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IBVM JOLIET BACKGROUND

We are gathered here today to commemorate our sisters who worked in Joliet many years ago. Throughout the years the people of Joliet have remained loyal friends to the Loretto Sisters, and we wish today to express our gratitude to them for their continuing friendship and loyalty to the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

It was on August 30, 1880, that Reverend Mother Teresa Dease arrived in Joliet from Toronto at the request of Father Maurice F. Burke, the pastor of St. Mary's Church and Father Walter Powers, the pastor of St. Patrick's Church. With Mother Teresa were three sisters:

Sister M. Gonzaga Gallivan	1843-1912
Sister M. Dosithea Gibney	1842-1917
Sister M. Lidwina Doyle	-1888

After a week in Joliet Mother Teresa returned to Toronto and knowing "the harvest was plentiful and the laborers few," sent four additional sisters to Joliet. They were:

Sister M. Agnes McKenna	1877-1927
Sister M. Bathilde McBrady	1873-1929
Sister M. Angels Lynn	1854-1924
Sister M. Amelia Hurley	1855-1920.

These women and their successors set a marvelous pace for IBVM education in the United States. Besides conducting a parochial school for boys and girls, they gave Joliet its first Academy for girls, chartered under a general law of the State of Illinois, Nov. 6, 1882. In 1892 it was accredited with DeKalb Normal and

in 1903 with the University of Illinois at Urbana.

Amid many sacrifices, the Sisters purchased land on the corner of Cass and Ottawa and in 1883 built their own Academy one block from St. Mary's Church. (This property today is a postal parking lot.) The Academy was a boarding school as well as a parochial school and a convent for the sisters who later served in other parishes as well.

The Sisters endeared themselves for 38 years to the grateful people of Joliet and projected an image of IBVM that we struggle today to emulate: compassion and concern for our students, quality education, Loretto hospitality and graciousness.