

AMERICAN REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION
ARCHIVES

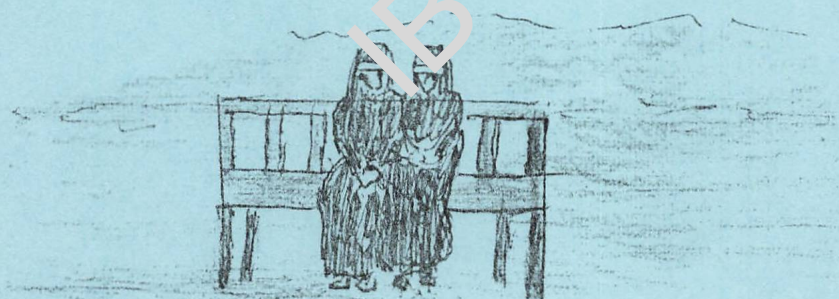
GOD NOT ONLY LOVES
TO HEAR OUR STORIES,
HE LOVES TO TELL HIS OWN.
AND QUITE SIMPLY,
WE ARE THE STORY GOD TELLS.
OUR VERY LIVES

ARE THE WORDS

THAT COME

FROM HIS MOUTH.

1982



"The shades of night were falling fast"

MARY WARD CELEBRATION JANUARY 16, 1982.

JOHN SHEA.

PREFACE

Although the sovereign wisdom and goodness of our Lord and Creator, as he has called us to embark upon life's Pilgrimage, will undoubtedly give us grace to reach our destination, and though the interior law of love and charity, which the Holy Ghost is used to write and imprint upon the heart, be more helpful than any published accounts yet, since the sweet disposition of Divine Providence requires the co-operation of His creatures, and as such was the custom of other famous pilgrimages, we have thought it necessary also to tell tales on our Pilgrimage, that by listening to them, we may, with the greater ease, attain to the end we propose to ourselves.

The end of our Pilgrimage is not only attending to our own perfection and salvation,...but, earnestly to endeavour to promote the perfection and salvation of our neighbor...Fellow pilgrims, people on the way, our Sisters in this Company, the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Like Chaucer's pilgrims on their way to Canterbury to visit Thomas Becket's shrine, we tell our tales to amuse and entertain one another along our way. But the tales written herein serve a double purpose: they encourage and entertain.

For as we read the tales of the faithful women of this Company who have outrun us in distance and endurance, we find ourselves alerted, refreshed, and invigorated--anxious to keep going with steady pace and expectant heart. We hope that these tales will allow you to smile, to wonder and then, to cherish ever more deeply God's call to you to follow Him faithfully in the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

We recall Father John Shea's words, "God not only loves to hear our stories, He loves to tell his own. And quite simply, we are the story God tells. Our very lives are the words that come from His mouth." Now we invite you to let Him speak to you through our own true stories--replete with zany escapades, daring predicaments, dedicated service, bold undertakings.

The themes of these stories are joy, humor, and fearlessness for, "The true children of this Company shall accustom themselves to act not out of fear, but solely from love, because they are called by God to a vocation of love."

So these are, above all, love stories. How are love stories written? How do we listen to them? Our own study and observation of the people involved disclose very little to us. The persons in love must reveal themselves to us. These self-revelations that follow show us, not only women in love on Pilgrimage, but also Jesus, the Son of God incarnated in their lives, taking us all on Pilgrimage back to the Father. All things to the greater honor and glory of God.

M. del Rey

The following verses were written for Sister M. Anselm Thibert's Silver Jubilee
in August, 1933, at Sault Ste. Marie, by Mother Berchmans

Some five and twenty years ago
When postulants were rare,
After serious consultation,
We betook ourselves to prayer.

And we made a big novena
That the Lord might send us one
Who would daily grow in virtue
To be a saintly Nun.

Tonight I wish to tell you
How he heard our fervent prayer,
When we ended our novena,
Along came Anne Thibert.

She was young and sweet and charming
And good and kind and true,
With a sunny disposition
That never did get blue.

We called her Sister Anselm --
And one and all, we knew
That we loved her very dearly
Five and twenty years ago.

I know not if her hair still curls
But her laughing eyes are brown,
And seem as if they never yet
Held shadow of a frown.

Oh, the years have made her dearer,
Not alone to you and me --
Dearer to her loving Bridegroom
Who has blessed her jubilee.

There are many happy moments
In the life-time of a Nun --
When her joy is quite ecstatic,
And yet admits of fun.

But the merriest occasion,
At least, it seems to me,
Is the jolly celebration
Of a silver jubilee.

And of all the happy jubilees
From what I hear you say--
Was never one that could surpass
The one we hold today.

MOVING TO OUR PRESENT MOTHERHOUSE

The summer of 1928 was a time of excitement — the fulfillment of a long-awaited dream for our Institute — the opening of our new Abbey on Mason Boulevard in North Toronto. For over fifty years after our arrival in Toronto in 1847, we had established houses in the area to the south, near Young Street, and now, the new building was finished in the open-field district of north Young Street, less than two blocks from the street-car terminal.

I was one of the Postulants who were to enter that summer — at the new location, we were told. But it was not to be, for we entered at 403 Wellington Street — the old Abbey — and waited a year and ten months before we finally, moved to the new.

I was assigned, as a Postulant, to work in the business office with Mother Lorenzo. Mother Agatha was the superior, while Mother Loretto Ivers had the book press, and Mother St. Margaret was principal of the high school and of the older boarders. Mother Victor had charge of the grade-school boarders.

I was companion, when needed, to Sr. Eymard — now, Sr. Kathleen McGovern — who, as a Novice, taught in the new Abbey's high school. Other Nuns went there daily by street-car from Wellington Street: Mothers Angelina, Dorothea, Ethna and Carmelita.

The building seemed very large to me — especially the refectory, where only three or four tables occupied the middle of the floor. I was kept busy answering the doorbell during dinner, presiding, when needed, in the music corridor, taking the Nuns' shoes to the repair shop on far-away Spadina, and bringing them back. There were no repair shops nearby — in fact, few shops at all. I was entrusted with the banking, and was companion to Mother Virginia when she went to her violin lessons.

Many items, such as books and records that had already been transferred to the new Abbey were sometimes needed back in the old Abbey. This meant that many times the Saturday, this Postulant had to go back and forth, bringing the needed article to where it was wanted. It was claimed that the Postulant would know where to find it!

The final moving day was in June of 1930. We arose real early that morning, stripped the beds, and carried bedding and mattresses to the hall, while Sr. St. Leonard and Sr. Mary Grace, with hammers in hand, took the iron beds apart before the Movers arrived to load their trucks before setting off to the new Abbey.

After Mass and breakfast, most of the Sisters left by street-car for our new home, but some of the Novitiate members and others stayed until the Jesuit Seminarians arrived to move in. In a generous spirit, we had left sets of Vestments, a well*stocked pantry, and a tasty dinner for the new occupants.

We arrived at Mason Boulevard earlier than the Superior General and her Council, and were standing on the second floor overlooking the front entrance when they arrived. We were all ready to burst into song. I do not remember all the hymns we sang, but the "Te Deum" was the one most heartily sung. Then dinner followed, in the large refectory, and after that beds to be made and clothing to be put away — in other words, we took up our routine in the same way as before.

Mother Radegonde was our Novice-Mistress, and Mother St. Carmel her Assistant. The Noviceship Room and our sleeping quarters were located on the south end of the fourth floor. The first Profession of our group was on August 28, 1932. We were the last group to receive the Communion veil. Another historic change was on July 31, 1932, when all the Habits lost the long-familiar trains.

ENGLEWOOD

Being the last postulant to enter at the Branch Novitiate in September 1933 was an experience. Since the house could only hold a certain number, one of the Junior Professed Sisters had to move to the Englewood Convent across the yard. Sr. Lucy Walsh left the day before I arrived. I was put in a private room on the third floor next to Sr. Bernarda's room.

Saturday evening, she mentioned the fact that "she had to make linens." In my own mind I thought how could she "make linens"? I did not see a sewing machine in her room.

During a recreation, without Mother Bernadine, our mistress, Sister Adele, was explaining to us, as she had done in her fifth grade class that day, that $\frac{1}{2}$ of $\frac{1}{4}$ is $\frac{1}{8}$. After a lengthy explanation and demonstration we understood. She was so happy that she rose and sat down with such force that her chair broke in half. From that day we said that $\frac{1}{2}$ of $\frac{1}{4}$ is a "broken chair."

As soon as school was dismissed that year of 1934, the novices returned to the Abbey for preparation for First Profession, the Junior Professed and Postulants moved to Englewood. The Branch Novitiate was to be razed for the St. Bernard's Gym or Lyceum. The Postulants were received in St. Bernard's Church with Msgr. Murray, celebrant, on July 2, 1934. That evening we were on our way to Toronto for our Canonical Year accompanied by Mother Carmel, Englewood's new Superior.

M. Beata

THE SAULT

At the Sault once, Sr. Thaddea as Procuratrix, asked Sr. Leah to accompany her to Ashmun Street to pay the bills. Sr. Leah got a supply to be refectorian for her. Sr. Leah got home in plenty of time to perform her job--she didn't realize the size of the Sault.

M. Thaddea

A GOTHIC TALE

I recall one evening in 1962 when Mother General Constance was making Visitation at Loretto Englewood. We were in the midst of a hearty congé--a Jimmy Stewart movie, party supper, night prayers in private and a sleep-in to look forward to the next morning. While Sister M. Charles (Mary Catherine Spatz) changed the reels on the movie projector, I thought it most appropriate to make a few clever remarks in keeping with the congé spirit.

While I do not recall the exact drift of those remarks I do remember hearing a voice from the opposite side of the refectory, "del Rey, you have a fund of inconsequential information." The voice belonged to Mother Xavier, our Superior.

While history has proven her astute observation correct what follows is a piece of evidence/information certainly not inconsequential. On the contrary, what I intend to unveil here clearly identifies (for the edification of our young nuns) the sturdy and solid crop of young nuns harvested in the middle 50's.

Now I recall those years (circa 1955-60) and the torment conjured up when I thought with dread of the one "duty" I prayed would never fall to my lot. For what I most feared was the awesome and distinguished title: MISTRESS OF HOUSE. I did not, alas, want to be MISTRESS of anyone's HOUSE when I could barely keep "our cell" in order. I performed well such duties as Hebdomadarian, Refectorian, Dispenser, Linenarian. I was a happy, young nun and never bold. (BYN)

All this came to an abrupt end in September, 1958, almost a quarter of a century ago. I was assigned by the local Superior, Mother Susanne Simpkin, to be MISTRESS OF HOUSE at St. John Vianney Convent in Northlake.

I was very young then, 20 years and 4 months old. Not being finally professed (JP) I was anxious to please and receive in return the approval of my superiors. To that end I assumed the title, MISTRESS OF HOUSE with fortitude, much trepidation, and still some slovenliness.

Like many appointments in religious life, one learned the intricacies of a newly assumed duty from one's predecessor. The new duty, subsequently, took on more or less dignity, awe, responsibility from this predecessor's concept of the task. The person who preceded me in this most noble of tasks was Sister M. Clarice Krol. Many of ours will testify that in those days Sister Clarice always attacked her responsibilities with a rigorous determination and religious fervor. I did not.

After watching me flounder for several weeks and fearing the HOUSE and its MISTRESS would surely fall apart, Sister Clarice kindly drew up the following more detailed job description. When she made the presentation I said within myself, "Surely, Lord, this is the high water mark of spirituality. (The Paters and Aves took second place.) This year I shall become a saint." What follows is a verbatim copy of the aforementioned document. Those who wish may view the original document on display.

MEMO FROM SISTER CLARICE

- 1.) Clean incinerator
- 2.) Mend sheets
- 3.) Pass out sheets and pillow cases on Friday
- 4.) Clean Superior's cell Friday
- 5.) Keep supply of light bulbs and replace worn-out ones
- 6.) Keep supply of T.P., deodorant blocks, Mr. Clean, polish, etc. etc. (soap)
- 7.) Repair things (Get Mr. O'Brien etc.)
- 8.) Fix rooms for guests
- 9.) Yard lights (p.m. and a.m.) and Exit lights
- 10.) Sun deck - before storing for winter wash with saddle soap - one chair cushion needs sewing
- 11.) Carry up sheets, pillow cases, towels, etc. on laundry nights
- 12.) Tell Sisters when scrubbing and waxing should be done (library, offices, parlor, com. room, workroom, etc.) Help them!
- 13.) Keep furnace room clean
- 14.) Put dust mops in wash when they need it!
- 15.) Get room ready for retreat priest-take care of it and him (clothes etc.)
- 16.) Keep linen closet clean

Jobs you inherit

- 1.) Arranging key charts
- 2.) Buy flashlight and batteries
- 3.) Few sheets to mend

In short, a supervisor would:

DO ANYTHING THAT WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE GENERAL
ORDER OF THE HOUSE.

CODA: I did not become a saint that year. A dismal failure, I was removed from that esteemed office the following year and assigned an even more challenging duty: I was to be the assistant Dispenser to Sister M. Clarice Krol who was to become my life-long mentor. Together, hand in hand, she would teach me the rubrics of the culinary arts. And therein hangs another tale. All things to the greater honor and glory of God.

*All of this is true: Sister M. del Rey Wente
Dec. 31, 1981*

LONG BEFORE VATICAN II. THE CHANGES BEGAN TO COME IN FOR THE I.B.V.M's.

Composed by Mother Alberta, Hamilton, in the early 1930's

Mary Ward's Girls have lost their guimpes,
But I know where to find them;
With many contortions, they were cut in small portions,
And soon, on their necks, they will bind them.

And Mary Ward's Girls have lost their trains,
Yet, not one of them knows where to find them;
The War brought an urge for more and more serge,
So there's none left to hang on behind them.

Now Mary Ward's Girls have bonnets no more,
And please don't ask us where to find them;
With their ribbons and veils, they've left us no trails,
But, no one, as yet, seems to mind them.

These Girls had long veils that covered their forms
When in Chapel they kept all decorum,
But the wind that blew other things out of their ken,
Swept even these raiments before them.

And now, goodness knows! Having lost all these clothes,
Will their Mother and Foundress still know them?
And when they go Home, what an awful suspense
To decide just where Mary'll bestow them!

Written in reply, by Mother Yvonne Lee, Loretto Abbey, February 1962

But Mary, their Mother, found things just quite other;
For these adaptations are not innovations,
But just what their Foundress had fought for.

So when they arrive there, while others may stare—
And some even glare —
She'll see in them Girls she had fought for.

Later, in 1970—

Now, Mary Ward's Girls have come out in curls.
Their veils have been cast far behind them;
Long skirts have gone out without any doubt,
And ladies of fashion you'll find them.

We wonder, alas, if all things will pass,
And our Institute -- will it weather the blast!
But our Mother says: "Courage!"—There's no help in worriage.
We must love, but dress as we please.

by— M. Thecla, courtesy of Sr. Marian Murphy's Archives!

AN EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP, IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE

Deep in the Upper Peninsula's woods, northwest of Marquette, President Roosevelt's Government built a series of rough wooden dormitories to house his Civilian Conservation Corps. Later on, they were used to impound German War Prisoners, and finally, the Diocese of Marquette bought the property. They named it Camp Flagens, in honor of the Bishop — which was no compliment, I can assure you, for, like Kilroy, I, and three of Ours were there for two long weeks.

In the summer of 1950. Bishop Noa, who was fond of "roughing it" arranged for an Educational Workshop for the Sisters of the Diocese — and what could be more healthful and challenging than holding it at Camp Flagens! This decision alone, proved that Bishops are far from being infallible.

So, off went four of us — Sisters Rita Jacques, Kenneth Sullivan, Mary Alfred Guillard, and Thecla Flynn — our bedding preceding us by two weeks. We arrived after dark, and in the rain. As we stepped off the bus, an authoritative voice called out: "Ladies of Loretto, follow me!" We did — to our sorrow, for the barracks we entered was a replica of the Long Houses of the Iroquois Indians. The dim light from the few hanging light-bulbs revealed row upon row of Army cots, bereft of any sheets or covers. We averted our eyes from the bumpy, rusted, canvas-covered mattresses, glad that our bedding had not arrived. An orange-crate dresser stood by each bed, waiting for the tenants. Also waiting, were the mosquitoes, for they had easy access to our quarters through the gaping holes in the window screens.

At this point, Providence stepped in, and three of us were moved to temporary lodging in semi-private cubicles being reserved for the PHD's conducting the Workshop. Army cots and orange-crates were still in evidence here, but over the half-wall partitions, providing privacy of a sort, we smiled ourselves into sleep to the soft accompaniment of popping corks and gurgling liquid — sounds coming from neighboring cubicles. Sr. Mary Alfred braved the night elsewhere, so she missed the storm, even.

The Shower Room building was built in the woods, without benefit of partitions or even window curtains. In the ceiling, numerous spigots were ready to cascade cold water on any who desired it — the more, the merrier! At the entrance, a Nun propped-up an old road-sign: "20 miles an hour!" As you might guess, many Sisters preferred near-by Moon Lake for their ablutions.

The Four Loretto's favored Moon Lake for boating, for prayer, and to get together. We pushed out an old skiff from the shore, and we seemed to be the only sailors up there.

The Workshop went on for two long weeks, stressing the "Green Bible — that is the text: "Guiding Growth in Christian Social Living". Remember it? One PHD was in charge of planning the daily menu, but Sr. Mary Alfred earned Magnum Cum Laude from everyone for her performance as chief cook and kitchen worker. The rest of us helped the kitchen crew by washing our dishes at table, but the shallow wash-basins we used for this job were a far cry from the soapy "tins" that used to be Loretto style in former days.

Seminarians were on hand too, to perform many services, one of which was to supply heating oil to the various stoves — for the weather turned cold. A warning cry of "Oil!" heralded their approach, and the occupants of each barracks ducked further down under the covers.

On our last night at Uncle Tom's Cabins (Named by us for Bishop Thomas Noa), we entertained him at a party, with square-dancing, singing, and story-telling. The next day we were driven the 350 miles home by our Pastor, Fr. Guertin, who came reluctantly, but at Sr. Kenneth's phoned plea, for it meant a two-day journey for him. Our Superior, too, shared his displeasure, and did not put out the Welcome Mat on our return. So, in spite of our harrowing two weeks up near the Dew Line, we were still "out in the cold" at our homecoming.

by M. Thecla

HOW SPEARMINT KEPT THE PAINT-BRUSH GOING

After Sr. Marcella Armstrong left Englewood-- about 1938--she spent a number of years at the Soo, working hard, as usual. She loved to wield the paint-brush, and her field of operation centered on the numerous doors in our large building. "Stipling" she called it. It seemed to be achieved by wiggling a brush over the wet paint one had just applied to the door, making wavy patterns. If the patterns weren't satisfactory to the artist's eye--well, a little turpentine would rub them off, clearing the space for a second or third try. And all during the artistic endeavor, Spearmint Gum seemed to furnish the rhythm that kept the paint-brush in motion. Nor did the rhythm slow a bit on the day that she heard the Principal admonishing the High School for gum-chewing. Sr. Marcella brushed it off as easily as she brushed off the unartistic STIPLING patterns.

M. Thecla Flynn

MY FIRST MISSION

Would there be a chance to return to the Sault? My home, which I had left three years earlier? But I needed a "Companion"! Mother Felician, visiting from Chicago, graciously agreed to wait over for me; but only a day, as she must return and get her classroom in readiness. My Family and I were grateful; the Convent Parlor that one evening was filled to overflowing! The Pastor joined them briefly, saying, as he hung a hat (or was it a Biretta?) on the hat rack, "I came to see the Neophyte!"

Soon the train trip was over, and I was arriving at my first "Mission". Mounting the front steps, I found the Superior, Mother Imelda, coming right out on the porch to welcome me. That was the beginning of eight wonderful years there--part spent in First Grade and part in Eighth, though I little guessed that then!

Wonderful people to share with--Mothers St. Benedict, St. Roque, Aldegonde, Hilary, Mary Teresa, Lucia, St. Mel, St. William, Berenice, later Sister Mary Grace and Teresita, all of whom could be the subject of very special memoirs! I shall mention two little ones about Sister Teresita, who was a hard worker, and always lots of fun. She wanted so much to lose some weight; and we always teased her. Good meals come, day after day-- and she was always going to begin "tomorrow" to reduce!

While still very young, she was attacked by a dreadful disease, and suffered a great deal. She was hospitalized a long time, and suffered valiantly. During the long slow process of her dying, the Mother General came to visit, and told us later of Sister's brave, loving words. Mother General, realizing the tremendous sufferings Sister was enduring, asked her to offer them for the Institute. Those were the days of Mexico's "Blood-drenched Altars", and Sister replied that she had told Our Lord that her sufferings would be offered gladly for those suffering persecution in Mexico, but now at this request, would indeed offer them all for our Institute.

M. Vivian

THE EVENTFUL CEREMONY

Memories---someone has said they give us a chance to relive these precious times! These I have been enjoying; let me share with you a few from around the time of First Profession.

In the school year of 1929-30, five Novices who had just completed their Canonical Year at Loretto Abbey, on Wellington Street in Toronto, were sent to teach at St. Bernard's School, Chicago. We were four Canadians: Sisters St. Dominic, Gilbert (Eva Marie), Urban, Ignatius, and I. A great story could be told about how marvelous was Mother Carmelita in accepting, and attempting to train five young Sisters, not yet teachers, on her Grammar School Staff. Msgr. Ryan also deserves our gratitude for accepting us at his school, knowing the young Sisters would leave their classrooms and journey off to Toronto for a six-week vow preparation. One spring, there were five of us, in five classrooms (each of about sixty students!). No doubt, there were anxious thoughts; some worries, perhaps; but we could not be asked to delay our Profession for a reason not concerning the individual Sister.

The five "Second Year Novices" had a quiet meeting; a very important one, indeed. Sister reviewed the problem we all knew existed--all those teachers deserting their classes in April, for weeks! She presented her solution: that we could volunteer to wait until August for our precious day of Profession. Unanimously, we agreed, grateful to Sister for her foresight, and worth-while suggestion. Each of us wrote individually to the Mother General and offered in our own words to delay the day of our Profession, so as to complete the school year uninterrupted. As we heard later, all the others of our "Ceremony" said they would also wait until August. With the five rightfully ready for that time we made a lovely, unusually large group to make their Committment together that August of 1929.

We wrote our letters separately, early in Advent. I can never forget the beautiful letter we received before Christmas, from Mother General Pulchra. Each of us had, and no doubt cherished, a copy of her elegantly worded letter, in which she told us that "the joy of the Wise Men, when they found the Star again and resumed following it, was not greater than ours".

M. Vivian

HOW A NIGHTMARE WAS CORRALLED

Sr. Lucia Altenburg, who died this past year at the Falls, spent a number of years at St. Brides, the Soo, and Sacramento, teaching music. She was a good Community person--easy to live with, full of good humor--but, very excitable on occasion. One night, after a bad dream or nightmare, she rushed into the Superior's room calling out, "I'm dying! I'm dying!" Mother Imelda, the Superior, though awakened out of sleep, was alert enough to answer, "Well, go and get into a decent nightgown!" This appeal to decorum seemed to dispel all thoughts of dying. Sr. Lucia lived on for over fifty years.

M. Thecla Flynn

JOLIET AND THE PURSUIT OF NORMAL CERTIFICATES

In the second year of novitiate, those who were not attending Canadian Normal were observing classes and substituting in different schools. My substitution for the last two months was in a class of third grade boys (same as 7th grade in the U.S.) in Guelph.

Vacationing at the "Falls" as a Jr. Professed, I was sent for at the Abbry. Meeting Rev. Mother Stanislaus in the hall, she told me I did pretty well in Guelph the last two months. Now she was sending me to Joliet,

When my novice mistress, M. Mechtilde Halloran heard this, she was pleased, for her cousin Sr. M. Felix Devine, the superior in Joliet, was a Normal trained teacher, and would give me help with the teaching.

However, in about 1916, Sr. M. Jerome began had received her B.A. degree and asked the Mother General to go on for an M.A. She was told, "I'm making you a different kind of M.A. Go to Joliet and be the superior." "Oh," said Sr. Jerome, "In that case, may I get extension courses for the nuns, there?"

So all of us were encouraged to take the first course, "Ethics", towards a degree, and the other courses followed.

Later, from Woodlawn and Englewood we had extension courses and attended De Paul, Loyola, Chicago Normal, Marquette Normal, etc. along with our teaching.

In Michigan about 1920 a state law required all Sisters to have a life certificate. I was sent to Sault Ste. Marie, wondering why-- without the certificate.

Sister Mary Carmel Galvin, on the General Council was now the Director of Studies.

Sisters M. St. Clement Brohman, Pancratius Porter, Agatha Allison and I were sent to Marquette Normal with the credits we had which were accepted. Within three years we had our permanent certificates. For many years we were teaching in Michigan.

M. Florence Maloney

THE DON CARLOS FAMILY

One day after Mass, Monsieur Don Carlos announced to his wife that a boat load of immigrant children from Ireland were to be found at the Church door after the next Sunday's Mass. He informed his wife that he told the priest he would take the four girls to substitute for his four daughters they gave to religion in the Loretto Community.

His four daughters were: Sister Angela, Sister Joseph, Sister Euphemia and Sister Camilla. All were artists. They afforded us with many joyous moments and storied recreations.

AN ANECDOTE

On one occasion, Sister Euphemia answered the telephone. To her anxious inquiry as to the price of a certain article, was told a much higher price. She quickly answered, "Why are you dearer to me now than you were when we were first engaged."

THE CUSTOM OF SINGING DAYS

On the morning of the Feast of the Transfiguration, Mother St. Teresa, the Choir Mistress, assembled us on the Choir Loft of the Old Abbey for beautiful singing in honor of Our Lord. When the Superior heard the commotion in the Choir, she quickly looked up the list of singing days to see if she was correct in finding that Feast was not on the list. She sent Mother Clara to tell them not to sing. In relating this story later, Mother Mary de Lourdes said that this is no longer the Feast of the Transfiguration but the Feast of the Disfiguration of Mother Clara who had fallen down the steps to the Choir Loft.

M. Callista

SAILING TO THE SAULT AND TWO OTHER EPISODES

It was early in the afternoon of a hot August day in 1938 when four tear-eyed young Sisters found themselves at the Chicago pier of the North American Line preparing for their first long trip on a steamship.

Among the many packages and baggage hidden away were four little brown envelopes, one for each Sister, which notified her of her destination for the coming year. It was decided not to spoil the happy holiday by reading any distressing news at this time but to wait until leaving the boat. Sister Ignatius and Sister Alfreda were assigned to St. Mary's at the Sault, Sister Consuela to the Kindergarten and to be taught by Sister Callista in preparation for her Toronto examination in Music. Since this little account will deal with Sister Consuela and myself and our two assignments, I will begin with:

Episode No. 1: After a few days of recreation we decided to get down to earth as our assignment was lengthy in the Music Department especially as Sister Consuela had to be ready for public examinations in history of music, theory, and harmony and at the piano. After the Christmas holidays the time drew closer for the public examinations at the high school in Ontario where Sister would have to write three hour tests.

Episode No. 2: The day of the examinations came at last when Sister and I got ourselves ready for the walk across St. Mary's River solidly frozen over. It was a beautiful sunshiny day and the scenery was exquisite. The high school was almost in our pathway and we found ourselves meeting the other contestants in the "hour of doom." I was ushered to another classroom to spend my afternoon alone with my prayers, etc. The hours passed slowly but finally the gong sounded and soon we would be on our way back. To our horror it was black and dark outside but there was nothing for us to do but to carry on and trust we would get home safely. As we progressed it seemed to grow darker and darker and we were fearful and prayerful. Suddenly there appeared a little light coming, we thought, from a candle or a star. As it drew nearer it changed to the form of a lamp and finally we discerned a man carrying a lantern and leading

a horse through the darkness to the Canadian side. We began to feel closer to home. As we got nearer the shore it didn't take us long to find the way to a happy reunion with our Sisters and we were ready for a special supper. After two weeks or so Sister Consuela received her grades in theory, harmony, and history.

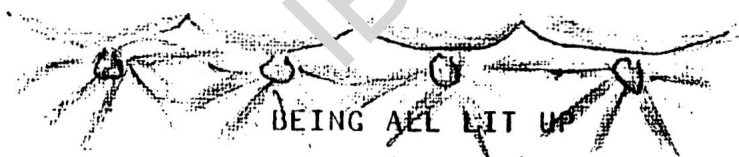
M. Callista

ANECDOTES

Sister Mary Teresa had many fund raising plans. On the day of her burial, as the officiating priest bent over to bless her coffin, the check slipped out of his vest pocket and rested on the coffin. Someone remarked, "Even in death she is collecting funds."

The Novitiate was moved to Loretto, Woodlawn. A nurse, Mrs. McIntyre was employed to help the sick. Sr. Johanna needed help in trays, etc.

One day when Mrs. Mc Intyre was ill in bed, I was given the chore of bringing her supper tray to the third floor dormitory where she lived. Having forgotten to put salt on the tray, I had to come down and get it and bring it up to her. This made me late for dinner. When I reported my error Mother Bernardine asked the sisters if that ever happened to them when they got a tray would they miss the salt. I, all the while shaking the salt shaker on my food, said, "I would never miss it."



M. Beata

In pre-Vatican II days, every Loretto House claimed a list of Benediction Days, signed by the Bishop, and posted in every Sacristy. This list was quite lengthy, as it included thirty days in May and in October, plus many of the Saints, down to the Japonian Martyrs-- (if you remember).

If the priest happened to forget to return at five o'clock, a phone call would remind him. On one occasion as the Community waited in the chapel, they heard the Sacristan, Sr. Magdalena, phone Father and ask: "Are you coming for Benediction? We're ALL LIT UP."

M. Thecla Flynn

LORETTO KINDERGARTEN
1952 --- 1981

Loretto Kindergarten opened its doors for the first time in September 1952. Sister Francis De Sales, now known as Sister Francis Clarke was asked by Mother Roberta, the Superior of Loretto Convent, Wheaton, to be the teacher and director of this new project.

That first year, 19 students enrolled, but in the following years, the numbers varied as is the history of many school enrollments. At one time, the enrollment was as high as 38 pupils. The lowest recorded enrollment was 18.

At one period in the history of our kindergarten it was necessary to discontinue our school for a period of four years, June 1961 - 1965. No Sister was available to teach kindergarten at this time.

In 1965 Sister Aloyse came to Wheaton as Superior. She also volunteered to teach kindergarten. She wrote to Monsignor Wagner, superintendant of Schools and asked to reopen the kindergarten. His reply was in the form of a beautiful letter in which he said he was delighted to know of her plans and he extended his blessings on the new project.

Since 1965, the kindergarten has flourished, even though four surrounding Catholic schools have recently opened their own kindergartens.

In the 30 years of existence we have graduated 698 little students from Loretto. This work was done by the willing efforts of six Sisters of Loretto who have willingly given their talents and time to keeping this worthwhile educational project in operation.

We hope God will shower His blessing on these Sisters, namely:

Sister Frances de Sales
Sister Howard Moriarity
Sister Aloyse Hackett
Sister Marita Lynch
Sister Eva Marie Turgeon (1 year)
Sister Marie Drummond

Providing for early education in meeting the needs of Catholic children is one of the greatest challenges facing Catholic educators and parents today.

Sr. Marie Drummond

FRIEND OF THE SOO LORETTO--FATHER GAGNIEUR S.J.

Before our Sisters came to the Soo in 1896, Fr. Wm. Gagnieur, a Jesuit missionary, was there before them, ministering to outlying areas of the Upper Peninsula and Canada. For almost fifty years he was one of Loretto's staunchest friends. His brother, also a Jesuit, was pastor at St. Mary's for a time, and their mother lived at our convent till her death.

There were numerous stories connected with Fr. Gagnieur's long life of service--some of possible miraculous happenings, and others of a humorous vein. In his old age when he was brought to the Grey Nuns' Hospital in the Canadian Soo, he insisted: "I'm not physically able to stay in bed."

He often said Mass in our Convent, and on one occasion, when there had been singing at Mass, he instructed the server, Sr. Marion Murphy, in no uncertain terms: "Speak louder! I can't hear you with all that noise back there!"

When a Bishop who was unsympathetic towards our Nuns was visiting the Rectory for the first time, he proposed the suggestion that we be ousted from the Diocese. Right away, our friend, Fr. Gagnieur, came to us, saying: "Pray! Pray! They're talking over there about putting you out!" This rumor surfaced six times in the years up to 1950. Bishop Nussbaum, a Passionist transferred from Corpus Christi, Texas, to the Marquette Diocese, was definitely opposed to us. After the pastor had brought him over to visit the Convent Nuns, he designated them "hot house plants". Only after Bishop Wagner's term as Bishop did we realize the reason for the opposition to us. He informed us that we were described in the Diocesan records as having been disobedient in building the second wing of Loretto Convent in 1911. We were ignorant of that charge, for the second wing had been built to balance the first wing that was sinking on quicksand.

Fr. Gagnieur so endeared himself to the people that when he died in 1937, they were determined to have him buried where he had lived--in the Soo. The city, itself, cooperated by opening the snow-bound cemetery in the midst of winter, for everyone felt that we had had a saint living amongst us.

M. Thecla Flynn

JOLIET DAYS

In Joliet, it was a twenty minute walk from the school to the convent. A 4th grade boy would be sent daily from the school to the convent to pick up a hot dinner in a basket for the nuns (about 3 lay sisters cooked in the convent). The dinner would be warmed in the office. Dessert was brought by Mrs. Daggitt in a buggy with her baby.

We had 4-5 schools in Joliet at one time-possibly 40 nuns staffed them and lived at St. Mary's Academy.

Sr. Florence recalls a flu epidemic in Chicago and Joliet when three of ours died.

Vacation was "taken as it came". The Joliet nuns went to Chicago; those at Englewood and Woodlawn vacationed at Joliet.

A grandfather clock then at Joliet and now at the Sault had the inscription: "Whilst we have time, let us do good."

M. Florence Maloney

OUR SISTERS GO TO SOUTH DAKOTA

Father Leahy from Baltimore stopped once at St. Bride's Parish to say Mass. He didn't know our community at all. He'd been looking for Nuns to teach religion in South Dakota. Mother Imelda, the Superior talked with Mother General Pulcheria. In 1931, the first group of IBVM'S went West.

There was Fr. Creahan's group of IBVM'S who went to towns like the Hinker's (Sr. Evelin and Teresa) and celebrated parish feasts, also, prepared First Communion and Confirmation classes.

Father Leahy's group of IBVM'S went to Mc Intosh, S.D. for two weeks of school. Then the next two weeks he drove them out near the Bad Lands to Blackhorse Indian Mission, 18 miles from Mc Intosh.

In preparation for these summers, the Sisters brought trunk loads of school materials and food. The Milwaukee Road Railroad gave free transportation to those who taught those summers. Listed amongst the teachers were: Eleanor, St. Mel, Dominic, Mary Ellen, Bernarda, Lorian, St. Germaine, Bernadette, Lillian, Florentia, Laurentia, St. Maurus and Sylvester.

It was unusual in the thirties for Nuns to go westward, hundreds of miles from their convents and teach like this.

Marita Kompare

EVELIN AND TERESA HINKER MEET OUR NUNS

The Hinker's Parish, St. Michael's, in Watuga, S.D., was visited by Srs. Bernarda, Laurian, and Mary Ellen. They taught C.C.D. and lived in a house the parishioners had fixed up as a convent. They had a long day: 7:00 AM Mass to 4 PM, teaching.

The people brought the Sisters their food. Evelin Hinker remembers one time that she brought chicken and Sr. Bernarda said, "How do you cook this?" Later, at home, Evelin's Mom whopped her when she said those Nuns were the dumbest bunch of people for not knowing how to cook chicken! (From then on, Mrs. Hinker wrote out cooking directions for them.)

During the '30's, the Hinkers and all of S.D. endured a 10 year drought. A seaze of grasshoppers also descended on them. Luckily the Hinker family lived along a river and that kept the insects away during the day. In some places the sun couldn't be seen because of the grasshoppers. They even ate the paint off of the buildings and the bark off the trees.

Heretofore, the South Dakota's had Nuns but these IBVM'S were fun: they laughed, teased; they were human; they even talked to the children at recess. Their humanness eventually inspired Evelin and Teresa to join our Institute.

Evelin Hinker

HOW THICK SHOULD ICING ON A CAKE BE?



Away back, forty years or more, the Soo was a great place for picnics. We went to various places---Land's End, Sherman Park, the Shallows, the Rock Cut, and to Bell's Cottage. On one occasion, as we packed our lunches, Sr. Felician, the Superior, denied our request to make a batch of fudge to sweeten the outing. She accented the STAPLES as sufficient nourishment. We DID have permission to make a cake. So, we persuaded our best candy-maker--Sr. Ursula Rutledge--to put extra-thick icing on the cake. It was enjoyed by all--even the Superior, who remarked on the icing's thickness.

M. Thecla Flynn

IBVM Archives

WHEN THE CHANGES CAME MARCHING IN

Around 1933, when Mother St. Teresa was Superior General, she initiated a change in our religious Habit by removing the train-- a nine-inch extension which was "let down" when one entered the chapel and the parlor, or when one knelt to get the Mother General's blessing.

Losing our trains was just too much of a shock to Golden Jubilarian Mother Clara Brett. She sat stunned and still long after the startling news broke. For weeks after the scissors had completed the alterations, she still kept hooking up the docked Habit.

However, for the rest of us, the change was more than welcome, for it meant that we could also shed the cumbersome habit skirt-- a necessary adjunct when one hooked-up the habit.

M. Thecla Flynn

ANECDOTES

Answering the door one day, when a group was expected for about a week, I was greeted with the question: "Are you Sister Diabolo?" When I told the inquirer he had made his arrangements with Sister Beata, I could see that the significance of both names was lost on him.

In another instance, on the way to see the chapel, a visitor asked if he would be able to see the catacombs.

The lettering "Queen of the Institute" on the wall in the blue foyer prompted a third person to ask if the Sister sitting on the bench there was the Queen of the Institute.

M. Consuela

TAKE OFF YOUR BLACK STRAW BONNET

"Use your common sense! exclaimed Mother General St. Teresa, back in the winter of '32, when she heard that one of her bonneted Nuns had her nose frozen. Right away, she legislated that warm head-scarfs, not black bonnets, were henceforth to protect Nuns and noses.

It happened in Sedley's sub-zero winter, when two Nuns faced the stiff prairie winds as they stood waiting for a delayed street car. Sr. Petronilla's nose was frozen! Mother St. Winifred applied the ancient remedy--SNOW--which was supposed to defrost the nose. This only increased the itchiness during the ride, and brought on a series of muted giggles, but with no serious effects.

However, this incident spelled the end to the Salvation Army-bonnet, and initiated the era of head-scarfs, or, iotas, as they came to be called. There were no more frozen noses!

M. Petronilla

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS FOR A PICNIC TREAT

In the early 1930's, Sisters Gervase and Thecla, as young and able Nuns, were encouraged to do many housecleaning jobs at the old Soo convent. After one tedious and dusty ordeal of renovating the 40-year old green window-shades, which consisted of turning them top to bottom, retacking them on to the rollers, sewing a new hem for the stick and string, and putting them back up for the next 40 years. As a reward, the Superior--Mother Anita-- decided that we should go on a picnic to the Pumping Station park area at Algonquin. She gave us each TWENTY-FIVE cents to spend, and sent us off for the day.

I forget what we did all day, but we probably spent our quarters for candy at the O'Gorman's Candy Wagon. Towards FIVE O' CLOCK the fateful hour to be back home, we waited for Mary Andary, who was to drive us back. She had forgotten us! When we finally got to a phone, darkness had already set in, so that we returned home under the stars--a rare thing in those days!

M. Thecla Flynn



"The shades of night were falling fast"