and had not included it as one of the 50-bed rural hospitals planned for rural areas.²⁸

Late in 1969, citing insufficient staff to administer the two hospitals, the General Council decided to withdraw from Our Lady's Hospital, ending an era. Over the course of 45 years, 16,730 patients had received care from 34 sisters. Sister Kathleen Allen, who had been appointed superior in 1967, facilitated negotiations with the hospital advisory board and the provincial health department for the sisters' withdrawal from hospital management. The hospital was sold to the health ministry, which in turn transferred it to the municipalities of Vilna and County of Smoky Lake under the name of District 105, Vilna General Hospital. The transfer was effective on 1 July 1970.

The advisory board became the governing board, and Sister Allen remained until December 1970. Sister Barbara Kowalski returned to her hometown of Vilna in 1984 after retiring from teaching; she volunteered at the hospital, visiting the sick and seniors, until her death in 2005.²⁹

St. John's Hospital, Edson, 1926-1997

In 1922, Archbishop O'Leary visited Edson, a railway centre in the northwest of his archdiocese. Chagrined to discover the area was "practically without hospitalization," he later remarked, "Children were being born under conditions which were a disgrace to our modern civilization and the sick had to be sent to Edmonton to receive proper medical attention."³⁰ Incorporated in 1911, the town grew after the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway (GTP) line, which extended west from Edmonton to the Pacific coast, and a 50-mile branch line south to the coal-producing region, aptly named Coal Branch. For their coal-fired train engines, the GTP and later Canadian National Railways (CNR) consumed most of the steam coal mined in the Coal Branch mines in Mountain Park, Cadomin, Luscar, Robb, Mercoal, Foothills and Lovett. Named in honour of Edson Joseph Chamberlin, the GTP's vice-president, Edson with a population of 4,000, dominated by Protestants, was also the regional centre for farmers and the lumber industry.³¹

Archbishop O'Leary turned to Father Hughes, who approached Father Daly about opening a SOS hospital in Edson. The hospital would serve as the only large facility between Kamloops, British Columbia and Edmonton to treat the serious injuries of the coal miners.³² As with the Vilna hospital, Fathers Daly and Hughes made a visit in the spring of 1926 to inspect a potential hospital building in Edson, and held a meeting with the townspeople, who promised to help financially. The proposed building had been originally built by the town as a hospital in 1914 and was named after Lady Minto, philanthropist wife of the governor general who had donated funds to build rural hospitals. In its two periods of use, the Lady Minto Hospital served as an emergency centre during the influenza pan-



Side view of the first St. John's Hospital, Edson, 1928

demic and was then used by the Victorian Order of Nurses for a year between 1921 and 1922 following a request by the archbishop. In early autumn, Father Daly's purchase offer of \$1,500 was accepted by the town, and arrangements were made for extensive repairs and renovations. Since the new Vilna hospital was also scheduled to be built, finances were tight. To cover the costs, Theresa Small, the widow of missing theatre owner Ambrose Small, donated \$5,000, and the hospital was named St. John's Hospital in memory of her brother, John Kormann.³³

Shortly after its purchase, Sisters Wymbs, founding superior of the Vilna hospital, and Sister Catherine McNally, from the Edmonton catechetical mission, came to inspect the hospital and to ascertain the number of beds, and the necessary hospital equipment and furnishings. After an overnight rest at the Imperial Hotel, the sisters assessed the two-storey square building with its broken windows, fallen plaster and water seeping through the skylight over the operating room. Back in Edmonton, they ordered equipment, linens and other furnishing, and arranged for hospital renovations. Returning in November, Father Daly and the sisters unpacked the boxes and a room was chosen for the chapel, which smelled of paint and varnish. The Catholic Church Extension Society had sent \$500 for the chapel in the name of Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Conway, and the Montreal Catholic Extension Society sent vestments, altar linens, and supplies. While tradespeople continued the renovations, Father



Sister Catherine Wymbs and male patients, Edson, 1933

Daly met with prominent citizens in the town to discuss a hospital grant. A group of local women, who helped with sewing curtains and painting radiators and screens, formed a hospital auxiliary of 30 members. The hospital became a community project.

In late afternoon of 8 December 1926, Archbishop O’Leary blessed and officially opened the 15-bed hospital. The auxiliary received the guests, mostly non-Catholics, and served tea while collecting \$80 in donations of silver coins. The next day, the first patients, one with a fractured hip and the other an injured foot, were treated, both workers’ compensation cases.³⁴

Unlike Vilna, two physicians, Doctors McCordic and R. Johnston, already resided in Edson, and surgeon Dr. M.E. Tiffin arrived shortly afterwards. When no doctor was available, Sister Agnes Brunning, who had been transferred from Camp Morton to become superior (1927-1932), performed a successful appendectomy: “It is quite easy. You just put your finger under and push it up and then cut it out.”³⁵ Like the original Vilna hospital, the facilities were makeshift. Patients on cots were lifted up the stairs to the operating room for appendectomies, tonsillectomies, births, fractures, broken limbs, accidental shootings, and teeth extraction. As in Vilna, the first hospital quickly reached capacity. On 13 April 1930, the annalist recorded the shortage of space of “the patient [who] had to sleep on a cot in the

operating room and the baby in a cardboard box. Now we have six babies.”

It was a train crash just south of Edson that demonstrated the necessity of a larger hospital. Early Sunday morning of 16 April 1931, a train was thrown from the track after a car hit the split rail and five train coaches were hurled down a 30-foot embankment. Notified by Dr. Tiffin, also the CNR medical officer, Sister Brunning prepared for the onslaught of 29 injured persons, despite having a full hospital. To free up beds, convalescing patients were moved to the nurses’ dining room. The injured were treated by hospital staff before the arrival of two nurses and a doctor from Jasper, and additional nurses and doctors travelling on a special CNR hospital train from Edmonton. Officials and reporters were everywhere, phones ringing, and people making inquiries or offering to assist. Ten were admitted from the wreck, and one man died from his injuries a week later.³⁶

Coincidentally, nearby property was being excavated in advance of the construction of a new hospital. This was Father Daly’s most ambitious project at a cost of \$90,000. A year earlier in a private meeting with Father Daly, Sir Henry Thornton, the CNR board chairman and president, increased the company’s annual contribution to \$2,500 from \$1,000 for 10 years to the hospital. To gain more financial support, Father Daly contacted the heads of 13 mining companies, which employed up to 5,000 miners in the Coal Branch district.³⁷ Notwithstanding the CNR donation, Sister Brunning noted in the 1930-1931 financial report that \$3,322 was owing in patient fees. “We have so many patients who can pay nothing. We are just managing along on the compensation board money.”³⁸

Construction of the hospital was speedy. By 4 September, the sisters gave tours of the new 38-bed brick hospital. The facility was connected to the town’s water and sewage systems and equipped with a full basement, east and west solariums, an elevator, and telephones with extensions. A week later, six men from the CNR’s first aid team moved the patients into the hospital. The sisters converted the old hospital into their residence. At the official opening on 15 Octo-



Opening of the second St. John's Hospital, Edson, 1931. Archbishop Henry O'Leary, on the top steps, and Father Daly in the centre foreground. Sister Hermine LaMothe (extreme left), Sisters Mary Ann Bridget Burke, Catherine Wymbs and Carmel Egan on the extreme right.

ber 1931, Archbishop O'Leary admitted misgivings about building a hospital during the hard times and scarce money of the Depression, but Father Daly's faith and optimism and that of the sisters persuaded him. The archbishop and Edson Mayor A.D. MacMillan cut the official ribbon as the sisters and Father Daly watched proudly.³⁹

Winter was the hospital's busiest season with the opening of the area's lumber and tie camps. The medical staff attended to patients with broken limbs, torn ligaments, bruises, cut fingers, and the usual road accidents. The medical care was appreciated and recognized in 1935 by the hospital receiving King George V's jubilee medal in celebration of his 25 years on the British throne. Cognizant that two-thirds of the patients were English-speaking, Father Daly suggested the medal be framed and placed "in view where the public can see it." He added, "Knowing the Western atmosphere as I know it, this is good business!"⁴⁰

Up to 12 sisters staffed the hospital as nurses, dieticians, x-ray technicians, and office staff with the assistance of lay doctors, nurses, temporary Edmonton hospital nurses, housekeepers, and a handy-

man. The sisters' residence, now the entire first hospital, provided rooms for sisters recovering from long-term illness and presented an alternative location to Toronto for the renewal of vows and annual retreats. In June 1935, Redemptorist Father Henry Bartley received the final vows of five sisters after preaching an eight-day retreat.⁴¹

As superior of the new hospital from 1934 to 1942, Sister Mary Quinn established an atmosphere of brightness, laughter, and professionalism. Nursing Sister Ella Zink, a second-year novice, recalled the welcoming greeting of Sister Quinn, who was on her way to the operating room with her sleeves rolled up, ready to scrub. Informal, friendly, and forthright with a scintillating Irish wit, Sister Quinn's outstanding characteristic was thoughtfulness. On Sister Zink's first evening at the hospital in 1939, Sister Quinn gave her several good photographs of the hospital to send home, saying, "Our families in the East usually had weird notions about the West and thought we live in teepees and were terribly deprived, so seeing actual pictures put their minds at ease."⁴² Whether inside or outside the hospital, Sister Quinn "was always very direct; she did not beat around bushes. This was helpful to a younger sister. If you had difficulties ... she faced them head-on with you. In fact, she often anticipated them and prepared you. This gave her real credibility and was confidence-inspiring. Nor did she beat around the bush in telling you were lacking or wrong."⁴³

For two decades, yearly admissions steadily increased to 1,100 in 1946 from 243 in 1927. As admission numbers rose, financial troubles eased. Half of the revenue came from a grant from the Alberta government and the CNR, and an agreement with the provincial compensation board to treat miners and recipients of the government's Depression relief. Townspeople also supported the hospital; in 1939, proceeds of the board of trade's charity fundraising purchased an iron lung from England.⁴⁴

In the postwar period, the sisters took advantage of increased government funding. Many sisters upgraded their professional training and pursued new studies. With the burden of being the first-elected Sis-



Sister Dorothy Daley in the hospital lab, Edson, 1976

ter General lifted, Sister Margaret Guest developed a second career in Edson. From 1950 to 1975, she managed the hospital's medical records, obtaining qualifications as a registered record librarian. She established the medical records department, working closely with the Alberta Hospital Association, and also assisted other small hospitals in setting up their own medical records libraries.⁴⁵ Similarly, Sister Dorothy Daley found her niche at the hospital when appointed in 1952. Beginning first as a nurse's aide, Sister Daley enrolled in a laboratory and x-ray school in Edmonton, graduating from the first class of x-ray and lab technicians. At the hospital, she worked full-time and overtime taking x-rays of many accident victims from highways, skiing, and rodeos. Frequently, she returned to Edmonton for refresher courses on the latest techniques, until retiring from the hospital in 1976.⁴⁶

Meanwhile, the increasing complexity of the hospital's finances was placed in the capable hands of Sister Evelyn Tunney, who managed the business office for almost two decades, starting in 1956. Well-equipped to oversee the changes, she had worked for 15 years for the federal government, rising to the position of supervisor in the central accounts of the treasury department. With this stellar finan-



Sister Evelyn Tunney and young patient, Edson, 1958

cial background, she kept the accounts in women's residences in Montreal and the Motherhouse. To update her qualifications, she attended courses in hospital management and accounting as well as in financial management for not-for-profit institutions at the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana. She also assisted the auxiliary, which was re-established in March 1957.⁴⁷

Sister Hermine LaMothe had a lasting impact on the community. A former Bell Telephone employee in charge of receivable accounts in the Montreal office, Sister LaMothe was first appointed to the hospital in 1929 for three years. She worked in the office, helped nurse patients, visited the immigrant families and taught catechism to their children. "We were jacks of all trades and there was plenty to do," she recalled. "Often it was 11 p.m. before we got to bed after a full day's work, but we enjoyed the work and it was worth doing."⁴⁸

Returning in 1946 after postings in Marquis, Vilna and women's residences, Sister LaMothe, for the next 25 years, supervised the hospital laundry – the washing, drying outside or in the hospital basement, and the ironing. However, school children waiting for their mothers to end their hospital shifts associated Sister LaMothe with something other than clean sheets. Every afternoon, the laundry door opened with the custodian announcing, "Your gang is here, Sister." Sister distributed cookies, even to neighbourhood dogs, and heard the tales of the school day. After retirement in 1971, she continued to visit the hospital and the sick and elderly in the town until her own health diminished and she was confined to a wheelchair in



Sister Kathleen Allen and nurse place infants into incubator, 1955



Sisters on hospital front steps, Edson, 1952. Front row (l-r): Sisters Leona Rose, Mary Roberts. Second row: Sisters Beatrice DeMarsh, Brigid Knopic, Bertha Jackson. Back row: Sisters Eileen Gallagher, Silvie Nachtegale, Dorothy Daley, Hermine LaMothe, Mary Reansbury, Rita Sullivan, Clara Graf.

later years. L.B. Halliwell, chairman of the hospital board in 1970s, paid tribute to her acts of simple kindness. "Many, many lives in the Edson area have been touched in a very real sense by this small, frail little human being. While small and frail she may have been, she cast one of the greatest and longest shadows of influence that I have ever seen by anyone."⁴⁹ His assessment was shared by the town of Edson when in 1982, it named a new housing subdivision La Mothe Heights.

While Sister LaMothe had a quiet demeanour, Sister Brigid Knopic brought a contagious laugh that filled the rooms during the 27 years of her two appointments. Her smiling greeting and informality were rooted in her Ottawa Valley upbringing, and her prior nursing experience as a private duty nurse gave comfort to patients and their families. During these years, she continually upgraded her medical education with certificates in the care of communicable diseases and practical obstetrics, a diploma as a radiology technician, and courses in hospital administration and rehabilitation medicine. Instead of emphasizing these impressive credentials, Dr. Thomas Biggs, president of the Alberta Hospital Association, spoke of her lively personality when presenting her with a citation in November 1978 for distinguished service to the hospitals and people of Alberta. "You are a woman of seemingly boundless energy who approaches all tasks with bold eagerness and fervent zeal. You are an incurable optimist, ever cheerful and friendly; your only failure is your inability to control the abundant goodwill and the infectious good humour which you spread wherever you go. Your spirit and the richness of your life have touched all of us."⁵⁰

Equally remarkable was Sister Kathleen Allen, a nurse from North Bay, Ontario, who had cared for the Dionne quintuplets and their mother. She arrived in August 1953 to begin 36 years at the Edson mission, earning the distinction of being the longest-serving sister at the hospital. She once observed, "I've worked here long enough to have nursed mothers and the mothers' children. I'd say, 'I slapped your bottom when you were born, and now I'm slapping your baby's.'"⁵¹ As a staff nurse, director of nursing services, and director

of patient care at both the Edson and Vilna hospitals, Sister Allen employed a direct approach. “Ninety percent of hospital administration is talking, taking time with patients, letting them air their gripes, explaining what’s happening. Just talking.”⁵² A whistler of canary trills, Sister Allen used this musical distraction when giving a needle. “Nurses often would call me to whistle while they give the needle to frightened patients.”⁵³ In a small rural hospital, understaffing and changing medical procedures, Sister Allen reflected. “I know the temptation to overwork, to become so work-oriented that one forgets prayers. Maintaining balance demands constant struggle.”⁵⁴ Her assignment in Edson was interrupted only once with an appointment to Our Lady’s Hospital from 1967 to 1970. During that time, she studied at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, earning a diploma in hospital administration.

Just as in Vilna, new trends in health care and the introduction of government financing of services presented challenges. A report to the 1960 Chapter showed that Edson admissions had steadily increased to 1,731 in 1959 from 1,468 in 1953. In response, an advisory board was established at the Edson hospital in 1963 to assist with the negotiations for a new, fully-government-funded 50-bed hospital under the provincial government’s rural hospital plan. Unlike Vilna, Edson was considered a regional centre as part of the Yellowhead Highway, a major interprovincial highway connecting Manitoba to the coast of British Columbia. Sister Mary Roberts, superior from 1962 to 1970, orchestrated the building of the new hospital and the sisters’ residence. The director of nursing at the time, Sister Joan Schafhauser, recalled Sister Roberts’ attention to detail when changes would benefit the patients, although she gave the architects many a headache. The sisters moved into their new residence adjacent to the new building in March 1969.

The third St. John’s Hospital opened officially in December 1969 and was accredited by the Canadian Hospital Association in 1971. One year after the opening, the hospital recorded admissions of 1,485 patients, treatment of 2,906 outpatients, 122 babies, 2,662 x-rays, 143 major operations, and 550 minor operations. In 1973, the



Ambulance in front of the second St. John's Hospital, Edson, 1940

advisory board was transformed into a 15-member governing board, including two sisters and the General Council. By the hospital's 50th anniversary in 1976, the staff had grown to 70 members, including four sisters and Albert Mercier, its first lay administrator.⁵⁵

Under the governing board, an extended care facility, attached to the hospital, was opened in September 1980, bringing the total bed capacity of St. John's Health Care Complex to 106. In 1987, the sisters began the lengthy process of negotiations with the Alberta government to transfer ownership. As director of nursing from 1972 to 1989, Sister Allen oversaw the transfer of St. John's Health Care Complex to the Edson Municipal District, despite the sisters' preference to transfer administration to the Catholic Health Association of Alberta. The agreement was signed on 1 April 1991 and took immediate effect, with the hospital renamed Edson Health Centre. As a tribute that year, the Catholic Health Association of Alberta honoured the Sisters of Service with its Recognition Award for outstanding contribution to Catholic health care for 65 years and the service of more than 50 sisters in the kitchen, laundry, operating rooms, wards, and business offices.⁵⁶



The third St. John's Hospital, Edson, 1970

As in Vilna, the sisters took an active part in the local parish life, starting with Sister Marie Anne Paradis in 1927 as organist in Sacred Heart Church. Weekly religion classes were conducted during the school year, and each summer, the sisters taught catechism and provided sacramental preparation to children in the surrounding areas. In the absence of the parish priest, the sisters conducted a prayer service at the suggestion of Father Daly. Redemptorists, particularly Father Archibald McDonald, came monthly from their Edmonton parish to celebrate Mass, to deliver conferences and talks and to visit. Provincial Superior James Fuller and consultant Father George Mylett included an Edson stopover while on a visitation to Western Canadian Redemptorists in 1938.

A closer collaboration evolved when the Redemptorists accepted the responsibility of Sacred Heart Church in October 1949. Under the first pastor, Father Isidore Shalla, a new church and rectory were built with help from parishioners. Father Shalla had met many sisters during their summer catechetical tours in Saskatchewan, and like the sisters, he travelled to Coal Branch mine communities and the mission of Hinton. When Father George Gunnip was appointed pastor in 1964, a new era of Redemptorist partnership emerged. At St. John's Hospital, he served on the board's ethics committee and as

hospital chaplain, as well as chaplain and friend to the sisters. Father Gunnip arranged for the icon of the Mother of Perpetual Help from Rome to be enshrined in the sisters' chapel.

From 1952 to 1997, Sister Daley served as organist and catechist, teaching three generations of children about their faith. During the summers, she journeyed to nearby communities of Haddock, Peers, Rosevear, and Hinton to teach religion. For adult parishioners, she initiated and conducted bible study, prayer and reflection groups. Appointed to the parish council in 1975, she was also an active member of the CWL and served as a parish visitor. Sister Allen was remembered for her cool thinking in leading a liturgy to replace a Saturday evening Mass in 1985, just minutes after she discovered Father Gunnip dead of a heart attack in the rectory. After the Redemptorists withdrew from the parish following Father Gunnip's death, the sisters continued to volunteer in the parish. Sister Tunney also actively participated as a member of the parish council and the CWL along with assisting with the weekly bulletin, counting the church collections and teaching religion to the parish children and in the outlying missions. Two years after Sister Tunney's death in 1999, stained-glass windows, financed in part from a legacy from Sister Tunney and immortalizing the work of the Sisters of Service, were hung in the Edson parish. Sister Irene Profit, a retired catechist and skilled seamstress, also found a niche in Edson, her final mission. From 1980 and 1990, she tended to the plants in the hospital greenhouse, selected and placed many of them in the seniors' residence, part of the hospital. Her almost daily visits to the residents was captured in a poem, *Sister Profit*, by Joseph Shearn, in *Poems and Pictures*. He paid tribute to her cheerfulness and compassion, "to the uplift that your presence gives" and "to give aid to a troubled soul."

After retiring from nursing in 1989, Sister Allen devoted her time to Sacred Heart parish and the people of Edson. Visiting the hospital and nursing home as a volunteer and as a Eucharistic minister, Sister Allen also conducted ecumenical funeral services in Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, and United Church churches due to the clergy shortage. In 1995, the town named Sister Allen as its Senior

Citizen of the Year. Her matter-of-fact manner was always evident, especially in 1972 when she ate dinner with Karol Cardinal Wojtyla, the future Pope John Paul II, at parish pot luck dinner in Edson. “He was sitting alone and so I joined him.”⁵⁷ When the Edson mission was closed in 1997, Sisters Allen and Daley joined the community’s retired sisters in Toronto. After Sister Allen’s death in 2005, more than 100 Sacred Heart parishioners signed a sympathy card, which included a donation for flowers to be placed on her grave as well as a contribution to Scarboro Missions in her memory.

For 50 years, the institute’s small hospitals and district nursing more than fulfilled the ambitions of Archbishops McNeil and O’Leary and Father Daly. In both hospitals, the sisters cared for thousands of patients from the outlying farms, coal mines, and logging camps until the government built hospitals and covered patient services. By virtue of the hospitals, the sisters were omnipresent and were interwoven into the fabric of two central Alberta communities. When government assumed responsibility, the goals of the rule were achieved.

Chapter Eight

Renewal and
Fulfilling Vatican II

The Second Vatican Council

Modernization was the approach of the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) in the four sessions held between 1962 and 1965 in Rome. Since the Council of Trent (1545-1563), which was prompted by the Protestant Reformation, the Church had become “a walled institution closing itself off and defending itself from modernity.”¹ Over the centuries, this attitude prevailed within the Church which became immune to societal changes. In summoning the Council, Pope John XXIII gathered more than 2,500 bishops and cardinals to bring the teachings of the Church more in line with the modern world. Most affected by the 16 documents of Vatican II were those in religious life, in particular women religious. The Decree on Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life, *Perfectae Caritatis*, promulgated on 28 October 1965, called for religious communities to renew themselves by returning to the gospels as the sources of Christian life, and to reflect the spirit and source of their founding while adapting to the contemporary world. Renewal within religious life was to evolve through full participation of their members, and with the assistance from local bishops and other external advisors. Meetings of the General Chapters were to provide the means for renewal, and the General Council was to oversee the required revision of the constitution to reflect the renewal.²

Ecclesiae Sanctae, the decree about life in the community, emphasized that renewal and adaptation would require flexibility in daily routines rather than strict adherence to the order of the day. Mental prayers was to replace the multitude of prepared prayers, and the promotion of recreation and community life would be essential. A revision of the community’s constitutions was to eliminate obsolete rules and customs and to outline the charism. The Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church (*Ad Gentes*) called for religious communities to transform the world through social justice and action while carrying out their ministry and following Christ as set forth in the gospels.³

Lumen Gentium, which was promulgated by Pope Paul VI at the con-

clusion of the final session in 1964, defined the nature of the Catholic Church in the current world. "When women religious awoke on 21 November 1964 when *Lumen Gentium* was promulgated, they discovered that they were no longer a part of the clerical force... that the religious state of life is not an intermediate state between the clerical and lay states."⁴ Instead much emphasis was placed on the role of the laity.

In many aspects, the Sisters of Service had been living many of the basic elements of Vatican II decrees. Unlike traditional women congregations with highly structured and regularized convent life, the institute members lived among the people. The challenge and dilemma for the members was a double-edged sword: to respond to Vatican II decrees for renewal and adaptation of their missionary charism when their original apostolates were ending, and still respond to the most abandoned souls of current society.

Pre-Vatican II Initiatives

Two years before the first session of Vatican II, Sister General Agnes Dwyer began the process of renewal of the institute. Elected at the 1960 Chapter meeting, she possessed a wealth of SOS experience, having entered the novitiate in January 1931 at the age of 26. A teacher with Sister Catherine Donnelly at three missions, she had been appointed as a superior in the North Dakota catechetical mission, later as Sister Mistress, and a member of two successive General Councils. When she assumed office in 1960, the SOS membership had reached 119 professed sisters. The General Council had strong representation from residential club superiors, with Sisters Mary Fitzmaurice, Nora FitzPatrick, and Catherine Schmeltzer elected as councillors. Sister Quinn was returned as assistant general, and Sister Florence MacNeil remained as treasurer. The Chapter delegates issued a testimonial of appreciation to Sister Catherine Donnelly.⁵

The 1960 Chapter also recommended new uniforms. Within weeks following the 1960 Chapter, the General Council approved the wearing of the standard white nurse's uniform and on 8 December



The modelling of the complete set of new uniforms, 1963

1960, all six sister nurses at the Edson hospital donned on the white uniform.⁶ The update of the increasingly unstylish grey uniform, the symbol of the SOS untraditional religious life, and the fashion of the 1920s, had been a recommendation from the four Chapters since 1943. Shortly after the white nurses' uniforms began to be worn, the General Council called upon Sister Anne Johnson, assistant to Sister Mistress and knowledgeable in fabric and fashion from her former working life in textiles to present a new set of uniforms. She selected a classic style of shift dresses and A-line coats by Dublin-based designer Sybil Connolly, made popular by U.S. First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy. However, the costly production in Ireland made the Connolly designs impractical. Instead, Michel Robichaud, a young designer in Montreal on the cusp of a successful career, donated his services to create a similar design, which a committee of sisters refined. Tip Top Tailors of Toronto made the uniforms in regular dress sizes, which often required alternations. The new uniforms and two coats were modelled in the October 1963 issue of *The Field at Home* and were worn immediately.⁷

In November 1963, Sister teachers Marge Denis and Marilyn Gillespie in Peace River wore their new uniforms to a meeting of the Alberta Teachers' Association, and they later recounted the reaction. "At first we got stunned glances, and when the shock wore off, people came to say how much they liked it. One young teacher kept saying, 'Is it ever sharp!'"⁸ Shortly afterwards, Sister Rita Patenaude in the Montreal residential club decided that her braided hair, which dropped down to her waist, and tucked under her cap, would be cut in a hair salon. "I didn't know what to ask for. It had been years." She recalled. "All I could remember was the last haircut before I entered. The style was feather cut. I answered, 'a feather cut.' She rolled her eyes."⁹

Greatly aware of the importance of Vatican II, the Toronto sisters attended in 1961 a lecture on the liturgy and the forthcoming ecumenical council, and a series of lectures about religious life and the council by controversial and influential theologian Gregory Baum in 1963 and 1965. Sister Dwyer arranged for all the Toronto sisters in July 1963 to hear a talk at the novitiate by the German moral theologian Father Bernhard Häring, C.Ss.R., a Vatican II advisor. At the end of 1964, she initiated a colloquium of 40 sisters from the western provinces to hear further perspectives at the Edmonton catechetical house. Among the speakers were Redemptorists Father Bernard Johnson, Edmonton Provincial Superior and brother of Sister Anne Johnson, and Father Edward Kennedy, who had accompanied Father Häring the previous summer. In a session entitled *The S.O.S. Faces the Future With the Church*, Father Kennedy urged the sisters to take advantage of their unique situation as a less institutionalized community with a tradition of adaptability and a visible solidarity with the people. He suggested a family life apostolate to strengthen and prepare the Christian family for the enlarged role of the laity in the Church through the Christian Family Movement, adult formation and education. To encourage more vocations, eastern and western Canada should have separate vocation directors, armed with a reasonable advertising budget. Father Johnson warned, "If you do not get vocations, you need not to worry about adaptations or modifica-



Sister General Alice Dwyer with Redemptorist Fathers Bernhard Haring and Edward Kennedy at the novitiate, Toronto, 1963

tions for there will be no community to adapt.”¹⁰

As a follow-up to the colloquium, a review of the process of renewal and adaptation was undertaken, circulating questionnaires on vocations and discussion topics for the upcoming Chapter meeting in 1966. Groups of sisters scrutinized every aspect of missions and community life and summarized their findings for the Chapter. They sought the source of the founding in *Ecumenism Blossoms*, an account written by Sister Catherine Donnelly that was printed and distributed in 1965. However, the dilemma for the future was laid out in the Appropriate Renewal of Religious Life, part of *Ecclesiae Sanctae* decree. It encouraged religious to maintain their proper activities and make adjustments that would benefit the universal church and individual dioceses.

The manner of living, praying and working should be suitably adapted everywhere, but especially in mission territories, to the modern physical and psychological circumstances of the members and also, as required by the nature of each institute, to the ne-

cessities of the apostolate, the demands of culture, and social and economic circumstances.¹¹

Under the directives, religious communities were mandated to review and reassess their way of life and programs while remaining faithful to the essence of religious life and the history and development of each community.

From the initial review of rules and customs, many sisters suggested eliminating the order of the day, and the cap and hats, except for formal occasions, an increase of communication and discussion, rather than spiritual reading, especially at meal times. For spiritual prayer life, the sisters preferred the emphasis on private prayers, reading the Divine Office or a short breviary. Other recommendations covered modernization of houses and changes in postulancy.¹²

In December 1965, six months before the Chapter, the sisters held a colloquium to chart the future. Over three days of sessions, they received further advice from Toronto Archbishop Philip Pocock, seven experienced and high-ranking members of religious congregations, and three lay persons. The sessions were summarized in reports published in the next three issues of *The Field at Home* that underscored the institute's dilemma. As Sister General, Sister Dwyer unobtrusively allowed the winds of change to waft quietly through the institute in such a way that the many needed changes were made in a non-startling manner, which made acceptance much easier.¹³

The Chapter of 1966

Prior to the Chapter in July 1966, Father Kennedy, while studying at the Lumen Vitae Institute in Brussels, wrote to the Chapter delegates.

With all the change in the church, you now not only have to catch up to these changes but you have to be ready to forge ahead of them if you wish to be true to your original inspiration, which was to be at the frontier of the church. This is a bit frightening, yet it

is not that difficult because you have many features on your side. You are still small enough to be flexible. You are not a pontifical congregation and it is much easier to be experimental.¹⁴

He also advised eliminating rules about letter writing, telephone calls, and friendships outside the community, “which cannot have a place in the new thinking about ... [being] open and reaching out to the world.”¹⁵ He envisioned two future paths: to settle as a more conventional community, or to move into the frontier and become more mobile. He advised the latter, cautioning that the larger communities “once they get into modern garb and modern ways of living, will be hard competition in the best sense of the word.”¹⁶ The pioneer path would retain the founding inspiration and spirit. Father Kennedy envisioned a role for the sisters in remote areas of Labrador, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and the Canadian north – in truly abandoned communities. He further suggested that the sisters work in larger cities as parish assistants, with an office in the parish rectory, as was beginning in Europe.¹⁷

The Chapter opened after three days of preparation by Father Joseph F. Gallen, SJ, professor of canon law in the Jesuit seminary at Woodstock, Maryland. Reports were presented on all the apostolates, the purpose and future of the institute, professional retraining of sisters, renewal of community life, and revising of community prayers. The Chapter passed resolutions reaffirming their missionary charism dedicated to the service of those in need and to the most universal and lasting good of the Church. The sisters would continue to undertake works in areas and places that other religious normally do not; be characterized by mobility, a freedom from ties to properties and real estate; to train others to take over the work of the Church; be focused on the person; and to develop a long-range plan for the training and placement of sisters.¹⁸

At the time of the Chapter, the membership of 121 professed sisters reflected the age of the community with the majority, 62 per cent, over 50 years old; 28 per cent between the ages of 35 and 50; and 11 per cent under the age of 35. The breakdown of the sisters

assigned to missions showed that approximately 30% worked in the nine residential clubs; 20% in eight teaching missions; 20% in the Vilna and Edson hospitals and 20 in religion education at Regina, Edmonton and the CCD offices.¹⁹ Decisions about the institute's future direction were deferred until the second Chapter session in 1968. However, a unanimous motion was passed to express "to the Redemptorist Fathers a testimonial of gratitude for the self-sacrificing guidance of Fathers Coughlan and Daly in the founding of the Sisters of Service and for the continuing interest and concern."²⁰

A daunting task awaited those elected to the General Council in 1966: Sister Mary Reansbury as Sister General, and Sisters Patricia Burke, Nora FitzPatrick, Ella Zink, and Mary MacDougall as councillors. Coming into office at a critical time, Sister Reansbury, who had entered in 1945 at the age of 32, was the administrator of St. John's Hospital in Edson from 1950 to 1966, and superior for nine years. In 1964, she replaced an ailing Sister Mary Quinn on the General Council. Her clarity of purpose and steady hand helped the community stay the course while navigating the decrees of the Second Vatican Council. "She was open to acknowledge the gifts of her sisters and gave them the freedom to develop their potential in ways not thought possible before," Sister Patricia Burke observed. "She promoted and encouraged education and training for new ministries and new needs. As well, she was a qualified and experienced administrator with the knowledge of good business practices and accounting procedures and experiences in working with governing and advisory boards, women's auxiliaries, and staff."²¹

To prepare for the second session of the 1966 Chapter, a survey of 80 sisters was conducted by Redemptorist Father Edward Boyce at the request of the General Council, with the assistance of Sister Frances Coffey. Completed in September 1968, the survey found that the sisters considered their founding charism a key factor in the approach to renewal. Father Boyce, a sociologist who assisted the London Diocese and other religious congregations in renewal, concluded that the Sisters of Service would not exist without Catherine Donnelly's vision and the original inspiration of the founders. The

SOS “should be a community of dedicated Catholic women typified by competence, concern for those in greatest need, courage, adventurous spirit, healthy independence, flexibility, approachability and mobility.”²²

During a day of reflection before the second session in December 1968, Father Boyce challenged the sisters to prepare for a new age and begin afresh and “to change everything, and not just to patch up something that is past. You have to think radically. It calls for a brand new perspective ... If you are going to save the Sisters of Service, if that is in God’s plan, then you have to renew it to the extent that people almost would not recognize it ... Service is the key word ... Be everything you can be ... The world is ripe and waiting for you.”²³ In the second session, the Rules and Constitutions, approved in 1937, were suspended and replaced with guidelines on an experimental basis. The Chapter resolutions covered policy statements, the administrative policy manual, community prayers, admission and formation policy, and customs.

During the four years of Sister Reansbury’s administration, changes in the community’s apostolates coincided with a departure from the more structured living in the larger houses. The women’s residential clubs in Toronto, Ottawa, and Edmonton were closed along with the Edmonton religious correspondence school and the Motherhouse. Meanwhile, the rural teaching missions in Sinnott and on Christian Island were ended and teachers were hired in northern Alberta at High Level and Faust, and in St. John’s. As the number of university-educated and professionally trained sisters grew, they accepted positions away from community life. Sister Reansbury observed that the rules and regulations had defined the sense of community. “We have moved from a closed society to an open society, from a structured, to a non-structured life.”²⁴

In accordance with the renewal of religious life, the suburban property on Bayview Avenue acquired in 1961 as the site of a new Motherhouse was sold. Instead, the sisters purchased a city property, better suited to a service-oriented community, just east of the

Bloor viaduct in a residential area overlooking Riverdale Park. The property search and the construction of a three-storey building in a modern Italian villa style were overseen by an advisory board of sisters and lay experts. Designed by architect Roy Orlando, an Italian internee in Canada during the Second World War, the house accommodated 20 sisters, administrative offices, and recreational and work rooms. As the first full-scale building project since the Alberta hospitals, almost four decades previously, the new Motherhouse at 10 Montcrest Boulevard was completed in 1969 and furnished with items from some of the closed houses. Archbishop Pocock officially blessed the house on 3 April 1970 and dedicated the ark-shaped wood-panelled chapel to Our Mother of Perpetual Help. A summer cottage was purchased in Keswick on Lake Simcoe to provide respite for the sisters.²⁵

The Vatican II decree on missionary projects sparked interest in foreign missions among English-speaking Canadian communities, following the example of the Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of Pembroke, Ontario, and Our Lady's Missionaries, the first English-speaking Canadian congregation dedicated to foreign missions. During the 1954 Chapter, Father Daly had urged the sisters to consider the U.S. Redemptorist missions in Brazil. A decade later, the 1966 Chapter delegates accepted an invitation from Father Johnson to assist the Edmonton Province's Brazilian mission in the diocese of Juazeiro. In 1967, Sister Reansbury travelled to Rome, representing the community at an international meeting of women religious, and then onto Brazil and Peru, assessing a possible mission in South America.²⁶ Sisters Lydia Tyzsko and Leona Trautman were appointed to the mission in Casa Nova, Brazil, where the Edmonton Redemptorists provided pastoral care for a rural parish encompassing 30,000 square kilometres. After six months of study and training in the Portuguese language and a year at the Coady Institute at St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, NS, the sisters arrived in Casa Nova in June 1969 for a two-year period. Sister Trautman participated in the Mothers' Club, which blended spiritual instruction with family health, cooking, sewing, and crafts. She taught art in school classes and introduced a wooden puppet from Christian Is-



The new Motherhouse at 10 Montcrest Boulevard, Toronto, 1975

land to the children. In coordination with the Redemptorists, Sister Tyszko travelled to other local communities, teaching religion and aiding families, and later was appointed as catechetics coordinator for the Casa Nova municipality to train lay catechists. The mission ended in December 1971, and the sisters were replaced by a Brazilian community, the Missionary Sisters of Jesus Crucified.²⁷

The Chapter of 1970 and the Aftermath

The new Motherhouse was showcased during the 1970 Chapter in the first week of August. In opening the Chapter, Cardinal George Flahiff, CSB, of Winnipeg assessed the Vatican II sessions which he had attended, noting that renewal and adaptation extended to the entire Church, not only religious life. He drew attention to the military character of religious life, its blind obedience to a superior, and to rules, customs, and its overly legislated structures. By reducing rules, profound renewal in religious life would breathe a new spirit into the necessary structures. He warned that the old notion of exclusivity of religious life, “of being a people apart, of insisting upon certain privileges and flaunting them like status symbols, can in the long run do considerable harm by separating us.”²⁸ The cardinal stressed the priority of mental prayer over the quantity of prayers. Seeking one’s own perfection, he said, should be replaced by “opening outward, inspired by the gift of oneself. This would be very much

in keeping with the pastoral and ecumenical spirit of the Council. We should be community-centred and not just in the sense of our own religious community; we should be Church-centred since the Church is the basic community of which we belong.”²⁹

The 17 Chapter delegates elected Sister Patricia Burke as Sister General to a four-year term and Sister Helen Hayes as a councillor to oversee the changes. Under the new structure ratified by the Chapter, Sisters Florence Kelly and Mary Roberts sat on the General Council for two years and were succeeded by Sisters Eileen Gallagher and Joan Schafhauser for the remaining two years of the council’s term. In the four years since the 1966 Chapter, the membership had decreased to 111, and 21 women had left the community. In the missions, 27 sisters were assigned to the six remaining residential clubs, 21 were teaching, 13 worked in the two hospitals, and two sisters were in Brazil, while 20 lived either at the Motherhouse or the novitiate, 15 sisters were students. The average age was 57.5 years with 24 sisters under 50 and 83 over 50.³⁰

Numerous topics relating to community life were discussed, including internal communications, formation, personal prayer, worship, and a spiritual renewal program. The critical areas of concern were underlined as the failure to change with the times, the aging of members, the lack of vocations, the lack of training among sisters over the age of 50, the co-ordination of academic and community life, the balance between a sister’s individual aims and community responsibilities, and sisters’ fear of and resistance to change. Anxiety was expressed about the main goals of the community, the apostolates, and the administration in the face of the future closing of missions and the ending of the founding apostolates of immigration, port work, and residential clubs. However, the delegates reached a consensus on the SOS missionary pioneer spirit. “WE HAVE COME TO SERVE is that spirit. Service is in everything we did, and service is bound up very closely with the notion of being sent. If we lose the concept of what it means to be sent, we are cutting God right out of the picture.”³¹ Sister Edna Deland captured the sense of the unsettled times, writing that in this period of transition and



Sister General Mary Reansbury and Archbishop Philip Pocock of Toronto under the portrait of Father Daly after the blessing of the new Motherhouse, Toronto, 1970

change, the sisters were seeking to adapt “to new ways of thinking, to new concepts of responsibility, authority and freedom with very little direction.”³²

Following the Chapter resolutions, a period of experimentation unfolded as the sisters sought to redefine their “commitment and responsibility to contemporary society.”³³ Options of missions were to be developed, and staffed by sisters who were compatible with each other. In light of the diminishment of the original apostolates, sisters were encouraged to employ their own initiative to seek new apostolates to help others. A program for continuous, personal spiritual renewal was to flourish through reflection groups, diverse forms of liturgy, instructions to deepen prayer life, a house of prayer at Camp Morton, and training in spiritual direction. Cardinal Flahiff’s suggestion of prioritizing mental prayer was accepted, along with personal spiritual reading and less emphasis of communal prayers at scheduled times during the day.³⁴ Older sisters, who may view the changes as a threat to their own security, were given the option of

wearing the new grey uniform or secular clothes, and planning their personal budgets. In March 1971, the administration introduced a co-membership of lay persons associated with the SOS mission.³⁵ Future management resolutions were approved to form committees on finance, retirement, and residences. The successful professional development policy was endorsed strongly after 32 sisters had graduated with university degrees or professional certificates. All sisters teaching religion, including those in schools, required background in scripture, catechetics, and ecumenism. Education not only better equipped the sisters for service but provided the community with insight into future changes.³⁶

Almost immediately to increase communications among the sisters, the General Council started two newsletters, *General Council Reports*, a short outline of council decisions, and *Here and There*, a newsletter written by sisters about their activities. The council also decided to sell the Glen Road novitiate in view of dwindling vocations. Sister Frances Coffey, director of formation, moved to 303 Willard Avenue, a house in the city's west end, in October 1970 and later to 12 Montcrest Boulevard, a house purchased next door to the Motherhouse.

During the 1950s, Sister Ella Zink had travelled with slides, brochures, and materials on vocational tours to schools and parishes to attract young women interested in Canadian missionary life. After Vatican II, Sister Catherine (Cassie) Moriarity, her successor, had attempted to involve the entire community through a vocation committee, vocation co-ordinators at each mission and a newsletter. In Toronto, she accepted invitations to give talks, to sit on panels, to visit schools, and to attend diocesan vocation meetings and national conferences. She conceded that "we can't sell a style of life. All I can do is to help a girl discern if He (Christ) is asking this total gift of self from her. Young people today are not impressed by the printed word ... unless they can see in us a person who is free, honest and genuine."³⁷ Sister General Patricia Burke noted in a newspaper article, "There are lots of opportunities to give service to people without joining an order."³⁸ From 1970 until 1997, eight women joined



Sister General Helen Hayes (left) and Sister Joan Schafhauser (right) accompany Sister Mary-Ellen Francoeur to take final vows in Our Lady of Lourdes church, Toronto, 15 August 1984

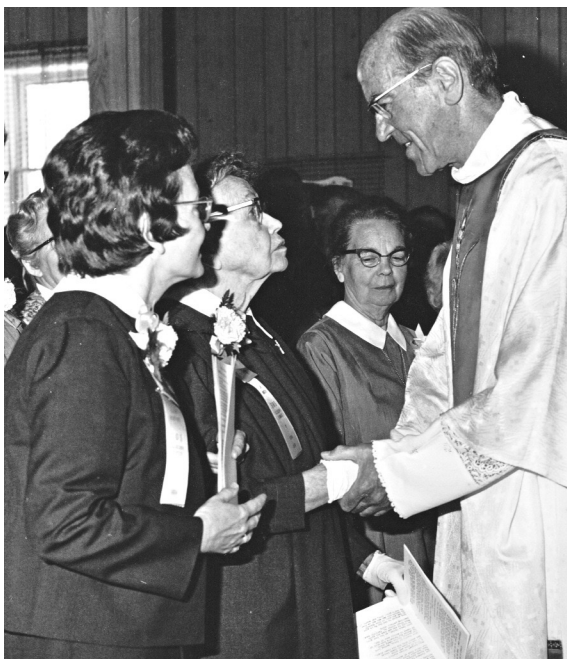
the formation program with four leaving without taking vows and two leaving after taking vows. One of the two who remained, Sister Mary-Ellen Francoeur, the last permanent member, professed final vows on 15 August 1984. Over the next three decades, SOS vocation appeals in the Catholic newspaper advertisements and vocation displays remained constant to its Canadian missionary charism. An advertisement in 1994 was simple in its message that the Sisters of Service were called to be on the outskirts of the Church, making the Church present, being the Church for those who are not part of the Church. Another advertisement drew attention to the sisters' apostolates in health care, education, social service, parish, family ministry and prison chaplaincy.³⁹ The last candidate left in 1997.



Sisters before attending the Mass in celebration of the 50th anniversary, outside St. Patrick's Church, Toronto, 15 August 1972



Sisters attending the Mass in celebration of the 50th anniversary, on front steps of St. Joseph's Cathedral, Edmonton, 21 August 1972



Cardinal George Flahiff presents the papal medal, Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice, to Sister Catherine Donnelly with Sister General Helen Hayes (left) and Sister Alice Walsh (right), Camp Morton, 18 August 1974

Celebrations

Despite this period of transition, celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the founding in 1972 enhanced the community spirit. The jubilee events held throughout the year centred on two liturgies, held one week apart in August. On the official date of founding, 15 August, Archbishop Pocock offered a Mass of Thanksgiving on the altar in the Redemptorist's St. Patrick's Church, with 400 in attendance, including 40 sisters, dressed in the contemporary grey uniform. At the reception that followed, Sister Catherine Donnelly formed part of the receiving line, greeting family and friends of the SOS in the adjacent Catholic Settlement House. A week later, 44 sisters, many wearing contemporary clothing, attended a concelebrated Mass in St. Joseph's Cathedral in Edmonton in their honour. The three subsequent issues of *The Field at Home* documented the history of the institute.⁴⁰

The 50th anniversary of the Camp Morton mission presented a joyful occasion for the Sisters of Service and the local residents, among whom Sisters Donnelly and Lena Renaud still lived. Cardinal Flahiff offered the Mass in St. Benedict's Church on 18 August 1974 in celebration of the golden jubilees of Sisters Margaret Guest and Donnelly, the pioneer sisters who founded the iconic mission. Cardinal Flahiff presented the papal medal, *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice*, to Sister Donnelly in recognition of 50 years of work for the Church.⁴¹

Further Renewal and Adaptation

The final vows of Sisters Patricia Flynn and Colleen Young were professed in St. Patrick's Church, Toronto, on 15 August 1974 following the Chapter. Sister Helen Hayes was elected as Sister General, and Sisters Mary Reansbury, Florence Kelly, Hilda Lunney, and Joan Coffey as councillors. The institute statistics showed a gradual decline with 104 professed members; 46 sisters were over 65 years and 59 were under 65. The closure of eight of the nine residences and the Vilna hospital in Alberta had given rise to missions in northern Canada, where almost 25 per cent of the sisters were teaching in classrooms. At the 1974 Chapter, the delegates adopted recommendations to hold formalized community and weekly prayers, as well as a symposia to foster a deeper community and religious spirit, continue with co-membership, and present retirement as a personal choice. The Chapter also endorsed a statement on apostolate.

Since the basis of any community is a common search for values, the apostolate of the Sisters of Service, whether the Sister lives alone or in a group, contains the same spirit and values of the community ... Every apostolate is approved by the Administration and thereby becomes a community apostolate. The word 'mission' henceforth refers to any place where a Sister of Service lives and exercises an apostolate.⁴²

In the four years from the 1974 Chapter, the missions of Hawk Hills, Churchill, Fort St. James and Saskatoon were closed and five



Sisters studying the proposed rules and constitutions at the Chapter, Toronto, 1982

new teaching missions and the catechetical mission at Clarendville were among the new initiatives. Sister Rosemarie Hudon conducted a community retreat in 1974 and sisters attended one of the Rochais sessions in 1976 under the direction of Father Albert Fournier, OMI, in Edmonton or Toronto to explore community relationships topics. On the heels of the Rochais session in Toronto, 11 sisters were moved into Niagara Retirement Manor in St. Catharines, Ontario. Sister Ella Zink, after two decades as editor of *The Field at Home*, was succeeded by Sister Evelyn Tunney in 1975.⁴³

As an aspect of renewal and adaptation within the community, the 1978 Chapter was open to all sisters to attend, replacing the tradition of elected delegates. Of the 102 perpetually vowed sisters, 68 members attended. Father Conleth Overman, OP, of Cincinnati, Ohio, acted as the first facilitator of SOS meetings and Chapters, and outlined the agenda to develop the vision of the institute and the ongoing process of hearing and evaluating sisters' responses. Six committees were formed, each examining an area of concern. In the Chapter's second session in 1979, a 500-page document entitled *Profile 79* outlined all aspects of community life to better articulate and develop the vision, mission, and goals of the SOS. At the third session in July 1980, a committee of Sisters Magdalen Barton and

Rosemarie Hudon and canon lawyer Father Francis Morissey, OMI, was appointed to draft the rules and constitutions. Divided into four parts, and each part was studied by 14 sisters, during the Chapter of 1982. The constitutions and statutes received approval from Cardinal Emmett Carter of Toronto in 1982. In the constitutions, the spirit of the institute was characterized by zeal for the Kingdom of God, typified by the sisters' daring initiative in departing from tradition. Mobility, flexibility, and readiness to live and work in small groups were essential to the way of life.⁴⁴

On Labour Day, 5 September 1983, Sister Catherine Donnelly died at 8:30 p.m. in St. Catharines, five months from her 100th birthday. Her body was transported to the Motherhouse from the retirement home in St. Catharines, where she had lived for the last two years. Some 100 mourners, including Cardinal Flahiff, signed the memorial book at the wake, held in the Motherhouse. Father C.J. Crusoe, SJ celebrated the funeral Mass at nearby Holy Name Church, and Toronto Provincial Superior Francis Maloney, C.Ss.R., the homilist, was among the 12 concelebrants. Toronto Auxiliary Bishop Robert Clune gave the final blessing before the burial in the community plot at Mount Hope cemetery.⁴⁵

Much of Sister General Helen Hayes' 12 years of administration was concentrated on the painstaking task of involving the entire community in discussions to agree on a new constitution to meet Vatican II's call for renewal. New missions were established by sisters serving in pastoral assistance, teaching, public health, catechetics, and social work in the Yukon, the Maritimes, Newfoundland and Labrador, northern Saskatchewan, and northern Alberta. In visiting the missions, Sister Hayes said she could relate to the difficulties the sisters faced, as she came "from the ranks." Having entered the novitiate in 1949, she had worked in hospitals, schools, and residential clubs.⁴⁶ Ever forthright, she reprimanded Sister Catherine Donnelly in 1979 for a flood of virulent letters, outlining grievances against Father Daly. "Storing up grievances is more than a waste of time; it is a waste of life that could be lived to greater satisfaction," she wrote to the foundress.⁴⁷ Sister Hayes felt that since Vatican II the institute

had shifted from the original apostolates having a communal aim to a community of individual apostolates.⁴⁸

Elected Sister General in 1986 for two successive terms, Sister Frances Coffey approached governance with a practical view to the future. Entering in 1952 and following her sister Joan into the SOS, Sister Coffey entered in 1952 but had never served on General Council. She drew from perceptions as a teacher in Rycroft, a catechist, formation director, and a hospital chaplain.⁴⁹ Under her leadership, two dominant issues – money management and provisions for retired sisters – were tackled. In 1989, the firm of Mackenzie Financial Corp. was hired to manage the institute's total investment portfolio. Retired sisters moved to Toronto, becoming the first residents to occupy the seventh floor of Scarborough Court, a new Catholic seniors' residence. Four missions were closed, including Camp Morton and the Halifax residential club, and the sisters also launched a SalvAide project to financially assist the community of Pepeishtenango, El Salvador.

In search for the spirit and source of their founding, a study of the institute's charism was undertaken by Father John Manuel Lozano, and a biography of Sister Catherine Donnelly was commissioned. Facilitators continued to guide discussion and decision-making in meetings.⁵⁰ The 1990 Chapter members approved a motion that Sister Catherine Donnelly be recognized as foundress and Fathers Daly and Coughlan as co-founders, along with a statement of charism: "The Sisters of Service are a missionary, apostolic religious community, called to a life of prayer and service, furthering the Kingdom of God among the most in need of spiritual help."⁵¹

As houses closed and missions ended, the Motherhouse at 10 Montcrest evolved into the centre of the community with sisters serving as the administrative staff. Sister Marian Haut, a bookkeeper who had been posted in Vilna and four residential clubs, was assistant bursar for a decade, and Sister Domitilla Morrison was the circulation manager of *The Field at Home* and the first community archivist. Tea time at 3 p.m. was a lively daily occasion, especially during the 15

years when Sister Brigid Knopic lived at the residence.

When Sister Anna McNally was elected Sister General in 1994, she was well-acquainted with the lingering issues. Sister McNally, an educator who entered in 1954, had attended every Chapter since 1974, assisted as a member of the committee for future planning, and served as a councillor from 1986 to 1990.⁵² The 1994 Chapter members agreed to embrace apostolic spirituality and adapt governance structures to provide wider involvement for sisters in leadership.⁵³ In the first term, priority was placed on creating a new type of governance to share decision-making for the final decades.

The Sisters of Service had met the requirements of Vatican II. They examined the spirit and source of their founding and adapted further to the contemporary world. Renewal evolved with the full participation of their members, and with the assistance from local bishops and other external advisors. The meetings of the General Chapters provided the means for renewal, and the required revisions of the constitution were completed. Although the missionary charism was restated in the Chapters, agreement on its form was elusive. Their revitalization of religious life had rested on maintaining a missionary charism, but the small, scattered apostolates, that were adopted, had inherently weakened community life, which the earlier apostolates had fostered in more structured missions and with a common purpose. In facing future decisions, a new model of governance was required to promote greater ownership and partnership among the sisters.

Chapter Nine

Vatican II Missions and
Apostolates

Apostolates and Missions in the Post Vatican II Era

The Vatican II decrees for adaptation and renewal pushed further the mobility and options for the Sisters of Service following Chapter resolutions reaffirmed the institute's charism as a missionary community. The original apostolates of immigration, rural health and education were now controlled and funded by government agencies. Religious education was directed under the National Office of Religious Education (NORE), the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) office in Ottawa. Chapter resolutions had urged sisters to upgrade their education to adapt to employment opportunities inside and outside the Church. Sisters with professional training, qualifications and university degrees sought government positions in teaching, health care and social services. Bishops continued to request sisters for specific situations and were notified formally when a sister was working in their dioceses. An increased number of sisters served in pastoral care as chaplains, pastoral assistants, parish administrators, spiritual directors, and on marriage tribunals. A few sisters ventured into unique fields. The initiative, resilience and spirit of service from the first pioneer sisters was inherited by those members of the post Vatican II era. Under the revised constitution, flexibility and readiness was offered to members to live and work alone or continue in small groups to adapt to contemporary needs.

Religious Education

The Vatican II impetus to increase parish and family participation in religious education gradually brought to conclusion this early SOS apostolate. By 1970, only the Regina catechetical mission remained, although individual sisters co-ordinated religious education in parishes and dioceses. Through the CCD, these changes had already begun with SOS involvement prior to Vatican II, and continued in the next decade. For example in the Nelson Diocese, four sisters continued the work, begun by Sisters Lita Camozzi and Frances Coffey to expand the programs with more parish and parental participation. For five years until 1967, Sister Coffey, who had earned a

master of theology degree from Catholic University in Washington, DC, taught religious education at Notre Dame University, Nelson, and was succeeded by Sister Rosemarie Hudon for two years until June 1969.¹ Sister Coffey had moved to Toronto in 1967 to become Formation Director and to coordinate the catechetical program in the Catholic Office for Religious Education at the Toronto archdiocese until 1975.

Regina Archbishop Michael O'Neill, in effort to increase the involvement of parents in teaching religion to their children, proposed that the archdiocesan CCD office be located in the sisters' newly constructed correspondence school. At the archbishop's request, Sister Alice Walsh submitted a detailed report in 1964, outlining the process of establishing such an office to support parish schools of religion. To introduce the plan, Sisters Eileen Bridgeo and Louise Antonini travelled with Father Michael Hogan, director of religious education, throughout the Regina archdiocese. Father Hogan presented the program, and the sisters stayed for some days helping to prepare prospective parents, senior students, and volunteer catechists to teach religion. Sister Camozzi expanded this approach and conducted 41 workshops and met pastors, parents, and teachers in each parish to demonstrate and explain the new methods of teaching, using audio and visual materials. Consequently, enrolment in the correspondence school declined in favour of parish-based instruction.²

The newly-created *Canadian Catechism* series was the essential text for instruction. A departure from the question-and-answer format of the much-used U.S. catechisms, the *Canadian Catechism*, developed and published by L'Office de Catechese du Quebec, presented the basic teachings in texts composed of doctrine, scripture and morals, in a series of books, each suited to a specific age group or grade level. The NORE office, which translated the text into English, became a unifying and stabilizing force for religious teaching throughout Canada as students learned from the exact same text. To coordinate this catechetical renewal, NORE personnel developed a school edition of the *Canadian Catechism* series and a parish edition

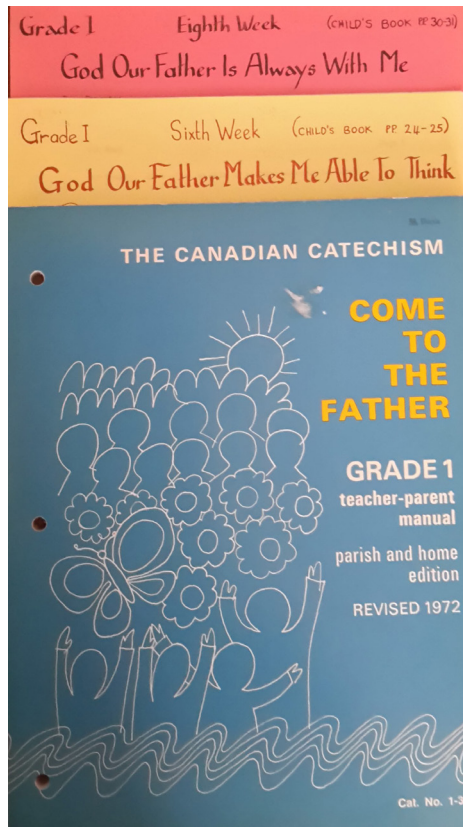
for the use of catechists teaching in parish schools of religion. Across the country, NORE aided catechists and diocesan religious education offices through workshops, conferences, in-service training and publications.³

This renewal posed a challenge to the Edmonton and Regina correspondence schools. A report to the 1970 Chapter acknowledged that religious education was becoming more the responsibility of the various dioceses and the sisters in the field were employed by the dioceses.

These changes in the approach and presentation since Vatican II call for more training and preparation than formerly. Specialized religious educators today are really teaching adults, both teachers and parents. There has been considerable discussion regarding the phasing out of the correspondence work. In both Regina and Edmonton, the work now is under the direction of the diocese. There seems to be a limited need for the correspondence school at this time.⁴

After the amalgamation of the Regina and Edmonton schools, Father Martin Jeffrey, co-director of NORE, still considered correspondence lessons as viable. He received approval for the Regina correspondence school, renamed the Daly Centre in tribute to Father Daly, to be transitioned into a research-orientated centre for those dioceses in need of correspondence materials. From 1970 to 1980, a team of religious educators came each spring for a week's workshop to adapt correspondence lessons, known as the Home Program, to the *Canadian Catechism* series. Initially, Sister Marge Denis acted as the SOS liaison with NORE while Sister Patricia Flynn sketched the illustrations to accompany the lessons. In 1972, as a consultant to indigenous catechists with NORE, Sister Denis travelled across Canada to prepare two visual aid kits for pastoral use among the Indigenous under the title of *The Beatitude People*.⁵

In 1974, the Daly Centre under director Sister Theresa Duffley, distributed over 4,500 sets of the correspondence lessons through-



The cover of The Canadian Catechism and samples of Daly Centre correspondence lessons, 1971

out Canada to families without access to either school instruction or parish schools of religion. In the Daly Centre, experienced sister catechists coordinated the mailings as they had done in the early years; these included Sisters Agnes Hearn, Rita Hurley, Margaret MacMillan, Mary Regan and Alice Walsh. By the end of that year, 90 per cent of the materials – 5,800 sets of courses along with 2,492 doctrinal notes – had been sent to nine provinces, the Northwest Territories, and Alaska.⁶

The acceptance and demand for the *Canadian Catechism* series exceeded all expectations and was hailed as a model in an article by Canadian writer June Callwood in *Maclean's* magazine and in a feature in *The New York Times*. The ever-increasing demand for corre-



Sister Florence Kelly in the lessons storeroom, Daly Centre, Regina, 1978

spondence lessons and the lack of space to store them prompted a meeting in January 1984 at the Daly Centre with Father Lawrence DeMong, director of NORE, Sister Florence Kelly, Daly Centre's director since 1978, and Sister General Helen Hayes. Consequently, the Home Program was transferred to Ottawa, where ample storage space was available for the lessons at the publications centre of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB), where all the texts were published. Shortly afterwards, the shelves at the Daly Centre were emptied, and Sister Kelly moved to Ottawa to work with the catechetical team for a year. Returning to Regina in 1986 as the archdiocese's coordinator of catechetics, she promoted the Home Program throughout the archdiocese, which had more than 1,000 rural catechists in the 10 rural deaneries. Sister Kelly organized rallies at various centres, facilitated workshops in many rural areas and assisted catechists. Since no sister was available in September 1984, Patrick Jenner, a religion teacher in the Catholic schools, was hired for two years to correct lessons. With little prospect of obtaining much-needed sister staff to help with the correction of lessons, the sisters approached Archbishop Charles Halpin to transfer the Home Program to the archdiocesan office.⁷

On 27 June 1991, the feast of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, the archbishop celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving in the sisters' chapel to mark this transfer. Tributes were paid to their contribution to religious education in Western Canada at a special Mass and celebration at Holy Rosary Cathedral in September, and at the Western Conference of Catholic Religious Educators at Banff in November 1991. On the conclusion of their stewardship of religious education, Sister Mary Corke, principal of the Home Program, noted the important element of "putting religion back into the home with parents teaching their children. ... Parents really enjoy the closeness achieved through working with their children on faith and moral projects, and appreciate the new unity and peace, which develops as each member of the family becomes more conscious of Christ's presence in their lives. Religion has the greatest meaning for children, who learn it from and with their parents."⁸

Sister Mary Jackson, teacher and catechist, continued to keep current with further studies, completing a master of arts degree in theology from Notre Dame University in Grand Bend, Indiana in 1964. She also studied at London, Ontario's Divine Word Institute in its first year for catechists. Joining NORE, Sister Jackson assisted teachers and catechists to update their teaching methods in response to Vatican II changes and taught the program in every grade to assess the doctrinal content and its effect on the students. In 1968, Sister Jackson assisted in the production of the parish and home editions of the *Canadian Catechism* series. Later she completed the program for junior high school. From these contributions, she was recognized as a leading catechist in North America. She taught summer schools across Canada, including two summer programs at Newman Theological College near St. Albert, Alberta, and conducted workshops across Canada and in the U.S., as well as serving on the National Liturgical Commission from 1968 to 1971, and the Edmonton Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission for 1969 to 1972. As supervisor of religious education for Edmonton Catholic schools from 1961 until 1975, Sister Jackson was prominent as a coordinator and instructor in the catechism workshops, preparing over 2,000 catechists from Edmonton, and other dioceses in Canada and in the U.S.

During the final sessions of Vatican II, Sister Hudon pursued graduate studies at the University of Ottawa, receiving a master of arts degree cum laude in theology in 1963, and a doctorate three years later. Her thesis entitled *The Prayer of Modern Sisters* was published under the title of *NUNS, Community Prayer and Change*. She assisted in the mission in Grand Forks, ND for a year, and embarked on a university teaching career as a lecturer in scripture courses in Nelson, British Columbia, St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia, and at Memorial University at the Corner Brook, Newfoundland campus. In September 1971, she was hired as the first religious consultant for the Humber-St. Barbe Roman Catholic School Board in the western Newfoundland diocese of St. George. Based in Corner Brook, Sister Hudon aided catechists in Catholic schools and provided instruction to Catholic children attending public schools. Through her influence, a correspondence school of religion was opened in Corner Brook in 1972 and in Grand Falls in 1974 by the Sisters of the Presentation, in whose convent she lived. Sister Pauline Coates assisted in setting up a catechetical correspondence correction centre for Newfoundland in 1972 although the lessons were corrected at the Daly Centre for two years.⁹

Clarenville, Newfoundland, 1975-1992

Both at 69 years of age, the two founding sisters of the Clarenville mission in 1975 brought vast expertise and qualifications to set up catechetical centre in the Grand Falls diocese. Sister Madge Barton, a teacher and the founding superior of the Regina catechetical mission in 1934, was matched with Sister Agnes Hearn, a catechist for three decades. Sister Hearn also had completed four years as the director of religious education at St. Paul's parish in Winnipeg as part of a new practice of engaging religious women and lay personnel as parish workers. From 1969 until 1973 as the catechetical coordinator, she faced found resistance from parents accustomed to the questions and answers of the *Baltimore Catechism*, who were unwilling to accept the new approach to catechetics in the *Canadian Catechism*. Sister Hearn recruited, trained, assigned and supervised catechists,

and prepared catechetical outlines and letters to parents. She also conducted home visiting, instructed children and adults in special sacramental preparation and organized a youth club and a youth choir. To prepare catechists with the *Canadian Catechism*, she attended a 12-day course in Edmonton which covered modern catechetics as exemplified in the *Canadian Catechism*; problems in diocesan organizations; and teacher training and supervision.¹⁰

Arriving in Clarenville on 22 August 1975, the sisters attended Sunday Mass, celebrated by Bishop Alphonsus Penney, who had driven 156 kilometres from Grand Falls to introduce the sisters to the parishioners. At a chance meeting with Sister Hudon, he expressed his concern for the many children in his diocese lacking Catholic religious instruction. At her suggestion, he wrote to Sister General Helen Hayes and the General Council, who agreed to establish a religion correspondence school for Catholic families whose children were unable to receive regular Catholic religious instruction. The village of Clarenville on the unceded, traditional territory of the Beothuk and the Mi'kmaq was a strategic location on the east coast in Trinity Bay for the sisters to visit the 90 communities. While predominantly Protestant with the majority of churchgoers attending the United Church of Canada, a friendly ecumenical spirit pervaded with pleasant exchanges of ideas regardless of faith tradition. Although the correspondence school was their immediate task, the sisters envisioned a long-range plan to aid parents and catechists at parish schools of religion. Three weeks later, the sisters met with the bishop and five pastors to outline the aspects of the religious correspondence school, named the Living Word Centre, and each sister was assigned a geographical territory.¹¹

The sisters attended Mass each Sunday at a different parish church in their assigned areas and afterwards explained the correspondence program, seeking interest among the parish families. Later, names of Catholic students were obtained from the area's integrated school boards. In the correspondence school office, a large high work table was constructed with built-in drawers and compartments for supplies as well as two sets of shelves to store the lessons and books.



Left: Sister Agnes Hearn stands in the office, Clarenville, 1976. Right: Sister Viola Mossey greets Terry Fox on the start of his run across Canada, Gander, 1980

The lessons were ordered from the Daly Centre and books from the Catholic Education Committee in St. John's. The Living Word Centre was first housed in their three-room apartment and then remained there when the sisters moved into a trailer in a mobile home park as their living quarters. One of the neighbourhood dogs, whom the sisters befriended, protected their trailer well, preventing a propane delivery and a visit from Bishop Penney.¹²

The religious correspondence program was officially inaugurated during Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Grand Falls on 21 September 1975. Sister Hearn paid special attention to Catholic families living in two isolated fishing villages, Little Heart's Ease and Gooseberry Cove, along the southwest arm of Trinity Bay. In the absence of a priest, she often drove along winding gravel roads in these coves on Sundays to conduct para-liturgical services in their tiny churches. During the week, Sister Hearn visited the cove families and helped parents with teaching problems. She also assisted in fundraising at Little Heart's Ease for painting the church, and the purchase of a much-needed chalice, church furnishings as well as a Christmas crib at Gooseberry Cove. Sister Hearn also travelled to Churchill Falls where she taught religion at



Sister Margaret Ready and First Communicants, Boyd's Cove, 1985

the high school. In 1979, she was succeeded by Sister Adua Zampese, who had taught in St. Julien's on the Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland.¹³

The Clarenville mission expanded its activities in following years. Acting on parental suggestions, certificates were presented to every student who had completed lessons. Before Mass, correspondence students and parents regularly met with Sister Zampese to work out any difficulties with the lessons. In 1980, Sister Rita MacLellan was hired as pastoral assistant to help Father Larry George, pastor of the King's Cove and Clarenville churches. Sisters Zampese and Viola Mossey were interviewed about their activities in Newfoundland on "Dialogue," a CBC television program in January 1981.¹⁴

Sister Margaret Ready, who helped to establish CCD in Fargo and Grand Forks ND, replaced Sister Barton in 1981. For three years, Sisters Ready and Zampese worked in 28 parishes, giving retreats, visiting families and preparing students for the sacraments. To assist the religious coordinators with the retreat schedule, Sister Zampese drove some Confirmation students for a retreat at Long Harbour, a distance of 100 kilometres.

The sisters participated in ecumenical activities which were encour-



Sister Madge Barton visiting students with squid drying on a line in the background, Dover, Bonavista Bay, 1979

aged by Vatican II directives. During July 1982, Sisters Flynn and Zampese blended a successful summer program of day-long religious instruction and sacramental preparation with music for six weeks among the Gambo missions. Sister Ready in September 1982 extended greetings of the Catholic community of Gambo to the Loyal Orange Lodge at St. George's Anglican Church, and spoke in various churches on the World Day of Prayer. Sisters Barton, Ready and MacLellan spoke at the area's Salvation Army Citadel, United Church, and Anglican churches. In 1982, Sister General Helen Hayes, with the institute's diminishing membership in mind, suggested at the Grand Falls diocesan annual meeting that other women religious communities and lay people be sought to continue the work of the SOS.¹⁵

In the fall of 1981, Sisters Camozzi and Hartman arrived in Bishop's Falls, a town in the northcentral part of the island on the unceded, traditional territory of the Beothuk and the Mi'kmaq to assume the correspondence program initiated by the Presentation Sisters at Grand Falls. Like the sisters in the catechetical tours of the 1930s, they travelled the distances by a camper van, sleeping overnight on extended trips, to visit families and assist catechists. Sister Hartman's guitar instruction to students led to the holding of two hoo-

tenannies in Bishop's Falls with the young guitarists entertaining parents and students. To assist families with special needs, the sisters created a series of booklets. Sister Camozzi wrote the text; Sister Hartman drafted the lesson questions and Sister Flynn with Bruce Murphy illustrated the pages. The sisters initially combined their efforts to prepare lessons for First Communion and Confirmation and later on other topics under the titles of *Know Your Church*, *Jesus, the Saints and You*, and *The Jesse Tree*. *Journeying in the Catholic Faith*, a 128-page book of lessons was published and used by pastors to instruct converts. When the sisters left Bishop's Falls in 1983, Sister Zampese assumed their work for one additional year.¹⁶

In the spring of 1983, the sisters moved into five units in a Clarendville apartment building, combining living quarters and office under the name of Trinity Place. The following spring, Sister Mary Jackson arrived from Edmonton to organize workshops to acquaint catechists with new teaching methods. At the request of pastors, Sister Jackson instructed teachers and catechists in five eastern locations and in several other western missions. She was invited to speak on prayer to the United Church congregation at Shoal Harbour, and also gave talks on Catholic teaching to high school classes at their integrated schools. When Sister Zampese left in 1984 for a new assignment as director of formation in Toronto, Sister Eileen Gallagher, a teacher from High Level, took over the Gambo missions and Sister Ready inherited the western parishes. Sister Mary Harding, a catechist who previously served in Regina and Fargo, assisted them by correcting lessons as well as leading the singing at nursing homes, the correctional centre and the hospital. When Sister MacLellan left in 1990, a search by the diocese was started to replace the sisters. A lay religious co-ordinator was hired and Sisters Ready and Gallagher, the last of the 13 sisters, who served over 17 years, closed the mission in June 1992 after a series of heartfelt farewells from clergy, parents, children and friends.¹⁷



Sister Mary Halder in public health car, Vilna, 1965

Health Care

The opportunities in health care expanded in the 1970s for sisters, who had earned academic degrees and professional qualifications. Sister Mary Halder, a registered nurse with a bachelor of science degree in nursing, had already embarked on a trailblazing path for the SOS as a public health nurse. Wearing the uniform of a public health nurse, she began her career at the North Eastern Health Unit in St. Paul, Alberta in 1964 and worked a weekend shift at Our Lady's Hospital in Vilna. Assigned as a shift nurse at St. John's Hospital, Edson, for less than a year, Sister Halder remained in Edson and joined the Agricultural and Rural Development Agency (ARDA), a federal-provincial collaborative community development project to assist low-income people living in rural area of west central Alberta. "This was a new adventure," she explained, "Along with a home economist, the work involved developing and administrating a program of working with local women to enable them to develop their leadership skills and thus to assist other women in their community. The work was interesting, challenging and very exciting."¹⁸

Sister General Patricia Burke encouraged Sister Mary Halder to apply for a public health position with the federal Northern Health



Sister Mary Halder speaking at a conference, Teslin, Yukon, 1972

Service in the Yukon. Subsequently, Sister Halder was hired as the public health nurse from 1972 to 1974 in Teslin, Yukon on the traditional territory of the Tlingit peoples. After earning a postgraduate diploma in continuing education from the University of Saskatchewan in 1976, she returned to the Northern Health Service, and was posted briefly in Watson Lake before being promoted as Regional Health Educator from 1976 until 1983 in Whitehorse on the traditional territory of the KwanlinDün First Nation and the Ta'anK-wäch'än Council. She established community health programs in small Indigenous communities, introducing them to the local public health nurse. In the Yukon, elements of social justice were intertwined with daily life. On behalf of the 8,000 Indigenous peoples living on the Yukon shores, she participated in land claims negotiations with the federal government. After a year in Toronto as vocation director, she returned to public health in Alberta at the Fort McMurray health unit in 1985. That year, she relocated to Smoky Lake, east of Edmonton, on Treaty 6 Territory and Metis homeland and worked in the North Eastern Alberta Health Unit, her first em-



Sister Joan Schafhauser examines baby, High Level, Alberta, 1975

ployer. Retiring in 1999, Sister Halder was quoted in the *Smoky Lake Signal*, “I hope I have made a difference in the lives of some of the people here. They have impacted me. I have been very moved by their struggles and their resilience to tragedies. I have valued having people share their lives with me.”¹⁹

After professing first vows in 1958, Sister Joan Schafhauser, a registered nurse, was appointed to the Vilna and Edson hospitals for 15 years and earned a bachelor of science degree in nursing from the University of Alberta. Her interest in public health led Sister Schafhauser to High Level as the public health nurse from 1973 until 1975, living with sisters teaching at the public school.²⁰ While formation director in Toronto from 1977 until 1984, Sister Schafhauser also nursed part-time for four years in the palliative care unit at Toronto Grace Hospital, and she completed one year of a master of science degree in nursing. The studies were interrupted upon her election as Assistant Sister General during the 1986-1990 administrative council term.

Returning to Western Canada, Sister Schafhauser completed a gerontology and home care course in 1991 at Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton before nursing from 1991 until 1994 in the long-term care, and in home care at St. Louis Hospital, Bonnyville, Alberta on Treaty 6 territory. Back in Toronto as director of Scarborough Court from 1994 until 1997, she continued to learn about holistic health practices during a sabbatical year at the Franciscan Centre, Little Falls, Minnesota. In 1998, she began to live and work the next two decades in Kingston, Ontario on the traditional homeland of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and the Huron-Wendat. She worked for two years at night, caring for dying cancer patients in home care and in hospice as an employee of WE CARE Home Health Services. During this time, she completed a correspondence course from St. Francis Xavier University as a parish nurse, receiving a certificate in 1999 and joining the nurse team for St. Mary's cathedral parish. In 2000, she accepted the position of spiritual co-ordinator at Providence Manor, the 275-bed long-term care home of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul.

Upon retirement in 2004, she trained as an instructor of fitness for seniors, including Tai ChiTao at Inn-Terra Eco Spirituality Program, Cottonwood, Idaho. For a decade, she taught Tai Chi Chih in her Kingston apartment building, the city's health unit and community centre, and at Collins Bay Institution. "It was a wonderful experience because they were so receptive. I taught them movement and they did exactly what I said. One guy said he just came every week to see my smile."²¹ Before she moved to Toronto in November 2018, the residents of her apartment building held a surprise farewell party. A next-door neighbour recounted her help as he completed credits for Grade 12. "I couldn't get this assignment. Joan came over and spent hours with me to get this assignment done. ... Joan and I got 86"²² Sister Schafhauser continues to teach Tai Chi Chih to residents at Presentation Manor, where she now lives.

After eight years of appointments in residential clubs and religious education, Sister Hilda Lunney trained from 1969 until 1971 at Toronto's Quo Vadis School of Nursing, which had been established

for older adults with the support of the nursing school at St. Joseph's Hospital. During her training, Sister Lunney was placed at Lakeshore Psychiatric Hospital in the city's west end, and found that psychiatric nursing appealed to her. After graduating as a registered nurse, she was hired at the Lakeshore hospital as a psychiatric nurse. Sister Lunney recollected on her three years at Lakeshore "in contact with many people both well and sick with whom I learned to laugh, weep and pray as various emotions came into play."²³ In September 1974, she left her position upon election to the General Council, and the staff at Lakeshore Psychiatric Hospital wrote a touching tribute.

We have watched you demonstrate understanding, compassion, kindness and generosity in conjunction with efficiency, skill and knowledge of human behavior and needs. We have been touched by your dedication and love of mankind which seem to grow and enrich the lives of those around you. Your advice and guidance, so humbly offered, was eagerly received and valuably employed. We have found comfort and reassurance in your reliability and encouragement in your willingness to assume extra responsibilities. We have learned from your ability to meet each new situation with enthusiasm and hope and each day with a smile. ... rest assured that your memory will inspire us to maintain the high standard of patient care you helped to establish.²⁴

Before entering the Sisters of Service in 1976, Sister Mary-Ellen Francoeur had earned a doctorate in clinical psychology at the University of Ottawa, and forged a new SOS apostolate working as a clinical psychologist. She was employed from 1979 until 1984 as associate director and therapist at Southdown Institute, near Aurora, Ontario, a program for religious and clergy with addiction and mental health issues. Moving to Northern Ontario, she accepted a position of clinical psychologist at Lakehead Regional Family Centre, Thunder Bay, for three years until 1989, living with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Sault Ste. Marie. From her Indigenous patients, she learned of their culture, spirituality, and struggles as well as the racism in that city on the traditional territory of Fort William First Nation. Moving further north as clinical director of James Bay Men-



Sister Mary-Ellen Francoeur stands behind at dog sled, Moosonee, Ontario, 1993

tal Health program from 1989 to 1995, she initiated a program for Indigenous mental health in Moosonee on Treaty 9 Territory, the traditional land of Cree and Moose Cree. She moved to Ottawa in 1995 where she worked as a clinical psychologist with Indigenous therapist Diane Tanner.²⁵

In 1969, Sister Mary Harding at the age of 55, enrolled in a one-year nurses' aide course in Calgary after 25 years of appointments in religious education and residential clubs. Upon graduation in 1970, she worked in Alberta at Manning Municipal Hospital for three years and in St. John's Hospital, Edson, for a decade until 1983. With this nursing experience, Sister Harding was appointed to Niagara Retirement Manor in St. Catharines, assisting the retired sisters until 1988.²⁶

From her entrance in 1945, Sister Rita Sullivan's appointments had encompassed work in the Edson hospital, residential clubs, and the Peace River teaching mission as superior. Immediately following graduating with a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Windsor, Sister Sullivan, at the age of 59, enrolled in a two-year nursing course in Lethbridge, Alberta, and joined the nursing staff

of Peace River Auxiliary Hospital from 1972 until 1980.²⁷

Sister Silvie Nachtegale, who had served in the residential clubs, the Edson hospital, and the Regina catechetical centre, graduated at the age of 54 from the Toronto School of Practical Nursing in 1970. She remained in Toronto to nurse at Providence Villa for two years, and at St. Michael's Hospital until 1974, when she then joined the nursing staff at the Moosonee Clinic. For three years, she provided medical treatment at the clinic and the fly-in northern Ontario communities of Attawapiskat and Fort Albany. Returning to her home province of Saskatchewan, Sister Nachtegale nursed for three years until 1980 at the Union Hospital, North Battleford on Treaty 6 Territory and the Metis homeland. After a sabbatical year, she combined nursing with assisting at Our Lady of Peace parish in Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan until 1987.²⁸

Sister Marilyn MacDonald, a retired social worker, embarked on training as a massage practitioner, earning certificates in Reiki in 1993 and craniosacral massage therapy in 1998. In Alberta, she received clients at the community's cottage at Seba Beach, in Stony Plain and at the Edmonton SOS residence. In 2003, she moved to Kingston, Ontario and she practised massage therapy and healing touch at the Providence Retreat Centre and the Religious Hospitaliers of St. Joseph Region in nearby Amherstview.²⁹

Education

Teaching in Catholic schools and in remote locations

After Vatican II, the teaching sisters with their newly-minted university degrees and upgraded education qualifications applied for positions in remote areas, where residential schools had been closed, and in the expanding rural Catholic school systems. Over the next three decades, the sisters taught in 37 different schools.

Sister Anna McNally earned a bachelor of arts degree in 1966 and a bachelor of education degree a year later from the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon and joined the staff at St. Charles school

from 1966 until 1968 under the Saskatoon Separate School Board. Transferring to St. Matthew's school in 1968 until 1973, she participated in a team teaching pilot project in which 100 children were grouped according to their learning abilities and interest.³⁰

After closing the Rycroft mission in 1972, Sister Magdalen Barton returned to Regina as a supply teacher under the Regina Catholic School District, teaching in elementary schools and two high schools until 1974. The next year, Sister Barton ended her four-decade teaching career in Spirit River, Alberta.

In 1968, after 15 years in teaching missions in Alberta and Saskatchewan, Sister Joan Coffey moved to St. John's to begin the SOS teaching apostolate in Newfoundland and Labrador. Sister Coffey taught at St. John Bosco school, the province's first alternative school, from 1968 until 1972. Sister Adua Zampese taught Grade 1 in The Goulds, southeast of St. John's, commuting with Sister Barbara Kowalski, who taught Grade 7 at nearby Petty Harbour, from 1973 until 1975.³¹ Sister Kowalski, after graduating with a bachelor of arts (education) degree from Memorial University, taught at St. Augustine's School for Girls in St. John's from 1976 until 1979.

In the late summer of 1971, Sister Mary MacDougall, the popular music teacher and superior of four Grouard teaching missions, travelled by airplane to the central Labrador community of North West River on the homelands of the Innu Sheshatshui First Nation. Her arrival fulfilled a request from Bishop Henri Légaré, OMI, of the Diocese of Labrador-Schefferville for a SOS teacher to join the 11-member staff of the newly-built Pennamin Mackenzie school under the Roman Catholic School Board of Labrador. The government-built school provided classes from kindergarten to Grade 8, and housed a library, home economics room, cafeteria and wood-working shop. Sister MacDougall, who taught Grades 6 and 7, collected 30 articles written by her Indigenous students, describing their community, families, activities of hunting, picking berries and camping for publication in an issue of *The Field at Home*.³²



Sister Joan Coffey and students in classroom at the Pennamin Mackenzie school, North West River, Labrador, 1979

Sister Joan Coffey joined the mission in 1972, as did Sister Anna McNally, replacing Sister MacDougall in 1973, Sister Clare Gilmore, who taught from 1974 to 1976, and Anne Leonard, SOS co-member. As principal of the Pennamin McKenzie school from 1972 until 1983, Sister Coffey put into place programs and activities to enhance and support the revival and respect for the culture and traditions of the Indigenous peoples. Sister Coffey enrolled in a beginner's course of duffle embroidery and encouraged parents to take pride in their children. A member of the executive of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association (NTA), she held the record of nine years as the longest-serving female member, at that time. Trips to NTA meetings in St. John's gave her the opportunity to shop at the city's Avalon mall to fill suitcases with purchases of much-needed items at much cheaper prices for the families in Labrador, returning with treats, staple goods and cigarettes. She also coordinated two weekend retreats for Our Lady of the Snows parish. Gathered in the forest camp sites in late August, the retreats included baptisms, marriages and First Communion. Retiring from teaching, Sister Coffey closed the mission in June 1983.³³

Sister Alena Bryden, experienced in the care of young people at the Rycroft student dormitory and four women's residences, worked for seven years as a housemother at the dormitory for students at-



Sister Adua Zampese and students on field trip, St Julien's, 1978

tending the high school operated by the International Grenfell Association. Founded by English medical missionary Wilfred Grenfell, the association established health services and schools in Labrador and northern Newfoundland. Sister Bryden left when the school was closed in 1980.³⁴

In 1975, Sister Adua Zampese was missioned to teach in Grand-is-St. Julien's, a Newfoundland fishing outpost without a road connection to the mainland. The isolation of the outpost on the Great North Peninsula, part of the ancestral homelands of the Mi'kmaq and Beothukwithout, had discouraged a series of teachers, who did not remain beyond a few months. Sister Zampese and Sister Rosemarie Hudon, experienced rural teacher and mentor for the first eight weeks, were joined by Peggy Noseworthy, the second teacher at the two-room St. William's school. Sister Zampese remembered vividly some aspects of outpost life in the mid-1970s.

Until the spring, we cut a hole on the ice on the brook and got our water from it. On laundry days, our neighbours' young sons helped us to carry the water to the house. At first, for a few months, there was one telephone in the harbour and the mail came once a week, weather permitting. The post office was in a room of a private house.



St. William school, depicted by Sister Patsy Flynn, St. Julien's, 1978

From the first Sunday and every Sunday after, Maude, our closest neighbour brought a wonderful home-cooked dinner. Other meals came during the week. The people lived off the land, fish, rabbits, seabirds and other wild meats, were shared. We quickly acclimatized not only to the weather, which was cold, but also to their way of life. We became part of their familiar ways. We enjoyed Christmas concerts, the Mummers, the homemade hearts and notes found tied around the door handle on Valentines Day We were made part of every activity.³⁵

Sister Patsy Flynn replaced Peggy Noseworthy in 1976. For the first months to prepare for a class of 20, aged 9 to 16 in Grades 4 to 9, Sister Flynn spent many nights in the school, pouring over the curriculum and preparing lessons. It was a linguistic challenge for the Scottish and Italian teachers conversing with shy Newfoundland children and their outport dialect. When local families completed the construction of the teachers' house, it became a community centre for children to receive lessons in guitar and art. In exchange, Sister Flynn learned to jig a fishing line and drive a skidoo. The sisters enjoyed such St. Julien's events as the first school graduation, and led Sunday prayers and distributed communion. For the outport-

ers, Sister Flynn introduced Scottish dancing, while Sister Zampese taught sewing to the teenagers and served as a hairdresser for some women. The sisters participated in the successful community lobbying of the Newfoundland government to build a road to St. Julien's. Once the road was constructed in 1979, the sisters left. Sister Zampese stated straightforwardly: "There was no need for us to be there and the teachers would stay."³⁶

In Manitoba, most of the smaller schools, including the Berlo and Camp Morton schools, were closed by 1967. Sister Lena Renaud commuted to the regional school in Gimli as did Sister Clare Gilmore from 1969 until 1971. Moving to The Pas in 1971 for three years, Sister Gilmore joined the staff of the Opasquia school as a Grade 2 teacher in the central Manitoba town on Treaty 5 Territory. Sister Gilmore, a catechist before earning teaching credentials, initially lived with a United Church family and later moved into a residence for teachers.³⁷

While Sister Gilmore settled into The Pas in 1971, three sisters arrived in Churchill at the invitation of newly-appointed Bishop Omer Robidoux, OMI, of the Churchill Diocese, to teach in two schools in this Indigenous community on the western shore of Hudson's Bay on Treaty 5 Territory. At Duke of Marlborough school, Sister Patsy Flynn taught Grade 3 and Sister Marilyn Gillespie served as a special education teacher, while Sister Anita Hartman taught Grade 7 at Hearne Hall school, a junior high school in nearby Fort Churchill. After the first year, Sister Flynn became the full-time art and music teacher and Sister Hartman was employed briefly in part-time clerical work at the Northwest Territories education office. However, her advertisement in the local paper offering private music lessons led to a full-time program of teaching music lessons to individual and small groups in the front room of the rented house. Sister Flynn co-ordinated the parish religious education program, gradually transitioning to the teaching of adults. Both sisters organized and directed the church choir and served on the parish council. Sisters Flynn and Hartman left Churchill in 1976.

After a year in Churchill, Sister Marilyn Gillespie taught Grade 5 from 1972 to 1975 in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut on the west coast of Hudson's Bay, and a year of teaching with Sister Peggy McFadden in Fort St. James, British Columbia as part of the Frontier Apostolate under Bishop Fergus Grady of Prince George. She rejoined the staff of the Churchill school, and brought her Grade 6 class to visit and meet Innu families and former students in April 1979.³⁸

At the age of 60, Sister Margaret Murphy, a catechist for almost four decades, earned a Manitoba teacher's certificate in Brandon in 1971 and immediately was hired to teach at the Canadian Forces Base, Camp Shilo, on Treaty 2 Territory. After a year, she moved to Winnipeg, teaching Grade 2 at St. John Brebeuf school from 1973 until 1978.³⁹

After two decades as a catechist, Sister Eileen Bridgeo with a freshly-earned teacher's certificate secured her first teaching position in September 1970 at Our Lady of Wisdom school under the Metropolitan Separate School Board. Three months later, she was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and died on New Year's Day. Many students, parents and teachers from the school paid their respects at the wake held in the Motherhouse, and a busload of students from the school's Grades 5 to 8 attended the funeral Mass at Holy Name Church.⁴⁰

The same year of 1970, Sister Anne O'Connor, an elementary school teacher for 25 years, began a new career in school libraries after completing a two-year library technician's course at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute (now Toronto Metropolitan University, TMU) and worked in school libraries in Bradford and Colgan north of Toronto.⁴¹

Sister Lita Camozzi, in a respite from Vatican II apostolates in religious education, returned to the classroom on two occasions. In Vancouver, she taught at St. Joseph's school from January 1973 until June 1974. Back in Toronto, she was a member of the staff of Our Lady of Lourdes school in the city's downtown for eight years until

1996. After her retirement, she volunteered at the school, helping with arts and crafts and sacramental preparation.⁴²

Following two years in the South American mission, Sister Leona Trautman visited Moosonee, Ontario in May 1972 to see whether it met the criteria as a SOS teaching mission. During the visit, she signed a contract to teach Grade 5 at Bishop Belleau school. Sister Trautman brought familiarity with Indigenous culture from postings at Christian Island and in Brazil to this Cree and Metis settlement of 2,000 on the southern end of James Bay. Sister Agnes Brunning at 75 came as her companion to look after the housekeeping and cooking in their rented house on the main street, where nursing Sister Nachtegaele also lived. Sister Brunning also visited families and was sacristan at the church while Sister Trautman taught weekly religion classes at Canadian Forces Station Moosonee, a military installation opened in 1962 as part of NORAD's Pinetree Line chain of radar stations. Sister Trautman enjoyed the congeniality of the school staff and their gatherings, which she and Sister Brunning attended. In the spirit of ecumenism, Sister Trautman also participated in Anglican services in Moose Factory, and the World Day of Prayer. In her early 60s, Sister Trautman took up snowshoeing in the winter, and as an avid gardener, she served as president of the James Bay Horticultural Society in Moosonee. Adapting a project from the Brazilian mission, she helped mothers form the Catholic Ladies' Club, which later evolved into a subdivision of the CWL. Upon retirement from teaching at age 65, Sister Trautman closed the mission in June 1978.⁴³

More than a decade later, Sister Patsy Flynn with experience in the northern communities of Churchill, Fort McMurray, and High Level, joined the 15-member staff at Bishop Belleau school from 1990 until 1997. As in her other teaching positions, she added music and art to her classroom curriculum. For the 1994 Christmas concert, Sister Flynn's Grade 6 class played three carols, demonstrating the results of their many hours of practice on guitar. With her encouragement, the Grade 3 students carved snow sculptures, raising \$700 for Development and Peace's international programs in developing countries. She integrated Indigenous traditional beliefs and spiritual



Sister Patsy Flynn helps students with art, Moosonee, 1993

values with their Christian commitment. After a six-month course in religion and art in the modern world at Regis College, Toronto, she returned to Moosonee, adding the teaching of the Cree language. She closed the second Moosonee teaching mission in June 1997.⁴⁴

On a cold 30 January 1974, Sisters Mary Phillips and Marilyn MacDonald arrived in Fort McMurray at the beginning of its economic explosion. Once a shipping hub for the north, this Northern Alberta town on Treaty 8 Territory grew as the centre of the Athabasca tar sands extraction. Following the opening of the first commercial operation in 1967, government services were required for the predominantly young population of 10,000, who worked in the oil industry.⁴⁵ Demand for much-needed experience and expertise prompted six sisters in the fields of education, health, and social work to undertake short commitments for specific purposes.

While Sister MacDonald resumed her apostolate as a social worker for the Alberta Social Services, Sister Phillips began to fashion a new Alberta government program of Early Childhood Services. During two years as co-ordinator, Sister Phillips formulated policy and



Sister Mary Phillips stands in front of Sister Mary Phillips School, Fort McMurray, 1993

procedures; hired, supervised, and delivered in-service seminars to staff; and developed suitable public relations programs. When Sister Phillips' program was adopted in the school system in 1976, she returned to the classroom, teaching students with learning disabilities at three schools in the Fort McMurray Catholic School District, and was placed in charge of the Learning Assistance Centre in two of the schools. At the same time, she updated her professional skills with special education courses at the Eugene campus of the University of Oregon. Promoted as the board's resource teacher for children with learning disabilities, she coordinated and planned the board's programs for special education and learning disabled students. After retiring in 1982, Sister Phillips' work was recognized with honours. For excellence in education, she was presented with the Tree of Life Award in 1987 by the Fort McMurray Education Centre, and the Achievement Award for Community Service by the Alberta gov-

ernment in 1991. The ultimate professional honour came when the Fort McMurray Catholic School District named its newest school, opening in October 1993, as the Sister Mary Phillips School.⁴⁶

From 1975 until 1977, Sister Mary Jackson, after 14 years at the Edmonton Catholic board developing religious education, combined the positions of religious coordinator for Grades 1 to 9, and half-time arts teacher for the Fort McMurray Catholic board. Her sibling, Sister Bertha Jackson, a nurse, worked as a teacher's aide in early childhood services for a year and taught dietetics to students in a home care program at Keyano College in the second year. The Jackson sisters, who stayed for two years, were invigorated by the figurative and literal sense of growth in the town. "In the winter, although the weather was cold, the scenery was very spectacular," wrote Sister Bertha Jackson.⁴⁷ Under contracts also with the Fort McMurray Catholic board, Sisters Clare Gilmore taught for the 1978-1979 academic year; Patsy Flynn from 1980 until 1983 at the Turcotte school and Marilyn Gillespie for a year ending in 1983.

During retirement, Sister Phillips served as part of the pastoral team of St. John the Baptist church in Fort McMurray, coordinating sacramental programs as well as visiting hospitals and volunteering as choir director and organist. She assisted with the town's social support services as a founding member of the Growing with Grief Group, a member of the senior's group, Golden Years Society and a board member of the Cornerstone Counselling Centre. At the Fort McMurray Regional Hospital, she was a member of the volunteer services committee for pastoral care, worked with home care and introduced a palliative care program at the hospital. The mission ended in December 1991 when Sister Phillips, at the age of 73, left Fort McMurray.⁴⁸

In 1975, Sister Anna McNally spotted an advertisement for a teaching position in the northern Saskatchewan village of La Loche on Treaty 6 Territory and Metis homeland. She approached Sister Patricia Burke, who was completing a graduate degree in social work, to join her. For the next two decades, the pair held a series of positions

to assist the Indigenous peoples, developing social and educational and literacy programs after the closure of the residential school system. Sister McNally noted, "Our commitment was to come to help the people until they could take over, and which they did."⁴⁹ At Ducharme School from 1975 to 1979 as a teacher and vice-principal, Sister McNally won praise for her innovations and initiative from superintendent E. Lawton.

La Loche exhibits the diverse problems of a people caught in a rapidly changing environment. Sister McNally recognized this and concluded that the existing formal education system was not meeting the needs of the children of La Loche. It was mainly through her efforts and those of the principal, [that] the major changes have been made in educational programming in La Loche. Those changes have not brought about instant success, but they certainly show greater promise than anything previously tried in that community.⁵⁰

From La Loche, the sisters moved 300 kilometres south to Green Lake, a Metis community, Sister McNally served as vice-principal of St. Pascal school. "We stayed there until we were not needed."⁵¹ Sister McNally accepted a position in La Ronge on Treaty 6 Territory in 1983 just prior to completing a master of education degree at the University of Saskatchewan. As a language consultant for two years, Sister McNally developed an English as a second language program with the Northern Education branch of the Saskatchewan government, serving northern schools throughout the district. Due to her creative and effective approach to Indigenous education, she was recruited by the Northern Teachers Education Program (NORTEP) in 1985. This program, unique in Canada and based in La Ronge, was the vision of both – the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan, to educate and train Indigenous students to serve as teachers in their own communities. As an instructor and field supervisor for NORTEP, she was both educator and mentor for a generation of Indigenous teachers. By 1995, about 200 had graduated with bachelor of education degrees.⁵² Travelling the length and breadth of northern Saskatchewan, she was a presence in the northern schools and communities as a Sister of Service and as a professional and dedicated educator.



Sister Eileen Gallagher and students beside an outdoor altar, Meander River, Alberta, 1983

Sister Burke served in the literacy program at Northlands College, a post-secondary institution in La Ronge, and at a satellite campus in Buffalo Narrows over a period of three years beginning in 1987. She then became the co-ordinator at the newly-founded Gary Tinker Federation, a non-profit organization for the disabled until 1994. When both sisters were elected to the General Council, the mission in northern Saskatchewan was closed in 1995.⁵³

A year after the closing of the residential school on Alberta Hay Lakes reserve in 1971, Sister Eileen Gallagher accepted a position to teach Indigenous children for a year in Assumption, where she lived in the teacher's residence. For the next three years, she taught at the Upper Hay River Day school on Dene Thá First Nations reserve at Meander River. During the week, Sister Gallagher lived in a trailer on the reserve and travelled to the south on weekends to join the sisters at the High Level mission. The mission was closed in June 1975.⁵⁴

After leaving St. John's, Sister Barbara Kowalski taught in a series of schools following the closure of residential schools. From 1979 until 1980, she taught in Paynton, Saskatchewan in a school under the ad-



Sister Anita Hartman and students at St. Michael's school, Brights Grove, Ontario, 1996

ministration of the Little Pine Cree First Nation. Moving to Alberta, she taught in Drayton Valley in central Alberta, separate schools in Edmonton, the Frog Lake Public Indian Day School on the Frog Lake reserve, and on the Goodfish First Nation reserve under the Whitefish First Nation until retirement in 1984.⁵⁵

As a final multi-member teaching mission, three sisters arrived in August 1988 to the southwestern Ontario farming town of Wyoming to teach at Holy Rosary school in the Sarnia Separate School District. Sister Peggy McFadden taught one year and Sister Patsy Flynn two years while Sister Colleen Young stayed until June 1994 when she retired from teaching. Sister Anita Hartman arrived in 1990, teaching at St. Joseph school in Sarnia and St. Peter Canisius school in Watford until September 1991 and then, she taught Grade 2 for a decade at St. Michael school in Brights Grove under the St.

Clair Catholic District School Board. After retirement in 2001, she continued to reside in Brights Grove, setting up a music program in her residence, offering instruction in piano and guitar to 45 children from kindergarten age to high school.⁵⁶

In November 1992, Sister Bernice Anstett joined Sister Young in the Wyoming mission. As in Onoway, the pair actively participated in parish life. At Holy Rosary parish, and St. Philip parish, Petrolia, they assisted with RCIA, and as lectors, and eucharistic ministers, especially to the sick and shut-ins. Sister Anstett led Liturgy of the Word and communion services at nursing homes and senior residences and at the Little Rock Scripture Study. With a special interest in liturgy, both attended courses during six summers at Saint Paul University in Ottawa, each earning a certificate in pastoral liturgy. With this academic background, both led liturgies for the CWL meetings and conducted retreats and served as members of the liturgy committee for three years of the proposed Holy Rosary parish complex. In 2005, Sisters Anstett and Young were honoured at an appreciation Mass and social at Holy Rosary church.⁵⁷

Pastoral Care - Chaplains

After 14 years working in the residential clubs, Sister Rita Patenaude broke new ground in 1972 as one of the first women chaplains on a Canadian university campus. From 1972 to 1974, she served as a chaplain at the undergraduate St. Joseph's College at the University of Alberta, Edmonton. She moved to Campion College, the undergraduate college at the University of Regina, for six years and to St. Jerome's College at the University of Waterloo in 1981, serving until 1988.⁵⁸

At the end of her term as formation director in 1976, Sister Frances Coffey started training in chaplaincy and clinical pastoral education. She joined the staff of the Whitby Psychiatric Hospital, east of Toronto, as a duty chaplain in 1978 for the next eight years. She felt drawn to a ministry of people in need, and those with problems, to allow faith to be a source of strength in facing difficulties.⁵⁹



*Sister Frances Coffey in uniform outside
the hospital, Whitby, Ontario, 1981*

While teaching in Churchill, between 1976 and 1979, Sister Marilyn Gillespie began to visit teenage students who were serving weekend jail sentences, to help them with their schoolwork. During a sabbatical year in Toronto, Sister Gillespie trained at the Ontario Correctional Institute for prison chaplaincy in Brampton, Ontario and continued studies at the Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax, receiving a masters of theological studies degree in 1987. Shortly afterwards, as one of the first women federal prison chaplains in Canada, she was employed at the Westmorland Institution in Moncton, New Brunswick, from August 1987 to 1988. Wishing to be closer to the Ontario sisters, she was hired as the Catholic chaplain at the Joyville Institution, a medium security prison in Kingston, until 1994 when she took a sabbatical year. She trained at the Jesuit's Loyola House Centre of Spirituality in Guelph, as part of the internship program of spiritual direction. Returning to Kingston in 1995, she



Sister Agnes Sheehan in her office at the marriage tribunal of the Winnipeg archdiocese, 1980

served as the chaplain at the minimum security Pittsburgh Institution in Joyceville until retirement in 2002.⁶⁰

Before the Halifax residence was closed in 1991, Sister Hilda Lunney trained in clinical pastoral education, and served as chaplain from 1991 until 1995 at the city's hospitals of Camp Hill and Queen Elizabeth II.⁶¹

Pastoral Care - Marriage Tribunals

Sister Agnes Sheehan, an experienced social worker, joined the marriage tribunal of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg from 1979 until 1983. When she moved to Toronto, she resumed this specialized ministry at the Toronto archdiocese from 1984 to 1997. Of the almost two decades at the marriage tribunals, she considered these years as “the best period of my life. ... It was as if all my life had been a preparation for that work and my social work training was a big help to me.”⁶²

A teacher and catechist, Sister Mary Jackson became a member of the Alberta Catholic Regional Tribunal for the Edmonton archdiocese from 1977 until 1994 as an interviewer, official auditor, judge, and defender of the bond. She graduated in 1980 with a master's de-

gree in canon law (licentiate) from Saint Paul University in Ottawa. Sister Jackson described her view of marriage tribunals. "Too many persons have married for the wrong reasons: pregnancy, escape from an unhappy home, social pressures. Sometimes older couples stay in the marriage for the children's sake, but they exist only in an armed truce: love died long ago. The marriage tribunal is not, unfortunately, understood by the majority of Catholics. We see anguish and pain; sometimes, when we are fortunate, we can help assuage the ache."⁶³

Sister Molly Andrews joined the marriage tribunal of the Toronto archdiocese in 1983 until 1985.

Pastoral Care - Parish Ministries

As one of the first woman religious to serve as a parish worker, Sister Mary Corke was employed as parish visitor at St. Joseph's Cathedral in Edmonton for a year following the 1967 closing of the Edmonton women residence.⁶⁴ To educate herself about the theological changes of Vatican II, Sister Corke attended the Divine Word Institute in London, Ontario and the University of Windsor, earning a bachelor of arts degree. She returned to parish ministry and worked with Sister Florence Kelly in the British Columbia's Okanagan Valley at the Penticton parishes of St. John from 1973 until 1974 and St. Ann from 1974 until 1975. Sister Lita Camozzi was consultant and co-ordinator of religious education at St Ann from 1974 to 1981, and in Kelowna in 1984.⁶⁵ After the departure of Sisters Corke and Kelly, Sister Viola Mossey served as the parish assistant at St. Ann for a year and Sister Anita Hartman succeeded her in this position until 1981.⁶⁶

In the spring of 1970, Sister Lena Renaud was officially installed as assistant pastor of St. Benedict's parish in Camp Morton, and as the first woman in Canada to be appointed as an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist. In the church ceremony, she was presented with the alb and cincture by Father Georges Savoie, military base chaplain at Gimli, who officiated in the absence of the ailing pastor. Sister Renaud took communion to homes and conducted Sunday services.⁶⁷



Left: Sister Catherine Donnelly receives communion from Sister Lena Renaud, Camp Morton, 1971. Right: Sister Adua Zampese at the pulpit, Radville, Saskatchewan, 2000.

Returning to her hometown of Dartmouth, Nova Scotia in 1979, Sister Bertha Jackson served as a pastoral associate at Pope John XXIII parish in nearby Cole Harbour for seven years. Of her parish activities in 1984, she wrote, “To teach, for me, is a new experience and one which I enjoy but it does take a good deal of time. I’m still visiting homes, going to the hospital, taking Communion to homes; having meetings with lay ministers and looking after the Baptismal classes and lay workers. I do other odd jobs as well.”⁶⁸ From 1986 until 1994, she served in her home parish of St. Peter’s in Dartmouth as pastoral assistant and co-ordinated the outreach program to the sick and housebound. On the parish’s 165th anniversary in 1994, she was awarded the Archdiocesan Medal of Merit by Archbishop James Hayes “for her extraordinary dedication and spirit of sacrifice of the diocesan church.”⁶⁹ Soon afterwards, she retired at the age of 79.

While working at Smoky Lake, Alberta, Bishop Raymond Roy of the St. Paul Diocese appointed Sister Mary Halder as parish administrator for Our Lady of Atonement Church in the absence of a full-time priest. Under her administration, the parish completed several projects, including renovation of the church to its original design and upgrading the heating system. She participated in the Emmaus Lay Ministry formation program sponsored by the diocese.⁷⁰

Sister Rita MacLellan, as pastoral assistant in the churches at the King's Cove and Clarenville, Newfoundland, between 1980 and 1990, was involved in religious education, sacramental preparation and pastoral care. She also provided chaplain services to the community's correctional institution and senior citizens' home, and served as a member of the ecumenical pastoral team. At her farewell party, she was praised for being the symbol of the parish throughout the business community and general public. "Mention her name and people smile. Sister has a deep faith and spirituality and makes an impact on those she meets in her daily life, a lady, who does the ordinary, extraordinarily well." ⁷¹

Sister Helen Hayes served as parish minister at St. Aloysius Church in Milestone, Saskatchewan from 1991 until 1994, and assisted by Sister Rosemarie Jansen.

In the Toronto archdiocese, Sister Adua Zampese was assigned to Epiphany of Our Lord parish in Scarborough. As pastoral associate from 1987 until 1993, she directed the RCIA program, and started home, school and parish sacramental preparation, scripture prayer groups and RENEW, a small group program. With the pastor and other parishioners, she attended a training session at Loyola House in Guelph to establish ongoing small prayer groups, based on the model of the Basic Christian Community. Thirty years later, these groups are still active.

In Saskatchewan, Sister Zampese served in three parishes. As pastoral assistant in the Regina parish of Holy Family for two years until 1996, she coordinated sacramental preparation and Confirmation and directed the RCIA program. For five years until 2002 in the southern Saskatchewan town of Radville, she and companion Sister Margaret Ready provided pastoral care, administration and maintenance of Holy Family parish and the mission church of St. Blaise parish in Lake Alma. In the absence of a resident priest, Sister Zampese, as pastoral minister, presided at the Liturgy of the Word on Sundays, and at Marian Health Centre, a long-term care home

on Saturdays. “I was also responsible for the Sacramental preparation of children and adults at both parishes,” she noted. “The priest went to Radville every two weeks, less often in Lake Alma.”⁷² Back in Regina for a year, she co-ordinated religious education at St. Anne parish until 2003 when she was elected as the SOS pastoral director.

Pastoral Care - Spiritual Direction

After leaving office as Sister General in 1994, Sister Frances Coffey spent her sabbatical year at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, California. In 1996, she settled in Edmonton, and for the next 12 years, she developed a ministry of spiritual direction. As a member of the Providence Renewal Centre, she gave spiritual direction to individuals and in parishes.⁷³

Following retirement from prison chaplaincy, Sister Marilyn Gillespie returned to Loyola House, where she had trained almost a decade earlier, on staff and then as a volunteer. Remaining in Guelph, she travelled every other month for ten years, to offer spiritual direction to the Sisters of Charity in Saint John, while continuing spiritual direction and retreat work at Loyola House until 2018 when she joined the SOS at Presentation Manor. When the need arises, she returns to Loyola House to help with retreats as well as offering local spiritual direction when requested.⁷⁴

Upon leaving private practice as a psychologist, Sister Mary-Ellen Francoeur embarked on training as a spiritual director having previously assisted a woman law professor from Rwanda studying in Ottawa. In 2001, Sister Francoeur visited Rwanda and the professor for two and half months, recalling powerful experiences with the people, walking with the women on International Women’s Day, and listening and counselling the survivors of the genocide in 1994. She has continued to provide spiritual direction in Montreal and Toronto, where she now lives.⁷⁵

Public Relations

Entering in 1938 as a nurse, Sister Ella Zink received a series of appointments over 15 years at the Vilna and Edson hospitals. After the 1954 Chapter, she attended Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, now TMU, studying photography for future assignments as editor of *The Field at Home* from 1955 to 1974, and for religious promotional and SOS vocational material. After five summers of study, she earned a master of arts degree in journalism and a theology degree at Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Later, she studied philosophy of social communications at Saint Paul University in Ottawa.

Sister Zink joined the staff of the Canadian Religious Conference (CRC) in Ottawa in 1965 for three years in the permanent secretariat office, planning and organizing a vocations department on a national level, and later served as assistant general secretary. She broke new ground as the first woman director of public relations of the English sector for Catholic Conference of Bishops (CCB) from 1968 until 1973. In that capacity, she attended some of the synods of the bishops in Rome. Monsignor James Weisgerber praised her contribution of assisting in the practical implementation of the teachings and spirit of Vatican II and “giving constant proof of the generous contributions made by women and religious to our Church and society.”⁷⁶ Continuing in public relations, Sister Zink returned to the hospital field as assistant executive director for public relations and publications at the Catholic Hospital Association from 1973 until 1975. Breaking further new ground as a woman religious, she was employed by a non-religious organization as public relations director for five years to 1980 of the YM-YWCA. During that period in Ottawa, she also assisted other organizations: a member of the publicity committee of the Ontario Heart Foundation; campaign publicity committee of the United Way of Ottawa-Carleton; publicity committee of the social planning council of Ottawa-Carleton; and as a board member of the Catholic Family Services of Ottawa. She served as chair from 1980 until 1982 of the Canadian Public Re-



Sister Ella Zink speaks at press briefing, Winnipeg, 1968. At the table (l-r): Archbishop Maurice Boudoux of Saint Boniface; Bishop Alexander Carter of Sault Ste. Marie and Bishop Remi DeRoo of Victoria.

lations Society of Canada and as its chief examiner to approve the accreditation of public relations practitioners, receiving an award of merit from the society.⁷⁷

Social Justice

After moving to Ottawa in 1995, Sister Mary-Ellen Francoeur became active in Religions for Peace, serving in executive positions at the Ontario chapter and national president of the Canadian conference. She attended the 1997 assembly in Kyoto, Japan; was a member of delegation to Israel and Palestine in 2004; and represented Canada at the world conference in 2006. She was a member of the Kairos Women of Courage delegation to the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2013. For her human rights and peace endeavours, she received the Peace Award from the Friends for Peace in Ottawa in 2007, and the Pax Christi award from the Toronto chapter in 2016.⁷⁸

Social Work

In 1957, Sister Agnes Sheehan completed the two-year program at the Maritime School of Social Work in Halifax, becoming the first Sister of Service to graduate as a social worker. For the next 15 years while at the Winnipeg residential club, Sister Sheehan served in many posts, including superior during the construction of the addition to the building and as the staff social worker from 1960 to 1968, and social worker at a Child Guidance Clinic from 1968 until 1973. Of the Child Guidance Clinic, she recalled: "That was a wonderful experience because it was inter-disciplinary. Our teams were primarily social workers, reading therapist, a speech therapist, psychologist, and psychiatrist."⁷⁹ Her contribution was recognized in 1966 with the awarding of the Bene Merenti Medallion on the occasion of the 50th jubilee of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg. At that time, she was involved with the recreation division of the municipal Social Planning Council, the umbrella for all the social agencies, including the SOS residence. When the residence was closed in 1973, it was leased to the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation for five years at \$1 a year. The YWCA undertook the operation of Hargrave House as a YWCA-SOS joint project with Sister Sheehan as the director.⁸⁰

After one term as Sister General, Sister Patricia Burke returned to her studies, graduating with a master of social work degree from Dalhousie University in Halifax, where she had also earned a social work diploma from the Maritime School of Social Work in 1958. She worked at the Catholic Welfare Society in Saskatoon for the next eight years until elected to the General Council and served as Assistant Sister General. In taking up Sister McNally's suggestion to join her in Saskatchewan, Sister Burke was hired as director of social services, stationed in La Loche for the provincial department of Northern Saskatchewan from 1975 until 1979. Moving to Green Lake for three years, she served as coordinator of school and community services for the first year in St. Pascal school, and returned to the provincial department as family services supervisor and regional director for the next two years. After a sabbatical year, she was placed

in charge of development and field supervision at the department's regional office in La Ronge for two years. In 1985, she completed a master of science degree in administration from University of Notre Dame in Indiana, and was promoted to regional director of social services in Creighton to combine social work administration with program development until 1986. At Northlands College, a post secondary institution, she combined her work in the literacy program with social work in the college's social services for two years until 1989.⁸¹

After closing the North Dakota catechetical mission in 1968, Sister Margaret Ready enrolled in a social work course at the Regional Vocational School in Halifax, earning a diploma in social welfare. She was promptly hired as a social worker for Catholic Family Services of Eastern Nova Scotia, serving from 1970 until 1975 in New Glasgow on the unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. Sister Ready then worked at the Family Enrichment and Counselling Service from 1975 until 1981 as a family counsellor in Moncton, New Brunswick, also on the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq.⁸²

Entering the SOS in 1963, Sister Marilyn MacDonald studied at Ryerson, now TMU, earning a diploma in social work in 1971. She returned to the Winnipeg residential club, her first mission assignment, and was hired by the Winnipeg Children's Aid Society in the field unit, located in the Indian and Metis Friendship Centre. "The director never forgot I was a Sister. I adapted to the life of my clients."⁸³ She began a life-long friendship with Mary Richard, an Indigenous activist.

After the Winnipeg residential club closed, Sister MacDonald began two decades with Alberta Social Services, starting at its district office in High Prairie. She lived in a two-bedroom trailer with teacher Sister Mary Phillips in Faust, a small Metis village on the shores of Lesser Slave Lake. As part of the six-member staff, Sister MacDonald was assigned to assess and provide welfare and child protection service at the Sucker Creek Reserve, Grouard and Big Prairie, a Metis colony. "I really enjoyed the Metis... I think of this one woman



Sister Molly Andrews sits with men at the Fred Victor mission, Toronto, 1976

in a line of people who would come out to my car, which served as my office with the opening line. 'It's my turn to come to confession.' ... It gave many the opportunity to discuss private concerns."⁸⁴ In attending case conferences of government wards in care, she drove a mother to Edmonton to meet her son living in a child welfare institution, and recalled the mother's comment on the return trip: "Imagine me going around with a nun."⁸⁵

Following six years with Albert Social Services in Fort McMurray, Sister MacDonald returned to studies, completing in 1978 a bachelor of social work degree at the University of Calgary. Back in Edmonton, Sister MacDonald returned Alberta Social Services, working in child protection until 1982 when she was elected to the General Council. Returning to Alberta Family and Social Services in 1986 until retiring in 1997, she served in the field offices in Drayton Valley, Edmonton and Stony Plain, all on Treaty 6 Territory. Reflecting on her career as a social worker, she observed.

Child welfare is highly stressful work and few last long with some integrity intact. I always felt I was knee deep in working with those in great need. People who do not thank you and yet, there were moments that make it all worthwhile. Kids with tremendous resilience and dedicated co-workers.⁸⁶

Upon returning from the Brazilian mission, Sister Lydia Tyszko joined the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Metropolitan Toronto in 1972 until 1978, working with families in the city's north end and in the downtown area of Regent Park.⁸⁷

Joining the SOS in September 1971, Sister Molly Andrews continued to work as a social worker at the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Metropolitan Toronto until 1972. She completed studies at Ryerson, now TMU, with a bachelor of social services degree in 1975, and then joined a newly-created program to assist men with alcohol-related problems living on skid row.⁸⁸

When the Vancouver residential club closed in 1972, Sister Isabel Ellis, a 1967 graduate of the social welfare work course at the Nova Scotia Institute of Technology, Halifax, completed a homemaker course in Vancouver. Working diligently to establish a homemakers association, Sister Ellis became supervisor of homemakers for the Family Service Agencies in Vancouver from 1973 until 1980.

Unique Apostolates

Sister Anne Johnson studied home economics at Ryerson, now TMU, graduating in 1971 and worked for one year as chef manager of Laughlin Lodge, a downtown seniors' residence. During the early 1980s, she volunteered at Hope Cottage in Halifax, bringing meals and comfort to street people, and resumed volunteer work when she lived in a seniors' apartment building for 14 years in mid-town Toronto. Sister Johnson concentrated on support services to help seniors maintain their independence through Meals on Wheels and Downtown Care-Ring Home Support Services of Toronto, a service of driving seniors to appointments. For Alzheimer patients, she helped at the community day-programs and supported caregivers, and visited seniors of the nearby Our Lady of Assumption parish.⁸⁹

Sister Anita Hartman was a music teacher above all her other apostolates. In the summer of 1975, she launched the first guitar camp at Camp O'Neill near Regina, and 24 attended, the majority of whom



Sister Anita Hartman (foreground, extreme right) and campers at Guitar Camp, Camp O'Neill, Summer 1981

were sisters from other communities. In the following year, the guitar camp was expanded to three locations for two weeks at a time. Aimed at teens and adults, the camp, housing 100 participants with a family atmosphere, fulfilled its claim of learning to play guitar in one week. The popularity of the camp became well known. Father Mark Miller, C.Ss.R., recalled one summer looking from the altar during a Sunday Mass and seeing no teenagers. Upon inquiring, he learned that the teenagers were attending the nearby guitar camp. Shortly afterwards, Father Miller visited the camp, noting, "It was no wonder why they were there."⁹⁰ Although Sister Hartman retired from the guitar camps in 2004, at the age of 65, the camps continued, retaining her philosophy and teaching methods.

Sister Viola Mossey worked as a secretary to the retreat director of the Tabor Retreat House in Charlottetown for two years until 1978.

Sister Theresa Duffley's concern and care of the sick and elderly was realized when she was employed as a Red Cross homemaker in Halifax from 1979 until 1984. She also volunteered to assist disabled children in programs at the swimming pool at Dalhousie University.⁹¹

While living at the Regina mission, Sister Anna Green attended a Christian fellowship meeting in 1982. After seeing her art displayed at the meeting, Bryan Folk, an inmate at the Regina Correctional Centre, asked her to teach art at the centre. A few months later in 1983, arrangements were made for the 82-year-old Sister Green to assist a group of prisoners during their painting sessions in still life and landscape depictions from photographs. For the next two years, she hovered near the easels, giving suggestions on perspective and brush strokes.⁹²

Sister Brigid Knopic coordinated the spiritual program for Catholic residents at Fudger House, a downtown Toronto long-term care home, for a decade. With a cadre of 25 volunteers, she prepared the room for the weekly Mass, helped to bring the residents to the liturgy, and assisted at the funerals. Sister Margaret Ready noted that nothing would prevent Sister Knopic from keeping the weekly commitment.⁹³

In Regina, Sister Patsy Flynn volunteered at a women's shelter and at Birthright when she joined Sisters Zampese and Ready from 2002 to 2003 before she undertook and completed a graduate degree in art therapy at the Kutenai Art Therapy Institute in Nelson, British Columbia. She moved to Beaverton, Ontario, where she practised art therapy during retreats in country parishes, and facilitated a spirituality group in her residence from 2005 until 2013.⁹⁴

The variety of apostolates by the sisters undertaken since Vatican II attested to their adaptation to the contemporary world. The number of missions in northern Canada was an endorsement of their missionary spirit, flexibility and mobility. Sisters showed initiative in

seeking new apostolates, which matched their education, training and interests. Ironically, the apostolate of teaching located in outlying areas, just as the foundress had envisioned, dominated the four decades since the end of Vatican II.

Chapter Ten

Coming to Completion

On the warm evening of 15 August 1997, Toronto Archbishop Aloysius Ambrozic offered a Mass of Thanksgiving to celebrate the institute's 75th anniversary. In his homily, the Slovenian-born archbishop paid tribute to the SOS immigration work, touching on his own immigration milestone at the age of 17, when arriving with his family as displaced persons at Pier 21.



Sister Colleen Young presents offertory gift to Archbishop Aloysius Ambrozic at the 75th anniversary Mass in St. Patrick's Church, Toronto, 15 August 1997.

More than 200 friends and family attended the Mass at the downtown Redemptorist St. Patrick's Church and then gathered at a reception in the adjacent Settlement House, where the sisters had assisted German immigrants in the early 1930s. During the reception, an official photograph of the 22 Sisters of Service at the Mass documented the occasion. This joyful celebration on the founding date was one of eight events held over four months, in seven other mission locations to mark the occasion and to honour their achievements.¹ A commissioned biography of Catherine Donnelly, *To Do and to Endure*, astute-

ly written by historian Jeanne Beck, was launched in September and received laudatory reviews. The historical legacy was also captured by Sister Madge Barton's 593-page narrative of the SOS contribution to religious education under the title *Gather Up the Fragments Lest They Be Lost*, a 25-minute video, and interviews of 20 sisters. To commemorate their ministries across Canada, each sister purchased a metre of the Trans Canada Trail being built to celebrate Canada's 125th birthday, a project to maintain a system of connected urban and rural trails across Canada. They chose one of the provincial parks to add their names to the plaque.



Sisters attending the 75th anniversary Mass, Toronto, 15 August 1997. Front row (l-r) Sisters Agnes Hearn, Mary Jackson, Leona Trautman, Anna McNally, Brigid Knopic, Joan Coffey, Helen Hayes. Back row: Sisters Florence Kelly, Mary Roberts, Margaret Ready, Bernice Anstett, Anne Johnson, Rita Sullivan, Mary-Ellen Francoeur, Martina Martens (in formation), Anita Hartman, Colleen Young, Magdalen Barton, Agnes Sheehan, Theresa Duffley (obscured) Joan Schafhauser, Adua Zampese.

During the anniversary year, future long-term planning of the institute was on the agenda to address the major issues of the community: diminishing numbers, lack of vocations, the departure of the last of the candidates, and fewer sisters available for leadership. An actuarial study was undertaken to examine more closely the issues facing the community. The actuarial table of the 53 living sisters showed that 11 sisters were under the age of 65, 13 were between 65 and 80 years, and the largest group of 29 were over 80 years. Four sisters were employed full-time in salaried positions, and five sisters worked part-time.²

Given these demographics, leadership was limited to a small pool of sisters with this issue being addressed at the 1998 Chapter meeting three months later. An in-depth study of different models of governance of religious congregations took place and was presented to the delegates for review to discern which model of governance best fits the SOS at this historical period of the institute. The proposal of a circle model of governance, one of collaboration and sharing of leadership responsibilities provided an alternative to the traditional hierarchical 'top-down' governance. Many sisters saw this approach of new governance as a way to follow in the untrodden path of the foundress and continue the legacy of the untraditional, pioneering stance of the institute. The circle model of co-responsibility and mutual accountability emphasized consensus, more effective information sharing, full disclosure and an opportunity to shape decisions. "Instead, the traditional responsibilities of leadership have been distributed to a wider circle of members who choose to share the burden, power and privilege of leadership in a more egalitarian manner," explained Ted Dunn, a member of the SOS facilitation team.³ The chapter delegates discussed and approved the process of implementing the circle governance and the treasurer's report outlined the healthy financial state of the community.⁴

In the summer of 1998, a process began to establish a foundation to better manage the institute's financial assets, which had grown under Mackenzie Investments. A foundation would ensure the care and maintenance of the institute's members, and its ministries and charitable activities. The Daly Foundation was established, fittingly named in recognition of Father Daly's skillful acumen of the institute's finances. The Daly Foundation was incorporated in September 1999, and the sisters would have the legal authority to change its bylaws.⁵

After Chapter Meeting, the first official circle meeting was held in Halifax in late August 1999, and a second in late November. The 17 circle members, composed of sisters under the age of 75 years, were divided into smaller circle groups or committees representing

various aspects of the community life and mission responsibilities: finance and properties; administration and communications; care of the elderly; and ministry and personnel. The circle meetings, which were held three times a year, increased the communication and connection among the sisters.⁶

In the spring of 2000 to meet future needs, the Motherhouse was vacated for renovations, enlarging bedrooms with ensuite bedrooms and upgrading electrical and plumbing system of the three-storey house. The 10 sisters living at the Motherhouse were dispersed. Some joined the retired sisters at Scarborough Senior Retirement Residence; others moved to Cardinal Ambrozic Houses of Providence and the remaining 24 sisters lived in 16 locations.⁷

A year later, the predicament of healthy finances and a further decline of membership persisted in discussions.⁸ Sister Anna McNally, the community's director, expressed the dilemma. "To what were we being called at this point in our history? Religious are called to function in the realm of economics to address the gap between culture and gospel/Christian values. It spoke to and affirmed the community's inspiration to move forward to use the financial resources creatively and effectively. It identified the need to be more proactive and responsible in developing a means to use our financial resources wisely. The sisters imagined a new form or vehicle to continue in mission and create a long lasting financial and spiritual legacy of the SOS community."⁹

The sisters examined options and decided to establish a foundation with the board membership consisting of sisters and members selected from the broader social justice community. Sister McNally noted that the foundation "would enable the SOS to ensure that the history, values and spirit of service would be passed on. Also, it would provide involvement of the SOS in active ministry until such time that when they would be unable to serve in the capacity of directors but long after to continue in mission to be advocates for groups struggling with unjust structures."¹⁰



Members of the circle meeting, Mississauga, Ontario, 2003. Seated front row (l-r) Sisters Anita Hartman, Anna McNally, Patricia Burke. Seated second row: Hilda Lunney, Mary Ellen Francoeur, Marilyn Gillespie, Adua Zampese. Standing: Frances Coffey, Joan Schafhauser, Lita Camozzi, Patsy Flynn, Colleen Young, Marilyn MacDonald, Mary Halder, Helen Hayes

Catherine Donnelly Foundation

The decision to create a charitable, ecumenical foundation generated excitement and a sense of achievement. Just as the early pioneer sisters had done in the 1920s and 1930s, the sisters saw and responded to the greatest unmet needs in communities across Canada. During the fall of 2002, the legal process began to establish, in tribute to the foundress, the Catherine Donnelly Foundation (CDF) as a registered charity. The foundation's mandate continued the SOS charism of helping people not served or reached by traditional programs. A founding committee drafted a document reflecting the foundation's vision, mission, purpose, values, and grant eligibility.¹¹

The sisters saw the 2003 establishment of the Catherine Donnelly Foundation as an extension of their mission and as a way to honour their foundress. Sister McNally related other aspects. "The founding vision impelled the sisters to focus their gifts and resources to respond to basic human needs in the areas of housing, education

and environmental initiatives. Through the foundation, there has been researching and evaluating those needs in response to and in the light of the spirit, values and the history of service throughout Canada.”¹²

Incorporated in February 2003, the CDF received about one-quarter of the assets of the Daly Foundation for funding. Grant applications were considered from non-profit organizations for one-time programs and projects in three categories – housing, environment, and adult education – to reflect the historical work of the sisters. Initially, the sisters held the majority on the board. Valerie Lemieux, the part-time coordinator, later full-time director, set up an office in the recreation room of the Motherhouse. Her connection with the SOS stretched over a decade. She had assisted in selecting applications for the Catherine Donnelly bursary; designed and printed the *Newsletter*; and produced the 75th anniversary video and interviews. Chartered accountant Desmond Wilson was the CDF chief financial officer. In 1993, he joined the Motherhouse staff as assistant treasurer, and in 2003, he was appointed treasurer after the constitution was amended to permit a lay person to occupy that position. Lay members of the board of directors also were selected from non-profit organizations with expertise in contemporary issues.¹³

In 2011, the CDF office moved to 12 Montcrest Boulevard with three staff members. On its 10th anniversary, CDF received the award for outstanding foundation from the Association of Fundraising Professionals for its ongoing commitment to creating positive change in Canada. In 2014, the board approved a groundbreaking divestment policy of any carbon-related companies and investment in energy efficient and other environmental initiatives.¹⁴ The CDF staff has grown to five full-time members in 2022. The 13 board members are assisted by nine resource persons, who also sit on the three grant committees and CDF internal committees, providing general or specific expertise. Since 2005, the foundation has approved projects for more than 400 organizations, totalling \$25 million, including more than \$1 million to support Indigenous peoples and communities to heal from the intergenerational trauma of the residential schools. A

five-year commitment of \$1.25 million was approved in November 2016 for a housing project, A Way Home, to fund effective solutions to youth homelessness. Further contributions from the Daly Foundation were approved in 2008 and 2012. Sister Mary Halder, the last sister on the board of directors, retired in 2020.¹⁵

Further Planning

In the intervening years, the circle meetings concentrated on issues of diminishment of members. A search was undertaken to find an appropriate residence for the retired sisters to move from the Scarborough retirement residence due to 13 deaths, and the need to downsize to a smaller facility. At the 2003 Chapter meeting, Sisters Adua Zampese, Joan Schafhauser and Mary Halder were elected to leadership. Sister Zampese, pastoral director, assisted by other SOS, accompanied the sisters to their new residence at LaSalle Manor, a community residence of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.¹⁶ A number of farewell gatherings preceded the meticulously choreographed move of eight sisters in February 2005 onto the ground floor of the manor's east wing. For the next decade, the sisters enjoyed the company and activities of the other residents, the Christian Brothers, two sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame, and priests from the Toronto archdiocese and other religious congregations. The manor's chapel was cherished for the daily Mass, quiet reflection, the funerals for 16 sisters and the joyful celebrations of the 100th birthdays of Sisters Viola Mossey and Agnes Sheehan, and the joint celebration of the 60th and 70th jubilees of Sister Margaret Ready and Sister Sheehan, respectively.

After five years of circle governance, the directors initiated a review and assessment of the last four years. In 2005, a workshop was directed by canon lawyer Sister Marjorie Gallagher, SC, to outline the process for the closure or the dying out of a community. Facilitators Sister Frances O'Brien, SP, and Barbara Baker of Kingston assisted in guiding the crucial decisions.¹⁷

In August 2007, the 12 members of the Chapter meeting, after

heart-wrenching and emotional discussions, issued a directional statement. Recognizing their diminishment, they decided to follow the approach of “dying out.” In accordance with canon law, the members were required to plan for the future living arrangements and quality of life by appropriating financial assets, and attend to the emotional, psychological, physical, and spiritual needs of the remaining members. The Chapter delegates elected Sister Marilyn MacDonald as community director, and Sisters Adua Zampese and Sister Anna McNally as directors.¹⁸

During that decade, recognition of the SOS achievements within Canada grew, starting in January 2000 when Sister Catherine Donnelly was selected as the one of 10 great Canadian Catholics by *The Catholic Register*. Four years later, the Sister Catherine Donnelly Catholic School was officially opened in the north end of Barrie, Ontario, under the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board. During the 2005 centenary celebrations of the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta, the SOS participated in the events to pay tribute to the women religious congregations, who had created the basis of provincial health care, education and social services. That same year, the SOS established a centennial scholarship through the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses Educational Trust to sustain their legacy in nursing. A book exploring the spirituality of the foundress was commissioned in 2009. Entitled *The Courage to Dare*, by Kathryn Perry, the book was published in 2013. The sisters also honored Catherine Donnelly by creating a woodland cosmos walk in 2009 at the Ignatius Jesuit Centre’s 243-hectare organic farm, just north of Guelph, Ontario, and the site of the final SOS group retreat held in 2014. From the Nellie McClung Foundation, the SOS were selected in 2021 as one of the 150 women recipients to receive a Trail Blazing award in Manitoba.

Sponsorship Agreement

Future arrangements emerged as a priority in the “dying out” process. Over the next few years, the sisters held a series of meetings and consultations with canon lawyer Father Francis Morrissey, OMI, who had also advised the SOS on the revised constitution, and advisor Sister Marguerite Letourneau, SGM. At a meeting in June 2009, a type of sponsorship agreement was proposed for consideration to Sister Margaret Myatt, congregational leader of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto. A formal request was made in October, noting the small numbers of SOS available to assume leadership and the historical bonds in the founding years with Mother Lidwina and Mother Othilia.¹⁹ The request included a motion approved by the SOS corporate directors to “begin a dialogue with the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto (CSJ) to become the sponsoring congregation of the Sisters of Service.”²⁰ Within a month, Sister Thérèse Meunier, the newly elected congregational leader and general council, responded positively. The SOS corporate directors and community formally agreed on 7 December 2010 to enter a covenant relationship of sponsorship with the Sisters of St Joseph. A draft of the sponsorship agreement was prepared in February 2011, and received approval of the Toronto archdiocese.²¹ This sponsorship agreement marked the first accord between two English-speaking women religious communities in Canada.

In 2009, a steering committee was struck for the appropriation of Sisters of Service funds allocated for donations. At a circle meeting approval was granted for donations to the Canadian Council for Refugees, the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, Canada Without Poverty, Citizens for Public Justice, Oxfam Canada, and Edmonton-Toronto Province of the Redemptorists for the First Nations’ peoples and the poor in Canada.²²

The last gathering of sisters at the Motherhouse was held on 15 August 2011. Father William Fitzgerald, C.Ss.R., celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving, as he did on 10 November 2011 at the signing of the

sponsorship covenant. “You have covenanted with those who were with you in the beginning,” Father Fitzgerald observed in his homily. “Doesn’t that speak a powerful word about the continuity of life, the communion of life? It speaks a special ‘accompanying’ that has been an outstanding aspect of your own service to others. You, too, have accompanied others over these almost 90 years.”²³

The Motherhouse was closed on New Year’s Day, 2012. On 25 January 2012, the feast day of Sister Catherine Donnelly, the sponsorship agreement was signed officially in the CSJ administration centre. The agreement ensured that under CSJ administration, the SOS would continue as a religious institute until the death of the last member. When the sponsorship agreement came into effect, the CSJ congregational leader assumed the position of SOS community leader of the 20 members. The CSJ leadership provided the administration for the sisters’ care and fulfilled members’ roles on The Daly Foundation and CDF boards. The SOS archives, the repository of the historical documents and 20,000 photographs, was moved to the CSJ administrative offices, and an archives office was furnished with Motherhouse artifacts, including the 500-pound safe from Father Daly’s office. Later, all issues of *The Field at Home* were digitized and are hosted permanently on Internet Archive.

Appropriation of funds continued with individual sisters’ donations and larger donations. The CWL connection was renewed in 2015 with a donation to a fund for the development of women in leadership in the Church. In 2016, the SOS funded a multi-year catechesis project undertaken by the Centre for Religious Education and Catechesis at Saint Paul University in Ottawa. During the pandemic, a large donation was made to Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto directed to families in distress in 2021.

In November 2018, seven sisters moved into Presentation Manor, a residence initiated by Sisters of Service and other religious communities, ‘the concept of Community of communities of religious and lay communities’ being built on the site of LaSalle Manor under the Ontario Collaborative Housing for Religious. With the remaining



The 89th anniversary of the founding and the last community gathering at the Motherhouse, 15 August 2011. Seated (l-r) Sisters Adua Zampese, Joan Schafhauser, Agnes Sheehan, Marilyn MacDonald, Viola Mossey, Helen Hayes, Colleen Young. Standing (l-r) Sisters Anna McNally, Hilda Lunney, Father William Fitzgerald, C.Ss.R., Margaret Ready, Mary-Ellen Francoeur, Mary Halder, Frances Coffey, Patricia Burke.



Sisters Marilyn MacDonald and Sister Therese Meunier, CSJ Congregational Leader, sign the sponsorship agreement, Toronto, 25 January 2012



Postal stamp designed to celebrate the institute's 100th birthday. Courtesy of Ibrahim Ng.

SOS residing at the Cardinal Ambrozic Houses of Providence, one sister lives in an apartment in Toronto, and the other in Wyoming, Ontario.

August 15, 2022 marked the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Sisters of the Service, and the occasion of celebration, of rejoicing and giving thanks was captured in various ways: the National Daily TV Mass, aired across the country from the chapel of Loretto Abbey in Toronto, a history by M.C. Havey, SOS Archivist, 'I have come to serve', a SOS documentary: 100 Years of Gratitude, with a festive dinner and program for family and friends of the Sisters of Service.

In light of Vatican II, Redemptorist Edward Boyce observed in 1968 that history has justified the Sisters of Service. The untraditional rule, dress, and custom to live among the people were verified by Vatican II's call for religious congregations to renew and adapt to the contemporary world.

Their founding arose from the influx of immigration in the early 20th century, and their apostolates grew in assisting immigrants and settlers from the ports to the homesteads. The religious dress and the absence of a regimented schedule within a convent provided opportunities to be an informal presence of the Church. The meeting of immigrants at the four Eastern ports was truly unique among religious congregations in Canada. In the aftermath of the two world wars, the women's residences evolved as centres to assist immigrants socially and spiritually in their entry into Canadian life.

The flexibility of their rules and the initiative of the sisters were seen in the other apostolates. Religious education expanded from an initial assignment of teaching the faith to children attending public schools to four correspondence schools of religion, and an adaptation and creation of correspondence lessons. Teaching in rural schools, the founding of two Alberta hospitals and district nursing, although providing a Catholic presence, were the most ecumenical and inclusive of the apostolates.

From the late 1960s, the institute faced the dual challenges of fulfilling Vatican II and creating apostolates in their missionary charism when responsibility for financing education, health care and social programs rested increasingly with provincial governments. A shift from the original apostolates created scope for sisters' education and experimentation in developing missions. Many sisters, well-educated and professionally-trained, adapted to the shift by working in government positions, located in remote regions to respond the local needs of people and communities. When most sisters had retired from full-time employment, their legacy of assisting those most in need continued with the establishment of the Catherine Donnelly Foundation. The decisions to seek the sponsorship agreement were faithful to the initial spirit of blazing a new path for women religious. However, it was the grit, dedication, resilience of the sisters that contributed to their achievements in more than 50 outlying areas and four ports. The history of the SOS is a series of threads of commitment pulled in unison to serve people in an untraditional, non-monastic life as part of the contemporary world.

NOTES

Introduction

- 1 Ronald Rees, *New and Naked Land: Making the Prairies Home* (Saskatoon: Prairie Books, 1998), 8-13. The act also called for a house, often of log or sod, to be built and a specified area of land to be cultivated within three years. By 1885, a railway crossed the vast land from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific assisted the government of Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier to accelerate its search for immigrants beyond the British Isles and Western Europe. This policy of almost free land grants was successful in attracting an influx of immigrants from Eastern Europe. In Sifton's term of office of 1896 until 1905, the annual number of immigrants entering Canada rose from 16,835 to 141,465. His description of these prospective immigrants became an informal dictum: "I think a stalwart peasant in a sheepskin coat, born of the soil, whose forefathers have been farmers for ten generations, with a stout wife and half a dozen children is of good quality." <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/sir-clifford-sifton>, accessed 23 February 2022.
- 2 Census of Canada, 1901, 1916
- 3 Sisters of Service Archives (SOSA), series 7-02, box 9, file 1.

Chapter One: The Founding

- 1 Sister Catherine Donnelly, *Ecumenism Blossoms*, 2-3. SOSA, series 1-01.4, box 11, file 1.
- 2 Sister Catherine Donnelly, "Why I Became a Sister of Service." SOSA, series 1-01.4, box 11, file 15.
- 3 Sister Catherine Donnelly, "Ukrainians," SOSA series 1-01.4, box 11, file 14.
- 4 Jeanne Beck, *To Do and To Endure: The Life of Catherine Donnelly, Sister of Service* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1997), 17-38. A Model School is a graded school usually connected with a normal school or teachers' training college and used as a model in organization and methods of teaching.
- 5 The list of 12 schools can be found in Beck, *To Do and To Endure*, 32-41.
- 6 Sister Mary Agnes, CSJ, *The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph* (Toronto, 1951), 124-125; Beck, *To Do and To Endure*, 40-41.
- 7 Beck, *To Do and To Endure*, 40-41; Donnelly, "Why I Became a Sister of Service." For Catholic-Protestant tensions in Ontario see Mark McGowan, "Sharing the Burden of Empire: Toronto's Catholics and the Great War, 1914-1918," in *Catholics at the Gathering Place*, eds. Mark McGowan and Brian Clarke (Toronto: The Canadian Catholic Historical Association, 1993), 155-176; Mark McGowan, *The Waning of the Green: Catholics, The Irish and the Identity of Toronto, 1887-1922* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), 250-284.
- 8 Donnelly, *Ecumenism Blossoms*, 2.
- 9 Ronald Rees, *New and Naked Land: Making the Prairies Home*, 54-59, 65-66.
- 10 Donnelly, *Ecumenism Blossoms*, 2, 4; Beck, *To Do and To Endure*, 45-48.
- 11 Donnelly, *Ecumenism Blossoms*, 4; Beck, *To Do and To Endure*, 54-55.
- 12 The Redemptorists were founded in Italy by St. Alphonsus Liguori in 1732. The congregation of priests and lay Brothers is devoted to the pastoral care of the most abandoned souls through preaching and parishes. The Redemptorists arrived in the United States in 1832 and came to Canada in 1840 as itinerant preachers. In 1881, English-speaking Redemptorists from the United States assumed the responsibility for St. Patrick's, a predominately Irish immigrant parish in Toronto.

- 13 Archives of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto (ASSJT), Congregational
Annals, 668-673.
- 14 The Redemptorists assumed care of parishes in Brandon, Manitoba (1898);
Yorkton, Saskatchewan (1904); East Kildonan-Saint Boniface, Manitoba (1914); and
Holy Rosary Cathedral, Regina (1914).
- 15 Archives of the Edmonton-Toronto Redemptorists, (AETR), series 3-02, box
1, file 17. The Vice- Province of Toronto was established in 1913 under the authority
of the U.S. Redemptorist Baltimore Province. In 1918, the Toronto Province of En-
glish-speaking Redemptorists in Canada was created as a separate administrative enti-
ty by the congregation's administration in Rome when there were sufficient Canadian
members of 52 priests, 18 students, and 13 lay Brothers as well as nine houses. In the
Toronto Province, Father Coughlan continued as a consultant (advisor) to Toronto Pro-
vincial Superior Patrick Mulhall, a fellow American.
- 16 Karl J. Schindler, C.Ss.R., *To Serve God's People: A Hundred Years of the
Redemptorists at St. Patrick's, the Cradle of the Toronto Province, 1881-1981*, (Toronto: St.
Patrick's Church, 1981), 156-157. AETR, series 3-02, box 1, file 17. In his concern
about immigrants, Archbishop McNeil of Toronto requested that the Redemptorists
work among the Italian immigrants coming to Toronto at the turn of the 20th century.
Within months, Father Coughlan was appointed to the newly-created Vice-Province of
Toronto as pastor of the first St. Patrick's church, renamed Our Lady of Mount Carmel
for an Italian congregation. Father Coughlan returned to the U.S. in 1936 and died in
1942, kneeling in the chapel of his home parish in New York City.
- 17 Beck, *To Do and To Endure*, 55-57.
- 18 Donnelly, *Ecumenism Blossoms*, 2-3, 13-14, and "Why I Became a Sister of
Service."
- 19 Donnelly, *Ecumenism Blossoms*, 15-16, 20-21.
- 20 Mother Mary MacKillop founded the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart
(the Josephites) in 1862 in Victoria, Australia. Essentially a teaching congregation, the
sisters lived in small houses rather than in large convents.
- 21 George Boyle, *Pioneer in Purple: The Life and Work of Archbishop Neil McNeil*
(Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1951), 2.
- 22 Boyle, *Pioneer in Purple*, 2-38, 39-114. Neil McNeil served in the Cape Breton
parish (1891-1895), and in St. George's (1895-1910). He was appointed the first bishop
of the Diocese of St. George's when it was established in 1904.
- 23 Archbishop Neil McNeil, Circular Letter, 14 September 1921, SOSA, series
1-01.1, box 1, file 6.
- 24 McNeil, Circular Letter, 14 September 1921; Boyle, *Pioneer in Purple*, 173.
- 25 Donnelly, *Ecumenism Blossoms*, 44.
- 26 Donnelly, "Why I Became a Sister of Service."
- 27 ASSJT, Congregational Annals, 2 February 1922, 721. The entry reads, "The
Community has agreed to give the services of a Sister as Mistress of Novices to the new
community, the 'Sisters of Service' about to be founded principally for the benefit of
the Missions of Western World. Very Reverend A. Coughlan, Provincial Superior of the
Canadian Redemptorists called this morning to make the request."
- 28 Sister Mary Agnes, *The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph*, 113-125. There
were three missions in British Columbia—a hospital in Comox, (1913), a school in
Prince Rupert (1916), and a school in Ladysmith (1917)—plus St. Joseph's School in
Winnipeg, Manitoba (1919).
- 29 Previously, Catherine Donnelly was living at 97 St. Joseph Street as a temporary
headquarters. Due to the damp basement, the house was considered unsuitable and 2
Wellesley Place was purchased.

30 Boyle, *Pioneer in Purple*, 119-123.

31 SOSA, series 4-02, box 1, file 8. The red-brick house on a sandstone base was designated in 2000 as a protected property under the Toronto Heritage Act. Built in 1899 and designed by architect Charles Gibson in a Romanesque Revival style, the house featured a reception hall with panelled and carved oak, a winding staircase, stained glass, and elaborate plaster ceilings and walls. All have been preserved. The first owner of the house, Rupert Simpson, co-owner of Toronto Knitting and Yarn Factory, sold the house in 1911 to Barry Hayes, owner of the Toronto Carpet Manufacturing Company, whose west-end factory employed more than 1,000 workers. An excerpt of the novitiate annals on 8 July 1923 stated. "Sisters (Catherine) Wymbs, (Mary Ann Bridget) Burke and (Catherine) Donnelly were treated to a pleasant outing by permission from our kind Mother Lidwina. The afternoon was spent at Donnybrooke, the estate of Barry Hayes, who sold the SOS 2 Wellesley Place."

32 SOSA, series 2-04.2, box 12, file 3.

33 ASSJT, series 111, file 1.1, box1, St. Joseph's Convent Annals, Prince Rupert, 5-11.

34 ASSJT, Constitutions, 1914, 41.

35 SOSA, series 4-02, box 1, file 9.

36 Beck, *To Do and To Endure*, 96-97.

37 SOSA, series 7-02, box 2, file 14

38 General Archives of Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, Rome General Archives (RGA), series 2000, Provincilia, vol. 1. Rev. Arthur Coughlan to Rev. Fidelis Speidel, 23 April 1924.

39 SOSA, series 4-02, oversize box 1, file 1, Novitiate Annals, 1922-1927.

40 Novitiate Annals, 1922-1927.

41 RGA, series 2000, Provincilia, vol. 1, Rev. Arthur Coughlan to Rector Major Patrick Murray, 13 January 1922.

42 RGA, series 2000, Provincilia, vol. 1, Rev. Patrick Mulhall to Rector Major Patrick Murray, 1918.

43 SOSA, series 1-01.3, box 2, file 17; series 1-01.2, box 1, file 8.

44 *The Field at Home*, July 1961. SOSA, series 1-01.2, box 1, file 7.

45 *The Globe*, 24 January 1922.

46 Novitiate Annals, 5 April 1924.

47 SOSA, series 7-02, box 2, file 6. Sister Wymbs died in 1953.

48 RGA, series 2000, Provincilia, vol. 1, Coughlan to Speidel, 23 April 1924.

49 SOSA, series 6-17.1, oversize box 27, file 1, Halifax Annals.

50 Novitiate Annals, 1922.

51 RGA, series 2000, Provincilia, vol. 1, Speidel to Coughlan, 3 April 1924; Coughlan to Murray, 16 May 1924.

52 SOSA, series 1-01.1, box 1, file 6, McNeil to Daly, 4 September 1922.

53 SOSA, series 2-02.1, box 4, file 22, 3-4.

54 McNeil, Circular Letter, 14 September 1921.

55 McNeil, Circular Letter, 14 September 1921. The departure from the tradition religious habit meant that there was no wimple, the women's head covering in the Middle Ages, the rosary beads, the tunic and veil.

56 McNeil, Circular letter, 14 September 1921; SOSA series 4-02, box 1, file 9.

57 SOSA, series 4-02, box 1, file 9.

58 SOSA, series 4-02, box 1, file 9. On another occasion, Father Daly noticed the gloves as Sister Schenck readied for a shopping trip. In discovering the gloves were of the silk material worn by the CSJs, he objected: "That has nothing to do with us. Silk

gloves do not go with the vow of poverty.” Mother Lidwina resolved the matter that silk gloves would be worn until the time of first profession of vows, which took place 15 months later.

SOSA, series 7-02, box 2, file 14. Sister Kathleen Schenck’s memories. Holt-Renfrew raised the price to \$5 and later preferred not to take the orders, as it was not a paying proposition. Madame Louise Hat shop on Bloor Street became the next milliner. The workmanship was perfect, but over the years, she thought she could not charge sufficiently for the detailed work involved. Sister Eva Chartrand, had been a milliner, an owner of her own shop, gave lessons with explicit directions on the cleaning, blocking and pressing of hats.

SOSA, series 6-0-4.1, box 2, file 1, Mother Lidwina to Rev. George Daly, 26 August 1924.

Novitiate Annals, 1923-1924.

Novitiate Annals, 1923-1924.

Novitiate Annals, 1923-1925.

SOSA, series 7-02, Schenck memories.

Novitiate Annals, 11 March 1925.

Schenck memories.

Novitiate Annals, 1923, John M. Bennett’s contribution is described in an article in *The Field at Home*, Summer/July 1984.

Novitiate Annals, 1923-1924; Schenck memories.

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/john-ronan-emc>, accessed

Novitiate Annals, 1923-1924. Sister Schenck’s biological sisters were Sisters St. Louis and Marcelline, both teachers. Sister Donnelly visited Sister Justina on several occasions.

Novitiate Annals, 1923-1924.

Novitiate Annals, 1923.

Novitiate Annals, 1923-1924.

Novitiate Annals, 1924.

Novitiate Annals, 1923.

Novitiate Annals, 1924, SOSA, series 2-02.1, box 4, files 24-25.

SOSA, series 1-01.1 box 1, file 6. The vow: “*I ... desiring to consecrate my life to the Service of God and His Church in the presence of Jesus Christ, His Immaculate Mother, St. Joseph, St. Teresa and the whole Celestial Court for one year from the second day of August 1924, according to the Rule approved by His Grace the Archbishop of Toronto for the Sisters of Service make the vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience for one year from the second day of August 1924, according to the Rule approved by His Grace, the Archbishop of Toronto for the Sisters of Service.*” The wording of the vow was changed after the Second Vatican Council.

Novitiate Annals, 1924.

The Field at Home, 1924-1926.

ASSJT, biographies. Sister Othilia served as local superior in Lafontaine (1905-1914) and Barrie (1915-1916), the Motherhouse (1916-1919), the novitiate at St. Joseph’s-on-the-Lake (1919-1920), and Houses of Providence (1920-1925).

Sister Magdalen Barton, “Manual Work of Novitiate,” 1927-1928, SOSA, series 5-01.1, box 1, file 11.

Novitiate Annals, 1927.

SOSA, series 4-02, oversize box 1, file 3, Novitiate Annals.

Donnelly, *Ecumenism Blossoms*, 72. It was the second time she was advised to “keep out of any official position yourself.”

SOSA, series 6-10, box 14, file 19. Mother Othilia died of a heart attack in April

1937. Sister General Florence Regan and seven sisters attended the funeral, for which Father Daly served as the deacon. Mother Lidwina visited the Wellesley Place Motherhouse on many occasions, and received later appointments as superior of the St. Joseph's Motherhouse and at the teaching mission in Thorold, Ontario. She died 3 June 1963 at the age of 91.

- 86 ASSJT, Mother M. Victoria Devine series 12, file 3, Sisters of Service to Mother Victoria, 1928. A more detailed examination of the six years of the CSJ direction of the SOS Motherhouse and novitiate is found in M.C. Havey, "Many are golden links: The Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto and the Initial Formation of Two Canadian Congregations – the Sisters of Service and Our Lady's Missionaries," *170 Years of Service. A Collection of Essays of the History & Mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto*. (Toronto: Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto, 2021).

Chapter Two: The Big Maps

- 1 SOSA, series 3-01, box 1, file 1.
- 2 SOSA, series 7-01, box 1, files 11-13. The following sisters were influenced by Redemptorists: Sisters M. Barton, N. FitzPatrick, D. Daley, B. DeMarsh, T. Duffley, I. Ellis, J. Coffey, F. Coffey, V. Gillis, C. Gilmore, M. Grace, M. Harding, H. Hayes, R. Hurley, B. Jackson, A. Johnson, H. LaMothe, S. Liota, H. Lunney, R. Mill, M. Muldoon, M. O'Hare, M. O'Kane, M. Quinn, M. Ready, M. Reansbury, M. Szostak, G. Walsh, C. Wymbs, and E. Zink.
- 3 Father Daly published a third book, *My Father* in 1945.
- 4 SOSA, series 7-01, box 1, files 11-13. Articles in *The Field at Home* attracted the following: Sisters Mary Fitzgerald, Mary-Ellen Francoeur, Clare Gilmore, Margaret MacMillan, Lena Renaud, Joan Schafhauser, and Evelyn Tunney. Another 10 permanent sisters credit their vocations to reading articles about the SOS in Catholic newspapers.
- 5 *The Field at Home*, October 1929, July 1961.
- 6 SOSA, series 1-01.3, box 2, file 16.
- 7 SOSA, series 1-01.3, box 2, file 16.
- 8 SOSA, series 1-01.3, box 2, file 16.
- 9 SOSA, series 1-01.3, box 1, file 415. Circular letter, 10 August 1938. Basic texts included *The True Spouse of Jesus Christ*, *The Glories of Mary*, and *The Way of Salvation and Perfection*.
- 10 SOSA, series 5-01.2, oversized box 1, file 1.
- 11 *The Field at Home*, July 1961.
- 12 SOSA, series 2-01, box 1, files 3, 6. Rev. George Daly to Archbishop Neil McNeil, 24 April 1931. Father Daly asked the archbishop to petition Rome for the issue of \$160,000 bond spread over 30 years to mortgage the SOS properties as guarantee. Two more bonds were issued to rearrange the financing. The bonds involved the loans and mortgages to fund the construction of two hospitals in Alberta and the purchase of properties in Edmonton, Montreal, Vancouver and Toronto. SOSA series 1-01.3, box 2, file 8. Father Daly announced that the institute was debt free in a circular letter, 1 May 1950.
- 13 SOSA, series 3-01, box 1, file 2
- 14 Novitiate Annals, 1923; SOSA series 2-09.3, box 34, file 1, 19. Senator O'Connor donated \$1,200 a year to the Edmonton catechetical mission from 1928 until his death in 1939, and bequeathed \$2,000 a year over 25 years to the SOS in his will. Charles Baillie left \$55,531 in his will.

15 AETR, series 5-01, oversize box 1, file 1. William Regnery owned Western
Shade Cloth Company, which produced window shades and curtains, similar to Daly
and Morin Company, the Daly family enterprise in Montreal. Father Daly made numer-
ous visits to Regnery in Chicago for the rest of his life.

16 SOSA, series 2-01, box 3, files 1-5.

17 SOSA, series 2-09.2, box 33, files 4-6; series 2-01, box 3, files 15-17. At the
time of Mrs. Small's death, the estate contained real estate holdings but limited cash and
was laden in estate tax. The judgment in 1954 split the remaining \$141,000 inheritance
among Small and Kormann relatives. Art experts concluded that the alleged Rubens'
painting was the work of a German artist.

18 *The Lord Build the House: A History of the Catholic Women's League of Canada, 1920-*
1990 (Winnipeg, private publication, 1990), 14.

19 SOSA, series 2-09.1, box 33, file 1.

20 SOSA, series, 6-17.2, box 23, file 12, Rev. George Daly to Sister Veronica Gillis,
5 January 1951; series 7-02, box 4, file 3.

21 SOSA, series 7-02, box 4, file 3. Sister MacNeil served as procurator-
general-treasurer (1960-1970), and as superior of the Motherhouse (1954-1960 and
1964-1966). Her sister Mary, who entered on the same date of 2 August 1931, died on 26
January 1933 in St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto, two months after professing first vows.
Archbishop McNeil celebrated the requiem funeral Mass in the novitiate chapel. Her
burial was the first in the community's plot in Mount Hope cemetery.

22 SOSA, series 2-05.1, box 14, file 1.

23 *The Field at Home*, October 1931. This was the last profession of vows that
Archbishop McNeil attended.

24 SOSA, series 1-01.3, box 1, file 41.

25 SOSA, series 2-04, boxes 10-11. Each Sister General wrote several circular
letters yearly, to announce deaths of sisters, openings and closings of missions, and spe-
cial events.

26 SOSA, series 2-05, box 1, file 14. Bonds were issued in 1935, 1936, and 1937.

27 *The Field at Home*, January-February 1972.

28 SOSA, series 7-02, box 3, file 3.

29 SOSA, series 7-02, box 28, file 3.

30 SOSA, series 5-01.2, oversized box 1, file 1.

31 SOSA, series 5-01.2, oversized box 1, file 1.

32 SOSA, series 5-01.2, oversized box 1, file 1.

33 SOSA, series 7-02, box 10, file 13.

34 SOSA, series 5-01.2, oversized box 1, files 2-3.

35 SOSA, series 5-01.2, oversized box 1, file 1; series 2-07, box 25, file 5.
The house at 62 Glen Road was purchased and demolished in 1936 to enlarge the novi-
tiate grounds.

36 *The Field at Home*, July 1939.

37 SOSA, series 5-01.2, oversized box 1, files 1-2; series 7-02, box 20, file 2. Father
Sheen, a professor at the Catholic University of America in Washington, began broad-
casting on radio in 1928. By 1934 he was host of *Catholic Hour* and delivered 20-minute
talks, which evolved into his own program.

38 SOSA, series 5-01.2, oversized box 1, file 2-3; *The Field at Home*, January 1952.

39 SOSA, series 7-02.3, box 1, files 1-12. From 1922 to 2022, a total of 372 women entered
the SOS, and 124 remained as permanent life members. From 1922 to 1928, 86 entered
and 33 remained; from 1928 to 1937, 91 entered, 41 remained; from 1937 to 1950, 88
entered, 36 remained; from 1950 to 1960, 56 entered, 13 remained; from 1960 to 1970,

43 entered, 10 remained; and from 1970 to 1997, eight joined, two remained. There were no candidates after 1997..

40 SOSA, series 1-01.3, box 1, file 41.

41 SOSA, series 2-02, box 4, file 24.

42 As a consultor, Father Daly participated in the decisions to open foundations of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Dawson Creek, BC (1936), Blessed Sacrament, Nelson, BC (1938), Sacred Heart, Williams Lake, BC (1938), and St. Gabriel's, Athabasca, Alberta (1940). Due to the wartime shortage of priests, the congregation assumed pastoral responsibility for St. George's parish, Claresholm, Alberta, its three outmissions, and Wells, B.C.

43 SOSA, series 2-02.1, box 4, file 25, Archbishop James McGuigan to Rev. George Daly, 21 April 1937. The archbishop wrote. "I must, they say, formally erect them as a religious Congregation 'juris diocesani' (Diocesan Jurisdiction) and they will function as such for ten years, after which further steps may be taken to secure the "Decretum laudis" (Decree of praise) in view of giving them Pontifical standing."

44 SOSA, series 3-01, box 1, file 1.

45 *The Field at Home*, Spring 1973.

46 SOSA, series 5-01.2, oversized box 1, files 1-2.

47 SOSA, series 3-02, box 1, file 5.

48 SOSA, series 3-02, box 1, file 5. The rule rewordings involved administering baptism at death, keeping family names, vow ceremonies in the presence of the Sister General or her delegate, rising time, silence between night prayers and rising time, flexibility in recreation on Thursdays and feast days, Chapter attendance of superiors of two or more sisters, Chapter delegate election for all professed sisters, and restrictions on additional prayers.

49 SOSA, series 3-02, box 1, file 5; SOSA series 7-02, box 4, file 10.

50 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 23, file 5, Rev. George Daly to Sister Mary Szostak, 26 February 1945.

51 *The Field at Home*, July 1947.

52 SOSA, series 3-03, box 1, file 10.

53 SOSA, series 3-03, box 1, file 10.

54 SOSA, series 3-03, box 1, file 10; *The Field at Home*, October 1948.

55 SOSA, series 3-03, box 1, file 8.

56 SOSA, series 3-03, box 1, file 10; series 7-02, box 15, file 1.

57 SOSA, series 2-02.1, box 4, file 13.

58 *The Canadian Register*, 16 June 1956. SOSA, series 6-47.2, oversize box 53, file 2;

SOSA, series 1-01.3, box 2, file 8. In 1928, when Murray was Toronto Provincial Superior (1927-1930), he sought unsuccessfully for permission to appoint an assistant to Father Daly in the work with the Sisters of Service.

59 SOSA, series 1-01.3, box 2, file 8.

60 SOSA, series 3-05, box 1, file 16.

61 SOSA, series 2-08.4, box 30, files 7-24, 28.

Chapter Three: The Ports

1 SOSA, series, 4-02, oversize box 1, file 2, Novitiate Annals, 1 March 1925,

2 Sister Florence Kelly, "Welcoming Services for Immigrants," *The Field at Home*, January 1961.

3 *Rules and Constitutions of the Sisters of Service*, 1937, 12.

4 SOSA, series 1-01.3, box 2, file 9, Circular Letter, 16 November 1951.

5 SOSA, series 2-03.1, box 6, file 6.

6 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 23, file 12; Statistics Canada, "150 Years of Immigration in Canada," 29 June 2016, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-630-x/11-630-x2016006-eng.htm>.

7 SOSA, series 2-03.1, box 6, file 6. A report of immigrants met by the Sisters of Service between 1950 and April 1955 stated the sisters in Halifax met 175,427 Catholic passengers and referred 124,894 persons or families from 902 ships; at the ports of Montreal, Quebec City, and Saint John, the sisters met a total of 60,301 Catholic passengers on 426 ships, referring 77,681.

8 Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21. The plaque is located on the WM Fares Wall of Tribute.

9 SOSA, series 2-03.1, box 6, file 6.

10 SOSA, series 6-17.1, oversize box 27, file 1.

11 Government of Canada, "Pier 21 National Historic Site of Canada," accessed 3 March 2022, https://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=1794. A second overhead walkway crossed the tracks to the regularly scheduled trains for the more affluent passengers.

12 SOSA, series 2-03.1, box 6, file 14; series 6-17.2, box 23, file 8; *The Field at Home*, Winter 1981. The sisters adapted their referral procedures from those of the federal Department of Immigration on meeting settlers. Federal immigration officials wired telegrams or telephoned the local immigrant agent of the arrival of passengers.

13 *The Field at Home*, October 1948. Sister Szostak died in October 1948 from a malignant brain tumour.

14 SOSA, series 7-02, box 16, file 8.

15 SOSA, series 7-02, box 4, file 6. During the Second World War, she moved from wartime Halifax to Western Canada, stationed in Edson (1942-1943, 1944-1947). After leaving Halifax in 1962, Sister Dulaska was appointed to the teaching mission of Rycroft, Alberta (1962-1972), where she visited non-English-speaking Canadians, looked after the sisters' residence, and enjoyed the pleasures of gardening. When the Rycroft mission was closed in 1972, she served in Regina and Edmonton (1973-1974) and in Spirit River, Alberta (1974-1977). She died in 1978.

16 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 23, file 8; oversize box 27, file 1.

17 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 23, file 6.

18 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 23, file 7, Sister General Mary Quinn to Sister Mary Szostak, 5 July 1947.

19 Government of Canada, "The Arrival of Displaced Persons in Canada, 1945-1951," last modified 15 February 2016, <https://www.canada.ca/en/parks-canada/news/2016/02/the-arrival-of-displaced-persons-in-canada-1945-1951.html>. Persons displaced in the aftermath of the Second World War ended up in Displaced Persons Camps in Europe run by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA) and the International Relief Organization (IRO), an intergovernmental organization that had the initial authority (1946-1951) to set up camps for the massive influx of refugees. This large and diverse group of refugees, many of whom were well-educated professionals, contrasted with earlier waves of immigrants who were primarily labourers or farmers. Most displaced persons fulfilled the terms of their contracts in low paying, often remote jobs, and were initially forced to leave their families behind. While their adjustment to Canada was often difficult, many eventually found work that was more in keeping with their experience and training, and were reunited with their families. Most moved to major Canadian cities, where they joined ethnic neighbourhoods. A significant number

of refugees were Croatians, Czechoslovakians, Estonians, Hungarians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Romanians, and Yugoslavians.

20 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 23, file 10, Rev. George Daly to Sister Veronica Gillis, 12 September 1949.

21 SOSA, series 2-03.1, box 6, file 14, box 6; SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 23, file 8.

22 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 23, files 7, 9, 11, 14. **1948 Immigration Report:** Holy pictures distributed, 427; magazines, reading material, 2,251. **1949 Immigration Report:** Leaflets, religious pictures distributed, 6,302; rosaries, 453; medals, 1,310; books, papers, and magazines, 14,650; prayer books, Dutch, 123; Welcome to Canada-Ukrainian leaflets, 2,146; Polish leaflets, 7,423; papers and magazines in Polish, 5,422; Ukrainian, 2,195; English, 1,336. **1950 Immigration Report:** Leaflets, religious cards distributed, 6,485; rosaries, 3,579; medals, 1,430; prayer books, 145; New Testaments, 32; newspapers and magazines, 13,429; stationery supplied to all landing DPs during the years. Food provided for at least 20 DPs for journey across Canada. **1951 Immigration Report:** Leaflets and booklets distributed, 6,735; religious cards, 1,599; medals, 900; rosaries, 4,688; prayer books, 14; newspapers and magazines, 20,831. **1952 Immigration Report:** Booklets and leaflets distributed, 1,086; religious cards, 2,812; rosaries, 2,736; medals, 1,451; prayer books, 19; newspapers and magazines, 13,231. **1953 Immigration Report:** Newspapers and magazines distributed, 8,728; holy cards, 2,243; medals, 850; prayer books, 348; booklets and leaflets, 120; rosaries, 2,382. Stationery supplied by K of C, soap and face cloths supplied by CWL. All religious denominations combined to give candy, apples, oranges, face cloths, soap, and toys to all families coming out during the Christmas season. From five ships which arrived close to Christmas, 2,202 passengers received these gifts. A treat was given to all Catholics detained over the Christmas season. **1954 Immigration Report:** Rosaries distributed, 2,628; medals, 1,427; religious cards, 2,653; prayer books, 92; newspapers and magazines, 6,673.

23 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 23, files 7, 9, 11, 14.

24 SOSA, series 16-17.2, box 23, files 10-11. In September 1949, Sister Brunning accompanied eight orphans between the ages of 4 and 14; in April 1950, she escorted 14 teenage boys. Future Toronto bishop, Father Francis Marrocco, director of the Catholic Immigrant Aid Society of the Canadian Catholic Conference in Ottawa, arranged these trips to temporary orphanages, where the children were adopted by families of their linguistic and cultural background.

25 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 23, file 10, Rev. George Daly to Sister Veronica Gillis, 18 October 1949.

26 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 23, file 12.

27 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 23, file 13.

28 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 24, file 1, Sister Veronica Gillis to Rev. George Daly, 29 December 1951.

29 Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, "History," <https://pier21.ca/culture-trunks/italy/history>, accessed 3 March 2022. In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, Canadian immigration policy remained highly restrictive, preventing the migration of displaced persons, refugees, and other immigrants. In the late 1940s, Italians were removed from the enemy alien list, prompting the largest wave of Italian immigration to Canada. Between the early 1950s and the mid-1960s, approximately 20,000-30,000 Italians immigrated to Canada each year. Many Italians came to Canada on government-sponsored, one-year contracts to work in industries with labour shortages.

30 SOSA, series 7-02, box 24, file 1.

31 Government of Canada, "Press Backgrounder: The Refugees of the 1956
Hungarian Revolution," [https://www.canada.ca/en/parks-canada/news/2019/05/
press-backgrounder-the-refugees-of-the-hungarian-revolution-of-1956.html](https://www.canada.ca/en/parks-canada/news/2019/05/press-backgrounder-the-refugees-of-the-hungarian-revolution-of-1956.html),
last modified 1 June 2019.

32 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 23, file 9.

33 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 24, file 12.

34 *The Field at Home*, July 1965.

35 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 24, file 17.

36 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 24, file 14; series 7-02, box 24, file 1.

37 SOSA, series 7-02, box 24, file 1.

38 SOSA, series 7-02, box 24, files 1, 3.

39 SOSA, series 7-02, box 16, file 3. *The Field at Home*, Winter 1981.

40 SOSA, series 7-02, box 16, files 6; *The Field at Home*, Summer 1983.

41 SOSA, series 7-02, box 28, file 1.

42 SOSA, series 7-02, box 28, file 1.

43 SOSA, series 26.1, box 29, file 11, Sister Kathleen Schenck to Rev. George Daly,
30 October 1926.

44 Schenck to Daly, 30 October 1926.

45 SOSA, series 26.1, box 29, file 13. The baby clothes and groceries came from
Cote des Neiges subdivision and the sheets and a sewing machine from St. Lambert
subdivision.

46 SOSA, series 6-26.2, box 29, files 15-17, 19, 21; series 6-26.3, box 30, files 5,
8-9. From May 1928 to April 1929, the sisters met 336 boat trains and interviewed 738
people at the railway station. In the year ending 30 April 1930, 418 trains were met and
661 people were interviewed. In the year ending 31 March 1931, 360 trains were met,
770 travellers assisted travellers, and 59 visits to the detention centre. From 1 June 1931
to 31 May 1932, 124 trains were met, 281 travellers interviewed, and 87 visits to the sick
in hospitals and 74 social service visits. In 1 June 1932 to 31 May 1933, 65 trains and
four ships were met. In 1937, 160 trains and 104 ships were met; in 1938, 110 trains and
109 ships were met; in March-August 1939, 100 trains and 59 ships were met; and in
March-August, November 1940, 181 trains and 19 ships were met, carrying returning
Canadians and English evacuees.

47 *The Field at Home*, July 1939.

48 *The Field at Home*, January 1940.

49 SOSA, series 7-02, box 16, file 8.

50 *The Field at Home*, April 1948.

51 SOSA, series 2-03.1, box 6, file 5.

52 SOSA, series 2-03.1, box 6, file 2; series 6-26.3, box 33, files 13, 15-16; box 34,
files 1-14. *The Field at Home*, July 1952, July-October 1956. In 1950, the sisters met 20
ships; in 1951, 71 ships; in 1952, 96 ships and 69 trains; in 1953, 45 ships and 51 trains;
in 1954, 55 ships and 41 trains; in 1955, 95 ships and 29 trains; in 1956, 110 ships and 36
trains; in 1957, 123 ships; in 1958, 123 ships; in 1959, 129 ships and 244 airplane flights;
in 1960, 117 ships and 177 airplane flights; in 1961, 106 ships and 61 airplane flights; in
1962, 97 ships; in 1963, 84 ships and 2 airplane flights; in 1964, 80 ships; 1965, 70 ships;
1966, 16 ships.

53 SOSA, series 6-26.3, box 34, files 4, 10.

54 SOSA, series 3-06, box 2, file 19.

55 SOSA, series 6-34, box 38, file 31. Port Québec, "Then and Now, accessed 3
March 2022, <https://www.portquebec.ca/en/about/port-authority/history>.

56 Federal-Provincial Conference on Immigration and Colonization, Ottawa, 14-

15 November 1923, SOSA, series 2-03.1, box 6, file 14.

- 57 Jan Raska, "Port of Precedence: A History of Immigration at the Port of Quebec Part 2," updated 22 October 2020 (Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21), <https://pier21.ca/research/immigration-history/port-of-precedence-a-history-of-the-port-of-quebec-part-2#footnote-26>. La Grosse Ile closed in 1937 as a quarantine centre and was named an Irish Memorial Historic Site in memory of the 3,000 Irish immigrants in the 19th century who died while in quarantine. SOSA, series 6-34, box 38, files 31-32. The Catholics consisted of 5,080 British, 824 Belgians, 261 French, 688 Italians, 593 Germans, 1,706 Polish, and 2,398 Ukrainians. The remaining 3,651 were from many nations. In 1928, 76,997 persons arrived through the port of Quebec, of whom 27,806 were Catholics. The sisters distributed 9,600 Catholic magazines and papers, and 2,259 medals, rosaries, and sacred pictures; made 62 visits to detention rooms; and arranged seven marriages.
- 58 SOSA, series 6-34, box 38, file 31.
- 59 SOSA, series 7-02, box 4, file 13.
- 60 *The Field at Home*, October 1948.
- 61 SOSA, series 6-34, box 38, file 33.
- 62 SOSA, series 2-03.1, box 6, file 5; series 6-17.2, oversize box 28, file 2. The children were placed with families from a Ukrainian orphanage in Ancaster, Ontario.
- 63 SOSA, series 2-03.1, box 6, files 2, 5; series 6-26.3, box 33, file 16; box 34, files 1-14. In 1953, a sister met 61 ships; in 1954, 44 ships; in 1955, 60 ships; in 1956, 39 ships; in 1957, 50 ships; in 1958, 16 ships; in 1959, 10 ships; in 1960, 13 ships; in 1961, 7 ships; in 1962, 5 ships; in 1963, 7 ships; in 1964, 2 ships; in 1965, 3 ships; in 1966, 1 ship.
- 64 SOSA, series 2-03.1, box 6, file 3; series 6-17.2, oversize box 28, file 2.
- 65 SOSA, series 2-03.1, box 6, file 2; series 6-23.3, box 33, file 16; box 34, files 1-14; *The Field at Home*, July-October 1956. In 1953, a sister met 10 ships; in 1954, 10 ships; in 1955, 4 ship; in 1956, 13 ships; in 1957, 10 ships; in 1958, 12 ships; in 1959, 7 ships; in 1960, 3 ships; in 1961, 4 ships; in 1962, 4 ships; in 1963, 2 ships; in 1965, 1 ship; in 1966, 1 ship.
- 66 SOSA, series 2-03.1, box 6, file 3.

Chapter Four: In the Rural schools

- 1 SOSA, series 7-02, Schenck memories; Donnelly, *Ecumenism Blossoms*, 86.
- 2 *The Field at Home*, July 1961.
- 3 SOSA, series 1-01.1, box 1, file 6, Archbishop Neil McNeil, Circular Letter, 14 September 1921.
- 4 Beck, *To Do and to Endure*, 121-140.
- 5 SOSA, series 6-04.1, box 2, file 1.
- 6 SOSA, series 6-04.1, box 2, file 1.
- 7 Manitoba Historical Society, "Memorable Manitobans: Alfred Arthur Sinnott (1877-1954), last modified 19 November 2020, http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/sinnott_aa.shtml. Born on a farm in Prince Edward Island, Sinnott attended Prince of Wales College and St. Dunstan's College in Charlottetown and Laval University, earning a bachelor of arts degree before entering the Grand Seminary in Montreal, where he obtained a double degree in theology and canon law. In Rome for canon law studies and ordination in 1900, he returned to St. Dunstan's College and moved to Ottawa as private secretary to Cardinal Sbarretti, the Apostolic Delegate; he served in Ottawa for 13 years. With this working knowledge of ecclesiastical affairs in Canada, he was appointed

archbishop of Winnipeg in 1915. Under Sinnott, the archdiocese expanded with new churches, 100 missions, seven hospitals, a Catholic college, and increasing numbers of English-speaking clergy. He died in 1954.

SOSA, series 6-04.1, box 2, file 1.

SOSA, series 6-04.1, oversize box 2, file 1.

SOSA, series 6-04.1, oversize box 2, file 1.

SOSA, series 6-04.1, box 2, file 1, Rev. George Daly to Sister Catherine Wymbs, 7 September 1924.

SOSA, series 6-04.1, box 2, file 1, Daly to Wymbs, 16 October 1924.

SOSA, series 6-04.1, box 2, file 1, Daly to Wymbs, 24 November 1924.

SOSA, series 6-04.1, oversize box 2, file 1; *The Field at Home*, April 1925. The Winnipeg-area religious congregations included the Sisters of St. Joseph, Sisters of the Holy Name, Good Shepherd Sisters, Grey Nuns, and Sisters of Providence, as well as the Redemptorists.

SOSA, series 6-04.1, oversize box 2, file 1.

The Field at Home, January 1925.

Beck, *To Do and to Endure*, 138-139.

SOSA, series 6-04.1, oversize box 2, file 1.

SOSA, series 7-02, box 5, file 2.

John C. Gottfried, "A History of Education in the Evergreen School District" (thesis, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba, 1965), 146.

SOSA, series 7-02, box 9, file 1.

SOSA, series 6-04.2, box 5, file 6.

SOSA, series 6-04.2, box 5, file 6.

The Field at Home, October 1944.

SOSA, series 6-04.2, box 5, file 7.

SOSA, series 7-02, box 28, files 5-7.

SOSA, series 7-02, box 28, files 5-7.

SOSA, series 7-02, box 26, file 1.

SOSA, series 7-02, box 26, file 1.

SOSA, series 4-02, oversize box 1, file 2.

Dictionary of Canadian Biography, s.v. "O'Leary, Henry Joseph," accessed 10 November 2021, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/o_leary_henry_joseph_16E.html.

Rosa Bruno-Jofre, *The Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions: From Ultramontane Origins to a New Cosmology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 39. This was the priority of Euphrasie Barbier, foundress of The Religieuses de Notre Dame des Missions (RNDM) – Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions, a French missionary congregation. In August 1898, four members arrived to teach in Catholic schools in rural Manitoba as part of the recruiting drive of Adelard Langevin, archbishop of Saint Boniface.

Dictionary of Canadian Biography, s.v. "O'Leary, Henry Joseph." Besides the Christian Brothers, O'Leary brought a number of religious orders into the diocese, including the Redemptorists, the Sisters of Charity from both Halifax and Saint John, the Sisters of St Joseph, the Sisters Adorers of the Precious Blood, the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement, and the Sisters of Service.

SOSA, series 6-49, oversize box 62, file 1; Beck, *To Do and To Endure*, 141-160.

SOSA, series 6-38, box 49, file 1; *The Field at Home*, April 1931. Sister Donnelly writes of the first academic year; Beck, *To Do and To Endure*, 173.

SOSA, series 6-38, box 49, file 2; Beck, *To Do and To Endure*, 164.

SOSA, series 6-38, box 49, file 3.

SOSA, series 6-38, box 49, file 4; Beck, *To Do and To Endure*, 166, 176-184.

Tony Cashman, "An Act of Faith: The Women and Men Religious of Edmonton

Catholic Schools,” Edmonton’s Catholic Schools: A Success Story (Edmonton Roman Catholic School Board District 7, 1977).

40 SOSA, series 6-09.1, oversize box 12, files 3-4.

41 SOSA, series 6-36, box 48, files 1-4.

42 SOSA, series 7-02, box 30, file 7.

43 SOSA, series 7-01, box 1, file 13.

44 SOSA, series 7-01, box 1, file 13.

45 *Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan*, s.v. “Great Depression,” accessed 17 November 2021, https://esask.uregina.ca/entry/great_depression.jsp. Ordained in 1909, P.J. Monaghan taught for a year at Joliette College before joining the Diocese of Sault St Marie, where he served in parishes in Northern Ontario. In Regina, he followed the financial course charted by predecessor Archbishop James McGuigan and gradually restored the diocese to solvency. Within four years and during the hardships of the Depression, he erected 27 new churches and chapels, launched the Catholic Youth Crusade which within three years was actively established in 70 parishes and established the Pontifical Association of the Holy Childhood.

46 SOSA, series 6-01, box 1, file 1; *The Field at Home*, January 1940, April 1940.

47 SOSA, series 6-01, box 1, file 1, Sister Margaret Morgan to Sister General Florence Regan, 9 September 1938. Father Beechey was originally from Kitchener, Ontario.

48 SOSA, series 6-01, oversize box 1, file 2.

49 SOSA, series 6-01, box 1, file 11, Sister Mary Jackson to Sister Mary Quinn, 8 April 1948.

50 SOSA, series 6-23, box 28, file 21.

51 SOSA, series 6-23, box 28, file 21.

52 SOSA, series 6-23, box 28, file 21, 26.

53 SOSA, series 6-23, box 28, file 21, 26.

54 SOSA, series 6-23, box 28, files 24-25.

55 SOSA, series 7-02, box 5, file 10.

56 SOSA, series 6-23, box 28, file 25.

57 SOSA, series 6-43.2, box 53, file 29.

58 Beck, *To Do and To Endure*, 240-241.

59 Beck, *To Do and To Endure*, 239-247.

60 SOSA, series 6-43.1, box 53, file 2.

61 The sisters who took high school courses were Sisters McCourt, Dulaska, Rose, Reinhardt, and Stradinski.

62 SOSA, series 6-43.1, box 53, files 1-28.

63 SOSA, series 7-02, box 29, file 5.

64 SOSA, series 7-02, box 29, file 5.

65 SOSA, series 6-43.1, box 53, files 9-10.

66 SOSA, series 6-43.1, box 53, files 10-17.

67 SOSA, series 3-06, box 1, files 19, 25.

68 SOSA, series 3-06, box 1, files 19, 25.

69 SOSA, series 6-10, box 14, file 21, Sister General Margaret Guest to Sister Mary Quinn, 6 September 1939; series 4-02; oversize box 1, files 4-6; *The Canadian Register*, 2 December 1967.

70 SOSA, series 4-02; oversize box 1, files 4-6; *The Canadian Register*, 2 December 1967; *The Field at Home*, July 1946; series 6-10, box 14, file 21, Sister General Margaret Guest to Sister Mary Quinn, 6 September 1939. The school was located at the intersection of Victoria Park and Lawrence Avenues. Sister Coughlin was appointed to Wexford (1939-1942 and 1945-1948).

- 71 The Indian Affairs branch was moved to various federal government
departments throughout the period of 1941-1968. The sisters signed contracts with the
Indian Affairs branch when it was part of the Training Division of the federal department
of mines and resources (1941-1950); the federal department of Citizenship and immi-
gration (1950-1965); and the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs (1965-1968).
- 72 SOSA, series 6-05, box 7, files 7-8.
- 73 SOSA, series 2-02.5, box 1, file 22.
- 74 SOSA, series 6-05, box 7, file 8; oversize box 8, files 1-5.
- 75 SOSA, series 6-05, box 7, file 8; oversize box 8, files 1-5; series 3-06, box 2, file
19.
- 76 SOSA, series 6-32, box 38, file 1, Bishop Henri Routheir to Sister Mary Quinn,
13 May 1950.
- 77 *Dictionnaire biographique des Oblats de M.I. au Canada*, s.v. H. Beaudoin, OMI; J.-P.
Demers, OMI; G. Landreville, OMI, Vol. 5; Missionary Oblates - Grandin Province -
Book of Memory. Born in the southwestern Alberta community of Pincher's Creek and
educated in the province, Henri Routhier entered the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and
was chosen to study for six years in Rome, where he also was ordained in 1924. Back in
Canada, his appointments were Alberta-based as a teacher in the congregation's junio-
rate in Edmonton (1926-1936 and superior, 1930-1936), as pastor in Saint Paul, Alberta
(1936-1938), and as Superior Provincial of the Oblate Province of Alberta-Saskatche-
wan for two three-year terms (1938-1944). As Superior Provincial, he visited the Vilna
mission and the SOS Motherhouse. At the end of his second term and with valuable
parish and administrative experience, he was appointed as Vicar of Missions of Grouard,
arriving in McLennan by train to take residence at the Bishop's House on 2 June 1944.
His rise continued a year later as Titular Bishop of Naissus and Coadjutor to Bishop
Langlois. On 18 September 1953, following the death of Bishop Langlois, he became Ap-
ostolic Vicar of Grouard. In 1967, Rome restructured the Church in the Canadian north:
the Apostolic Vicariate of Grouard became the Archdiocese of Grouard McLennan, and
the bishop became archbishop. He died in 1989.
- 78 SOSA, series 6-37, box 48, file 5. Father Fuller wrote to Father Daly about the
request.
- 79 SOSA, series 6-37, box 48, file 5.
- 80 SOSA, series 6-37, box 48, file 5.
- 81 SOSA, series 6-37, box 46, file 10.
- 82 SOSA, series 6-37, box 46, file 10.
- 83 SOSA, series 3-03, box 1, file 8.
- 84 *Wheatfields and Wildflowers: A History of Rycroft and Surrounding School Districts*
(Edmonton: Rycroft History Book Committee, 1984), 109-111; SOSA, series 6-37, box
48, file 5.
- 85 SOSA, series 6-37, box 48, file 5.
- 86 SOSA, series 6-32, box 38, files 1, 21; SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 23, file 12.
- 87 SOSA, series 6-32, box 38, files 1, 21.
- 88 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 24, file 1, *The Field at Home*, October 1957.
- 89 SOSA, series 6-32, box 38, file 6.
- 90 SOSA, series 6-32, box 38, file 14.
- 91 SOSA, series 6-32, box 38, file 21.
- 92 SOSA, series 6-32, box 38, file 2.
- 93 *The Field at Home*, October 1960.
- 94 SOSA, series 6-32, box 38, file 19.
- 95 *The Field at Home*, April 1957.

- 96 SOSA, series 7-02, box 5, file 8.
 97 SOSA, series 7-02, box 27, file 1.
 98 *The Field at Home*, October 1960, Autumn 1980; SOSA, series 6-32, box 38, file 19.
 99 SOSA, series 6-18, box 27, file 1.
 100 SOSA, series 6-18, box 27, file 1.
 101 SOSA, series 6-18, box 27, file 1.
 102 SOSA, series 6-18, box 27, file 1.
 103 SOSA, series 6-18, box 27, files 1-5.
 104 SOSA, series 7-02, box 4, file 1.
 105 SOSA, series 7-02, box 4, file 1.
 106 SOSA, series 6-19, box 27, files 6-15.
 107 SOSA, series 7-02, box 14, file 9.

Chapter Five: Keeping the Faith

- 1 *The Field at Home*, July 1937.
 2 Boyle, *Pioneer in Purple*, 146.
 3 Sister Madge Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments Lest They Be Lost," 1997, http://sistersofservice.ca/resources/fragments_sos_paper.pdf, 285.
 4 SOSA, series 6-09.1, box 10, file 2, Rev. Peter Hughes to Rev. George Daly, 10 December 1924. James Donahue, *Prince Edward Island priests Who Have Labored or Are Laboring in the Sacred Ministry, outside the Diocese of Charlottetown*, 2nd ed (St. Paul, Minnesota: Webb Publishing), 1935. Peter F. Hughes, D.D., was born in Freetown, Prince Edward Island. He was educated at the Prince of Wales College, Charlottetown, graduating with a bachelor of arts degree in 1909. He studied philosophy and theology at the Grand Seminary, Quebec, and received a Doctor of Divinity degree. Ordained by Bishop Henry O'Leary in Kinkora, Prince Edward Island, on 15 June 1913, Hughes taught at St. Dunstan's University (1914-1922) and was also secretary (1915-1919) to Bishop O'Leary of Charlottetown. When Father James McGuigan, also an Islander, was appointed archbishop of Regina in 1930, he insisted that Father Hughes accompany him. In 1935, Hughes was appointed monsignor.
 5 SOSA, series 6-09.1, box 10, files 1-2; Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 14-15.
 6 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 17-27, 52.
 7 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 29-31. Father Daly had been appointed as the founding superior at St. Alphonsus parish by the Redemptorist superiors in Rome, but after Father Coughlan's objections, the appointment was withdrawn in favour of Father Daly continuing to direct the development of the SOS.
 8 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 65-66, 76, 82-83; *The Field at Home*, July 1929.
 9 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 82, 67, 151-153.
 10 *The Field at Home*, July 1929.
 11 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 52; *The Field at Home*, April 1937.
 12 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 116-121.
 13 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 120-121, 151-153.
 14 SOSA, series 7-02, box 10, file 15. Sister Mary Regan was appointed to the Regina mission in 1935-1937, 1943-1949, and 1971-1976, and to the Edmonton mission in 1937-1940, 1941-1943, 1949-1955, and 1968-1971. In Toronto (1955-1957), she worked with Sister Edith Wayland in the office of the Society of the Propagation of the

Faith at the Toronto archdiocese. Sister Regan died on 5 March 1993 at the age of 97 in Toronto.

The Field at Home, April 1937. After 1938, the Regina mission became the distribution centre, receiving all the names for the remailing.

Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 154, 199-207.

SOSA, series 7-02, box 11, file 7. Sister Morgan, who immigrated from England in 1926, was appointed to the Regina missions (1937-1938, 1939-1942, 1943-1956 (superior, 1949-1956), 1963-1968, and 1976-1980). She was posted to the Edmonton catechetical mission (1936-1937, 1942-1943, 1956-1963, 1968-1971) as superior. She died in 1997 in Toronto.

SOSA, series 7-02, box 11, file 5. Sister Hurley was appointed to Regina on three occasions (1942-1950, 1956-1969, 1973-1975) and once in Edmonton. (1939-1941). She worked Toronto office of the Propagation of the Faith (1953-1955), and taught religion in a children's hospital in St. John's (1975-1977), and at Sacred Heart parish, Edson (1977-1983). She died in 1996 in Toronto.

The Field at Home, April 1963.

SOSA, series 6-09.1, box 10, file 2, Sister Catherine McNally to Archbishop Neil McNeil, 8 November 1925.

The Toronto Globe, 26 March 1929; John Gottfried, "A History of Education in the Evergreen School District," 142.

SOSA, series 6-09.1, box 10, file 2, Rev. George Daly to Sister Catherine McNally, 26 December 1925.

Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 31-37.

The Globe, 26 March 1929; "Gather Up the Fragments," 126.

SOSA series 2-09.3, box 34, file 1, 19; "Gather Up the Fragments," 51.

SOSA, series 11-03, box 3, files 8-10; Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 40, 47-59.

Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 76.

SOSA, series 7-02, box 11, file 7.

Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 75.

The Field at Home, July 1929, April 1937.

SOSA, series 1-01.3, box 2, file 2, Father Daly, Circular letter, 8 December 1941.

SOSA, series 7-02, box 23, file 14.

Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 158.

SOSA, series 11-03, box 3, file 5.

Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 154-156.

Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 154-156; *The Field at Home*, July 1937, October 1937.

SOSA, series 11-03, box 4, file 13.

Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 162-163, 167, 184.

SOSA, series 11-03, box 3, files 15-16. In using this method, Father Heeg was a few years ahead of Pope Pius XII's Encyclical, *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (On the Promotion of Biblical Studies), published 30 September 1943. In addressing biblical scholars through this encyclical, Pope Pius XII encouraged them to work with all zeal and care. "What is more sublime than to scrutinize, explain, propose to the faithful and defend from unbelievers the very word of God, communicated [to all] under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit."

SOSA, series 11-03, box 3, file 13; Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 162, 164.

SOSA, series 11-03, box 3, file 8.

42 SOSA, series 11-03, box 4, file 11-12.

43 SOSA, series 3-02, box 1, file 5. The Chapter accepted seven courses for school-aged children and youth. The seven courses for school-aged children and youth were accepted by the Chapter:

1. Picture Lesson Course for Juniors. This series of outline pictures and simple instructions prepared children for the First Communion Course.
2. First Communion Course. *Jesus and I*, by Rev. A.J. Heeg, SJ, consisted of 17 lessons for children preparing for their First Communion. The language was clear and direct, and the pictures on each lesson were instructive and easily coloured.
3. Intermediate Course. This course was developed by Right Rev. Monsignor Day for children who had made their First Holy Communion or who had previously received some instruction. There were 13 lessons and supplementary test.
4. Simple Mass Course. This was a series of simple instructions on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.
5. The Prairie Series. This course on the Apostles' Creed gave valuable explanations for each of the 12 articles. There were 28 lessons.
6. The Sacrament Course. Developed by Right Rev. Monsignor Day, this course presented thorough instructions on the sacraments in 26 lessons.
7. The Commandments Course. This course, also by Monsignor Day, explained the 10 Commandments and the Precepts of the Church in 22 lessons.

For adults, a convert course was designed. The textbook, *Father Smith Instructs Jackson*, by Most Reverend John F. Knoll, DD, was accompanied by eight tests. *The Jesus and I* course was often used as a foundation course for adults.

44 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 166.

45 SOSA, series 11-03, box 3, file 18; Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 162, 166.

46 SOSA, series 11-03, box 3, file 7; box 4, files 2-4, 9-10; series 7-02, box 13, file 12; Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 161-166. In 1955, Sister Jackson enrolled at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, graduating in 1958 with a bachelor of arts degree with a major in philosophy and a bachelor of education degree.

47 SOSA, series 3-06, box 2, file 3; series 6-05, box 1, file 16.

48 SOSA, series 11-03, box 3, file 1; Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 194-195.

49 *The Field at Home*, October 1926.

50 *The Field at Home*, October 1927.

51 SOSA, series 7-02, box 2, file 4.

52 *The Field at Home*, October 1929.

53 *The Field at Home*, October 1929.

54 *The Field at Home*, October 1929.

55 SOSA, series 11-02, box 2, file 5; Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 77-79.

56 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 80.

57 "Coachbuilt," http://www.coachbuilt.com/bui/w/wilson_motor_bodies/wilson_motor_bodies.htm; *The Globe*, 26 March 1929.

58 SOSA, series 11-2, box 2, file 28; *The Field at Home*, January 1932.

59 SOSA, series 7-02, box 8, file 7; *The Field at Home*, July 1932.

60 *The Field at Home*, April 1933, July 1933, October 1933.

61 SOSA, series 11-02, box 2, files 8-10; *The Field at Home*, October 1934, October 1936; Beck, *To Do and to Endure*, 197-221; Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 100, 106.

62 SOSA, series 7-02, box 2, file 18.

63 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 128-130, 226.

64 *The Field at Home*, January 1936.

65 *The Field at Home*, January 1936.

66 *The Field at Home*, April 1941.

67 *The Field at Home*, April 1941.
 68 SOSA, series 3-05, box 1, file 16.
 69 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 161-166. The first Society of Christian Doctrine was established in Rome in 1560 under Pope Pius IV and consisted of priests and laymen dedicated to teaching religion to children, youth, and adults in the churches of Rome. It was renamed Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in 1571, and Pope Pius V recommended CCD to all bishops. In 1566, the first comprehensive catechism, *The Roman Catechism*, was completed as a compendium of Catholic truth and as an enduring source book for subsequent catechesis until its last edition in 1978. The Decree of the Congregation of the Sacraments stressed four types of apostolic work:

1. Religious instruction of elementary Catholic school children not attending Catholic schools – through parish schools of religion, religious vacation schools, and correspondence schools.
2. Religious instruction of high school students not attending Catholic schools, as well as youth of the parish – through Catholic Students' Mission Crusade, Catholic Youth Clubs, retreats, etc.
3. Adult religious education for laity in general – through study clubs, convert classes, a correspondence course in CCD Methods of Teaching Religion, Catholic Action Clubs, and other parish organizations.
4. Religious instruction in the home by parents following directed programs or teaching outlines.

70 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 161.
 71 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 170-171
 72 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 171, 181-185. Sister Mary Jackson was director of the CCD office in Edmonton from 1953-1954 and the Catholic Information Office in 1955-1956 and 1960-1961.
 73 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 171. Sister MacLellan returned to a teaching mission in 1954.
 74 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 171; *The Field at Home*, July 1963.
 75 SOSA, series 1-01.2, box 1, file 9.
 76 SOSA, series 6-1, box 20, file 1.
 77 SOSA, series 6-1, box 20, files 1-2.
 78 *The Field at Home*, January 1940.
 79 SOSA series 6-11, box 20, files 3-5; *The Field at Home*, April 1941.
 80 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 274-276.
 81 SOSA, series 6-11, box 20, files 5-6.
 82 SOSA, series 6-11, box 20, files 7-10; *The Field at Home*, October 1944.
 83 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 278,
 84 SOSA, series 6-11, box 20, file 10-11.
 85 SOSA, series 7-02, box 16, file 3; Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 279.
 86 SOSA, series 6-11, box 20, files 15, 19-20; *The Field at Home*, October 1960.
 87 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 280-281.
 88 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 283.
 89 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 284-285.

Chapter Six: Home Away from Home

1 Boyle, *Pioneer in Purple*, 120-124; SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 24, file 4. Paulina Bren, *The Barbizon* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2021), 20-26. In 1903, the 12-storey Martha Washington Hotel was built in New York City as the first accommodation for self-supporting, white-collar women. The basic purpose was to care for the unprotected

girl in our cities, to keep good girls good, by providing a home away from home.

2 SOSA, series 3-03, box 1, file 10. Federal-Provincial Conference on Immigration and Colonization, Ottawa, 14-15 November 1923. In 1919 the federal immigration department established a women's division in Great Britain to interview and advise immigrants, especially unaccompanied women, who wished to work in Canada. The agency directed women to the hostels.

3 SOSA, series 6-31.1, box 36, file 7; Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, "Our Story," <https://www.providence.ca/our-story/history/missions/toronto/>. Rosary Hall opened in 1911 in Toronto as the first of eight similar residences under the same name in Canadian cities. Founded by a charitable lay association, Rosary Hall at 218 John Street met increasing demands for a hostel for young working women and students and guarded "many of our girls from the countless pitfalls and retained them happily in the arms of Holy Mother Church." The Toronto house had 114 beds. After the First World War, different religious and charitable organizations operated hostels, including the YWCA and the Women's Christian Temperance Union. The Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul administered Rosary Hall in Toronto from 1939 to 1971.

4 SOSA, series 2-03.2, box 8, file 19.

5 SOSA, series 2-03.1., box 8, file 2.

6 SOSA, series 1-01.3, box 2, file 18, Lady Margaret Kerr to Rev. George Daly, 11 November 1930; series 5-01.2, oversize box 1, file 1.

7 Kerr to Daly, 11 November 1930.

8 Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, "Empire Settlement Act, 1922, accessed 21 April 2022, <https://pier21.ca/>. Approximately 165,000 British immigrants arrived in Canada as participants in various settlement schemes, far less than the millions originally envisioned. With the onset of the Great Depression and the election of a new Conservative government in 1930, the programs of assisted settlement effectively came to an end.

9 SOSA, series 3-03, box 1, file 10.

10 SOSA, series 3-02, box 1, file 5.

11 SOSA, series 7-02, box 21, file 5.

12 SOSA, series 3-06, box 2, file 19.

13 SOSA, series 3-06, box 2, file 19.

14 SOSA, series 2-03.1, box 6, file 14.

15 SOSA, series 7-02, box 3, file 14; series 6-47.1 Register, Book of Arrivals, oversized box 53, file 3. Canadian Register of Historic Places, "Mary Perram House, 4 Wellesley Place," accessed 27 February 2022. <https://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=1439>. Built in 1877 for Mary Perram, a widow, the house was purchased in 1913 by Commander Frederick Law, official secretary to five successive lieutenant governors of Ontario. Upon his death in 1923, the Redemptorists purchased the house on behalf of the Sisters of Service, who were not incorporated until January 1924. Like 2 Wellesley Place, the house is designated as a heritage property. It is recognized as an excellent example of late 19th century residential design, blending Italianate and Gothic Revival exterior.

16 SOSA, series 7-02, box 8, file 1.

17 *The Field at Home*, July 1938.

18 SOSA, series 6-47.2, oversize box 53, file 2.

19 *The Field at Home*, October 1943.

20 SOSA, series 6-47.2, oversize box 53, file 2; series 6-47.1, box 54, file 9. In later years, the sisters kept a wedding dress and headpiece for residents to use.

21 SOSA, series 6-47.2, oversize box 53, file 2; series 6-47.1, box 54, file 9.

22 SOSA, series 2-03.1, box 6, file 5; series 6-47.2, oversize box 53, file 2; *The Field at Home*, October 1951.

23 *The Field at Home*, April 1952; SOSA series 6-47.2, oversize box 53, file 2.

24 *The Field at Home*, April 1955.

25 SOSA, series 6-47.2, oversize box 53, file 2.

26 SOSA, series 6-47.2, oversize box 53, file 2.

27 SOSA, series 6-17.1, oversized box 27, file 1.

28 SOSA, series 6-17.1, oversized box 27, file 1.

29 SOSA, series 6-17.1, oversized box 27, file 1.

30 SOSA, series 6-17.1, oversized box 27, file 1.

31 SOSA, series 6-17.1, oversized box 27, file 1; series 6-17.2, box 23, file 8

32 SOSA, series 6-17.1, oversized box 27, file 1; *The Field at Home*, July 1939.

33 *The Field at Home*, January 1941.

34 *The Field at Home*, July 1941.

35 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 23, file 2.

36 SOSA, series 2-04.2, box 12, file 3, Sister General Margaret Guest to Sister Mary Quinn, 20 July 1946.

37 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 23, files 8-10, 13-14; series 6-17.2, box 24, file 5.

38 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 23, file 11. *The Field at Home*, January 1952.

39 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 23, file 14.

40 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 23, file 14.

41 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 24, files 18-23. The survey showed that 75 per cent are Catholic; most are referred by friends, most are from Maritimes, in particular NS, ages 16-20 represent 80 per cent; over 20 – 20 per cent. The students represent 20 per cent and two thirds of students attend hairdressing courses and 40 per cent of the residents were office workers. The average length of stay was long-term 67per cent, 39per cent short term, average is 5 months; number of girls received in 1970 was 228.

42 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 25, file 3; *The Field at Home*, Fall 1976, Autumn/October 1984.

43 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 25, file 24.

44 SOSA, series 6-50.1, box 63, file 11; series 7-02, box 2, file 8.

45 SOSA, series 6-50.1, box 63, file 11. In the first year of 1926-1927, 181 girls were placed in positions. In the final year before the Depression (1929-1930), the sisters met 61 trains, and 37 immigrants lived in the house.

46 SOSA, series 7-02., box 22, file 16.

47 SOSA, series 6-50.1, box 63, file 15.

48 *The Field at Home*, July 1938.

49 *The Field at Home*, January 1939, October 1939, October 1941.

50 *The Field at Home*, April 1950.

51 *The Field at Home*, July 1946.

52 *The Field at Home*, April 1942, April 1943, July 1944, July 1946.

53 SOSA, series 2-03.1, box 6, file 5. *The Field at Home*, April 1950.

54 *The Field at Home*, April 1951.

55 SOSA, series 6-50.1, box 66, file 1. *The Field at Home*, January 1960, October 1962.

56 SOSA, series 7-02, box 2, file 14.

57 SOSA, series 6-50.1, box 66, file 12.

58 SOSA, series 6-26.1, box 9, file 11; David Bureau, "The Archbishops of Montreal and the Canonization of Saint Brother André," 18 November 2020, <https://www.saint-joseph.org/en/the-archbishops-of-montreal-and-the-canonization-of-saint-brother-andre/>.

59 SOSA, series 6-42.1, box 29, file 11, Sister Monica Meade to Rev. George Daly,
31 October 1926.

60 SOSA, series 6-42.1, box 29, file 11, Sister Kathleen Schenck to Rev. George
Daly, 30 October 1926.

61 SOSA, series 26.1, box 29, files 12, 15.

62 SOSA, series 26.1, box 29, files 12-14, 20. A survey by the Department of
Immigration and Colonization found that 43 per cent of the 72 girls who came in 1926
from the Irish Free State had gone to the United States. Most of these girls were from
small farms in southern Ireland and inexperienced in domestic work. Although they had
received valuable training, many left their job placements at \$20 a month, "making Can-
ada a mere stepping stone into the States." However, in July 1926, a representative of the
CWL in Scotland came to see the girls for whom they had arranged passage, and they all
expressed satisfaction with their work in Montreal.

63 SOSA, series 7-02, box 4, file 4.

64 SOSA, series 6-26.2, box 29, files 15-17. In the year, ear ending April 1930, 360
girls stayed in the hostel, 101 visits to the sick, 75 social service visits, 50 visits to the
detention home; 75 sick girls were cared for in the hostel. Girls continue to entertain
their friends to little teas, showers and birthday parties in a homelike friendly manner in
the hostel.

65 SOSA, series 26.1, box 29, files 15-16.

66 House Histree, "Shaughnessy House, accessed 20 April 2022, [https://housechis
tree.com/houses/shaughnessy-house](https://housechis
tree.com/houses/shaughnessy-house). Designed and built by William T. Thomas in
1874, the two separate seven-bedroom houses commemorate a time when Boulevard
Rene-Levesque (then Dorchester Street) was lined with opulent houses surrounded by
landscaped gardens. The mansard roof, two-storey bay windows, symmetrical facades,
and stone-textured walls reflect the Second Empire style and Montreal Greystone. The
east house was owned by William Brown, a wealthy merchant (1874-1882), William
Van Horne (1882-1892), Lord T.G. Shaughnessy (1892-1923), and St. Mary's Hospital
(1923-1934).

67 SOSA, series 6-48, oversize box 37, file 2; *The Field at Home*, April 1935.

68 SOSA, series 6-26.3, box 30, files 8-9.

69 SOSA, series 6-26.3, box 30, file 9; *The Field at Home*, July 1938.

70 SOSA, series 7-01, box 7, file 8.

71 *The Field at Home*, July 1938; SOSA series 6-26.1, box 29, file 11.

72 *The Field at Home*, April 1941. House Histree, "Shaughnessy House." The
west side of the house was built for Duncan McIntyre (1876-1888), CPR vice-president.
Other owners were Lord Strathcona (1888-1902), his cousin Eleanor Cantile and her
husband Lord Mount Stephen (1902-1927), and Hugh Graham, Lord Atholston (1927-
1940).

73 SOSA, series 7-02, box 3, file 13.

74 SOSA, series 2-03.1, box 6, file 5; series 6-17.2, box 23, file 14; *The Field at Home*,
July 1947, June 1949.

75 SOSA, series 6-26.3, box 34, file 4. The Christian Family Group supplied two
members every evening to assist the work of finding suitable housing for families. The
Catholic Girls Information Bureau had an employment service and a list of suitable plac-
es for rooms and board. The CWL held a fashion show to aid immigration work.

76 SOSA, series 6-26.3, box 34, file 5, Sister Mary Fitzmaurice to Sister General
Mary Quinn, 15 May 1958.

77 SOSA, series 6-26.3, box 34, file 6.

78 SOSA, series 6-26.3, box 34, file 12, Sister Mary O'Kane to Sister Agnes Dwyer,
11 February 1962.

79 SOSA, series 6-26.3, box 34, file 9. *The Glengarry News*, 6 September 1962.

80 SOSA, series 6-26.3, box 34, file 10.

81 SOSA, series 7-03.1, box 1, file 16.

82 SOSA, series 6-26.3, box 34, file 10.

83 SOSA, series 6-26.3, box 34, file 13.

84 SOSA, series 6-26.3, box 34, file 14; series 7-02, box 3, file 12.

85 SOSA, series 6-26.3, box 34, files 12, 18, 21.

86 *The Field at Home*, July 1929; SOSA, series 6-09.2, box 12, files 1-2, 4, 6-11;
Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 129.

87 *The Field at Home*, July 1942.

88 SOSA, series 2-03.1, box 6, file 5; *The Field at Home*, June 1949, July 1950,
October 1951.

89 *The Field at Home*, April 1948, April 1952, July 1954.

90 SOSA, series 7-02, box 2, file 12.

91 SOSA, series 6-09.2, box 12, files 24, 34.

92 SOSA, series 6-09.2, box 12, files 24, 37; series 2-05., box 16, file 2.

93 SOSA, series 6-48, box 57, file 2, Archbishop William Duke to Rev. George
Daly, 5 July 1929. Deborah Rink, *Spirited Women: A History of Catholic Sisters in British
Columbia* (Vancouver: Harbour Printing, 2000), 218-219.

94 SOSA, series 6-48, box 57, file 2, Rev. George Daly to Sister Frances Church, 15
October 1929.

95 SOSA, series 6-48, box 57, file 1.

96 SOSA, series 6-48, box 57, files 4, 6, 9, 11, 13. *The Field at Home*, July 1937, July
1938.

97 SOSA, series 6-48, box 59, file 23; *The Field at Home*, June 1949, April 1950,
April 1951, April 1953.

98 *The Field at Home*, October 1951, July 1954, October 1962.

99 SOSA, series 6-48, box 59, file 23.

100 SOSA, series 6-31.1, box 36, files 7-8; box 37, file 12. *The Field at Home*,
January 1933. In 1916, a boarding house for Catholic Girls was purchased by Mrs. W.H.
McAuliffe with the assistance of some friends as a temporary home for women seeking
employment who have no home in the city, for any women convalescing after sickness
and women in securing employment. In 1930, the department of health advised the
association to give up care of immigrants on the grounds that there was not sufficient
room for the regular boarders and 19 immigrants were moved out of the hostel although
15 were constant visitors. Negotiations between the Rosary Hall association and the SOS
began in 1931.

101 SOSA series 6-31.1, box 37, files 1-2. *The Field at Home*, July 1935, January 1937.

102 *The Field at Home*, October 1937.

103 SOSA, series 6-31.1, box 37, file 1; *The Field at Home*, October 1936, January
1937, April 1938.

104 SOSA, series 2-04.2, box 12, file 3; *The Field at Home*, July 1940, July 1941.

105 SOSA, series 2-03.1, box 6, file 5; *The Field at Home*, July 1952, July 1953.

106 SOSA, series 7-02, box 14, file 7. Sister Ella Deland was appointed superior of
the residential clubs in Ottawa (1944-1950, 1962-1968) and Vancouver (1955-1961).
The Field at Home, July 1966.

107 *The Field at Home*, July 1966.

108 SOSA, series 7-02, box 15, file 4.

109 SOSA, series 7-02, box 15, file 4.

110 SOSA, series 6-31.1, box 37, file 12.

- 111 SOSA, series 6-31.1, box 37, file 12. <http://ottwatch.ca/meetings/file/>. The property was constructed circa 1874 and is an excellent example of the Second Empire style.
- 112 SOSA, series 6-42, oversize box 50, file 2; box 51, file 17; *The Field at Home*, July 1946.
- 113 *The Field at Home*, October 1943.
- 114 SOSA, series 2-02.1, box 4, file 13.
- 115 SOSA, series 7-02, box 6-7.
- 116 SOSA, series 7-02, box 6-7. Sister O'Brien was superior (1957-1963 and 1966-1972) and died in April 1986, at the age of 91 in St. Catharines, Ontario.
- 117 SOSA, series 6-42, box 51, file 17. *The Field at Home*, July 1946, April 1948, April 1949, July 1950, July 1951.
- 118 *The Field at Home*, October 1948.
- 119 *The Field at Home*, October 1961.
- 120 SOSA, series 6-42, box 52, file 20.
- 121 SOSA, series 6-42, box 52, file 20.
- 122 SOSA, series 6-17.2, box 23, file 14.
- 123 SOSA, series 6-40.1, box 50, file 1, Sister Theresa Duffley to Sister General Mary Quinn, 26 September 1953; series 2-07, box 24, file 16. *The Field at Home*, January 1954; Canadian Register of Historic Places, "Howard House," accessed 3 April 2022. <https://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=2314>. Built in 1892, Howard House is a wooden, four-storey Queen Anne Revival house, located at 7 Garrison Hill. It was designated as a Registered Heritage Structure in 1997 due to its historical, architectural, and environmental values. James Parker, a senior partner in shoe manufacturing company of Parker and Munroe.
- 124 SOSA, series 6-40.1, box 50, files 2-4.
- 125 SOSA, series 6-40.1, box 50, file 20.

Chapter Seven: District Nursing and the Alberta Hospitals

- 1 SOSA, series 2-02.1, box 4, file 22, Rule of the Sisters of Service.
- 2 SOSA, series 6-04.1, box 4, file 26.
- 3 SOSA, series 6-04.1, box 4, file 26. Elizabeth Taborek, *A Road Less Travelled: A Memoir of Sister Agnes Brunning*, 2006, SOSA series 7-02, box 11, file 3.
- 4 Taborek, *A Road Less Travelled*.
- 5 Taborek, *A Road Less Travelled*.
- 6 SOSA, series 1-01.1, box 1, file 6. Archbishop Neil McNeil to Camilus Cardinal Laurenti, 12 August 1923.
- 7 *The Field at Home*, January 1927.
- 8 Archbishop O'Leary brought Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, Kingston, who were already in Dayland, Alberta in the 1908, and established St. Mary's Hospital, Camrose (1924); the Sisters of Charity of Immaculate Conception 1926 in Radaway; Sisters of St. Joseph of London, Ontario in Stettler, 1926-1927, in Galahad, 1927-1978, and in Killam 1930; the Sisters of Charity of Halifax, Immaculata Hospital, in Westlock, (1927), in Hardisty, (1929), and Jasper, (1930). See *The Bold Journey: 1943-1993: An Alberta History of Catholic Health Care Facilities and of Their Owners* (Edmonton: Catholic Health Association of Alberta, digitized 1995),
- 9 SOSA, series 6-10, box 17, files 7-8; series 3-02, box 1, file 5.
- 10 Pauline Paul, *A History of the Edmonton General Hospital: 1895-1970* (doctoral thesis, University of Alberta, 1994), 147-163, <https://www.chac.ca/documents/36/Ed->

monton_History_of_Edmonton_General_Hospital_1895-1970.pdf. Two major federal health care policies were adopted between 1957 and 1968. In 1957, the House of Commons passed the Hospital Insurance and Diagnostic Services Act. Although provincial participation was voluntary, all provincial governments accepted the federal offer of a 50/50 cost-sharing arrangement. Consequently, by 1961 all provinces had accepted the terms of the act, which stipulated that in order to receive federal funding, provinces had to offer “universal coverage, portability of coverage from province to province, comprehensive coverage for all in-hospital care in general and certain other designated care, and public, non-profit administration of plans was mandatory.” In 1968, the federal Medical Care Act was proclaimed and all provinces agreed to participate. Under the act, medical services were funded in the same manner as hospitals.

SOSA, series 6-49, box 60, file 1, box 60.

“Village of Vilna,” accessed 9 January 2022, <https://www.vilna.ca/>.

SOSA, series 6-49, oversize box 62, file 1.

SOSA, series 6-49, box 60, file 1, Rev. George Daly to Sister Catherine Wymbs, 5 November 1925.

Daly to Wymbs, 5 November 1925.

SOSA, series 6-49, oversize box 62, file 1.

SOSA, series 7-02, box 9, file 1.

SOSA, series 6-49, box 63, file 8.

SOSA, series 7-02, box 3, file 11.

The Field at Home, January 1949.

SOSA, series 6-49, oversize box 62, files 1-2. A mortgage of \$20,000 was secured for the hospital.

SOSA, series 7-02, box 2, file 16.

SOSA, series 6-49, oversize box 62, file 1.

SOSA, series 6-49, oversize box 62, files 1-2; series 7-02, box 11, file 3, box 12, file 6.

SOSA, series 6-49, oversize box 62, files 1-2; series 7-02, box 2, file 11.

SOSA, series 6-49, oversize box 62, files 1-2.

SOSA, series 6-49, oversize box 62, files 1-2.

SOSA, series 6-49, oversize box 62, files 2; series 3-05, box 1, file 16; series 3-06, box 2, files 1, 8.

SOSA, series 3-07, box 3, file 8.

SOSA, series 6-10, oversize box 20, file 1. Christopher Lawrence John White, *The Old Edson Cemetery: Investigations into an Early 20th Century Western Alberta Cemetery* (master’s thesis, University of Alberta, 2012), accessed 10 January 2022, https://era.library.ualberta.ca/items/2f67534c-30f2-42a9-9b2b-37eca6c5bf7e/view/8d5b5c9d-d993-4bc4-983c-1c923d4f4a94/White_Christopher_Fall-202012.pdf.

“The Coal Branch,” Alberta Culture and Tourism, accessed 10 January 2022, <http://history.alberta.ca/energyheritage/coal/triumphs-and-tragedies-1914-1930/albertas-coal-town-evolution/the-coal-branch.aspx#page-1>. Grand Trunk Railway went bankrupt in 1918 after financial overextending in building the route to the Pacific. The federal government, which had given the GTR about \$28 million in subsidies and loans, took over the railway in 1919 and placed it under the management of the CNR in 1923; *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Grand Trunk Railway,” accessed 9 March 2022, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/grand-trunk-railway-of-canada>.

“The Coal Branch,” From 1920 to 1929, 87 miners sustained serious injuries and 42 died.

SOSA, series 6-10, box 14, files 9, 11.

- 34 SOSA, series 6-10, box 14, file 9; oversize box 20, file 1.
 35 Taborek, *Road Less Travelled*.
 36 SOSA, series 6-10, oversize box 20, file 1.
 37 SOSA, series 6-10, box 14, file 7.
 38 SOSA, series 6-10, box 14, file 6, Sister Agnes Brunning to Rev. George Daly, 8 April 1931.
 39 SOSA, series 6-10, box 14, file 6-10.
 40 SOSA, series 6-10, box 14, file 16. Rev. George Daly to Sister Mary Quinn, 10 June 1935.
 41 With Sister General Regan also present, Sisters Mary Fitzgerald, Margaret Muldoon, Mary Quinn, Patricia Williams, and Agnes Hearn professed the final vows on 23 June 195.
 42 *The Field at Home*, Spring 1973.
 43 *The Field at Home*, Spring 1973.
 44 SOSA, series 6-10, box 14, files 9, 17.
 45 SOSA, series 7-02, box 8, files 2-3.
 46 SOSA, series 7-02, box 15, file 1.
 47 SOSA, series 7-02, box 16, file 1.
 48 SOSA, series 7-02, box 5, file 10.
 49 SOSA, series 7-02, box 5, file 10.
 50 SOSA, series 7-02, box 20, files 2-3. Sister Knopic was assigned to Edson from 1943 to 1957, also serving as superior from 1951 to 1957. During her second posting from 1967 to 1980, she served as superior and director of nursing between 1969 and 1972.
 51 SOSA, series 7-02, box 21, files 3-4.
 52 SOSA, series 7-02, box 21, files 3-4.
 53 SOSA, series 7-02, box 21, files 3-4.
 54 SOSA, series 7-02, box 21, files 3-4.
 55 SOSA, series 3-05, box 1, file 16; box 2, file 8; series 6-10, box 19, file 2; series 7-02, box 26, file 12.
 56 SOSA, series 6-10, box 16, file 1.
 57 SOSA, series 6-10, box 16, file 1; series 7-02, box 21, files 3-4, box 15, file 1, box 16, file 1.

Chapter Eight: Renewal and Fulfilling Vatican II

- 1 Michael Attridge, "The Early Reception of Vatican II by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto," *170 Years of Service: A Collection of Essays of the History & Mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto*, 201, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651028_perfectae-caritatis_en.html.
 2 Attridge, *170 Years of Service*, 202-219.
 3 Attridge, *170 Years of Service; Ecclesiae Sanctae*, https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_p-vi_motu-proprio_19660806_ecclesiae-sanctae.html.
 4 Attridge, *170 Years of Service*, 239; *Lumen Gentium*, 21 November 1964, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.
 5 SOSA, series 6-05, box 1, file 16. In 1960, there 106 sisters with final vows, 13 with temporary vows, four novices and four postulants, a rise from 88 sisters with final vows in 1950. SOSA, series 7-02, box 4, file 8. Sister Agnes Dwyer grew up in the

southwestern Ontario farming area of Norfolk County, and graduated Normal School in London, Ontario, and taught school in Penetanguishene, Ontario. For her first appointments, she taught at St. Brides, Alberta (1932-1934), Bergfield, Saskatchewan (1939-1943), and nearby Diamond Crossing (1943-1945). During these years, Sister Dwyer upgraded her teaching certificates and techniques by attending summer school classes. After 13 years of teaching, she was appointed superior and director of the religious correspondence school in Fargo, North Dakota (1945-1948). At the novitiate as assistant to the Novice Mistress, she developed and wrote a program for novices, based on the spirituality of St. Alphonsus, and trained younger SOS in the catechetical instruction. She also updated programs of religious instruction for children. Her summers were spent teaching in the religious vacation schools in North Dakota, Alberta, and Manitoba. At the 1954 Chapter, she was re-elected as a member of the General Council and appointed Novice Mistress.

- 6 SOSA, series 6-05; box 1, file 16; *The Field at Home*, April 1961.
- 7 SOSA, series 2-02.1, box 5, file 6. McCord Museum, "Michel Robichaud," last modified 1 February 2019, <https://encyclomodeqc.musee-mccord.qc.ca/en/entry/michel-robichaud/>.
- 8 SOSA, series 6-32, box 38, file 14.
- 9 SOSA, series 7-03, box 1, file 16.
- 10 SOSA, series 6-47.2 oversize box 53, file 2; series 3-06, box 1, file 17; *The Field at Home*, October 1963. Father Edward Kennedy was an English teacher at the Redemptorist St. Mary's College, Brockville, Ontario, in the decade before Vatican II. Always forward-thinking, he embraced the changes, serving as director of the information centre of the Edmonton archdiocese, as an Edmonton city councillor, and as Provincial Superior of the Edmonton Province. Father Bernard Johnson, first Provincial Superior of the Edmonton Province (1961-1968), organized an *aggiornamento* in 1965 for Edmonton confreres to hear papers about Vatican II, and he insisted that confreres take study sabbaticals as part of their Vatican II renewal.
- 11 *Ecclesiae Sanctae*.
- 12 SOSA, series 3-06, box 1, file 19; *Ecclesiae Sanctae*.
- 13 *The Field at Home*, Summer 1978.
- 14 SOSA, series 3-06, box 1, file 19.
- 15 SOSA, series 3-06, box 1, file 19.
- 16 SOSA, series 3-06, box 1, file 19.
- 17 SOSA, series 3-06, box 1, file 19.
- 18 SOSA, series 6-06, box 1, files 20-26.
- 19 SOSA, series 3-06, box 2, files 6-8. The breakdown of the 77 sisters in missions showed that 26 were appointed to the nine residential clubs; 19 were appointed to the nine teaching missions; 16 were posted to the Edson and Vilna hospitals; 10 were working in the Regina and Edmonton catechetical centres; and eight in the CCD offices.
- 20 SOSA, series 3-06, box 2, file 8.
- 21 SOSA, series 7-02, box 20, file 1. Sister Reansbury's first assignment was a post-ing at the Motherhouse (1946-1947), followed by the women's residence in Toronto (1947-1949).
- 22 SOSA, series 3-06, box 2, files 13, 19. Father Boyce also worked with Sisters of Charity of Halifax, Sisters of Charity of Saint John, Sisters of St. Martha, and the Ursulines of Chatham. As the first elected Toronto Provincial Superior in 1968, he left the congregation and the priesthood in June 1970.
- 23 SOSA, series 3-06, box 2, file 13, 19.

24 SOSA, series 3-06, box 2, file 19.

25 *The Field at Home*, Fall 1969, Spring 1970. http://www.italiancanadianww2.ca/collection/details/dicea2011_0034_0004. Cottages were also purchased in Seba Beach for the Alberta sisters, in the Laurentians for the Montreal sisters, on the Bay of Fundy for the Halifax sisters, and in Pasqua Lake for the Regina sisters. Camp Morton was the summer spot for the Manitoba sisters.

26 SOSA series 3-06, box 1, file 19. The Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of Pembroke, Ontario, had assigned sisters to serve in Canada since 1929 and expanded their foreign missions to Japan, the Dominican Republic, and the Bahamas. Our Lady's Missionaries, the first English-speaking Canadian congregation dedicated to foreign missions, was established in 1949 and their first missions were in Nigeria and Japan.

27 *The Field at Home*, Fall 1969, Summer 1970.

28 SOSA, series 3-07, box 3, file 7.

29 SOSA, series 3-07, box 3, file 7.

30 SOSA, series 3-07, box 3, file 8; series 3-08, box 3, file 19. The 111 members included 106 with perpetual vows, four with temporary vows, and one novice. Of the 21 sisters, who departed the SOS, eight sisters had professed final vows, six had professed temporary vows, five were novices, and two were postulants.

31 SOSA, series 3-07, box 3, file 8.

32 SOSA, series 6-26.3, box 34, file 17.

33 SOSA, series 3-07, box 3, file 8.

34 SOSA, series 3-07, box 3, file 8.

35 *The Field at Home*, Volume 37, No.2.

36 SOSA, series 3-07, box 3, file 8. The 32 graduates included eight with undergraduate degrees, seven with Divine Word Institute certificates, four with social work degrees/diplomas, four with health care training, two with teaching training, and two in library courses.

37 SOSA, series 5-02, box 2, file 1.

38 *The Globe and Mail*, 24 June 1972.

39 SOSA, series 5-02, box 2, file 1. A final newspaper advertisement in 2000 welcomed inquiries to be directed to the Regina house.

40 *The Field at Home*, November-December 1972.

41 *The Field at Home*, Summer 1974, Winter 1983.

42 SOSA, series 3-08, box 3, file 20; series 7-01.2, box 1, files 20-25.

43 *The Field at Home*, Summer 1976, Fall 1976.

44 SOSA, series 3-08, box 3, files 19-20; series 3-09, box 4, files 1-5; series 2-05.1, box 16, file 16; *The Field at Home*, Fall 1978. Sister Hayes was re-elected as Sister General, and the General Council was comprised of Sisters Florence Kelly, Hilda Lunney, Marilyn MacDonald, and Catherine Schmeltzer.

45 SOSA, series 4-03, oversize box 6, file 2.

46 SOSA, series 7-02, box 28, file 3. Sister Hayes was appointed to Toronto residential club (1951-1952); as bookkeeper at Our Lady's Hospital in Vilna (1952-1956), and Winnipeg residential club. After attending the Winnipeg Normal School (1962-1963), she taught at King Edward School No. 1 (1963-1965) and served in Grand Forks (1965-1969) in the CCD office. At the 1970 Chapter, she was elected on the General Council and as assistant Sister General. During that four-year term, Sister Hayes completed a bachelor of arts degree in sociology and world religions, graduating from McMaster University, Hamilton, in 1973. She was re-elected in 1978 and 1982.

47 SOSA, series 1-01.4, box 8, file 1; Beck, *To Do and Endure*, 287-288.

48 SOSA, series 3-11, box 4, file 14. The General Council members elected at

the 1982 Chapter were Sisters Marilyn MacDonald, Bernice Anstett, Margaret Ready, and Florence Kelly.

- 49 SOSA, series 7-02, box 31, file 1. Sister Frances Coffey was appointed to Edmonton catechetical centre (1955-1957) while attending Normal School. She taught at Rycroft (1957-1962) and established the CCD office in Nelson, British Columbia, where she taught at University of Notre Dame (1962-1967). Back in Toronto, she was appointed director of the novitiate (1967-1978), and co-ordinator of catechetical program in the Toronto archdiocese (1970-1975). She was employed as a chaplain at Whitby Psychiatric Hospital (1978-1986).
- 50 SOSA, series 2-05.1, box 15, file 7; box 16, file 32. The Chapter of 1986 also elected Sisters Anna McNally, Mary Jackson, and Joan Schafhauser as councillors. The Chapter of 1990 elected Sisters Patricia Burke, Mary-Ellen Francoeur, and Mary Halder as councillors.
- 51 SOSA, series 3-12, box 5, file 8.
- 52 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 12. Sister McNally was appointed to the Toronto residential club (1957-1960), attended St. Joseph's Teachers' College (1960-1962) in Montreal, taught in Peace River (1962-1964) and Saskatoon (1966-1973), and earned a bachelor of arts degree in November 1966 and a bachelor of education degree a year later in November 1967. She taught in North West River, Labrador (1973-1974) on the Sheshatshiu Reserve. Afterwards, returning to Toronto, she studied at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (1974-1975) and completed a diploma in adult education. From 1975 to 1995 she held a series of positions in the northern Saskatchewan communities of La Loche, Green Lake, and La Ronge. For another education leave, Sister McNally returned to the University of Saskatchewan (1982-1983) for a master of education degree, which she completed in 1984.
- 53 SOSA, series 3-13, box 5, file 16. The 1994 Chapter elected as councillors Sisters Patricia Burke, Marilyn MacDonald, and Helen Hayes. The 1998 Chapter elected as councillors Sisters Mary-Ellen Francoeur, Helen Hayes, and Hilda Lunney.

Chapter Nine: Vatican II Missions

- 1 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 171-172. Sisters Hilda Lunney, Agnes Dwyer, Patricia Cooper, and Margaret Murphy continued the work in the CCD office in Nelson Diocese.
- 2 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 196-200; *The Prairie Messenger*, 2 September 1991. Correspondence school students decreased from 1,240 in 1968 to 881 in 1969.
- 3 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 191-192. Bernadette Tourangeau served as NORE director from 1963 to 1995.
- 4 SOSA, series 3-07, box 3, file 8.
- 5 *The Field at Home*, Winter 1973, Summer 1973.
- 6 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 209-213; SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 6.
- 7 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 226, 234-235. In April 1983, Sister Kelly reported that approximately 260,000 lessons had been sent to 120 Western centres, 190 centres in Ontario and Quebec, and 90 centres in the Maritimes. The increased demand for the program strained the space and facilities at Daly Centre. The work of assembling, weighing, packaging and transporting the large cartons to the post office was demanding. Fortunately, Sister Kelly had an assistant Sebastian Reinhardt, brother of Sister Celestine Reinhardt.

SOSA, series 7-02, box 14, file 7. Barton, *Gather Up the Fragments*, 234-235.
 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 172.
 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 170-171.
 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 290-292. Bishop Penney commissioned the sisters to provide correspondence lessons for children without access to religious instruction on the diocese's eastern section and the western section to the Presentation Sisters' school. Sister Barton was appointed to isolated Catholic families of Gambo; between Gambo and Clarenville and along the Bonavista Peninsula. Sister Hearn was given the responsibility of the families in the area east of Clarenville, including in the Long Harbour parish of the St. John's archdiocese.
 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 292.
 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 296-297.
 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 299-301.
 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 301, 307, 312.
 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 305-306; *The Field at Home*, Summer 1983
 Barton, "Gather Up the Fragments," 307-312
 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 11; *The Field at Home*, April 1966.
 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 11; *The Field at Home*, Fall 1973, Winter 1979.
The Field at Home, Summer 1975.
 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 13.
 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 13.
 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 12.
 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 12.
 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 11.
 SOSA, series 7-02, box 23, file 14.
 SOSA, series 7-02, box 21, file 5.
 SOSA, series 7-02, box 20, file 9.
 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 12.
 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 12.
The Field at Home, Fall 1975
 SOSA, series 6-29, box 35, files 13, 20; *The Field at Home*, January - February, 1972, Spring 1974.
 SOSA, series 7-02, box 28, file 1; *The Field at Home*, Winter 1979, Winter 1980, Summer 1981.
 SOSA, series 7-02, box 12, file 5. <https://www.heritage.nf.ca/articles/society/grenfell-mission.php>, accessed 29 January 2022 <https://theindependent.ca/uncategorized/dorm-kids/> accessed 29 January 2022.
 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 13.
 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 13; series 6-41, box 51, files 9-12; *The Field at Home*, Fall 1977, Winter 1977.
 SOSA, series 7-02, box 26, file 6-7. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/the-pas> accessed 30 January 2022
The Field at Home, Summer 1979.
 SOSA, series 7-02, box 9, file 6; *The Field at Home*, Summer 1979.
 SOSA, series 7-02, box 3, file 1.
 SOSA, series 7-02, box 3, file 1; box 4, file 11.
 SOSA, series 7-02, box 24, file 8.
 SOSA, series 6-27.1, box 35, files 1-4, oversize box 1-4. *The Field at Home*, Summer 1974, Fall 1976.
 SOSA, series 6-27.1-2, box 3, files 1-6.
<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/alberta> accessed 30 January

2022. In 1967, Alberta produced about 36.7 million cubic metres of crude oil. Ten years later, production had grown by nearly 65 per cent to 60.5 million cubic metres. Since these peak years in the 1970s, oil production has been slowly declining.

- 46 SOSA, series 6-18, box 20, files 31-32.
47 SOSA, series 7-02, box 15, file 3.
48 SOSA, series 6-13, box 20, file 31; *The Field at Home*, Summer 1983, Winter 1984.
49 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 12.
50 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 12.
51 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 12; series 6-16, box 21, files 12-18.
52 SOSA, series 6-20.2, box 27, file 25.
53 SOSA, series 6-20.2, box 27, file 23-25.
54 *The Field at Home*, Winter 1973; <https://nctr.ca/residential-schools/alberta/assumption-hay-lake>
55 SOSA, series 7-02, box 26, file 10.
56 SOSA, series 6-51, box 67, file 1.
57 SOSA, series 6-51, box 67, file 1.
58 *The Field at Home*, Fall 1976, Summer 1981.
59 *The Field at Home*, Winter 1979, Summer 1981.
60 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 11.
61 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 11-12.
62 SOSA, series 7-02, box 29, file 1.
63 SOSA, series 7-02, box 13, file 10.
64 *The Field at Home*, October 1968.
65 *The Field at Home*, October 1968; SOSA, series 7-02, box 24, file 8.
66 *The Field at Home*, Spring 1977.
67 *The Field at Home*, Volume 37, No 3, 1971.
68 SOSA, series 7-02, box 15, file 3.
69 SOSA, series 7-02, box 15, file 3.
70 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 11.
71 SOSA, series 7-02, box 12, file 1.
72 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 13.
73 SOSA, series 7-02, box 31, file 1.
74 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 11.
75 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 11.
76 SOSA, series 7-02, box 10, file 1.
77 SOSA, series 7-02, box 10, files 1, 2, 6; *The Field at Home*, Winter 1976, Fall 1978.
78 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 11.
79 SOSA, series 7-02, box 29, file 1.
80 SOSA, series 7-02, box 29, file 1.
81 SOSA, series 7-02, box 30, file 1.
82 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 13; *The Field at Home*, Autumn 1979.
83 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 12.
84 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 12.
85 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 12.
86 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 12.
87 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 12.
88 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 12; *The Field at Home*, Spring 1977.
89 SOSA, series 7-02, box 21, file 1.
90 *The Field at Home*, Winter 1975, Winter 1976, Winter 1977, Spring 1982.
91 *The Field at Home*, Autumn 1981
92 *The Field at Home*, Autumn 1983.

93 SOSA, series 7-02, box 20, file 6.
94 SOSA, series 7-01.1, box 1, file 11.

Chapter Ten: Coming to Completion

1 SOSA, series 7-04, box 2, file 10. The other celebrations were held in Halifax,
24 May; Regina, 1 June; Vilna, 14 June; Camp Morton, 12 July; Winnipeg, 13 July; Ot-
2 tawa, 30 August; Edmonton, 28 September.

3 SOSA, series 3-14, box 6, file 11. The four full-time salaried sisters worked in
health care, teaching, and parish and prison chaplaincy. Two part-time sisters worked in
4 health care, and one each in hospital chaplaincy, psychotherapy, and spiritual counselling.
5 Ted Dunn, "Circular Models of Leadership: Birthing a New Way of Being,"
Human Development, Volume 27, Number 4, Winter 2006, 18.

6 SOSA, series 3-14, box 6, files 1-14.
7 SOSA, series 2-05.2, box 17, file 1. Desmond Wilson, Establishing a Founda-
8 tion: The CDF Experience, workshop for the Sisters of Charity of Immaculate Concep-
9 tion, Saint John, NB, 5 April 2018. In 1999, Sister Cecile Turcotte, GSIC, was approved
10 as interim treasurer to replace Sister Florence Kelly, who died of cancer. Sister Celia, had
11 been the treasurer of her community for 14 years and past president of Association of
12 Treasurers of Religious Institutes (ATRI).

13 SOSA, series 2-05.2, box 17, file 1.
14 SOSA, series, 7-01.1, box 1, file 10; series 2-05.2, box 17, file 3.
15 SOSA, series 3-14, box 6, file 5-14.
16 Sister Anna McNally, email message to M.C. Havey, 3 June 2022.
17 Sister Anna McNally, email message to M.C. Havey, 3 June 2022.
18 SOSA, series 2-05.2, box 17, file 1.
19 Sister Anna McNally, email message to M.C. Havey, 3 June 2022.
20 SOSA, series 2-05.2, box 17, file 1.
21 The board divestment policy was directed at any of the 200 global, publicly trad-
22 ed companies with the largest coal, oil, and gas reserves as listed in the Carbon Tracker
Initiatives' "unburnable carbon" report. The board approved a concerted effort to seek
companies investing in renewable energy, other low carbon-fuel sources, energy efficien-
cy, and other environmental initiatives that satisfy CDF's investment quality standards.
23 <https://catherinedonnellyfoundation.org/>; Steve Brearton, communications
officer and policy officer, email message to M.C. Havey 2 May 2022. The internal com-
mittees were governance, finance, investment, human resources, and compensation. Sis-
ter Halder, who had served for 17 years, was appointed in 2021 as the first honorary
Elder, a new position of the board.

16 SOSA, series 3-15, box 6, file 19-20
17 SOSA, series 2-05.2, box 17, file 8.
18 SOSA, series 3-16, box 6, file 23.
19 SOSA, series 2-06.1, box 1, files 1-4.
20 SOSA, series 2-05.2, box 18, file 4.
21 SOSA, series 2-06.1, box 1, files 1-4.
22 The appropriation committee was composed of: D'Arcy Martin, an adult edu-
cator and social activist, coordinator of the Centre for the Study of Education and Work
at the University of Toronto, and Christine McKenzie, a facilitator in social justice work,
earned a graduate degree in environmental studies and a doctorate in adult education and
community development.

23 SOSA, series 2-06.1, box 1, file 1.

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1922-2022

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Sister Agnes Brunning	Sister Mary Fitzgerald	Sister Anne Johnson
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Sister Pauline Coates	Sister Ann Geraghty	Sister Brigid Knopic
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Sister Margaret Muldoon	Sister Mary Reansbury	Sister Evelyn Tunney
Sister Evelyn Murphy	Sister Florence Regan	Sister Lydia Tyler
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Sister Marie Anne Paradis	Sister Kathleen Schenck	Sister Ella Zink



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