

Joliet Foundation

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Rev. Mother Teresa Cleare accompanied by Sr. M. Gonzaga (as Superioress) Sr. M. Klothia and Sr. Ludwina left Toronto, Tuesday Aug. 29th. 1888 and proceeded to Hamilton, where they remained a few hours then resuming their journey arrived in Joliet Aug. 30th.

Our future little convent which had been previously occupied by the Sisters of the Holy Cross being entirely devoid of furniture obliged us to accept the hospitality of Rev. W. H. Powers for a week. Rev. Mother returned to Toronto having remained three days in Joliet.

Sep. 8th, Feast of our Blessed Mother's Nativity we took possession of our Nazareth.

On the same day the select school was opened with eight pupils in attendance. A few days before, the parochial school was commenced in the basement of St. Patrick's Church, with twenty-five pupils, including boys and girls - both schools continued to increase weekly until they reached the number of one hundred.

Srs. Sr. Agnes Mc Kenna and Bathilda joined the little band 9th Sep. and were stops!

heartily welcomed. Our great object now was to prepare one of the little rooms for a chapel; and on the 15th Sep. the Octave of the Nativity of our Blessed Mother, Rev. W. H. Power consoled us by bringing us the most Blessed Sacrament. Our gratitude in having our dear Lord with us once more can be more easily imagined than described.

Through the industry of the nuns after the days hard teaching, our little Nazareth gradually assumed a clean, if not a home-like appearance.

Many a hearty laugh was enjoyed over our discomforts and contrivances. In the refectory and sleeping apartments especially, poverty was conspicuous. Sep. 17th Mrs. M. Angelo and Amelia arrived Nov. 13th Feast of St. Stanislaus Rev. W. H. Power gave Benediction of the most Blessed Sacrament for the first time in our little Chapel.

The weather now became unusually cold for the early season and the Community suffered considerably from its effects, not having the necessaries of life.

Soon however things assumed a more comfortable appearance by the Community's going into debt for necessaries.

The winter of 1880 according to old settlers was more severe than any experienced in twenty-five

Years - during part of that season the people were obliged to have recourse to ladders from the second story for egress from their houses, owing to the great snow drifts. Then followed the protracted thaw, during which the inhabitants might-easily have been deluded with the idea, that they were living in a modern Venice as they were compelled to use boats to convey themselves from one house to the other particularly in the lower parts of the City.

There was much to discourage the young Community the first year of the foundation, owing to things having taken an entirely different turn from that which we had expected; in fact, it was nothing but disappointment on all sides. Had not kind Providence lent a helping hand, the poor nuns would have sunk under their very trying position.

Our first examinations were held on the 16th Dec. and were attended by Rev. Fathers Power Burke and Blunne. All passed off very creditably the Pastors complimented the Community, and pupils very highly on the progress which the latter

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had made in so short a time

The three days preceding the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord were spent in retreat; and, on 1st of morning renewed our vows.

Christmas Eve, Rev. Fr. Burke, Pastor of St. Mary's gave us a very agreeable surprise by presenting to the Community a very valuable silver service, which, to the young Community was an overwhelming act of generosity on the part of the noble donor who, at that time was a comparative stranger -

May 8th The children who had been preparing during the winter had the happiness of making their first Communion.

May 13th Beloved Rev. Mother accompanied by Fr. M. Ignatia arrived from Canada and remained five days. Our delight on meeting dearest Rev. Mother was indescribable.

May 14th Archbishop Trehan made his first visit to Follet - and on the following Sunday confirmed one hundred and thirty of our pupils.

After our dear Archbishop's visit in May arrangements were made which contributed greatly to the salvation of souls, and to cheer and encourage the Community. During the Archbishop's visit, he decided that it would

be for the benefit of the children of the city - and the Community - to move to St. Mary's Parish where the Catholic population was larger, and a Community greatly needed.

Fr. Burke was therefore instructed to rent a house until such time as a Convent could be built, the rent to be paid by the Pastor which amounted to four hundred and twenty a year.

July 6th The Community moved from St. Patrick's to St. Mary's parish on Cross St. Although very much embarrassed at the time of our removal to Rev. Father Burke's parish owing to the erection of his very beautiful church, he received the Community with that truly generous magnanimous spirit so characteristic of his noble nature.

Since our advent to kind Fr. Burke's parish, he has continued the same paternal care and solicitude for our spiritual and temporal welfare.

His visits to the Schools and Community - are looked forward to with the greatest pleasure. Immediately on our coming to St. Mary's parish our kind pastor donated to the Community a

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beautiful gold Chalice, Ciborium, and Candelabra -
Rev. Fr. Power gave a silver Ciborium

July 26th. Feast of St. Anne we had our first Mass in the house - Rev. Fr. Burke officiating. He also blessed the house. The Community has also experienced much kindness at the hand of Rev. P. Blunne, our first Chaplain, who is a model of fervor and regularity -

The Franciscan Fathers, who are located in the City, have always proved themselves friendly to the Community, rendering spiritual assistance, whenever solicited. Rev. Fr. Gerhardt O.S.F. conducted our first retreat, with which we were very much pleased. The Archbishop appointed him extraordinary Confessor.

Sep. 1st, 1881. The Archbishop visited Jonit and preached at High Mass for the benefit of the Community. A collection was taken up.

The next day our select school was opened in St. Mary's parish with an attendance of seventy pupils. The same day the parochial school was resumed in St. Patrick's with forty children including boys and girls. A few days only elapsed when the select school was crowded to excess with the addition of five boarders (as many as could be accommodated)

to whom the nuns gave up their cells etc. They, distributing themselves the best they could for the night's rest. To many, it was a mystery where the nuns put themselves for the night. Some of the nuns apparently enjoyed this discomfort as well as any cell in the Mother House.

The same refectory served both for nuns and boarders. Towards close of Sep. The select school numbered one hundred eight - and continued increasing. Rev. Fr. Burke's first visit to the school was marked by his promising the young ladies a beautiful gold medal for competition which created quite a spirit of emulation among the classes.

Sep. 17th. the number of our little community was increased by the arrival of Srs. M. Beatrice and Veronica, both Sisters taking charge of the parochial school at St. Patrick's.

Sep. 20th We were rejoined by a visit from Archbishop Lynch of Toronto and Fr. McCann. When His Grace saw the crowded condition of the house he suggested our erecting a "Tent" on the grounds to serve as class rooms until such time as we

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could build

Oct. 28th 1882. Sr. M. Eleuthera's jubilee was celebrated with the usual rejoicings. Presents poured in from all our houses in Canada, and congratulations from all quarters - Judging from her appearance her twenty-five years of religious life have dealt gently with our dear Mother

One evening quite late in Dec. '81. The mother of one of our pupils came to the Convent saying, she had been sorely tried by sickness in the case of her eldest boy afflicted by dropsy, stating, that we possessed some miraculous water, and begging a little for her afflicted boy; feeling compassion for the poor Mother we gave her a little of the Lourdes water and a medal of our Beloved Mother, which she took with great faith. So great that our Lord was pleased to reward it by the perfect cure of her child, whose life had been despaired of by physicians. The poor Mother was so grateful, and the father, in speaking of the event said, "I used to be a little wild but when I saw the goodness of Almighty God, and His Blessed Mother in leaving us our child, I determined to become better and thank God! I have persevered."

Christmas Eve, Miss A. Walsh presented a very fine sewing machine, and on other occasions also gave

tangible proofs of her kindness.

Feb. 6th 1882 Mary Maguire, one of our pupils, obtained a certificate from the County Superintendent Prof. Perry.

April 19th Rev. Mother Teresa and M. M. Regis arrived in Joliet giving us a most agreeable surprise. They remained a week.

April 20th was marked by a small-pox panic which resulted in the closing of all the schools in the city for two weeks. God in His mercy, not only preserved the lives of the members of the Community during the alarming epidemic; but likewise our dear children.

During the month of May, the piety and devotion of our dear children to our Blessed Mother was very striking, all vying with each other in decorating her statues and performing acts of virtue in her honor -

21st June Mary Burke, Bessie Burke, Elora Mack and Nellie Griffin had the happiness of making their first-holy communion in our little Chapel -

23rd June Examinations and closing exercises of the Scholastic year took place at St. Patrick's school with

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which all were much pleased. Fr. Pomer announced to the congregation on the following Sunday the great progress of the children during the past year -

24th June Katie Lerley & Mary Collins received certificates from Prof. Perry, County Superintendent and secured city schools immediately.

June 3rd Select School closing exercises took place with which parents and clergy were very much pleased. Rev. Frs. Burke, Blunne, Camillis O.S.F. and Ementine O.S.F. were present. Miss Katie Lerley was the fortunate winner of the beautiful gold medal donated by Rev. Fr. Burke. Six young ladies had the honor of drawing for it -

July 28th 1882 Sr. M. Bartholde accompanied by Mary Majure left for Toronto. The latter to enter the Institute.

Aug. 4th. We began our annual retreat conducted by Fr. Eugene O.S.F.

Aug. 15th. After the dedication of St. Mary's Church the Archbishop accompanied by several priests from Chicago paid us a very friendly kind visit.

The same morning mass was celebrated in our chapel by Bishop McCullen. For five weeks the nuns taught private pupils during the summer vacation which was quite a financial help in our straitened circumstances. About June 26th. two more of our pupils

viz. Mary Connelley & Katie Burke obtained certificates, and began teaching the following Sep.

In the Spring of 1882 the Community purchased ground on the corner of Ottawa & Cass Streets and commenced at once the erection of their present spacious Convent, all debt on land & building having been incurred by the Community & J. Follet.

Aug. 6th 1883 the Community moved from Cass St. to their new Convent, and on the 15th of the same month the house was dedicated by Archbishop Tuckey who also administered confirmation. The same day in St. Mary's Church is about two hundred of our Sisters. There were present on this occasion a large number of clergy from England, besides others from the surrounding parishes. The Convent was thrown open to all on that occasion, who manifested great pleasure at the success of the new, and expressed best wishes &c. for the future.

On reopening our schools Sep. 1st 1883 we commenced with over two hundred children, everything wearing a bright and pleasing aspect.

On taking possession of our new and most welcome abode, the Community again experienced much

kindness at the hand of its true friend and Pastor Rev. L. Burke in the substantial presents of a beautiful altar, railing, vestment-press and Candelabra.

Mrs. Roberson presented Conity with a fine carpet for parlor, and the ladies gave a beautiful Sanctuary Carpet. Through the infinite goodness of God, and our sweet-mother of "Perpetual Succor" success seemed to attend every effort made by the Conity since its removal to St. Mary's Parish.

Dec. 27th 1883 The pupils of the academy gave a concert, the proceeds of which were to go towards the furnishing of a library for the academy. The concert proved quite a success; the Conity-raising a sufficient amount for the intended purpose.

In this same month one of our boarders Lucy Curran obtained a certificate from Prof. Perry and received a school. The next year Maggie McFallon received her certificate and went to teach.

In 1885 Fannie Lyle and Mary McManey received certificates from Prof. McKeernan, County Superintendent.

Sept. 8th 1884 We celebrated our dear Superiors' Jubilee Brother A. Longa. It was indeed a Jubilee day for us all. Presents, rich and rare passed in

C. M. D. G.

from our houses in Canada. Rev. F. Burke presented her with a magnificent picture which hangs in the parlor. Our beloved Rev Mother, Teresa sent a costly altar-cover with other acceptable gifts. Numerous congratulations were received from all quarters, where our kind and good Mother was known.

The Sacred Heart ^{Parochial} School was opened in Sept. 1885 by the Rev. Maurice Burke P.P. with an attendance of 340 pupils and Mothers Evangelists Catherine, Georgina, and Veronica as teachers assisted by M. M. Preatrice. In a short time they found the necessity of a greater number of teachers and St. Bernadette arrived in Jan 1886 and St. M. Isabella in Sept 1886 to assist the overworked teachers.

Eight of our Young Ladies graduated in 1886 namely Misses Augusta Ulm, Agnes Meers, Margaret Foley, Frances Tighe, Winifred Walsh, Helen Burke, Minnie Stubbs and Mary Mahoney, giving great pleasure and satisfaction. The graduation medals were donated by our kind friend and Father Rev. Maurice F. Burke.

On Sept 1st 1887 We opened St Mary's Parochial

School with three hundred and fifty pupils
and six teachers. This reflects great credit on
our good Pastor Rev. M. F. Burke who leaves
nothing undone to promote the welfare
and happiness of his children.

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