

Sacred Heart Letters

Compiled by
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*I am grateful to the following people
who helped in the preparation of these letters:*



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Sketch by "Aileen", June 1917.

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J. Matthews 1979¹

Introduction

Following the deaths of her parents (Mamie Jardine Harris in 1906 and John Harris in 1915), Mary Harris came to boarding school at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Halifax, Nova Scotia from St. John's, Newfoundland. Mary began school at the Convent in September of 1916 and her sisters, Alice and Marjorie, joined her in the following years.

This school was run by Religious of the Sacred Heart, an order of Catholic nuns founded in France in 1800. The members of the Society have, through their prayer and service, devoted their lives to spreading the message of Jesus' love for each human being. Traditionally they have been teachers who established schools throughout the world. Until the 1960's they were "partially cloistered" which, at its simplest, meant that the nuns lived most of their lives within

¹ Used with permission of the artist. www.JudyMatthewsArtist.com/
Ms Matthews advised (2018) that the print has recently been re-introduced.

the boundaries of their various properties. They were permitted to travel from one convent to another, attend certain classes and attend medical appointments, if accompanied by another female. There were two categories of Religious of the Sacred Heart at that time: the teachers, referred to as “choir” nuns, were called “Mother”, while those responsible for such things as cooking and housekeeping were “coadjutrix sisters” and were addressed as “Sister”. In the 1960’s the distinction was eliminated and all were called “Sister”.

Mary Harris was an excellent student at the Convent of the Sacred Heart and came to believe that she might have a vocation to the religious life. Following her graduation from the Convent in 1922, she entered the Society of the Sacred Heart at Kenwood in Albany, New York where the Society then trained most North American nuns. Mary left Kenwood after several months because of health problems related to a heart condition.

Mary Harris’ granddaughter, Michelle Murphy-Oyao, has generously shared Mary’s brief diary from the spring of 1917. This diary tells the thoughts of a young girl in her first year at the Sacred Heart School, still grieving the death of her father, living away from her home in another country, missing her sisters, and possibly experiencing symptoms of her heart condition, but it also shows us Mary as the strong, determined, joyful, religious individual she was.

Mary had great affection for the Sacred Heart Religious and corresponded with many of them during her school days and afterwards. There are 150 letters written to Mary, most from the nuns, while a few others are from her sisters and schoolmates. The first was written in 1919, the last in 1931. I have added very brief biographical information for the women who wrote these letters.

I have included detailed biographies received from the Archives of the Society of the Sacred Heart, United States-Canada Province, for the two nuns who wrote most frequently - Mary McDermott RSCJ and Mary Louise Ryan RSCJ. In addition, there is a third biography of this type - that of Margaret Lahey RSCJ - given to me by Isobel Page RSCJ (1913-2004) who prepared it for the Society. I encourage you to read all three - they provide great insight into the lives of these women.

For those who are unfamiliar with the Religious of the Sacred Heart and their schools, it is difficult to explain the distinctive features of this education. Almost twenty-five years ago I discovered a beautiful article by Sacred Heart alumna, Suzannah Lessard. In that article Suzannah conveyed the essence of Sacred Heart education as it was when the schools were run by the Religious of the Sacred Heart. With her kind permission, I use her words to introduce the letters written by these nuns and alumnae.

These are the writings of women, women whose voices we have rarely heard.

Madeleine (Leahey) Snow

The Luxury of Order²

BY SUZANNAH LESSARD

Noroton, as it was universally known, was really the Convent of the Sacred Heart at Noroton, a small boarding school - only seventy students - located in a large Queen Anne mansion on a narrow spit of land that projected from the coast of Connecticut into Long Island Sound. My enrollment there was sudden. The family had spent the summer in California, and we learned when we got home that the carpool to my day school had collapsed. My parents were musicians; our home life was a frugal, Bohemian one in which spontaneous decisions were common.

It was, however, my orderly, upper-crust grandmother who made the call to Noroton. And it was Reverend Mother herself who said I could come, even though it was the last minute, and not to worry about the tuition, they would arrange for a scholarship - I could take the qualifying test later. This was because my mother and aunts had gone to Noroton, and my grandmother herself to a school run by the same order in Rome. So in one sense I belonged utterly at Noroton. On the other hand, at thirteen I was a country girl from a household where there was a lot of chaos, and my primary identification at the time was with Huckleberry Finn.

We drove up to the front door, where ancient oak and beech trees shaded the grounds on either side and enclouded the house so that one saw only floating bits of facade - a swatch of brick, a snatch of ample white trim around a piece of ample window, a fragment of the big white pediment over the door. The house was four stories tall, and as we neared it the sky seemed filled with just trees and Noroton. At a glance we could see that every inch of the grounds was gardened, or in some way accounted for. On either side of the drive, however, we saw under spreading boughs clear through to a dazzling sea.

The next thing that I remember was finding myself alone in a white-curtained cubicle in a dormitory. There was a bed, and a crucifix, and a chair not for sitting but for putting your folded clothes on at night, I had been told. My cubicle was between the nun's cubicle, which had solid sides, not curtains, and the wall. This meant that I could not make contact with the other girls.

² Lessard, Suzannah. "The Luxury of Order" House Beautiful December 1995: 16+ Used here by permission of the author and of the publisher, Hearst. The article was included in an anthology Lessard, Suzannah "The Luxury of Order" If These Walls Could Talk, Thoughts of Home Ed. Elaine Greene. New York: Hearst Books, 2006. 137-144.

Mine clearly was the most undesirable cubicle, a cubicle someone might be put in for punishment, though I knew that my placement probably reflected my last-minute acceptance - possibly also the fact that my parents weren't paying.

I remember nothing else of my arrival or first few weeks there: It is as if I went into a coma and then awoke as a full-fledged member of a world that I had always known. This reflects shock, no doubt, but it also makes sense in that the densely ornate, beautiful, and absurd life of Noroton was hermetically sealed off from the world in a way that defies the very concept of transition.

Though the real nature of Noroton arose out of intangibles - out of traditions and attitudes and even a mysticism of a sort - Noroton to me is the place: the grounds, the Sound, but primarily the house. It had homelike elements such as a big staircase that swept up from the front hall, an intimate wood-paneled library such as one would find in a home, a space we called the refectory that had once been a dining room, for Noroton had indeed housed a family originally, though on a scale too large-gauged for my imagination to connect with. The first floor especially seemed built for giants.

The structure was full of inferences of hierarchy and divisions. On the second floor, for example, the bedrooms were grand - four girls could sleep in each of them comfortably - with private bathrooms and big windows deeply set so that one could sit in them reading or looking out to the water. On the third floor the bedrooms had dormer windows and no bathrooms, and the ceilings were much lower; these were for lower classwomen. All the rooms that we were allowed into on the fourth floor - previously the floor for servants - were mingy. An exception was the squash court, a deep sky-lighted room of varnished wood in which we studied geometry and Thomas Aquinas.

Much of the fourth floor was out-of-bounds, however, because it was cloistered; only nuns could go there. Bits and pieces of the other floors were also cloistered. So while Noroton, in one sense, became as familiar to me as the house in which I grew up, a substantial portion of it was missing; as a result a coherent blueprint could never coalesce in my mind. It was a logical, highly architectonic structure containing abrupt interruptions of the unknown.

The nuns at Noroton belonged to an order, the Religious of the Sacred Heart, that had been founded in France in the early 19th century. Their habit was based on an 18th-century peasant costume: a fluted starched bonnet encircling the face closely, a black dress and a shoulder cape with buttons down the front that were imported from France, as were the gold

double wedding rings each had put on when taking her vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience in the ceremony of marriage to Christ. Their vows also included a dedication to the care and education of the “Children of the Sacred Heart,” which was us. We were never students, we were children. We addressed the nuns as “Mother,” and always signed notes and letters to them as “Your loving child.” The nuns were cool, aloof, rarefied. Yet when we left on a holiday, which was not often, they would stand on the steps under the pediment and wave good-bye with the big white handkerchiefs that they always kept in their deep pockets.

Customs at Noroton reflected the world of European aristocracy to which earlier Children of the Sacred Heart had belonged, as had many of the earlier nuns, their peasant dress notwithstanding. The motto of the school, for example, was “Noblesse Oblige.” A deep court curtsy, for another example, was a part of our daily routine. Whenever a girl met a high-ranking nun, she would curtsy before and after speaking to her. Even if one merely passed, say, the Reverend Mother in the hall, one would say “Good morning, Reverend Mother” and curtsy, though in that case one curtsy would do. We all developed the knack of curtsying without breaking stride for times when we were on the run. A few years ago I encountered a friend from Noroton who had moved to England, to a place near Prince Charles's country house. She had met Prince Charles, she said, and consequently had had an opportunity to use her court curtsy. This news of an interpenetration of the world of Noroton and the “real” world brought on a tiny unearthly thrill such as one would experience upon meeting up with something known only in dreams.

Although in my four years at Noroton there was only one French girl in the student body and no nun of French origin, many of the terms of daily life were French. Our afternoon snack was *goûter*, for example, our holidays were *congés*, and every Sunday night we had *Primes*. *Primes*, which we pronounced preems, was a ritual that took place in the front hall of the school, a long room with a high coffered ceiling, tapestries on the walls, wooden medieval furniture, and a vast Oriental carpet on the floor. The whole school would be present, seated according to height along the walls, with the nuns in three rows at one end. Each class would, in turn, march up to Reverend Mother, who sat front and center, peeling off in front of her and then circling around to form a small horseshoe directly before her. Fancy parade formations were another tradition inherited from the 18th century.

Sitting at Reverend Mother's side, the Mistress General, a kind of dean of students, would say “First Academic Class all very good” - she would pause here while the class curtsyed in unison - and then continue “except for Suzannah Lessard, who loses her notes for” “Losing your notes” was a punishment for anything from a minor infraction such as speaking after lights

out to the grave violation once perpetrated by myself and my best friend when we took a tour of the cloistered parts of the house.

Those who didn't lose their notes would get a little blue card from Reverend Mother on which was printed "*Très Bien*" (very good). Those who lost their notes, and they were very few, often just me, would get a card that said "*Bien*" (good), and Reverend Mother would cast her eyes down and frown or look sad as one curtseyed and said, "I'm sorry, Reverend Mother." After *Primes*, the cards would be collected.

I lost my notes at nearly every *Primes*, but as I look back it seems to me that the pattern had nothing to do with the nuns, or the Noroton way of life, but rather with areas of unresolved pain that resulted from my growing up the oldest in a large family with parents who were very young and overwhelmed. For me, this predictable, unemotional punishment - unlike the thrashings at home - meant rules were rules, and adults were adults, and children were really children. It was a kind of luxury I couldn't get enough of. The nuns knew girls, the message was, including misbehaving girls like me. Almost with satisfaction - certainly without alarm - they openly attributed my waywardness to my "artistic temperament." I came to fully belong at Noroton, forming friendships that endured, and learning to trust the nuns implicitly, even as I disobeyed them. Certainly there was never any suggestion that my welcome at Noroton was wearing thin.

There was only one occasion on which the nuns' cool, unflappable love wavered. It had to do with my hair. My hair, when it grew beyond a certain length became a kind of uncontrollable Afro, defying the strict grooming standards at Noroton. I liked this. The rambunctiousness expressed in this way was a kind of safety valve and though I suppose the nuns made comments and somehow encouraged me to have it cut or find a style that would contain it, I wasn't aware of a lot of pressure in this regard. I was, consequently, taken by surprise completely when one day as I walked by Reverend Mother's parlor she pulled me in, pushed me into a chair, and cut my hair. This violent and invasive action stands alone in all my experience at Noroton, a shocking aberration that reflects, perhaps, how frustrating my incorrigibility must have been.

The heart of Noroton, the place that was at once most formal and most intimate, was the chapel, situated behind the front hall in what had once been the drawing room of the house. A panelled room, with a parquet floor and large windows that directly faced the sea, our chapel had a private, privileged feeling that a church does not have. It was like a room in a home - it was personal - and yet there was the tabernacle, and inside was the host.

We went to Mass each morning. In the winter months it would be dark outside and the chapel would be lit by low lights and a few candles on the altar. When we entered, most of the nuns would already be there in their stalls, personal kneeling places set apart along walls. Sometimes they would be finishing up the Office, a ritual of early morning prayers practiced by contemplative orders. In Lent they would have gotten up even earlier to say Matins. The Mass was said in Latin then, and all of us, nuns and girls, would say the responses in Latin as well. We girls wore mantillas, the black lace veils that European women wore in church, but that were virtually unknown in America at that time. The kneelers were bare wood, and we all developed calluses called “chapel knees” that would get thicker as the years passed. One fasted before Communion in those days; occasionally a girl would faint.

The ceremony of our daily Mass was austere. Kyrie Eleison, Agnus Dei, Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus. Over time that early morning hour became, for me, a space within which the tension inside me abated. That space contained the beginning of time and the end of time, and my birth and my death. Before dawn broke, the black sky would acquire depth, an inky blueness that seemed to be a physical manifestation of that space. It was a wild, boundless space, yet one made accessible by elaborate artifices: by the rituals, manners, and systems of symbols that made up our life there. Within its stillness, and its vastness, I experienced myself in a way that was supernally calm and pleasurable, yet also passionate. In that space I felt profoundly free.

Twice a year we had a three-day retreat, in which we observed a rule of silence from beginning to end. Our time was meant to be spent in prayer and recollection, we were allowed to take contemplative walks alone (something that I would have liked to have been able to do at all times), were served especially good food, and listened several times a day to a priest who would talk to us in the chapel. The priest was usually a Jesuit, but one year it was a Dominican who led the spring retreat, and I requested a private session with him. I wanted to tell him about an impasse that I had come to in that free calm space I had discovered at daily Mass. As I told the Dominican, I had arrived at a point at which it seemed to me that I had to make a decision either to mindlessly do what the church taught, or to think for myself. The priest hesitated for a long time, and then he said, “You must think.” The answer said to me *Your existence is serious*.

Another set of structures containing the inner space I had discovered at Mass was music. We sang a great deal Noroton. Every day, for half an hour before lunch, the whole school would stand in the study hall learning and rehearsing sacred music, usually Gregorian chant, or the polyphonic music of the Middle Ages, and then we would sing it at Benediction or at Sunday Mass, or as part of the special liturgies of Advent, or Lent, or the processions around the grounds

in May. This is music that was written not to impress or edify or give aesthetic pleasure, but to give glory to God. It's a kind of art in which ancientness is palpable and also in which there is a very clear underlying assumption of humility, of human tinyness, of awe. Gregorian chant sung on a dark morning in Lent especially creates an attitude quite at odds with modern conceptions of the nature of the world and man's place in it. The lusty and unreserved joyful worship of a Magnificat and the stately prayerfulness of an Ava Maria also opened up dimensions from another time.

* * *

It all fell away.

With the modernization of the church in the late sixties (I had graduated in 1962), the nuns left the cloister and went into the world in regular clothes, in many cases to serve in the inner cities. In a secular world, my ties to a changing Catholicism also fell away.

Noroton closed and the property was sold to a developer who, I heard, tore down the middle section of the house, the section that contained the chapel. This left two freestanding wings facing each other, which he renovated into condominiums.

One spring, long after all this happened, I was driving through Connecticut on the Thruway when the exit for Noroton came up. On a whim I took it, and a little while later I was driving down the road that leads toward the end of the point. I parked outside the entrance and walked up the drive.

Where before there had been a facade encloused in trees, there was nothing. In place of the middle section of the house there was just sky. You could walk right through to the sea on the far side. But I stood there on the site of the chapel, aware, first, of my feet on the ground, then of my weight, of my eyes, of my breath, of the interior of me, of my heart. Of my soul.

Mary Harris' Diary - spring 1917



Dearest Mother Barat
take me as your child, and
make a worthy child of the
Sacred Heart.

Mary Harris
Notes on the Retreat 1917.
Given by Rev. Father Orosz.

“Aim high with God in sight”
My Motto.

Order of the Day.

7.25 Rising
8.15 Holy Mass
9 Breakfast
9.20 Free Time
10 Instruction
11 Free time
11.15 Stations of the Cross
11.30 Free Time
12 Dinner
12.30 Out of Doors
1.15 Prepare for Sewing
1.30 Sewing
2.30 Free Time
3 Instruction
3.30 Gouter and Walk
4.15 Study Hall
4.30 Instruction
5.30 Free Time
6 Singing
6.30 Supper
7 Beads in private
7.30 Night prayers in Chapel.
Dormitories

Commenced March 5th 1917.

O Jesus I offer up this retreat for the love of your Sacred Heart, and Our Blessed Mother who is my Mother especially as Moma is gone to God. I love you O Mother, and I wish with my whole heart to love you and your Divine Son more every day of my life. This morning when the retreat began I did not feel much like keeping silence and giving my heart and soul up to prayer, but when I came in from my first silent thoughtful walk my heart was full of peace and and [sic] happiness, at the thought of three days of spiritual and sweet union alone with God and my dear Blessed Mother. I want to make this retreat very well so that it will have an effect on my whole life. As the Father said we are not put in this world for pleasure but with some definite object in view and during this retreat I am going to do my best to make sure whether my object i[s] what I think it is and that is - to become a nun. O if I was only old enough to enter now. I don't think the time will ever come. O my dear Jesus help me to do well at my studies especially Arithmetic so that I will be well fitted for the life. And give my [sic] grace to persevere in my object so that nothing will keep me from it. The Father said that if we expect much we will get much from

God at least so I must try to be more good and generous in giving to God not only the things that I am obliged but also other little things. A retreat is a withdrawing from the world to arrange as it were, the matters of our souls with God so that we will be happier in the love of God afterwards

3.30. 2nd Instruction

The Father spoke to us this afternoon about the awful danger of bad books and some of the moving pictures that are shown and that we should have the courage to be staunch and not be afraid to say “no” to anything harmful to our souls. We ought to cultivate a taste for good reading, so that in the world we will not be in want of a subject for conversation when we meet educated people in the real sense of that word. I am very glad that I always refused to go to the moving [sic]. I cannot imagine what led me to do so perhaps God wanted my mind to be innocent of bad pictures.

5. oclock 3rd Instruction

This Instruction was on sin, what an awful calamity it is and no one can possibly without peace of conscience [sic] no matter how happy they otherwise are. Conscience is a voice which tells us right from wrong. If we do not listen to it, there will surely be sad results. And even in small things we should not think there [sic] do not make any difference. They do and in many cases where they are not nipped in the bud, sad results follow. Scripture says “We fall by little and little”. O I feel more holy to-day than ever before and if Daddy could only see me he would know that I am persevering in my ----- . I remembered Madame Byrne many times today in my prayers and I do hope she did not forget me in her holy ones.

March 6th 1917

During Mass this morning I read some maxims in my prayer book. The ones that appealed to me most on reading them over, although I have often read them before were: “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul” (Mark VIII)

“Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what God hath prepared for those that love him” (Cor.)

[“]If any man will follow me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me” (Mark VIII)

[“]Walk before me, and be perfect.[”] (Gen. XVII.I)

After the first day of the Retreat I am very much stronger and feel more good than ever before. A very strange thing is that I cannot pray right at Mass. I have so many distractions. Mother Seymour read a book for us at tea on “Love and friendship”. It was lovely. At dinner yesterday she read a book called the Education of girls by Mother Stewart [*The Education of Catholic Girls* by Janet Erskine Stuart]. It was principally about the different kinds of character.

Madame Wynne told me once that my character is decidedly assenting and (plegm) sanguine.

10.30 4th Instruction

This Instruction was on the Incarnation and Redemption of Our Lord. He came down from Heaven to become man he had all the troubles dissappointments [sic], trials and sorrows of the human race and in every way was like unto the human race, with the exception that he was free from sin. When we sin, we insult the person of Jesus Christ and in a way, make all the trouble he suffered for our salvation useless, and make him suffer again who loves us so generously and tenderly.

Again he spoke of the very good habit of examining our conscience daily. We ought to ask the grace and light of the Holy Ghost. Then give thanks to God for all He has given us. Examine our conscience frankly and sincerely. And when we go into Confession, we must not beat about the bush, but use as few words as possible

March

5th Instruction

The father told us that the greatest honor that could be conferred on any human being, the most marked sign of favour given to human beings by God - is the Catholic Faith. We are under one Father on earth and there is perfect peace and union while in other religions there is no unity each sect has a different way of expounding the Bible. As a proof that these cannot be the right religions when Luther tried his so-called reform, the people after a time broke after a time, away from his beliefs, and commenced religions of their own.

He exhorted us above all things to be faithful and not to desert our birthright at the prospect of riches and honour in this life but to pity the outsiders with all our hearts' pity, that by prayer and teaching them what is true, we may convert them, and bring them to the true fold.

March 6th

6th Instruction

So far, I liked this one best the father said that no matter what sphere of life we are in we must have suffering to gain intellectual knowledge we must suffer by giving up recreation that we usually have. So in the physical suffering we must give up things that will injure our health.

But there is a solace for suffering when we think of all Our dear Lord suffered for us and how ungrateful we are to him when we offend him by sin. What an amount of suffering he endured for my sake and then ungrateful creature that I am I offend him. He was scourged by a thousand cuts with those knotted cords which tore his dear Sacred Flesh, and then dragged through the streets as a mad man while a crown of thorns pierced his Sacred head. Then he had to carry that heavy cross on which he was to be nailed while his hands were pierced with the sharp nails and his side pierced with a sword and water and blood poured forth. Let us then come to him who loves us so tenderly with perfect trust and not doubting. "Ask and ye shall receive." He loves us to ask him for everything. Then another lovely thought is found in the words "Come to me all ye who labour, are weary and heavily burdened and I will give you rest." What consolation that gives us to think that we can always go to Him call Him our friend and tell him all our joys and sorrows, and when every one else seems cold and indifferent we always have "The Silent Prisoner" and we go to him without introduction or ceremony. O Dearest Heart of my own Jesus, I love you better than anyone on earth and I want to give my life to Thee.

March 6th

7th Instruction

This time the father spoke of what a wonderful mystery the real presence is. St. Thomas Aquinas called it a Sacred Banquet. It cannot be understood in this life but in our heavenly life if we ever get there we will understand it fully. What would we do without it. It is a memorial of Our Lord's Sacred Passion, when he was about to offer up his life for our salvation he left us his body and blood sacramentally as we give anyone as keepsake if they are going on a long journey. God would not leave us a few drops of bread and wine so therefore when he blessed and broke the bread, and said This is my body. This is my blood he let those who did not wish to believe, go away from Him rather than take back what He had said. Then the Mass is the supreme sacrifice where Jesus Christ offers himself for the faithful.

I don't feel a bit good to-day. I wish God would give me some sensible consolation. But I am not going to become discouraged but will hope for better things soon.

Mother Seymour read to day that we must suffer for our dear tender lover - God. God once revealed to some one that if they prayed for one hundred years for suffering they would not at the end of that time be worthy of one little cross. He sends suffering to those he loves. Sometimes in the form of mental torments when we feel it impossible to pray or even after Communion unite ourselves with him.

Then at other times he sends physical sufferings such as illness, but the worst kind seems to me the coldness of friends whom we love, and who at times seem to take no interest in us. These are all tokens of God's wonderful love for us, and the more we get the more he loves us. O dearest Lord I will try to accept all the little trials and sufferings you will be pleased to send, cheerfully and lovingly and with a smiling face. It is sometimes hard but but [sic] it all comes through love and I will accept with that thought.

8th Instruction

This was on the way we should pray. We should not merely say a number of words without any thought added to them. But Prayer simply means raising our hearts, souls and minds to God. It is a conversation with Him for different purposes to thank Him, for petition or otherwise. To give the mind a rest while in the Church or otherwise while praying or at meditation is not, as some people wrongly think a distraction, but at the same time, to think of things that we should not be thinking of at the time is wrong.

Another thing treated in this Instruction was Frequent Communion the father said that it is a splendid thing when we are prepared well, but it is very wrong to go to Communion through routine or because [of] other people. We should have a desire for Our Lord, and should see some sign of an advance in virtue when we have communicated a great many times. Another very dangerous thing is to be scrupulous. Scrupulous people are generally proud by not listening to what they are told also wilful and disobedient and they very often pass over grave faults for the sake of confessing little petty imperfections. We should not think of prayer as a labour or hard work but as a sweet conversation with God. He says "My Yoke is sweet and my burden light" I must try very hard to pray very well and not be the least bit scrupulous.

I was just speaking to Father Orosz he asked me if I was making the retreat. I said Yes. And then he asked me was I happy I said I was very happy, and he said "God bless you"

9th Instruction

Last but not least, was this Instruction it was on Devotion to Our Blessed Lady. He said when every one in the so-called Reform broke away from the Church none of them persevered in Devotion to Our Lady. How could any Christian not associate the name of Jesus without thinking of Mary.

She is Our Mother and we should honour her as such and not let a day pass without consecrating ourselves to her as our patroness. She has healed many a broken heart during this war and when the hour of death comes will not forsake us if we have been true to her during life.

The retreat is over now I'm very sorry to say because I never in all my life spent three happier days. I am feeling much holier and have during the time cultivated and nurtured a stronger and more eager love for Our Lady. She means more to me now and I seem to know her better and I intend to go to her in every little difficulty. I was inclined to feel jealous of the girls who went on a visit with Rev. Mother. But why should I while I have my Heavenly Mother to visit whenever I want to.

This morning the Retreat closed by a Mass said (of) over our resolutions we went to Communion after which there was Benediction. Then we went to Breakfast. At our places were cards from Rev. Mother. This afternoon the Father played for us while we were all seated on the floor in the most graceful!! attitudes. I played and sang and the Father was very pleased. The nuns all were delighted to see that someone had simplicity enough to offer!!!!

March 18th

I feel like killing everyone today because Madam Byrne has recreation tonight and I can't go because Mother Lowth wants me. But I must cheer up and make the sacrifice lovingly and willingly as a little act for poor Mother Seymour whose Mother just died yesterday. Dear Lord this little sacrifice is hard to me. I have no strength of character but I think of the awful sufferings you had to endure so I offer it lovingly.

Uncle Will is no better. I hope he will soon die because he will only be a worry to Aunt Agnes. I feel so lonely today nobody seems to like me and when I went to the chapel today there was a lovely Easter lily on the altar. It brought back sad memories of the one I gave Daddy when he was dying.

Goodbye for today dear Jesus, help me to study and do well in the Exams.

May 1st 1917

It seems ages since I have written in this precious little book. Since March many things have happened. They [sic] Examinations are over and I am glad to say I did well in them. At last Our Lady's month has arrived, the sweetest month in all the year to me, because Our Lady seems to love me more or at least show me that she loves me, more in this month than any other time of the year. I am going to work very hard during this month and try to be worthy to crown

our Lady at the end of the month. I hope nothing will happen to make my [sic] be disobedient or anything else between now and the end of the last of this month. Today I feel so happy our Lady seems to be so near me and I have been thinking of Dearest Daddy a great deal. My dearest Blessed Mother has a great secret with me. It is a great big intention that nobody knows about not even Margaret. I know deep down in my heart that she will grant it and I am going to have two masses said in her honour during vacation if it is granted. I also am praying hard that I will be able to crown her. Today we had competition in Literature. I think I did very well. I hope I got first place. This afternoon we had benediction and we sang a lovely *Ave Maria*.

May 2nd

Oh joy! I got 1st in the competition on 86% that is the beginning of my answer. Oh dearest Blessed Mother please grant my request. I knew my lessons today and thank goodness did not fail in the practise which is doing our duty well and it certainly is pretty hard.

The competitions of three begin with Composition on Monday.

Oh my ever since May began I am so happy. I really never knew how much I loved Our Lady before what a joy it would be to be allowed to crown her at the end of the month.

I had to sing for Rev. Mother tonight with Regina. After it was finished Rev. Mother said that she could not understand a word we said. I must admit it was rather discouraging but "Every cloud has a silver lining." Aileen is so good since May. I hope it will continue because it would be great if she could crown Our Lady. It would give Madame so much pleasure.

May 3rd

Nothing of note has happened today except that Regina gave me a sweet bookmark and made me promise never to say that she does not like me any more.

I knew my lessons today and was faithful to the the [sic] practice.

Instead of the Politeness medal being given for manner it is to be given for conduct. I hope I get my mention of [sic] Monday at primes. We sing every day going into the Chapel for benediction. It is simply lovely.

Oh! my dearest mother take me under your loving protection and never let me do anything to displease either you, or our Lord. You know dearest Blessed Mother that I often feel lonely oh so lonely for Moma and Daddy and you can't imagine how I want Daddy sometimes.

May 4th

Today is the first Friday of the month.

The weather seems to be cold from the look of it in here and I do not feel a bit like being good today some girls think it is easy to be good but I could give them a little light on the subject. However it is not what I feel like but it is - DUTY that I must do whether I like it or not because I would not displease Our Lady by letting her see that I am not willing to make many little sacrifices for her. But so far I have had Distinguished every morning at study that is for this month and I shall not give up the battle now.

I never really felt as I do now what a beautiful month May is. Not that there is benediction every day and because the altar is decorated but because I love Our Lady.

Well the First Friday is over and somehow I feel queer. I knew my lessons and did very well in class but sad to say I was not among the guard of honour. Peg was I am so glad. To night we had pictures of different girls on the Magic Lantern. It was very good. The school seems sad today. The news came that Adele Grace is dead. She met with a serious accident yesterday and died today. It seems very very sad and she is only 18. I feel to night as if it is impossible for my intention to be granted but Our Lord said that if we have the faith the size of a mustard seed we could command mountains to be buried in the sea and it would be done accordingly and why could not this comparatively small thing be done. I told Aileen my secret today but I feel a kind of sorry for doing it now. I must not be discouraged as to the answer to my prayer because I know that if it is God's will that it will be granted.

And my motto is

Aim high with God in sight

and no matter how many times I fall I am going to jump up and begin over again. I wish there was someone here to talk to. I do wish there was a Mistress General. Oh dear! tomorrow is Saturday and the next day is Sunday and then, then Monday and the competition in Composition. Oh Holy Ghost inspire and guide my pen so that I will make a splendid competition. I must stop for tonight as I am rather sleepy. Holy Mary protect me and keep from me all sin and love me and keep me for yourself always, always.

Sat. May 5th 1917.

Thank heaven there is no competition today, and I expect we will have a nice class, as we always do.

Today has been quite nice. At class this morning we did some Latin translation which was quite interesting.

But Arithmetic - Oh! We had a test but I did not get one example correct. At recreation we played baseball. Madame Gillen was mistress I think she is very nice but most of the girls don't like her.

Hilda Jenkins is peeved with everyone today I don't know why. She nearly bit my head off this afternoon. But I should worry about her.

At tea time I got two letters. One from Peg and one from Alice. They were both very interesting and also funny. Alice said that the pony has a little foal and she is soon going to send me a snap of it. Peg says that she thinks I'm going home for my holidays. Oh joy! I hope I do, because I am just longing to see Alice and Marjorie. I wish Daddy was here though.

The school seems sad today because there is a report going around about Adele Grace. I don't know whether it is true or not so I had better not write it.

Mary Ryan gave me this verse tonight. I think it is sweet.

What a precious name you carry
Little girl with eyes of blue
Just to think dear Mother Mary

Shares her Holy Name with you
 Sweetest name (of) in all the ages
 Loved of God and loved of man.
 Honoured by all saints and sages
 Ever since the world began.
 Praised by countless voices ringing
 In the bright celestial choirs.
 Blessed by little children singing
 Hymns of thanks and fond desires
 Gracious with a grace supernal
 Lovely as a morn in May
 What a grace that is eternal
 This the name you hear today.
 'Tis a priceless jewel you carry
 Little girl with eyes of blue
 Yet I know dear mother Mary
 Gladly shares her name with you.

[See *To a Little Girl Named Mary*, by H. M. Kennedy, in the *Kentucky Irish American*,
 (Louisville, Kentucky) Sat. Jun. 11, 1921, at page 3 <https://www.newspapers.com/image/68188144/>]

May 7th 1917.

Today has been a very pleasant one. I studied most of the time, and we had lovely
 recreations and best of all the cloud about Adele Grace's death is lifted off the school because it
 is all a great lie.

But somehow I am lonely for Daddy tonight I wish he could come back to me even for
 one day, but I know it is impossible.

The [sic] is a dread over me about the competition in Composition tomorrow but I know
 our Lady will guide my pen while I am writing. This is all that happened today so I must stop
 writing and say some fervent prayers to Our Lady to help me tomorrow and I know she will do
 it.

Goodnight dear Blessed Mother keep me safe during the night and make [me] your own
 special child.

Regina seems queer lately I don't know what is the matter with her. I suppose she notices
 that I do not like Hilda Smith but I positively can't do that because she has not got a good word
 to say for anyone.

May 8th 1917.

We began our Comp. of three today with Composition. I feel deep down in my heart that
 I will get first place. But the one I dread most is Grammar. It is to be on Friday but I know Our

Lady will help me. Margie is very good at Grammar so I am afraid, but I began a novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Thank goodness we had primes today and I got my mention for conduct. Poor Aileen did not, but Madame says that she thinks it is a mistake. I hope it is because really Aileen has tried very hard.

Nothing else of importance happened today. I wish to heavens the day of the Prizes would come in one way but in another way I don't because I will be very lonely after someone here (not mentioning names).

May 9th

It is a good thing I have this book to let my spite out, in. Today has been perfectly horrid. I expect it was my own fault through [sic] because I woke up feeling cross.

At class this morning Madame went on with a lot of stuff about the way I kneel in the chapel and I did not say anything but I was positively boiling inside. At Instruction and all the other classes it was all right until English class in the afternoon and that capped the climax. Peg was next to me and I was sitting very straight and paying strict attention when suddenly I felt a great dig. It was Peg's pencil. I jumped about two feet and she started to giggle. She laughed so much that she set me going too, and Madame sent me down at the end table. After class I asked her if she was cross with me and she said "Yes" I asked her again at 4 o'clock and she seemed a bit better. But I am not sure yet whether she is pleased or not. I just feel like the old boy but feelings don't count in this world but I was trying to be so good. Just my luck! I only hope Madame won't take my notes. I don't suppose she will though.

Blessed Virgin Mary help me to be good and attentive in class and don't let anything happen again like it was today.

May 8th 1917

O! today has been simply terrible. At class this morning I laughed at Mary Sinnott and Madame said I was laughing at Charlotte and she is going to take my mention for conduct. That will take away all my chance of crowning Our Lady. I just hate to think of it because it makes me feel so discouraged this is the hardest week I have spent since I came here. But Our Lady understands. And even if I do not crown her on earth Our Lord will make me worthy of crowning her in Heaven.

We have had so much Latin this week that it positively gives me nightmare[s]. I am sick of the sight of the Latin book. I do wish the Competition was over. At Arithmetic we are learning some foolery that I don't understand. It is a great consolation to think that there is only forty days more and then I hope - home.

May 9th 1917.

Take my head on your shoulder daddy.
Turn your face to the West
It is just the hour when the sky turns gold

The hour that Moma loved best.
 The day has been long without you Daddy
 Youve [sic] been such a while away
 And now you're as tired of work Daddy
 As I am tired of play.
 But I've got you and you've got me
 So everything seems right.
 I wonder if Moma is thinking of us
 Because it's my birthday night
 I'm sometimes afraid to think Daddy
 When I am big like you
 And you are old and grey Daddy
 What you and I would do
 If, when we got up to Heaven
 And Moma was waiting there
 She shouldn't remember the two she left
 So sad and lonely here
 But year by year still sees no change,
 And so 'twill all be right
 (Wh) We shall always meet her in our dreams
 Good night dear, dear, Daddy goodnight
 Why do the big drops fall Daddy
 Moma's not far away
 I often seem to hear her voice
 Calling me, through the day
 And it sometimes makes me cry Daddy
 To think that none of it's true
 Till I fall asleep in a dream Daddy
 Of home, and mother and you.
 But we're all the world to each other Daddy
 For Moma once told me so.

[See *Daddy*, Words by Mary Mark Lemon, Music by A. H. Behrend, at
<http://www.traditionalmusic.co.uk/songster/37-daddy.htm>]

I think this little poem is just sweet. It makes me very sad and lonely for Daddy. Today has been pretty good. Madame is pleased with me again that is one consolation, I hardly know whether to be sad or glad to think there is only forty days more before the Prizes (but) for who knows what will happen between now and September.

This time tomorrow night the awful Latin Competition will be over. It is wearing on me like a nightmare. Our Lady of Perpetual Help grant that I will make a splendid Competition.

May 11th 1917

Deo Gratias! the Competition in Latin is over at last. No one knows how relieved I am. I do not dare even think how I got on. It was awful I think, and I know Peg will get first place. However we won't know that until June. I am not going to be a "stick in the mud" though and get discouraged at that, but I must work as hard as I possibly can and get first place in the three other English subjects and fulfil the words of the dearest of poets, Longfellow

"Let us then be up and doing, with a heart for any fate,
Still achieving still pursuing
Learn to labour and to wait.

This has been a very nice [sic] and I felt very happy and good, I am in hopes that Madame won't take my mention, because I apologized 5 times already.

Goodnight dear little book. I don't know what I would do if I had not got you to vent my spite, and joys and sorrows in.

May 12th 1917

Today has been pretty good. Mr. Haddock gave me a lovely book of songs today. But I don't like Saturday or Sunday they are too long. Madame Byrne took my mention for the medal, but Mother Lowth said I should have it so she gave it to me. I feel like an ass about it because if I happened to crown Our Lady Madame Byrne would be sure to say something about it. But I am not going to worry myself about it anymore. Madame Byrne seems to be raging with me. Oh dear Lord I wish I had someone here to like me, I mean among the nuns. I had a letter from Mary Doyle today and she said it is undecided yet as to whether I am going home or not. I never spent such a hard two weeks as the past two have been. I've (been) been into scrapes the whole time just because I am trying to be good. I do wish the "Prizes" would hurry up and come, I am crazy from studying that's a fact.

I am a fool though to be grumbling like this, I probably don't know what's good for me.
I am just longing to see Alice and Marjorie.

May 13th 1917

Today has been simply great. This morning at recreation Madame said something about people excusing themselves so I determined not to give her the chance to say that again, and afterwards I told her that I had taken the resolution not to ever excuse myself again because I have had a lesson that will last a long time. At noon recreation Madame Wynne was Mistress and we had a lovely time telling jokes etc. At four o'clock recreation Margie, and Kathleen and Mary Sinnott and myself acted Charlie Chaplin for Mère Pillet she roared laughing. To night we had a lovely concert I sang *Irish Lullaby* and also *My Old Kentucky Home* with Regina.

Helen Wallace is probably going to stay here for the holidays. I think it would be just great if I could stay too we would have great fun. But when I think of home it does not seem such great fun though.

May 14th

Today I got up feeling punk but I studied quite well this morning and knew my lessons well. Mother Lowth did not give me my mention after all but I don't mind now as much as I did at first. Tonight I am awfully tired, I wish Sister would give me something because I don't know what is the matter with me lately. To night we had charades and they were great. Peg was not well so she went to bed early. I am going to pray very hard that Aunt Agnes will let me go home instead of remaining up here because I want to go home an awful lot and another thing I want is to bring Alice up here next year.

May 15th

Today I knew my lessons and I was pretty good too, but nothing else happened. Tonight at recreation we had charades, and tomorrow we are going to begin the novena to Blessed Madeleine Sophie. Oh how I love that dear [indecipherable] and I hope she will get me the big intention that I am praying for.

May 16th 1917

This morning we commenced the novena to Blessed Madeleine Sophie her statue is in the chapel and it is perfectly sweet. Just think, only thirty three more days and we will have our holidays. I knew my lessons today pretty well and Madame is reading a great story for us. The two little Turnans are across the way tonight, I see where we have a picnic. They are to be confirmed tomorrow. We have just finished a lovely book in the Refectory called the *Life of St. Ignatius*. It was simply great.

May 17th 1917

Today has been a great day. It is the wonderful Feast of the Ascension. This morning we had two masses and I was nearly dead by the time the last one was finished. I had the most awful headache all day, and my gums and lips are sore and altogether I feel miserable. I got on very well at class today except Arithmetic and at the [sic] we had Long. and [indecipherable] which I do not understand. At Benediction this afternoon seven little Juniors were confirmed. The Archbishop gave a dear sermon, and also Father Curran. At noon today Aileen came rushing out to tell us that she had permission from Mother Brennan to give some shadow pictures and have an extra long recreation.

After Benediction we went down and arranged St Annes room by putting every sweater we could find up to the windows and two sheets across the door.

At tea the first Cours were dying to know what we were going to have but we wouldnt [sic] tell them. After supper we rushed over to the recreation room and got everything ready. When Mother Seymour came over she persuaded us to invite the first Cours so we had to do it. The show was as follows

Shadows pictures of the Ascension, The Annunciation, The Finding in the Temple, The Agony in the Garden, The King Arthur of Brittany and songs in between. I was Our Lord in the Ascension and I sang *O Rex Gloriam* and in the Annunciation when I was singing *The Ave Maria*, I simply had to Laugh at the end of it. We had the lights covered and we suddenly discovered that the coverings were scorching. Everyone enjoyed it and we feel quite proud of ourselves.

May 17th 1917

Just think seventeenth [sic] days of this month have passed already. Today the Geography Competition by [sic] written, I think ours was simply great, and I am sure I did pretty well. This afternoon we had headbaths and I needed one very badly. Tomorrow is Saturday and I think I have been pretty good this week so I hope I will get my mention. I am hoping to get a letter and some snaps tomorrow. I hope I will not be disappointed.

May 30th

It is an age since I wrote in this book. But so many nice things have happened and I've been so tired at bedtime that I could not write in it. First of all Mother Mahoney our Vicar is here she is a perfect dear. Mother Walsh is with her. I got my Angel's Medal on dear Blessed Madeleine Sophie's Feast and Regina told me that according to the number of notes that I will Crown our Lady, but she is not sure yet.

O Dearest Blessed Mother I knew all along through thick and thin that you would not refuse my request, and I now have more faith as to the big intention. Only three more weeks. Madame Byrne has been sweet to me lately and she is going to take me for some class work some Sunday!! Oh joy! Our Lady granted my request for I did crown her. It was at Lourdes Statue.

Letters 1919 - 1931



Convent Students 1919 - Mary Harris front row, second from right

S.C.J.M.³

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Halifax, Nova Scotia,
July 21, 1919.

Dear Mary,

Reverend Mother has just favored me with a request to answer your welcome little letter. She went into Retreat last night after giving us just ten minutes warning so we feel

³ These nuns usually began their letters with S.C.J.M. - *Sacrés-Coeurs de Jésus et Marie* - and added RSCJ after the signature which is *Religieuses du Sacré-Cœur de Jésus* or *Religiosae Sanctissimi Cordis Jesu* or *Religious of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*.

like orphans. You need not worry about changes - Always wait until the trouble comes and then the worry is not wasted. There has not been the sign of a change yet though if all the presentiments are fulfilled we shall have a general exodus. Our Retreat Father was from Yankee Land and was almost frozen during his stay though I believe some Haligonians were suffering from heat.

Your devotion to Caesar quite touches my heart and brings to mind the Latin and Algebra exercises you asked me to send you. You remember Mother Brennan⁴ made a series of speeches before you little people left and she carried out all the promises since. When I went for those books there was no trace of them and on inquiry I found the precious manuscript had been consigned to the paper-basket. She felt it quite a pity the work was so neat but she supposed you had abandoned it.

Edith⁵ comes out quite often. Elsa and Freda have gone with their Mother, the two little ones and Carl. They have a house next to Edith's and are having a delightful time after the long period of separation. Hilda has gone to Bedford and I have heard nothing from Aileen or Florence.

Poor Mother Duffy⁶ is suffering a good deal but is about. Her sister died during the Retreat and it was a great sorrow. Mother Coster⁷ has gone to God and received a loving welcome I feel sure. She suffered agonies before the release came. Pray for her.

The two beautiful fonts in the Chapel are constant reminders of you and of Alice. We have the outer glass put in on the dark side of the Chapel and two openings have been made so that the sick may hear mass up in the infirmary corridor. The Children's Refectory has been

⁴ Mary Brennan RSCJ (August 31, 1865 - November 13, 1926), of St. John's Newfoundland, was the daughter of James and Annie Brennan. Mother Brennan is buried in Mount Olivet Cemetery, Halifax, N.S.

⁵ This refers to Edith Metzler, later RSCJ, (1903-1998) who graduated from the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Halifax with Mary Harris in 1922, then shortly thereafter entered the Novitiate of the Sacred Heart. Mother Metzler taught for a portion of her career at College Street School in Halifax. See Isobel Page, R.S.C.J., *College Street Remembered*. Printed in Canada by kaice/tec reproduction ltée. no date, pg. 58. See other references to her in these letters. Her grave is in Holy Cross Cemetery, Halifax N.S.

⁶ Confusingly there were a number of "Mother Duffys" in Canada during this period: Ethel (1893-1984), Phoebe Gertrude (1853-1929) and Josephine (1854-1926). In addition, Mother Mary Duffy died in 1917.

⁷ Clare (or Mary-Clara) Coster, R.S.C.J. (1855-1919), was the daughter of Charles D. Coster and Grace Holbrooke. Mother Coster's grave is in Montreal at Le Repos Saint-François d'Assise <https://www.rsfa.ca/> See cemetery records.

renovated and the traces of the Explosion are gradually growing less.⁸ Give my love to Alice and tell Marjorie I am looking forward to meeting the third of the Harris trio.

As ever,

Devotedly in C.J.,

Mary A. B. McDermott⁹

rscj.

⁸ The Halifax Explosion took place December 6, 1917 when two ships collided in Halifax Harbour. One of the boats was carrying munitions and the resulting explosion destroyed a significant portion of the city, killing about 2,000 people and injuring another 9,000. The Sacred Heart Convent was severely damaged, while College Street School sustained minor damage. Both properties were sufficiently intact to be used in the relief effort, the Convent housing children whose families were missing, two doctors who worked from the school, as well as seventy Red Cross nurses from Boston. College Street School was used as housing for workers repairing homes. See Isobel Page, R.S.C.J., *College Street Remembered*, pp. 23-24.

⁹ See the biography of Mary McDermott RSCJ following these letters.



Mary, Alice and Marjorie Harris

S.C.J.M.

Convent. Halifax. 27th July 1919.

My dear Mary,

The only virtue of this scant line in answer to your very nice letter, is its promptitude: a few minutes offer, and I accept, lest such be long in coming again.....

I was glad to hear that you and Alice are enjoying a happy, healthful summer. September will find you the better ready for travel over the strong roads. Vacation is flying, isn't it? August opens on Friday - College Street¹⁰ nuns start the 25th August - too near, you would think.

We had an excellent Retreat, given us by Father Mullin S.J. of Worcester College, Mass. He called us up the Mountain, sure enough: we ought to be Saints, being given so many graces.

Not a child in the house now: Freda and Celna are with their mother, who has come on from W. Indies. Karl has gone far West. Changes come to all here below - no moving in our sphere to other houses, as yet: some will doubtless occur. Soldiers obey orders, you know - and good soldiers, joyfully. Rev. Mother comes out of her Retreat Tuesday, and we shall welcome her, indeed.

Our Spring Garden looks lovely - roses in full bloom and grass so green. Some hot days have said summer, and we have accepted them as averaging with iceberg days past. Yes - read all you can, dear Mary, both solid and merely pleasant books - nothing, except prayer, is better.

Much love to Alice (she is studying Math, I hope?) to girls you meet - ours - and to you. Pray for Yours devotedly,

C.M. Lowth R.S.H.¹¹

¹⁰ The Religious of the Sacred Heart ran two schools in Halifax for about one hundred years beginning sometime in the 1850's. One was a fee-paying day/boarding school for girls on Spring Garden Road. The other was a nearby free day school for both boys and girls. The two-school model came directly from the Society's mission to educate both rich and poor children, to be accomplished by using the proceeds from the private school to fund the free school. Eventually the free school became College Street School which was part of the Halifax public school system, although it was staffed and run by the Sacred Heart nuns. Finally a new public school was opened in 1952 but the school was too far from the Convent for the nuns to meet the requirements of cloister, so the nuns ceased this work. See *College Street Remembered*. The fee-paying school continues as a member of the Network of Sacred Heart Schools and now admits boys and girls but no longer has students living at the school.

¹¹ Catherine Mary (Kitty) Lowth RSCJ (Dec.23, 1853 - Dec. 24, 1924) was the daughter of Irish parents Mathew Lowth and Mary Glavin. Catherine was born in Columbus, Wisconsin. Mother Lowth wrote a short article for the *Catholic Encyclopedia* in 1909 on Mother Phillipine Duchesne, one of the founders of the Sacred Heart in the U. S. Mother Lowth is buried in Montreal in Le Repos Saint-François d'Assise <https://www.rsfa.ca/> See letter from Mary A. McDermott of Jan. 2, 1925 describing Mother Lowth's death and Ancestry <http://www.ancestry.ca/family-tree/person/tree/25896487/person/1772147151/story> and Lowth, Catherine. "Philippine-Rose Duchesne." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 5. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909. Retrieved Oct 25, 2019 from New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05182a.htm>

S.C.J.M.

Convent, Halifax. 6th July 1920

My dear Mary,

I must forewarn against the credit mark you are about to give me for this prompt answer to your very nice letter: I was just writing a little business note to Alice when 'Mary' called, so I am enclosing the word to her in my thanks to you.

Two holy and gay U.S.A. Jesuits took ship for St. John's this morning, going to give Retreats in your country. We asked them to find you children out, and do you find them - most edifying and interesting.

Indeed, you have gone to pegging Brandy, dear Mary! Don't work too hard, but you will be glad to go on in line with those of your class, in Mathematics, as I think you will do, by dint of this good extra work. Write some tests for your teacher - to test yourself. No doubt of the solid reading you will get in, between times.

As Margaret Jenkins¹² is kind enough to get some books - *Hohenzollerns*, Publisher Musson Co. Toronto, along with some other books - I must only thank you, Mary - or perhaps say that if you wish to substitute: *Dante, the Central Man in the World*, by Slattery, and published by P.J. Kenedy Barclay St. New York it would be lovely of you. Or - anything else you like. For your library, get Lionel Johnson's *Critical Essays*, if you haven't this - I am reading them now - a present - delightful.

We are well settled in vacation, all thinking of the Retreat not far off - 22^d - Pray for us and me, then, won't you? The house is so silent now we can't help being in mood for prayer and study.

I am writing Alice in regard to... Latin and Math. With love to Marjorie, tell her to take a dip into Arithmetic this summer to strengthen up. Of course the Martin's¹³ are having a lovely

¹² At least three sisters of the well known Jenkins family of Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island attended the Convent of the Sacred Heart and knew the Harris sisters. Margaret "Queenie" (1897-1999), Hilda "Bobs" (1900-1988) and Stephanie (1903-) were three daughters of Dr. Stephen Rice Jenkins and Ellen Sweeney. Margaret taught school in Georgetown P.E.I., then became a librarian; she married Fred Taylor. Hilda became a nurse in Montreal. See Hilda Jenkins and Margaret Jenkins Taylor *The Jenkins Family, Five Generations of Doctors*, 1975, Prince Edward Island Public Archives and Records Office and Ancestry <https://www.ancestry.ca/family-tree/person/tree/159879626/person/422088867535/facts> and <https://billiongraves.com/grave/Margaret-Q-Jenkins-Taylor/9252032>

¹³ The Martins are sisters Audrey and Pauline Martin who were boarders at the Sacred Heart in Halifax They were the daughters of Joseph Arthur Martin and Mary McArar. Pauline Ann Martin RSCJ (June 5, 1910 - Sept. 11, 2008) was at the Halifax Sacred Heart Convent from about 1917 until graduating from there in 1929. She trained as a registered nurse, graduating in 1936 from St. Mary's Hospital in Montreal and then worked as a nurse in Montreal. Pauline entered the Society of the Sacred Heart in 1944 and made her final profession in 1952 in Rome.

time. On Audrey's return, tell her, we shall have to pull up Arithmetic so as to even it with English this year coming. All business, isn't it? Kindest regards to dear Aunt¹⁴, love to girls and to Mary. Devotedly Yours, **C. M. Lowth R.S.H.**

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Halifax, Nova Scotia,
July 15, 1920.

Dear Mary,

Many thanks for your letters, and now to business. *Leading Events in History* is published by R. & T. Washbourne, 1, 2, & 4 Paternoster Row, London, and also by Benziger Brothers, New York City. As the value of English money is low you would do better to get your copies in London. I do not know the price as the price lists are continually changing but the set would not be more than five dollars at most. We send for the books and send the money after for the most part. You may send your order and if they are not willing to send the books they will send the price, or you could send what you were sure would cover cost and they would put what was over to your credit.

When you are sending for the *Vocabularies* get *Acucid* Books I, II, and VI. I am glad you are getting on well with the Geometry. Be sure to do the Exercises. I trust you will get over some of the solid as well as the plane before Sept. for it will mean much for you next year. The First Class will take up Vergil so you may be prepared for tasting some of the sweets of Latin poetry. I am sure you will love it. I am getting some most delightful readings ready and even if I do not have you the books will be there.

Mother Martin was a teacher and a nurse at a number of Sacred Heart schools in Canada. In her later years she acted as the Society's archivist in Montreal, and in Halifax served as school librarian, hospital chaplain, and assisted with the Society's retirement home. The Martins were cousins to Sister Regina Cowan RSCJ on their mother's side of the family. Sister Pauline Martin is buried at Holy Cross Cemetery, Halifax, N.S. See *The Gazette*, Montreal, QC, 2008-09-13.

¹⁴ Agnes Mary (Harris) Tobin (1873-1930) was Mary Harris' aunt, one of John Harris' sisters. In 1905 Agnes married William Tobin (1876-1917) who was employed as bookkeeper in John Harris' business. John Harris died in 1915 and Agnes and her brother Thomas B. Harris were named as executors and guardians for Mary and her sisters; in addition Agnes was paid to maintain John Harris' home on Rennie's Mill Road in St. John's, Newfoundland for the children.

Ever since you left Mothers Jensen¹⁵, Duffy, Brennan, Sister Delia¹⁶ and myself have been picking up your belongings. The case is now full to overflowing and we have registered a resolution that cost what it may you are to be transformed into a neat child. I am very sorry I did not go to your desk before you left, and had I you would have had less spare time on the *Rosalind* before it started.

Please do not go about telling that I wanted you to read *Hudibras* or I'll suffer harsh judgements. I wanted it to be more than a name and I desired you to read extracts but I never thought of you reading it all. I am delighted you found time for Moliere. Evelyn and Rita enjoyed him so much that they wept with laughter but Bobs [Hilda Jenkins] was affected in just the opposite manner and that made the others hilarious. I want you to get in much reading this summer. Take notes on what you read so that you will have it fixed for the test. You might read some of Schiller's poems and one or two works each of Corneille and Racine. If you have Agnes Strickland's *Queens of England* you might read Henrietta Maria, Catherine of Braganza and Mary of Modena.

I am glad a pony arrived to delight your heart and I can just see Marge and Alice prancing about in delight.

¹⁵ Mary Jensen RSCJ (1874-1941) was the child of Danish immigrant John Anders Lawrence Jensen and Quebec mother, Maria Austin. Mary seems to have had one sister and the family resided in Montreal. Mother Jensen is buried in Montreal at Le Repos Saint-François d'Assise <https://www.rsfa.ca/> See cemetery records and Ancestry.ca 1891 Census of Canada for John Jensen.

¹⁶ Sister Delia Crowe RSCJ (1868-1950) was a coadjutrix sister from Ireland. Her grave is in Mount Olivet Cemetery in Halifax, N.S. See <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/191320731> and 1921 Census of Canada, Nova Scotia, Halifax, Sub-District 050, Halifax (City).



Alice and pony Bess, St. John's, Newfoundland



Eileen Burns
See footnote for letter of July 15, 1920

Ruth is out often and is a sweet little nurse to her mother who had an operation about a month ago.

This must count as the birthday letter as I shall be in Retreat during your celebration. You shall be lovingly remembered in prayer. Thank you a thousand times for your mass offering. It enabled me to have a mass for the repose of the soul of our dear Mère van Goethem who went to God on July 3rd. I want you to pray much for her and I have asked her to interest herself in your studies and all that concerns you.

Aunt Agnes' surprise was a very dear one and I hope the savings of your youth will be invested in books and not in frills and flounces. Do not bring back any non-sensical things next year for we shall need all the room possible for treasures. I want your test year to be one of dearest delights and not a bug bear with a big black exam hanging over it like a cloud. You are to make up your mind to love Mathematics most of all, give it a wee bit more time than anything else and half the difficulty is over. Give my love to Alice and dear little Marge.

Devotedly in C.J.,

Mary A.B. McDermott

rscj.

P.S. Mother Duffy sends you love, thanks you for the letter and the package. M.McD.

S.C.J.M.

Convent, Halifax, 7-20-'20

My dear Alice,

Thank you for your nice lively letter and as we are very near our great week of Retreat, the end of which brings us to August, I must comment a little on your thought for next year: also, enclose for you and the other First Academicians near: - Sheila¹⁹, Pauline, Audrey etc. the programme laid down for Second Academic everywhere next year. Kindly show the girls, will you? To omit this matter would indeed provide a leak in the structure, wouldn't it? Notice even

¹⁹ Sheila Mary Conroy RSCJ (March 14, 1904-November 13, 2000) was from a large, well-known St. John's, Newfoundland family. Her parents were Charles O'Neill Conroy and Mary Agnes Weathers. Sheila was a student at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Halifax and a good friend of Mary Harris. In 1926 she entered the noviciate, at Kenwood in Albany N.Y. and made her final vows in Rome in 1935. She had a long career as teacher, Mistress of Studies, Superior and Provincial Secretary. For a number of years she was Reverend Mother in Halifax where, as was usual, she was much loved. Reverend Mother Conroy is buried in Holy Cross Cemetery, Halifax. Her niece (daughter of her eldest brother James) is Margie Conroy RSCJ (1930-). See *Primes Sacred Heart School Alumnae Newspaper*, 7.1 (2001): 4 and https://www.ancestry.ca/family-tree/person/tree/5115654/person/1909628260/facts?_phsrc=En21&_phstart=successSource See family photo at page 74.

the History and accompanying Literature, all those eight centuries of Christian times, of which no educated Catholic can afford to be ignorant - the ages upon which all later times are built. As to English and American History much can be learned by reading, if one cannot remain for the successive classes - (such an advantage.) Logic and Astronomy have gone into 2^d Acad. - more difficult Philos. into 3^d Acad. founded, of course, upon Logic. What do you think of the Latin? Three Books of Carmen! It is a big step from the 1st to 2^d Acad. (Mathematics must correspond)

and what would she do who skipped this work, but come down with a - **flop!**

Yes, dear Alice, even if we have but a month to give to school, isn't it wise to put the links of the chain together, rather than do scraps here and there? Do you remember Charlotte Egan's plan? - t didn't amount to much that last year.

I am glad you are having a lovely time - Be sure to give soul and mind their share. And Mary! Isn't she a trump card? Give her love and tell her to give the body its due share. What of Marjorie? Copy the five Jesuits visiting St. Johns - they live. Pray for us the coming week - it is the week for us.

Kind regards to Aunt Agnes, so good to you. Return for solid work - all you colleagues - in 2^d Acad. in Sept. Devotedly, **C. M. Lowth R.S.H.**

1921 Class Pictures

The following class pictures are from Mary Harris' photo album. In some cases girls may be missing from the class pictures and not all the girls in the pictures are named. In addition, there may be mistakes in the spelling of names.

First Elementary



D. Bond, G. Emery, H. Murphy, M. McIsaac, P. Burgess[?], M. Grant, M. Wallace, M. McCloud, J. Chisholm, E. Fenton.

Second Elementary



F. Blank, S. Winfield, M. Petropolis, Ruth Chisholm, C. Murphy, K. Murphy, D. Kilburn, E. Carey[?].

Third Elementary



E. Roche, M. Duggan, C. Bond, D. Blank, A. LeBlanc, P. Smith, A. Ryan, D. Saunders, G. Scriven, D. Chapman.

First Preparatory



P. Martin, M. Curray, E. Ternan, M. Glassey, P. Lynch, E. Dwyer, I. Wallace, B. Chipman, K. Beazley, C. Soulis, K. Mahar, M. Ternan.

Second Preparatory



H. Cameron, J. Sweeney, M. Petropolis, F. Bishop, A. Purtill, D. Thompson, E. Petipas, E. Brennan, E. McKintosh, M. Walsh, B. Smythe.

Third Preparatory



S. McManus, M. Page, M. Moore, K. Winfield, F. Beazley, E. Burgess, M. Harris, C. Hay Shaw.

Supplementary Class



M. Buckley, H. Mont, M. Ryan, V. Kilburn.

First Academic



K. Hanifen, M. Lanigan, A. Mackasey, E. Donahoe, C. McGuiggin, D. Metzler, F. Crosby, C. Giovannini.

Second Academic



M. Glenister, M. Woods, S. Stephanie Jenkins, O. Graham, B. Skerry, A. Martin, P. Campbell, A. Harris, E. Burns.

Third Academic



M. Ryan, G. de Wolfe, S. Conroy, M. Hayes, V. Cann, F. Mitchell.

Fourth Academic



M. Dingle, F. Foley, E. Foley, H. O'Connor, K. Burke, M. Granville, M. Brennan, M. Lahey.

Post Academic



F. McGuiggin, M. Harris, E. Metzler, A. Waugh.

Halifax
July 10, 1921

My dear Mary,

Your letters to Rev. Mother and me arrived in due time to our distinct satisfaction as we were anxious to have direct word of our Trio. That we had indirect word you know already as you have heard of the visit paid us by Sister Perpetua²⁰. The good Sister told us that she at first intended remaining on the boat but was so tired on arriving in Halifax that she decided to come up here and ask hospitality. We were delighted that she did so as she was able to get a good rest of which she was in sore need. She told me a great many interesting things about your dear country which would seem to have the second place in her heart - Ireland of course claiming the first.

I am glad the Marshall family regarded the sending back of the letters in the right way. From what you children said of them I felt they must be good people who would not wish their daughter to conduct herself as Cynthia was doing. They probably would not have believed it to be true had any one reported in regard to what was going on - but her own letters gave a proof that could not be questioned. Perhaps it is a lesson that the child needed to bring her to her senses and that will make her give up all that familiarity, etc., which might have carried her far.

Do not forget, if ever you are asked, to let people know that all correspondence is subject to censorship. It is a rule that is quite open and above-board, and many a parent has been glad of this very rule. - You ought to thank GOD that you have always been so carefully guarded and never exposed to the temptations that came in poor Cynthia's way.

Although the First Friday was very unpropitious for visits, rain and fog, etc., twenty-four of our dear children came out for Benediction, League Meeting and visits with Rev. Mother and their Mistresses. We have had the pleasure of seeing some of them each Sunday and Friday since school closed.

I was delighted to hear about your act of unselfishness on the boat. That was a good beginning which I hope will be followed by many more until you acquire the beautiful habit of unselfishness. It is in one of our Lady's virtues which every Child of Mary should possess. - I

²⁰ Sister Perpetua was Sister Mary Perpetua O'Callaghan (1877-1933) of the Newfoundland Sisters of Mercy. Sarah O'Callaghan, who was born in Ireland, came to Newfoundland at the age of twenty-six. She was extremely well educated for a woman of her time, having attended St. Andrew's University. Before she had made her final profession she became headmistress at Littledale School, where she brought about significant improvements in the quality of the education. About the time of this letter Sister Perpetua was on study leave travelling to New York to study at Fordham University, from which she received a Doctor of Philosophy in 1923. She then obtained a diploma as Supervisor of Normal Schools from Columbia. Her brother also came to Newfoundland and was ordained a priest in 1907, serving in various parishes around St. John's until his death in 1948. See Charlotte Fitzpatrick, rsm, *Standing on Their Shoulders*, HUB Printers, St. John's, Newfoundland. 2014.

am enclosing your League Leaflet. Notice your practice is HUMILITY - and I did not pick it out - so our Lord wants that virtue of you.

About the Masses for Reverend Mother de Montalembert²¹: your Aunt Agnes had the kindness to write me before you left Halifax, on the subject. I thought that I had told you of her letter but supposed it escaped me with all there was to do the last days. Please give my love to Aunt Agnes to whom I count on writing soon.

I am sending the mite boxes by Mary R. who is leaving on the 12th. Put them in a prominent place where they may invite all your friends to help the Chinese Missions.

Believe me, dear Mary,

Devotedly yours in C.J.M.

M. L. Ryan²²

rscjm

Madam Wallace²³ asks me to give you her love and thanks you for the nice letter.

S.C.J.M.

Convent, Halifax. 4th August 1921.

My dear Mary,

Little more than a late “thank you” for your so nice letter will be the outcome of this sheet, I fear. But it carries my good will to do more, be assured.

²¹ Catherine de Montalembert RSCJ (1841-1928), who had been the Vicar of Austria from 1905-1913, became an Assistant General in the Society of the Sacred Heart. See Monique Luirard, *The Society of the Sacred Heart in the World of Its Times 1865-2000*, translated by Frances Gimber, pg. 232 and 751.

²² See the biography of Mary Louise Ryan RSCJ following these letters. See also:

<https://wc.rootsweb.com/trees/183785/I3235/marylouise-ryan/individual>

²³ Mary Blanche Wallace RSCJ (July 25, 1885 - January 23, 1954) was born in Halifax to John William Wallace and Teresa Mary O’Neill. Mother Wallace was a teacher, then Mistress General, in Halifax. Immediately following the Halifax Explosion, when the school was used to house orphans and nurses from the U.S., Mother Wallace wrote this: “Tuesday: in charge of nurses’ refectory...68 in house! Some very friendly, some stare curiously. One Catholic says a young Protestant had said ‘it is very spooky here with those weird black creatures gliding around in the dark!’” See

rscjindiaprovince.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Update_March_2017_print.pdf at page 5.

She is buried in Fraserview Cemetery, New Westminster, B.C. See British Columbia Registration of Death.

We came from our best week of the year - the Retreat, on Sunday morning, and now faces must be turned toward school times with this dawn of August.

Are you having a lovely vacation, restful, too, Mary, after the strong [indecipherable] year of study. Change of place and still more, of occupation re-make both body and soul, often; you should have a prime report in September for golf, swimming, horse-riding (I don't say prize fighting) as proof of strong doings this summer. I am sure you [sic] reading good books. And what of those dear sisters of yours? Valiant? How does Alice like that fine 6 a.m.? Love to both and to you. Best regards to your dear Aunt.

Devotedly **C.M. Lowth R.S.H.** All well, clock included.

[Letterhead]
ACADEMY OF THE SACRED HEART
HALIFAX, N.S.

[Summer 1921]

Thank you, dear Mary, for your nice long letter of the 3rd which was very welcome. It is nice to hear of you children devoting yourselves to help the good Sisters with their Bazaar - Sheila also did some practical work for that good cause. You see it is good for you to learn at school how to take the initiative in such things - part of your training - then our Lord can count upon you to be a help wherever help is needed when you are out in the world. - Keep on trying to forget yourself trying to acquire unselfishness, and to do all the kind and thoughtful things possible for every one else. - I remember that before you went home you told me you would be coming back ahead of the others - but, Mary, I do not feel that it is kind of you to do this. Last year it was all right because you had work to make up and the Tests to look forward to - but no such reason exists this year. To run away before the others looks as if you did not care much to be with them - especially as you will be soon leaving them for good, if our Lord continues to make your health improve. - What I would like is to have your Aunt Agnes bring you all back by the boat that leaves about the first of September - then [sic] you could be out with her all you want until school opens. But if this can not be done you should wait for Alice and Marjory. I am sure Rev. Mother would let you have your Honours as you have spent so much extra time at the Convent waiting for boats.

Mary Ryan wrote me about the picnic and also about the accident Francis had - and her own accident. Its [sic] a blessing they did not lose their sight. I wish you would call Mary up and tell her that I have sent her glasses to Doctor McLennan and shall forward them to her as soon as they are mended.

That was curious about Alice and Pauline getting frocks exactly alike. They may be taken for twins now.

Be sure to bring Pauline with you to school when you return. I am sorry for the Marshalls getting such bad news of their son. Who will take care of Cynthia while they are in England? She needs guidance surely.

Love to you and Alice and Marjory
from yours devotedly in C.J.M.

M. L. Ryan
rscjm.

S. C. J. M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart
Halifax, Nova Scotia
August 17, 1921.

Dear Mary,

Many thanks for your dear letters and your Mass offering in the last - you quite tempt one to be naughty your methods of heaping coals of fire are so generous. Are you anxious to hear of the changes, or has all curiosity died in you? So far there are none, we are as we were and Madame Wynne²⁴ is on her homeward voyage. We are hoping she will return to Halifax.

Mr. Heinroth is on from New York giving a course in the Ward Method - of course I do not attend as my voice is my despair.²⁵

I was sorry to hear of little Francis Ryan's²⁶ accident but am relieved to learn that his sight has been saved. I do not see how boys ever live to grow up they meet with so many accidents.

²⁴ Mary-Alice Wynne RSCJ (March 17, 1882 - October 8, 1959) was born in Newhaven, Prince Edward Island. Her father was Thomas Wynne of County Monaghan, Ireland; her mother's maiden name was Devereaux of Newhaven, P.E.I. Mother Wynne taught at least part of her career at College Street School in Halifax. Mother Wynne is buried in Mount Olivet Cemetery, Halifax, Nova Scotia. See *College Street Remembered* pg. 58 and Province of Nova Scotia - Registration of Death 005903.

²⁵ The Religious of the Sacred Heart opened a school of music in 1916 - the Pius X School of Music - in New York City at Manhattanville. It was run by Georgia Stevens RSCJ and Mrs. Justine Ward, a wealthy musician, who developed the method of teaching and financed the project. Mr. Heinroth was an important staff member. The Ward Method was a means of teaching church music, including Gregorian chant, to children. *College Street Remembered*, pg.18, 19.

²⁶ Francis J. Ryan (1905-January 24, 1924) was the son of William J. Ryan (b.1869) and Margaret Ryan (b. 1874) of Howley Street in St. John's, Newfoundland. Francis died of nephritis. His sister, Mary Ryan, was a student at the Halifax Sacred Heart Convent. He is buried in Belvedere Cemetery in St. John's. See https://www.ancestry.ca/interactive/61508/FS_004554314_00272?pid=346458&backurl=http://search.ancestry.ca/cgi-bin/sse.dll?dbid%3D61491%26h%...

Edith is a dear child and so helpful that I do not know what we should do without her. Your prayers are answered for she is coming in as a boarder in September. She comes out very often and does messages by the score.

This has been the busiest of busy summers. I have gotten in a good deal of book work but to-day marks my first visit to the trunk. Mother Duffy says if I can find anything in it I deserve a prize. We got some choice new books in the library and I am counting on you having a most delightful and profitable year. Rest now and come back ready for hard work and plenty of it.



Library, Convent of the Sacred Heart, Halifax (Postcard)

Mother Seymour²⁷ has a beautiful new gramophone. It plays any record and has the sweetest tone of any I have ever heard. Take note of any exceptionally good records you hear. She has few yet but she is only going to invest in the choicest. She has *Pinafore* and when Alice's songs were played each one said, "Listen to Alice".

²⁷ Ida Mary Helen Seymour RSCJ (1874 - 1968) was born to William Seymour and Helen McDougall. Her remains are in Montreal, Quebec at Le Repos Saint-François d'Assise <https://www.rsfa.ca/> See cemetery records.



Performance in the Reception Room
Mary Harris in centre



Sheila Conroy as Buttercup in Pinafore



Elsa and Alice Harris as
Admiral and Captain in Pinafore

Did you get any new books? I hope you did not spend all your substance on clothes for they only wear out and the books last for generations. When cleaning the library I found some treasures tucked away - old books with calf bindings, I dote on calf bindings, they were on Latin and Mathematics. I shall let you have a peek at the former.

Tell Mary Ryan that I think she is only praying for "Mary" which is sending up the most beautiful strong fronds I ever saw. The little Chinaman is stubby and "Willie" is doing pretty well. She will explain this Greek to you.

Give my love to your little sisters and to Vera if you see her. Lauretta is in from Boston. They say Mary Sinnott is somewhat better.

Yours devotedly in C. J.,

Mary A. McDermott

rscj.



Mary Sinnott

[Letterhead]
 Academy of the Sacred Heart
 Spring Garden Road
 Halifax, Nova Scotia

[summer 1922]

My dear Mary,

If this is the first time you are getting a letter from the Convent it is quite too bad and I fear you are feeling neglected. You know well that you are not really neglected in our loving thoughts - so take a few thoughts unwritten to make up for those that wanted to be written.

Rev. Mother received your cablegram and we all rejoiced in the good news of your safe arrival - we also commended your thoughtfulness in sending word at once. You know we were somewhat anxious as the *Sable Island* is not blessed with too good a reputation. - Father Donnelly has a very clever little essay called "Giving Bad Names" - perhaps the *Sable* is not as black as she is painted - eh? At any rate you should have no grudge against her since she gave you the four extra days at the Convent. - Your letters have been quite interesting especially the graphic descriptions of the ocean trip - the Community enjoyed the mental vision of you wandering up and down the stateroom swathed in a bedspread! You must have been miserable indeed when you had not the strength to unearth your kimona. - Its [sic] all over now and you can enjoy a nice restful Summer with your dear Aunt Agnes. - Several of the Nuns remember Doctor Tobin and, knowing his great regard for Rev. Mother²⁸, they were not surprised at his kindness to you children. - "Children" reminds me that Madame Wallace was pleased to learn her relatives were able to go over and meet you and attend to your arrangements. But they were quite astonished to see "young ladies" as they expected tiny tots from the Junior School. - As

²⁸ This reference to "Rev. Mother" likely refers to either Marie Wauters RSCJ, footnote for letter July 16, 1922, or Mary Conwell RSCJ. Mary Conwell RSCJ (August 24, 1858 - June 23, 1929) was the daughter of Simon Conwell and Susanna O'Hagan of Digby, Nova Scotia. During the 1920's Reverend Mother Conwell was superior in Halifax, Vancouver and Seattle. She is buried in Mount Olivet Cemetery, Halifax, N.S. See Province of Nova Scotia, Certificate of Registration of Death and "Noted Catholic Educator Dies" *The Province* (Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada) June 28, 1929, p 38 at <https://www.newspapers.com/image/499313983> and <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/191320643>

Mother Stuart²⁹ says “our children are always ‘the children’ to us”. You remember those old ladies who were here on the 20th of October - they were still “the children”.

You asked me to help you out with your conge³⁰ and I just remember a very nice one. There was a Prize of Excellence at Roehampton in 1905 and I have the whole programme of her conge, from the rising in the morning to retiring at night. Its [sic] really very nice. During the vacation she made little booklets, one for each child in the school, with inside a beautiful or comical verse. That is so much nicer than bought souvenirs. I have a model of a little booklet and shall send it to you in the next letter that goes. Marg. could cut out the booklets, Alice could paint them and you could select and write the verses. - I have not had a word from Sheila since she left us. If you see her - or I should say when you see her, since you meet daily - tell her that I got the letter she left behind for me and read it all with much interest - also I am very grateful for the Mass cards both you and she left for me. - About marking your clothing: you can not get the number for your religious trousseau until you go to Kenwood - I know this because some other girls asked for a number - mark all your clothing and every thing with your full name - your school number would not do as you might find some one else had it, and things would get mixed. - It is lovely to look forward to your Aunt Agnes taking you to Kenwood - she will certainly come here too on the way. - Thank you, Mary for telling me about Miss Foran³¹ to whom I shall certainly write. It was nice and tactful of you to tell her the cause of our silence, our hearing of her trouble only from an outsider. - Love to Alice and Marjory and tell them they will have

²⁹ Janet Erskine Stuart RSCJ (November 11, 1857-October 21, 1914) was born in England to an Anglican clergyman, Andrew Stuart, and his second wife, Mary Penelope Noel. Janet Stuart became a Catholic a few years before entering the Society of the Sacred Heart about the age of twenty-five. She was soon Mistress of Novices and was then named Superior Vicar. Finally, in 1911 she became Superior General of the Society but served only three years in this role before her death. Her grave is in the Sacred Heart chapel at Roehampton. See <https://rscjinternational.org/news/janet-stuart>

³⁰ The winner of the Prize of Excellence, as Mary Harris was for 1922, was entitled to provide a holiday or special day - a congé - for the school.

³¹ This was probably a reference to Margaret Foran who died in St. John's, Newfoundland September 24, 1941. See <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/146426335> Margaret Foran's mother, Margaret A. (Mrs. John W.) Foran, died June 1925. See <http://ngb.chebucto.org/Newspaper-Obits/news-1925-e.shtml> (June 9 death notice). Later that year her brother, Charles J. Foran, died. See <http://ngb.chebucto.org/Newspaper-Obits/news-1925-e.shtml> (Tue. Nov. 10 - “British War Hero Dies From Wounds”).

letters very soon. Also please remember me to Aunt Agnes and to Mary Doyle³² and believe me always, dear Mary,

Yours devotedly in C.J.M.

M. L. Ryan
rscjm.

Remember your
Three Hail Marys.

Since writing this sheet a letter has come from Sheila which shall soon be answered. Enclosed is bill from the dentist. Mother Wallace sends you her love and thanks for letter and Mass card.

[summer 1922]

My dear Mary,

I am adding a little word just for yourself as you wanted it once in a while. - First, I am delighted to know that the “bursting feeling” in your head is diminishing. It must go entirely before you leave home so do all you can - whatever rests your head - to get over it. You know we desire very much that you should all keep up your daily Mass and Communion, but if you need the extra rest you should sleep late in the morning. I think you do need it in order that your head be perfectly cured. Try it any way for a while - say you will go to Mass & Communion so many times a week and then rest the other days. Audrey goes every Tuesday and Friday - of course Sunday - you know she is not strong, but you need the rest more than she does. Try to relax the strain and to really rest. You will be able to become a good little worker in our Lord’s vineyard. - How about order? You promised when you went home to have a place for every

³² Mary Doyle (b. 1894) and her sisters Margaret (b. 1897) and Elizabeth (b. 1892) were Mary Harris’ first cousins, children of Patrick J. Doyle and Elizabeth Harris Doyle. Following the death of their parents, Mary’s father John Harris provided considerable assistance to his nieces. The two older girls moved to the U.S. while the youngest, Margaret, remained in St. John’s and married John (Jack) Augustine McGrath. John McGrath was a nephew of Sir Patrick T. McGrath who bequeathed him a house on Gower Street (date of probate for Patrick T. McGrath’s will, July 3, 1929). John and Margaret had three daughters, Patricia (b. about 1928), Margaret (b. about 1930) and Barbara (b. about 1934).

See <http://ngb.chebucto.org/Wills/mcgrath-patrick-14-528.shtml> (will of Patrick McGrath); <http://ngb.chebucto.org/Newspaper-Obits/daily-news-obits-aug55.shtml> (obituary notice from the *Daily News* for John A. McGrath, August 1, 1955, p. 16); and Browne, W. J., *Eighty Four Years a Newfoundlander*, (Hon. W. J. Browne, St. John’s, 1981) p. 175.

thing and every thing in its place? Is that the case right now while you are reading these lines? I did not tell you that the question was asked "how did Mary get that Prize without an accessit to order?" Not by way of an objection - you know that every one was glad and rejoiced with you - but only as an expression of wonder, having heard the rule read so often. So now, Mary, since the exception was made for you (as you had every thing else) it ought to put you on your mettle - noblesse oblige - to acquire the missing detail. It will be hard, it always is for one who has no bump of order, but it is not impossible. You have done some really good work on your character this year and as each act of self-conquest gives the soul a degree more of strength you are better prepared now to succeed than ever before. It would be well for you to take this as the subject of your particular Examen until you have attained success. I am enclosing a little examen sheet for you to mark - bring it back with you when you come in the Fall so that results may be seen. Look at the month of July - you see the lines are divided for morning and evening - I have put five little dots morning, four in the evening to show you how to mark. When you make your noon examen mark the number of times you have failed - same in the evening. And, Mary, be sincere with GOD - work for Him - remember how often you have heard at Sodality that there is absolutely nothing worth while on earth except to please GOD. Don't work to please creatures - that is all folly. Its very nice for them to be pleased with results of your work (if you have worked for Him) but don't let their pleasure be an aim. Remember that one heartfelt act of love is more to Him than all the Prizes of Excellence ever given in the world. So do not allow any feeling of vain complacency to have place in your soul. - And do not be content with any surface work - go down right to the bottom and have the courage to face your soul just as it is - your character just as it is - motives, intentions, etc. Without scruples or worry, work gently but sincerely with our Lord to make your soul just what He wants it to be.

Be faithful to your spiritual reading every day and to your rosary - and do not forget what we said before you left about being especially kind and lovely and loving to Alice and Marjory.

I pray our Lord to bless you and to grant you grace to work so faithfully and sincerely that He may see His image growing in your soul day by day. - You know that I shall always be glad to hear how this is going on.

Much love to you, dear Mary, from

Yours devotedly in C.J.M.

M. L. Ryan rscjm.

S.C.J.M.

[Summer 1922]

My dear Mary,

Your letter of the 21st has just come so I add a word to mine already written. I am so glad you have an answer to your question, from Rev. Mother Vicar, as you seemed to be

anxious about not hearing. - Now the main thing is for you to get your head entirely well - get rid of that “bursting feeling”, take whatever rest you need in order to ensure this result. And do not worry about any thing as worry would prevent your head from recovering.

Now I want to tell you some thing, and remember this for always: letters from your Superior or Vicar or [are] just for you and not for any one else - and in the Noviciate it should be the same in regard to your Mistress - visits with her and what she tells you are sacred and for you alone. Mind, I am not finding fault with you, only giving you advice for your future guidance. You remember what I told you children about Confession - all that is said should be sacred between the Priest and the Soul. It is all right to say “I have permission to put off my entrance until such a date” as you had already spoken of your desire. - Since you ask my advice about excusing yourself I shall tell you some thing that impressed me long years ago at Conflans, something said by Rev. Mother Borget³³ - she was Assistant General & Treasurer General but notwithstanding her many material works she always seemed to live in God’s presence, to bring Him to others. - She was visiting Conflans and came to talk to the Novices. Her talk was on Humility and she said she would give us a practice for acquiring this Virtue so loved by the Heart of JESUS, a practice that would be a test of our desire to please Him. It was to “never excuse ourselves when found fault with”. She said “There are many persons who can discourse beautifully on Humility (for others) but who can not endure to be found the least fault with - who can be relied upon to always excuse themselves very plausibly, even by putting the blame on others” (mean thing to do, but that is where the fear of blame takes them). She said many other things that struck me as a novice as for instance “It is not a question at all as to whether or not you deserve the blame, the only question is: do you want to give some thing to our Lord?” “These little acts of self conquest give so much pleasure to His Sacred Heart.” I remember that she said our first movement is always to excuse ourselves, and that is what we must give Him, the first fruit of conquest for Him. Give it to Him lovingly and then *laissez tomber*. You know what that means? Drop it entirely from your thoughts as soon as you have conquered yourself for Him. And when you are in the Noviciate try to take this practice that the dear sainted Mother Borget gave to us and do not excuse yourself. Nothing stoical or martyr-like about it “I have committed so many sins, dear Lord, been so unfaithful [sic] often, so I take this opportunity of not excusing myself in order to give you something more agreeable than my many infidelities.” - And about the Sisters trying to induce you to enter there? See the good side of it Mary - that is their zeal for souls - they need subjects and would like to have you to help with their good work. You are settled and all is right for you - but don’t find fault with them. - My dear child, so many are engaged in putting bad constructions on the words and deeds of others and in giving out bad and false impressions - do not you give them any help in this line. As St. Francis de Sales says “It is better to make a hundred mistakes on the side of Charity than one mistake on the opposite side. - It is the charitable judgement that is most likely to be right. - This is strong doctrine for a little girl still out in the world, but Mary, I do so want you to be of the number of those whose

³³ Césarine Borget RSCJ (c1827 - 1917) was forty years as Assistant General and forty-five years as treasurer of the Society of the Sacred Heart. See Monique Luirard, *The Society of the Sacred Heart in the World of Its Times 1865-2000*, translated by Frances Gimber. iUniverse, 2016.

hearts and souls reflect the image of GOD, and in whose souls He finds delight - and it is Charity alone that can do this. Without Charity as St. Paul tells us, all other virtues are without any value. - See the best in every one - say the best of every one - never form a judgement from appearances - and above all never run the risk of injuring any one by repeating the thing that seems to be but may not be. - I know that you do not do these things - all you children did work very hard at this point last year - it was only what you remarked about the Sisters “trying to make you change your mind and go to them” that made me write this.

Would you please give this picture to Sheila the next time you see her - I do not know how she failed to get it sooner. Here are some leaflets found among your things....

Good bye, dear Mary, and much love from

Yours affectionately in C.J.M.

M. L. Ryan

rscjm

S.C.J.M.

Convent. Halifax. 14th July '22

My dear Mary,

Your very nice letter greeted me this morning on my coming back to Earth, and your card had come on time from the ship. Thank you for both. All brought you home.

We had a strong and beautiful Retreat, Mary, and I am sorry it was so short. The invigorating son of Saint Ignatius³⁴ set us well upon the Highways of God, once more, I tell you. It is blessed to live and work for Our Lord. Pity to waste time or opportunity, isn't it?

Now you are snugly settled at home, resting a good deal, I hope, dear Mary, after many labours, and before some others. Yes - read your excellent books - that is rest to the rational - play your piano and sing God and His works - not in the voice of Mary Orr, however.

How prosper our dear Alice and Marjorie? Enjoying life and its pastimes? Please give both my love and my advice to find a little time for Latin and Mathematics - the latter, especially. Things would be so much helped next year by an increase of strength in these subjects. Some good friend in St. Johns [John's] would be glad to assist them over the rough places. Perhaps it would be Mary. Thank Our Lord for what you received [in] the years spent at the Sacred Heart, and run forward to use these things to please Him and those around you. Only for a few minutes have I seen your co-graduates but both are well and happy. You - all three³⁵ - should write one to the other.

³⁴ This is a reference to a Jesuit priest as the Jesuits were founded by Ignatius Loyola, a saint of the Catholic Church.

³⁵ The three graduates for 1922 were Edith Metzler (later RSCJ), Angela Waugh and Mary Harris.

All are well in our household and busy setting things in order. Library, Chemistry, Physics cases have seen my fingers and knuckles flying: other people, at like exercise. Not much study or reading has come in yet, but both are on the horizon. Today is the French Republic's national day, but I, for one, prefer the 4th to the 14th of July. The memory is of a nobler cause. I could almost hear the booming of cannon and - of firecrackers over the Border, on the joyful American 4th. Liberty is a boon.

In October - not September? - you will cross the Line into the U.S.A. - God leading you - and I hope, happily cross it. Be generous and brave, Mary. The Sacred Heart will outdo you in giving, believe me. Meanwhile, get ready, write often to us and to Rev. Mother Vicar, pray much and count upon the love and poor prayers of Yours affectionately,

C. M. Lowth R.S.H.

Best regards to your good Aunt and love to the dear children at home and others of St. Johns known to me.

S.C.J.M.

Halifax 16th July. 1922

Dear Children,

Your telegram and letters were more than welcome and I am sending many a "thank you" to the three Harris. How will it ever do to say "the two Harris?" We were so glad to know that you had reached home safely; we thought little of the *Sable* and feared that the accommodations were very poor. But: "Tout est bien qui finit bien," and when the end is the Newfoundland Home, undoubtedly "all is well!" - Three Mistresses of College Street School are leaving to-night for Manhattanville, via Boston, not to stay there, just to follow the singing courses now in progress. M^r Murray³⁶, M^r Codie³⁷ and M^r Gillen³⁸ are the three wayfarers. They

³⁶ Eva May Murray RSCJ (January 21, 1876 - August 15, 1946) was born in Wilton Grove Ontario to Robert Murray and Janet Macdonell. In her book *College Street Remembered*, Sister Isobel Page describes Mother Murray, who was both a teacher and principal at College Street School: "She came to Halifax as a novice in 1899 and started teaching ... almost immediately. In 1905, she was made Principal and held that position until 1931, while at the same time teaching the girls of Grades VII and VIII... Her students loved her and class work with her made going to school a happy, rich experience... Her teaching was sound and anything she undertook was carried out with competency and thoroughness." She was the major influence responsible for bringing the Ward method of music education, taught at Manhattanville College's Pius X School of Music, to College Street School. When she retired from College Street she taught at the nearby Convent school where she was also much loved. *College Street* p. 18-26. Province of Nova Scotia Certificate of Registration of Death.

will come back in August. I hope you do not have in St. John's the very rainy weather we have here; it is as foggy and clouded as late in the fall. We trust you are well and Angels! Kind regards to your dear Aunt. Yours devotedly S.C.J.M. **M.Wauters rscj**.³⁹
Perhaps you already heard that Connie McG is coming back.

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Halifax, Nova Scotia,
July 23, 1922

³⁷ Teresa Codie RSCJ (July 15, 1888 - May 2, 1954), was born in Halifax, N.S., the daughter of William Joseph Codie of Halifax and Mary Elizabeth Farren of Saint John, N.B. She spent thirty-five years as a Sacred Heart teacher, much of that time at College Street School in Halifax. Sister Isobel Page gives a wonderful description of Mother Codie as a teacher and Principal (1931-1933). Sister Page wrote that Mother Codie was a "remarkable educator" who could be described more accurately as strict rather than "loveable" or, as Sister Page wrote, "she had the power of striking terror into the hearts of both the timid and the defiant". Mother Codie did have a particular kindness for those students who worked hard but had little academic success. Aside from her teaching ability, Mother Codie was a talented fundraiser and "she masterminded fund-raising sales on just about everything from begonias and geranium slips to molasses candy and homemade greeting cards". She was extremely innovative and devised a system to use discarded x-ray films for such things as desk covers and book covers. She obtained a silk parachute which she used to sew both school costumes and liturgical vestments. According to Sister Page, "through the thirties and forties, she set up a mini-industry for the production of liturgical vestments... Working under her direction were the Sodality members, and together they provided sets of vestments for many a poor church in the Maritimes." She is buried in St. Peter's Cemetery in New Westminster, B.C. See British Columbia Registration of Death and *College Street Remembered* p. 26-28.

³⁸ Catherine Frances Gillen RSCJ (1887-1931) was born in Moncton, New Brunswick to parents James and Catherine Gillen. She received her teacher's licence in 1906 in Fredericton, N.B. In 1910 she entered the Novitiate of the Religious of the Sacred Heart in Albany, N.Y., making her first vows in 1912, and her final profession in 1919. She taught in Halifax at College Street School and the Convent of the Sacred Heart, and then spent her last years teaching at the Sault au Récollet in the Montreal area. See Cemetery Records at Le Repos Saint-François d'Assise <https://www.rsfa.ca/> and Ancestry <https://www.ancestry.ca/family-tree/person/tree/80327419/person/48418628244/story>

³⁹ Marie[a] Wauters RSCJ (b c. 1851) was Superior (Reverend Mother) at the Halifax Convent during this time. Sister Isobel Page described Rev. Mother Wauters in a letter [Jan. 17, 2002] "She was a Belgian - a lovely, gracious lady whose English was picturesque." See 1921 Census of Canada, Nova Scotia, Halifax, Sub-District 050 - Halifax (City).

Dear Mary,

Your letters have all been received and very much appreciated but I am so busy that my pen rarely gets to letter-writing. The news that Aunt Agnes would return with you was just delightful, for the Congé would not be a real one without her, and she surely could not think of sending such a distracted mortal as you to Kenwood alone.

Yesterday I was in Mother Lowth's class-room and we were speaking of you. I asked her when the group was to be "hanged". She said that it was not framed yet but that you had given her two, one for herself, and another she found on her desk. I told her that you said you were having one framed and that it was probably in some shop awaiting a claimant. I did not like to ask Edith. Now if you have left one somewhere write and I shall get Eileen to look it up. I hope you have written to Mother Jensen. I got a little note from her asking about the prizes but I did not have a chance to write since. I counted on your giving a full account.

Mesdames Murray, Gillen and Codie went to New York last Sunday for the Ward Method and we do not expect them back until school reopens. Tomorrow we are hoping to see Sister Joseph and Mother Bernard. I am very sorry that Sister Joseph did not get cured. Have you seen my Sister of Mercy since?

Eileen has just finished reading the *Life of Victoria* by S. and was delighted with it. Have you read yours yet? Eileen has also promised me to take a new set of exams and I am quite content with her. See what you escape on account of distance. Give my love to Mary Ryan. I shall write to her soon but tell her Hay fever is not conducive to correspondence. I hope she will return with you in the Fall. Remember me to Alice and Marge and tell A. I am in earnest about the cello.

Devotedly yours in C. J.

M. McDermott rscj

Convent Sacred Heart,
Sault Au Recollet,
July 25, 1922

My very dear Mary,

You see by the heading of my letter, we are still enjoying the lovely country air of the Sault. The summer has been a delightful one, more like fine Halifax weather, as we have had but little intense heat.

I was so happy to hear of your success and thanked God for all He has done for you during those precious years spent at the dear home on Spring G. Road. He drew you to His Sacred Heart in a very particular way, then wooed and finally won, all your heart's devotion and

love. May it be ever His, but increasing with years as you learn day by day how very lovable and worthy He is of our life's devotion.

Indeed I rejoice with you that your health has improved so much. Another big sign I think, that He really wants you to serve Him In religion. Probably you often thought I did not encourage you enough in your vocation. My only reason dear child was the fear I had that you would not be strong enough. Knowing you intended remaining until graduation, I simply prayed very earnestly that before school days closed our Master would give you the needed health. I was so afraid of a big heart breaking disappointment. Now you are at the parting of the ways. A new life is about to begin a new page about to be written in your book of life. Oh my dear Mary, make every word, every letter, of pure gold - the pure gold of love for Him and Him alone. Do not let criticism ever come between you and Him - "All for Jesus, in Jesus, through Jesus." This and this alone will make you happy - for the Lord is a jealous Lover and wants all. You will be generous I know - so generous that He will be able to find His rest in your heart.

It will be a very sweet pleasure indeed to see you and your dear Aunt Agnes for whom as you know I have a very real affection. What a Mother she has been to you dear three children. You can never never repay except by a tender filial devotion, all she has done for you so simply and sweetly & generously. God has given her the heart of a true Mother. I always admired her breadth, tenderness, and strength in dealing with you all. Each so different, yet each so well understood and loved. Please tell her how very happy I shall be to see her again.

Love also to Alice & Marge for yourself dear Mary be assured of my unfailing affection and interest. Pray sometimes for

Yours ever devotedly

M. Jensen

rscj.

Halifax
Feast of St. Ignatius 1922
[July 31, 1922]

My dear Absent-Minded Mary!!

Yes, there are reasons for this strong appellation. Do you know what you have been doing of late? You have been putting Canadian stamps on the outside of your envelopes and Newfoundland stamps on the inside. A few days ago three letters came all dressed up in this peculiar manner and enriching the Canadian tax department by twenty-four cents - I think the various inversions of right order have now mounted up to seventy cents! So now, my Dear, will you please try to have your mind present to what you are doing? Otherwise later on you will be going to your class with your Missal and Office book instead of your Grammar and Geography. And the Young Ideas over whom you will be supposed to be the presiding Genius, will be

shooting in the wrong direction. - I have been hoping that my last letter did not make you feel bad, Mary, but that you understood and took it in the right way. If you work on the lines suggested you will be so glad later on that you began early. This you can not realize now but you must take it on Faith for the present and the day will come when you will realize it. - Let the past be past now - close all that up and never think of it again. There are always the duties of each hour to give our Lord and they can not be done as they should when other preoccupations are in the mind. Learn to control your thoughts while you are young - my saintly Mistress of the Novices used to place such stress on this - because if one does not gain control of thoughts in youth one will never be able to make her spiritual exercises with fruit and profit. - You may be at times hurt, vexed, annoyed, etc. "Dear Lord, I give you that. No one meant to hurt me but since it happened as it did I give it to you and now it is finished and I shall never think of it again." This sounds easy but in reality it takes great strength of will to acquire this self-control, and as I said above you will thank GOD later on if you begin the work in earnest now.

I could not find my little model of a booklet so Madame Connaughton⁴⁰ had the kindness to make me one which I enclose. It will give you an idea of what I meant. You can make them a little larger if you like, for the sake of the writing inside. - Don't forget to tell me if Marguerite Ryan is to be in St. John's this Summer. - And tell Sheila to answer me about the Howleys. We have not heard any thing from them since April when Mr. Howley wrote for information which we sent to him.

Good-bye, my dear Mary. Keep your heart united to the Sacred Heart of JESUS Whom I beg to bless and guide you always.

Yours affectionately in C. J. M.

M. L. Ryan rscjm

Enclosed some more of your belongings found after you left.

[Summer 1922]

My dear Mary,

If there is one thing that can rejoice the heart of a mistress general, more than another, it is to see one of her children growing in love of our Lord, proving it practically. This is why your last letter gave me such joy. Had there been question of a command, and obligation to obey, the matter would have been different - but I only made a suggestion regarding what would most please our Lord, and you at once submitted and made that act of humility that He wanted. A

⁴⁰ Mother Conaughton [also spelled Connaughton] was likely one of two RSCJ siblings Alice Conaughton (1889-1972) or Cecilia Conaughton (1894-1979), both daughters of Francis Conaughton and Margaret Collins. Mother Cecilia Conaughton taught for a time at College Street School in Halifax, N.S. See *College Street Remembered*. They are buried in Montreal at Le Repos Saint-François d'Assise <https://www.rsfa.ca/> See cemetery records.

year ago you would have argued the matter with me and tried to show the reasons why it would be better to excuse yourself - and this is just where one can see that you have grown in His love. - Keep this manner of acting for all your life - you can never give Him too much, never enough. He has given you so much, loved you so infinitely - you know this, Mary, and now you have begun to give Him in return any little flower of sacrifice that He asks of you. - Remember always that it is He - do not look at the creature, but behind the creature to Him - living thus in the supernatural you will be happy and untroubled by the little accidents of life.

I was glad to get your answers to my various questions as it is more satisfactory to know in advance whom to expect for the coming school year. - We have not yet heard whether the Fortunes have decided to send Addie to us - do you know? And are you acquainted with a Gibbs family who live at 57 LeMarchand Road? They have not let us know their decision either. Are they of the same family as Barbara Gibbs?

Did you succeed in getting the names with which to mark your clothing? When I wrote you about them I did not know they could be had in Halifax - at least they can be ordered at Wood Brothers who have them made and all ready in two weeks. They are called "Cash's Woven Numbers" or Names - and formerly were made only in England, but now it seems they are manufactured in Canada and the States.

It is nice to know that you are all working for the C.S.C. - let Alice and Marjory bring back whatever is finished for the Orphans.

About your absent-mindedness, Mary, you really must take to heart what I said on my card (written lately) for it is serious. You must put yourself to work to correct it, for that defect would be an impediment to your doing good work - especially when you are employed with the pupils. Ask our Blessed Lady to help you overcome this defect and she will not fail you because she wants work for our Lord to be done well.

I suppose Alice and Marjory will travel with Mrs. Conroy and Elfie as we had word they are leaving on September 2nd. - Hope some more will be with them. - I shall answer your ?? as



The Conroy family, about 1923.

Left to right - Back row: James (father of Margie Conroy RSCJ), Charles Henry (Harry), Louis. Front row: Elfrida (Elfie, attended Halifax SHC), Mary Agnes Weathers Conroy⁴¹, Hugh (on Mary's lap), Charles O'Neill Conroy, Margaret (attended Halifax SHC, later Henley), Agnes Weathers, Edward, Sheila (attended Halifax SHC, later RSCJ).

⁴¹ Mary Agnes Weathers Conroy (1875-1943) came to St. John's, Newfoundland from London, England to marry Charles O'Neill Conroy whom she had met in London when he was studying there. The couple raised a large family in St. John's. She was the mother of Sheila Conroy RSCJ (1904-2000) and grandmother of Margie Conroy RSCJ (1930-). Her other daughters were Elfreda Mary Conroy (1908-1989) and Margaret (1916-1991) - the three Conroy sisters attended the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Halifax. In later life Elfie was a stenographer in St. John's where she lived with her brother, Charles Henry (Harry) Conroy (1905-1985), an engineer. Margaret married Edward Patrick (Ted) Henley (1917-2002) and the couple lived in Newfoundland where they raised twelve children. See Ancestry.ca - Canada, Voters Lists, 1935-1980 for Elfreda and C. Henry Conroy, and Newfoundland Grand Banks obituary transcriptions <http://ngb.chebucto.org/Newspaper-Obits/bon-area-2002.shtml> See also www.ancestry.ca/family-tree/5115654/person/1909812003/facts

to the date of your congé a little later. There is plenty of time to decide it (and have it) before you leave for Kenwood to arrive at the Noviceship on Mater's feast. I could not give your message to Helen as all the girls have been so busy with the festivities consequent upon the arrival of the American Squadron that there was no getting at them - and now she is in the country, whence I trust she will write you. - Here is a Spiritual Bouquet you left behind you - was about to tear it up, but it may have some tender memories - so.....How is order getting on? Are all your things in place and tidy?...

Good bye, dear Mary, and keep in mind the points herein laid down: absentmindedness, etc.

Yours devotedly in C. J. M.

M. L. Ryan

rscjm.

Do you happen to know if Miss Foran received my letter written some time ago?

S.C.J.M.

Convent, The Sault.
18th August 1922.

My dear Mary,

Your last nice letter deserved a much earlier thanks, but a locomotion of nearly a thousand miles, together with several other occurrences, has prevented even a little reply.

Something like ten or twelve days ago, Reverend Mother Vicar sent the kindly word for me to come, with M^r Seymour, to the dear old Sault - she, en route for Vancouver - I, to stay here - until returned to Halifax - next week, probably. And so time flits by, all parts of the year, nearly at the end of vacation, aren't we? Are Alice and Marjorie thinking of this, I wonder? Both giving some hours to Latin and Mathematics, doubtless, so as to get footing and standing in September classes. Please convey my love to them and the hope that the boat may bring them to shore on the 7th. Are you sending a half dozen other fine children to the Sacred Heart, to replace you, dear Mary? I invite them cordially. Won't it seem out of gear not to have our Mary at primes, at class etc. that first day! We shall all miss you, and vice versa, but let us pray that better coming awaits you, if not in Sept. not too long after, D. V.⁴²

⁴² *Deo volente*, Latin for God willing.



Primes took place in the Reception Room in Halifax. (Postcard)

Have you been reading good books? Here is an excellent one: *Rebuilding a Lost Faith*, the conversion of John L. Stoddard, our travel writer - published by Kenedy, N.Y. Excellent.

Spring Garden will rejoice to welcome home M^{rs} Murray, Gillen and Codie, who have been at Manhattan^e. the past month and who left us this a.m. in their return to Halifax. When we lose another house gains, and Vancouver will count riches in M^{rs} Jensen, Seymour and Croak now speeding over the mountains to Point Grey. The scenery of the West is very beautiful and they will revel in God's wonderful creations.

Yesterday a number of us went to our City House, by a circuitous way, and how I enjoyed the lovely country! The St. Lawrence is truly majestic, and the blue Laurentians beyond! Are you getting rested, dear Mary, after your year of hard study? We are glad to have learned though we must pay the price of knowledge. It is worth more than the groans we give, isn't it - in the long run. Juanita and Ruth took us to the station, and some other children were there with kind "au revoirs".



Juanita O'Connor

Our Dalhousie girls are a credit, thank God. Please pardon this [indecipherable], dear Mary.
Give love to Aunt, the children and Mary.

Always devotedly yours **C. M. Lowth R.S.H.**

[Letterhead]
ACADEMY OF THE SACRED HEART
HALIFAX, N.S.

August 21, 1922

My dear Mary,

Thank you for your letter of the 16th which arrived this morning. I really fail to understand why my letters take such a long time to reach you. Do you think they travel overland? and that yours come direct by steamer? For yours always travel faster than mine. I have written to you - the dear Trio - oftener than to any other of the girls, yet it always seems as if you were waiting for an answer that does not come. - Thanks for the little booklet - it is very nice and will please the girls. - Speaking of it reminds me of "pickles and cheese" and that Mother Brady asked me to thank you for your letter to her and to say that Margaret attended to the ice cream - and I think that was all, except to give you her love. Mother Dillon⁴³ asks me to enclose a note from her - what is the use if our letters go wandering all over the country instead of heading for St. John. [John's]

Did you yet receive my letter asking you to find out if my letter of sympathy reached Miss Foran? Please do not forget about this - and if you have a chance do tell her how terribly we felt about Pauline - you must remember the day I told you and Alice and Marjory? And how dreadfully we all felt. - Poor Pauline - it is very, very sad. Until her case I had never heard of tuberculosis affecting the brain, but just lately I have heard of another case. We can only pray for the dear girl and hope that our Lord will soon come to her aid.

Bessy Penny is being married soon - they say this week - and Evelyn Levis⁴⁴ in September to Dr. Kearney.

Will Mary Ryan be coming over with you? And does her Mother take her to Montreal? - How about Alice's horse? Thank you for sending the stamps - but Mary, do try to overcome that bad habit of being absentminded - you cannot do good work unless you become practical and present to the duty of the moment. Love to the dear Trio from

Yours devotedly in C.J.M.

M. L. Ryan

rscjm.

⁴³ Gertrude Mary Dillon RSCJ (March 22, 1863 - June 12, 1947) was born in Hamilton, Ontario to parents James Dillon of Ireland and Susan Agar of Sarnia, Ontario. Mother Dillon was a teacher for many years in Halifax. She was buried in Mount Olivet Cemetery, Halifax N.S. Province of Nova Scotia Certificate of Registration of Death.

⁴⁴ Evelyn Levis and Connie Levis (see picture of Connie with April 4, 1923 letter) were sisters living in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Evelyn married Dr. Michael James Carney and the couple had four children: Michael William Carney (c. 1924 -2016), Anne Nancy Carney, Eleanor "Joyce" Dickey (1929-2019) and Janet Carney. 1921 Census

<http://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.item/?app=Census1921&op=img&id=e002908915>

<https://walkerfh.com/tribute/details/318/Michael-Carney/obituary.html>

<https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/halifax-ns/eleanor-joyce-dickey-8275213>

[Letterhead]
 ACADEMY OF THE SACRED HEART
 SPRING GARDEN ROAD
 HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

August 28, 1922

My dear Mary,

We have had so much heavy rain and so much consequent dampness that the typewriter is quite out of condition and I am having a difficult time answering some necessary letters - rather sending some necessary answers. - Your letter of the 23rd came to-day and was welcome, as your letters always are. I was sorry on reading it that I had not told you we are adopting a College frock this year. You see knowing that you would not want another uniform and likewise that Alice and Margory have theirs made here, I never though [sic] to mention the change. I hope that little girl of whom you write will leave hers to be made until she arrives here. Rev. Mother had a letter from Mr. Gibbs in the same post that brought yours, saying that we might expect Mary. Then you announce Addie Fortune, but we had not heard the decision until you wrote. As for Mercedes Halley, her family has not applied at all. We are sure however of any one that you would recommend - though it is more satisfactory for the family to have a prospectus and to know the terms and requirements etc. If you can prevent any uniforms from being made at home, will you please do it? The new one is very pretty and has advantages to be explained later on. - Yes, you certainly shall have nice long visits when you come on and then all that there was no time to say in letters shall be said. - You must know more than we do as we had heard nothing about Madame McKenna going to Vancouver. It is true that Mother Seymour went but she was accompanied by Mother Jensen and Mother Croak. - Please give my love to "Aunt Agnes" and tell her she must not feel bad about not writing - I understand perfectly how little time she must have left over when her many duties are seen to, especially this Summer with all your affairs to be arranged. We shall have a good talk when she is here with you and that will be better than letters. - Did Alice and Marge get my letters? And has Alice been enjoying her horse? Don't tell me she could not find one? - What will Marguerite Ryan do next year? I had a good letter from Miss Foran lately. Will you tell her so with my love. I mean to write her again. Good bye, my dear Mary. Love to you and Alice and Marjory from yours devotedly in C.J.M.

M. L. Ryan
rscjm.

S.C.J.M.

Convent, Halifax, 3^d Sept. 1922.

My dear Mary,

In the midst of all kinds of papers I am interpolating this little correction of bad letter habits: Letters disappear from my desk in September to re-appear only in July, except the kind ones received gratuitously.

Today, our precious children Alice, Marjorie and some other Newfoundlanders are out on the waters, Halifax-bound, aren't they? I hope the Star of the Sea is watching over them!

And Mary is not with them - for the first time missing. But your journey will be far happier, shortly. Yes - mingled are the feelings, I know well, though sadness is sweet in your coming to the Sacred Heart, all Sweetness. Let the tears flow - no harm - sunshine will dry every one of them, and you will take up any kind of duty offered, with light heart and brisk step, believe me. Vocation is a wonderful thing giving a glow to every work, every sacrifice. I, too, am sorry you won't see dear Reverend Mother Vicar, in your going, but she may stop at Kenwood on the way back from Rome. Of course you will visit us and the Sault for a little, Mary? Never mind that we are too busy to look up - welcome to you just the same. We expect a good number of children if all applicants turn up. Superior class will be five, I think, and we shall do a merry strong business, D.V. Not much change in the Mistresses - M^r Seymour in Vancouver, M^r Marshall from Montreal here.

I am glad you have been sewing, - to rest from the heavy tomes you love. Don't tax the eyes, Mary, they are too precious in all lives. You are at the beginning of life and how much there is to be done for God! Rejoice in it and go on whole-heartedly. You will love Kenwood, with its solitude and its eloquence. When you look out on the Hudson from the terrace, say a prayer for me. Many a thought I had in that dear spot Are you packing up, bag and baggage, and heart? I hope your good Aunt Agnes is to go with you, - she would be less lonely. Be sure we shall miss you, dear Mary, in all provinces, but I pray daily that you may give all to our dear Lord, and that *pro semper*⁴⁵. Love to Aunt Agnes and yourself, with thanks for your very nice letter. Au revoir.

Always yours devotedly, **C.M. Lowth R.S.H.**

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Halifax, Nova Scotia,
August [September] 3, 1922.

Dear Mary,

The graduates are hanging in state over our Mother Foundress and I shall lend the telescope to any-one who is nearsighted and wishes to study them in detail. The frame matches the one of Eileen's set and was one dollar twenty-five. Mother Lowth looked rather perplexed

⁴⁵ Latin meaning "for ever."

over the change and said, "Mary is going to the Noviate, she cannot spend money there." Then I came to the rescue and suggested that we should get rid of the surplus seventy-five cents for you, and she looked relieved and acquiesced.

Bessie Penny was married this week and Loretta Kelleher was her bridesmaid. Evelyn Levis is to be married to Doctor Carney this month and is very happy. Mrs. Scarff had a little son last week.

Mother Lowth returned and brought Madame Marshall, a little English sister with her, and the former is very busy making preparations so that not a minute may be lost. Thank you for seeing my Sister of Mercy. She has not come here yet. Perhaps she will be with Alice and Marge to-morrow. So you expect that I am not to know the date of your arrival - if Marge or Alice know it I shall find it out if they have to tell it in sleep.

Mother Brennan is up and down. These last few days she has seemed a little better, but there is no permanent improvement. Her aunt was delighted with you and could not write enough in your favor and that pleased us all very much.

I have written to Vera, we all sympathize with her, and pray for her good father.

I have begun already to realize how very much we are going to miss you and that though we gain a little sister we lose a very devoted child on whom we could always count. Mother Barette⁴⁶ is wailing so over the music that I am sometimes tempted to offer myself as a soloist and I think Mother Lowth will have a very difficult time to get on without you.

You asked about the classes. I heard who had each but I am afraid much has leaked out of my memory. At all events Mother Lowth has the Superior Class and 1st Instruction; Madame Wallace has the Fourth Academic for Class and Mathematics; Madame O'Connor, the Third Academic; Madame Wilson, the Second Academic; Madame Marshall, the First Academic; Madame Scanlan⁴⁷ the Third Preparatory. I have the Post Academic for Class, the Superior for Mathematics, and the Second Cours Instruction.

⁴⁶ Fabiola-Ursule Barette RSCJ (Aug. 27, 1869 - 1941) was the daughter of Alicibiade Barette and Victoria Provost who raised a large family in Montreal. One of her sisters became an Ursuline nun and one of her brothers was a priest with the Oblate order. From the information in U. S. census records, it seems Mother Barette may have taught at the Sacred Heart school in Puerto Rico for part of her career. While in Halifax, Sister Isobel Page wrote that Mother Barette was in charge of the music - she played the organ and piano and taught piano as well as singing. [Letter of Jan. 2002] See also Ancestry

https://www.ancestry.ca/family-tree/person/tree/102418022/person/360015259065/facts?_phsrc=yEn622&_phstart=successSource She is buried in Montreal at Le Repos Saint-François d'Assise <https://www.rsfa.ca/> See cemetery records.

⁴⁷ Mary-Ann-Teresa Scanlan RSCJ (1869-1942) of Halifax, Nova Scotia was the daughter of Irish parents Mathew Scanlan and Mary McGuire. Mother Scanlan is buried in Montreal at Le Repos Saint-François d'Assise <https://www.rsfa.ca/> See cemetery records and 1891 Census of Canada at https://search.ancestry.ca/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&dbid=1274&h=1598633&tid=37938087&pid=130004023237&usePUB=true&_phsrc=yEn607&_phsta...

Please tell Aunt Agnes that I am going to introduce myself this year as you were too absent minded to do it the last time she was here and I am not too sure you have improved. I had to run off from this letter to entertain John Wallace Foley and he screamed terrifically. I got him some cookies and he was comforted by the taste of those coated with chocolate. Ethel informed me that she had to take him home but as long as the chocolate kept him quiet I did not mind the mess. He looked too cute for words when he got finished but needed to be dropped into a bath.

Sept. 4

Alice and Marge have arrived, (this is my third attempt at this letter) I have not seen them yet but they sound hale and hearty.

Father Phelan has left Halifax and will sail from New York for Belgium where he is going to study at Louvain University for the next two years. College Street opens the fifth and we are hoping they will have a fine day for the entrance. We have been deluged with rain this Summer and have had very few warm days, alas!

I am enjoying your books to the full, and sit hours in my classroom studying.

My ferns are growing beautifully. I think I shall have to build an annex for them as they are outgrowing their present habitation. Each feast of Our Lady I put Mater⁴⁸ at the feet of the Sacred Heart and she has many clients. The rest of the time she stays in my classroom.

You are always in my prayers these days. I fully realize how very hard they are but they are part of the price of your vocation and your dear Aunt Agnes has made everything wonderfully easy in every other respect.

Yours devotedly in C.J.,

Mary A. McDermott rscj.

Oct. 2 1922

All Excellence of Yesterdays
is found compressed in Today;
and may it so continue for you,
Dear Mary, until the dawn
of the great today!

Lovingly yours,

**C.M.L. [Catherine Mary Lowth]
R.S.H.**

⁴⁸ Mater Admirabilis is a particular depiction of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. The first rendition was done as a fresco by a young Religious of the Sacred Heart postulant in Rome who painted Mary as a young girl wearing a pink dress. Every Sacred Heart school now has a similar painting or statue. This feast is celebrated on October 20 with special religious, alumnae and other events. See <https://rscj.org/who-we-are-/heritage/mater-admirabilis>

[undated]

To dear "Aunt Mary,"

Thanking you for your beautiful congé and with lots of love
 Your old desk-mate,
 Olive
 Please pray for me, sometimes, dear "Auntie."

Halifax
 October 11, 1922

My dear Mary,

How is the dear little Isaac to-day? As the motor drove off that eventful afternoon one could not help being reminded of Abraham taking his beloved son to be sacrificed - and though the poor little Isaac suffered and wept, she was very glad that no old ram could substitute her, is that not true? And now the big sacrifices have been made, St. John's and the Convent, and you will not have to go through these things again - not that your heart will grow cold, Heaven forbid! St. Paul cries out "woe to the unaffectionate" - But henceforth you will love all in our dear Lord, and in Him find again all that you have given up for Him. Your tears took nothing from the completeness of your offering - Our Lord's Heart is intensely human, sympathetic and compassionate - He understood the sufferings which only made your gift richer.

Your letter and card from Quebec came yesterday and were very welcome. I am so glad your dear Aunt Agnes took you to visit the Great Shrine and feel sure the dear Mother of our Lady obtained precious graces for you in your new life.⁴⁹

Do you know that after all my making sure of your New York address before you left us, what did I do but lose it! Small wonder considering the various happenings of that day. Last evening as I was asking St. Anthony to find it for me the thought came to me of a book I had been using that day - opened the book and there was the card on which you had put the address. Thank you, dear Patron of lost articles!

Alice wrote you and addressed her letter to the Post-Graduate Hospital, Brooklyn, but I fear it will not reach you as no street was named. She and Marjory had a rather sad time after

⁴⁹ The Shrine of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré

leaving you, but getting back into regular work has been a great help to them. You remember hearing a few times that work is a wonderful panacea for many ills.

Later - Had to leave you, dear Mary, for a number of things, the last being the E. de M.⁵⁰ meeting - quite a shrunken meeting with only Margaret [Lahey] and Audrey [Martin]. You would never guess the Practice they got so I shall tell you: Cheerfulness in all circumstances and at all times - not that they are uncheerful, at least Margaret is not - but to be always cheerful in all the little ups and downs of daily school life, especially in the beginning of the year, requires a good bit of unselfish virtue - the E. de M. can give the cheerful tone to the school and that is a good way of practising zeal - a nice homely way that could not cause any self-glorification.

Thank you, dear Mary, for the Mass. I found the card at my place in the Chapel the morning after you left and thanked you in my prayers at once. - Much love to you and your dear Aunt, and all good wishes from yours devotedly in C.J.M.

M.L. Ryan
rscjm.

Sunday

Dear Mary

Many, many thanks for the Mass card which I received after your departure. You are always too good to me and I can never tell you how much I have appreciated all the Masses.

Alice, Marge and all of us miss you very much but we are happy in the thought that you are going where the love of the Lord awaits you. I have received no word from Mary Ryan yet but little Elfie [Conroy] got a letter from Sheila [Conroy] saying that Mary was to leave yesterday on the Minowa so I am hoping you will see her before you leave Montreal.

We are having dire misfortune over the costumes for it seems you bought up all the gold tinsel in Halifax. However I am going to try and get it in Montreal. Yesterday was the sortie and some poor little things spent it in going from store to store for the decorations.

Last night Margaret [Lahey] returned with a marcel wave and none of us recognized her. You can imagine the sensation, but, alas, poor Mother Duffy was down with rheumatism and Margaret was disappointed. Helen took Lillian, Addie and Geraldine home with her and Lillian danced with joy when telling me what a lovely time she had and that she was to go again to hear the radio.

Little Dorothy Wallace was disconsolate when she heard she had lost her chance to be in the tableaux and she told her mother she was sure she would never get over it.

⁵⁰ E. de M. - Enfant de Marie or Child of Mary - signifying a member of the Children of Mary Sodality.

Evelene Burns came over last night with part of her costume, she could not find me so tried the vestry. I heard someone laboring up the stairs and went out and found Eveleen carrying [sic] Vic who is no light weight. I was just as happy Mother Duffy was not around for I think she would draw the line at Vic. Edith came over after you left and told me of her longing for Kenwood as you bade her. Pray for her and for the others on my list, and be very happy that you have a dear Aunt Agnes who makes all so easy for you. With much love and an assurance of remembrance in prayer,

Yours devotedly in C.J.,

Mary A. McDermott

rscj

S.C.J.M.

Montreal -
Oct. 13 - 1922.

My dear Mary,

This is just a little "God speed you" on your way to God's dear Home where He is waiting for you with open arms and Heart.

It was a real joy to see you on Wednesday and you brought me nice letters from Madames Codie and Gillen. They spoke about the lovely day you gave them all on Monday.⁵¹

A religious vocation is better than a Prize of Excellence, isn't it dear? Our dear Lord becomes our Prize of Excellence in religious life and the way to obtain It is virtue. Assuring you of my sincere wish for your happiness and my prayers (if you want them) I remain

Yours lovingly in C.J.M.

B. Pacaud, R.S.C.J.⁵²

Halifax

⁵¹ This is the holiday Mary organized for the school. It was customary for the winner of the Prize of Excellence to return to the school the following year to provide a small celebration for all.

⁵² Blanche Pacaud RSCJ (Nov. 3, 1887 - June 8, 1965) was born in Bay City, Michigan to French Canadian parents Alphonse Pacaud and Agnes Tremblay. Mother Pacaud was a teacher at the Convent of the Sacred Heart teaching in Montreal, Vancouver and possibly other cities. She is buried in St. Peter's Cemetery, Vancouver B.C. See Province of British Columbia Registration of Death and Ancestry.ca - 1930 United States Federal Census - New York Albany, District 0009.

October 16, 1922

A little word, my dear Mary, to bid you welcome to your new Home where you are going to be very happy in the service of the best of Masters. Do you feel the prayers that are being offered up for you by all your friends in Halifax?

Your letter from the Sault was very interesting not only to me but to all the Community - likewise to the girls who heard it yesterday. A number of them have written to you so you will be acquainted with all the happenings at Spring Garden Road.

Mary Ryan left home last week all alone for Montreal and by this time I suppose she is safe within the Convent walls. She will have to work up her French as there are not many English speaking Nuns at Marie Réparatrice. Her poor mother is feeling the separation very much - says she would have been so happy if Mary had entered at the Sacred Heart. Creusa writes that she is very happy in her new life but will always love "the Convent".

Do not forget to deliver all the messages that were entrusted to you for Kenwood. When you meet Mother Walworth give her my love and ask her if she remembers when we crossed the Continent together. - You have a letter with you for Julia Heffern⁵³ but you might give her an extra message of love. - I used to have Viola Dorsey at Lake Forest and it seems to me I remember a little sister Mabel - also perhaps Agnes Ducey would be the little sister of the Mary whom I had in by gone days. - Romaine Hackett was, I think at St. Joseph? In the catalogue I see Katherine Townsend, and I recall instructing a girl of that name to enter the Church, I wonder would she be the same. - You can imagine how busy we are getting ready for Old Pupils' Day - every one is doing some thing by way of preparation and this has been interrupted many times since the first line was written, so perhaps it would be well to call a halt for this time. - Mary I wish you write me out the Daily Regulation at Kenwood, hours for every thing from the rising to the retiring, how much time for each thing - the school regulation I mean of course - I like to have ideas and am sure your kind Mistress of Noviciate would give you permission to do this. (Saturday & Sunday too)

One word more, dear Mary - remember that one little rule for the Discernment of Spirits: Never decide any thing and never change a decision under the influence of feeling - wait until the feeling or emotion or sentiment has passed and then make use of the Guides God has given us, Faith and Reason, in order to decide as God wills.

⁵³ Julia Heffern RSCJ (Mar. 18, 1892 - June 23, 1979) was the daughter of William Heffern and Alice Keenan. Julia Heffern was born in Buffalo, New York and was a student in the Sacred Heart School in Lake Forest, Illinois. She received a Bachelor of Arts from Loyola University in 1926 then, after she had become a Religious of the Sacred Heart, she obtained a Master of Arts from Loyola. For many years Mother Heffern was teacher and Mistress of Studies at the Sacred Heart School in St. Joseph, Missouri. Her grave is in the Religious of the Sacred Heart Cemetery in Albany, New York. See Heffern, Julia "The History of the Foundations of the Society of the Sacred Heart in South America", (1934) *Master Theses*. 206. Loyola https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses/206, U.S. Social Security Death Index (SSDI) - My Heritage, Billion Graves - My Heritage, and Newspapers by Ancestry 15 Jan 1946, 15 *The Boston Globe* at Newspapers.com

Much love to you and Aunt Agnes from

Yours devotedly in C.J.M.

M. L. Ryan

rscjm

Halifax

November 1922

My dear Mary,

Thank you for your very interesting letter which was enjoyed by all the Community. We are also very glad to hear how happy you are and how perfectly at home in the dear Noviciate.

This can not be the long letter for which you ask as several things have prevented it from being written, but you know, dear Mary, that you have always my loving prayers - better than letters. Besides Alice and Marjory keep you informed of all that goes on in the school, which is what you like to hear. - Will you please tell Mother Benziger that I received her kind letter containing Kenwood regulation. Give her my love and my thanks and tell her that I shall write later myself.

Yes, I remember Marie Cooney⁵⁴ perfectly. She was always a dear good girl at school, one that could be depended on. I am sure she is a very good little Nun now. - Ask her what has become of her little sister, Helen, whom I prepared for her First Communion? I fancied her face would be turned to Kenwood some day. - Is Romaine Hackett in the Noviceship? I had her only a short time but enough to appreciate her worth.

No, Mary Ryan has not written to us but report says she is very happy in her new life. Mrs. Ryan misses her very much but told Sheila that she would never oppose the will of God, no

⁵⁴ Marie Cooney RSCJ (c. 1894 - Oct. 4, 1966) died at Barat College, Lake Forest, Illinois and is buried in the Religious of the Sacred Heart Cemetery in Lake Forest. At the time of her death, the newspaper reported that "she had been head of the Convent of the Sacred Heart, 6250 Sheridan Road for 25 years." See *Chicago Tribune* (Chicago, Illinois), Wed. Oct 5, 1966. Marie's sister, Helen Cooney, (1900 - 1990) married Arthur V. Burrowes and the two had a large family. See <https://longislandsurnames.com/> Another sister was Madeleine Sophie Cooney RSCJ (1912 - 1994). Madeleine Cooney RSCJ had masters and doctoral degrees from Stanford and was an academic described as a "lover of the intellectual life, teacher of humanities". Madeleine Cooney taught at a number of Sacred Heart colleges. She also edited and sometimes wrote for one of the Society's publications. For example see "Mater in Her Old Age" which was first published in *RSCJ: A Journal of Reflection*, Vol. VI, Winter, 1985, No. 1, pp 135-142. *Chicago Tribune*, (Chicago, Illinois) Thurs. Aug. 11, 1994, pg 41 and Society of the Sacred Heart, United States - Canada "Christmas Reflection" <https://rscj.org/christmas-reflection>

matter what it cost to give up her children. - Creusa is very happy also with the Sisters of Mercy. Kathleen Burke has been visiting in St. John's lately to Sheila's joy. I am sure you will pray especially for poor Sheila who finds it hard to be reconciled to conditions. Her father brought her some evening dresses and other worldly things from England which did not make her happy at all. You know where her heart is, so pray hard for her.

Yes, I remember Angela Gorman⁵⁵ very well. That family were the foundation stones of our Convent in Seattle. Seven daughters all at the S.H. This is all for to-day, dear Mary, except to wish you a very holy and happy Advent with an ever increasing love of our Lord.

Everyone sends much love to the little Halifax Postulant, and begging you to remember me affectionately to Mother Bodkin,⁵⁶ I am always

Yours devotedly in C.J.M.

M.L. Ryan

rscjm

S.C.J.M.

Convent Halifax, 27th Nov. 1922.

My dear Mary,

Only a week before the silence of Advent; several weeks indeed, since your kind letter from Quebec. So I must cut away from this pile of papers to thank you for writing and to wish you all the blessings of dear Kenwood, Mary.

⁵⁵ Angela Gorman RSCJ (c. 1899 - Sept. 1966), who was born in Portland, Oregon and educated at the Sacred Heart School in Seattle, made her profession as a Religious of the Sacred Heart in 1931. She taught at the San Francisco College for Women, Barat College in Lake Forest, Illinois and two other Sacred Heart Schools in California. Three of her sisters were living at the time of her death: Mrs. Delores G. Von Volkli, Seattle; Mrs. Stephen Moreland, Portland; and Mrs. John F. Conley, Tacoma. See *The San Francisco Examiner* (San Francisco, California) Sun., Sept. 18, 1966 pg 60.

⁵⁶ Gertrude Bodkin RSCJ (July 26, 1875 - October 18, 1966) was born in Ireland to a large Catholic family where she was one of four daughters to become Religious of the Sacred Heart. Mother Gertrude Bodkin's talents were recognized immediately within the Society and she was soon given considerable responsibility. In 1909 Mother Bodkin was sent to Kenwood, Albany New York where she was to serve as Mistress of Novices for twenty-three years. In this role she had the task of training all Religious of the Sacred Heart throughout the United States and Canada. She was then vicar of the New York area for twenty years. Reverend Mother Bodkin was considered to be a holy woman whose contribution to the work of the Society of the Sacred Heart was immense. See *Life of Mother Gertrude Bodkin*, no information on author or publisher, 1971.

Your Aunt brought us happy news of you and we rejoiced with her over your final settlement in the House of the Lord. I am sure you are tasting its sweetness every day, and that your “angel” catches up for you the savour you may happen to miss. Before now you have learned to strip the potato both with economy and art! Never mind, - you will learn to do all things well, so push on, like an American!

What shall I tell you about old Halifax town? Of the town I know little more than the climate - pretty generally in a fog or rain - slight snow lately. We hear that many are indulging in - measles, and a few of our children have caught the fashion. May it not enter our gate, D.V.!

Just now we are ending the beautiful Forty Hours, during which so many earnest prayers went up to God - some of mine for you, dear Mary. Our Lord received our humble worship anyway and He so blesses all in this house.

The children are very good and studious, now working to finish the matter due for Tests of Two. Besides, they prepare the annual Bazaar under Mother Duffy’s wing, and you remember the bustle for that affair.

The lovely Eighth is nearing, and a few choice souls hope Our Lady will favour them on her great Feast. Of course, I have the best class - you know them - and the finest Doctrine Cours, outside of Rome! It is good to be pleased with what is good, isn’t it? You and I have a common sacrifice, however, this year - no direct dealings with Trigonometry; we both, too many other duties.

Alice and Marjorie are doing nicely all about - praying also, for their dear absent Mary. Alice hopes no one at holy Kenwood is being shocked by her pranks in letters to you?

We are now looking out far on the Atlantic, to catch sight of our beloved Mother Vicar, though will probably land at N. York. You, I hope, will see her soon, and she will expect to find you happy at the Sacred Heart. Don’t mind hard little things - some may be hard - Our Lord’s service ought to cost us something. A pearl for nothing? No - pay the little He asks, dear Mary, and await the magnificent treasure in store for you. Write if dear Mother Bodkin thinks good - give love to dear old friends of mine - pray for me and believe me always in Cor de Jesu.

Yours affectionately, **C.M. Lowth R.S.H.** (Pardon scratch of a letter.)

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Halifax, Nova Scotia,
December 29, 1922.

Dear Mary,

If this letter is queer it is due to the fact that your young sister and Addie are making enough noise to wake the dead. I am in my classroom and they are making up for the dullness of the weather by “exuberant spirits”. I hope they will not meet the fate of Prince John. Alice is as

good and sweet as she can be and most helpful. The *Constant Prince* is to be played for the Bishop's feast and today I have to begin at costumes. I have taken the five ladies and my long suffering sisters are going to rig out the men. Alice is a man - good as she is I'd never attempt to costume her again after my last experience. She worked feverishly over a green sweater and sat up nights to have it done for Christmas Day - it has only one hole in it and anyone who has tact does not notice it. - Most people have no tact.

Yesterday Audrey brought me word that Gertrude was delirious. When I get her back in class she will get over that I'm thinking. Are you praying hard for Eileen? She gets flattery heaped on success continually and though she manages to keep her head I sometimes wonder how long she can manage it. Of course I am very proud of her and she has promised me to go in for another set of exams but I want her to end up in Mother Bodkin's care. I never see Angela but Edith is here everyday. I have not been able to get much time at shorthand since I saw you but perhaps the New Year will bring some free minutes. Mary Chisholm has a little daughter - it was born Christmas eve.

I am sure you are very happy and good, living and loving as a little novice should, and I have not a worry about you.

Yours devotedly in C.J.

Mary A. McDermott rscj.

S.C.J.M.

Convent Sacred Heart
Halifax, 1st January 1923.

My dear Mary,

Happy New Year and many thanks for your dear letter of early December. You see by the above date that I am starting out as an honest debtor but due payments will not continue long, I fear, when once this desk accumulates papers from all quarters. A poor letter-writer am I, it must be said. But none the less I love to hear that our Mary is so happy at Kenwood and that valleys are filling up and mountains levelling down - provided there are any such. Of course you feel at home: the life of a good child at school lifted into the other, spiritually, - all joyous and vigorous under Our Lord's very eye; you are really bound to be happy and grateful, day by day. I pray for you every morning at Holy Mass, that Faith, Love - and Good Sense may lead you to the heights of perfection as a Religious of the Sacred Heart.

Weren't you glad to see our dear Rev. Mother Vicar back from Rome? She was pleased to see you and pleased with you, Mary. And now you know Kenwood's kind Mother Vicar also, whom you love by this time. We are praying for dear Mother Kenney⁵⁷ - not very good accounts

⁵⁷ Ellen (Ellie) Maria Kenny RSCJ (c 1845 - November 12, 1925) was the daughter of Sir Edward Kenny and Ann Forrestall of Halifax, Nova Scotia. The Kenny family was well known

come in the matter of her health. She is indeed ready to go but we are less ready to have her go, unless God wills it. So many would miss her.



Photo of Ellen (Ellie) Maria Kenny RSCJ. Because she does not appear to be wearing a silver cross, the photo was likely taken before she made her final vows as a Religious of the Sacred Heart.

http://www.holycrosshalifax.ca/database/family_profiles/kenny_family/kenny_religious/

in Halifax, especially for using their wealth to generously support various charities there. Three of Ellen's brothers became Jesuit priests - one served in Canada and the U.S., while the other two worked in England. Ellen, who had been a student at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, entered the Society in 1864. She spent the first twenty years as a Religious teaching in Halifax, then went on to teach at Sacred Heart schools in London, Ontario, Rhode Island, Sault-au-Récollet and New York. She died in her early eighties in Albany, New York and is buried in Kenwood at the Religious of the Sacred Heart Cemetery in Albany. See Holy Cross Historical Trust, The Kenny Religious

http://www.holycrosshalifax.ca/database/family_profiles/kenny_family/kenny_religious/

The children of our household left us on the 21st for their holidays: the 8th will see them at class again. No question as to their enjoyment of these days - rain or shine, blast or calm. Some returned to play with the Orphans on Innocents, but all vanished in the evening. We have the merry Newfoundlanders, your sisters included, and they keep the house resonant. Of course we miss you this year. Supr. class are four bright robust girls - well at work, the week round - none better in the school. Instruction counts mine - busy learning Grace, Sacraments etc. Now we prepare a Feast for the Archbip. in latter January. See the end of this paper! Good wishes and many prayers I offer you, dear Mary, for 1923. Run your course bravely and happily for and with the Sacred Heart of Our Lord, who loves you. Best love to all old friends at K - Pray for yours affectionately in C. J. **Catherine Mary Lowth R.S.H.**

[Letterhead]
Academy of the Sacred Heart
Halifax, N.S.

Many thanks, my dear Mary, for your delightful letter of January 1st which was enjoyed by all the community as well as myself. It makes me very happy to know that my dear "little Isaac" is so at home in the Master's House and has found there such peace and joy. This is nothing to what it will be later on - as the years go by your happiness will deepen and broaden and you will learn more and more how very good our Lord has been to you - following you with love and mercy all the days of your life and bringing you safe into the shelter of His Home. You may be sure of my prayers every day - I think every one is praying for you in your dear Convent-by-the Sea, for we are all so anxious to have you keep well and strong and able to lead Common Life. So far you seem to have a very good record, thank GOD! May He continue to bless you in this same way and in many others.

Your "doings" on your special feast, Holy Innocents, amused us - how nice that the Ego has been slaughtered once for all in such quick fashion! On that same day we entertained the Orphans from the Good Shepherd Convent - there were about sixty of them, not so many as last year. Our children were most generous in providing toys and candy for all these poor children besides making garments for them. The Vacation Band and some others served them and gave them a nice little entertainment. On the 27th we had the St. Anne's for Benediction, Supper and a generally good time in the Gymnasium. You remember their dancing??

Alice and Marjory are counting the days until they leave for Kenwood. I wish the visit would give them some special thoughts and desires - especially Marjory.

Mary, would you please tell Julia Heffern that her letter gave me much pleasure and that I hope to tell her so myself soon - and give her my love - also to Marie Cooney. - Mother Benziger

⁵⁸ had the kindness to send me the Kenwood Regulation but I shall thank her myself for that. Much love, dear Mary, from yours devotedly in C.J.M.

M. L. Ryan
rscjm.

One more word, dear Mary, to ask you to pray especially for Margaret [Lahey]. She needs prayers very much just now - you who are such an old friend will understand. She had a certain desire to remain at home after Christmas - but returned. The retreat will I hope, do much for her. She is as thoroughly good and unselfish as of yore - but not as buoyant. - Your letter to Alice came a few minutes ago - thank you for the date of Profession. I shall give dear Marie Cooney a special remembrance in prayer.

Monsignor Foley is very ill - received the last Sacraments this morning at two o'clock. Pray for him - he would be a great loss. Good bye, dear Mary. In that dear Chapel sometimes remember

Yours devotedly in C.J.M.
M. L. Ryan
rscjm.

Convent Sacred Heart
Halifax, Jan. 14, 1922 [1923]

Dear Mary,

Having just finished the 'Announcements for Sunday, January 14 and not being able to put Mary Harris down for prayers I decided to write to you as the next best thing. Remember how I used to fear saying prayers? I can manage quite well now and only occasionally get twisted.

⁵⁸ Ursula Benziger RSCJ (1885-February 5, 1972) was born in New York to Swiss parents. She was a student at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Manhattanville, entered the Society in Kenwood, then made her final profession in Rome in 1917. Following studies in Roehampton, England she returned to the New York area where she served as Mistress of Novices at Kenwood and Superior at Maplehurst and Manhattanville, and Warden at Manhattanville. Reverend Mother Benziger then became one of several Assistants General to the Superior General of the Society of the Sacred Heart. She is buried in Kenwood Cemetery in Albany, New York. Louise Benziger RSCJ was her sister. See *The Tablet* (Brooklyn, New York), Nov. 9, 1946, pg 17 in Newspapers by Ancestry at <https://www.newspapers.com/image/576334263> and <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/84598509/ursula-benziger> and Newspapers by Ancestry <https://www.newspapers.com/image/576315086> and dedication of Manhattanville 1947 issue at http://archive.org/stream/mvilleyearbook1947/mvilleyearbook1947_djvu.txt

Olive is my desk mate now. Remember when she was yours? The Study Hall is just the same Mary and the occupants too. We are preparing a play for the Archbishop's Feast on the twenty-fifth. The *Constant Prince* of Calderon is the one. Rehearsals go on for it with the same momentum as in days of yore when you and I staged together.

Christmas, Mary in our house was as noisy as ever. I received your letter when I returned and was very glad to hear from you. My! You are lucky, Mary. Perhaps you know this but I guess I told you so before. Are you using your note books? And do you need more contents?

There is a new Junior boarder now, a Mary McDougall who for eight or nine months went to the city house. At first she was lonely but now seems quite bright.

Lent comes early, Mary so that makes us expect the Retreat sooner. Please say a prayer Father Filion will come.

Competitions of Two are going on now among the Graduates as well as the others and I believe I am included in the partakers. Mary, I do not love your old friend Trigonometry.

'Shallo' calls me Mary so I must see to him, will write longer next time

much love

from **Margaret Lahey**⁵⁹

E. de M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Halifax, January 21st, '23.

Dear Aunt Agnes,

We both had letters from Margaret⁶⁰ this week, the first one's for a long time. I am so glad we have a nice gramophone at last, I love Brunswicks. By the way it is Marge's birth[day] soon, and I want to know if you will send me some money to get her a pair of bangles - which she wants very much, and another thing is a three-flowers compact, the big ones in the brass cases. I am asking you beforehand because it will take eight days for this to reach you and eight more for yours to get here so that is half a month or more, however let me know as soon as you can.

She won't be allowed to have a party this year, no one is, but she can have a cake.

I had to go to Dr. Fluke to have a cavity in my tooth that just commencing attended to.

Margaret Emmerson was here on Monday, she came up to see us with Bella Scott and we [went] out to the Larry Inn and had tea with her, she left the next morning. We had a letter from Mary a few days ago, I suppose you hear from her regularly do you, she said she has permission to write you one week and Marge and me the next.

⁵⁹ See the biography of Margaret Lahey RSCJ following these letters.

⁶⁰ Likely her cousin Margaret Doyle.

I wrote Elsie⁶¹ but I am not sure about the address, Post-Grad. Hospital is what I put with just Brooklyn N.Y. Will that reach her do you think?

Write soon and let me know about Marge, love to all,
Alice

Convent of the Sacred Heart
 Halifax, Jan. 21, 1923

Dear Mary,

Although I wrote to you last Sunday still to-day finds me writing again. Do you know why? Remember January twenty-first last year? Does it not seem like ages ago? To me it does. Madame McKenna went away this day [a] year ago. What changes since then!

I often think of you dear Mary, and miss you more than I can say as the song goes but never before so vividly did you come back to me as this morning. It was after my Thanksgiving, right after Holy Communion and when I looked up I just thought you were in your old place next to me and then I remembered the Feast of St. Agnes last year, how we were together. I wonder if I will ever see you again, Mary. Not that I expect either of us to figure in the 'Obituary List' within the next few days or months but the thought just came to me.

Do not think Mary, by the tone of this that I have the 'blues' because even though it is raining pitch-forks and I shall see no one from home to-day, and the wind is crying like a baby, (only more fiendish) I still am quite myself but wanted to talk to you so much to-day that I decided to write to you. I have still charge of the music, Mary, but my voice has not got any more 'Caruso'-like than when you had the position.

Please say a prayer for me sometimes, Mary.

Yours lovingly
Margaret Lahey
E. de M.

[Letterhead]
 CONVENT OF THE SACRED HEART
 KENWOOD, ALBANY, N. Y.

Eden Hall - Pa.

Feb. 25th 1923

⁶¹ Likely her cousin Elsie Doyle.

My dear Mary -

Although my retreat will not be over until Tuesday I want you, if possible, to have a line from me before you leave Halifax for home. I understood that you left dear Kenwood on the 20th with Elsie Doyle and that you were going to Halifax by way of Boston and by rail. I am glad as it is safer for you than the sea - We have had high winds here the last days and it was very cold - I was so glad to get your letter last Monday and have not forgotten you as I know how hard the last days were especially as it was a long drawn out agony in spite of all we could do - Now that you have seen your two merry sisters and have had good talks with our Mothers at Halifax I think you must feel better - Aunt Agnes will be very glad to have you home and to try to make you quite well - There is no reason why you should not have a long & useful life but you can never be an athlete! Let me know how you are as soon as you reach home and say if your aunt is quite satisfied about all the arrangements - I am sorry I was not there to look after them but I knew that others did all & more than I could do - Pray for me dear Mary

I am yours very affectionately in C.J.M.

G. Bodkin RSCJ

If this finds you at Halifax please give my love to all I know - thank M^r Henrion⁶² for her nice letter -

80 Brighton Rd.
Charlottetown, P.E.I.
Mar 4, 1923.

My dearest Mary

I am so sorry, Mary dear, and I know just how you must feel. To have all your life's plans hopes and ambitions fail, O how hard it must be. Dear I just heard from Stephanie that you had been ill and obliged to leave the convent. Do you expect to be able to return. I do hope so.

It was such a shock to me for I knew you had been doing so well, and I believe some one told me you had been thriving, so as to have been getting fatter every day.

There is no one, I believe who will take the cross in a truer spirit than you dear. For myself, if my plans should fall, I would feel my whole existence was for nothing, and I would I

⁶² Katherine Henrion RSCJ (1895-1974) was born in Nova Scotia to Nova Scotian parents. For at least part of her teaching career Mother Henrion taught at College Street School in Halifax, N.S. *College Street Remembered*. pg. 58 and 1921 Census of Canada, Nova Scotia, Halifax, Sub-District 050. Halifax (City) and <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/191320833/katherine-henrion>

fear, give up everything, unless with sorrow I should come strength. That reminds me, Mary of “Sorrow the King-Maker”, do you remember that essay. Since those dear days, some have passed the test, others have not been tested. Do write and tell me everything, if you would like to.

I am a poor hand at comforting, but be assured, dear of my love and truest sympathy.

Sincerely

Queenie Jenkins [Margaret Jenkins]

S.C.J.M.

Kenwood, Albany.
March 12, 1923.

My dear Mary,

It is an unexpected joy to be able to tell you how glad I was to learn of your safe arrival home. Mother Bodkin kindly let me read your most interesting letter to her, and I need scarcely mention how much pleasure it gave me. Certainly a special envoy of Angels must have been hovering about your ship, as this time of year is so very dangerous for travelling. It seems almost miraculous that you escaped being wedged in by a field of icebergs. I trust that the long journey has not taken away any of your strength.

You do not miss Kenwood any more than we do you. The other day at recreation after dinner Sister Noel said she had lost her “dear confrère”, so you see we all think of our nightingale. I am so glad you were able to see all the dear nuns at Halifax. Were you able to have a talk with Mother Ryan and dear Madame Scanlan.

You can imagine how glad the “white flock in the West Wing” were to welcome back Mother Bodkin after her retreat. The day after her return Reverend Mother left for her regular visit to Manhattanville, so we are now looking forward to her speedy return.

I am sure you will be glad to know that Sisters Farrell, Dorsey and Krim are to make their vows on the fifteenth and Sisters LeBesque, Wansboro and McCarthy are to receive the Habit. We are all very happy for them. One more Canadian has been added to our list of postulants as Sister Morin’s⁶³ sister arrived about two weeks ago; she is the third of the family in the Society.

The children are to begin their retreat on the fourteenth and next week there will be one for outsiders, so you see we are to have much to think about between now and Easter.

⁶³ Berthe Morin RSCJ (1892-1988), Cecile Morin RSCJ (1895-1977) and Germaine Morin RSCJ (1899-1991) were daughters of Alfred Morin and Marie Guenette, all of Quebec. The three sisters are buried in Montreal at Le Repos Saint-François d’Assise <https://www.rsfa.ca/> See cemetery records and Ancestry.ca Census of Canada, Quebec Centre, Sub-District 16 - St. Louis ward.

Winter still holds sway with little chance of disappearing as there is a slight thaw at noon and down comes the snow again during the night. However, it will probably dry up all of a sudden, and then we will have a delightful spring.

Mary dear, I can picture you in my mind's eye eating molasses three times a day. That surely is a most curious remedy, yet it is so simple that one would not mind taking it if the result would be a "good strong heart". I wonder if your Guardian Angel whispers to you how often I pray for you dear. I hope you do not forget me once in a while. I am glad your Aunt is well. Will you please give her my love. Do you ever see dear Rose?⁶⁴ When you see her again please give her a great deal of love and thank her for her much loved letter.

Last week we had the pleasure of welcoming four of our Mothers who have just come back from their beautiful ceremony of profession at the Mother House. They were really full of the wonderful privilege of seeing Our Mother General and gave us glowing accounts of their visit to the Vatican, where the Holy Father gave them a private audience. He gave each one a special blessing, and before leaving extended to Mother General a blessing for the Society and all the children. It was surely a great honor for them.

The Children of Mary have planned a series of lectures for the next few months and we have been given a complimentary ticket. The first one was given by Mr. Laffen on Chesterton and was extremely good, as his real Irish brogue and keen wit added not a little to its charm.

I suppose you are wondering when my rambling letter will draw to a close; it is not like Tennyson's Brook dear Mary, but is just the result of a heart full of joy at being able to send a great deal of love and prayers, to you dear from,

Your sincere friend,

May Ryan

R.S.C.J.

Dear Mary -

Many thanks for both your letters - M^r Smith thanks you too - I hope you are getting better rapidly & will be able to go about when the snow disappears - Happy Easter - We shall remember you next week in prayer -

affectionately in C.J.M. **G Bodkin**

RSCJ

[Letterhead]

ACADEMY OF THE SACRED HEART

HALIFAX, N. S.

⁶⁴ Rose Sinnott RSCJ (1895-1979) attended the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Halifax, N.S. as a student, then became a Religious of the Sacred Heart. Mother Sinnott was at the Sacred Heart Convent in Vancouver in the 1940's. Mother Sinnott is buried in Halifax at Mount Olivet Cemetery. See Canada, Voters Lists, 1935-1980, British Columbia, Vancouver South, 1945, 42558 pg 3 and <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/191320895/rose-sinnott>

March 25th, 1923.

Dear Mary,

At last the tension of the examinations is over, and one can freely breathe at last. What do you think of two examinations and three tests in one week? Not much time lost I can assure you. At Marge's English examinations she was asked to locate the Big Dipper, her answer was, "over College Street School". At the Christian Doctrine one's [sic] she was so wrought up that when questioned she said "I don't know", Madame MacDermott [sic] got such a start that she nearly collapsed.

At our English Examinations I was praying to get a certain few lines in Latin, and would you believe it fell to my turn just at those lines. In Christian Doctrine the same thing happened, I wanted a question on Socialism. Papers were passed, with three questions on each and I had socialism on mine, I was so glad. Did you ever hear anything like Mary Brennan at oral examinations? Mother Lowth could not get a word in edgewise. She sounded like a repeating diamond needled gramophone playing "pop goes the Weasel" or something of the sort.

Mother Baratte [sic] gave me a piece of music which she thought would be nice for me to send you for Easter. It is a little folio I forget it's [sic] name with some nice "studiable" pieces in it. I intended it to reach you by Easter but the mails are so bad that possibly it might never reach it [sic] so I am sending it by Mr. Will Howley, whenever he returns from Montreal. I think he will be here sometime this coming week.

We are deep in the Guerre Française again, Audrey is captain of King Alberst's [sic] side, and I of Fauche's. Audrey and I speak French at breakfast chaque⁶⁵ jour, quelques fois pendant les recreations a douze heures et demis et aussi quelques fois a trois heures et demis. C'est très bien pour moi parce que Audrey avait une bonne prononciation et une grande vocabulaire. Et si je désire une mot, je demande Audrey. Nous continuons cette guerre après Hoc je pense, parce que il est pour la fête de ma Reverende Mère. Si vous m'crivez moi une lettre en Français je tacherai essayer de repondre vous - peut-être ma lettre de reponse est seulement en Pidgeon Français mais ayez pitie sur mes effortes.

Je reste

Votre soeur affectueuse

Aliceuse

⁶⁵ Translation: every day, sometimes during lunch, and also sometimes at goûter. It's very good for me because Audrey's prononciation is good and she has a big vocabulary. And if I want a word, I ask Audrey. I think we'll continue this Guerre after Hoc, [possibly a mis-hearing of the word "Pâques" - Easter] because it's for Reverend Mother's Feast. If you write me a letter in French I'll try to answer--maybe my reply will only be in Pidgeon [sic] French, but have pity on my efforts.

I remain,

Your affectionate sister

Aliceuse

* I have enclosed a little palm-cross for you and Mary D.

[Note at end of letter:]

Dear Mary, will you ask Sheila if she would like to subscribe to the *Signet*. Margaret Lahey is a good business manager - she got fifteen subscriptions to send to Mother Patterson.

Happy Easter to you and much love, dear Mary.

Yours devotedly in CJM

M. L. Ryan
rscjm

S.C.J.M.

Halifax, March 25, 1923

My dear Mary,

I want you to have a few lines from your Halifax home at Easter, though I fear that the Newfoundland letter-carrier may not agree with my intention. A very happy Easter, dear Mary, may all the joys of the Resurrection of our Divine Saviour be yours.

I thought of you this morning when they sang Faure's beautiful chorus, "Les Rameaux". How are you? Getting stronger daily I hope. The papers mention Newfoundland's severe weather and storms. We are not much better off; it was milder for two days and snow and ice were slightly reduced, but yesterday a heavy snowfall provided us with a new white blanket - the scenery is beautiful and little icy fingers add to the decoration - but think of the advanced season. In Vancouver leaves made their appearance and flowers are budding.

Thank God we are all well especially the children, for which we are most grateful to dear St. Philomena. The grippe prevailed all over the city, so we were really privileged. M^r Pesendorfer⁶⁶ has had a very bad cold, also S^r Keogh⁶⁷ and we had a trained nurse, but they are both well again. The class examinations are over, also those on Doctrine, and all the classes did well, even Alice with her Latin. I received a letter from Reverend Mother Mahony⁶⁸, she regrets

⁶⁶ Pauline Pesendorfer RSCJ (1863 - 1946) is buried in Mount Olivet Cemetery in Halifax, N.S.

⁶⁷ Mary Keogh RSCJ (Feb. 2, 1861 - Sept. 7, 1930) was born in Bonavista Bay, Newfoundland, the daughter of Patrick Keogh and Susannah Ryan, both of Newfoundland. Sister Keogh was a coadjutrix member of the Society. She died from tuberculosis. Sister Keogh is buried in Mount Olivet Cemetery, Halifax, N.S. See Province of Nova Scotia Certificate of Registration of Death.

⁶⁸ Ellen Mahony [also Mahoney] RSCJ (1843 - Jan. 16, 1925) was born in Saint John, New Brunswick, to parents John Mahony and Mary Murphy. She served in Halifax, St. Louis and Manhattanville, N.Y., then spent her years as Superior Vicar (meaning that she was responsible for all the Sacred Heart Convents in Canada) at Sault-au-Récollet, near Montreal. Rev. Mother

so much she has not yet written to you, but she has been very sick with the grippe and is recovering slowly. Pray that she may soon get her strength back. M^r Ryan is very well, also the other mistresses.

Kindest regards to your dear Aunt Agnes, I hope she is well. When is she coming to Halifax and to us? Au revoir, very much love from Yours devotedly

M. Wauters rscj

Many thanks for your last letter, dear Mary. This little branch is from my blessed palm.

Mahony is buried at Le Repos Saint-François d'Assise <https://www.rsfa.ca/> See Ancestry.ca Quebec, Canada, Vital and Church Records (Drouin Collection), 1621-1968 and "Fifty Years in Religious Life", *The Gazette*, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, Feb. 7, 1920, *The Gazette* at Newspapers.com, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/419709514>



Dear Mother your daffodils arrived
 and are already near the Blessed
 Sacrament giving all your messages.
 Many, many thanks together with
 a few daffodils of another kind,
 travelled all the way from Europe
 The repository is lovely and the
 chapel so quiet; the singing this
 morning perfect. At the Irish children
 sang the bells in the corridor, and I
 suppose you will find a good ringing,
 just the one we wanted. Since last night
 we are hearing the Irish Tone, and

Postcard from Reverend Mother Wauters RSCJ transcribed below

S.C.J.M.

Holy Thursday 1 p.m.
[March 29, 1923]

Dear Mary your daffodils arrived and are already near the Blessed Sacrament giving all your messages. Many, many thanks together with a few daffodils of another kind, travelled all the way from Europe. The repository is lovely and the chapel so quiet; the singing this morning perfect. At the Gloria children rang the bells in the corridor, and I assure you we had a good ringing, just the one we wanted. Since last night we are nearing the Arctic Pole, such cold and icy winds, I don't know if we had a colder day, despite sunshine. Once more happy easter, **M. Wauters rscj**

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Halifax, Nova Scotia,
April 4, 1923.

Dear Mary,

This morning I arose with a firm determination that you would not have to wait a day longer for a letter, though all my attempts up to the present were fruitless; yesterday's attempt was balked by Edith's advent. Easter I received your letter and gifts and I return you a thousand thanks for all. You spoil your old mistress and leave her nothing to desire. I had a mass said for my dear ones with your offering, so your gift brings happiness even to those who have passed from time to eternity. As for the beads - need I say I shall treasure them, and they are all the dearer because fashioned by your deft, loving little fingers. You shall always have an intention in the prayers said on them. You are the most persevering child I have ever met and no one else would think of going in for manufacturing articles of piety under such conditions.

Don't mention praying for Spring, it is too late for that now, but pray Heaven that Summer will not be eliminated, too. We are all snowed up here, the snow is above our Refectory windows and it is cold enough to freeze a polar bear. Then think of the ice-bergs which are due in June! Yesterday the Archbishop was telling us what a fine climate Halifax had, and I was thinking what a fierce one it has.

I think you ought to have a snap taken with the "stick". Miss Skerry handles one, also Connie Levis and some other plump ladies but I can't picture you with one. However, save your head at any cost. A few weeks ago we had a play and when Gracie Dempster appeared in the old violet silk gown that you always wore it brought the house down. Margaret Lahey was convulsed with laughter and could only gurgle "Mary Harris should be here to see her double". Gracie swished the train about and spoke in high G and the play was even better than the last Junior performance. Gracie was simply splendid.



Connie Levis

See the footnote for her sister Evelyn Levis at letter of August 21, 1922

Alice grows sweeter every day and Marge prettier but the latter is developing a voice that would wake the dead so we have somewhat to say to each other in Doctrine class. A few days ago some one from Newfoundland called and was tactless enough to tell Alice that she looked very well - You can picture her indignation, for if there is any thing Alice loathes it is "looking well".

I am glad Betty⁶⁹ [McGrath] is interesting you in her work and I like the idea of the school paper very much. At the Sisters of Mercy, Mt. St. Mary's Academy, Hooksett, New Hamp. they had a school magazine issued monthly and we just loved it. Then we got exchanges from many other academies and colleges and that kept things alive and spinning. Sister Paul used to be the Editor and we loved to work under her. I think it is still published. I like the magazine form better than the paper.

I have heard nothing from Mary - I wonder if she gets the letters that are sent to her. I do not feel surprised I have not heard from her since Willie has had only one letter.

October seems a very long time but I can see your point of view. I must make this proviso - If I flit you must extend your trip to take in my scene of action. Father Cloutier says the best way to learn geography is to take trips.

All I hear of you delights me. I am happy that you are taking your trial like a trustful child and not grieving or moping, and that you are shedding sunshine about you. God will bless your generosity and has something very beautiful in store for you. Your golden daffodils in the Sanctuary invited special prayers each time I looked at them but they could not supply for your golden notes and that was a real little cloud on my Easter. We all missed you and your melody and at recreation every one said the music was good but not like when "our Mary" was here. Have you begun to sing again? Audrey is sitting by me knitting a sweater for the poor and she sends her love to you. Please write often and tell me all about yourself. Remember me to Aunt Agnes, Mary, and Shelia [sic]. With much love,

Yours devotedly in C.J.,

Mary A McDermott

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,

⁶⁹ Betty McGrath was Newfoundlander Elizabeth McGrath Conroy Mennie (1900-1989). Betty's parents were James McGrath and Min Aylward. Her father - a fisherman, fish dealer, politician, and Governor of the Penitentiary - died in 1902, shortly after her birth. Betty first married Jim Conroy and he died unexpectedly when their children, Charlie (later Father Conroy who died in Peru in 1966) and Margie (later Sister Margie Conroy of the Religious of the Sacred Heart), were very small. Betty studied law and replaced her husband in legal practice with her father-in-law, becoming the second woman to practice law in Newfoundland. Betty retired from the practice of law about 1944 when she married a second time and moved to Montreal with her husband, John Mennie. Betty was a good friend of Bill Browne's first wife, Mary Harris, and Mary Harris and Bill Browne first met at Betty's home. See Robin McGrath, "Elizabeth McGrath Conroy Mennie: Barrister and Solicitor," *Newfoundland Quarterly* vol. XCII, no. 3 (1999) 12, 13 and Sister Margie Conroy RSCJ, telephone interview, 4 July 2000 and Bert Riggs, "All the Way From Oderin," *Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 23 May 2000: 9 and Browne, *Eighty-Four Years*, 107.

Sault au Recollet, April 4, 1923.

My very dear Mary,

You have been very much in Reverend Mother's thoughts and she is so distressed to think you have not had a line from her and now she is on the eve of her departure for another long journey - on land this time, to Vancouver. Not having a moment in which to write to you, dear Mary, she transmits her messages through me. She of course, regrets that you had not - what she always feared - sufficient strength for the arduous life of a religious - but religious in your heart, you always will be, dear Mary, and you must have heard in that dear novitiate that "God regards the heart". You did God's will, more than that, or better, no one can do. It must be a hard trial for you, dear Mary, and one that will call for your utmost trust in the "Father Almighty" who knows all, can do all, and who loves you. Reverend Mother wishes me to send you most affectionate messages, dear Mary. She prays for you and knows that in your heart you are 'one of ours' and as such she loves you dearly - as we do all,

Yours affectionately,

M. Coughlin⁷⁰ (indecipherable)

R.S.C.J.

S.C.J.M.

[Letterhead]
Convent of the Sacred Heart
Albany, New York

8 Avril 1923

Ma Chère Marie,⁷¹

⁷⁰ Mary-Sophie Coughlin RSCJ (1873-1943) and Elizabeth-Madeline Coughlin RSCJ (1885-1930) were siblings whose parents were Timothy Coughlin and Mary Ann Glavin of Huron County, Ontario. This reference is likely for the older sister, Mother Mary-Sophia. Both sisters are buried in Montreal at Le Repos Saint-François d'Assise <https://www.rsfa.ca/> See cemetery records. See also Ancestry <https://www.ancestry.ca/family-tree/person/tree/57009416/person/280160787948/story> however there may be errors in information concerning Mother Elizabeth-Madeline.

⁷¹ Translation: April 8, 1923

My dear Mary,

I was very pleased to receive your lovely letter written shortly after your arrival in St. John's. I hope the weather improves quickly so you can at least go for walks without catching cold--the sun is just what you need. Here, we are finally rid of the snow, but not the cold. Our Reverend

J'ai été bien contente de recevoir votre bonne lettre écrite peu après votre arrivée à St. John. Je voudrais que le temps se mette plus vite au beau afin que vous puissiez au moins vous promener sans prendre froid, c'est le soleil qu'il vous faut. Ici nous sommes enfin débarrassées de la neige mais pas encore du froid. Notre Révérende Mère Vicair est partie le 1^{er} Vendredi du mois pour faire la visite de Rochester et de Detroit. Elle a emmené avec elle ma S^r Dolores qui est partie pour 2 mois pour se dévouer auprès des petits Italiens de l'école. Elle a bien fait son sacrifice, vous voyez, chère Marie, que N. S. en demande à tous ceux qu'Il aime. C'est précisément la marque de son amour. Aussi, en pensant à vous, et c'est bien souvent, je prie que vous n'en laissiez passer aucun de ceux qu'Il met sur votre chemin. Rien n'est petit ni grand devant Dieu, c'est l'amour seul qui fait le prix de ce que nous donnons. Keep the little word which has done you good. The more you will think of it, the more the truth of it will sink in your soul, then you will never feel alone and it will open to you a world of peace and wonder. Je joins à ma lettre "The Good Shepherd" vous êtes si bien une de ses brebis! La poésie est de N. V. Mère Stuart. "Mon Secret" est d'une Mère de France, c'est le votre aussi, vous verrez. Comment va votre cousine Elsie? elle a oublié de se soigner, mais j'espère qu'elle est bien maintenant, donnez-lui mon bon souvenir.

Au revoir, chère Marie, soyez certaine que je ne vous oublie pas; faites de même pour moi dans la prière qui nous gardes unies dans le Coeur de Jésus.

B. Lecroix rscj.⁷²

Halifax

Mother Vicar left the First Friday of the month to visit Rochester and Detroit. She brought Sister Dolores with her, who is gone for two months to devote herself to the little Italians at the school. She really sacrificed herself, you see, dear Mary. Our Lord asks many sacrifices of those he loves. That is precisely the sign of his love. When I think of you, which is often, I pray that you don't ignore any sacrifices that he leaves in your path. Nothing is big or small before God; only love determines the price of what we give. [English omitted]. I am attaching "The Good Shepherd" to my letter; you are one of his sheep! The poetry is by Our Venerable Mother Stuart. "Mon Secret" ["My Secret"] is by a Mother from France. It's yours too, you'll see. How is your cousin Elsie? She forgot to look after herself, but I hope she's well now. Remember me to her. Goodbye, dear Mary. Know that I haven't forgotten you; do the same for me in the prayers which keep us united in Jesus's heart.

⁷² Berthe Lecroix RSCJ (c 1868-Oct. 10, 1944), who was born in France to a French father and a Dutch mother, came to the U.S. in 1903. She was a professor of French for nearly forty years at Manhattanville College in New York and, as well, advised on the French curriculum for the Sacred Heart schools in the eastern U.S. See Newspapers by Ancestry, Obituary, *Daily News* (New York, New York) Wed. Oct. 11, 1944 pg 604 and Ancestry.ca - 1930 United States Federal Census, Manhattan (Districts 751-1000, District 0883).

April 8, 1923

My dear Mary,

Did I thank you for the letter brought by Mr. Howley? If not let me thank you now for that one and also for the one that came with Alice's Easter box. It is always a pleasure to hear from you, and I hope you will believe this even though I can not write as often or as much as we would both wish. - Go on being brave and not imposing your sorrows on others. - Try to be faithful to your Spiritual Exercises - make a little meditation every day, and do not forget your reading. - You say that you wish you had the life of Mother Stuart - I have within the last few months ordered several copies, so know just where to get it. The price is five dollars and if you want me to order a copy for you let me know as soon as you get this and I shall have one sent to you as quickly as possible. - It is really a wonderful life, so spiritual, hopeful, instructive and altogether charming. - If you decide to get a copy (and I hope you will) please lend it to Sheila who is anxious to read it also. - She greatly enjoys having you to talk to - it is an outlet for her pent up feelings. - I am so glad you had a good letter from Mother Bodkin and hope you may soon have one from Rev. Mother. Have you not heard from the latter at all since you came home? - Thank you very much for the Mass offering - such a welcome Easter card, dear Mary. - When will Elsie be passing through on her way to New York? I hope she has fully recovered by this time though if she has no thanks are due to the weather. - From letters I judge you have been enjoying (?) about the same specimens as we have.

One thing (among many) in your last letter pleased me very much - that you feel you are growing in personal love of our Lord - keep up the exercise of the Presence of God and you will grow more and more in this love which should be to us as the very breath we draw. - The other book you wanted *The Society of the Sacred Heart* was out of print when I wanted to get some copies last year. I am going to try again and shall let you know the result. - This is a scrappy letter, dear Mary but the best your old Mother can do now - so take it with much love and all good wishes for your happiness.

Devotedly in C. J. M.

M. L. Ryan**rscjm.**

I am writing Sheila too.

S.C.J.M.

My dearest Mary

Mother Byrne⁷³ gave me your kind message and I just feel I must send you a word, since she is writing to you. I am praying for you so often, understanding well how you feel. But it is all Our dear Lord's doing and He knows best. You did His Will in going to Kenwood and now you do it again in taking care of your health. Let Him arrange your life as He pleases you belong to Him everywhere. Thank you for your promise. Kindly give my love to dear aunt Agnes; she seems like an old friend to me. I am expecting a letter from Halifax, from M^r Murray, we love one another very much. Courage, dear little Mary, and do remember me also in prayer.

17th April 1923

A Spies
r du S C de J⁷⁴

S.C.J.M.

Manhattanville
April 22nd, 1923

My very dear Mary,

This was a stray sheet among my note paper. It looks cheery so I took it. Needless to say your letter gave me joy. Not a day goes by without thought of you, dear child. But my love is a silent one. Over and over again Mother Spies asked me - "Have you written to Mary?" and alas! I was obliged to answer no. So when your dear letter came I passed it over to her and she wrote you, but I have mislaid the letter. I hunted fifteen minutes for it, so now I will trust it to St. Anthony. I am so glad you are resting - That is right, with house care and the balmy air of St. John's you will soon be strong again. Perhaps in a year or so our dear Lord will call his little Chosen One again to Kenwood, and all will be dearer than ever. It is comforting to know you look upon your sickness as a loving gift from the dear Master. No need to tell you to be generous with Him, for I feel you are. When you see Margret Edens, please tell her I often think of her and that I send my love. Write me when you feel like it Mary dear. Your letters are

⁷³ Mary Byrne RSCJ (1871 - 1945) was the daughter of James Byrne and Sara Greene. She is buried in Montreal in Le Repos Saint-François d'Assise <https://www.rsfa.ca/> See Cemetery records.

⁷⁴ Antoinette Cornelia Marie Spies RSCJ (1871- Nov. 7, 1938) was born in Holland, the daughter of Frederick Spies. She moved to New York in 1915. Shortly thereafter she received an honorary degree of Master of Arts from Fordham University and later received her Ph.D. from Fordham. Mother Spies was a professor of Mathematics at Manhattanville College. In 1932 Mother Spies was assigned to teach at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Roehampton, England where she died in 1938. See Death Registration, District of Wandsworth, "Fordham Confers Degrees on 187" *New York Herald*, June 13, 1918. p7, and 1930 United States Federal Census, New York, New York, Manhattan (Districts 751-1000) District 0883 and 1930 Manhattanville College yearbook at https://archive.org/stream/mvilleyyearbook1930/mvilleyyearbook1930_djvu.txt

always welcome, but you know my inveterate dislike to letter writing. A wee word now and again you may receive.

Kindly remember me to your dear Aunt Agnes.

Much, very much love to you, dear Mary,

From your loving friend in C.J.

Mary Byrne
R.S.C.J.

S.C.J.M.

Sacred Heart,
Sault, April 28, '23.

My dear Mary,

Once more the address of "Rennie's Mill" is heading your ever welcome letters. - The great overture, so generously made in obedience to God's call, has been a success. In renouncing your cherished plans you have accomplished His. Surely the peace and resignation to His will that followed your big sacrifice are proof sufficient that His providence is arranging everything for you. So you do well, dear Mary, to abandon yourself blindly to Its guidance from day to day. - Do you know those consoling verses of O.V. Mother Stuart: "Thy Will is Best"? The last is:

"O God: I thank Thee;
I have learned
That Thy unerring will is best:
At Thy command that rest is toil;
That, with Thy Presence, toil is rest, -
Content, through bright or shadowed way
At Thy sweet will to go or stay."

- I am glad, Mary, that the pent-up zeal for God's glory and the helping of others' salvation or sanctification will find a sphere and outlet in your present circumstances, since you are a Promoter of the League, and are able to visit the poor. Ever the humble, cheerful acceptance of forced inaction (backed up by prayer) is a grand apostolate! - I still keep our little compact about the Seven Dolor Beads⁷⁵ every Friday. Pray for me too, dear Mary.

⁷⁵ Seven Dolor Beads - Refers to the devotion to Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and her seven sorrows (dolours). In the mid eighteenth century the founder of the Society of the Sacred Heart, St. Madeleine Sophie, stipulated that the rosary of the Seven Dolours was to be prayed every Friday by the Religious of the Sacred Heart. These are "the 'seven sorrows' of Mary: the prophecy of Simeon, the flight into Egypt, the loss of Jesus in the Temple, her encounter with Jesus on the way to Calvary, the death of Jesus, Mary receiving his body from the cross, and the

During the absence of Mother Murphy (who is with Rev. Mother Vicar in Point Grey) I



Clare Murphy RSCJ (1889-1967)⁷⁶

burial of Jesus". Carolyn Osiek RSCJ, Archivist "Our Lady of Sorrows in the Society" Society of the Sacred Heart, <http://rscj.org/our-lady-sorrows-society>

⁷⁶ Clare Murphy RSCJ (May 15, 1889 - July 5, 1967) was born in Halifax, one of eleven children of John Murphy and Mary Cronin. She joined the Religious of the Sacred Heart in 1910, making her final vows in 1917. Mother Murphy was teaching at the Sault in 1923. At the time of her death, Reverend Mother Murphy had been the superior in five Canadian houses and was the only nun to have done so. She was an aunt to Halifax area priests Rev. Gerald Murphy, Rev. Richard

am taking the IV Academic. My days are quite full, otherwise our chat might be longer. Mde. Connaughton sends you her love. So does your old friend in corde Jesu,

**Mgt. M. Nealis,
R.S.H.** ⁷⁷

Halifax
April 29, 1923

My dear Mary,

Instead of making an apology for the nice large Paper used in your last letter (April 12) you should congratulate yourself on having a way to give pleasure to those at the other end of the line. It was indeed a letter well worth waiting for - so you see ! - I am so sorry that you had to be laid up with grippe for so many days and do hope you have entirely recovered by this time. - It is evident that all your friends were very good to you and attentive during your illness. - You have much to thank God for even though in His wisdom He saw fit to send you a big cross. -

I have ordered the Life of Mother Stuart⁷⁸ for you and requested Benziger to send it direct to St. John's. Will you please let me know as soon as it arrives so that I may send them your money order for \$5.00? I shall not send it till I know you have the book. - I also sent to Mother Patterson the names you enclosed for the *Signet*: Barbara's and Sheila's - but am waiting also to

Murphy, Rev. Greg Murphy and Rev. Robert Walsh. She is buried in St. Peter's Cemetery, New Westminster, B.C. See British Columbia Registration of Death, *The Vancouver Sun*, July 6, 1967, pg 35 and "Retired Nun's Funeral Held", *The Province* (Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada), Jul 11, 1967, pg 2. See

<https://www.ancestry.ca/family-tree/person/tree/111997759/person/350094234093/facts> I am advised the picture is from the Society Archives.

⁷⁷ Margaret Mary Nealis RSCJ (Dec. 9, 1876 - Dec. 17, 1957) was born in Fredericton, N. B. Her father, Hugh Nealis, was a Catholic who had come from Ireland about 1845; her mother, Jean Wilkinson, was an Anglican. Mother Nealis entered the Society shortly after leaving school and made her final vows in Paris in 1903. Mother Nealis served for most of her career as portress at the Sault-au-Récollet near Montreal. She has been described time and time again as a joyful, kind, serene and loving woman. Mother Nealis became widely known as an amateur religious artist whose output was prolific. In part, she became so well known because many of her works were lithographed and distributed without charge by J.F. Topp, a Montreal photographer. See *The Soul Pictures of Margaret Mary Nealis*, A Thesis in the Department of Art History, Apollonia Elizabeth Schofield, Concordia University Montreal, 1993, available through the National Library of Canada.

⁷⁸ Maud Monahan, *Life and letters of Janet Erskine Stuart*, London, Longmans Greene, 1923.

send her the money as Margaret has never heard of the safe arrival of her letter. You see Margaret wrote Mother Patterson and sent the names of thirteen subscribers along with money order to pay subscriptions - that was weeks ago. As when your last letter came Margaret had heard nothing from Kenwood she indited another letter to Mother P. - She has had no answer yet. So many letters are lost but we hope good St. Anthony has had a care of this one.

May 2nd - feast of St. Athanasius -

See how the days run away from one when she wants to write a letter! Meantime we have had letters from you to rejoice our hearts. First of all I must thank you for getting another subscriber. Rose Sinnott's name shall be sent on as well as the fee for *Signet*. A card from Mother Patterson to Margaret has relieved our minds on the score of money sent as she says all has been received - sorry she did not let us know sooner. I suppose she is busy like the the rest of us. - You did not use the big sheets for your last letter. Resume them for they are very welcome. - I was amazed to hear that Margaret Doyle had not received any word from Alice and Marjory since she was in Halifax. Both had written several times before your letter came and now they will do so again - "but what's the use"? since one can never count on their getting to their destination. - Every once in a while a number of letters disappear into the unknown - no possibility of finding whither they have gone!

In regard to Mary Howley I must say that I am surprised at what you tell me for though I knew she was a very spoiled child she did not seem such as she has shown herself to be since leaving here. So much kindness was lavished on her in so many ways that one would think a spark of gratitude would make her show some appreciation. When I think of the nights and days Sister McGovern⁷⁹ spent in caring for her like a baby (when she had rheumatism) and the hundreds of steps she took to get any thing that Mary fancied - it really seems too ungrateful of the girl! - Regarding the other matter I shall tell you the facts since Mrs. Howley has spoken of it - otherwise I would not mention it. When Mrs. Howley was leaving Mary here she told me that M. was irregular regarding her menses (since coming to Halifax) and that she would like me to have her looked after. I answered that this was not unusual at Mary's age & that we would certainly have her attended to. She also told Mary that in case she was not all right at Christmas time she wished her to write and let her know as she would prefer to take her home and see to her. (Now I want you to notice this request in view of what is to come. Mary was out in the city for more than two weeks at Christmas and so had every facility for writing to her mother.) Sister McGovern being asked to look after Mary did so as you can understand - carrying hot foot baths up to her room at night, giving her hot drinks and medicine that has helped many others. In November Mary came to me with great joy and said "I am so happy because I am all right again" she also wrote the same to her mother. - Now from that day until just before the Easter vacation Mary never mentioned the matter to me. Naturally I thought she continued "all right" and as she came to see me often and never hesitated to ask for whatever she needed or wanted it did not

⁷⁹ Sister Margaret McGovern RSCJ (June 29, 1849 - January 10, 1929) was a coadjutrix member of the Religious of the Sacred Heart, so that she was not a teacher but did housekeeping at the Convent. She was born in Ireland to parents Michael McGovern and Mary Murray. She is buried in Mount Olivet Cemetery in Halifax. See Certificate of Registration of Death, Province of Nova Scotia.

enter my mind that she was concealing some thing regarding her health. - When she told me at Easter that she had not been as she should for three months I was amazed - when she spoke of writing it to her mother I said (with the kindest intention posible) "Don't you think it would be better to let us attend to you first and try to bring you around as Sister did in the Fall?" I added that being so far away it would only worry her mother and that if Sister did not succeed I would be the first to tell her mother. I also reminded her that when she had rheumatism in the Fall I wrote at once to her mother and continued to keep her informed of Mary's condition. - Mary to all appearances was perfectly satisfied. Sister ordered the medicine and would have begun at once the treatment only Mary went out for the Easter vacation. During that vacation all this incomprehensible affair was - I was going to say concocted but do not like to use the word. However I do not know what word to add, so you can supply. So often it happens that the menses stop for a while at Mary's age - we have to deal with this very frequently - and all Doctors say that it is nothing to cause alarm unless the girl is sick otherwise. - Now, Mary, notice that no fault seems to be found with Mary Howley for not telling her mother at Christmas time what her mother expressly told her to write - yet Mary was out in the city and perfectly free to write all the letters she wished. - This has taken a lot of time to write but knowing that you and Sheila are such staunch champions of the Convent it seemed best to let you know the true version of what you are hearing. - Alice was perfectly furious when she read what you had to say on the subject - though you did not say as much to her as to me. She exclaimed "Why I never saw any one taken so much care of as Mary Howley, except Mary Harris." She wants to write to M.H. but I shall see that she is not too strong. - Marjory said "Aunt Agnes would never let any one say such things in her presence." So with such true friends in St. John'[sic] it would seem at least possible to give a true idea of the matter. - Tell this to Sheila as I shall not have time to write it twice.

Interrupted!!!

A note from Rev. Mother Lewis just received speaks so sweetly of "dear Mary Harris". She says you were in the infirmary when she was there at Kenwood so she did not see you, but every one seemed to love you and to regret so much your having to go home. She speaks of the sorrow it must have been to you to abandon your cherished desire - and of the inscrutable ways of God, to call you to the life in which you could have done much good, and then not give you the strength to carry out your vocation. - I can understand what you say, dear Mary, about the longing for Kenwood - but there is only one thing worth while, to love our Lord and do His will no matter how hard to nature, how crucifying to the heart it may be. - Yes, I understand too the day you were in Halifax that you were too dazed to be yourself or to be able to say the things you wanted to say later on. - But you can write with the certainty that all will be understood - and that the more you write the better pleased I shall be. - Don't forget to let me know just as soon as the life of Mother Stuart reaches you. - Give love to "Aunt Agnes" and to Mary Doyle. I asked Margaret D. to call on Rev. Mother Lewis at Grosse Pointe and the latter hoped to welcome her but so far has not seen her.

Be cheerful, dear Mary, and never let yourself repine. Our Lord loves you and wants you to love Him with a joyful heart.

Your loving old Convent-Mother,

M. L. Ryan

rscjm.

Write a nice long cheery letter to Helen O'C. who is always the same devoted friend and who misses you in many ways.

Convent of the Sacred Heart.
Halifax, May 5, 1923.

Dear Mary,

You have made me your debtor for two letters, but you know how busy the days are at this particular period of the year. We had a mock test in Christian Doctrine on Friday, and I managed to fill the best part of fourteen sides.

On Friday night we had a perfectly lovely concert. Mrs. Affleck, (whom I don't think you know) brought out several people. The programme was first an orchestral piece, "Open thy blue eyes" by Mrs. Affleck and a Rachel Hagen a graduate of the Mount last year, first violin, Mrs. Beckwith - second, and a Miss Margery Eagen cello.

Mrs. Conie & Dr. Beckwith - a duet.

Miss and Mr. Courtney (Ella) duet.

Miss Eagen cello solo.

Mrs. Affleck two violin solos.

Miss Courtney song "Little boy blue"

Mr. Courtney song I I passed by your window

II I am master of my fate.

Dr. Beckwith song ye winds & waves

and an encore

Mary Granville an Ave Maria.

Miss Eagen cello "To a Wild Rose".

Miss Affleck plays the violin wonderfully, and the piano and cello equally well. A Miss Mackenzie accompanied most of the pieces and Mrs. Affleck the rest. The piano did not sound bad although its tone is about as deep as a cake pan. That new piano in the reception room is not half as good as the old one. You play a piece on it and then get so disgusted you feel like breaking it in pieces.

We are preparing for Reverend Mothers [sic] feast which I fancy will be some time near the twenty fourth. I am to say the address, Mother Ryan is Teaching, isn't that nice - priez pour moi.⁸⁰ Sister McGovern sends her love continually.

Marge was out to a concert on Tuesday at the Conservatory with Madeleine P.⁸¹ She was only allowed out until nine thirty and had to tear herself away. The First Communion ceremony

⁸⁰ French, meaning "pray for me".

⁸¹ Likely Madeleine Page, sister of Isobel Page R.S.C.J.

is on Thursday - poor little Petie Murphys mother is delayed in St. John in the flood, and has all Petie's things for it, she may have to wait - Mother Ryan is better, are we glad? Need I answer.

Love
Alice

Halifax
 June 17, 1923

My dear Mary,

Only about two minutes in which to write this note - impossible however to put it off [in] view [of] the important item (for you). - A few evenings ago I was having a talk with Alice during which she said "I would like to come back next year only I don't like to ask as I fancy all arrangements have been made for me next year." - It happened that I had just been having the same thought in the Chapel so I told Alice that we must pray about it and see what could be done. Do you think, Mary, that your Aunt Agnes would be willing to send her back for another year? It might be of the greatest benefit to the child for she is just at a point where she appreciates the character training and is working on herself in a way she never did before. Alice has the making of a very fine character, noble qualities and tendencies - but with these she has a most rebellious disposition, especially when her will is crossed in any way. For this reason I feel sure that another year of training at the Sacred Heart would do for her what could not be done elsewhere and just what she needs.

It would be well also for her to have another year of studio work at the Convent before she branches out into a big Art School. Now see what you can do, Mary, for the good of your sister. You know I am thinking of what is best for her in writing thus. I did not write on this subject sooner as it only came to me lately how much good another year would do her. - I want Mary Gibbs also to come back and hope Barbara will not try to keep her at home.

She is a very nice girl but has only realized lately the necessity of character training - since Father Fillion's Retreat.

This is all for to-day with a promise of more when time permits. So glad that Margaret went to see Rev. Mother Lewis.

Much love dear Mary from yours devotedly in C.J.M.

M. L. Ryan
 rscjm

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
 Spring Garden Road,

June 24, 1923.

Dear Mary,

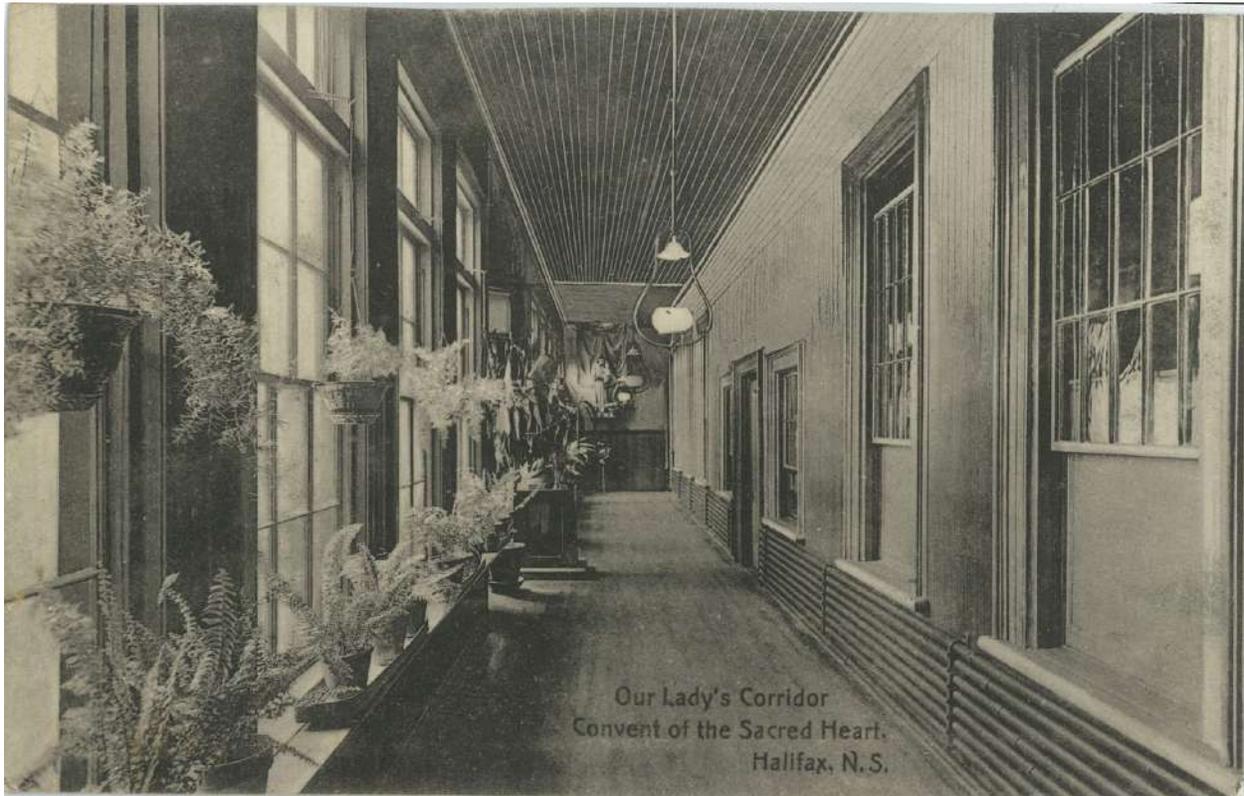
'Cast your bread upon the waters and it shall return to you', do you recognize this type paper that you ordered with such care for my notes? I know that you consider a typed letter very commercial but the fact of the matter is that Sheila is going tomorrow and my eyes are rather done out from some hurry-up work and I think you would rather have this than something shorter in my very elegant script!

Sheila is just as dear as ever, she came to my classes and shared all our ups and downs. The day the test marks arrived I was engaged repotting ferns and my class was making mud pies and enjoying itself to the full. I picked out all the nice juicy worms for Sheila and she shrieked as only she can shriek. I did not expect the returns so soon and had not even time to get my hands washed before I went in to see the crowning. Both got the same average 90 1/4%, not quite up to your mark, but I was very well satisfied and would not ask for two better workers.

I heard from Mary Ryan not long ago. She is very happy and very good. She told me you were always in her prayers and she wishes very much that you may have your heart's desire. I heard of a wonderful miracle of the Little Flower today and as she valued her vocation and had a holy impatience to get out of the world into Carmel I feel sure she would help you. Why not write to her sister who is Prioress at Lisieux and tell her about yourself and get a relic. You always were persevering so why, if it is God's will, not persevere for a miracle. If you could only get your dear little heart mended up the rest of you is strong enough for an Amazon. I shall pray with you and I am sure Mary and her novices, and the Kenwood novices would join us.

John Burns was ordained today and he will say his first Mass here tomorrow. His Mother is the happiest lady in the realm and so are his sisters happy though Eileen confessed last night that she felt like weeping and she did not know why. We had his chalice out here yesterday and it is a beautiful one. It was designed and made in Belgium under Father Phelan's direction and is in memory of John's father. Alice and Marge went to the ceremony and I never saw anything so tired as Marge when she got back to dinner. It is sad to see Alice going off this time, as I suppose it is for good. You know I hate to see the children grow up and I can never get used to it. Alice has been very sweet this year and has done very good work.

When is Betty coming and when am I to expect the Convent Paper? Sheila told me a fire had postponed the arrival of the latter, but I hope not for long. Your little Sister Agnes came but I did not see her as I only had an invitation from Addie who was on a search for all the Newfoundlanders and did me the honour to count me in. I am delighted to hear that Sister Joseph is so well. That is a miracle, indeed, for she was very, very ill when she passed through Halifax on her way to New York.



Ferns were an important part in the decor of both College Street School and the Convent of the Sacred Heart. Mother Theresa Codie's "ferns were the largest and the most luxuriant".

See *College Street Remembered*, page 27.

..... Monday

This epistle was not finished yesterday because Madame Codie insisted on my taking a look at her ferns and this afternoon I shall begin the House-cleaning of the Physics cupboard. I must confess I think hard things of Adam when the cleaning season comes around especially as Mother Lowth has such an inordinate affection for coal oil and applies it so generously.

Are you reading lovely things? Just as soon as the Physics and the Library as [are] spick and span I shall revel in books, Mercier among them, and I shall rejoice as the minutes fly on bringing October ever nearer. Be very good and careful of yourself so that there will be no excuse for not coming. I was very regretful when Sheila came and told me how well you were that I did not choose June for the visit but now that her's [sic] is at an end I am glad it is to be in October. The saddest thing in this world, sin excepted, is that all is so fleeting. Audrey was feeling sad at the thought of Sheila's departure the other day and she told me that the [she] went into the Seminary and told Our Lord that the one joy was that she would never have to part from Him and I thought what a wise little girl she was to realize it so keenly at her age.

Madame Codie wants me to thank you for the stamps. Newfoundland stamps are most eagerly sought for so that everytime a package arrives she is in high glee. This is her very busy time. She has a class of fifty-three and school does not close until next Friday. I am not going to tell you about the graduation for I know that you will hear all that from your dear little sisters.

Mother Barette has done wonders with the Orchestra and your Aunt Agnes will be delighted with Marge's improvement in music. I think Marge would rather practise than read or study. I can hardly keep her down to finish her dinner when Miss I. is here.

Father Burns said his first Mass here today. He wore a vestment of white satin that Mother sent. It was most touching to see him give his dear Mother Holy Communion. Gerald and Willie, with ten other young men, were in the Sanctuary and the girls and their Mother in the first bench. Father Burns looked very young and holy - he made me think of Saint Aloysius. It was beautiful to see Mrs. Burns surrounded by her good sons and lovely daughters. Eileen is the sweetest of girls and is so lovingly attentive to her Mother that everyone admires her. Evelyn is just as dear and Mrs. Burns declining years are crowned with joy.

Have you heard from Reverend Mother yet? I have not and I have come to the conclusion that I am dropped from her list of correspondence. Mother Brennan does not seem much better. She always asks for you and prays for your intention.

If I read this letter over I probably would consign it to the paper basket but there is not time to go in for composition and I know you will rather enjoy the type errors. They will remind you of the notes where you had to use your judgment. You know I always told you that the self-made man was bound to make a fool of himself periodically - though he is a man one admires tremendously - and it is the same with a self-taught typist (barring the admiration). Your letters are always a delight and the more they tell me of you personally the better I like them. I hope you go to see Mrs. Ryan. When you do give her my love. Remember me to your dear Aunt Agnes and to Mary. Tell Elsie that I always get cheated out of the chance of seeing her but that I have not given up hope of meeting her yet. With much love to your dear little self,

Yours devotedly in C.J.,

Mary A. B. McDermott

rscj.

S.C.J.M.

Convent. Halifax. 2^d July '23.

My dear Mary,

No, there was not a pin-hole of time to thank you for your dear bright letter of May 26th, up to the school closing: and even Sheila slipped off without taking an extra note to you - Alice and Marjorie, too. One would think love for the precious children an X quantity in my books, though it is really this love that cuts off the time for letters to them as well as to grown-up friends. Here is the lovely Visitation Day now, reminding me of my debt to Mary and scores of others. Also, Dominion Day, urging good Canadians to do credit to the country in all ways. (Americans become citizens here after a time - if they behave properly!) so let us have a word together. One nice little visit with Sheila I had, and she told me how well you are getting on - happy and somewhat better in health after the hard winter. Don't fatigue yourself with those

music lessons, kind act as it is toward the good Sister. Alice and Marjorie will see that you are only prudently busy, I hope, though your loving Aunt is on the watch for this no doubt.

Your sisters left us in the best of health and spirits - after a good year and we shall welcome both back in September, Providence willing. Sheila C - enjoyed a quiet sweet visit, and like Mary, went weeping from the old portal. She is a genuine Sacred Heart child and my regret is that the last two years here were denied her. Elfie may be more fortunate in this. We all love her and are glad of her advance to the First Acad. next year. I should like to praise duly your dear Marjorie's assiduity in studies the past year but you know of it by her improvement. Alice also did so much better all round.

What of the old Convent? Quiet, busy, full of house-cleaning etc. just now. Study and above all, prayer will follow soon. Pray for us - and me during our Retreat, 22^d-31st. I have a six-line poem, - [indecipherable] - that says much to me: no room to quote it here.

All are well, according to God's Will - M^r Brennan not extra. M^{rs} Murray and Codie off to Manhattan^e. today for a few weeks' chant!

Keep a brave loving heart dear Mary - Our Lord expects it. He loves you [indecipherable].

Thanks for your sweet letter to the "many graduates". We read and enjoyed it together the P.M. of closing day (when it arrived). I know they all thank for your kindness in writing. The Ark escaped the "flood".

Best love to you, Auntie, Sisters. Write. Always yours affectionately, **C.M. Lowth RSH**

S.C.J.M.

Halifax July 3, 1923.

My dear Mary,

This is already July and I have not yet answered that very nice and correct french letter you wrote for my feast. I thank you so much, and truly enjoyed it. If I did not tell you sooner it is simply that there was very little time left for correspondence, if there was any at all. I am most grateful too for the mass offering enclosed in your letter. Your sisters must have written you all about my feast and the conge, and since then Sheila went back to St. John's and I am sure that there is not anything that happened or should have happened in the Convent that she did not tell you. It is your turn now to come and pay a visit to your Alma Mater. Will it be on Oct. 20th?

No M^r Mathieu did not tell me that you had French meetings or matinees, how do you call them? Enclosed you will find a circular issued by the "Action populaire française. It may interest you. I wish you could have assisted at M^r Maria Crosier's french examinations; all little juniors and the many, many things they know! M^r Maria has all kinds of figures taken from catalogues and reviews, the children name the articles in French, spell the words etc.

M^r Murray and M^r Codie left yesterday for Manhattanville, there to follow the summer course of Mrs. Ward's musical method.

ii ADVERTISEMENTS

Summer School of 1923
Pius X Choir of Liturgical Music
 COLLEGE OF THE SACRED HEART
 New York City

July 2nd to August 11th, 1923

Gregorian Chant
 According to DOM ANDRÉ MOCQUEREAU, O.S.B., of SOLESMES
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Please deal with our Advertisers and mention the SIGNET.

Advertisement from *The Signet*
 (a magazine of the Alumnae of the Sacred Heart) May 1923, ii.

An Appeal to Sacred Heart Children

Old children of the Sacred Heart are begged to look into this work as here is a great field for expert teachers and the education given in the Convents of the Sacred Heart lays a foundation for the apostolic call of Pope Pius X. The Chair of Liturgical Music at Manhattanville is the training school where teacher-students receive intensive training in the theory and practice of the Justine Ward Method of Teaching Music, which is the basic study for the correct understanding and rendition of Gregorian Chant.

Justine Ward Method of Teaching Music

First Year—Second Year—Third Year—These Normal courses are given by Mother Stevens and are adapted for both musicians and non-musicians. Music is a language—all can learn to understand it, and read it, and many can learn to write it. Musicians taking up this work will be interested in the pedagogical side; the presentation and the simplification; and the non-musicians will discover that music is meant for all by their own power to understand and grasp what has hitherto seemed so mysterious and elusive. A syllabus of the subject matter contained in Music I, II, III will be sent on request. Practical demonstrations will be given by children during the classes.

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The subtle art of the technique required for an intelligent rendering of Gregorian music lies in an understanding of that broad and undulating rhythm, that legato, which characterizes all the melodies from the simplest to the most elaborate. Musical and rhythmical principles, theoretic and applied, of the most varied nature will be studied in a simple manner step by step and analyzed. Scientific doctrines governing the plastic expression of the rhythmic flow (chironomie), long regarded as obscure, will be presented in clear simple terms and studied from an interesting and practical point of view. In the work of Fourth Year the science of outlining by manual gesture the undulation of rhythm is treated as a basic element of primary educational importance—hitherto this study has been reserved almost exclusively for directors of music and choirmasters. The course will be of interest and profit to choir directors and advanced students as well as to the beginner.

Fee, \$10.00.

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According to the Justine Ward Method. Each step carefully graded. The Triad as basis and bridge. A practical course in chord relations and harmonization of melodies. Two and three part writing to give a better understanding of harmony and chord progressions. Contrapuntal treatment of tones, as well as columns and blocks of tones. Course adapted for teachers and musicians as well as for the ordinary student.

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Musical Analysis—Given by MR. BENEDICT FITZ GERALD.

Beginning with the smallest musical thought, the motive; to the development of the phrase, the sentence and the part; a careful survey of the two part and three part song forms, with due attention to the smaller art forms. An excursion will be made into the larger art forms including the sonata form. An elementary knowledge of harmony and pianoforte will be of much assistance in understanding the work.

Fee, \$10.00.

For further information, address the Secretary:

Pius X Chair of Liturgical Music
College of the Sacred Heart
Manhattanville

Please deal with our Advertisers and mention the SIGNET

Advertisement from *The Signet*
 (a magazine of the Alumnae of the Sacred Heart) May 1923, iii.

You know that College St. School won the cup for the 3rd time. And you should have seen and heard, the enthusiastic welcome extended by the school children to the winners of the contest! - two boys and three girls composed the team, - the boys were brought simply on the shoulders of their classmates from the Majestic to the school, the girls carried the cup, and when the party appeared at the other end of the street, the school children (500) who waited for them in front of the building broke out in tremendous cheers, the bells rang and never I think did the appearance of the shining cup provoke such excitement. Fr O'Sullivan dropped in at the same moment expressing congratulations which added to the screams and joy. Finally all were sent home for there was no possibility of getting on with the classes, there was too much excitement.

I hope you are all very happy holidayers? Kindest regards to Mrs. Tobin. Love to the three sisters. Please give this note to Sheila. Yours devotedly

M. Wauters

rscj

Pay a visit for me to S^r Joseph and tells us how she is.

Convent of the Sacred Heart
Spring Garden Road
Halifax N.S.

July 10, 1923

My dear Mary -

Has Sheila explained to you the cogent reasons why you did not get a letter from me when our dear Newfoundlanders went home?

I did want very much to write you but circumstances were against it at the moment. - Sheila enjoyed her visit to the utmost as without doubt she has already told you - and next October you will be enjoying your visit to "the dear old Convent".

We heard that Mary and Elsie Doyle were coming over from St. John's the early part of this week and rather expected they would make us a call - but so far we have not had the pleasure of seeing them. I hope they will not pass through without taking in Spring Garden Road. - This envelope was found after the children went home - whether it ever had anything in it I know not, only that it was found empty and that I proceed to fill it. - Alice tells me that your article on the Dream of Gerontius was very good, among the best in the magazine. Why not let us have a chance to enjoy it? I thought you were going to send us a copy as soon as the magazine came out? -

Did you succeed in getting Father LeBuffe's book on *The Hound of Heaven*? You will like it extremely I am sure and it will be an aid to you when writing on that subject. Father LeBuffe - more than any one else perhaps - brings out the religious significance with its depth of

helpfulness in this wonderful poem. - Read it all from the Introductory Essay (which is very beautiful) to the last Note. The Scripture references are illuminating - where he finds in the inspired pages this same "human nature fleeing away from Him, and the Tremendous Lover still pursuing". You should be able, inspired by your love for the poem, to write something very good. - Now to another subject = did you receive the note I wrote some time ago anent Alice's returning in September?

And if so what do you think of it? Alice writes that she thinks arrangements have been made that will preclude her coming back. - But, Mary, arrangements are not the "Laws of the Medes and the Persians" - so I let myself hope that the decision is not irrevocable and that we shall see her again as a school girl. You see, Mary, Alice is at a turning point when another year of character training would mean more to her future than any thing else could do. Think of all the many years and years she may have to spend in the world - is it too much to give one more little year out of them all to what would be of the greatest benefit to her. She has worked on her character in such a different way the latter part of this year, and has shown so much appreciation of things that are higher. - Well, I have put her in my prayers in a very special way this Summer trusting it to the Sacred Heart to bring her back.

Much love to you, dear Mary, from
Your always devoted Convent-Mother in C

M. L. Ryan
rscjm.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Halifax, Nova Scotia,
July 22, 1923.

Dear Mary,

Here it is the eve of the Retreat and the Father who is to give it is already here. He is a Father Finnegan from Baltimore and I think our breezes will delight him if our fogs do not depress him.

The *Inter Nos* arrived and with it your dear letter. I was delighted with both. Indeed I have quite lost my heart to the school paper and think you all deserve great credit. I am hoping I shall see Betty [McGrath] to tell her just how pleased I am with it. I know from experience just how much work it represents and all the tact that must be used to float it successfully. The sketches are clever, too, I thought none would appear as Rose told me that much had been lost on account of a fire. It had a birth quite in keeping with its high spirit. I liked your study very much, in fact I liked your production the very best. I have a great weakness for the Dream and you have caught the author's spirit. I was going to mark the passages I liked best but I cannot keep hold of it long enough to do so. Rose was most interested and liked your essay very much,

Mary Evans got it from her and then I believe Mary Carey turned up so it has been going the rounds.

A few days ago I had a nice visit from Mrs. Burns and Eileen. They are very proud of Father John and are now most interested in helping him in the decorations of his room at the glebe. Willie has gone to Montreal to visit a young cousin of his who is to enter the Jesuit Novitiate in a few weeks and I am hoping that Willie will remain. Eileen thinks that it is dreadful of me but she would not be very much surprised if it came to pass.

The news of Mr. Brown[e] reached me before your letter got here so you see Halifax wakes up once in a century when something phenomenal happens. However I shall not quarrel with you as long as your friends are good Catholics, but you may expect tornadoes and cyclones if you go in for heretics. Against the heretics I have no personal feeling, but against their influence I shall work. I think I was expected to faint when the revelation of Mr. B was made to me but I disappointed the expectations by not even showing surprise. I am sure Alice and Marge are at their naughtiest and that is saying a good deal.

Doctor Foley has returned from California and seems to have regained health and strength, but his fair niece who accompanied him from Halifax did not return...Perhaps she fell in love with the climate. Mgr. Murphy has returned from New York where he was for treatment and he, too, seems to have received much benefit.

Did I tell you in my last that Madame Murray and Madame Codie had gone on for the Ward Method? I got a letter from Agnes and she told me that Sister Paul had gone on for it, too, so you see what I lose for not having a voice. I wish I could borrow yours for the summer, I know you would lend it to me if it were possible.

After the Retreat I shall expect a letter telling me what you are reading and what you are studying. I hope it is warm enough now to wear the creations you have been laboring on for the past months, and you must bring some of them on to exhibit in October. Isn't October slow in coming? If it is only as slow in going we shall be satisfied. My grandmother used to tell me I spent one half of my life wishing the other half away and I believe she was right. Please remember me in your prayers, and you may be sure you will be very lovingly remembered in these days of silence and solitude.

Yours devotedly in C. J.

M. McDermott

rscj.

On Train bound for Montreal

[likely August 1923]

My dear Mary,

Ever since I heard that I was to leave Halifax I have been trying to send you a few lines and Rev. Mother kept saying "Do tell Mary yourself and don't let her hear it from an outsider" but it was impossible to get it done at the Convent so I am doing the next best thing. (This train

is so terribly jolty that its next to impossible to write). It is a sacrifice to leave the dear children whom I love so dearly and who have been so responsive to my labours for them. But GOD knows best and so we make the sacrifice - they and I - lovingly because He wills it. It is a disappointment too, dear Mary, not to be able to see you in October - so we shall offer that up also. You know how I looked forward to helping you then as in the olden days - be sure the help of my prayers will never fail you. - Would you please take charge of some messages for me as this train is impossible for more than a note to you. Thank Alice for her last two letters and tell her I was so very glad to hear from her and that she knows for what I count on in her. I hope to write her later on. And thank Marjory for her 2nd letter and say to her that I count on her to help keep up the spirit of honour next year and to be loyal to the new Mistress General. - Then please call up Sheila and tell her with my love that I received her letter finished at Pouch Cove, just before I left Halifax and that I shall answer as soon as possible. Same message to Elfie. Then call up Barbara Gibbs and tell her I was much pleased to receive her letter, that I hope she is really better, give her my love and tell her to send Mary back to Halifax in September. Love to Mary also. - Tell Gertrude Sinnott that I was glad to get her letter at last and that I hope she may have a very happy year when she goes back to the Sacred Heart. I was glad to hear that Mary Howley is improving and hope and pray she may soon be well. Now I fear this can go no farther as the motion gets worse instead of better. You know how dearly I love the dear Trio from the Harris family and what a pleasure it was for me to work for you. May the Sacred Heart of JESUS bless and guard and keep you all and may you ever be His faithful loyal children. Love to Mrs. Tobin and to you, dear Three.

Your always devoted Convent-Mother in C.J.M.

M. L. Ryan

rscJM.

Mary Dear, do not show this letter as it is too dreadful but you understand the difficulty of writing on a train - and such a train.....



The Trio - Marjorie, Alice and Mary Harris.

P. O. Box 95
 Dartmouth, N. S.
 August 19, 1923

My dear Mary,

Honest I am sorry for not writing before but you will excuse me I know when I tell you that only last week did I answer two very important letters which were then one month overdue. One was to Rev. Mother Mahony the other to Rev. M.J. Fillion S. J.

Country-life as we Lahey's take it leaves time for naught save sleeping and eating with an occasional dish washing spell in between. Weather conditions have been on our side and every week we have one or more so-called boarders. The week before last we had four extra, making in all thirteen. Mgt. Woods is due to morrow until Saturday. I wish you were coming. Well so much for home-talk.

I was out to the C.S.H. Wednesday and spent the afternoon with Madame Mac. Honest to goodness Mary, I hate to go out since Mother Ryan has gone. I expect to hear from her soon. The house seems lost. Poor Madame Wallace she misses M. Ryan so. My! how she cried the day she left. I went out and saw her that morning and had dinner there with Rose and then went to the train. I hope to get a trip to Montreal soon. In the Fall my Aunt is coming on and pray please I can return with her. I am going to remain home for this year at least.

Is Alice coming back? I am sure Marge is. I am glad I am through. I would and will and do Miss Mother Ryan so.

Where is Sheila? Did she get my photo? I shall write her as soon as I can. I owe so many letters.

Oh, Mary - Graduation is o'er. And I came fourth. But if the Lord is good to his own the devil is too and will you believe every paper which recorded the Prizes put my name first. My fellow students were furious and although they did verbally all they could to retract such an error they were not so incensed as to have a public contradiction made so accordingly in many a mind I did exceptionally well. (I just went to arrange these sheets and see I have skipped these two sides. Sorry. But I guess I made up on the end. The new Mistress General has not turned up yet.) The prizes to me are now only "a dream of the past" so I shall not waste any more ink on them.

I got the cat skin Mary. Please tell your respected sisters. It is a little beaute. I took it out last week. A would-be friend of mine did the deed for me. Madame Mac swears he is a 'steady' but no go - he is already engaged to a glass-eyed beauty.

O, by the way, Alice is only fooling about any exams I took. Nothing but the regular routine was my lot. I spent considerable time with M. Ryan the last few weeks and the last night we spent well on-to-gether, down in M. Wallace's class-room. O what a night. But it is gone now forever. 'All things are passing.' This favorite line of Marge's is about the truest ever penned. Ask her.

I want to see you in October Mary but I hope I am in Flanders for the 20th. I loathe such functions, I shall have many a question to ask you then. We are going to have our town house all

done over in the Fall but if it is finished I shall try and arrange your staying with me a few days. (Then we can talk the night away). Pray that it can be so - that is if you care to come.

Three cheers for you and your gentleman friend! I think it's great I have none. I expect none. I do my hair worse than I did last year but yesterday I went to the Beach with some fellows and girls and there they fixed my hair in grand style. So to-day I am sporting bubbles and a black band and really if I do say it myself it is an improvement. So if I continue I may 'land a youth'. I shall send you a snap later.

Judging from the dances down your way you must be having a jazzy time. I have been to a few out here but I do not like them any more as yet.

I have not seen nor heard any thing of H' O'C [Helen O'Connor] and do not mind if I ever do. Mary Brennan is off with Low - Bill etc. and Ethel home.

I heard - (not Gospel yet) Mary Brennan is going to go (next year) to Dal. to take lectures in (I can't spell it) Bacteriology = bugs etc. Pathology (some word that means a study in causes of diseases.) Besides these lectures she is going to do practical work under some Doc at the V.G. Hospital.

I heard that Ethel is going to Maritime Business College and to Technical in the nights for dressmaking. So everybody is busy but me.

I see little of Father Curren as I go to Confession lately in Dartmouth to Father Courtney, our Pastor now. Father Mackay went to Sable Island last week just on the regular return trip.

If by any chance you should drop this letter tell the finder a raw junior wrote it and thus save the Convent's name. I had but ½ hour when I commenced before I should get supper so must run now. Love to all my Nfld. friends. Mary, in case it is too late the next time I write please send me 6 or 7 more pairs Irish Horn Beads, small size - C.O.D. Marge might bring them. Love to you old pal - Pray for me sometimes, please and write soon.

Margaret Lahey E. de M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart
Sault - au - Recollet
Montreal P.Q.

August 29, 1923

My dear Mary -

So many letters from Newfoundland to be answered! I shall begin with you and try to work down to the bottom of the heap. Your letter of the 10th arrived in due time and found a very interested reader. You may count upon it that I too am sorry not to be able to look forward to seeing you in October - but you know there is nothing so good as the will of GOD and as we can do that always we shall always have the best. - This has been, as you say, a year of sacrifices for you - thank GOD you have accepted them generously and borne them bravely, and you are

going to continue giving this testimony of love to our Lord. - I know that your heart is not in the things you have to do now - dress and balls and all the other "empty show" of society, but you have to give some time and attention to all this for Alice's sake - indeed you may be a great help and safeguard to her. - It is lovely to hear that you all go to Mass and Communion every morning. It is the great means of making reparation to our Lord for the many who do not know Him or love Him. - And the outside world is over-exerting itself now to make Him forgotten. - I read an article lately by a great Professor in which he says "If only we can inculcate into the minds of our students (University) the principles of evolution there will soon be an end of Christianity." - And that is what they are doing in non-Catholic Colleges and Universities - sometimes openly, more often insidiously - teaching the most harmful kind of evolution. - One day I quoted to Judge Wallace some thing that the Professor of Biology had said to his class - the Judge was startled and exclaimed "I did not know that any Professor would permit himself to make such a statement." That is just where the evil lies - when they are alone with their pupils those teachers can make any statements they please, and inoculate them with whatever poison they please. - How I loathe the thought of Catholics attending non-Catholic Universities! Yet there are many Catholics who have no hesitation in advising our young people to go there - Bartering the priceless gift of Faith for an empty Degree. - Well, thank GOD, none of you will be endangered in that way. - Mary, will you attend to a few messages for me? Tell Barbara Gibbs, with my love, that I was much pleased to receive her letter, that I hope she is really better since the operation, and that she must not prevent Mary from returning to the Convent. Barbara wrote me how much Mary had improved last year but she needs still another year at the Convent. - Tell Sheila and Elfie that I shall try to answer their letters soon. - Tell Marjory that her letter was very welcome and I am delighted to know about her dress-making ability. - Did Sheila tell you of the letter Mrs. Howley sent me by her? One would never think she had made a single complaint so full of gratitude to the Convent was she - coming to see us and thank us herself for the good care Mary had. I fancy the poor woman must be rather excitable and hardly knew what she was saying when she first found that Mary was ill. - Do you know that I have never seen your essay on *The Dream of Gerontius*? You thought Sheila was sending it - she thought you were sending it - Barbara said one of you would send it - so there you are. - You might bestir yourself now and let me read it. - Have you received Father LeBuffe's book yet? You will love it and it will help you to write well on *The Hound of Heaven*.

Good bye, dear Mary. I know that you will always be a comfort to our Lord - His true and faithful child no matter what comes.

Yours devotedly in C.J.M.

M. L. Ryan rscjm

Mary, try to write to Audrey often. You know her sorrows and how much she needs help and consolation.

S.C.J.M.

Halifax, Sept. 14. 1923

My dear Mary,

Don't you think I should apologize for leaving you all these weeks without word? Well, it could not be helped, Mother Ryan's departure gave me even more pressing duties to attend to; she was such good and gentle help to me. But she was wanted elsewhere, and you know that changes are no exceptional event in the Society. Thank God we go on loving one another and the French proverb: "loin des yeux, loin du cuer"⁸² does in no way apply to us. The last news I had of Mother Ryan was not very good; she felt rather miserable and Rev. Mother Mahony is giving her a rest. Soon you will meet M^r Turgeon⁸³ who will give you news of M^r Jensen and Rev. Mother; the latter is so well. Some day you must go to Vancouver and see her. This morning I received a letter from a Montreal lady who is travelling and had spent a day at Point Grey; she is delighted with the warm welcome Reverend Mother gave her.

But, en attendant, come as soon as you will to Halifax; perhaps our own loving welcome shall suffice you for the moment. Then, think of our joy, our dear Reverend Mother Mahony expects to be here for the 20th of October. Will you not be glad to meet her again?

Rose Sinnott must be with her now. She expected to leave for Kenwood to-morrow, feast of Our Lady's Seven Dolours. Say a little prayer that she may not have too hard a time. - Dear Mother Kenny is nearing the end I fear; she has received the last Sacraments and is very weak; the last news is slightly better.

We wait anxiously news of our houses in Japan, Tokio and Tohe⁸⁴. Tohe was spared and I read that Shika, the district we occupy in Tokio is also; but we have no official news; the Jesuits' university, just completed, has been destroyed. What an awful catastrophe!

Au revoir, à bientôt, a warm welcome is awaiting you. S.C.J.M. Yours devotedly

M. Wauters rsh

Give my love to Alice please. We miss her.

⁸² Out of sight, out of mind.

⁸³ Adele Turgeon RSCJ (c 1877 - Aug. 1932) was the daughter of Joseph Ovide Turgeon and M. J. Berthelot of Quebec. The family was well known in Montreal, with one of her brothers an architect, another an accountant, and her maternal grandfather a highly regarded judge. Mother Turgeon taught in Sacred Heart schools in Halifax and Vancouver and was Director of Studies and Reverend Mother at Sault-au-Recollet. See Newspapers by Ancestry *The Gazette* (Montreal, Quebec, Canada) Aug. 24, 1932, page 9 <https://www.newspapers.com/image/419684480> and Cemetery records at Le Repos Saint-François d'Assise <https://www.rsfa.ca/>

⁸⁴ The Religious of the Sacred Heart had established schools in Japan beginning in 1908. A major earthquake struck near Tokyo September 1, 1923, with a loss of more than 100,000 lives and the destruction of over 500,000 buildings.

Sacred Heart
Sault, "All Saints",⁸⁵
1923.

My dear Mary,

Better a few hasty lines than wait for more leisure to thank you for your nice letter with the good news of your engagement. You did not mention the name of your future husband but I pray for you both that the years to come may be filled with the peace, joy and prosperity that follow God's Benediction.

Later - I have just seen Mother Ryan who intends to answer your letter to her very soon, dear Mary, so I am confiding my wee note to her envelope.

On Monday I am to take the II Academic Class and am in sore need of a hasty review of the matter -

I do not forget the little compact with Our Lady, every Friday - - - May she help you to do great and lasting good in the sphere of work which Providence has placed you in. Much love, dear Mary, and every best wish from

Your old friend

in Corde Jesu,

Mgt. M. Nealis R.S.C.J.

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart
Sault au Recollet
Montreal P. Q.
November 1923

My dear Mary -

It is quite a while since your good letters of Oct. 8th and 23rd reached me and gave me a pleasure for which this is a tardy thank you. - I am delighted to know that you had such a lovely time at the Convent but not surprised, knowing your love for the dear old place. Your departure was correspondingly damp I hear - but that is all past now and you only remember the happy things. - Your account of the visit with Doctor Foley is very satisfactory and still more satisfactory the fact that your mind can now be at peace in following his wise advice. - And Mary, do not let your self have any more worries, going back over the past, or wondering whether you did or did not do the right thing and so on. You have had the best advice not only from Doctor Foley but, as you say, from Rev. Mother Vicar. They are actuated by regard for

⁸⁵ November 1, 1923.

your happiness and highest welfare, so let other thoughts be finished with and prepare for the life that awaits you so as to make it just what our Lord would have it. You say that you want to do His will and to please Him - I am sure of it and that is why I say: do not worry or be anxious, settle your mind in peace and tranquility to be very unselfishly happy and to make others happy. - And now, Mary, another thing that is very important: do not let your mind lie fallow because you are entering upon a life which will require a great deal of domesticity. It is always a source of regret that so many girls seem to regard domestic life and intellectual life as contradictory terms, when on the contrary they may be in perfect accord and should be so. Let me give you an example - have you noticed in the *SIGNET* the name of Agnes Burkley? now Mrs. J. M. Harding? She is a dear old child of ours and though she graduated a good many years ago (1907 or '08) has always kept in touch with her old M.G⁸⁶. She married a Harvard man whom she converted to be a splendid Catholic - has four children, a large house and servants to look after, yet has always kept up her reading, and reading of the very best. She and her husband read together and both have fine literary taste. Moreover she is a very faithful Child of Mary, and it is not so long since she wrote me of how she tried to keep up some of the old school practices in acquiring the virtues she needed. She is Local Editor for the *SIGNET* in Omaha and writes well - especially book reviews where she shows much discrimination. People write of her as "a most wonderful wife and mother" and do not understand how she can accomplish all she does in so many lines. What I began to say was: if one can do it so can another - and it would be an awful pity for a girl with your education and ability to give up intellectual work. - I have not yet told you that I read your essay on *The Dream of Gerontius* with much pleasure. It is very well written and thought out, but not up to your best. You must keep on writing until practice gives you facility. Did you ever get Father LeBuffe's book on *The Hound of Heaven*? I hope so and that you will now settle down to write the essay you meant to do last year on that wonderful poem. - What are you reading? It would be nice if you were to begin to lay the foundations of your own home library, making a good choice of books that can be kept as friends. I wish you would get Mother Forbes' *Lives of the Saints*⁸⁷ which are delightfully written besides being instructive. Do you take *AMERICA* edited by the Jesuits in New York? If not you certainly should have it for it is a liberal education in itself. There you would find lists of every thing that is best in the line of books. - I must stop now, dear Mary. All loving wishes for the best graces our Lord can give you. Be true to Him always and to our dear Blessed Mother whose own child you are.

Yours devotedly in C.J.M.

M. L. Ryan
rscjm.

Mother Nealis asked me to send you the enclosed note when I would be writing. I am sorry it has had to wait so long.

⁸⁶ Mistress-General - similar to a school principal.

⁸⁷ Frances Alice Monica Forbes RSCJ - F.A. Forbes - (1869-1936) was a Religious of the Sacred Heart from Scotland who wrote a number of books about saints. <https://librivox.org/author/3580>

[Letterhead]
 Convent of the Sacred Heart,
 Spring Garden Road,
 Halifax. N.S.

S.C.J.M.

Nov. 4. 1923.

My dear Mary.

That little note of thanks which was handed to me after you had left was very welcome. I am most grateful, dear Mary, also for your generous offering and for the telegram telling us of your safe arrival. We were glad to know you had reached home after, I hope, a nice passage and very little seasickness?

Yes time flew rapidly during your stay at the convent. It always does and we should learn to profit by every minute of it, don't you think so? It is a very precious gift of God to us. - A hearty "welcome home" was waiting for you, I am sure.

The children are a bit excited today, they are to have their Halloween [sic] Party to-night, and great preparations are going on. The pantry looks like a candy store.

Our poor Mother Nadeau⁸⁸ is suffering very much but she can speak no more and scarcely opens her eyes. Say a little prayer for her.

Au revoir, dear Mary, give my love to Aunt Agnes and Alice. I hope you will have a very bright and happy winter season with its sweet feasts and long evenings "en famille".

Very affectionately yours in CJ

M. Wauters rscj

Audrey Martin has been received as Child of Mary last friday, Doctor Foley officiating. She looked very happy.

9 Edward St. Dartmouth N.S.
 Sunday, November 4, 1923
 Wet, dark stormy night

Mary Harris - Margaret Lahey. Yes - O yes they're friends - went to school together - correspond - exchange photos - quite thick - yes that's what I thought. Saw each other quite often while Mary was up for Old Pupils - Hhmmm 'Spose they wept went [when] they parted? Margaret did not turn up - No? Yes that's what I heard - went off without a phone message even. Queer - Yes, I always said they were.

⁸⁸ Marie Nadeau RSCJ (1842 - November, 1923) is buried at Mount Olivet Cemetery in Halifax. See <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/191321823/marie-nadeau>

Am I crazy, Mary dear, is that what you think? No I ain't. But the above random is just what I imagine I hear Ethel or some body like her saying.

How is Bill, the boy and Mary the girl?

I shall write more sanely soon for now be content as I am nearly crazy with neuralgia.

Margaret.

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart
Halifax, Nov. 11th 1923.

Dear Mary,

Mary thanks for the Money Order so promptly sent after your return and accompanied by such a nice letter. I was so glad to hear that my short parting visit with you had done you good. You may always count on my poor prayers as it is one of my special devotions to pray for old pupils. It consoles me a little for not being able to do much for the present ones!

I hope indeed, dear Mary, that you will be very happy and that you will make of your home one where the Sacred Heart of Our Lord will be truly loved and glorified. One where love, cheerfulness and order will brighten everything. As you say "Noblesse oblige", and I know you understand the motto so well that I need not add anything further except pray that you may carry it out fully, and that I will.

Nothing of importance has occurred at the Convent since you left except the arrival of a new pupil who plays the harp quite nicely, I believe. I have not yet heard her. She is the daughter of the Cuban Consul to Canada.

In honor of Thanksgiving Day the pupils went home Friday (boarders and Day Pupils) to return Tuesday at 9 a. m.

Our dear Mother Nadeau went to God last Thursday. The Mass of Requiem was sung by Mgr. Foley with Dr. Curran as Deacon and Fr. Mackay as sub deacon. The latter accompanied her to the Cemetery where he blessed the grave. Thank you, dear Mary for your prayers during my Retreat. Please continue them. Give much love to Aunt Agnes and Alice. In Corde Jesu, Devotedly, **J. Naud, rscj.**⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Josephine Naud RSCJ (1870- 1956) was the daughter of Charles Augustine Naud and Anne Marie Marcotte, all of Quebec. Mother Naud later served at Sault-au-Récollet as Superior (Reverend Mother). She is buried in Montreal at Le Repos Saint-François d'Assise <https://www.rsfa.ca/> See 1921 Census of Canada, Nova Scotia, Halifax, Sub-District 050, Halifax (City), Cemetery records, and Newspapers by Ancestry, <http://newspapers.com/image/419807381> *The Gazette* (Montreal, Quebec), Apr. 21, 1936, pg 9.

SCJM.

Convent of the Sacred Heart.
Halifax, Nov. 15. 1923.

My dear Mary,

Horrors! I have kept Audrey's letter three full days always hoping to find time to send a line to you. Thanks ever and ever so much for your lovely letter. It was sweet of you to write so soon after getting home. The first days after you left, I missed you a lot, I always expected to be greeted by your cheery smile, at some turn of the corridors. Margery was remarkably brave and never made others feel that she was lonesome for her dear big sister. It is a part of her creed any way, not to beg for sympathy from others. She has a certain 'enclosed garden' within her and very few intimate friends are allowed to enter. I find it strange in one who seems as open and expansive as your dear Margery.

I rather like the quiet way in which you became a fiancée, Mary! Congratulations dear! and may you become every day more enthusiastic about your new call. Don't you think that the Thirty Days' Prayer brought you all you wished for, and all so quickly and so satisfactorily.

I am glad too that I know you now and to have found out for myself that you are a genuine child of the Sacred Heart, - one of those thoroughbreds which remain true to the end, in spite of everything. May God bless you.

Very devotedly yours,

A. Turgeon rscj

80 Brighton Rd.,
Charlottetown
Dec 17, 1923.

My dear Mary,

Many times have I meant to write to you, but at last the news in Alice's letter to Stephanie the other day, left me no alternative, but to write right away.

My very best wishes, dear Mary. We little thought, well, this time four years ago, when we were at school to-gether, that this would be the outcome. It was a surprise, Mary, and a pleasant one, as I know you must be very very happy. I don't believe Alice mentioned when you were to be married, in the spring I suppose.

I hope you will write to me, and tell me all about it. I am so interested and anxious to hear from you. Did you ever get a letter I wrote to you, some time ago. I suppose it must be a year since?

The very best of good wishes for the future Mary. Please tell your fiancé I congratulate him. Much love, and best wishes to everyone at 42 Rennie's Mill Road.

Lovingly

Queenie [Margaret Jenkins]

Convent Sacred Heart
Halifax Dec 24th 1923

My dearest Mary,

Thank you so much for the lovely batch of letters I received since you went home and which I did not have time to answer. A-hem a-hem. What has happened my dear. I have only received one letter and no answer to the epistle I wrote shortly after you went home. I am awfully sorry for not having written oftener but it was next to impossible and a young lady of your leisure should not have waited for me to keep up the correspondence.

Madame was telling me she had a very interesting letter from you and that Billy is getting more desperate than ever. How are you darling. Feeling any better about things? Madame showed me your photo and its [sic] simply sweet! Just your own dear self.

This can't be called a letter but I am going to write again. It is just to bear you the best of wishes, Christmas joy and love. Sheila will tell you something nice about Dad.

Lovingly

Audrey E. de M.

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Halifax, Nova Scotia
December 27, 1923.

Dear Mary,

This is my third attempt at this letter. The last interruption was Edith who is to accompany Mother Lowth to Montreal. They leave tomorrow morning and Edith was very tearful.

Your photo came in very good condition which is more than can be said for many parcels. It is lovely and it just seemed when I opened it as if you were smiling out at me. Audrey is in

love with it. Yesterday she came dancing in with Alice's which is a beauty, too. That child grows more like Mary Doyle in appearance every year.

You should have been here when Marge got the letter to go to New York. To say she was wildly excited would be putting [it] so mildly as to convey nothing. She had been doing beautifully in Doctrine Class but after the news came she did not know Moses from St. Peter, and she just gurgled out heresies with the most adorable smile. I know your Aunt Agnes would feel very happy if she could realize how much joy she gave the child.

Audrey is the happiest of mortals now. Christmas Eve her Father returned from Montreal after having secured a splendid position. After he closes his house here he will go back to Montreal, but Audrey and Pauline will finish out the year here. Audrey grows sweeter and sweeter each day and I hate to think of her going away so soon.



Pauline Martin, later RSCJ, and Audrey Martin

Just now the Newfoundlanders are having a comb-concert and it is like Bedlam in the room across the way so if this is somewhat incoherent ascribe it to the Concert rather than to failing faculties.

Your letters are dear and I look forward to every one. The one in which you asked me to choose a Christmas gift came while Reverend Mother was in Retreat but your own choice was just what I wanted most.

I am glad you feel more settled and, as for the prayers, I think ours are in unison as well as in union. I always pray that you and Mr. Brown[e] will do just what God asks of you and in the way He asks it. Your references to the said gentleman in your letters amuse me very much. When he is giving a lecture, he is Mr. Brown[e], when he is purchasing tables and chairs he is William and when he is on all fours cutting out circles "with his eye" he is Bill.

I must say I don't think you are very practical in your purchases, I thought the first thing you would buy would be a piano, that is what you will use most. I think you ought to encourage Mr. Brown[e] to take cooking lessons, it would be handy if you ever allowed him to go camping, and then you know you are very absentminded and he might save the situation on some occasion at home. I should love to have some of Alice's observations on the preparations for the coming event jotted down and if she would add a few illustrations I should be entranced. Don't you think she would favor Audrey and me if you would ask her?

The St. Anne's Sodality is here today and to-morrow eighty-three orphans are expected. It seems strange not to have a Harris about to entertain and help. I shall look for Alice's particular friend and see that she gets some extra goodies. My friend Jimmie Green met me a few days ago and gave me a hearty handshake. Now au revoir, this won't give you palpitations from the fear that it is a bill, at least. Give my love and best wishes to Aunt Agnes and Alice. For you I pray that this year will bring you happiness, peace and closer union with the Sacred Heart.

Devotedly yours

Mary A. McD.

rscj

S.C.J.M.

[Letterhead]

CONVENT OF THE SACRED HEART
ALBANY, NEW YORK

Dec.27th 1923

My dear Mary -

I wish you a very happy New Year and the heartiest congratulations on your choice of a state in life. God had first choice - had He not, and when He manifested His will so clearly by your state of health you were quite right to consider again & find your vocation - I hope and pray that you will be happy in it and have the strength for your new duties. I am sure you will always have to be very careful of yourself and go quietly but with prudence there is no reason why you could not lead a normal & useful life. Rose is getting on very well & seems to like the life more as she goes on - she will write you from time to time I am sure and tell you about Kenwood - I shall be interested to know your plans when they mature and meanwhile will thank God with you - Remember me to Mrs. Tobin & wish her a Happy New [Year] for me

Yours devotedly in CJM

G Bodkin R.S.C.J.

S.C.J.M.

Sacred Heart Convent
Albany, N.Y.
Dec. 27. 1923

My dear Mary:

Your Christmas card was much appreciated, and nicest of all, I have permission to write you a letter of acknowledgement. First, let me tell you how pleased I was to hear of your engagement. I feel the coming years will be brimful of happiness for you. It seems as though the Lord were rewarding you immediately for your efforts to please Him in coming to Kenwood, and then accepting the disappointment with such resignation - Thank God life is planning out so well for you - I know how delighted and charmed you must be, and I can picture your face just beaming with joy! So often I think back to our talks of last winter, and simply marvel at the turn events have taken! Mary, I had not the slightest idea then, that I would come here. If I had I might have been more inquisitive.

Our Christmas was beautiful and every one was very, very happy. The choir missed your silvery tones - Sister Noel often speaks of you and I am sure would send loving greetings did she know I was writing. Now dear, good bye, write sometime & tell me your plans as I shall always be interested - the very happiest of all New Years, love

Rose M. Sinnott E. de M.

S.C.J.M.

Halifax, 29 Dec. 1923.

My dear Mary,

It was most kind of you to send us that beautiful satin for a vestment. The nuns found it a very delicate thought and all admired the satin. It arrived in good condition and soon M^r Naud will begin the vestments which will be kept for our own chapel as a souvenir of our dear Mary. I thank you very much, also for your kind wishes to all. Marjorie sent us a telegram with Christmas wishes as soon as she reached New York.

You should have had a letter much earlier, but there is so much to do, and I miss dear Mother Turgeon who is not yet better. You must allow me to send you her wishes with mine for she cannot write. The Doctor wants her to take an absolute rest. You may well think how it suits her! Mother Lowth left yesterday for Montreal with Edith Metzler, there to undergo the operation for cataract. She is perfectly resigned to what is to happen, but we feel anxious and pray our Mother Foundress to restore her sight. She may be away for some time and will be missed. Reverend Mother Mahony has been ill, but she is much better, thank God, and assisted at the midnight mass.

Yesterday we had eighty-three orphans! Such lively party, they were never so noisy, happiness did it! And we were happy to see them happy. A very happy New Year dear Mary, also to your dear Aunt. Believe me in C.J.

Yours devotedly,
M. Wauters rscj

[undated - probably late December 1923]

Mary darling,

For her bag mother is most grateful and for yourself I am indebted. What a surprise! It is a beauty. Does William B. like it?

I am going to write you soon, old pal. Jennie is holding forth this season so I must be busy until she goes back. Remember the New Year - Look out. Beware! (Leap)

Love and best wishes
Margaret Lahey

Convent Sacred Heart
 Halifax Dec 31st 1923

My dearest Mary,

Many, many thanks for you lovely present. It was presented to me by Reverend Mother when we gathered around the tree for our gifts Christmas morning. I was delighted when I opened the box and discovered such a beautiful pair of stockings - so nice and so practical, really 'grecian' as Madame would say.

Well I guess Alice will inform you of my important news. Isn't it lovely the way Our Lord worked out every thing. Daddy arrived Christmas Eve with the glad tidings we have been waiting and hoping and praying for, for nearly a year. Such a beautiful Christmas gift from the hands of the little Infant. I just cried my heart out at midnight Mass I was so happy. If I could only take the Convent with me in my pocket when I leave in June I would have no regret in quitting Halifax. I do hope you will be up before the closing or I will not see you again in a hurry unless you should sail by one of the Empress boats on your trip to Europe. That would take you up to Montreal.

Madame showed me your photo. I think it is splendid - so natural. Mother Lowth left Friday morning and may not be back for the opening. How we must pray that all will be successful. Poor Mother seems to be failing all the time and this is such an ordeal.

Father Curran took us all on a visit the morning he was out for Mass and per usual gave the poor Newfoundlanders a good bit of teasing about their Maggoty Cove and the fifty days trip from Port-au-Basque to St. John's. Elfie is really amusing she takes it all in such dead earnest. He gave us each a sweet picture of the Little Flower before leaving.

Mary darling do pray that poor Mother Turgeon will soon be well. She was so sick again last week that she couldn't receive Holy Communion. She is better now but gracious she's been in the infirmary going on two months and its simply awful without her - the only blot on the lovely Christmas I had.

Much love and a desire for a letter

Audrey E. de M.

S.C.J.M.

[Letterhead]
 Convent of the Sacred Heart
 3851 - 29th Avenue, W.
 Vancouver, B.C.

January 1st [1924]

My dear Mary,

I know you will pray and get prayers for our dear Reverend Mother's only brother, who died in Digby, last night as the old year closed. Dear Reverend Mother's kind, sympathetic heart enters so deeply into others' sorrows, that she deserves all the comfort we can possibly obtain for her, so I am sure you will not forget her.

Just this week, I was speaking of you to dear Reverend Mother, who fully intends writing another letter to replace the one you never received, but you understand, her silence is never the result of forgetfulness, but of overcrowded days. I am sure, some time you will hear from Mother Jensen, too, who seems to have given up letters, to a great extent, but who loves you as dearly as ever. We were all interested in the great news of your engagement, and hope for further details.

I trust you are really better, Mary dear, and wonder if a trip across the Rockies might not be a nice wedding trip? I am sure you are happy to have Alice at home, and I trust she is ever a true Child of the Sacred Heart. Give her my love, please, and say how I should appreciate a letter from her.

May Our Lord bless the coming year, dear Mary, and give you all the desires of your heart. With kind regards to your Aunt and cousin, I am always, in C.J.

Devotedly yours,

I. Seymour,

r.s.c.j.

S.C.J.M.

Just a tiny word and a poor little souvenir, dear Mary, to tell you of my sincere congratulations and to assure you that on the 7th of July, I shall be very united to you in prayer and the Sacred Heart will hear many wishes for your happiness for many years to come from

Yours affectionately in C.J.

J. Naud rscj.

[Letterhead]
Convent of the Sacred Heart
Albany New York

January 3^d, 1924.

Dear Mary,

Your Christmas letter was one of the joys of the season and I cannot tell you how glad I am about your engagement. The past year has been a hard one in many ways and I love to think that now you are “tranquilly happy” in the knowledge of God’s Will for you. Your reassurance about your health is a great satisfaction too - you are quite prepared for a happy life.

You asked me about some of the nuns. It is easier to go backwards than forwards: Madame Louise Hamilton has been quite well for some months and expects to make her vows in a few weeks. In December Mothers Holohan, Weston, Ryan, Palau, Townsend and Carr made their vows. All that I can tell you of Madame Ryan is that she went to the Sault from here, but a letter addressed there would be forwarded, if she was sent further. Mothers Holohan and Weston are here, the former busy in the treasury, the latter not at all well. Mother Palau is going to Bogata - the last we heard she was still in Cuba. Mother Dorsey is at Lake Forest, Mother Farrell in Boston and Mother Krim at Rochester.

I have thought of you often these days. Our choir is new and timid and we are praying for recruits.

I do not know when I can write again, dear Mary, but count upon my constant prayers for you that the future God has planned for you may be filled with His choicest blessings. May He draw you always closer to Him.

Write often, I am always interested. I find here a letter begun to you in October - I will write in June if not before. Every New Year grace!

Affectionately

F. Smith r.s.c.j.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Florence Smith RSCJ (1887-1951) was the daughter of Judge Peter P. Smith and Mary Griffin of Pennsylvania. Mother Smith received her B.A. from Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart in 1927 and her M.A. from Fordham University in 1930. She taught in several Sacred Heart schools and was an Associate Professor of Music and Registrar at Manhattanville College. See Newspapers by Ancestry, The Times-Tribune (Scranton, Pennsylvania) Jul 30, 1951. p 22 <https://www.newspapers.com/image/534561979> and full text of “Manhattanville College Tower Yearbook” https://archive.org/stream/mvilleyearbook1944/mvilleyearbook1944_djvu.txt

Mc Haffern	Mc Caffrey
.. Faviell	.. Rains
.. Krim	.. Bourgeois
.. Dorsey	.. Liffiton
.. Hickey	.. Forman
.. Maple	.. Johnston
.. McShane	.. Leberque
.. Conayllon	.. de Bolivar
.. Mc Grady	.. Wareboro
.. Alentado	.. Mc Carthy
.. Watson	.. Noel
.. Kane	.. Shea
.. Kyles	.. Dowd
.. Carr	.. Haggerty
.. Holohan	.. Low
.. Dolores	.. Regis
.. Townsend	.. Rackaue
.. Ryan	.. Weston
.. Maria	.. Duffy
.. Hamilton	

This appears to be a list of women
Mary Harris knew at Kenwood.

S.C.J.M.

Halifax, N.S.
Jan. 3. 1924.

My dear Mary,

Do not judge my gratitude by my tardy thanks for the chances and those lovely beads. They are a joy to my heart and I cannot make up my mind to whom I shall give them as they are really too nice for a poor old nun like me.

Well Mary dear, the Fair was a great success notwithstanding the "hard times". I made over two hundred and sixty dollars at my table. Pretty good, was it not? I made twelve dollars on Madame McDermott's beautiful centrepiece. So you see our dear Lord blessed my humble efforts.

Rev. Mother, was telling us that Marjorie is having the time of her life. I am afraid she will never be able to settle down to her studies again and she will be very tired when she gets home.

I can scarcely believe that school will begin in four days the vacation has gone so quickly.

On New Year's day we heard of Mr. Frank Conwell's death. Poor Reverend Mother her last loved one. All are gone and she is alone. My heart aches for her with her big loving heart, this will be an overwhelming sorrow. Pray for him and for her.

We had a lovely Christmas and beautiful weather.

I think the collection you had for the "Brothers" was marvelous but, we know the generosity of the people of N.F.

Now dear Mary, I must wish you a very Happy New Year filled with every best gift that the Sacred Heart can bestow on you and yours. Kind remembrances to Mrs. Tobin and Alice with New Year's greetings.

Asking a little prayer once in a while and again thanking you I am ever in the S. H.

Yours lovingly

P. G. Duffy r.s.c.j. ⁹¹

S.C.J.M.

[Letterhead]
 Convent of the Sacred Heart
 3851 - 29th. Avenue, W.
 Vancouver, B.C.

January 15, 1924

My dearest Mary,

How could you ever think I would forget you? No indeed - You will always be my dear child in whom I shall always be deeply interested. It is very true I have shamefully neglected my friends in the letter line since crossing the Rockies but time here is really at a premium. Outside of business letters I write to few of my friends. So you went back to Halifax for Old Pupils Day. I was indeed glad. I am glad too, dear child, to learn of your engagement. Since it was not God's will for you to remain at Kenwood and with dear Aunt Agnes' approval, this seems the best decision you could make. I hope and pray that your life may be a happy one and that your

⁹¹ Phoebe Gertrude Duffy RSCJ (December 5, 1853 - March 3, 1929) was born in Saint John, New Brunswick to William G. Duffy of Ireland and Sophia Ford of Saint John, N.B. Mother Duffy died of "recurring cancer of breast" for which she had had surgery in 1927. See Province of Nova Scotia Registration of Death.

Fiancee may prove a worthy husband in every way. I am sorry that Alice did not return to Halifax this year. Margery trudged off bravely alone. Good!

Mother Seymour has told you of my dear brother Frank's death. I little dreamed when the holidays began that I would find my Bethlehem so near Calvary. It is a dreadful wrench to lose my last dear brother, but God's will is best. Please pray for his dear soul. Remember me kindly to Aunt Agnes, Alice and your cousin, Mary Doyle and believe always, dear Mary that you have a tender spot in the heart of your old Mother.

M. Conwell R.S.H.

S.C.J.M.

[Letterhead]
 CONVENT OF THE SACRED HEART
 MANHATTANVILLE
 CONVENT AVENUE AND WEST 133RD STREET
 NEW YORK CITY

[Jan.26, 1924]

My dearest Mary,

I hope Marjorie gave you my message, and thanked you for the beautiful stamps. I am so glad to have at last the Caribou set complete, and as for the new ones, well if they will soon be taken in, I am happy to have them, later on it might be impossible to secure them. I cannot imagine why they are not a success. They are beautifully [sic] and your island must be a wonderful place. So keep each one you can get hold of, and thank you again and again, dear Mary. Now let me congratulate you on the great event which will so influence your life. You have loyally tried to do what Our Lord wanted and so you are sure to do His Holy Will. A true Catholic household is a power for good, would that there were more of them. The nuns at Halifax are quite right in their advice; only take good care of your health. I was so glad so [sic] see miss Doyle and dear Marjorie. She is most like you and such a dear girl. I love her very much and would like to meet Alice too. Miss Doyle has promised to come again, before she leaves New York. The three Canadian probanists (two from Halifax) have just arrived and Thursday the band of 11 will start. I often pray for you, my dearest Mary, and hope you will visit us with Mr. Browne if you come in New York. Do write to me and tell me all about yourself; everything is of interest to me. Best love to aunt Agnes, miss Doyle says there is no one like her and I believe it.

Most devotedly yours in C.J.

A. Spies
r du SC de J

26th Jan 1924.

(Kindness of Mrs. Conroy)

[undated]

Dear Alice and Mary,

Just a little note between you to tell you that I am thinking of you even though I can't write decently long and frequent letters. But I hope that I shall hear from you as often as possible and that you will practise the virtue, at least for a little while, of writing letters without an answer. The tests of two begin for us graduates the day after to-morrow and in the midst of them come the Archbishop's Jubilee and Reverend Mother's feast and congé. You can imagine how much free time I am going to have. I received your last letter Alice it was very sweet of you to write without my answering that beautiful volume you sent in return for mine. Do keep up the good work. Mary I know is head over heels in her hope chest but I wish she would get a secretary or something Her correspondents are in a hopeless condition.

We had a lovely vacation. The one fault to find is that it passed too quickly. Yesterday Mrs. Conroy took us to see *Pinafore*. The actors only amateurs, were anything but beauties but they had lovely voices.

Au-revoir mes cheres amies. Heaps of love to make up for the short epistle and do write soon

Lovingly

Audrey E. de M.

Convent Sacred Heart
Halifax, Feb 3,
[1924]

Dear Mary,

Don't be surprised when you see my writing on this envelope but Marje had a fall on the rink, nothing serious you know, and Mother P. insisted on her staying in her room for the remainder of the afternoon. She lost her fountain pen on the boat or she would be write [sic] herself. The enclosed letter came some time ago. I think Marje will write herself during the week if she gets time. She is a busy lady you know.

Must say good-bye for now. Love to Alice

Sincerely

Connie McG.⁹²

Convent Sacred Heart.
Halifax N.S. Feb 3rd 1924.

My dearest Mary,

Many thanks for your veritable budget. I don't vouch to return the same but at least I'll express my gratitude. You see I am not a young lady leisurely preparing a hope chest but one preparing to enter upon the last race-course for graduation. These 'last affairs' are beginning to smite my timorous heart and make me dread everything that's before me, with an awful fear! But I suppose I mustn't be 'crossing bridges' etc so cheerio!

For the present I am as happy as a lark. I don't wonder you want to be back and would like a stirring up but I advise you not to come amidst competitions of two or you won't be stirred up but beaten stiff. They're over now thank goodness and I can breathe more freely and take a little more joy in life. Mother Lowthe [sic] herself is down and out. She couldn't take us for class this morning so she must be quite ill, poor old dear. She really shouldn't work so hard but there's no stopping her I suppose. She certainly will not last much longer. Well there's one thing, I hope when I die I will have done as much for Our Lord as she has.

We were all dreadfully sorry about Francis Ryan. No doubt he's gone to Heaven he was such a good boy but it's those he left behind I am praying hardest for and Mary most particularly. This cross will mean so much to her. And poor Bettie! Isn't it awful about her brother?⁹³ I have been praying very much for her too.

Madame Henrion and Madame Marshall are at Manhattanville now. There are ten going across and I think they will be on the water three weeks. It will be a wonderful trip! Just think

⁹² Constance McGuiggin later RSCJ, (1905-1973), taught for a time at College Street School, Halifax, and was Principal of that school from 1945 until it closed in 1952. See *College Street Remembered*, especially pages 47-53. She is buried in Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Halifax N.S.

⁹³ John W. McGrath (c.1892-1924) was the son of James F. McGrath who had been a fisherman, fish dealer, Member of the House of Assembly and Governor of the Penitentiary. Jack was Betty McGrath's older, half-brother. Jack had been an exceptional student at St. Bonaventure's College while he also worked as a shorthand reporter at the House of Assembly. He won the Jubilee Scholarship which permitted him to study at Dalhousie University in Halifax, N.S. and he was also a talented athlete there. Jack then moved to the U.S. and worked for former President Theodore Roosevelt, then George W. Perkins and finally he became president of a fish company and chairman of a fish wholesaler's association. "Johnny" McGrath was also a well-known and respected hockey referee. See "Obituary," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 19 February 1924: 4 and "Newfoundlander in Big Job," *Daily News* [St. John's, Nfld.] 17 July 1920: 7 and "The Late John W. McGrath," *Newfoundland Quarterly* 23.4 (1924) : 32.

of it. Poor Mary I guess your [sic] afraid to think of it for fear the very thought would reduce you to your little bed for a day at least. N'est ce pas?

Mother Turgeon is improving by degrees. My won't it be lovely to see her all better once again! Mother de Grangeneuve⁹⁴ is very sweet. She's always planning something nice for us and she is so very kind. We have a lovely sodality now - six or seven aspirants and myself. I do hope they will all be received this year.

Well honey if I dare do so, I promise to write soon. Much love and many prayers.

Audrey E. de M.

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Halifax, Nova Scotia,
February 3, 1924.

Dear Mary,

Competitions of Two by the dozens to correct is the excuse for not writing sooner this time. Thank you so much for your dear letter and its generous enclosure.

Marjorie is at work again and Mother Lowth is very much pleased with her Latin. I tell her the trip to New York was the best investment Aunt Agnes has made for a long time for she came back with a voice as sweet and as gentle as Mary Doyle's. She has some grownup ideas, however, and when she was discussing them at tea a few nights ago I laughed and said such things were not for a child like her. Patsy Haggerty, who is composed mainly of eyes, ears and tongue, piped up: "Really, Madame, Marjorie looks very young, she looks just like a pink baby". Since that we call Marjorie the "pink baby" if she takes upon herself any grandiose airs and it is most effectual.

I was on the look out for the November *Catholic World* for Betty's "Johnnie", and it is the only number that did not come. If you have it, and are not having them bound I wish you would send it to me. Audrey told me that Betty's brother is ill and I am very sorry. I shall pray for the dear sufferer.

You asked about Edith [Metzler] - She is now in Kenwood and very happy. I did not think she would go so soon, so I was almost as much surprised as you are.

For the past few weeks Margaret Lahey has been teaching at Oxford St. School. One night she called Angela on the 'phone and announced the fact. Angela was much surprised; then M. told her of Edith and Angela was almost overcome but the climax came when M. happened to

⁹⁴ Marie-Agnes de Grangeneuve RSCJ (1866-1954) was the daughter of Aurelien de Grangeneuve and Coralie Mallac and was of French nationality. Mother de Grangeneuve is buried in Montreal at Le Repos Saint-François d'Assise <https://www.rsfa.ca/> See cemetery records.

mention your engagement. Angela had only strength enough to say she would wend her way to Dartmouth in the near future to have things explained. The nearer the time approaches for your event the weaker I get. I hope you are praying much. I pray for you and for William everyday. I told Marjorie how very practical you had grown about wet plaster and walls and she said: "never fear, that is not Mary's practicality, she would not know if the walls were dripping, it is William's."

Do not work too hard at the trousseau or you will be worn out. You can get all the pretty things made by hand from France, and I do not think it is good for you to sit at sewing for hours at a time.

Has the *Inter Nos* been published yet? I have been waiting for a copy of the Christmas number but it has not put in an appearance yet. Madame Henrion and Madame Marshall are on their way to Rome, and my Sister Paul is still at Manhattanville at the Ward Method. A funny story was circulated after the two left for New York, it was that one of the nuns had had a vision and that the two had been sent post haste to tell the Holy Father! You can imagine how amused we were.

Now I must run off to two little people who are in penance for not being able to prove that suicide is never lawful. They promised to be able to do it by four o'clock. With much love,

Yours devotedly in C.J.,

Mary A. McDermott

rscj.

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Halifax, Nova Scotia
Easter Sunday, 1924.
[April 20, 1924]

My dear Mary,

As the last series of your letters began with a panegyric of your dear little self I have reached the conclusion that your Lord William has taught you to love yourself. What a calamity for him! Well, I shall admit that you are a most charming sufferer and you must admit that the executioner of your hopes does not get off without hearing about it. If you could see the papers I have to correct, the questions to make out and the "fat exercise book" I have filled with Trig. solutions you would wonder I could ever get down to anything so social as a letter. My conscience has me beaten black and blue with remorse as the weeks flit past but I'm afraid I am as dry as the dustiest parchments in the Library. Perhaps if Mother Lowth could get her eye on that qualification "dustiest" I'd get an occupation with a duster, so that no reflections could be cast on our housekeeping.

You may tell your William that I was provoked to silence with him last month. If he is much acquainted with womankind he will realize what a terrible assertion that is. When I heard that you were in *Pilate's Daughter* it was fortunate for you I could not write. I thought if you had no commonsense he ought to take you in hand and use a little authority. Do you not know, dear Mary, that you should not exhaust yourself in that way? I do not mind your singing now and again but you are not strong enough to stand the fatigue of practice for plays.

I am glad to hear everything concerning your new home-to-be is progressing so well and when it is all ready to receive you I shall expect some snaps so that I can visualize you as mistress of it. I had a little laugh to myself over the suit and could not resist telling Mother Duffy. She would like to have you within earshot. For my part if you take good care of yourself and rest as much as you need to I shall be delighted to hear of all your pretty purchases and I shall never scold about your extravagance; but if you should kill yourself through rash imprudence and not be able to enjoy your finery that would be extravagance of a kind that I could not forgive. Remember I am very serious about the rest question and I shall be most severe in June if I am not obeyed.

Your Dutch trunk must be on the verge of catastrophe unless it is bottomless or its sides are of india rubber for by this time you must have tray-cloths enough to stock a department store in a Fifth Avenue shop, to say nothing of the other things. Getting married is a tremendous fuss and one must be very much in love to attempt it!

Yesterday I received your letter and its enclosure. I sent out for the flowers for Reverend Mother in spite of a mad little blizzard we were being treated to, and tomorrow I shall give the Mass offerings to Father O'Reilly. Thank you a thousand times for your continued kind and generous thought of my dear dead. Nothing gives me so much pleasure as a gift that I can share with them. Today the altar was beautiful, the lilies were taller and lovelier than any we have had for years, but we missed your dear voice more than I can say.

I saw Margaret Lahey last week - she is just as gay as ever. She has been acting as substitute in various schools of the city and her stock of stories is more varied and amusing than ever. She told me that she and Harry Conroy correspond now, so I'm becoming quite interested.

I am just heartbroken over Mary Ryan, and am praying that Our Lord will cure her completely. Dear Mrs. Ryan has had so much suffering this year that I hope she will not be asked a new sacrifice. Just before Francis' death I received a lovely letter from Mary and I never dreamed she was ill.

I am sorry dear little Betty has had such sorrow. I found her such a sweet, unaffected child that she won my heart at once. You have very charming friends. I hope I shall see Margaret Edens - When is she to be married? Eileen and Bunny are in the fever that accompanies exams. They are both up for an M. A. this year. Mine are at the Mock tests and on the verge of laughter or tears or anything but normal. Lillian and Dorothy have the "A" to groan over so yours truly is having an interesting time assuring each one in turn that she will get through. Margaret repeated your feat of combining Tudors and Stuarts in the most startling manner and you can imagine what she got for it. Eveleen had Philip II just escape with his life when the Armada came to grief so I do not [know] what to expect in the end. Lillian is my consolation in Trig her papers are something to be proud of. Pray that she will keep up to her standard in the A.

I still have Marjorie's class for Latin and I am much pleased with her. She is improving on the violin everyday and she loves it. The little First Communicants are boarders now and Marjorie has charge of Margot McManus. I preside at tea and it is quite interesting to watch Marge and Margot and the strange thing is they look enough alike to be sisters. Margot is very sweet and very naughty and Marge is gentle and firm so I do not interfere. Your friend Patsy Haggerty had the measles and welcomed them as a ticket-of-leave from mathematics. She was not very ill and she got up a concert for Sister McGovern on St. Patrick's night.

Little Margaret Conroy is already quite at home and is a darling. She won Mother Lowth's heart at her entrance examination, having been most eloquent on Adam and Eve and very exact in her Mathematics. I could see by the gleam in Mother Lowth's eye that the little Miss had made a captive but I was much amused when she said to me, "Now Sister, you must not spoil that child". Now I just discover that this paper is upside down but you will have to make allowances for my age and lack of time and you can guess how much I love you when I tell you that Hilaire Belloc is in my desk waiting to be read and I am resisting temptation by giving into the greater temptation of a chat with you. As the day that means so much for you both draws nearer you are more and more in my prayers. May God bless you both, keep you very good and make you very happy.

Yours devotedly in C.J.,

Mary A. McD.

rscj.

Your dear Mater is at the foot of the statue of her Son who shares the homage of His subjects with her.

S.C.J.M.

Halifax, April 23. 1924.

Dear Mary.

Your Easter letter was most welcome and so were the lovely flowers which represented you at the Altar of Repose and on Easter day before the Tabernacle. It was very thoughtful of you to offer them and I thank you very much. Mrs. Conroy gave us news of all our Newfoundland children. It was nice to have her here, and she enjoyed her Holy Week and Easter at the Convent. The chapel, ceremonies, singing all was lovely, and on Holy Saturday we had two objurations from the protestantism and the baptism of a young woman. At St. Mary's too they had several baptisms among them that of an elderly gentleman white haired, Stipendiary Macdonald, and of two children of ten and seven years so longing to be catholics that the protestant mother had not the heart to refuse. Catholicism seems to make conquests everywhere; lately nine protestant churches closed at Montreal there being no more a congregation. Last sunday the baccalaureate sermon at St. Mary's proved a great success. The church was crowded even to the altar steps fifty per cent at least of the people being protestants, including the blackest

of the black. President Mackenzie and eighteen professors of Dalhousie headed the body of students. A Jesuit Father from New York delivered what they all call a perfect discourse on the Divinity of Christ. The tone, the choice of expressions, the way the subject was treated, everything appealed to and pleased the assistants of all creeds, to the utmost. - We are all well, M^r Turgeon is gone to the Sault. Pray for dear Rev. Mother Mahony for she is far from well. Au revoir; not too late to wish you the plentitude of pascal joys, also to Mrs. Tobin and Alice In CJ.

Yours devotedly

M. Wauters

rscj.

SCJM.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Sault, June 12, 1924.

My dear Mary,

Perhaps am I making a big mistake in thinking that you are yet Mary Harris but I do hope you are, as I would hate to be too late with my greetings, good wishes and most sincere congratulations. It does seem queer to think of your wedding, dear, and yet, it is all that Jesus wants of you now and therefore you will have all the strength of His Grace to be a dear good little wife, true through and through, and faithful until death. For married people, there is no Aspirantship, their vow of mutual fidelity is irrevocable from the very first day. I have no doubt that you will be very happy, dear Mary, because you have already proved that once you know your obligations, with God's grace, you stick to your duty.

Will the honey-moon trip take you in the direction of the Sault? If so, both Mother Ryan and myself would give you the warmest possible welcome. Dear Mother Ryan has ups and downs but she is very alive to all that touches her Halifax children. We read the details of Archbishop McCarthy's Jubilee feast with interest and pride. Can't you just picture to yourself the last preparations at the Convent? the decorating of the refectory, the washing of dishes, polishing of silver and upstairs, the rehearsal of choruses, and orchestra etc., Juanita, I am sure, said the address with ease and intelligence. I liked her manner of reciting ever so much at Old Pupils' Day, last October, didn't you?

I wonder what Marjorie intends doing next year. If you have anything to say in the family council, do put in a word to have her return at the Convent. It would seem very dreadful to think of Marjorie as of a grown-up, with nothing to do but face the world and amuse herself. Both Mother Ryan and myself are distressed at the thought that she may not finish her studies at the Sacred Heart; - she who is so well gifted to do very nicely indeed.

The Sault is a very lovely spot of God's great garden and just now it is at its best with its blossomed shrubs and deep blue sky. The school is large and a good spirit fills the long ranks of our one hundred and twenty boarders. Halifax is closing two days sooner than the Sault. We are

to have a wonderful procession for Corpus Christi. I shall pray for your happiness, Mary dear, on that day and during the octave.

I heard from Reverend Mother lately. She does not seem too well. Did you hear that she was going to Rome, next fall?

May God bless you always!

Very affectionately yours,

A. Turgeon rscj

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Halifax, Nova Scotia,
June 15, 1924.

My dear Mary,

Just after my deliverance from a flood of competitions I had the luck to fall into the whirlpool of prize-tying but I could not think of letting Marge go without a letter even though my mind is still running on dates, facts and qualities, and the like.

As the day when you really take on the responsibilities of life in a very serious way draws near I pray more and more earnestly for you, and you must make these days days of special prayer also. This beginning looks as if I were going to sermonize, does it not? Well I won't. I'll leave that to my elders and really answer your letter. I was pleased with Marjorie's work in Doctrine this year, it is the only branch for which I had her, but I am not optimistic enough to think I could influence her to return. She is beating her little wings against the restraints of school life and is pining for freedom. She is a dear, good child and I wish we could have her for a few years still. She really likes to study though she will not always admit it, and she has an exquisitely delicate perception of the beautiful. During tea time, when I am in charge, I can start a conversation on Music, Poetry or History with her and she becomes so engrossed that she forgets all else in the development of a beautiful thought or the appreciation of a character or composer until some more carnal damsel wails for a "second helping". Of course she never imagines that she is revealing so much of her attractive little self to a mistress who is quite delighted with her development.

How is Alice? I can imagine her mischief so brimming over that your life is hardly worth living and I often wish she would send an illustrated letter for I always enjoyed things from her point of view even when we differed.

Has your desire for centre-pieces been satisfied or must William still devote himself to applied mathematics in the way of circles, ellipses and the like?

Why don't you write to Audrey, and if you are too busy why doesn't Alice take up her pen? Audrey brought her Geology notebook to me today and it is a dream. She has every imaginable kind of a skeleton in it in india ink and some of them look as if their ribs had been

brushed with a whisk. She has a tapir with a really benign smile and maps that would make you gasp with delight.

You are dreadfully vague when you write politics to me. You express the fact that William is “running” and “contesting” and that he will be “running” until your wedding day and I am to pray for - well I used my judgment and prayed for winged-heels for William and political gout for the others. This is my debut in politics, let me know how the race turned out.

Tuesday the children are to feast Mere de Grangeneuve and Margaret Woods has just been down to have me cut out a suit of armor. The material was wrapping paper from Wallace’s so the suit had to fit the paper and Margaret must fit the suit. She has gone off to try to reason out how to make ends meet.

You were always enamored of Halifax weather - it is raining not drops but sheets, they say it is “good for the ground” which I conclude must mean good to wash the pebbles for precious little in the way of vegetation is going on.

I have not heard of or from Angel for ages but Edith seems to be getting on. Helen is the darling of Dalhousie, everyone loves her she is so gentle, humorous and thoughtful for others. She did splendidly in the exams. Eric also distinguished himself. He is still with the Brothers.

Margaret Conroy is a little darling - I do wish we could have her next year. She is never at loss for a reason or an answer. At recreation she spends as much of her time on all fours as upright much to the damage of the lily-look of her hands. I take the Juniors to bed every Monday night and as Margaret is the smallest I perform on her. Sometime ago I was thus engaged and she remarked, “Madame you needn’t scrub my hands so much”. I told her to look at the color of them and I held one up as I thought to her confusion, but she gave me one of her bewitching side glances and said, “Sure I’m a bit tanned”.

This letter is bound to be sort of a wandering one for there are so many interruptions, little maids peeping in at the door with requests such as: “Please let me take a Wilmer, Madame, mine is in my trunk”, “How does one say ‘he used to be extending’ in Latin?” “Madame, please get me a story book, I have not had one all year”, and the like. Now I happen to think of your statement that the house is all ready save for carpets, furniture, curtains - In the name of sense what else had to be gotten ready? I am mystified! I trust all the seeds William planted will sprout and I only wish you lived near enough to furnish my shrine with the blossoms. I am not so interested in the vegetables - one can get those by the can or bottle.

Now I must say au revoir - I would like to know the very day of your wedding but I shall give you both all my prayers on Corpus Christi in any case.

With much love, my dear little Mary, and every best wish for the future,

Yours devotedly in C.J.,

Mary A. McDermott rscj.

P.S. Our Retreat begins July 22nd,

M.A.M.

June 15, 1924

My very dear Mary -

Who would have suspected a couple of years ago that you would so soon forget your old M. G. who so many times dried your tears, etc. etc. - To be sure there is a letter here from you which has not yet had an answer - but in days gone by that would not have been a reason for your prolonged silence. However I know that you have been very busy with preparations for the future - and I have said to myself "if Mary needs me she knows that I am always ready to be of service to her" - and have felt sure that you would not hesitate to write if that were the case.

As I look at your letter, Mary, it makes me wish that it had been followed by others because it was so very interesting with an interest that demanded a sequence. I am delighted to know that Mr. Browne is a book-lover as well as a lover of you. It will make your married life so congenial. - Did you read in the last *Signet* an article on Juvenile Literature? It is by my old pupil of whom I wrote to you before - her husband is a Harvard man and their tastes being literary adds to the joy of living. She is a wonderful wife and mother and does great credit to her Sacred Heart training. I know you will do the same. Have you read Father Martindale's life of Father Vaughan? You were going to get it I think. Father M. writes very well indeed - he is clever but there is a little vein of cruelty in his pen - did it ever strike you?

Did you ever succeed in getting Father LeBuffe's work on *The Hound of Heaven*? You would love it. - And now to something else that I do not love at all!! Mary, how is it possible that Marjory is to leave school in the Third Academic? I am so disappointed about it. Marjory has not been very happy since Christmas, I know. Still that would not be a reason for cutting off her education just at this important stage. She is such a dear girl and could do so very well. - What about Alice? She owes me a letter this long time. Why does she not send a word? She knows that I am deeply interested in her. In fact our Lord hears my prayers for the three Harris's every morning at Mass. Give my love to Alice and Marg and ask the latter if she received the note I wrote her last week. I wanted her to get it before she left for home.

Are you coming to Montreal for your wedding trip? Would we not be happy to see you! At any rate I hope when things have resumed a normal temperature that you will send me one of those good long letters that used to gladden my heart.

Count always upon my faithful friendship, dear Mary, and upon my prayers that your new life may be filled to overflowing with GOD's best blessings.

Yours devotedly in C.J.M.

M. L. Ryan
rscjm.

S.C.J.M.

Halifax, June 16, 1924

My dear Mary,

This is still for “Mary Harris”, and I want her to know how much we will think of her and pray for her on the day which is to bring her a new name, and many heavenly graces, God’s own wedding present, so as to prepare her for the new life she is now stepping in.

Many congratulations dear Mary, and as many wishes for your perfect happiness; you know that none are more sincere and affectionate than those of your mothers of the Sacred Heart. I am sending you our little souvenir by Sheila who will give it to you with this note of congratulation at the best moment. I thought you would like a Roman Mater Admirabilis, you always loved her so much! May she bless you, my dear Mary, and shower upon you and your married life her motherly blessings. In C.J.M.

Yours devotedly
M. Wauters rscj

282 ½ Oxford Street
 June 29th 1924

My dearest Mary,

It is certainly a wonder if you still recognise my writing it is such an age since I last wrote. Now that busy school days are over however, I hope to make amends.

I must begin by thanking my Mary very much for the nice telegram she sent the day of the prizes. It arrived during the distribution and Mother de Grangeneuve showed it to us right after Benediction. The kind thought was much appreciated I assure you especially that day. The prizes were very quiet this year but all the more touching in a way. There were only five priests with Father Curran presiding. I shall never forget the valedictory as long as I live. I hadn’t been practised before anyone except Mother Lowth! When I suddenly found myself before the priests and nuns and the girls saying my “good-bye” I barely kept from crying till I had finished the last words and then as soon as my back was turned the tears fell fast. Then Father Curran began to speak and his very sympathy made things worse. I really thought that I couldn’t stay in the room another minute. But Father Macky and Father MacDonald were very funny so I kept up till Benediction. But it’s all over now and Our Lord has helped me wonderfully to be brave in front of this separation and be cheerful in my little difficulties in order to help my poor Daddy who has to face far greater trials. Things have gone from bad to worse so there is talk again of us going away and I think we really must this time. If things work out to Daddy’s arrangements we will probably be gone by Thursday. So for the first time I will ask you not to write until you hear from Audrey again.

Now enough of my troubles just pray for us Mary dear. This is not a very cheerful beginning to a letter meant to carry festal wishes and congratulations. It hurts me very much to think that I will not be able to represent my love and wishes among the lovely presents that will

be showered upon you. But I know that you understand. One thought alone consoles me. There is one bank which still remains to me among all others and that contains the greatest wealth and resources in the world. It is the heart of Our Lord. I will go to that bank on the seventh of July and draw out my own poor little savings and the great deposits of Christ and the Saints and with this wealth I will purchase countless graces for you and these gifts of Heaven will prove of more value to you in the end than any paltry souvenir of earth. I will engage a celestial messenger that day and charge him with my precious offerings. He will place them at your side at the moment of your espousals and they will remain there for good that they may help you in every need. What more could I do for a beloved friend?

I am afraid Mary that I will not be able to send you a graduation photo. You see I couldn't have any of my own and the few Lilian had taken will go to different nuns with the exception of one for me and herself. I promised Sheila mine if it was any good but I have my doubts. The proofs were simply awful.

I received a very nice collection of graduation presents. Lilian gave me a lovely leather purse of dull grey, Margaret Woods a French ivory comb, Addie a nail file and cuticle knife belonging to the set and Pauline the shoe horn, Marjorie Lannigan a sweet little ring, Margaret Lahey one of those tiny fountain pens, Helen O'Connor a very pretty graduation card and Reverend Mother a sterling silver thimble. All this finery together with my many medals would be a fine equipment if I wanted to open a jewelry store. That's what Father Curran suggested when he presented me with my fifth medal counting the medallion.

If you have any surplus photos after their extensive distribution remember there is a little friend who would love to have one. Wishing you again every joy that your new life brings to the true friends of Our Lord who unite themselves for His honor and glory I will say au-revoir. As much love as my angel can carry to you

Lovingly

Audrey E. de M.

SCJM.

[July 5, 1924]

My dearest Mary,

Your cousin Mary Doyle was here yesterday, and told me next Monday is to be your wedding-day. Need I tell you that I shall think very much about you on that day, and shall pray very earnestly that Our Dearest Lord may bless you and your husband. Of course my Mass and Communion will be for you next Monday. How happy you are both to be one in faith and zeal for the glory of God, and how much good you will be able to do. I know that for a while you will find no time for letter writing, but at least I expect a card to tell me about your whereabouts. I was so glad to get all the stamps, and if a married lady still has time for such small things, I will ask you to go on gathering. I was delighted with Marjorie; she is so much like you, that is

enough for gaining my affections. Now I want to see Alice. Mary is a dear friend to me. No nuns from Halifax are here this year and I am rather glad. They work so hard during the year, that the summer school is too much of a strain. Best love to Marge and aunt Agnes. You know, my dearest Mary, I do not forget you and will pray daily for your happiness.

Devotedly yours in CJ

A Spies

r du S C de J.

Manhattanville 5th July 1924.

Please give me your new address.

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Sault au Récollet,
P. Q. Canada,
August 5, 1924.

Dear Mary,

You should have had a letter before this but when I got here and found our dear Mother Lowth so very, very ill I had no heart for anything. I am writing this from her room and she is just sleeping a little or she would send messages to you.

I am to remain here and shall have the Fourth Academic. Ask Marge if she won't postpone her debut for a year and be my pupil. She would have every advantage in the music line and exceptional advantages for French. You know Alice said she would take an art course and I am sure she would love to work with Mother Nealis. Tell Marge I really want her. Mother Turgeon is here and is very much stronger.



Studio - Sault

I expect to see Madame Davis⁹⁵ this afternoon but I do not know what her final destination may be. I wish she was to remain here, but that would be too good to be true. We had a very pleasant trip here. Helen came with us as far as Windsor Junction. Were you very tired when you reached home. I hope Mr. Browne's cold is better by now.

The Sault is a lovely spot and I am glad to be near Mother Lowth now that she is so very ill. Do pray for her, you know it is crucifying for one so active to be chained down by suffering. I saw our Mother Vicar and she looked much better than I expected she would. I gave your love to Madame Nealis and many others, Madame Gary included, asked for you. Madame Ramsey was here when I arrived but she returned to the City House yesterday. I hear I am to have Elizabeth Story in my class and that she is now much larger than I. Ursula⁹⁶ goes to Kenwood with Madame Donahoe, and the latter sails for Rome about the twenty-first.

Don't you think my new pen is doing pretty well. I am using my knee as a desk and getting a ray of light through a crack because my dear patient sleeps better and longer when the light is excluded. Write a nice account of your beginnings soon.

⁹⁵ Mary Christina Davis RSCJ (October 27, 1885- August 20, 1969) of Windsor, Ontario was the daughter of John Davis and Juliette Baby both of Ontario. She had been Mistress General - school principal - in Halifax and possibly other Sacred Heart schools. She is buried in St. Peter's Cemetery, New Westminster, B. C. See British Columbia Registration of Death.

⁹⁶ Ursula Story RSCJ (1905 - 1994) is buried at Holy Cross Cemetery in Halifax.

Yours devotedly in C. J.,
Mary A. McDermott
 rscj

S.C.J.M.

Halifax, Sept. 12. 1924.

My dear Mary.

Is it Mary Harris? or Mary Browne? The one is just as dear to us as the other! It was a pleasure to hear of you and I thank you for your letter. We had a busy time during the holidays, and I had to wait for more leisure before answering. You too dear Mary had a few experiences; I am sure that by this time you are at least beginning to be a good house keeper, or if not yet, the desire is there, and such desires become soon or later a reality. Have you finished to discover all that is in your house? It ought to be a very cosy and happy home. How many pounds did you gain? Do you sometimes thank our Lord for your present happiness? So many do not have the hundred part of what you possess; be kind to the poor! - Yes Margaret Lahey entered and she is very happy, so is Edith Metzler. Mother Bodkin has just left for Rome, a temporary absence, and I met at Montreal Rev. Mother who is also on her way to Rome. Oh! you were at Montreal? Yes, and I met M^r McDermott, who is very brave, feeling already at home at the Sault and looking very well. Poor M^r Lowth is nearing Her great reward, Heaven, she is so sweet and patient, her nurses for she has two, a day and a night trained nurse, told me how edified they are, she never complains, never asks for anything, not even a drop of water. When I was sitting by her bedside and said: I must go for I will tire you, she replied: you do not tire me, I love to look at you. Say a prayer for her, she has been so devoted to our children.

Perhaps they told you of our many changes, soon mentioned, but not accomplished without sacrifice. M^r Naud is treasurer at the City House, Montreal, where there are 250 children; M^r Guitton who comes from Louisiana replaces her as Assistant, M^r Cable from Vancouver as treasurer. M^r Davis also from Vancouver is Mistress of studies, M^r Wilkins came as Class mistress and I brought with me M^r O'Farrell. All the community send love, dear Mary; kind regards to Mr. Browne. What does he think of our Mary? - Yours affectionately in C.J.

M Wauters rscj

It would be dreadful not to mention the new Mistress General M^r Wallace. The children seemed delighted with the choice. M^r Brady is [indecipherable].

S.C.J.M.

[Letterhead]

CONVENT OF THE SACRED HEART
GROSSE POINTE FARMS
MICHIGAN

September 15th, 1924.

Dear Mary,

Your lovely letter gave me real pleasure. I have thought of you so often and hoped you would write and tell me about yourself, which you have done quite to my satisfaction. That you are so happy is a great joy to me. I am sure our Blessed Lord must be pleased with you, you have tried so sincerely to do His Will. Had I known you were so much in such need of prayers I should have been more intense in my petitions for you, but God has taken care of you and rewarded you with real peace and happiness.

You have unconsciously traced a panygeric [sic] of Mr. Browne in recounting not only his willing consent to spend a good part of your honeymoon visiting nuns, but also his submission to your first attempts at cooking. I will not mention his surviving them.

Yes, Mother Byrne is here and seems to think you owe her a letter. Mothers Dowd and Kane are here too, the former in the parish school, the latter in charge of the Junior School.

Our children are very numerous for our accomodations, [sic] but a good, happy set. They are chiefly day-pupils and weekly boarders, so I may get a moment to write you on a Sunday. Indeed it is Sunday now, this epistle having been laid aside when the tribes returned.

Dear Mother Kenny has had another heart attack and is growing weaker as she does after each one. You know, I am sure, of Mother Lowth's illness; there seems little hope for her.

The last band of Superiors sails on the twenty-fourth, for Rome.

Much love and prayers and every best wish.

Devotedly in C.J.M.

F. Smith

r.s.c.j.

S C J M

19th Oct 1924.

[Letterhead]
ACADEMY OF THE SACRED HEART
MANHATTANVILLE, NEW YORK CITY

133^d St

My dearest Mary,

Need I tell you how happy I was to get your kind letter. No, for you know I never forget my dear little friend. I am so glad to know you are happy in every way. May Our Dear Lord bless you more and more, you and your husband, such a fine Catholic, I was told. Mary Doyle was here a few days ago and we had a nice talk, a great deal about you. I am most interested in your dog and always dreamt of one, when I was young. Here we have an Airdale [sic] who barks at me. How good of you to keep the stamps for me, I am very anxious to see the box arrive; I suppose however you have no air mail stamps, although I think such a thing exists in your isle. Many thanks already.

Yes, the Academy is at Noroton on the Sound, in a most beautiful spot; the water on three sides. Now we have 160 College girls and can take no more before the big dormitories have been converted into private rooms. Washington is doing very well, 60 children I think, boys and girls, but they take only day pupils. We were very sad to lose our dear mother Alma O'Neill whom you must have known in Canada. She came here for summer school and at the end of it had to undergo an operation. She died 6 weeks after it. It is a great loss, as she was most clever and dear. I always worked with her, and she was by far my best pupil. The ways of Our Lord are not ours. I have had no news from M^{er} Byrne directly, but know that she is still at Grosse Pointe and well. We saw R^d M^{er} on her way to Rome to the superiors retreat which ends to-day. She was superior at Halifax some years ago. M^{er} Bodkin did not come this way, but we saw mother Clapin.

Well, my dear Mary, next time I will try to write a longer letter, but to-day I have some 30 French copy-books to correct, besides my Math. This seems my lot in life and one of my girls in Brussels wrote to ask if A is to B as C is to D I suppose it is.
Devotedly yours in CJ

**A Spies
r du S C de J.**

S.C.J.M.

Halifax, Oct. 23. 1924.

Dear Mary.

Your telegram came during the afternoon meeting of Old Pupils Day, I thank you very much. We had a lovely day and all went on so well; the weather was beautiful, the rooms and halls decorated as usual with ferns, fall flowers, rich in color, and autumn leaves. Hundred and fifty old pupils were our guests for the day, all so happy; it was, they said, the happiest "Old Pupils Day" they ever attended. We repeated Mother Lowth's last dramatized Allegory "Dilecta" taken from Mother Loyola's book: *The King of the Golden City*. It is a play for Juniors, and gave great pleasure. New officers were selected. Mary Murphy is President of the

Alumnae, Ruth Cragg corresponding Secretary. The Craggs were to spend the winter at Washington, but Mr. Cragg is not at all well, and they had to give up the project.

Tuesday Bishop Leblanc⁹⁷, and Bishop Chiasson from Chatham⁹⁸ said Mass here, the last masses for the time being in the chapel which is filled now with scaffolding, we decided to have it repainted in preparation to our Blessed Mother Foundress' canonization⁹⁹, and the big parlour has become temporary chapel, for at least six weeks. Dear Mother Lowth is still lingering and the nurses marvel at her patience and gentleness. But dear Reverend Mother Mahony is much better; she even went to the City House, Montreal, and when the nuns in their glad surprise asked: Are you going to Halifax, she replied: not yet, not yet. As she was too ill in May to have her feast, the children feasted her last monday. Perhaps you know that Mother Conwell and Mother Clapin are in Rome, they are expected home in November. We wish they landed at Halifax but have little hope. I am sure you are happy and well. Kind regards to Mr. Browne and ever so much love to Mary Browne. In C.J.M.

Yours devotedly

M. Wauters

rscj.

⁹⁷ Bishop of Saint John, New Brunswick.

⁹⁸ Bishop of Chatham, New Brunswick.

⁹⁹ The repainting of the chapel was no simple paint job. As recorded in Apollonia Elizabeth Schofields's *The Soul Pictures of Margaret Mary Nealis*, Master's Thesis, Concordia University, Montreal, February 1993, at p. 51:

In 1904 Ozias Leduc was invited by the Religious of the Sacred Heart to decorate their convent chapel in Halifax, Nova Scotia . . . Ozias Leduc returned to the Halifax convent in 1924 to restore the chapel decoration. He took along as his assistant the young P. E. Borduas.



Sacred Heart Convent Chapel, Halifax

<https://novascotia.ca/archives/Notman/archives.asp?ID=662>

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Sault au Récollet, P.Q.,
October 26, 1924.

Dearest Mary,

I have just had the dolefullest accident; I had a letter half written to you and in tearing it off the pad I tore the top off it. This was a calamity for my free time is so crammed with things that ought to be done. You cannot be neglected another minute because I am worrying about you. I have not heard from you since your letter promising the pictures. They never reached me.

I expected a letter the 20th and it did not put in an appearance so now I am wondering if you are ill. I have been looking forward with eagerness to the receiving of William's lecture. We are reading Father Plater's life here, we had just finished it a little before I left Halifax. When I listen to it I think of the delight you and your husband must have reading it together as the Father was his friend.

Eileen sent me a charming account of Old Pupils' Day at Halifax. It was a complete success and she seemed delighted. They gave a play that Mother Lowth trained them for last year, "Delecta".

Poor Mother Lowth is now so helpless that you could never imagine it is she. Her other eye has become diseased and the greater part of the time she seems to realize little of what is going on about her. She speaks little and when she does express an idea it usually has to be evoked by a question. She always wants to get up and often thinks she is at Manhattanville. She has two little French nurses from Hotel Dieu and they are very kind and efficient.

Mother Lucie is ill and I should not be surprised if she would soon go home. Mother Adele has been surprisingly well up to now, but she has had a little set-back.

I wish you could see Mother Nealis' painting of the Canadian martyrs. It is destined for the Jesuits in Rome. Marion Furlong is here and I find her a dear child. She is so sensible and sweet it is a pleasure to talk with her. She is in my Sunday recreation band but during the week we see little of each other.

The 20th we had the Feast wishes for Reverend Mother and the next day a grand congé. It was the first congé for the new pupils and they were enchanted.

Have you gotten to the stage where you can write memoirs of your Newfoundland Pup? I imagine he has half your embroidery chewed up by this time if he is true to his breed.

How is Alice getting on as housekeeper? I fancy she will be pretty tired of it by the time Aunt Agnes gets back. Is Marjorie working at her music? I have not had a word from Margaret Lahey since she entered but Madame Henrion saw her on her way back and said she was very happy. She also saw Edith who had grown so stout that she hardly recognized her. This makes me think to tell you that old Aunt Maggie has gone to her reward. I believe her death was rather unexpected although she was so old.

Audrey's father has a good position in Montreal and she is still with her Grandmother. I would not be surprised if we were called to parlour¹⁰⁰ to see her some day. The children seem to love Margaret Woods as head of the school and they say she was admirable when Howard died. Several are taking the "A" this year, Margaret among them.

Last week my old classmate came with her sister to see me. I was expecting no one and was not listening for my bell so she had a wait of an hour and a quarter and she told me it would be a long day before she would come to me again. She is as sweet as ever but very worn looking, due to the fact that she has six wee ones to look after. Mr. Long came also, a week before, and had an hour's wait - he did not express his sentiments - but as Mother Walsh entertained him in the meantime he was the gainer.

¹⁰⁰ "Called to parlour" While the nuns would be called to the parlour for any visitor, in this instance Mother McDermott may have been referring to the custom of alumnae coming to the Convent with their husbands on their wedding day.

When are you and William coming to Montreal? You have not been here for ages. What new books have you and what is your pen engaged upon?

Madame Henrion is sitting at the table with me and is engrossed in a pile of competition papers. She is very busy and very gay as usual. I am sure she would send her love if she knew what I am doing. God bless you, dear child, give my regards to William and write soon to

Yours devotedly in C. J.,

Mary A. McDermott

rscj.

S. C. J. M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Sault au Récollet, P. Q.,
November 23, 1924.

Dearest Mary,

This is the last Sunday before Advent and you should see the way little Waterman is rushing. I had to stop and give him a drink to prevent his collapsing but that done he behaves beautifully. Yesterday I received Mr. Browne's most interesting and charming lecture - it was Bazaar Day and you know what that means - I read it while at Mother Lowth's bedside but it had necessarily to be a very hurried perusal. I am promising myself a real reading of it this week in spite of costumes for the *Taming of the Shrew* that are waiting for my attention. I shall share the delights of it with my Sisters and it may find its way Halifaxward. It was dear of you both to take so much trouble about the copying. You might have sent me the stenographer's copy if you only thought of my typed productions and of how my pupils had to use their judgement.

Thank you also for the Mass offerings and the photo. I was disappointed at not getting one with the groom but I understand now that it is coming. Yours was dear - such a quaint, lovely gown - I am so glad it was not one of those inartistic, abbreviated, skimpy frocks. The background was charming too. I showed it - the photo - to Mothers Ryan and Nealis and I shall show it to Reverend Mother this week.

She arrived in New York last week after a stormy voyage during which she almost died. Reverend Mothers Clapin, Bodkin and four others returned on the *President Wilson* and landed at Halifax, or at least the boat was delayed there, and they spent the night at Spring Garden Road. Imagine the joy of all! Reverend Mother Egert is to take charge of Grosse Point, she has just returned from Rome. Reverend Mother Burnett has gone to Noroton and Reverend Mother Lewis is at Manhattanville. Reverend Mother Theresa Hill goes to Detroit City House. I think you knew her, she was Reverend Mother Moran's secretary when you were at Kenwood.

Mother Vicar is not any better and does not leave her room now. Poor Mother Lowth is in the same helpless state. She is getting aged looking, but I do not think she suffers pain continually. Sometimes she has a bad headache and sometimes her poor eyes are very much

inflamed but she never, never complains. She remembers little of what happens now, but if helped a little recalls long past events.

Now, dearest child, my moments are at their ebb for letter-writing, I cannot tell you how much your letters delight me with their dear home touches. I feel as if I were just peeping in at you two dear young things beginning so happily, so well, so united, so ideally Catholic. God bless you both!

Yours devotedly in C. J.,
Mary A. McDermott
 rscj.

[Letterhead]
 CONVENT OF THE SACRED HEART
 KENWOOD
 ALBANY, NEW YORK

S.C.J.M.

Dec. 31, 1924.

My dear Mary:

Mother Bodkin wishes me to acknowledge your Christmas letter to her. I know it's disappointing not to hear directly, but I am very delighted to have the pleasure of a few minutes chat with you. You were very kind to send me so long and newsy a letter: the intricacies of first attempts at house keeping must keep you on the "qui vive", but I think with an Aunt Agnes ever hovering near, you'll not have a chance of doing much damage. Yes, all the superiors went to Rome for a wonderful retreat. It was a great joy to see Reverend Mother, Reverend Mother Clapin, (who is our vicar now) and Mother O'Loane. They all speak so wonderfully of our Mother General - I wonder if [indecipherable] S. saw her! Christmas was very happy for us all: the skating is fine just now - Margaret Lahey often speaks of you and of Sheila.

Now, dear Mary, I must go, as I have to write several letters before the bell rings - Thank you so much for your remembrance of me, and be assured of prayers for your intentions - wishing you every happiness in 1925.

Yours affectionately in C.J.M.
Rose M. Sinnott r.s.c.j.

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
 Sault au Récollet, P. Q.,

January 2, 1925.

Dear Mary,

The lovely photo reached here in perfect condition and I ran over to Mother Vicar's room to show it to her. She is very happy that you are so happy, and is perfectly content about your husband at whom she had a good peep through my eyes. He should have heard how eloquent I was about him and he would forgive me causing tears to flow during the honeymoon period and racing up from the country etc. Tell Alice and Marge that they were charming, and little Margaret was sweet. Thank you for the letters, too, dear Mary. I almost feel that I could find my way about your home without a guide but that I should live to see the day that baking a cake and literary occupations should divide your attention is almost beyond my comprehension, (That is why that particular "e" got out of place in literary, I'm nervous - like as Alice used to say).

By this time you have heard of our dear Mother Lowth's death. After being confined to her bed for months, and having periods of acute suffering, she died very peacefully, or at least without struggle for they think she was unconscious, Christmas Eve. Her body was brought to the Chapel on Christmas night. The Chapel was beautifully decorated in crimson and gold and her tiny coffin with its pall did not look at all like a reminder of death, in its gorgeous setting. I thought of all the Christmas feasts she had prepared and of how exact she was for richness in even the least detail where the Lord was concerned and as I looked at the beautiful little Infant with arms outstretched toward the Mother at rest I felt it was a delicate attention of the wee King's heart to have his feast hers also, with none of the trappings of death. The day Mother Lowth was buried Mother Pinard died and this morning Mother Cremor went to God. We have had the Cross as well as the Crib this Christmas. Pray for our dear departed ones.

I shall not express what I feel about the "bobbing" I am afraid the letter would not get further than Reverend Mother's room if I wrote what I think of you. I would not blame your husband if he went off until you looked like a reasonable matron again instead of a goose of a girl. Really I am provoked with you and I wonder what you will do next. Did Aunt Agnes enjoy her trip? Give my love to Sheila and tell her Carrie is visiting the Sault for a few days, and as soon as my letters are finished we are going up to the class-room to talk about Sheila, the girl guides, and the hats. Carrie promises to show me a picture of the hat. Please remember me to your husband, Aunt Agnes and the girls. Do not believe anyone who tells you you look well with that bob.

Yours devotedly in C.J.

Mary A. McDermott rscj.

SCJM

[Letterhead]
CONVENT OF THE SACRED HEART

ALBANY, NEW YORK

Jan. 2^d 1925

My dear Mary

Many thanks for your dear letter and good wishes. How earnestly I wish you a Happy New Year in your new home. It is sure to be full of graces for all of us and I like to think that you will share our joy in the Canonization of Bl. Madeleine Sophie. Please remember me to Mrs. Tobin and wish her a happy New Year.

Rose is well and forgetting how to worry - at least I hope so. Love and congratulations dear Mary -

Yours affectionately in CJM.

G. Bodkin R.S.C.J.

S.C.J.M.

Sacred Heart, Point Grey B.C.
Shrovetide 1925 [February 20-22]

My very dear Mary,

We are just stepping on the threshold of Lent and I have before me a pile of unanswered letters but they must remain as they are until I have written a line to you. You have been in my thoughts and prayers so often of late that I'm beginning to feel anxious. Are you well, dear child, and happy? Do tell me about yourself and your new surroundings. Did you get a pretty little lace handkerchief shortly after or about the time of your marriage? I hope it did not go astray - unfortunately it was not registered and it should have been.

Did you hear that I took a trip across the ocean last August and returned shortly before Christmas? It was a wonderful privilege. We had an audience with the Holy Father and saw all the great Basilicas and places of pilgrimage. We returned by way of Milan, Belgium and England and visited all our houses en route. We were eight in our band but we were forty-two Superiors in all at the Mother House, Rome. God was certainly good to us and I shall never cease thanking Him for the privilege of an eight days retreat at the Via Nomentana. Is Marjory still at Halifax? How is Alice? Do you live near Aunt Agnes? Please give her, your sisters and Mary Doyle my love, and tell Mr. Browne that I hope he is exceedingly good to my precious child and his wife.

God bless you, Mary dear, pray for me and believe that you are daily in the prayers of your old Mother in CJ.

M. Conwell RSH.

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Sault au Récollet, P. Q.,
February 25, 1925

Dearest Mary,

You may say "thank you" to dear Reverend Mother Mahony for this letter for, as you see by the date, this is Ash Wednesday and my pen had been set aside for correction of exercises only! As your Mass offering was enclosed Mother Vicar said I might not wait until Easter to acknowledge it. It was sweet of you to remember Mother Mahony this way - these are the acts of friendship that count so much and make up the deficit when the final reckoning is made. A death like hers is not sad - all her life was a preparation for it.

Did you know that our dear Reverend Mother Wauters is to go to the Canonization? Several children of the Sault have asked to go and one has already received her permission. I do not know what other religious of Canada will go with Reverend Mother Wauters - that will be an item for my next.

I have not heard from Audrey since Christmas and I wrote a long epistle, what do you think of that? You ought to write to her often - it must be very lonely for her in Valleyfield.

Dear Mother Duffy will never get over Gwen's sad death, and the family is crushed, but this much is certain Gwen was not at all accountable. She was ill and the poor child did not realize her state or her act, if it was her act.

When I read your account of the H. episode I just thought it was a great comfort that we are working for God alone. What targets we are and how miserable we would be if we had to worry about what the world thought! I think the absolute independence of our dependence would charm Chesterton.

I am glad you liked *My Unknown Chum*. The author must be a double-dyed Bostonian. I have had little time to read lately and whatever little there was I spent on French. I am now on the ninth volume of the Duchess d'Abrantis Memoirs. She is the, or was the, wife of one of Napoleon's generals - Junot. She (was is) clever, had a brilliant imagination and wrote interestingly. Her judgments on persons and events are keen. I have one volume still - I read at the five minutes. I am cultivating a French ear but my tongue seems cast in a hopelessly English mould. I am amused at the idea of your becoming such a little business woman. I am glad you are going to get what your Father wished you to have and I know you will use it well. M. Lahey received the habit the 16th. There is no getting a letter out of her. Congratulations on the bulbs - I am sorry you live so far away - think of the decorations I could have! Remember me to William and tell him I love the joy note that runs through all your letters because it makes me sure my little girl has an ideal husband.

Yours devotedly in C.J.

M. McDermott rscj.

SCJM

[Letterhead]
 ACADEMY OF THE SACRED HEART
 MANHATTANVILLE, NEW YORK CITY

[April 13, 1925]

My dear Mary,

I know how busy married ladies are, but still I feel sure you do not forget an old friend who is very faithful to you. I hope you are not sick and will find time to tell me how Mr. Browne, Alice and Marjorie are. I am even very interested in the Newfoundland dog. So please do give me news very soon. Also do not forget to forward the stamps you collected. I never see any from your isle now. Mother Murray has not written to me for a long time, but still I expect news soon. You will by this time have heard the glorious news of the canonization of Blessed Madeleine Sophie, our Mother Foundress. R^d Mother goes to Rome for the feasts; many College girls also. We will have a party of Canadian girls here for a few days, as they sail from New York. R^d Mother Wauters is going also and we will see her too. There are 400 children going from Belgium and Holland. I shall not forget to send you a souvenir; we are begged not to give the pictures before the feast, that is why I do not enclose any. Mary Doyle promised me she would write to you before Lent, to ask you not to forget me, but I suppose she did not, and as you know, I could not write during Lent. How is dear Marjorie getting along? I just would love your island; the views on the stamps are so beautiful; I love those rivers and quiet nooks. I feel sure I shall hear from you soon, and I never forget to pray for my dear little friend.

Devotedly yours in CJ.

**A Spies
 r du SC de J.**

13 April 1925

Kenwood
 May 10, 1925

Dear Mary,

It is four cents to Newfoundland you know, hence two in one, yours with Sheila's. It is a case of 'gone but not forgotten' so your letters, cards and telegram were all most gratefully welcomed 'though impolitely not acknowledged. You understand I am a Novice now. What

would you have given to have gone to Rome for the twenty-fourth? Reverend Mothers Wauters and Naud went but I do not think any Halifax children.

I saw Father Filion in April, Mary. You can imagine my joy. He came here for a ceremony on the twenty-ninth. I had a visit with him. He asked of you and said he was glad you had married such a fine man. Please tell Alice he spoke of her too. Remember me to Marge. How is your dear Bill? Remember last October in the private Room at the Convent, the letters we wrote.

I was sorry to hear of Sister Sinnott's Aunt's death. The name Aunt Agnes reminded me of your Aunt.

Mother Bodkin sends her love to you.

Father O'Riley from the Mount has gone to Rome for the canonization of their Founder Br. Eude. Remember the day in the Mount parlor? Did you know that Miss O'Regan who was with us entered there a year ago March 19th?

Hoping you are very well and happy,

I am

Yours sincerely

Margaret Lahey

n.s.c.j.

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Sault au Récollet, P.Q.,
May 31, 1925.

Dear Mary,

As far as I am concerned Spring Garden Road has taken on an attitude of determined silence and I hear I am to be trained. Madame Wilson is the prime mover, and all this severity comes from the fact that I have not time to write, and the Sault has not provided me with a Secretary. I am afraid you may be drawn into the unsympathetic vortex so here is what is left of me after Old Pupils' Day scribbling away feebly but bravely.

We had three days of celebration for our day of days. Monday was for Clergy and Religious; Tuesday, for the children; Friday for Old Pupils. Everything went off beautifully and they were never-to-be-forgotten days - days that only come once in a life-time!

Dorothy Cozzolino and Cecil Hayshaw were here. The former is to be married in September; the latter broke down after seven months of training in a Montreal Hospital - she was too young for such a strain. Now she is stronger and is looking about for a position.

I met my old classmate of the Sault and she now has six children, and she is so enthusiastic over her husband that he is her main topic of conversation - he is to be brought out for inspection as soon as school closes, and I know beforehand I am going to like him very much

because only a noble hearted, good man could have made my little Mary so very happy. Did you hear that Dard is to be married on June 2nd to Doctor Lyons. He is to be a Catholic. Dear Dard, I hope she will be very happy. Claire Gauvin is a Postulant here. The postulants are to remain at the Sault and only go to Kenwood after they have taken the habit.

Eveleen Burns did brilliantly at Dalhousie. The professors are delighted with her work and I am so proud of her that I hardly know how to express my sentiments. Margaret Smith has her B.A., and Helen has done very well. She has only one year more. Margaret Lahey is as silent as the tomb but there are rumors that she brings sunshine wherever she goes. Everyone loves her.

Lillian Clarke is taking a business course and Audrey is to begin - Oh those business courses! I have one now who threatens to go in for Domestic Science, all the while I am advocating college. Last Thursday I saw Hilda Jenkins, she does not look a minute older than when she was in the First Class, and she is very sweet and a credit to her Alma Mater. She has made a real success of nursing and does a great deal of good.



Hilda "Bobs" Jenkins
See footnote for letter July 6, 1920

Since I last wrote to you Mother Georgie Stevens was here with a band of her teachers and pupils. She came at Father Hingston's request and gave a two weeks demonstration of the Ward Method. Mother Barette came on from Halifax for it and we had a nice visit. Mother Davis was also here but not for the singing. Helen Murphy came on as Mother Naud's companion and returned with the other two.

We are to close on the seventeenth, I believe Halifax is in union with us. Most of our Graduates have gone to Rome so I expect we shall not have too tearful a day - I do not know if the capacity of those that remain could equal yours.

The Sault is perfectly lovely now - the River is glorious, I could watch it all day; another ravishing thing is the violet field where one may pick and pick to her heart's content. The valley lilies are nearly out and one meets them everywhere. My children expect to see no more of me after the lilies are out. How is your garden getting on? Eveleen has the fever for gardening too, but the trouble there is that whatever she plants Vic digs up.

Are you very well? Are you taking good care of yourself? Is the new little maid adaptable? How are Alice and Marge? I hope they are keeping up their music. Tuesday night we had a nice surprise sixty musicians came and gave us a Concert in honour of the Canonization. I thought how you would have enjoyed it.

I am going to run up and tell Mother Ryan that I am writing to you for I am sure she will want some space in my envelope. I shall expect a nice long letter soon with all the home episodes. Remember me to William. With much love

Yours devotedly in C.J.,

Mary A. McDermott

rscj.

[Letterhead]

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Sault au Recollet. P. Q.

[Undated]

My dear Mary -

As Madame McDermott has kindly offered me hospitality in her envelope I am thanking you sooner than I expected for the Easter letter. It was very interesting - you do know or you ought to know that I am delighted to hear from you at any time. But all the same did any one ever tell you that you are a fraud? Yes, surely I shall prove it since you ask proofs. In a former letter of yours there was a question about the status of Margaret Lahey which I replied to, saying that Margaret had received with great joy, the habit on February 16, likewise a word to the effect that she is very happy in her vocation and evidently is in the right place. Now in your Easter letter after assuring me that you enjoyed my letter exceedingly, every word interesting, etc., etc., you go on to say "Does no one ever hear from Margaret? Has she received the habit yet, etc.?" - Curtain falls.....

Also did you notice a question I asked about the pronunciation of Magdalen College, thinking that your husband being an Oxford man could tell me if it is correct to say Maudlin College, as an Englishman told me some time ago. - So my Dear, that's that! - All the same I am truly glad to know that you are so happy in your new life - which is not so new now as it was a

year ago but in which you seem to be growing happier. I wish you might have been in Rome for the Canonization on the 24th. The celebrations here and in all our Convents were beautiful, but what must it be to hear the voice of Christ's Vicar pronouncing one's Mother Foundress a Saint! Many pupils from all parts of the world went to Rome for the great day. I fancy Marguerite Ryan was the only representative of Halifax. - GOD bless you, my dear Mary. - Yours devotedly in
C.J.M.

M. L. Ryan
rscjm

[Back of same letter:]

My letter is short, my dear Mary, but I am sure that the facile pen of Madame McDermott will give you all the news of Convent and Old Pupils, etc. - She told me some time ago about the pitched battle you had with Mr. Howley anent Mère B's teaching of music. To which I replied that it was a blessing he fell into your hands as there could not be much left to demolish when you had finished the argument. - Is it not a pity that people must make up things against others when they have no objective reality to fall back on? But I suppose he fancied what he was saying was true. It all seems so silly for surely those who have ears to hear must know that none of the girls in St. John's play better or are more musical than you and Alice and Marge - and you are all pupils of Mère B. who herself has had exceptional musical advantages. - There is no doubt in my mind, dear Mary, but that you will always be "True Blue" and most loyal to your Alma Mater.

May I trouble you to give the enclosed note to Alice? Many thanks. I hope you keep up your music and your writing??

Love always from yours affectionately,

M.L.R.
rscJM.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Sault au Récollet, P.Q.
July 5, 1925.

Dearest Mary,

I could not go into Retreat without a little word to you. I was very busy the last days of the school year and busier than ever since. Your last letters brought me much joy and I need not tell you that the new little life that is confided to you shall be ushered into this world by the loving prayers of your Mothers and Mistresses of the Sacred Heart. You must be a good, obedient child now and take excellent care of yourself. Never mind if the maid gets this or that upside down, worry about nothing - just be good and pray, love and live! I can just imagine you

sewing at the little garments and singing little lullabys in anticipation. Could I possibly tempt you to listen to a little news - if not then the rest of this card is for William. We have visitors at our house! Mothers Murray, Davis, Finn, Guillen, Wynne, Wilson, Codie from Halifax, Mothers Healy, Wall and Dorion from the States, and the whole City House Community. The Sault is just the anti-chamber to Paradise and every one here is so gay and so good that I find myself pitying those who are not of us - Would not the world laugh if it knew it were being pitied! I am going to run up to Mother Ryan's room with this - she will write if she is well enough. Dear Audrey was here with Pauline for one morning and a few hours in the afternoon. Poor child she has had her share of the cross! Tomorrow we shall go into Retreat and you may be assured William, you, and the desired of your hearts shall have a great share in the prayers of

Yours devotedly in C.J.,

Mary A. McDermott rscj

[Letterhead]

Convent of the Sacred Heart
Sault au Recollet. P.Q.

[about August 1925]

My dear Mary -

Do you realize the dreadful thing I have done? For which I am tremendously contrite and afflicted. - Just previous to our entering upon our annual retreat Madame McDermott brought me an envelope, offered me hospitality for a word to you. - One thing and another came in the way of my writing and just after the retreat I was too ill to write. And then, O dreadful confession! I must acknowledge it for fear you would find out a new peccadillo at the day of judgment - I forgot that the envelope was in my box and that you had not been written to!! Open confession is good for the soul - but better still when you write and say I am forgiven. - You understand, young Lady, that no sentiments of contrition for not having written you enter my soul, as you are in my debt just now - what I regret is that you have not sooner received Madame McDermott's letter as I know the pleasure a letter from her is to you. - I shall make known to her the facts related herein when next I see her. She is so busy that seldom does she dawn on my horizon. - So herewith I send and end this chapter, only adding that you are often in my affectionate prayers.

Believe me, my dear Mary,

Yours devotedly in C.J.M.

M. L. Ryan
rscjm.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Halifax, Aug. 17th 1925.

S.C.J.M.

My dear Mary,

The news your letter brought me were indeed good news, and I thank you for giving them to me. I am so happy at the announcement of the coming event and rejoice with you over all that accompanies it. The preparations will I am sure, be all that the little visitor could possibly desire in the spiritual and temporal lives. All the Community will indeed pray for you dear Mary that the happy event may be just what you would desire it.

As you say, dear Mary, the Feasts in Rome were the next best thing to Heaven; the Canonization, the audience with the Holy Father when there were about 5000 pupils of the Sacred Heart present; the delightful gatherings at the Mother House where I was privileged to remain three weeks, etc. I hope Alice and Margery can represent the family on the 20th of Oct. and then I can tell them all about it and they can share all the news with you on the return.

Our Triduum of Thanksgiving will take place on the 20th 21st & 22nd of October; the first day will be given to the old pupils. I am glad to hear that Kath. Burke and Sheila Conroy will come to Halifax. Let your dear sisters follow their example.

Please remember me to Aunt Agnes and assure Mr. Browne of my kindest regards. Much love to yourself and assurance of prayers.

Devotedly in C. J.

J. Naud,

rscj.

S.C.J.M.

[Letterhead]
CONVENT OF THE SACRED HEART
POINT GREY, B.C.

October 11, 1925.

My dearest Mary,

You cannot imagine how much joy your letter brought me. It was a delight to know you were so well and so happy. Though the years seem to be taking us farther away from each other our hearts are even more closely united. You spoke in your letter of shadows of fear passing over your soul these days - that must cease and give place to loving confidence. Just put all your fears in the Sacred Heart, and your little one in Mary's keeping and all will be well with you both. Then, too, think of the days when the crown of your joy will be to bring up a little one

for the Sacred Heart. I always feel you are so safe and secure in William's keeping, and have none of those dread anxieties of which mixed marriages are so fruitful. Courage, darling, and confidence, your old mistresses are enfolding you in prayer.

Reverend Mother has gone she left us the 19th to be superior of Seattle. I had a few weeks with her and we had many talks about you, and William must have felt his ears tingle as I grew eloquent on his virtues and gifts. I brought forth the wedding group which was lovingly commented on.

Vancouver is really a lovely spot, at least our part of it. It seems that when we first arrived there was only one house in the vicinity, now behind us and to the left are many houses. To the right is crown land and not a building for miles. The children take long walks down to the sea and, when the weather permits, go paddling. Indian trails are cut through these lands and we have a really, truly one on our property.



This Vancouver photo was taken about 1914, probably when Mary Louise Ryan RSCJ was Mistress General. Note the slight differences between the habits of the coadjutrix sisters in the front of the photo and those worn by the choir nuns behind. City of Vancouver Archives - public domain.

<https://searcharchives.vancouver.ca/uploads/r/null/f/3/2/f32a751a3786e66646cc383fc9791c2e08e39d70c32088d0207e2b21510da4d7/ce48e02c-6c7f-442b-a5e4-5c59270717b4-CVA214-05.jpg>

The ends of the world seem to meet here and one meets all kinds of people, for instance, an English Major keeps our hedges trimmed, a one-time German merchant is the engineer, a Hindu ploughs the fields, a Chinaman grows the vegetables, an English Brother of some kind or other, whose health broke down, cultivates the roses and other decorative plants, and a Canadian Jesuit is chaplain.

The children are very interesting and work well. They play well, too, and are very large and strong. Madame Chisholm is here and is very dear, she supplies for all my forgets and supplies for all my absent-mindedness. Au revoir my dear little girl. Remember me to William. I'll write you soon about Laval - it went out of my mind until this very minute. With much love,

Devotedly yours in C. J.,

Mary A. McDermott rscj

S.C.J.M.

[Letterhead]
Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Spring Garden Road,
Halifax. N. S.

Oct. 18, 1925.

My dear Mary,

Your dear letter was a very pleasant surprise, though I have not forgotten you as you imagine.

I often think of you and since I heard of your expected joy, I have prayed much for you and will continue to do so until I hear of the safe arrival of the little stranger. I am so sorry you could not be with us for the "Twentieth" to celebrate our dear Saint's great day in Halifax.

I am glad that Sheila is here for she will be able to tell you all about it so much better than a letter could.

You can easily imagine what busy days these are for us all, but, it is all a labor of love so everything goes on happily.

Thank you so much for your generous offering for the Fair. I am deep in fancy work though I do not accomplish much my old hands are getting so stiff.

Were you not surprised when you heard of Madame McDermott's flight to Vancouver. I am so sorry for I feel sure I will never see her again in this world. Bunnie is having a pleasant visit in Boston so I am quite lonely without her flying visits, but I expect her home soon.

Did you hear that Ruth Cragg's father died quite suddenly about three weeks ago? I am sure you will pray for him.

I must now leave you dear Mary, with assurance of many prayers that all will be well next month.

Remember me to your Aunt and the girls and with much love,

I am always,

Yours affectionately,

P.G. Duffy r.s.cjm.

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Halifax, Nov. 6th 1925.

My dear Mary,

All the Community unite with me in congratulating you over the happy arrival of a dear little daughter.¹⁰¹ Such a joy both for you and for Mr. Brown [sic], and a legitimate one.

It was so sweet and thoughtful of you and your husband to let us have a share in the joys of this longed for day. So thank you, dear Mary; you may be sure we shall not forget the "Holy Family" in our prayers.

I had a message from Sheila telling us of her safe return home, and repeating Mr. Brown's [sic] message. I am sure that by this time, she has given you all the Convent news, and a glowing account of the 20th of October.

Kathleen Burke is still in Halifax, staying now with Mrs. Penny; but she came for the First Friday devotions and even to the meeting of the Children of Mary.

How are Alice and Marjorie? And Aunt Agnes? They are all very silent!

Let us soon hear from you dear Mary and tell us all you can about your dear little girl. Kindest regards to Mr. Brown. [sic]

Affectionately in Corde Jesu,

J. Naud,

rscj.

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart
3581 - 29th Ave. W.,

¹⁰¹ Marjorie Mary Browne, born November 5, 1925.

Vancouver, B.C.
 [November, 1925]
 [Subsequent letters use 3851]

My dearest little girl,

Long before this you have received my heart's wireless and know what a privation it is not to be able to gather you and your rose-bud of a babe close to it to tell you how I rejoice in your joy. I am so glad your first wee one is a girl - when praying I was very mortified and did not ask for a little girl, but I was desiring and wishing it so hard and so intensely that I feel now that the desire was blessed. Do get Bill to forget his forensic duties long enough to write me all about his little daughter, whether she is fair or dark, blue-eyed or black-eyed, just how big, or rather how tiny, she is, which one of you she looks like, what kind of a voice she has, how she looks in her new little clothes, how she fits in her dear little cradle, can she cry and coo and all the thousand and one things that are interesting about babies. If he is too busy winning cases and loving you both then some one must write.

This wee one is the crown of your love and being a child of prayer will be ever a comfort and joy to you both. God has been very good to you, my darling Mary, so good that He has given you a treasure to guard for Him and you will not disappoint His Heart.

Now I must tell you how I heard your news. Thursday Morning I was having experiments in Chemistry. At ten I had to stop for the time being, as the children have Instruction and I replace at the Portry. I had not been at the door long when the phone rang and I answered. The voice said, "a message for Madame McD." I replied "give it". Now this is not at all the way a portress acts but you see I am very verdant about some things. When the voice said "Mary had a little daughter today," I cried, "Oh, really! how is she?" Then the voice grew harder and said "Are you taking the message?" I was so excited I did not know what was doing but I called, "yes, yes!" When she finished she said in metallic tones, "Who is taking this message," and when I replied, "Madame McD," there was an "Oh," from the other end of the line, with a kindly little laugh in it.

When I got back to the experiments I did not know P. from K. and I am sure the children must have thought something wonderful had come to pass - and so it had. Before the end of the class I could imagine your little daughter succeeding beyond all my past and present day pupils in art and science, and I have been building Castles in Spain with the little maid as Princess ever since.

Reverend Mother said "tell all Mary's friends the joyful news" so I ran about from garret to the realms below and you should have seen how much gladness the news of the advent of your baby brought - it was as if a thrill of joy from dear old Newfoundland had made these far off West-lands brighter.

Please send some snaps soon - in your arms, in her daddy's arms, in the cradle, standing up, sitting down, in some little things that you have made, in her christening robe, in her little fur coat and all sorts of ways.

Just think! in five years she will be old enough to begin school - in the meantime I'll find out all that five-year-olds should know. I am sure she'll be able to sing like her Mother and will

dote on mathematics like her Father. I wish Alice would write and tell me just how you are all behaving. Is her name Mary - I am almost sure it is.

And you, dearest, are you getting well very fast? I feel that you are. I got your letter just the day before the Cable and it made me very happy - it was so bright and full of trust. Thank you for the Mass offering - I did not think for a moment you forgot - you never forgot when there was a question of loving or giving. Please give my heartiest congratulations to Bill, and for yourself and the dear baby accept fondest love.

Affectionately in C.J.,

Mary A. McDermott

rscj.

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Halifax, Nov. 28, 1925.

My dear Mary,

It is so good to be able to say that I rejoice with you now, that my contrition for not having answered your welcome letter before is rather uncertain. I cannot tell you how pleased we all are, or how eager to hear about you and little Marjorie.

Of course we could easily understand why no Harris could come for the celebrations, but nevertheless we were sorry. Sheila and Kathleen Burke have probably told you all about the festivities, which I think must have pleased Our Lord and honored our dear Saint.

All the little things which might have been called nice, have disappeared from my boxes, so I am sorry not to have a prettier medal for your precious baby.

Hoping you are very well and with congratulatory greetings to Mr Browne.

I remain, dear Mary,

Yours devotedly

M.B. Wallace RSCJ

[Letterhead]
PENSIGNNAT DU SACRÉ COEUR
SAULT AU RÉCOLLET

[likely Dec. 1925 or Jan. 1926]

My dear Mary,

You surely gave me a very nice surprise with your letter of the Eighth December. Considering your new and absorbing responsibility I feared it would be many moons before you would be able to make use of your facile pen, therefore the pleasure was doubled. - Yes, GOD has been very good to you, Mary, in bringing you through it all so well, and I see that you realize this when you say "it is all due to prayer." Quite a number of your old friends (myself among them) were anxious when we remembered how delicate you had always been. And now you seem so improved, so much better in health, that it is evident our Lord wanted you where you are, and that in being a good wife and mother you are doing His will.

How is little Marjory Mary and when does she intend to have her picture taken so that her mother's old friends may become acquainted with the little cherub?

We were talking of absent-mindedness the other day, (the Postulants and I) and as usual examples came to mind: LaFontaine for instance asking his hostess the name of the very agreeable young man whom she had placed next to him at dinner - "Mais, monsieur, c'est votre fils!!" - Then Margaret had a few delightful things anent a certain Mary Harris with whom she went to school in the dim and misty past - and I told them of having begged you to be careful and not to think Marjory Mary is a shawl, and not to fold her up and put her away in a bureau drawer. - But really Mary, you must have la grâce d'état to be able to carry on and manage every thing as you do. - The prayers of the Nuns are always with you and must be getting some of this grace for their dear old child. I am glad you had that good letter from Madame McDermott. She is very much missed in this house and I need not tell you that Halifax has not yet recovered from her loss. Poor Mother Duffy felt it deeply. You know that Madame Codie and Madame Wilson are here?

Margaret Woods is a very happy Postulant and by this time perfectly at home - in fact she seemed at home from the beginning. - We have two of our Vancouver children also. One of my old Point Grey girls was here not long ago on her way back from England where she had been studying at Oxford. I was asking her about the lectures and Professors and she said "they were all splendid, but its [sic] not that that makes one love Oxford, its [sic] the atmosphere - one absorbs the atmosphere." She reminded me of that paper your husband wrote on Oxford. - I shall be delighted to read your article on St. Madeleine Sophie when you can send it. -

My best wishes to you and Mr. Browne and the Baby for a very happy year filled and running over with blessings.

Believe me, my dear Mary, with much love,

Yours affectionately in C.J.M.

M. L. Ryan

rscjm

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Point Grey,
May 16, 1926.

My dearest Mary,

Many thanks for your letter and its enclosure. I wondered what on earth had happened to all in Newfoundland and came to the conclusion that the mails were at fault. I have not heard from Mary Ryan since before Christmas, I have written more than once and would like to know how her dear Mother is as well as her dear self.

Perhaps you have found out by now that the snap of wee Marjorie was not enclosed with your letter, but I have seen two! Good Mother Duffy sent me on your verses and the enlarged snaps on condition that I should send them back to her. I think they are splendid! Marjorie is a love, and Bill is so paternal I just had to laugh. I had a grudge against your hat as it hid all save your nose but I suppose you wore it to hide the desecration Fashion had made on your golden glory. You are a wise little girl to hand Marjorie over to a nurse. You ought not to tax your strength unnecessarily and Marjorie is too heavy for you to carry about. Your verses are charming - I long to hear you sing them!

Reverend Mother has had a sad experience. One of the children, a tot of nine, died quite suddenly of diphtheria. The school was closed but as no new cases have developed and the time of quarantine is up they will reopen next Monday.

Did you hear of Eveleen's wonderful success? She bids fair to rival Eileen's record. Helen O'Connor has her B.A. and so has her friend Edith McNeil. Bunnie is on her way to France with her husband, and Lilian is going to New York for an Art Course in September.

I am more in love with Vancouver than ever - You should just see the roses - there are roses everywhere, and such exquisite ones! Do you remember the house we planned just before you were married? As I recall it consisted of balconies and a lift. I see you intend a more practical, if not so poetical, an arrangement now - you did not mention the library, where is it going to be - perhaps in a separate building?

If you are going to be as busy the rest of your natural life as you have been these months I wish, since you borrow everything else of Bill's, that you'd borrow his secretary once in a while to keep me informed as to your doings. I only wish I had dear Mother Duffy here with me to enjoy the account of the house-cleaning.

Could you only know how busy I am you would appreciate this scribble. I'd be ashamed to send it only it promises to carry so much of my love to you and the Baby that its lacks will not count. Please remember me to Bill,

Yours devotedly in C.J.,

Mary A. McDermott rscj.

S.C.J.M.

3851-29th. Ave., West,
Vancouver, B.C.,
September 12, 1926.

My dearest Mary,

Since this is your feast and also almost the eve of our Opening I thought it time for my pen to get busy. Our last letters crossed but that is a mere nothing as long as they do not get lost. Would you believe it Newfoundland mail seems to be quicker than that from Halifax? This year I am going to have the Junior Matriculation Class and its members are those I had in last year's class plus a few others. Mothers Finn¹⁰², Wilkins and Liffiton are the new members of our staff - It is almost like Halifax now when one looks about in the Community. If only Mother Duffy could come we should feel as if we had never moved. When are you going to take Marjorie to Halifax? I want Mother Duffy to see her while she is wee even if I cannot. Everyone falls head over heels in love with her photo. Madame Finn thinks you are most charming in it too, but I cannot feel resigned to that "bob". If you could only see how they make houses out here you would understand why I thought yours might be finished. They nail some boards to perpendiculars, leave a space between, pour in some kind of a cement composition that hardens, blow stucco over it, and it looks like a real stone house. Being cloistered I have not been able to observe what happens inside. You'll guess I am looking out of the windows all the time - Well we live in the woods and the clearing is going on steadily [sic] and bright-roofed little houses are appearing with surprising rapidity. We have acres enough to keep them from being intrusively near, but our chapel is ever open to their inhabitants and our hearts to their little children.

Reverend Mother is well and very much loved in Seattle. Her house is teeming with children - She had to refuse over fifty boarders because of lack of room. Marjorie has not been over to see her yet because I am fussy as to her bearer. Marie Finn came up from California and I was going to send it over with her but she got into such complications with the Emigration officials that she did not go to Seattle at all, so I must wait until some child goes over for the weekend.

I was much amused, and so was Madame Chisholm, over your jamming experience - That's awful waste of time, Mary! Why you can buy all that sort of stuff in bottles and have no trouble over it. Think of all the profitable reading you might be doing! I am sure Bill would rather hear you warbling like a lark than find you exhausted by your labours on those crazy little raspberries. Since I made that cake in Halifax - urged on by human respect and the charming tempters of my Post Academic, I have never had a desire to invade the cook's domain save once to make paste, that I could not buy.

Do you remember how irate Sister Keough used to get with Mother Lowth and me on the book-question? Well she has more than a match in Sister Hogan who considers books are only for "young people"!

¹⁰² Evelyn Finn RSCJ (November 9, 1877 - April 19, 1959) of Saint John, N.B. was born to Michael Finn and Rose Harrison, both also of Saint John. Mother Finn was to remain in British Columbia from this time until her death some thirty-three years later. She is buried in St. Peter's Cemetery, New Westminster, B.C. See British Columbia Registration of Death.

Now I want my Christmas present before Christmas if the new house has not left you penniless and this is what I'd like it to be. A hundred visiting cards (not large ones) with envelopes to match engraved like this.



Of course I cannot get it on my drawing(!)

Relic

St. Madeleine Sophie

I'd like the engraving in Old English.

Send me the plate with the cards and then I can get others done when necessary. You can get them done where you have your visiting cards done. If you are bankrupt I know you won't mind saying so as we have passed through so many series of affluence and penury together in years past.

Edith Metzler made her vows last month and went on to the Sault. I do not know where she is to be stationed this year. Margaret Lahey is as silent as the moon, but rumor says she is very happy. Margaret Woods is in Kenwood and is in love with everyone and everything. I think that since Harold died a great weight of anxiety has been lifted. It just broke her heart to see him there. Mother Jensen got a snap of Creusa and she looks like a "Little Flower". Do you ever see her? Poor Margie Edens has had a hard summer of it but she always had a good sporting spirit and that will help her on. She is a dear, good child, too, and knows where to seek the Source of Strength. Is Vera's mother still living, if so, who is caring for her now?

Tell Bill if he is going in for Salmon-fishing as a diversion the West is the place for it - they haven't room enough to swim in the Fraser river there are so many of them - now I am only repeating a fish-story I have heard.

I asked Madame Wilkins if any of the Harrises had been up to Halifax last year and she said, "no, not the Harrises themselves, just orders for shoes, which Elfie took in hand", so I concluded Alice was still going in for fads in the boot-line. Do you remember the periodic cleanings-up when "Madame" would be called for and Alice, rosy and triumphant would display rows of boots ranged up with military precision and demand points for order? I was surprised to hear she was in the bank. I haven't a doubt as to her success - Alice is very clever but I did not think Aunt Agnes would hear of her working. Perhaps the best way to keep her from working is to let her have a taste of it. I do not like to see girls go to work unless it is necessary, though I should have each one trained in some profession as a measure of prudence when Fortune is so fickle.

Now I must say "au revoir". Hug your little Lovekins for me and give your young husband my very best regards. With very much love,

Yours devotedly in C.J.,

Mary A. McDermott

rscj.

Sacred Heart,

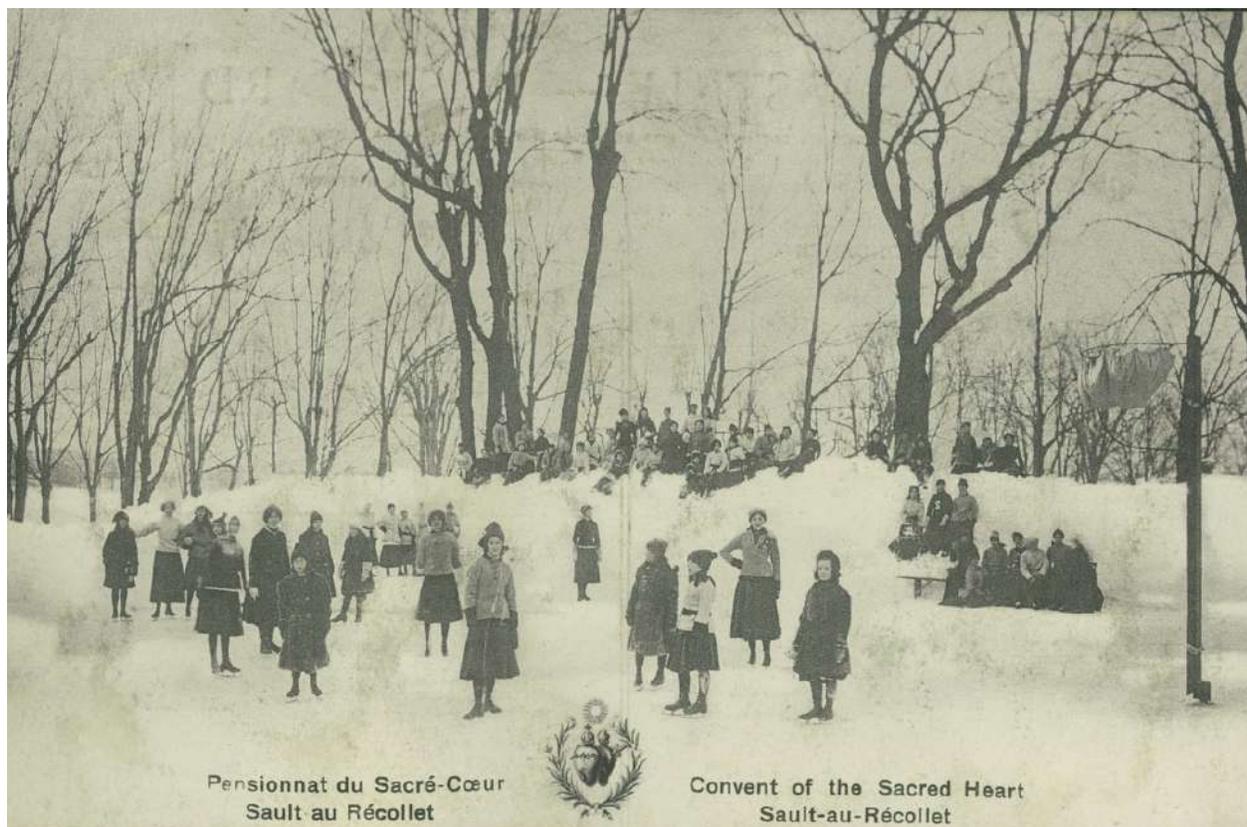
Sault, November 9, '26.

My dear Mary,

A few lines are better than none and I do so want to thank you for the welcome and interesting letter of October 8th. God has indeed blessed you "in all your undertakings" as He promised. What a joy it must be to see little Marjorie's first "successes" in life and no doubt you and Daddy will be having to buy a new pair of shoes before long once that young lady learns how to make her way about the place.

I only saw Sheila for a few moments when she came as it was a busy afternoon at the Portry. (Did you know I have been Portress since Sept. 1925?). It was a great sacrifice for Sheila not to see dear Mother Ryan, who, on October 8th had a grave heart attack followed by a stroke of paralysis - her second stroke - and since then she is in bed in the Infirmary. Though the worst danger is over she is still very weak; the old cheerfulness and thoughtfulness for others is, however, just the same. She sends you very much love, Mary and is so pleased about your lovely home and the new house in prospect.

Mother M. Byrne is back at the Sault now and very busy. The children are already looking forward to the skating rink to see if she still remembers how to do the "stunts" of bygone days.



Skating - Sault

Now, dear Mary, I must hurry off.

As it is the month of the Holy Souls I must let you know of those who have left us during the past year: Mother Gravel, Mother Josie Duffy,¹⁰³ Mere Archambault, and Mere de Monpoly¹⁰⁴ (whose funeral will take place this morning. Rev. Mother Vicar has just returned from visiting Halifax where she spent two or three weeks. She and all your old friends send much love, especially

Your old friend
in Corde Jesu,

Mgt. M. Nealis

R.S.C.J.

I have just finished a painting of our Lady's Assumption (74 by 46 in.) for a church in Boisdale near Frenchville, Cape Breton N.S. Photographs of it have been taken but I have not seen them yet. I also made a painting of Katharina Tekakwitha¹⁰⁵. The enclosed leaflet was designed at the request of Bishop Schrembs of Cleveland Ohio. Notice the front door (!) I told His Lordship when he asked me to represent Our Lord pointing to a Convent door, that, as Portress at the Sault, I knew our own best.

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
3851 - 29th Avenue West,
Vancouver, B.C.,
January 30, 1927.

Dearest Mary,

Your letter and the house came; the letter was darling and the house a dream! At first I thought you and Bill had gotten so ethereal that there was no dining-room, but when I came to the furniture I decided that there must be a place to put it. The poor painters must have had quite a time, I know of old how you behave when you want something! Bill is a very wise man, I am

¹⁰³ Josephine Duffy RSCJ (c 1855-July 22, 1926) was the daughter of Edward Duffy and Jane Frances Crawford. She is buried in Montreal at Le Repos Saint-François d'Assise <https://www.rsfa.ca/> See cemetery records. See Quebec, Canada, Vital and Church Records (Drouin Collection), 1621-1968.

¹⁰⁴ Marie de Monpoly RSCJ died in November of 1926. She is buried in Le Repos Saint-François d'Assise <https://www.rsfa.ca/> See cemetery records.

¹⁰⁵ Katharina Tekakwitha was the first Native American Saint, canonized in 2012.

sure he built a two-story house instead of a skyscraper just so you couldn't walk up and down miles of stairways. Did you move the dog and the vegetable garden and everything? The nursery must be sweet - can't you put Bill up there and make him do a sketch in colours? I should suggest your doing it only I remember the incredible arrangement of fingers you always got on the hand that was manipulating the apparatus and I'm afraid the same might happen to the legs of the chairs etc. Are you going to have a garden, and are the vegetables going to be back or front, you remember you told me front the last time.

Your letter tells me you are in high spirits and that makes me very happy - Bill has just the dearest, little wife in the world!

Perhaps by the time this reaches you your new little baby will be in your arms. What a busy Mother you will be - all your golden notes will ripple into lullabies now I'm thinking. We laughed so over Hugh Conroy's excuses for Marjorie's absence from the party, and laughed, too, over the thought of our absent-minded song-bird in such mazes of duties.

[Note: This letter from **Mary A. McDermott** is missing the second page]

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
3851 - 29th Ave. West,
Vancouver, B.C.,
November 28, 1927.

My dearest Mary,

Many thanks for your letter and offering. I knew Mater's Feast would bring a letter from you no matter how delinquent I seemed. Alice's experience took my breath away - I could never have dreamed such a thing, but I thank God that she found out the worst before it was too late. I am sorry for the lad - he was a good boy and has a good mother. Perhaps the fact that he drank accounts for his fall from grace. It is hard for poor Alice now, but she is young and buoyant and will soon realize from what misery she has been rescued.

Many enthusiastic reports of your visit to Spring Garden Road reached us from both nuns and children and they made me a wee bit homesick for one of your songs. I am expecting the promised photo of your little girls. I smiled when you asked whether you should go on the trip or not - do you realize how far we are from each other, or shall I answer such questions by cable! When you are "fortunate" to have such a nurse as Miss Northcote [sic] I should say, "Accept all your husband's invitations." He will never ask you to leave the children when you should be with them, and you are his companion as well as their Mother. Such duties and joys never conflict and you need a certain amount of relaxation and change.

Tell Bill I have a real laboratory now and I am quite in my glory, as well as up to my eyes in work. A friend of Reverend Mother's finding what straight we were in for Chemistry fitted

out not only the Chemistry laboratory but also one for Physics. That is why my pen has being so silent. I am not finished arranging the treasures yet and Mother Nahrings¹⁰⁶ declares that I should get a move soon for she never knew it to fail when one got so well established. If I could only get a little nigger to do the washing up I shouldn't have a worry.

The Papal Delegate stayed with us during his visit to Vancouver, and everyone was impressed by his goodness and kindness. The day after he left one of our Protestant babes declared that she was very miserable and lonely for "our dear Pope."

I have two charming new pupils - nuns! They are taking a course in Chemistry for their Hospital work and Government credits and they are most delightful to work with. Two of my last year's pupils have gone in for nursing! I am sorry for Dodo - I am afraid she will wear her life out nursing her Mother - she is doing her duty nobly. I was happy to hear such good news of Audrey - she had some very hard years and stood the test well. Her goodness is beyond praise. I hope Pauline will be a comfort to her. I have not heard from the Burns for ages, not a word after Father Willie's ordination. How is Marjorie -- and Bob? What of him?

It will be very near Christmas when this reaches you and it carries with it every loving wish for you and yours and a big "God bless you" for you, and Bill who makes you so very care-free and happy. Marjorie must be big enough now to have some idea of what Christmas means - I love to think of her as learning those first lessons at your knee.

Yours devotedly in C.J.,

Mary A. McDermott rscj.

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
3851 - 29 Avenue, West,
Vancouver, B.C.,
January 29, 1928.

My dear Mary,

My "Christmas" letter is unusually late this time but I know I shall find ready forgiveness if I cover miles enough of this pad. You and your dear ones were very present to me Christmas Eve and it seemed just as if you knew it when a box of white, fluffy-headed chrysanthemums were given to me just before Midnight Mass. You cannot imagine how near the East seemed to the West then.

¹⁰⁶ Teresa Anna Maria Nahrings RSCJ (October 8, 1876 - April 19, 1949) was born in Chicago, Illinois, to Godfried Nahrings and Anna Wetzel Nahrings who were of German heritage. She was buried in the Sacred Heart Cemetery on the grounds of Sacred Heart Convent at Point Grey; when the property was sold the remains of those buried there were transferred to St. Peter's Cemetery, New Westminster, B.C. See British Columbia Registration of Death.

I can picture what Bill is going through if he has to make excuses for the tardiness of my correspondence, but he has found out long before this that when you want something you want it very badly! Eileen wrote me of your visit and says your little daughters are the loveliest little creatures imaginable even though she only had photos to judge by. She made me very happy by saying how well you looked. Are you not glad you took that trip? When Bill and you need some little relaxation again come West, only bring the babes and I'll take care of them!

Reverend Mother Vicar and Mother Padberg¹⁰⁷ arrived yesterday and we are just a bit delirious with joy. It is two years since Reverend Mother's last visit and we have had many changes. I am going to show off my Laboratory if I get a chance. I do wish Bill were three thousand miles nearer and I'd occupy all his free time in the Chemistry department. I have two very sweet pupils in a special class - nuns from the hospital. They are a real delight, and are far ahead of my children who began earlier.

I should like to see Alice and Marge on their return - They must have had no end of experiences - I never met youngsters that could get into so many amusing difficulties as those two.

This is our rainy season but it is not as bad as it sounds, and after it is over there is uninterrupted sunshine. The children are "going to have me for dinner" so I must scribble faster. When the Gurney Contest and the Vicariate Composition Contest, and exams are over perhaps I shall have time to really answer your very dear letters. In the meantime you are always in my prayers and heart.

Devotedly in C. J.,

Mary A. McDermott rscj.

S.C.J.M.

Point Grey,
April 15, 1928.

Dearest Mary,

¹⁰⁷ Bertha Padberg RSCJ (July 4, 1882- March 19, 1958) was born in St. Louis, Missouri to parents Laurenz Padberg and his second wife Matilda Hoevelmann. Mother Padberg had been Mistress General in Vancouver, Superior in New York City (1929-1931), then returned to Vancouver as Superior from 1932 until 1937. In 1937 she became the Superior Vicar in Canada, responsible for all the Canadian Sacred Heart houses, and served in this capacity until her death in 1958. While Superior Vicar, she lived at Sault-au- Récollet in the Montreal area. Her sister, Wilhelmina Gertrude Padberg (1886-1920), was also a Religious of the Sacred Heart. Reverend Mother Bertha Padberg's grave is at Le Repos Saint-François d'Assise <https://www.rsfa.ca> See <https://rscj.org/canada-connections-part-1> and <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/144486524/Bertha-Agnes%20Anna-Padberg> and *The Vancouver Sun*, March 24, 1958. p 36 at <http://www.newspapers.com/image/492266277> and *Convent of the Sacred Heart A History in New York City*, New York, 2007, appendix, p 157.

Here I am as usual just getting off a scribble at the last moment. The children are coming in and classes reopen tomorrow. I have not had a moment during these holidays as there were several reports that I had to write up. Your darling babes arrived and they are the sweetest things I ever saw. Marjorie is really a baby no longer, but a little girl! She has mischief written all over her. The news you gave made me think that Merton Cottage will soon need an annex. Of course you shall have my prayers and I am looking forward to bringing all these little maids up.

That spring-cleaning you are interested in does not arouse my enthusiasm at all. I hope you have sense enough not to exert yourself physically. When you get interested in anything you never seem to know you are working until you fall down - leave even the direction of that business to someone else. It is good you have such a sensible husband - I hope you obey him! I think Bill and I should have a periodical conference. You have not said anything about your music lately - I was wondering as I looked at your babes if they were going to be little larks.

Reverend Mother's feast will be in about a week's time and one feature of the conge is a concert by the University Choral Society. You couldn't guess who one of the soloists is, so I'll have to tell you - Nora Haddock! It seems she has developed a voice. I have never seen her since I have been here.

Did I tell you that Mother Padberg was out here with Mother Vicar. We had a lovely visit. Reverend Mother is back from California and is entirely cured. I hear a word now and again of Margaret Lahey - she is very much loved everywhere she goes. I shall tell you a secret in a couple of months. You may worry the wits out of Bill in the meantime, trying to make him guess it. With much love -

Devotedly yours in C.J.,

Mary A. McDermott

rscj.

S.H.J.M.

Sault. April 16th. 1928.

Mary dear,

Needless to say your letter gave me much, very much pleasure. Yes, the Sacred Heart picture is finished. I began it on the First Friday of March and practically finished it on Good Friday - of course I only worked at it some days between that time. It is drying now and when it is sufficiently dry I shall varnish it. I think you will like it. Undoubtedly I sincerely hope so. I suppose if I write on it - Religious Article, there will be no duty. I shall value it at \$7.00 only. Let me know how to send it. It may go by parcel post - the measurements when it will be on the stretcher 28^{1/2} by 46. It must be unrolled on a flat surface great care must be taken not to crease the canvas - if a crease gets into canvas it will have to remain there as long as picture lasts. I gave

your letter to Mothers Ryan and Nealis to read. Write me on receiving this - about sending the picture - you will have it for June. You know our Lord's promise, I believe He will do all He has said to your dear family.

Ever so much love and every kind of best Easter Wish from yours devotedly in C. J.

Mary Byrne

R.S.C.J.

S.C.J.M.

Sault au Recollet
Montreal
[April 1928]

My dear Mary -

Though I am slow about writing please believe that my affection is not slow nor are my prayers in which there is faithful memory of you. Your January letter was very welcome and gave great pleasure to my heart. Its [sic] much better for you to be a devoted Mother than to keep up with all your olden time correspondence - and much as your friends would love to hear from you often, I think they must all understand that your new responsibilities lessen time.

All the details about Marjory and Madeleine¹⁰⁸ are very interesting and I don't wonder that those fascinating young damsels absorb your attention and your time. May our Lord call at least one of them to His service. There is such a need of workers in His vineyard - He told us to pray for that intention.

¹⁰⁸ Madeleine Sophie Browne was born February 15, 1927.



Photograph by Elsie Holloway.
Mary Harris Browne with Madeleine on her lap and Marjorie at her side.

Eleanore Burgess will make her Vows at the Cenacle on the 26th of April. On the same day Claire Gauvin will receive the habit at Kenwood and a Canadian Novice will make her vows. - You ask about Margaret Lahey - she is still at Grosse Pointe where I suppose she will remain until the close of school. Then I hope she may return to Canada. They seem to appreciate her so much that one may fear they will want to keep her.

I was glad to hear of Alice and Marjory returning safe to Newfoundland. I have often wondered if Alice recovered from that blow. GOD was truly good to let the whole affair come to her knowledge before instead of after her marriage. I hope He will give her a new and better opportunity for happiness.

Mother Byrne kindly gives me Hospitality for this. I hope you keep up your reading? That is essential... With kind regards to Mr. Browne and love to you I am
my dear Mary, yours devotedly in C.J.M.

M. L. Ryan

rscJM.

Maplehurst,
University Avenue and 174th St.,
New York.
[on or shortly after July 21, 1928]

My dearest Mary,

Mary Doyle has just called me up to tell me of the arrival of your little son and I cannot wait until a more favorable time to tell you what joy the news brought. I am so happy, too, that you are convalescing so nicely, I feared you were a little tired this summer. How happy Bill must be to have a son! I can only express as my best of wishes for the little man that he will be just as good as his father and give you just as much joy.

It is most improper to be writing this letter on the machine but I can imagine you perusing it while you are horizontal and this will be much less tiresome for you than my hieroglyphics. I am just dying to tell Margaret Lahey the news. Imagine we had been within ten minutes of each other for all these weeks and we have not met yet! I shall see her before leaving. Mother Henrion is here and you should have [heard] her gurgles of delight when she heard that the baby was a boy, I believe she likes boys better than girls. I am just waiting for Madame Wilson to trip in to give her a surprise. Please have his picture taken as soon as you are up. I suppose his name will be William II. Please do not do as Dardie did, she always spoke of her son and never told us the name, so Katherine and I named it Simon, because it was born on Simon Stylites' day, and Simon he will always remain for us.

I was wishing I could see Mary Doyle but she said she was going to Newfoundland on Friday and I never have a second during the week. I have so many papers to get ready and I spend the whole afternoon in the Laboratory. I never got into such a rush. The heat has been too much for me. I used to think I could sit on the Equator and feel comfortable but I have changed my mind.

Since I have been here Helen and Juanita have been in Vancouver, I hear that they fell quite in love with the West. I expect to return in a few weeks. The courses close about August twelfth so I shall be rather late getting back if I make my Retreat before returning.

A week ago I saw Lilian Clarke. She has a position in New York and is taking Fordham Extension Courses. I think she will get her degree next year. Now this is a shockingly long letter for a convalescent, and it is as queer as my typewritten productions always promise to be, but I could not wait a minute after hearing of you before sending a heartfelt of loving wishes, and a "God bless you" to the baby. Of course he will have to be a Jesuit so I am enclosing a relic of Father Doyle for his cradle, a tiny piece of the corporal he used at Holy Mass.¹⁰⁹

Devotedly yours,

Mary A. McDermott rscj.

P.S. Love to Alice & Marj.

Am delighted to hear of the little "Son". You must move to Halifax and let me have a hand in his education, or perhaps he could lodge at the Convent with his two sisters during the year? You see I am looking out for his spiritual welfare. I know his "daddy" must be delighted and as for his "mummy"!!! May our dear Lord bless the little family.

In C.J.M. **K. Henrion**

S.H.J.M.

Sault.

Oct. 14th. 1928

My Very dear Mary,

Yes, yes, I can hear you saying, "it does look like - A Very dear Mary - Three months of Silence before the Mary R.S.C.J. tells her joy at the God given treasure - The training of another soul for first passing through an earthly career on route for the highest heavenly one. Already many a prayer has been said for the Wonderful Boy Billy. Mother Ryan and myself have often spoken about you dear and the precious little family. Frequently Mother Ryan has said, do write

¹⁰⁹ William John Browne was born July 21, 1928. He did become a Jesuit, was ordained in 1958, and continues to serve as a Jesuit in St. John's, Newfoundland.

to Mary and give her ever so much love from me. It was a case of always going to. Please forgive me. I will try to do better in the future. About a year ago you were here. Now I suppose you are tied more than ever to the house. With three lovely babies!!! to take up your time and Motherly attentions. A little over two weeks ago Kathleen came back to Montreal. She has taken up nursing again. They could not keep her house. In the summer Mother Kelly's niece and sister were visiting here - Mrs. Gyrell and Margaret - from Toronto - Margaret said she had met you and your husband - when you visited Toronto last year. Now Mary dear do squeeze in a letter to Mother Ryan. I know I do not deserve any, but I am sure of a message in Mother Ryan's. I intend paying a few debts in the letter line this afternoon. You have been the first one to whom I send my love. Best wishes of the highest kind to you, Bill, Marjory, Madeleine and to the Wonderful Billy boy.

Show that you forgive by writing soon. Much love,

Mary Byrne R.S.C.J.

Halifax, N.S.
Dec. 29, 1928.

Dear Mary,

That is the dearest photo which reached me in time for Christmas. The babies are darlings, I just love Madeleine, she is so coy and shy; Marjorie reminds me very much of her namesake am I right? It was sweet of you, Mary dear, to send the picture to me. I just love it and shall have it suitably framed as soon as the Christmas rush is over.

Ever since Old Pupils' day I have been intending to write and give you all the news. I suppose you heard that the meeting elected me as president; I had hoped Mrs. Page would have been asked to stay in office but constitutions must be observed and so the harness fell upon less worthy shoulders.

The business meeting was highly successful and much was suggested for the new executive to do during the coming year. A second scholarship was voted so that \$75 additional must be raised during the coming year but that amount is a mere bagatelle and I hope to raise much more.

At the close of the meeting Sister McGovern was called in and presented with an illuminated address and a miniature cape and veil in lieu of the large one which had not arrived from Belgium. It arrived only on Christmas morning and was sported at Benediction that afternoon. It is a magnificent affair. I wish all the old Sacred Heart girls could see it.

After that we had the most wonderful luncheon served in the Sacred Heart real fashion; then a very pretty cantata "The Foolish Virgins," afternoon tea and so, away! A lovely day was at a close and we all enjoyed ourselves to the utmost.

At the business meeting a report from the St. [Saint] John branch of the Alumnae was read and was exceedingly interesting. It appealed to me because I think it possible to form similar organizations in other centers and this is the work I am going to pass on to you in the hope that you will undertake it. There are so many old Sacred Heart girls in Newfoundland that it should be relatively easy to form a branch association in your native land which should have the effect of binding the ties of friendship and of keeping up a very special interest in your Alma Mater.

I am going to send you on the Saint John report in order that you may see the work they are doing and how much they enjoy their association.

I would, however, suggest a different line of activity for the Newfoundlands. It would be possible for you to do some special work for the convent; for instance a linoleum covering is badly needed for the convent kitchen so that the dear sisters need not have to wash up the rough wood covering. You could have a bridge, a rummage sale or some similar enterprise and raise sufficient money. That's merely a suggestion - you may prefer to send some child to the convent from Newfoundland on a scholarship or you may like to buy a concrete walk for the convent entrance. These are mere suggestions, Mary, which you may reject or accept. The point is that a real live Alumnae means advertisement for the Alma Mater and more pupils are needed at the convent.

What do you think of organizing such a branch? Perhaps you are too busy to undertake such a task; call into consultation some of the St. Johns [John's] live wires and watch the idea grow.

I'll send you a copy of the St. [Saint] John report so that you may have a clearer idea of my hazy outline; also I'll ask Mrs. Cecil Donovan to send you a resumé of Old Pupils Day with the financial report and the president's report so that you may have official news of Alumnae doings to pass on to all the St. John's alumnists [sic].

Since beginning this epistle I have been listening in to the Grafton St. Church service. I'm sure I could preach a better sermon than Dr. Kerr. It is a miserable attempt but a very nasty distraction to my train of thought.

Well, Mary dear, write to me and tell me what you think of the contents of this billet doux.

I forgot to tell you that we hope to buy an electric dishwasher (\$375) to help the sisters and are planning a big bridge party, a rummage sale, a musical tea and a pantry sale. I wish you were only nearer to help me in my wild schemes.

With heaps of love to yourself and babies and with best wishes for 1929 to your husband and yourself.

Lovingly yours,

Eileen

Sault.
Feb.12th. 1929.

Mary dear,

The first Sunday of Lent must not come without a word from me. I am beginning a number of letters today, but will finish them before Sunday. Mother Ryan and I enjoyed your nice long letter, but we were disappointed your husband was not elected. Parliament needs good men like him. Can you imagine a High Mass for the opening of The Forty Hours on Ash Wednesday. I guess it is a fixed day here for this is the third time since I have been here. So many things have happened this week. One that concerns all. Mother Padberg, the Mistress General left for the U.S.A. She is an American from St. Louis, so going back to one's own country is not much of a sacrifice. I suppose you know Mother Phoebe Duffy is slowly dying. There is no hope for her and the poor dear is suffering a great deal. Mother Ryan seems better lately, she is more active. Your letter was on my classroom table and one of my English children exclaimed on seeing it, "Mother, please give me that stamp" I gave it to her and the other eight are begging for some. I told them when I wrote to the Lady in Newfoundland I would ask her to send me a few old stamps of different numbers. Since then, each day the question is put, "Have you written to the Lady in Newfoundland?" So please, Mary, do put a few in an envelope. I will make the children work for them by making acts of silence and mortification. You will share in the Good Works. The "Per Crucem ad Lucem" in the *Ave Maria* is written by Mother Spies. It seems she wrote an article for a magazine and signed her name, a gentleman in Cincinnati read it and sent her two hundred dollars for her good works. It was worth-while signing her name eh! Did I tell you Kathleen came back to Montreal in October she has been on the same case ever since her arrival. She cannot come out here - it is too far in the evening - so I only saw her three times for a few minutes. Much love dear Mary from Mother Ryan and me.

Yours affectionately in C.J.

Mary Byrne
R.S.C.J.

[Letterhead]
Convent of the Sacred Heart,
3851 29th. Avenue West,
Vancouver. B.C.

February 12, 1929.

My dearest Mary,

Here it is the last minute before Ash Wednesday and your letter not answered. Perhaps I shall reform after Lent. The children have just gone into Retreat and are at their first instruction.

Your money order came - thank you so much - you are too good to me. I think my letter telling you of the flowers and the dear photo crossed yours. I am going to have a long chat with you Easter if I only catch up in my work.

I thought I told you I got my M.A. I majored in History and took Philosophy and Literature as minors. The Chemistry course was just to help me in my present work. I had been at the M.A. work two years before I went to New York.

I am up to my eyes in Science and Mathematics this year and that is what eats up my time. The laboratory periods are very long and every experiment has to be signed up for as the books are examined by the Provincial Examiners. Now au revoir - with much love -

Very affectionately in C. J.,

Mary A. McDermott
rscj.

S.C.J.M.

The Sault
[June 3, 1929]

My dear Mary,

If evidence is to be trusted then I am dreadfully delinquent in your regard! Two letters from you are here on my table - one dated October and November 1928, the other January 1929. The first was addressed by my absent-minded child to Mary Doyle in New York - she had the kindness to imagine that it was meant for me and therefore started it on a backward journey - however you can understand that it was a long time after the writing of the letter before it came into the hands of the one for whom it was intended. Mary, when are you going to get over that little failing of yours? How do you do about the children? Does not absent-mindedness cause some complications at times? Well I hope you put them in the care of their Guardian Angels very often - and do you teach the little ones to have devotion to their Angels? I was very happy to see in your last letter (to Mother Byrne) that the children are growing in devotion to the Sacred Heart - at least that Marjorie is - that was a sweet little prayer you heard her saying [letter torn, word missing] to JESUS. What a chance and what a privilege is that of a good Catholic mother who from the time her children begin to think can turn their thoughts to things that are noble and high and true - can teach them to love our Lord the Exemplar of all that is beautiful and good. - I am sure that you are finding your happiness in training them in His blessed ways. And for the Natural virtues you can not begin too soon with TRUTH. Do concentrate your attention on that sine qua non¹¹⁰. - I note what you say in the January letter about the trip to England and your doubts in regard to leaving the children and you finish up with the familiar words "Can't you advise me?" No, my dear Mary, it was quite easy to advise you at school, but this is a far more

¹¹⁰ Latin - "without which nothing".

important matter and one which you must decide yourself - perhaps you have already settled it satisfactorily? I give you my prayers for this as well as for all that concerns you - but advice your own heart must see to. - It strikes me that you are extremely fortunate in having so reliable a person as Miss Northcott to look after the little ones any time you need her. - I hear that Alice is engaged to a good Catholic, Doctor Murphy¹¹¹. Please give her my love and say that I not only hope but pray that her life may be filled with happiness. I love Alice and Marjory just the same as of yore and pray for them with you... If I put in a note for Creusa will you take it to her the next time you go to the Convent? Thank you. - I hope you have taken the children to see her - and to let them be seen. - Do you ever see Kathleen Burke? She was such a reliable character - you know how that quality appeals to me. - And Mary Gibbs? What has become of her? Please give my love to any of the "old girls" you meet, but first to Alice and Marge. - I don't suppose you get time to do any writing now-a-days? You have a real literary talent - but of course it takes time and the children come first. This is much more than I thought to write but it will probably be many moons before I can write again - my box is bursting with un-answered letters. - Good bye, my dear Mary. Love GOD and be good.

Yours devotedly in C.J.M.

M. L. Ryan

June 3rd, 1929

rscJM.

S.H.J.M.

[Letterhead]
Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Spring Garden Road,
Halifax. N. S.

August 25, 1929.

My dear Mary;

Indeed, I was surprised to receive a letter from you, had you known your dear Mother Byrne was in Halifax, I certainly would not have been favored with your dear, welcome letter. The Community unite with me, in thanking you for your kind sympathy, and offering for Masses, for Our much loved Mother.

I just cannot tell you Mary dear, what dear Rev. Mother's death [Mary Conwell] means to me, and all here. Reverend Mother was taken away so quickly. She took ill Saturday morning

¹¹¹ Joseph Murphy (c 1899 -1958) was the son of Joseph B. and Agnes Murphy. Joe and Alice HARRIS married and had 4 children - Elizabeth, Brenda (John Carter), Dennis (Margaret) and Moya (Sharpe). Dr. Murphy's brother was Monsignor R. McDermott Murphy. When Dr. Murphy died he was Superintendent of St. Clare's Mercy Hospital, and Senior Surgeon of the General Hospital in St. John's, Nfld. *The Daily News*, St. John's, Nfld. Oct. 10, 1958, pg. 3.

with a hemorrhage from the nose. Doctor, and nurse, were called at once. Reverend Mother had said to some one who went to her early in the morning I am afraid, "It is the beginning of the end." The Dr. thought Rev. Mother would be relieved by the hemorrhage. She seemed better during the day, but towards seven o'clock, she had another hemorrhage, so they gave her the Last Sacraments. After that we never left her bedside, we prayed all night. Two more hemorrhages from the lungs, gave us little hope. Our dear Rev. Mother received nine Absolutions on Sunday. Father McCarthy who was devoted to Mother, never left her side. We said the prayers for the dying nine times. A little after four Rev. Mother had a slight hemorrhage then she opened her dear, kind, eyes, and looked at all those around her bed, then closed them to open them in heaven. She died so peacefully, without a struggle. I was kneeling at the foot of her bed, when my dear, dear, Mother left us forever. You can well understand dear Mary, what her going meant to me, never to hear her gentle, sweet voice again never to look at those kind eyes again. It seems as if she had come home to die with us, only ten months, since we had given her such a royal welcome to Halifax. She went to God, just as the fire broke out at the Sault. Her funeral was grand. Archbishop McCarthy was on His throne, Bishop MacDonald Sang the Pontifical High Mass, the Seminarians in the choir, and the Chapel was full. The Chapel was draped [sic] in black, also her Stall, and on her stall, was laid a Sheaf of white flowers, the gift of one of my little Juniors.

You will be glad to hear that all Mother Nealis' paintings were saved. Also all the Sacristy things, and a good amount of the nuns clothing, and two hundred day Caps of the religious. Now dear Mary, I must stop. I am sure Mother Byrne will write you soon. She came from the Sault, with eleven others. Our new Superior, is Rev. Mother Coughlin formerly of the Sault. I am sure you know her. I am glad you had such a nice trip. Kiss the dear little ones for me. Mother loved you, & your dear children. Love to yourself, and dear Mary Ryan, Marjorie, & Alice.

Ever yours devotedly
G Dillon rscj.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
 3851 - 29 Avenue, West,
 Vancouver, B.C.
 September 2, 1929.

My dearest Mary,

Your last letter made me realize with a start how quickly time flies. I did not dream your happy trip was a sweet memory of the past already. June had brought me the photo of your beautiful little son and your dear letter, but I was literally submerged by test papers, and as you gave me no address, I had only to wait until you returned to tell you how we had all lost our hearts to the baby. I keep your two little girls in my Trig. and sometimes when formulae are

being derived with agony by some young victim, your two sweet lassies smile up at me when a page is turned and I find myself sunny again.

I was very happy you decided to take the trip. I am very proud of the way you devote yourself to your babes but you need relaxation and a complete carefree change from time to time and so does Bill, and as long as you are fortunate enough to have Miss Northcott you can take a holiday without anxiety.

So a new little Browne is coming for Christmas! Well, IT will get a royal welcome and be accompanied by our prayers. I must lecture you a bit now. Do not go in for all sorts of work and worry - Leave all the work to the servants, and there's nothing to worry over when God watches over all. Give the new little one every chance for a good start in this fine old world of ours by taking good care of yourself and praying well. I know Reverend Mother will have a loving eye on you now. Her heaven-going was just as great and as happy as her living. She never did things by halves. I think she and Bill's father¹¹² are real types of the saints in their home going. I pray for the latter, but from your account I judge that his heart was right with God's heart and there was no delay in their Union. I am happy that your husband is the son of such a father.

The Sault disaster was a great shock to all but our Mother Vicar is valiant and the ruins of what was called the new wing are in process of restoration, and by October will be ready - God willing - to receive sixty pupils from the Fourth Preparatory up. Practically everything was lost except the contents of the Sacristy and part of the contents of the Linen Room. As it happened during the day there was much less confusion than had it taken place at night. No one of the community was injured, but some of the firemen were overcome by smoke and gas. There were no fatalities. Everyone was happy in the knowledge that the Blessed Sacrament was safe.

We had seven lovely Graduates this year. One is going to Manhattanville, one, I hope, to Oxford and three to the University of British Columbia. We received five nuns, four choir and one sister, from the Sault. Perhaps you know some of them: Mothers Dudomaine, de la Goupilier, Louise Daly, Anna Moore, and Sister Sargent. Fourteen (?) went to the States and a number to Halifax, among the latter were Mothers Genevieve O'Connor and Byrne.

Now I have something for you and Bill to do so sit up and listen! I am of the opinion that Cornerbrook is next door to St. John's and that it is so young that everyone who lives there makes frequent visits to the old city for social intercourse etc. Our Reverend Mother, Reverend Mother Hughes, has a young nephew who married two years or so ago and he has been sent there in the interest of his firm - the International Paper and Pulp Company - His wife and baby are with him. I want you to meet them. If the little wife is even half as charming as her letters you will love her, and I should be most happy if the boy should have a friend like Bill. Reverend Mother knows she herself would be fond of you from your letters so if Mr. and Mrs. Philip Hughes call on you, or if you come in touch with them in any way, broaden their circle of Catholic friends.

We open school on the tenth of September, and these are busy days - they are not so busy as those of last Summer and the weather is delightful. There are some more nuns going to China but we do not know who - one, I believe, is an American. We are opening a house at Oxford this year. Some nuns from the States are going, Madame Keyes is one - perhaps you know her. I do

¹¹² Bill's father, Liberius Browne, died July 30, 1929, while Bill and Mary were visiting England.

not know if children will be accepted this year or not. I am looking forward to Marjorie and Madeleine taking their Oxonian degree there. Many, many thanks for your Mass offerings for dear Reverend Mother . Remember me to Bill and hug the babes for me. With much love,

Yours devotedly in C.J.,

Mary A. McDermott
rscj.

S.H.J.M.

Oct. 27th. 1929.

Mary dear,

I took these programs [the letter is written on the back of an October 19, 1929, music program] intending to fill them with my horrid writing the very next day, and here a whole week has gone by and no word. By this time all will be stale. You will be surprised to hear that dear Sister Mary went to God, quietly and swiftly at half past nine Thursday evening. Yesterday morning we had the Requiem Mass. There were nine priests here. The very last act of dear Sister Mary was one of Charity. She certainly must have received a warm welcome from our Lord. Thank you for Billy's picture. My! He looks lively. Your intentions will be prayed for every day. I received your two lovely letters but I could not write about the fire. Perhaps you know Mother Ryan has gone to Lake Forest, Chicago. It is nice that she is near her own again. I sent her the letter you wrote me in England - she returned it - written on the free places - but I have not written to her since. My intentions were to write a very long letter and here is only an excuse.

Much love, Mary dear from your old friend in C.J.

Mary Byrne
R.S.C.J.

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
3851-29th. Avenue, West,
Vancouver, B. C.,
December 1st., 1929.

My dearest Mary,

A thousand welcomes to little Peter Joseph¹¹³. I got such a surprise when Reverend Mother came herself to bring the news of his arrival. I did not expect you were going to have a little visitor before the middle of the month. Reverend Mother gave me the contents of Bill's telegram, and I was so excited I cried, "What is it, a girl or a boy?" "Well," she replied, "as its name is Peter Joseph I think it must be a boy!" Mother Jensen, who was present laughed heartily at my expense, and happily over the thought of your being the mother of four cherubs. Bill was a darling to wire you must thank him for me. I am so happy about you - your Faith is safe and you are safe in the love of the best of husbands, and happy in the possession of your lovely babes.

After the telegram came your letter and that made me suspect that perhaps the earthquake¹¹⁴ had something to do with little Peter's precious arrival, but as long as you are both safe it doesn't matter. I was amused over your wondering if you would ever get them - the babes - brought up the way they should go after Marjorie's escapade - I do not worry about that - I can see they are growing up happy, healthy children in an atmosphere of faith and love. I think you ought to keep a record of their cute doings and sayings, I am not using "cute" in the Oxford sense, as well as photos of them at all stages. You write so well that it would be a source of delight to them and to you later on, and if things are not recorded they fade from the memory in time.

I must exhort you again not to take up household duties too soon. Your duties are growing in another direction now. Give yourself to the children and leave the rest more to maids. Then, too, you must look forward to intervals of complete change and relaxation such as you had this summer. I think I enjoyed the thought of you and Bill wandering around London as much as you enjoyed the trip.

Did you hear that Vera O'Dwyer has a little son? I hope she will bring him over to see us soon. You know she was at school when Reverend Mother was Mistress General in Halifax and she is very fond of her.

You must write as soon as you are strong and tell me all about little Peter. I hope his little skin won't be rubbing off like Billy's and worrying the wits out of you. When I look back on my College Street days and think of the possibilities of small boys I wonder how you will feel when Billy comes in after his first pugilistic encounter!

Mother Ryan is in Chicago now, and today we received a telegram that Mother Lucy had gone to God. Madame Wilson is still in New York and Margaret Lahey and Shelia [Sheila] are at the Sault, where they are both very much loved. I think life at the Sault must be unalloyed abnegation just at present. They have eighty pupils. The tower-bell was found uninjured after its fall. It was dug out of the debris by the steam shovel. I hear they are filling in the river bed with the debris of the of the [sic] building.

¹¹³ Peter Joseph Browne was born November 23, 1929.

¹¹⁴ November 18, 1929, an earthquake struck underwater on the edge of the Grand Banks off Newfoundland. There was no serious damage in St. John's but a tsunami which hit the Burin Peninsula on the south coast resulted in the death of 28 people and massive property damage including destruction of boats and fishing equipment. See <http://www.heritage.nf.ca/articles/politics/tsunami-1929.php#.Xc65LYIvdIE.mailto>

You asked me what I wanted for Christmas - now I do not want anything for Christmas - you and Bill have enough to keep anyone or a dozen persons busy with toy-getting for your increasing family and you are not fit for shopping. About February, not sooner, I shall have a deal of fine ruling to do and then I should like a Waterman with the finest possible nib, to use with red ink. It is no use to send it to me beforehand because I won't have time to use it. I would rather have a Christmas letter about the babes than a dozen presents.

Give my love to Bill and the babies and ever so much for you. I am so content and happy about you. Take care of your dear self and kiss little Peter for me.

Devotedly in C.J.,

Mary A. McDermott
rscj.

S.C.J.M.

Point Grey, B.C.,
December 18, 1929.

My dearest Mary,

This is a surprise! *The Gleam* has just been deposited in the Treasury where I am working on various things and the first copy must go to you, then, too, I have been fortunate enough to get a relic of the Little Flower, straight from Lisieux, and, as I want her to keep a special eye on you and little Peter, I am sending her on a journey across the Continent. I suppose you are still in the Hospital but I shall send this to Merton Cottage and Bill will deliver it to you.

Now I must give you a little lecture - you would miss it if I did not. You must not worry about anything! You must not think about Christmas festivities for the children!! You must not think anything about the house or anything else - Just rest and grow strong and dream of a lovely, long trip you and Bill will take as soon as Peterkins is big enough to be managed by a nurse. You must be very obedient to Bill. All his energies are bent on making you happy. I smile when I think at what rate you are increasing his responsibilities by presenting him with sons and daughters.

Now I must run off to my class, but remember my injunctions rest, rest, rest!!! No worry - nothing but love and thanks that God is giving you so many little souls to train in His love and service. I am sure you will love my Little Flower and that she will take every care of you and dear little Peter. With fondest love to you and all your dear ones,

Devotedly in C.J.,

Mary A. McDermott
rscj.

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
3635 Atwater Ave. Montreal,
December 19, 1929

My dear Mary,

It was only yesterday I learned of your illness, and Reverend Mother said I had better write at once to tell you how sorry we all were to hear of it. Everyone is praying hard for you, and I do not need to tell you that I am literally storming Heaven with my requests. I am hoping a letter, from yourself, in the near future, will let me know how successful my prayers have been, and will give me welcome news of you and the dear babies. Mother keeps me pretty well in touch with all of you, through her never-failing weekly letter, but by the time the items have been divided between all those she wishes to speak of, the information cannot be of a very exhaustive nature. Betty and Dodo must have contracted "manual paralysis" I think, and I have neglected you so shamefully that I do not deserve direct communication. My guilt does not lessen my desire, however, so please, one of the first signs of recovery will be a letter.

I heard from Mother Ryan just before Advent. You knew, of course, that she went to Chicago in September? There was question of her going to New York after the fire, but she was not found well enough. However when a devoted old child of Chicago paid her her annual visit, it was arranged that dear Mother Ryan should go back to Chicago with her. She stood the journey remarkably well and is quite settled in her new - old home by now. She is at Lake Forest. I had two weeks with her before she left. Was not God good? I owe her so much and it was nice to have the opportunity of saying, or trying to say some of my thank yous. When I write to her during the holidays I shall solicit her prayers for your recovery - though I trust it will be completed before that time.

We have begun our winter in earnest here and I have enjoyed my first taste of real snow and blizzard since I left Newfoundland.

Reverend Mother sends her love and the promise of many prayers, in which she is joined by all who know you, especially

yours affectionately in C.J.M.

Sheila Conroy R.S.C.J.

S.H.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart
Halifax N.S.
Dec. 22nd 1929.

Mary dear,

We heard that our Lord has sent you another little boy to train in His love. We are all praying for you, and this last week I have been offering up my Masses and Communion for you that you may grow strong and do much for God and your precious little family. Thank you for the Christmas card. May God bless you in His own Gracious Way and give you all sorts of happiness. All join in sending you love and best wishes.

Yours affectionately in C.J.

Mary Byrne
R.S.C.J.

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
3851- 29th. Avenue, West,
Vancouver, B. C.,
Canada.
January 10, 1930.

My dearest Mary,

Your blue billet-doux brought me great joy. I was longing to hear from you but I hardly hoped it could be so soon. You are a wonderful little girl and I am proud of you. Little Peter, I am sure, will be a great comfort to you and to his daddy when he grows up because of this suffering of yours. One of our Vancouver pupils had about the same experience as yours some six months ago. She was in bed for months, but she was very sensible and obedient and did not try to hurry nature and she is well and very happy in the possession of a sturdy little daughter. I hope you will not be rash as soon as you begin to feel stronger. You must do just as Bill says and remember he is the head of the family! I have every confidence in his judgments for you.

January 20th.

This letter should have been finished long ago but I cannot tell you how the time flies here. We are short-staffed and life has been somewhat of a rush. If I do not write often, I pray much for you and your little family. Bill's letter was a great joy bringing as it did the news that you were convalescing. He is a very fine Secretary and told me just what I wanted to know. It made me feel, too, that you could not be in better care, for, while using human means, he never forgets that prayer is the all-powerful means!

Would you like some Society news? Connie McGuiggan is at Halifax and is a very devoted little nun. Madame O'Connor has the Junior School! I cannot imagine her in that office and she is very amused over at herself, and is, according to the version of others, very successful with and dear to the wee ones.

Poor Reverend Mother Naud is very much tried. Besides her Infirmary Staff she has six trained nurses in attendance upon her sick. Of course some of them are from the Sault Community.

The present Sault Community is comparatively small, about forty. Sheila Conroy and Margaret Lahey are both of the number so you can imagine it must be rather gay. Everyone loves them and I am wishing for one, or both, at Vancouver. Mother Liffiton left us a few weeks ago. She will leave Montreal for Italy in the near future. I have not heard from Eileen since just after Reverend Mother went to Heaven, but I hear of her indirectly and she has made a great success of her Presidentship of the Alumnae.

Did I tell you that we have opened a house at Oxford? That reminds me of your remark that you were sorry you did not get to Roehampton. I am glad you did not. For the past year they have had an awful time - many of the schools in England had. A virulent germ, something of the nature of scarlet fever, made its appearance and just ravaged the Community. They thought it was stamped out twice but their hopes were vain. It is very providential that not one child was attacked, but the Community was laid prostrate. Reverend Mother Egert who was ailing was sent to England for a rest and change of air, and I hear she fell a victim also.

Now I must come back to yourself. You must rest, rest, rest! I am convinced that if you and the babies and Bill would besiege the Little Flower she would grant you a complete cure. She can mend up heart-valves as easily as can be, and I am sure she could never resist the little ones' petitions. I should like to see you very well and strong. You know she is very much interested in the Missions. Supposing you and Bill promise to take some definite interest in the propagation of the Faith if she obtained your complete cure - don't you think she would get busy? You both have inherited the gift of strong faith so here is a chance to exercise it. You remember they were at their ninth Novena when Mother Foundress cured Sister Coyne. I shall write to Bill later. In the meantime remember me to him and tell him how much his letter meant to me. With much love to you and the babes,

Yours devotedly in C.J.,

Mary A. McDermott
rscj.

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
3635 Atwater Ave., Montreal,
February 8, 1930

My dear Mary,

As home reports tell me you are still, unfortunately, among the ranks of the infirm, I thought another letter might perhaps be acceptable. I hope the novelty of two letters in a comparatively short time from my habitually silent pen, will not be too much for you.

Considering the prayers that are said for you - by holy people, I mean, not the poor but persevering attempts of your present correspondent - you are not getting better nearly as quickly as we hoped. That is hard on you, I know you must be very tired of invalid life, but it simply means we must pray even harder. I am going to storm Heaven, and I hope very soon to hear of real, sustained improvement - that you are yourself again, in fact. I shall make a special visit to our tiny Shrine of St. Madeleine Sophie every day for that intention. "So unite your prayers to mine" as Father Cloutier would say. Remember?

We are having delightful winter weather here, and I am enjoying it to the full. We have a very respectable amount of snow, a good deal of steady frost, little wind and very occasional storms. Does not that sound ideal? The Third Cours approve immensely and I am quite of their opinion. I have them for recreation at 12.30 every day and I find winter recreations much simpler than the others. The children are about evenly divided, French and English, and the chief difficulty with games, is keeping one set comparatively quiet while you explain to the other. But you do not have to "explain" tobogganing - (should I give it two n's in the middle?) - all that is necessary is to play the part of a traffic cop. And they love it! That is a lot about the Third Cours but they are darlings - and as for the Fourth!



Pensionnat du Sacré-Cœur
Sault au Récollet

Convent of the Sacred Heart
Sault-au-Récollet

Thinking of them brings me to your own little ones. How are they? You sent me such a nice picture of Marjorie and Madeleine the last Xmas I was at Kenwood. A snap of the whole set, some time or other would be warmly welcomed, and so many here would be interested in it.

Mother Liffiton came to us in November from Vancouver, and left here last Sunday for New York and Rome. She sails to-day I think. She often spoke of Mother McDermott and I wish I could remember half of the things she said. They were all very nice - I am sure you can supply them yourself, or equivalents.

Reverend Mother is in retreat just now, but I know she would want me to send her love and assurance of her prayers and those of all the community.

Please give my love to Alice, Marjorie, any of your visitors I know, and keep a large share for yourself. Let me hear, soon, of a speedy recovery and count on constant prayer for you and yours,

Affectionately yours in C.J.M.

Sheila Conroy R.S.C.J.

S.C.J.M.

[probably February 8, 1930,
enclosed with letter above]

My dear Mary,

My retreat does not prevent me from joining in Sheila's good wishes and especially prayers for a speedy recovery. I do sincerely hope you will soon give us news of a steady improvement with good news also of your darling children.

Kindest regards to Mr. Browne and much love to your own dear self. Please remember me affectionately to Alice, Marjorie and Aunt Agnes.

Devotedly in C.J.

J. Naud,

rscj.

Mary Harris Browne died Friday February 14, 1930
at home in St. John's, Newfoundland.

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
3851 West 29th. Avenue,
Vancouver, B.C.
February 15, 1930.

My dear Bill,

All day I have been in heart and spirit with you; poor boy, it is your hour of desolation and only God can strengthen you in it. I do not come to offer condolence but just to talk to you of Mary - dear little Mary into whose life you brought so much of joy!

When she first came to us she was so fair and frail and gifted that many thought she was not for earth at all, but she surprised them by her remarkable energy and recuperative power. She loved life, she enjoyed it but she never clung to it. She was the pearl of my pupils and it was a joy to help to form her lovely mind. Sometimes an old Mother would say - "remember you are getting that child ready for Heaven" - yet others would say, "God has something for Mary to do here." Her heart was set on the cloister, and I grew, almost unconsciously, to think of her as my little sister and look forward to the day when her gifts would be consecrated to Our Lord. Her Prize of Excellence Day was a happy one for me - then came her Kenwood Days. I wondered when she was leaving for New York if she could stand the physical strain of our life, but she looked into my eyes laughingly and said, "If I only receive the habit I won't ask to live - just the joy of dying in it!"

But God had other designs and the Kenwood sojourn was just a culminating grace to fit her more perfectly, in a spiritual sense, for the work He had marked out for her. Though disappointed when she returned her will was one with His and she smiled through her tears as she accepted all. I felt very sad over her state but a saintly old Mother said: "God has work in the world for that child to do." Then, my dear Bill, you came into her life - I could not quite grasp it at first, but by degrees I felt that God intended you for each other, and so it proved. God gave you both great gifts and good hearts. You have had five happy, happy years and the influence of your home has extended farther than either of you realized. God sealed your with love with four precious souls and little Peter - Mary's last gift to you - must be the dearest. I feel that in years to come he will be your greatest comfort, Mary will see to that.

Mary's Mission here is not ended, she has entered into a fuller, higher life where her glorious gifts of mind and heart are made perfect. She never forgot a friend while on Earth, think what her love for you and her wee ones must be now! Her life was singularly innocent and, while we pray for her, we feel the strong impulse to pray to her also confident in the power of the intercession of one who loved to do God's will while here.

Poor boy, I know your heart rebels against the separation though your will accepts it. These past months must have been ones of terrific strain on you. I wish you could go off on a trip; rest and a change of scene is what you need now until you get your new bearings. If you could accomplish that and return with a resolution to love and enjoy every reminder of Mary instead of feeling a heart pang over her homegoing, to take pleasure in all that you planned and carried out together, to feel that she wants you to realize that she has not left you to loneliness and repining but wants you to see God's love in her going and to trust Him in all, it would be a

great step forward. You gave her happiness. She would fill your life with love. You will recognize her smile in the eyes of her children and perhaps her wonderful gift of song will be part of their heritage. They will wipe away your tears and comfort you and, by degrees, Mary, herself, will show you the silver sheen of Heaven's side of the cloud that came between you and happiness.

Later on I want to hear from you of dear Mary's last days. Did she realize that God was bending down to gather to His Heart the soul that had ever been His? As I write to you the thought of the mother of the Little Flower comes very persistently before my mind. She, too, wished to enter but God had reserved her for a work in the world. He gave her a spouse worthy of her, and when it seemed that her five little children needed her most called her to Himself. Think of the results of her life - The Little Flower, her youngest, a channel of grace to the uttermost ends of the earth, and the other four children like lilies in a garden enclosed. Courage, my dear Bill, God is more lovable than his gifts, and He never takes back what He has once given. May He bless you and the babes and make you realize that Mary is, more than ever, the angel of your home. Tomorrow, your most desolate day, prayer shall bridge the distance between us - once more God bless you!

Devotedly in C.J.,

Mary A. McDermott

rscj.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
Halifax, Feb. 15th, 1930.

Dear Mr. Brown[e],

I was very sorry to hear of dear Mary's death and especially of the great cross which has fallen you and yours. But I suppose Mary is happier there in heaven than suffering on earth. It must have been a great blow and especially for the children. Still "Who the Lord loveth he chastiseth" and most likely has a great reward in store for you to make up for your great sorrow.

It is indeed the way of the world.

I am only a little girl so the only thing I can do is pray and that I will do with all my heart.

I am,

Yours respectfully,

Margaret Conroy.

P.S. A lamp is burnt for the repose of Mary's soul every day now and while she was ill too, at the shrine of Mater Admirabilis. I shall pray for you and yours.

M.C.

S.C.J.M.

[Letterhead]
 SACRED HEART ACADEMY
 KENWOOD
 ALBANY, NEW YORK

February 16th, 1930.

Dear Mr. Browne:

Mother Bodkin has asked me to express to you a little of the deep sympathy which is felt at "Kenwood" for you, the dear children and all whom Mary has left on Earth. Last night, Mother Bodkin asked us all, very sweetly and earnestly, that we pray for Mary, and her dear ones. The Novices were much touched, and you may be sure that many prayers and acts will be offered.

Everyone who knew Mary loved her. I have often thought that she was a true child of the Sacred Heart, and each day shows more plainly how great a grace that is. She was very dear to me.

It will comfort all of you, I am sure, to feel that not only here, but right across the Continent, from Halifax to Vancouver, and thence to China and Japan, fervent prayers will be said that Mary may come quickly into the fullness of joy, and that the Sacred Heart may, - as He surely will - send His Divine Strength to enable you [to] bear your cross. The little ones will comfort you.

With renewed sympathy from "Kenwood."

I am, dear Mr. Browne,

Sincerely yours,

Amy McEvoy

rscj¹¹⁵

S.H.J.M.

[Letterhead]
 Convent of the Sacred Heart,
 Spring Garden Road.
 Halifax. N.S.

March 4th 1930.

¹¹⁵ Amy McEvoy RSCJ (June 19, 1895 - 1963) was the daughter of Michael McEvoy and Frances Ryan of Placentia, Newfoundland. She is buried in Montreal in Le Repos Saint-François d'Assise <https://www.rsfa.ca/> See cemetery records and St. John's Catholic Basilica, St. John the Baptist, baptismal records, June 22, 1895.

Dear Mr. Browne,

Your letter gave me much pleasure. With all you have to do I think it was dear of you to write me. Thank you for the Notice about darling Mary. I really cannot tell you how sorry we all feel for you and the children. Mary was a universal favorite at school. She was always so nice with everyone, ever ready to sacrifice herself to give pleasure to others. Now she is enjoying the reward of all this. I certainly feel more like praying to her than for her, although I offered many Communions for her soul. Yes, I loved Mary very deeply and when she was in Montreal I had an intimate talk with her and I realized she was happy in her married life. Of course there must come into all our lives little things that on looking back one would wish otherwise. That is because we are humans. I know you made Mary's life an exceptionally happy one. That made the sacrifice all the greater and I believe God asked the heroic sacrifice of her life for some special design. It did mean so very much to her to leave you and the children. During Lent I shall often think of you in your hours of loneliness and pray the Sacred Heart of Jesus to console you.

Assuring you again of my deep sympathy and remembrance in my prayers,

I remain

Devotedly yours in C.J.

Mary Byrne
R.S.C.J.

S.C.J.M.

[Letterhead]
Seishin Gakuin
Shiea Tokio
March 31, 1930

My dear Mr. Browne,

The news of your great loss reached me only a few days ago in a letter from Miss Burke. I had heard at Christmas that dear Mary was very ill, but, as no other word came, I had hoped the many prayers were answered as we desired. I cannot tell you how very much I sympathize with you and your little ones. I have prayed and asked prayers for all and I know that God will comfort you as He alone can.

Half the world now separates me from the surroundings in which I first saw Mary, but her affectionate nature, docile spirit, sunny face and lovely voice will live forever in my memory.

Assuring you again of my prayers and sympathy, and of my continued interest in you and yours,

I remain, dear Mr. Brown,

Very sincerely yours,

M. B. Wallace

RSCJ.

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
3851-29th. Avenue, West,
Vancouver, B.C.,
April 22, 1930.

My dear Bill,

It was so good of you to write to me in the midst of your sorrow that I cannot thank you enough. You have been in my mind and prayers all during Lent - a desolate Lent indeed for you, but your letters make me feel that you have the sure anchorage that Faith gives, and that you realize that what you have lost for the present you will find again in the Heart of Christ, more loving and more perfect than before.

It seems to me that Mary must have had some realization that her end was near but her heart was too tender to witness your hurt. Then, too, she had no misgivings as to the future of her children. She knew their Faith was as safe in your keeping as in hers. That must have been a great, great consolation, for those children were far dearer to her than life. She hoped, too, I think, that she might pull through - death and she had looked each other in the face before but she had conquered.

Your letter telling me that Miss Northcott was to be in charge made me feel at rest about the wee ones, especially about Peter for Mary always had the greatest confidence in her and this, it seemed to me, developed into a loving trust, but your letter telling me your Mother was to mother the babies and take charge of your household made me very happy. I had hoped this but I did not know if she were able to take such a responsibility. She will love them and instill Faith into them as she did into you. Mary told me more than once how very good she was. You will have to watch out that she does not overtax her strength. Four strenuous babies require a great deal of attention, and you must see that she is not surcharged.

As long as your Mother is with them I hope you won't send them to school too soon; give their little bodies a chance to develop and strengthen. Six years, or six and a half, is plenty young enough. After that they learn more in one year than a poor little mite that has been started at five learns in three. I am sure they will be good students for both you and Mary achieved excellence in that order. Above all see they are brought up to be obedient - I feel convinced Mary would have accomplished that. The most miserable children in the world are the disobedient ones. We have one little one who never gave her Mother or Grandmother a minutes peace and who spent a great part of the time crying for what it was impossible to give her. Now she has come under school rule, and tears and shouts get her nowhere, so she is developing into a charming little girl. Your Mother would probably laugh if she knew I was giving directions about bringing up children, but I had two grandmothers, and I always knew just where to go when I wanted

something! I am enclosing a picture of Saint Madeleine Sophie for your Mother - I want her to be the first Sacred Heart religious your dear Mother becomes acquainted with, and I am certain she will help her with the children.

This afternoon I received Mary's Bible and I was very much touched in turning over the pages to find the dates of her five joys and your big sorrow. Life is indeed a mystery - Such a happy family - and others so miserable - what revelations we shall have in Eternity! With regard to prayer Mary's life was like a continued prayer. She lived in the presence of God and when a moment of doubt as to what should be done came she always got "on God's side of it" and nothing could change her. I never saw a child so free from human respect.

I am enclosing a little photo she had taken when at school, she was about seventeen. I thought it would fit nicely in your notebook. I like it very much - her hair was like spun gold. Have you got the lullaby she composed after Marjorie's birth? I have the words.

Alice wrote a very dear letter - She and Marge were broken hearted - I do not think they ever realized a sorrow as this one.

You said in your letter that you sometimes reprov'd yourself for not doing more for Mary. That is an illusion - the thinking you could have done more - You filled the last five years of her life with love and happiness - she was happy in the little ones, the suffering she endured was part of the final purification, and now she is enjoying rest in the possession of All Good. I shall look forward to hearing from you from time to time and shall follow your career with prayer. As soon as little Peter is big enough to sit up for a snap I should like to have one of him. With love to the babies.

Yours devotedly in C.J.,

Mary A. McDermott
rscj.

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
3851 - 29th. Avenue, West,
Vancouver, B.C.,
February 17, 1931.

Dear Bill,

Here it is the eve of Ash Wednesday and you have not had a letter yet! Your letter and its much appreciated gallery of babes reached me Christmas, and was what I like best of all the Christmas remembrances. It was very dear of you to think of such a surprise. The snaps and all the intimate little details about the children make me feel in very close touch with them. It was comforting to meet little Peter for the first time in your Mother's arms. I know he has all her affection. You have a lovely, happy set of little ones and they must be a great joy and consolation to you.

Christmas must have brought back a rush of memories. Mary wrote me about her last Christmas - how you carried her down to the drawing room and she watched the children as they got their toys. She was so happy that I hardly realized she could be near the end. It was a happy end for she had no doubts or terrors what the future might have in store for her precious babes. She knew their faith was as dear to you as it was to her - that you and she were really one.

I am glad you take the little ones to visit her grave and teach them to pray for her - she will shower blessings on you for that.

It looks as if little Billy has inherited his Mother's love for music - I am wondering which one will have her voice - surely one at least will. Marjorie must be a charming little picture at the piano - I am glad she is taking dancing lessons - it makes a child graceful and gives one poise. Madeleine looks very attractive - I can see something of both Mary and you in all the children except Peter - in him I can only see Mary. He seems a strong little fellow - I should love to see him.

I was just thinking of your age - or rather of your youth, some time ago. You are very young and yet in your profession and home you have heavy responsibilities - I am afraid you do not get relaxation enough. Periodically you ought to take a trip and be carefree for a brief space. Your household could not be ruled by a wiser or more loving hand than your Mother's and you could go off without anxiety. If you needed a little distraction Marjorie would be a delightful companion. When I was very young I used to go off on long trips with my father and those trips are among my happiest memories.

I did not know that Aunt Agnes died until I received your letter. It was a shock, I always thought of her as a vigorous little person. I do not much like the idea of Alice and Marge living in a hotel, but things are so changed within the last decade that I suppose it is not unusual. I hope Alice's fiance is a Catholic.

We have a house at Oxford now. I hope when Marjorie grows up she will be a pupil there. Just at present most of the students are nuns and the quarters are rather small but it will not take long to expand. Give my love to your dear Mother and the babes. You and yours are always in my prayers.

Sincerely in C.J.,

Mary A. McDermott
rscj.

S.C.J.M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart,
3851 - 29th. Avenue, W.,
Vancouver, B.C.,
October 25, 1931.

Dear Bill,

What a lovely surprise you gave me! When I opened my mail and found your four lovely babes smiling up at me various emotions struggled for mastery. Isn't wee Peter a love - he is a miniature of Mary, I do not wonder that your Mother has lost her heart to him - it is easy to give advice about bringing up children when one is thousands of miles away but I quite came to the conclusion that I would spoil them all if I had anything to do with them.



Elsie Holloway photograph
Peter, Madeleine, Marjorie and Billy Browne

Marjorie is a little coquette and so charming, Billie and Madeleine have both captured the hearts of the Community - everyone loves the "Brown[e] Babies." I think Billie looks like you and Madeleine is like Mary and you. The four look so happy and Peter's smile is ravishing. It makes me feel that he has found a real mother's love in his grandma's heart. How I hope I shall meet your Mother someday!

Your account of the children was so graphic I feel as if I know each one. Poor Marjorie, I can just see her marching off to school, naughty and the rest. With our over a hundred years experience in bringing up little girls (for the fruits of the experience of each generation is handed on) we would rather they would be a bit naughty when they are little - it gets them in form for they have to suffer correction, contradiction of will and various other disagreeable things that help to strengthen their characters.

I am happy to know Alice married a Catholic - that is the foundation for peace. It must have been a trial for you - I know just how it must have hurt to remember the love and the loss - the unalloyed happiness and then the void. But we have Faith and know that we shall find all we have lost here in the Heart of Jesus, and when you rejoin Mary there her love will be without end for your being both mother and father to the precious babes that were yours and hers.

My only worry is that you will kill yourself working. Politics, your profession and the children - all make tremendous demands on ones mentality and mental occupation is much more wearing than physical. You ought to relax periodically - once a year or once in three is not enough. You ought to get complete mental rest and change often enough to tone up and keep fit. You should never worry about anything - it never helps. You are gifted far beyond the ordinary and are outstanding in your profession and politics so there is no excuse for overworking - though I know there is an incentive.

Personally I never liked politics - I suppose I do not know enough about them. I like your profession better. After Mary met you she was coaching me in Newfoundland politics but I got all the men and offices mixed up and we ended up by laughing and getting back to Dante, and she sang a few snatches to restore my "mental equilibrium" which had been upset by the politics.

Vera O'Dwyer was here in August. She has a fine little boy, and a dear little home in Victoria. Her husband has had no position for some time, but that is the case of thousands out here.

Give my love to your dear Mother, and a hug to each of the babies. Tell Marjorie I am waiting for her first letter. Take good care of yourself and be assured of the constant remembrance in prayer of,

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Mary A. McDermott

rscj.

Biographies

This biography of Mary McDermott RSCJ is used with permission of the Archives, Society of the Sacred Heart, United States-Canada. See: Biographies: Canada, Archives, Society of the Sacred Heart, United States-Canada.

Mary A. McDermott RSCJ

1880-1967

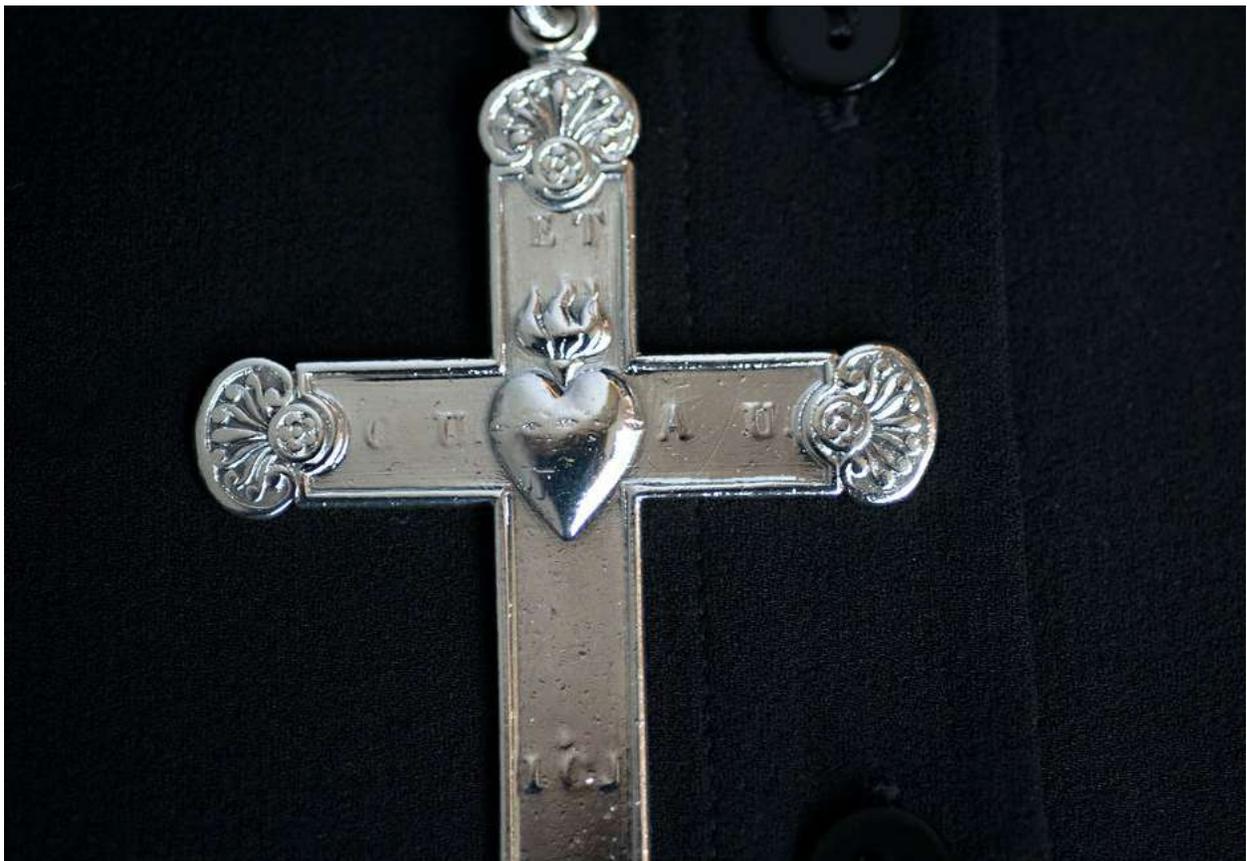


Photo by Jennifer Eichenberg

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¹¹⁶ The letters on the cross represent the motto of the Society of the Sacred Heart which is: “Cor unum et anima una in Corde Jesu” - One Heart and One Mind in the Heart of Jesus. See <https://rscj.org/who-we-are/heritage>

Les Religieuses du Sacré Coeur de Jésus de la Maison de Vancouver, vous supplient très humblement de recommander à Dieu au Saint Sacrifice de la Messe et dans vos prières, l'âme de leur chère Mère Mary McDermott décédée le 6 décembre, 1967, âgée de 87 ans, 8 mois, 19 jours, et de Profession, 51 ans, 9 mois, 25 jours, munie des Sacrements de notre Mère la Sainte Eglise.

Requiescat in pace.

A newspaper woman writing to Mother McDermott said:

The reason for our being there (at the reception) is really quite simple, Mother. We just happen to love you as much, if not more, today, then we did when we were your particular problem children in years gone by. We shall never forget the debt we owe to you. You might have fought a losing battle with us in a scholastic way, since we were never exactly God's dear gifts to student achievement. But I often wonder if you really know what you did for us. You taught us the meaning of integrity and truth and fair play. You taught us how to judge our fellow man not for "who" he was - but for "what" he was and for the standards he stood for. You taught us understanding and compassion and the meaning of loyalty. You taught us how to mantle failure with hope and success with humility. You taught us how to stand tall and steadfast in a world shaken with doubt and fear. You gave us the ability to think for ourselves and act for ourselves. You mixed equal amounts of discipline and wisdom, frowns and smiles, the stern word and the warmth of your heart and, gently, day after day, without ever really knowing it, we swallowed the dose and always came back for more. And one of the most important things in this whole wide world, you shared with us your precious, wonderful gift of laughter. ... I don't know whether in all the fifty years of your Profession you affected two people more deeply than you did my sister and me. I suspect you have, but forgive us for being just a little selfish and claiming you for our very own! We have both faced countless "tomorrows" on the strength of what you gave to us in those cherished "yesterdays".

From the Archives - a beautiful tribute to a beautiful person!

M

No 405 McDERMOTT, MARY

Birth: Boston, Mass, U.S.A. March 8, 1880

1st Vows: Kenwood, March 11, 1910

Final Profession: Rome, M.M. Feb. 11, 1916

Death: Vancouver, Dec. 6, 1967

Parents: Andrew McDermott, M. Elizabeth O'Farrell

scjm

VANCOUVER

Circular Letter of Sister Mary McDermott: If there had been no written testimonial to give us an insight into the life of Sister Mary McDermott, the shining example of her loving fidelity, her gentleness and unsurpassed loyalty to each member of the community would have been enough. However, one small note was found among her books and it gives us the key to her sanctity. In one examen two things stand out, "justice towards the children and justice towards the mistresses". In the other the following list had been typed. "Never to complain; never to judge another; never to give way to impatience; to live in charity with all; to keep a will steadfast towards God." There was no date on either of these entries but at the bottom of one page, printed carefully and dated 1959 was the one word - detachment - and the following quotation: "All my life Thy loving favour pursues, through the long years the Lord's house shall be my dwelling place." How much detachment God was to demand of her she could not then know! All who have lived with Sister McDermott can testify that she lived out the resolutions quoted above!

Mary McDermott was born on March 8, 1880 in Boston, Massachusetts. She was the eldest of six children, four of whom died in early childhood. Her father, Andrew McDermott, a man of deep piety, was a contractor and builder of churches. Her mother, the former Mary Elizabeth O'Farrell, a woman of quiet and gentle disposition was a skilled pianist and a fine needlewoman. In spite of the deep sorrow of those early years, their home was singularly happy. It was a home in which hospitality was an outstanding characteristic and all, rich and poor alike, were made welcome with great kindness and charity.

Sister McDermott had no regular school life until she was eleven. Her father's work constantly took him out of town. When possible he took his entire family with him but when this arrangement was not possible, he always took at least his eldest daughter. If there was a convent in the town Mary would attend the morning session there; if not, her father would teach her in one of the sacristies which were always fitted up for her exclusive use. As the child much preferred this mode of instruction, her prayer travelling to their destination was, "Please God, do not let there be a convent there."

When Mary was eleven years old, to the immense joy of the whole family, another son was born. With this birth the heavy cloud which had hung over the household and had lain heavy on the mother's heart, began to lift. In the following year, Mr. McDermott though still a young man, retired from business and Mary began regular school life at the convent of the Sisters of Mercy which was very near her home. For her Academic course she went as a boarder to the Sisters of Mercy convent in Manchester. Here as elsewhere she made fast friends and it was on the invitation of one of them that, after graduation, she went on a visit of some months to St. Louis, where she was to pray at the shrine of Blessed Philippine. At some period of her Grammar

School course, she gave an entire year and the greater part of other years to the study of music alone. In later years she was to say that she thought music was what she missed most in religious life.

An incident of her childhood demonstrates the initiative she was so often to show as a religious. On one occasion, the parish priest, ordinarily most kind and gentle with the children, was rather brusque with the little ones at confession. When they finished their confession he said sharply, "say your act of contrition." Mary noticed that several came out in tears and when she learned the cause, she went in with a catechism book open. When she began her act of contrition the words came slowly because she was reading them. The priest, recognized her and said, "What are you doing Mary? Don't you know your Act of Contrition?" "Yes," came the reply, "and so do the other children but you are frightening them so they can't say it."

Although at the age of six, she had emphatically declared her intention of becoming a nun, she was in no hurry to carry out this intention. On finishing school, Sister McDermott remained at home for several years, occupying herself in things that were of interest to her, but apparently caring little for the ordinary activities of young girls. She knew she had a religious vocation, but could not determine where she would ask admission. She liked the Sisters of Mercy, many of whom remained her friends for years, but did not think she had a vocation for some of their works. At the request of a former school-mate who was going to Canada, she decided to go with her, ostensibly for a finishing course of study, but in reality to try to come to some decision about her vocation. At the City House in Montreal, she found the answer to her quest. Her decision to enter the Canadian Vicariate was typical of her manner of making a sacrifice: to give the whole at once and to never turn back. She entered the noviceship in 1907.

Toward the end of her second year in the noviciate, Sister McDermott learned of the unexpected death of her Mother. It was a crushing blow, for she had never considered the possibility of her mother dying before her father.

When she had made her vows, she was sent to Halifax where she was almost a complete stranger. The school was passing through a difficult period but Sister McDermott then, as always, by stressing the good points and making the most of them, soon won over the children in the classes confided to her. She was always at her post, cheerful and cordial, and none guessed the heavy burden she was carrying. For months she had no news of either her father or young brother. One day, the Superior, Reverend Mother Reid, asked the young aspirant if she had no relatives since she never received a letter. As soon as the circumstances were known, Reverend Mother lost no time in getting in touch with those in Boston who might give the necessary information. The silence seems to have been due to a misunderstanding on the part of relatives. When the news came it was not of a nature to give joy to the young aspirant. Her father was in the hospital of the Sisters of Mercy and very ill. The one bright spot was the fact that Sister Paul, a life-long friend and former teacher, often went to see her father and the other Sisters were doing everything possible for one who had being their devoted friend and benefactor. What both Father and daughter suffered during those months of silence, which neither could understand,

only God could know. One morning when Sister McDermott was brushing her habit, [she] felt as though her father had passed by her, so close that he seemed to touch her. "He is dead", she said to herself and she was to learn soon after that it was exactly at that hour that God had called her beloved father home. Sister McDermott was sent to Boston to settle her father's affairs. This done, she returned to Halifax, bringing her young brother with her, placing him as a boarder at St. Mary's College.

A short time after her return from Boston, after securing her teacher's license, she was sent to teach in the College Street School. Sister McDermott was not by nature a disciplinarian. However, by dint of kindness and affection she soon won over the most unruly and made them her devoted friends and helpers. In one of her first classes there was a boy, not only poor but also unpleasantly disfigured, a result of harsh treatment at home, it was said. That boy became her favourite. Soon she had discovered his good points and by working on them she was able to give him confidence and he became a different child. She did not remain as long as most did at the Public School in those days, as her throat was weak and she was coughing a good deal.

Sister McDermott's marked devotion to Mater dates from her visit to the shrine at the Trinita. At that time she was very much worried about her brother, who, though exemplary in other respects, evinced no desire to fit himself for any type of a career. When at the shrine and praying for her brother, she noticed that Our Lady's cheeks seemed to flush. She changed her place trying to ascertain from what direction the light was coming that caused the change in Our Lady's countenance. On her return to the Mother House she mentioned the remarkable effect of the light on the painting. She noted a few raised eyebrows but one young nun said, "Oh, that means you are going to get your request."

On her return to Halifax she had not long to wait before she learned the cause of her brother's attitude towards life. He was suffering from a heart condition and had not long to live. He had gone to Boston after finishing at St. Mary's but now his sister had him return to Halifax where Mrs. Duggan, an old pupil and President of the Children of Mary, opened her home to the sick young man and gave him a mother's care until the end. Sometimes one would see the tall handsome youth walk slowly through the Convent grounds to spend what time he could with his sister. On the night of his death, perfectly conscious, he suddenly sat up in bed and with a face alight with joy, said to Mrs. Duggan who sat at his side: "O look! Isn't she beautiful!" Then with a sigh he fell back dead. It was the twentieth of October, exactly one year from the time his sister had prayed so earnestly for him at Mater's shrine in Rome.

Sister McDermott lived in every house in the Canadian Vicariate at one time or another, always leaving behind her the proof of work well-done and children who had been influenced by her love and concern for them. With the nuns too, she was gentle but determined and at a time when higher studies were not as essential as they are today, she had the foresight that others did not have about the necessity of using precious time to pursue this end. Many religious owe her a great debt of gratitude because she was adamant with them and did not allow them to give up when if left to themselves they might understandably have done so because of the pressure of

work in the school. From 1927 until 1952 Sister McDermott was Mistress of Studies and taught in the Academic classes in one or the other of our houses, but the last 20 years of her life were spent in Vancouver. When in 1952 she was suddenly deprived of the sight of one eye and threatened with complete blindness, it was at the feet of Mater that she found the necessary courage and strength. Every morning before Mass, her kneeling figure could be seen at Our Lady's feet and how efficacious her prayer may be judged by what she could say in the middle of the Marion Year: "I no longer fear anything that may happen to me, for I realize that nothing can happen except what God sees is best for me. I do not think that now I shall be in the least afraid to die, for the thought is very familiar to me."

One religious writes, "When I first came to Vancouver Sister McDermott was in charge of Reverend Mother's gift cupboard. At Christmas time a stream of beautifully wrapped parcels flowed day after day from her busy room. At reunions she sat near the end of the front row, silent and serene, with attentive twinkling eyes and fairy fingers knitting baby things that always looked as though they had just come fresh from the shop. It was sad to see those hands gradually slow down until eventually they lay still, just holding a face-saving little ball of wool and two idle needles. In the five years that have passed since then there has been the pain, not only of seeing all this mother's physical powers deteriorate but also the edifying awareness that her sensitive realization of every detail of her disintegration has been matched and surpassed by her heroically silent acquiescence and acceptance of every moment of it. I only knew her in her declining years. Her poor back was twisted and humped from an earlier injury to the spine but often when I passed by her little adjoining room I could not help but notice she was on her knees beside her bed. Later, when she was confined to her bed, she was as abandoned as an infant. She took whatever medications were given, without complaint. No matter what went wrong she never complained. If people came to see her she would relate all that had been said with great accuracy. If no one came she made no reproaches. She ate what was offered - and at the rate offered - and asked for nothing. Very occasionally she would express shame or regret for giving extra work and trouble. Most of the time she kept her counsel about these and all other sentiments. What she expressed was only gratitude and affectionate little remembrances. More and more towards the end of my stay at Vancouver, I was convinced that to be near her was to be near God and that my service of her was the measure of my service to Him - they had for me, become so identified! I think that I have never read or heard of the virtues and holy characteristics of any saint that I could not now apply to Sister McDermott. Caring for her was a grace well worth having crossed Canada to receive."

The Infirmarian who replaced the above mentioned religious and who did literally cross Canada to care for this saintly mother, as she was moved from Halifax to Vancouver, can only reiterate these words. It was to be for a very short while, but during those last months Sister McDermott grew in abandonment and serenity and never once was heard to complain or voice any other words but those of gratitude. She did not even betray the fact that the departure of one who had cared for her for so long was part of her final oblation. She offered it silently as she had grown accustomed to do all her life. A tangible peace surrounded her during these last months. Quite frequently it was impossible for her to receive Holy Communion. On one occasion a visiting

priest was so impressed with the aura of holiness that surrounded her, stopped beside her bed to ask her to pray for him and for his mission to spread the love and devotion to the Sacred Heart. He was on his way to Europe and when he returned to his home in Australia he wrote to say that there could be [no] doubt about the power of Sister McDermott's prayer as everywhere he went the path had been made clear for him.

The last five long years of her life she had been completely bed-ridden. The fact that the Chapel was full on the day of her funeral was witness to the love and esteem in which Sister McDermott was held and proof that she had not been forgotten by those who loved her.

Perhaps this letter could fittingly end with the words of Teilhard de Chardin's quoted in the short account that went to our houses with her death notice:

“Believe, finally in - and this word contains all the others - the “spirit” which you share. Only there, in the spirit beyond the flesh, lies no satiety, no disappointments, no limits. Only there, lies the free air, the royal road.”

The power of the spirit had been the most tangible factor for all those who came in contact with Sister McDermott during the last weeks of her life and it was tangible right to the end.

This biography of Mary Louise Ryan RSCJ is used with permission of the Archives, Society of the Sacred Heart, United States-Canada. See *Lettres Annuelles de la Société du Sacré-Cœur de Jésus*, 1933-1935. 3. 337-350. Archives, Society of the Sacred Heart, United States-Canada. The original is in French.

Translated by Guillaume at Langlo Language Services.

Mary Louise Ryan RSCJ

1857-1934

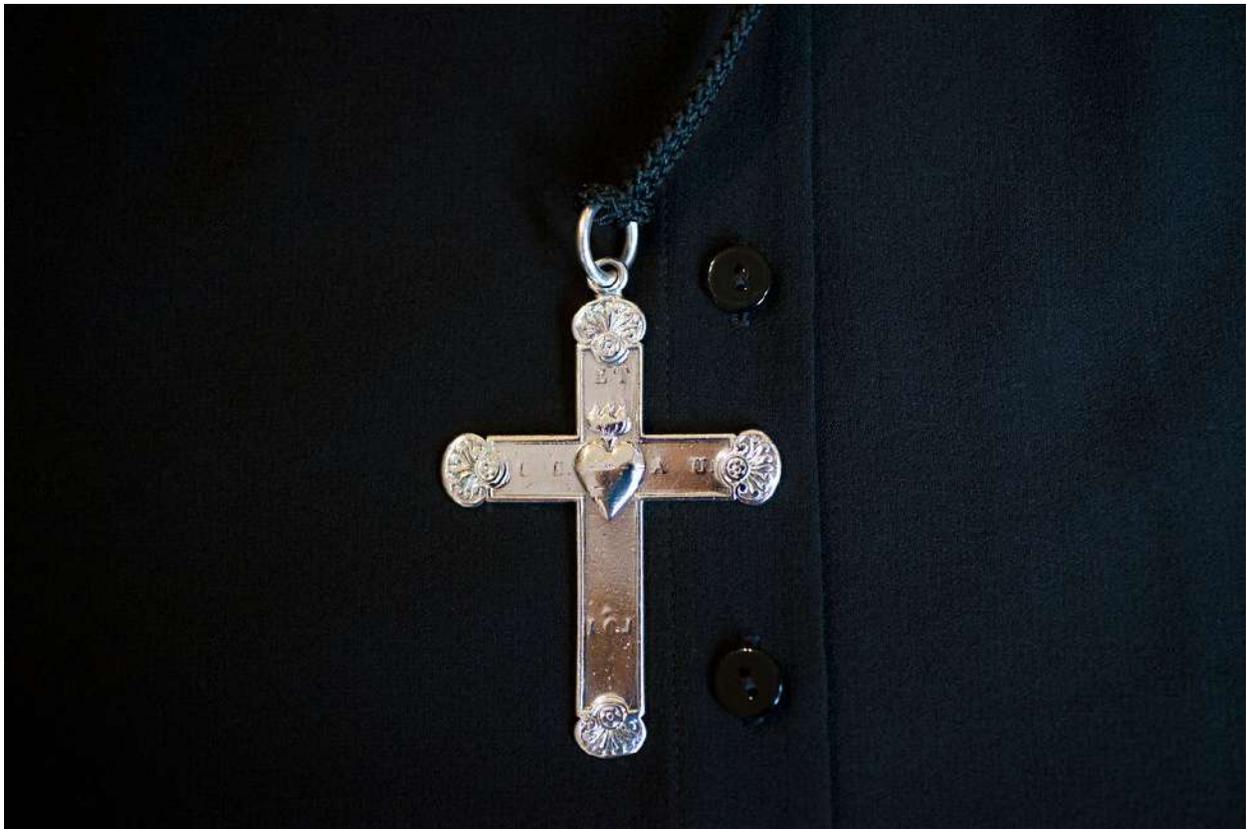


Photo by Jennifer Eichenberg

Thrice did the Good Master's call ring out, to reward long years of suffering generously endured, with eternal happiness. That is how we first witnessed, with great edification, the end of a virtuous life on June 12, 1934. Our dear Mother MARY LOUISE RYAN would receive in heaven the reward promised to those who long toiled in the Lord's fields.

Mr. John Ryan, father of our late Mother, was born in County Cork, Ireland, but came to America with his parents at a very early age. Our good Mother's grandfather, Mr. Cornelius

Ryan, was a partner in a major canal building firm and amassed a considerable fortune, which earned his family a place among Cincinnati's elite. But over time, this fortune was lost entirely, and young John had to secure his own future. He worked his way up and showed such talent as a businessman that he was still young when he became a partner in a large factory. In 1855, he married Miss Mary Blakeley and had six children: four daughters and two sons. Mary Louise was the eldest. She was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on August 19, 1857, and her soul, which would go on to do such great work for the salvation of children, spent just a few hours without the grace of Baptism, which she received on August 20. Her early years were happy, but misfortune would soon knock at the door of her Christian home. Mr. Ryan was taken from his loved ones by a heart condition at a mere 45 years of age. The fatal heart attack struck in his study, and despite his physician's best efforts, he died that same evening, leaving his wife to raise their young children, of whom the eldest was just 14. At the time, a newspaper described Mr. Ryan as a devout Catholic, a loyal and generous friend, and a gentleman in the truest sense of the word, who was respected and loved by all who knew him. His charity for the poor extended to all forms of misfortune, and his character, of impeccable integrity and respected by all, had earned him important appointments in the city's Administration.

And so, Mary Louise may have been just 14 years old when she lost her father, but in a single night, the pain transformed her childlike temperament and imbued her with seriousness beyond her years. She became a source of constant support and help for her mother, who had very delicate health, and her siblings placed their trust in her. As for Mrs. Ryan, she reminded all those who knew her of the Holy Scripture's inspiring depiction of the strong woman. To support her children's education, she accepted an excellent position with the Cincinnati public library. There, she engaged in genuine apostolate among the young men and women who frequented the institution, guiding them wisely in their choice of reading materials until they developed a taste for good and healthy literature.

Mary Louise, along with one of her sisters, started her studies at a good boarding school. But when the two sisters were of age for First Communion, they went to the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, where they were carefully prepared for this important act of Christian life, and Mary Louise was confirmed on April 18, 1870. During her life as a boarder, she began cultivating her beautiful contralto voice and became a remarkable musician. When she returned to the world, she joined Saint Ludwig Church's choir and happily dedicated the first fruits of her warm and prayerful voice to the Lord. It was then that she received an offer to teach music at the Georgetown Academy of the Visitation.¹¹⁷ Hoping to relieve her mother and help in the education of her youngest siblings, Mary Louise accepted, taking with her one of her young sisters, whose extraordinary intelligence earned her five gold medals in a single award ceremony. They say Mary Louise had a remarkable influence on her pupils, who loved and respected her despite her youth.

Upon her return home, Mary Louise looked after one of her sisters who had lost her sight. She

¹¹⁷ Now Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School.

would read to her, keep her company and try everything she could think of to ease her plight. Everyone considered the young invalid a little saint—gentle, pious, patient and resigned to God’s will. She was miraculously healed and regained her sight, but God, who wanted to keep such a pure soul to Himself, took her from this world when she was 17. Mary Louise suffered a violent attack of inflammatory rheumatism, which caused her much grief and seemed to heal completely, but it was just a prelude to the intense pain she would endure in the last years of her life when the condition returned. The young girl had often considered religious life, and during her stay in Georgetown, she had been under the direction of a holy Jesuit, Reverend Father Gueldner, who must have told her about the Society of the Sacred Heart. But at that time, her mother’s financial situation made it her duty to stay by her side and continue helping to care for her siblings. Eventually, the day came when they could finally do without their devoted eldest sister. That was when she was subtly tempted to believe that her mother still needed her. Two very important duties tugged at her heart. Which should she follow? She had serious reasons to believe she should continue a life of devotion to her good mother, but God had been calling her for so long, and her soul heard His divine call ever more pressingly. “And so,” writes Mary Louise’s brother, “knowing my sister’s wishes, our mother made the decision herself. Without a moment’s hesitation, she placed her beloved daughter in God’s hands.”

Mrs. Ryan wanted to give Mary Louise the joy of travelling to Europe and the great consolation of visiting Rome. While passing through Paris, Mary Louise went to see one of her friends, who was doing her probation at the motherhouse and introduced her to our Venerable Mother von Sartorius, then Vicar General and right hand of our Venerable Mother Lehon. The young woman offered to give herself to God as part of our Society, if our Mothers would have her. After Mary Louise had made several visits to the motherhouse, our Mothers decided that she would do her novitiate in Conflans, to her great joy. But her mother wanted to first take her to Rome to enjoy her presence a bit longer, promising to accompany her to Conflans as soon as they returned to Paris. Our Venerable Mother Lehon advised her to enter right away, and Mary Louise, with the generosity of her passionate nature, did not hesitate to sacrifice her long-desired trip to Rome and go to the Conflans novitiate, where she was welcomed by the mistress of novices, Mother Georgina. One of her Sisters from that time wrote that Sister Mary Louise left there the memory of her fervor and of her filial devotion to Mother Georgina, who certainly had high hopes for the gifted novice. A few amusing events early on had made her well known all the while showing her keen interest in perfection. During her postulancy, she read in the rule on obedience “*toutes se rendront sur le champ . . . où elles sont appelées*” (“all shall go right away to where they are called,” using the French idiom for “right away” that literally equates to “on the field”). The bell rang and Sister Ryan ran to her mentor novice. “But, Sister, where is the field?” The mentor novice was taken aback. “Well, you know, the field we are all called to!” This burning desire for perfection was combined with courteous rectitude. She was to serve in the refectory and received a card on which she could study the second server’s instructions, “*qui doit jeter de temps en temps un coup d’œil sur la table de nos Mères, etc.*” (“who must occasionally throw a glance at our Mothers’ table”). “I would never, ever,” cried Sister Ryan, “be so rude as to throw anything on our Mothers’ table!” With her rich intelligence, it didn’t take her very long to master the difficulties and nuances of the French language. How heartily she laughed afterwards

when her Sisters brought up the stories of “the field” and “the thrown glance”!

Sister Ryan truly worshipped Mother Georgina and Mother Adèle Muller, with whom she exchanged letters until these venerable Mothers were called to the eternal reward, where they were no doubt welcomed by the countless souls they had educated in religious life with sweetness and strength. Sister Mary Louise Ryan received the habit on August 17, 1887 and bound herself to Our Lord by taking her first vows on August 18, 1889 in Conflans. Upon her return to America, she came to Cincinnati following holy obedience. One of her aspirant Sisters who knew her back then wrote: “I was happy to live with Mother Ryan when she arrived in Clifton, having just finished her novitiate in Conflans. She brought back the atmosphere of that dear novitiate, and she lived the precious teachings of Mother Georgina, who imprinted upon each of her novices the true nature of our religious spirit. Mother Ryan had a happy disposition. She was friendly and sincere, a true nun in the loftiest sense of the word and an example to us all. God had endowed her with real musical talent, and her beautiful voice in the chapel was a prayer that expressed all of her fervent soul; hearing her, one felt that as she was united with Our Lord her heart sang the praises of so good a Master. When she sang the hymn ‘Jesus, abide in me’ (her composition), you were lifted up, and the earthly realm, with its pains and sacrifices, vanished before the expectation of eternal bliss.”

It was in Clifton that Mother Ryan began her apostolate, during which she was highly involved and successful with the children. Over the course of her religious life, she worked with every class from grade 4 through to the Superior Class, and she was placed in charge of the small boarding school for some time. She immediately exerted a positive influence on her students, studying the soul and character of each one to educate them accordingly. And so, when it came time for her former pupils to take on women’s responsibilities, they would recall the lessons and principles they were taught in their youth, and they would always come to seek her advice during hard times when given the opportunity. Mother Ryan’s years of aspirancy flew by, and the time for her probation approached. She greatly wanted to do it in France, and she prayed fervently and repeatedly to receive this grace, which she did, as she put it, “at the last minute.” And she made the most of those days of plenty under the direction of our Reverend Mother Desoudin. She also had the joy of being the English-language Secretary of our Venerable Mother von Sartorius, and oh, how she valued the privilege of this constant contact with our Superior General! We have nothing from which to form an idea of the divine work done in her soul during this time of probation, as all her notes burned in the fire at Sault au Récollet, where she was living. But based on our good Mother’s religious life, we can surmise that she drew from the Heart of Jesus all the grace and guidance she would need in her future apostolate.

On February 13, 1895, she took her final vows and was sent to Kenwood to be the novitiate surveillante. She loved the novices dearly, and the feeling was mutual. In all the fervor of her profession, she inspired within the young Sisters a strong wish to better know and understand the love of the Heart of Jesus, and taught them to have great admiration for spiritual matters, which was reflected above all by loyalty to our holy Rules and a burning desire to grow in their inner lives and through the spirit of prayer. Her vigilance embodied motherly gentleness, calm and

prudence. The novices knew that their surveillante trusted them and believed that each was doing her best. Mother Ryan had a noble desire to see them stand out on the path to perfection and to feel that they were perfectly happy from the moment they took their first hesitant steps into a brand-new life. Her well-educated and gifted mind produced endless inventions for congés and holidays, and the novices made unforgettable memories during these festive moments. They found her holiness contagious and happily accepted her suggestions; the very sight of her inspired them to aim higher despite their own misery and faults.

Our dear Mother welcomed postulants to Kenwood so affectionately that she would instantly win over both them and their parents, who then never failed to ask for news of her. Mother Ryan was so good, accessible and understanding that all those who had contact with her, either during the novitiate or later in active life, can attest to the veracity of these attributes. It would not be an exaggeration to say that she saved many vocations from failure as the novitiate surveillante by tactfully helping novices overcome many of the difficulties inherent to their chosen life. The postulants looked forward to the evening meetings as a source of great joy and grace—there, our good Mother helped them understand the divine reason for their entry into religious life and gave lessons on self-abnegation simply through her sweet serenity that concealed real physical suffering. She would correct young souls by showing the absurdity of an action, but always with a charitable attitude that never wounded, immediately seeing the amusing side of the situation and solving the difficulty with just one word. Seeing Mother Ryan's brilliant success, some of our Mothers in Kenwood wished that the formation of the novices be fully entrusted to her, but Reverend Mother Burke, then Superior, thought that her influence might be better applied to another sphere of action. So it was that our dear Mother left Kenwood, and her departure left a great void at the novitiate, where her action had been as spiritual as it had been quiet and sound.

At the beginning of 1901, she arrived on Chicago's West Taylor Street, and in 1902, she was Assistant Mistress General and inaugurated the monthly retreat for our former students. The population of the neighbourhoods around our convent on Taylor Street was rather undesirable and no longer allowed us to recruit children for the boarding school, so our Venerable Mother Digby authorized the purchase of the beautiful Lake Forest property, located merely a few leagues from Chicago. On September 20, 1904, the boarding school was transferred there, opening with 66 boarders reunited with their dear Mistress General, Mother Ryan. The house was far from finished, but under their Mistress General's direction, the children got to work helping their Mistresses with the settling-in process, showing admirable devotion. With true family spirit that was the trademark of the Taylor Street children, they gladly accepted all inconveniences and issues—of which the foundation had plenty—giving more thought to the efforts their Mistresses poured into making these first few days easier for them than to what they might personally be lacking. And so, they took the initiative to request permission to carry clean water provisions to the dormitories themselves until the plumbing work was completely finished. Soon, the boarding school had 125 boarders. There were not enough Mistresses for such work—the large house was a lot to maintain, and there were still plenty of inconveniences. Despite all that, Mother Ryan was able to perpetuate the spirit of generosity the community had been built on, upholding discipline and preserving peace and happiness under the direction of

Reverend Mother Lewis, Vicar and Superior at Lake Forest, who held Mother Ryan in great esteem and affection.

New students had more admiration than love for their Mistress General upon their arrival at the boarding school; to them, she was the personification of nobility and power. But once they got to know her better, they quickly recognized the motherly heart that hid under her appearance of reserved, almost austere, dignity, and the many testimonials collected from her former students clearly show what a precious friend and experienced, wise guide they had found in their dear Mistress General. She had great strength of personality, such that a general from Fort Sheridan (located near Lake Forest) would say, when visiting his daughter: “Madam, I wish I had the same control over my men as you do over these girls, who would not do anything to disappoint you.” And in the words of another father whose children attended the school: “Would that I had ten sons disciplined by Mme Ryan, what great men they would become!” The children knew that our good Mother was very impartial. Back then, students were absolutely forbidden from leaving school grounds on visiting days, even with their parents. One Sunday immediately after the start of the school year, some new students requested permission to go for a walk in the surrounding area; after all, the virgin forests were so beautiful! But they did not get it. Then, the daughter of the Governor of Illinois made the same request, and visitors awaited the answer with bated breath, certain that such important people would not be denied. It was a polite but firm refusal, and on that Sunday, the respect of the parents unfamiliar with our Society was genuinely earned.

It was during her stay in Lake Forest that Mother Ryan went through the pain of losing her holy mother on February 29, 1908. The timing of this death coincided with a birthday party the students were preparing for their dear Mistress General. They ultimately offered their wishes not with song, but through a bounty of suffrages and prayers for the repose of her mother’s soul, and the congé was postponed. After six years of fruitful apostolate at the Lake Forest house, of which she witnessed the founding and yearly improvement, Mother Ryan received her obedience for St. Joseph, Missouri, where she continued working with the same dedication to the children. The youngest and the oldest, those whom she so carefully prepared for their First Communion, remember her impersonal manner. Every detail was arranged with extreme care; the children felt they were surrounded by a heavenly atmosphere, that it was Jesus Himself who was preparing their hearts to receive Him, and they were delighted by all of it. After a brief stay in St. Joseph, our dear Mother was called to Canada to be Mistress General in Vancouver. Reverend Mother Mahony had requested a perfect Mistress General, and Mother Ryan had been selected, having already proven herself. She generously sacrificed her country, set out with enthusiasm and gave herself to her new mission with all her big heart.

Mother Ryan arrived in Vancouver in the summer of 1911, coming to a house that had opened in January. She threw herself, body and soul, into the hard work of educating these new children in this newly founded school and wanted the customs and spirit of the Society to be imprinted from the start onto these souls so dear to the Heart of Jesus. That was how she built up a model Sacred Heart boarding school. One of our number, arriving in Vancouver around that time, wrote that she was immediately struck by the perfect discipline that reigned in the school—the children

seemed like novices for how strictly they followed the rules. Mother Ryan had based their formation on great simplicity, which inspired them to find charm and pleasure in the least elaborately organized congé and led them to enjoy simply listening to an interesting and fun story for an hour's time. Her students loved the weekly etiquette review gatherings. The children's parents liked her very much, and her spiritual influence attracted souls to knowledge of the truth. A doctor, who was the son of an Anglican minister and whose young daughter attended the boarding school, fell ill. While bedridden in the hospital, he asked Mother Ryan to send him a book to pass the time. She lent him the biography of Father Van Rensselaer, S.J., in which he relates that his conversion to Catholicism began when he read Allies's *Formation of Christendom*. The doctor asked to also read this book, which brought him the gift of faith as well. He, his four children, and his wife, who had previously been baptized but was raised Protestant, all became fervent Catholics.

All the letters received mention the influence that Mother Ryan had on the parents who entrusted their children to her and who, many years later, still liked to recall the conversations they'd had with their daughters' Mistress General. She identified with people's interests and seemed anxious to gain their trust only to further help them. It should also be noted that most parents trusted her judgment regarding their children's education. Soon, Mother Ryan had to sacrifice Vancouver, where she had worked with all her heart for the Good Master, and go to Halifax to continue her task as Mistress General, for which God had given her remarkable talent. In her first address to the boarding school, she mentioned everything that was new to her in the house and added: "What isn't new to me, and makes me feel at home, is to have before me this wonderful group of children and to read in their serious and ardent faces the determination to employ every means to become true children of the Sacred Heart and, later, hardworking Christians." The children immediately saw in their new Mistress General a strong and motherly religious authority—a kind of authority none of them could have found it in their heart to betray. And so they all respected it.

The more a child gave, the more Mother Ryan believed the child could do and the more she expected better, the best, and the most from her, but always in the spirit of her favourite motto, "noblesse oblige." Devotion to the Sacred Heart was prized above all else at the boarding school—the League of the Apostleship of Prayer was a living action, and repeated offerings often occurred at unexpected times throughout the day with a reminder that what is offered through the very pure heart of the Virgin Mary must also be pure. The children faithfully counted their perfect hours; the Holy Hour was well-liked, as was the Guard of Honour on the first Friday of the month. Being chosen to take part in it was a genuine and very deserved honour. Everything had to be based on sincerity and honour. In fact, honour became such a watchword that many would soothe their conscience by admitting faults that had gone unnoticed by the Mistresses.

Mother Ryan's work with children was in full swing when heart disease, which had always been a source of suffering for her, made rapid progress. Often, painful episodes would leave her exhausted for hours. As she advanced in age in the service of God, the attacks became more frequent, and during the last years of her life, she became unable to climb stairs. In Halifax, she

suffered a fall from which she never fully recovered, and walking became so difficult that she had to resort to using a cane. In July 1925, Mother Ryan was called to Sault au Récollet and began her life as an invalid, a life whose idleness cost her in ways of which only God knows the full extent.

Before discussing this intensely meritorious phase of our good Mother's life, it is worth taking a look at the fruitful apostolate she exercised over the course of twenty years as Mistress General to children who, thanks to her spiritual motherly guidance, received a splendid education, for which God had endowed her with truly exceptional abilities. She loved her work and counted solely on the strength of the Heart of Jesus to fulfill it as He wanted. She drew the grace and insight she needed from Him through prayer and perfect obedience to her superiors. She knew that without this divine help, she would be powerless to do the work that God had entrusted to her, and it was this intimate conviction of her personal powerlessness that made her such a successful Mistress General. Reverend Mother Wauters, who got to know our dear Mother in Vancouver, said of her: "Mother Ryan has such a wonderful influence on the children that when they are under her direction, we can get from them everything that duty demands and more still." All the letters received attest to the veracity of these words; "forceful" is how our Venerable Mother Stuart described her. All those who had her as a Mistress General understood that she had a mother's heart filled with affection for each of them and a burning desire to see them walk straight towards the Sacred Heart of Jesus, ceaselessly repeating: "My children, in all things do we present the Heart of Our Lord as your model, exactly as our holy Mother Foundress would have wished."

Her instruction was based on two principles: the love of truth and honour, and a personal love for Our Lord. In her students, she inspired revulsion for lying and the unrighteous and instilled a strong sense that in all things, only the best suits a true child of the Sacred Heart. She always came back to one of those fundamental principles in some form, and as Saint Paul recommends, she insisted on them time and time again. "Make straight the paths of our God," she would say, and she pleaded for the rights of the Lord over the hearts of her children. "If truth and righteousness form the foundation of your character, then whatever your faults, we can make something of you, but if you lack those virtues, then our hands are tied." A few rare but very expressive gestures lent weight to her words. Her instruction most frequently pertained to the Sunday Gospel. She would take a thought and match it to an aspect of doctrine that she would then skillfully present to the children to engrave it into their minds for life. They could never escape the persuasive influence of her inspiring and luminous words. "Lord, I want to see" was one of her favourite texts, telling the children to ask Our Lord often to heal their blindness about themselves, to make them see the truth and His great love for them.

It was no surprise to see how Mother Ryan's older students embodied these lofty ideals when entering the world. "When my crosses are the heaviest," wrote one of them, "and the hardest to bear, I think back to her instruction: 'Jesus, being tired, sat down.' Then, trying to forget my own pain, I help my suffering neighbour, as Mother Ryan taught me to do, and repeat ceaselessly 'Heart of Jesus, I entrust myself to you...' and the strength to bear my crosses returns to me."

Another one, after leaving the boarding school, wrote: "I do wish I could hear one of Mother Ryan's instructions right now. At school, they would perk me right back up, and I could immediately resume fighting to overcome myself more energetically." She wanted her children to be strong-hearted, and those she guided needed to be able to hear the truth in whatever form it took. It has been said that Mother Ryan tried too hard to run the boarding school like a novitiate, but who can say how many souls were lifted up and fortified by the ideal of divine beauty she tirelessly presented to their minds and endeavoured to foster in their conduct? She would especially demand of Children of Mary that they give the best of themselves in all things. At that austere school, many girls of a frivolous and pleasure-seeking nature became serious-minded women eager to advance God's work in everyday life. She also taught them to let Our Lord into every aspect of their lives. "May each of your days," she would tell them, "be like a book open on two blank pages. One page will be titled 'This was done for Our Lord,' and the other, 'This was done for me.' Each action must be written by your mentor on one of those two pages; there is no middle ground."

"Mother Ryan made Our Lord so real, so interested in all our childish matters," writes a former student from Halifax, "that during the evening visit to the chapel, we found it very easy to tell Him about our day, our schoolwork, the demerits we'd received or avoided, the commendations we'd earned, and so on. Personally, I have very special reasons to know and love my dear Mother Ryan. In her first year in Halifax, my weekly grades were conspicuously devoid of 'Very Good' marks. My meetings with her were frequent and stormy. Mother Ryan told me the facts as they were without any concern for sparing my feelings. I often went to see her in a terrible state of revolt and irritation. She would always hear me out to the last word, which my anger repeatedly postponed. Ever calm and level-headed, she waited for me to regain my senses . . . and no matter how furious I had been coming in, not once did I leave her without having seen and recognized with her that the Mistress I had blamed was right and I was wrong."

Under this somewhat rigid appearance, our good Mother had a heart of gold. Only the girls who had the misfortune of losing their mother can testify to what she was like in those sad circumstances. Her advice, care, time and motherly affection were given without measure, and her special interest followed them when they left the boarding school. That was when the children came to understand the depth of their Mistress General's affection and her loyalty in helping them through life's trials. Those struck by family tragedies were sure to find solace and strength in her heart, and Mother Ryan was so delicate in how she came to the aid of the unfortunate that even the proudest among them were deeply grateful to accept the succor she discreetly brought them.

If vocations needed encouragement and support, Mother Ryan's letters arrived, reminding her dear children of the strongest principles they were taught at the boarding school, insisting on the ones that had helped them during their education and would help them even more now that they had to stand on their own, in such a way that would not admit letting go of the high ideals of the past. And if she read any degree of slacking off between the lines, her strong scoldings of school days past found their way into her replies, which she would end with her favourite saying. "Have

faith, have faith, always have faith.” When it was time to leave a loving family behind to follow the Master’s call, the good Mother’s letters became more loving—stronger, too—and to one girl who saw an unexpected sacrifice added to the others, she wrote among other things that a martyr’s tomb had been found engraved with a solitary inscription, *Omnia dedisti*. “And you, my dear child, will give Our Lord the joy to tell you the same when you offer yourself to Him.” In her dealings with the Mistresses she worked with at the boarding school, Mother Ryan was considerate and quick to show appreciation. She always welcomed them with the kind of warm friendliness that energizes and inspires one to put their heart into their work, especially when it is painstaking and difficult. Her words expressed her joy at serving the greatest Master and encouraged all who heard her to overcome their obstacles. Her example was as much a force for good as her words. After meeting with her, the Mistresses left with renewed strength to love Our Lord and to make the little souls that His love entrusted to them love Him.

It was in her long hours of prayer before the tabernacle that our good Mother found her strength and her ability to attract hearts to Our Lord. She was regularly seen at the chapel around the same time in the early afternoon. She barely felt the time pass when she was near Him. And the perfect contemplative attitude that followed her everywhere spoke volumes on how beautiful and fertile her inner life must have been. “I’ve always thought,” wrote one of our own, “that Mother Ryan’s remarkable influence on the children, for their own good, came from her life of intense prayer and intimate union with Our Lord, whom she loved passionately. It could be said without exaggeration that all her work was plunged into prayer. That is how she was filled with the spirit and love of the Sacred Heart all throughout the day.” “She was a saintly nun,” wrote one of her superiors, “acting as one with her superiors, and her work with the children will stand as testament to her selflessness and devotion.”

Mother Ryan was a force of nature in her community, a model of silence, charity and obedience. Perfectly loyal to authority, she would take it upon herself to organize aspects of the boarding school that were not popular with children and parents. Her superior was very pleased, “because,” she wrote, “she wanted to be the one to offer this pleasure to her dear children.” This loyalty to authority showed in thoughtful acts of kindness and concealed displays of devotion intended to lighten the habitual burden of superiors. Her control over first impressions was remarkable. “I saw,” wrote one of ours, “her big black eyes throwing flames at an insubordinate child before being filled with kind tenderness, just a moment later, for the poor young aspirant whose first experiences had caused this storm.” Our Lord, satisfied by our dear Mother’s active and fruitful apostolate with her young souls, turned it into one of suffering. Her passionate nature found this difficult, and only God knows how much she suffered from the inaction her exhaustion imposed upon her. But her strong soul, ever nourished by high-minded ideals and living in close union with Our Lord, was up to the challenge of completing the work of divine wisdom so perfectly.

Our good Mother, having nearly become an invalid, gratefully accepted some work with the children at Sault au Récollet and managed the English-speaking Coadjutrix Sisters, sharing teachings with them to make them love the Rule and the Society. Our good Mother also presided

over their recreational activities and kept them lively, religious and merry. The Sisters loved Mother Ryan very much; she was always willing to help in any way she could, and interacting with her was always easy and pleasant, with a spiritual quality. The bishop at Sault au Récollet wanted a novitiate opened in his diocese for choir sisters. Our Superior General and her Assistants General allowed this on a trial basis, and our dear Mother was chosen to oversee it. Once again, religious principles formed the basis of her instruction to young postulants, and her experience and her great knowledge of people's character allowed her to make a real contribution to the formation of these religious youth. In the words of someone who was among the first group of postulants and now works as one of our hardest missionaries: "We were seven postulants, enveloped in the most motherly attention of our dear Mother Ryan, nourished by personal and quite practical love for Our Lord: those six months truly were the golden age of our lives, and we can never forget them. In her daily exercises, she took much care to explain the Rule to us and make us love it, respect it and especially apply it. One evening, when a postulant arrived, our joy made us forget the great silence. It was like a family gathering, so merry that it resembled a group of boarders during recreation period. Mother Ryan learned of it, or perhaps she heard our joyful outbursts all the way from her room. The next morning, when she came to exercise, her expression was that of deep sorrow: "I have just," she told us in a sad tone, "spent an hour with Our Lord, asking Him to give me the grace to explain the Rule better than I have thus far; for last night, children, you failed to understand the rule of great silence, and it is my fault."

The disease was worsening; progressive paralysis put a gradual stop to her activities and to her great need to give generously of her work and self whenever and wherever she could. Although the Good Master gradually took away the use of her limbs, he left her mind and wonderful moral faculties intact so that she could dedicate them to her fellow Mothers and Sisters and to the Society, to make it more widely known and loved through her many French-to-English translations. For a long time, our good Mother held on to the hope that the Divine Master would hear and grant her fervent prayers to be healed, but such were not the designs of His Heart, who wanted to complete His work in this soul through suffering. The day came when He brought her full illumination: wanting what God wants is a greater thing than healing. Our dear Mother understood, and from then on, she prayed only for the holy will of the Heart of Jesus to be perfectly realized for her at all costs. Her patience grew increasingly heroic, and whatever pain she endured, never did she complain.

Mother Ryan thought she would live out her days in her beloved Canada, in this Sault au Récollet house that had welcomed her weakened self with such tender charity. But God had other plans. A great fire destroyed the house and scattered the nuns. Our Reverend Mother Hill, Vicar Superior, asked to receive some invalids who could bring the blessing of their prayers and suffering to the vicary. Mother Ryan was sent, and seeing Lake Forest once again, whose founding she had witnessed first-hand, softened the sacrifice. But that sacrifice was nevertheless felt, and Mother Ryan wrote: "God knows how to send me the cross that I find heaviest to bear." Indeed, she'd had to bear numerous crosses over the course of her long life, some coming from her very nature, "since," wrote one of her superiors, "she always was a nervous soul, with a

propensity to enlarge difficulties, but her heart was true and deeply sensitive and loving, fully given to God and the Society, for which she professed immense love, great admiration and boundless devotion. Our Lord asked very difficult things of her, sacrifices of which only He knew the price, but she generously gave Him everything.”

During our Mother’s last months on Earth, she continued living as an invalid, making a heroic effort to attend Mass every day, for that is where she drew her strength to endure the day’s suffering. Once her prayers were faithfully recited and her exercises of piety from the Rule finished, she spent the rest of the day reading, writing and, above all, praying, interested in every matter concerning the house. Her many children who kept in touch with their good Mother received from her letters full of motherly and ever-religious affection that showed her lasting interest in everything about them, and especially their souls. It was a comfort when some of them could come see her, and she encouraged them through their troubles and shared in their joys. Certainly, our Mother’s long hours of suffering, so bravely accepted and endured, earned immeasurable grace for her former students, who now show their gratitude in their prayers and through many Masses offered for the repose of her soul. The dear invalid was very grateful for her Mothers’ and Sisters’ visits. She never spoke of her pain, which was only hinted at by her features and masked by her kind smile. “One day,” said one of her children, a nun at Lake Forest, “I went to see her a few months before she passed away, and I found her trying to take a few steps using a chair she was pushing in front of her. ‘My child,’ she said, ‘someday, the Lord comes to you and asks if you can bear this, and this, and that, and there is nothing you can say, nothing you can do besides accept, telling Him always and without hesitation: Yes Lord, I want all that You want.’”

During her long time as an invalid, her severe, life-threatening heart attacks led to Mother Ryan receiving the grace of Extreme Unction several times. After one of the rituals, she wrote: “There are no words for the comfort God gives me through the grace of this sacrament.” However, with her living faith came a strong fear of death. In 1931, she wrote to one of her former students in Japan: “When you see my name at the chapel’s doors, pray that my purgatory is shorter than I deserve. Heaven approaches now, and there is a little corner I will set aside for our conversations in that celestial land, the country of light . . . but I wonder if, once up there, we will want to speak to anyone except the One who is our everything.” In the spring of 1929, the names of three Japanese children were sent to Mother Ryan at Sault au Récollet for their souls to benefit from her prayers and suffering. She kept those names precious in a tiny envelope at the foot of her statuette of Mater, for whom she held special devotion. Six months later, Mother Ryan wrote from Lake Forest: “Now listen to this: in the Sault fire, we lost everything. All our personal belongings, books, notes and so on were reduced to ashes, but the tiny little envelope with the names of the three children was found a few weeks later and is now on my table. Does this mean that Our Lord wants us to pray for these three children in particular?” The future answered in the affirmative, as Suma was baptized in 1933, and Tomi and Yoski became so loyal and devoted to the Sacred Heart of Tokyo that they are sure to one day receive in a sacrament what is still just a baptism of desire.

When our good Mother's days came to an end, another episode of paralysis left her fully motionless. When our chaplain brought her Holy Communion, she was unable to open her mouth, and we even wondered if she was conscious. Her eyes remained shut, and the only sign that life still dwelled within her poor, pain-exhausted body was her irregular breathing. A few moments before expiring, our dear Mother opened her eyes wide, cast a long, deep look all around the room, then closed them again and returned her soul to the One she had so loved and inspired others to love. When Mother Ryan's death was announced, messages of affection, esteem and regret poured in. Many of her former students wrote that, while praying for her, they were more inclined to pray to her, but would no longer neglect their pious duty of offering suffrages and Masses for the repose of that dear soul who had done so much for them. Others stated that they had immediately felt the power of her intercession with God. Lastly, many of them thanked God for making their paths cross hers so she could fill their hearts with love for the One who said: "I am the way, the truth and the life." Reverend Father Deeney, S.J., who knew her well, wrote when her death was announced: "I held this nun in great esteem. She had a remarkable combination of human and spiritual traits that made her a force for good." Mother Ryan had a habit of following exclamations with interrogations, such as: "Let us become holy," to which she would add, with all her fervent ardour: "Well, why not?" Could not her blessed life be summed up by this challenge, which, once overcome by her at sword's edge, guaranteed her eternal bliss?

This biography of Margaret Mary Lahey RSCJ was given to me for use with these letters by Isobel Page RSCJ who prepared it for the Society.

Margaret Mary Lahey RSCJ 1903-1987

by Isobel Page RSCJ



Photo by Jennifer Eichenberg

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Margaret Lahey was more than a fine religious, a born teacher, a faithful friend; she was a very complex personality: open, outgoing, warm, sympathetic, impulsive, cheerful, humorous, practical and efficient but at the same time often subject to despondency, to self-depreciation, to unnamed fears. Yet most of the people whose lives she influenced, even those with whom she

¹¹⁸ For a reflection about “Spes Unica” - one and only hope - see <http://allthislifeandheaventoo.blogspot.com/2015/06/spes-unica.html>

lived, were unaware of the dark side of her character with which she struggled all her life. One was always conscious of her powerful personality wherever she lived, and when she died, fellow religious and close friends across Canada and the U.S. experienced the extinction of a light – something bright gone from their lives.

Margaret Mary Lahey was born June 30, 1903 in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, the eldest of the seven children of James Lahey and Harriet O’Toole. There were four boys and three girls in the family, ruled over by a stern Irish father and a gentle Irish mother. The oldest and youngest, Margaret and Agnes, became religious of the Sacred Heart. Margaret was supposed to give good example to the younger children, as well as help look after them and she used to describe her wonderful mother as she remembered her sitting in the kitchen peeling vegetables and simultaneously rocking a cradle with her foot and giving directions to Margaret. There always seemed to be a new baby and she liked to recall with humour her innocence regarding the mystery of birth. A mid-wife neighbour would appear, her mother would retire to the spare room for a few days and the were children barred from entrance. The doctor came and went and then a new sound, a wailing infant. She never knew exactly where it came from nor did she speculate.

Margaret developed the reputation of a tom-boy as she grew up, getting into hot water with her brothers, tearing her clothes or losing her boots when she went skating. The family had a horse and buggy as a means of transportation and she loved to get the reins in her hands.

There was no Catholic school in Dartmouth so when she reached school age, Margaret began her years of ferry travel across the harbour to school in Halifax. She first attended St. Mary’s elementary school, and when she finished Grade 8, she enrolled at the Convent of the Sacred Heart where she was a student from 1917 to 1923. For the first five years, she made the daily trip across the harbour which was followed by a mile and a half walk, mostly uphill, without ever being absent or late! For her last year in the graduating class, she boarded, which meant staying at the convent except for the Christmas and summer vacation and perhaps two days at Easter. She used to recall with gleeful horror, the one day her brothers came to visit her. The convent portress at that time had a city wide reputation for a non-welcoming stance in the face of anyone who dared ring the bell. Her concept of the role of portress seemed to be that she was there to keep intruders out rather than invite them in. When Margaret arrived in the parlour, there were her brothers, sitting uncomfortably on the hard chairs each in his stocking feet with boots in hand. Over them hovered the portress warning them not to dare let their boots touch the shiny floor. They didn’t stay long nor did they come again.

Margaret was a good, hard-working student but she never enjoyed study and always claimed to be a non-intellectual, uninterested in books. Unconsciously, she let this tendency give her a feeling of inferiority. But at school, she was immensely popular with her teachers and fellow students and if any job came up requiring hard physical work, she was the leader. And she was quick to spot and to help any girl who was unhappy, homesick or in trouble. One contemporary recalls her first days at the convent. She was an out-of-town student and in one of the higher classes so boarding school was a new fearful experience for her. She was given a

dormitory alcove next to Margaret, and sat frozen on her bed while the others went about their business in silence. Their night business in those days meant drawing a pitcher of water from the one available tap, pouring the water into a basin in the alcove, getting washed and then carrying the basin of soapy water precariously to a large tub in the centre of the dormitory. Around the tub stood girls in bath robes with mugs, cleaning their teeth - of course in silence. The newcomer, after initiation, was wondering how she could stand one more night when over the top of the alcove partition came a small bag with a note attached. The note offered help and the bag some candy. As the days went by more little tokens came her way until she felt at home. She and Margaret remained life-long friends and always signed mutual letters "over the top".

Another fellow student, Sister Sheila Conroy, recalls her first winter at the convent in 1918 when there was still no heating in the school though a year had passed since the furnace was damaged beyond repair in the Halifax explosion. The boarders endured the morning study period in the study hall wrapped in coats or heavy sweaters. She lived for the arrival of her deskmate, Margaret, who would come into the study hall, curtsy to the surveillante and then greet Sheila with a smile that warmed her inside and outside. During the holidays an invitation came to the marooned boarders who could not go home to ice-bound Newfoundland, to spend an afternoon at the Lahey home which was bliss to the lonely girls.

The retreat she made during her final year at the convent with Father Filion, S.J. convinced her of her religious vocation and after a year at home, when she did substitute teaching, Margaret went to Kenwood, Albany, the novitiate of the religious of the Sacred Heart. Mother Gertrude Bodkin, mistress of novices, understood her as perhaps no one else did, and she loved this lively, generous, outspoken and unpredictable Canadian. When Margaret left the novitiate, after making her vows, Mother Bodkin remarked to the novices at recreation, "I hope you realize what you have lost". Yet she knew the real Margaret and when one congé day, the Mistress of Novices assigned two descriptive letters to each novice, Margaret's were "PP". No one could guess what they stood for and many were baffled to discover their cryptic interpretation "painful presentiment".

She made her First Vows in March 1927 and for the next year divided her time between Manhattanville and Grosse Point. One of her jobs at Manhattanville was night visitor which was time-consuming in that old rambling building and one she carried out with considerable trepidation as the lower corridors housed rats and scuttling cockroaches. She once even encountered a human intruder who ran from her light in terror. She went to Summer School at Fordham for the next few years obtaining her B.A. in 1930.

Her first real apostolate was at the Sault from 1928 to 1932 in the capacity of surveillante of the Lower Seniors, and then in charge of the Junior School and teaching various elementary classes. The juniors found in her the mother they had left when sent to boarding school and they idolized her. Many kept in touch with her long after leaving school and their happy memories of the Sault were Mother Lahey. They were not easy children to manage - many of them lively French Canadians who were always into mischief. Yet she used to tell the story of how before Primes

one day, when they were all squirming waiting for the arrival of the Reverend Mother, she told them severely “*Mettez vos pieds sur le plafond*”. They didn’t slide onto the floor with feet in the air as they well might have but one ran to her and whispered: “‘*plancher*’, *ma mère*”. A fellow religious recalls that one warm spring day, Margaret let her charges pull off their stockings and shoes and run barefoot in the cool, new grass. Their squeals of delight reached the ear of some stickler for observance who reported the scene and Margaret was fully reprimanded and warned “never again”. She was ready to leave for Summer School in June 1929 when the Sault was struck by lightning and a good portion of the building went up in flames. The pupils had left for the vacation but some retreatants were housed in one of the dormitories. Margaret went to their aid to help them get their belongings to safety and they had pretty well succeeded when irate firemen ordered them out of the burning building.

In February 1932, she went to Probation at the Mother House and she always kept happy memories of those days and of the kindness and understanding of Mother Datti with whom she corresponded for years. On her return she went to Halifax to begin one of the most fruitful and happiest times of her career, her years at College Street School. It was a challenging job, both her role as teacher and Principal, but it was one that gave scope to her many gifts: organizing scouts, guides, basketball and hockey teams, altar boys, school choirs and plays, training young teachers and maintaining the building with none-too-reliable janitors.

On top of it all there was the little matter of responsibility for some 400 students and keeping on the right side of the School Board and inspectors. Again, her outgoing personality won her friends and she herself had a special place in her heart for the older boys who were in her class and who would do anything for her. One of these boys, Mgr. Richard Murphy, gave the homily at her funeral Mass and summed it all up when he called her a “surrogate mother for all of us”. The war years brought air-raid sirens and alerts and the commandeering of the boys’ playground by the War Measures Act, to be used for the building of army quarters for the CWAACs. She took it all in her stride and hit upon the idea of using the stirrup pump, provided by the air-raid emergency equipment at the convent, to flood the girls’ playground to make a hockey rink. She would cheer on the Team, encourage them when they lost and spend the weekend washing the uniforms which were always kept carefully at the school along with the gear.

When things were at sixes and sevens and rules broken as is the lot of every school from time to time, Margaret could give strong reprimands and have the miscreants shaking in their shoes, but they knew too, that her wrath would very soon abate, there would be a joke and the tension would break. College Street School had a history of memorable Principals and she carried on the tradition which gave the school a reputation for scholastic excellence and a family atmosphere. Nor did she lose touch with her students when they left for High School, and when they came to visit her as grown men and women she always recognized them. In 1964, when the school had been closed for 12 years and the building burned to the ground, she arranged a reunion of former CSS students which was a tremendous success. At the same time, there was a drive for contributions towards the cost of a sprinkler system for the convent building - a system which the

fire department made of obligation if the building were to continue as a school. It was former College Street students who raised the necessary funds.

In 1944, Margaret resigned as Principal and returned to the Sault where she was Surveillante General and worked in the Treasury. In 1946 she began her “western apostolate”, her very active years as Assistant, Dépensière and Mistress of Health in both Winnipeg and Vancouver. All were new employments for her but she took them on with her usual energy and efficiency besides bringing her loving, vibrant personality to the new situations and winning lasting friends. She was a devoted Mistress of Health and her care of the sick was endless but more important was her unquenchable sense of humour which cheered her patients and endeared her to all the doctors with whom she came in contact. She would dream up all manner of little treats for her invalids which speeded the recovery process. The coadjutrix sisters knew that they had in her a redoubtable friend and advocate and they looked forward to recreations. Any employment she had was kept in meticulous order. She could always put her hand on anything requested: a pencil sharpener, a screwdriver, a jar of ointment, a can of beans.

She spent three years at Ravenscourt, the foundation house in Winnipeg where everything was in short supply from money and pupils to space and furnishings. The small community put up with every inconvenience possible and managed to do it with a light heart due in large part to Margaret’s exuberance. She knew how to follow Chesterton’s advice to look on an inconvenience as a great adventure.

Her next move was to Vancouver where she spent almost ten years - again as Assistant and Mistress of Health. In these employments she showed her concern for the young religious and for the various employees in the house. She used to say that she could tell a person’s state of mind and health by her walk and if she sensed that some young person was having difficulties, she would respond indirectly by leaving a candy bar in an alcove or giving some little recognition which certainly saved a vocation here and there. On one occasion, a young over-worked aspirant sleeping in a dormitory, failed to wake at the right time. Margaret noticed the silent dormitory, guessed what had happened so she roused the children and hurried them about their business while allowing the culprit to get dressed herself and make her way to Mass.

She easily related to the many handymen who were always part of the convent life. One of her “specials” was Tony - a Spaniard, who turned up for an interview in answer to the convent advertisement for help. Margaret hired him for his uncompromising answer to her blunt question, “Do you drink?” “Yes, I do, but I don’t get drunk”, he replied. They became fast friends and she tried to get him interested in his religion by giving him a Spanish edition of *The Way of Divine Love*. After a few years of dependable service and good workmanship, he grew restless and left Vancouver to make his way on foot through the U.S. to South America. He knew exactly the time and place to get across the border without detection. He wrote to Margaret for years until he finally returned to his birthplace and his sister sent news of his death. It was probably about this time that she began her letter writing apostolate which continued until her death.

When most of us, after meeting a person in one place, generally lose contact when we move to another, after one or two Christmas greetings, Margaret's letters continued and her envelopes nearly always contained enclosures - clippings, cards, anything she could find that might interest or amuse the recipient. One such person was a Dutch woman and her family whom she met in Vancouver. A probationist had met the father of the family on board ship and had given him the address of the Vancouver convent as somewhere he might go for help on arrival in a new country. Margaret took the family under her wing and for a time they lived in "the residence" a building on the property which housed the laundry and living quarters above. In time, the mother arrived with a retarded son and spent the first months of her stay working for the Canadian certification as a nurse. After difficult years, the family finally got on its feet. Margaret moved away but kept in touch with frequent letters for many years until Mrs. G. became ill and died. The next correspondent was the husband and finally the daughter. Margaret's letters and prayers were a constant source of support to this family through financial difficulties, through alcoholism and attempted suicide, through illness and death. Another refugee, a German woman who had escaped from Russia under hair-raising conditions, turned up in Vancouver and for ten years or so, looked after the "lingerie" at the convent. She, too, corresponded until her death. And then, of course, there were the students, chiefly boarders, with whom she kept in touch. She had a special soft spot for the "Latinas" and had a gift for calming them when their Latin temperaments exploded under the restraints of boarding school life. Christmas always brought letters and gifts from several of them. One former student felt that Mother Lahey, more than anyone else, was the subtle influence which kept Alumnae groups alive and faithful. In Halifax, for example, some years after she had retired, the girls who wanted to celebrate with a class reunion, their tenth or twenty-fifth anniversary of graduation, would make contact with the school through her.

One last group of people with whom she corresponded was rather unique in that they were individuals she had not actually met. A few examples must suffice. When she was working in the Treasury at the Sault in the late fifties, it was the era of the tremendous popularity of Mother Nealis's pictures and one of her jobs was to fill orders for holy cards. One such order came from an old pupil of Hove, England. Letters were exchanged and correspondence started which lasted until 1986 when a letter came from the correspondent's father telling of her sad death from cancer. When Margaret herself died, her community received a letter from another woman she had never met. She was an air force officer during World War II who used to attend Sunday Mass at the convent with other armed forces personnel and she often had breakfast there with the chaplain. When she left Halifax for another billet, she wrote a note of thanks to the convent for their hospitality and Margaret volunteered to answer. The correspondence lasted from 1945 onwards and was always signed - "Your pen-pal".

Sister Lahey's last assignment in a school situation was a very fruitful ten years in Halifax. A new wing was built on the convent to allow for more students and she was given charge of the "Lower Seniors" who occupied the second floor of the new building with a spacious study hall and classrooms of their own. She had an enormous influence on these young teenagers going

through the trauma of growing up through Grades 6, 7 and 8. Her study hall was always spotless, desks in order and everyone busy. At noontime she organized clubs to cover a wide variety of interests from chess to puppet making. They loved her and so did the teachers with whom she worked. Her teaching methods might have been “old fashioned” but the results were more impressive than those achieved by many a modern method. She taught Grade 7 subjects and by the end of the year there were very few who could not read and spell above their grade level. Many of these girls continued to keep in touch with her as they continued their education through university, entered the business world and in many cases, married. She made a rule for herself never to attend a wedding because if she went to one, there would be three more that year wanting her presence. In 1972, she resigned and there was no problem that year in deciding the dedication of the Year Book. An era in the life of the Halifax convent had come to an end.

In spite of the successes she experienced in these years, it was also a time of great suffering, both physical and moral. Arthritis, which had attacked her knees in the sixties, became aggravated until she found walking painful. It was fear and the moral suffering she experienced in the face of the many and rapid changes overtaking religious life that disturbed her. She fought against them almost blindly and was sometimes very bitter in her reactions. It took her a long time to come to terms with the way young religious were discarding the habit, going to hairdressers and giving up fixed monastic customs. But she finally adopted secular dress herself, along with a wig, because she realized that one could not turn back the clock and that one's clothing was not the essence of religious life. Yet her ‘painful presentiments’ grew in magnitude when bouts of depression overtook her and she had to struggle to maintain her centre of gravity. Her natural buoyancy kept her going and then she was offered a new and wonderfully life-giving apostolate when she set out, in the fall of 1972, to work in the Kenwood infirmary.

On paper she was retired but, in fact, she was on duty for eight hours a day caring for bed-ridden religious whom she had known at Manhattanville when she lived there after her first vows. Then she had been awed and slightly overwhelmed by the scintillating conversation that went on at recreation between these remarkably intelligent and holy women. Now these same religious were dependent on the care of others. They loved Sister Lahey and she could always get them to laugh if only at her own antics. She had an assembly line system to get a group of her charges ready for mass: stockings on the first, outer garments on another, back to the first with shoes and so on with the result that all were ready together. Contacts at Kenwood broadened her outlook and helped her see changes in a positive light. After ten tiring months in this work, she was asked to help with the organization of the first Canadian retirement house in Montreal and then to be in charge of it. She devoted herself with her usual wholeheartedness but the responsibility of running it was something she could not face. She helped in the infirmary at the City House for some months and then she returned to Kenwood for another year and a half of nursing. In June, 1976 she left Kenwood for good and then spent a deeply appreciated time of renewal at Pickering.

She returned to Halifax for the last stage of her life - 11 years when her activities would be curtailed in some measure but years when she was still carrying on an amazingly wide

apostolate. Three of her brothers had already died, and the fourth, Fred, was in a nursing home in Halifax. She had the joy of being able to visit him and to be a support to him and his family until his death two years later, something she had little opportunity to do when Walter and Pat were hospitalized. During these years she lived first at Spring Garden Road and then at Barat Residence when it was completed in 1980. Through most of these years she was involved in the literacy program carried on at the Convent by volunteer tutors two evenings a week. The students were from all walks of life, all ages and varying educational backgrounds, from complete illiterates to those who had missed out on schooling and needed help and encouragement. For the first years she had a class of men, numbering four or five. As usual she struck up close friendships with these students, some of whom were with her for two or more years and who made excellent progress. One in particular went on to earn his Grade 12 in a G.E.D. programme. He was a skilled chef in a hospital and Margaret was overjoyed when he won a gold medal in a Maritime chef's contest for his creation of Da Vinci's *Last Supper* modeled in confectionery sugar!

A year before her death, when pupils came to her at Barat Residence, as she was in a wheelchair, a young man was entrusted to her to learn spelling, grammar and basic Math. With her help, he passed examinations and was able to enter a university programme for mature students. She helped him in other ways as well. He lived with his mother who died very suddenly from a heart attack which was a traumatic experience for him and Margaret helped him live through it. He had never had much contact with any religion, let alone nuns, so he called her affectionately "Teach" and her face would light up when he came in, tired and dirty after work in a machine shop, and call out, "Hi Teach!"

Her last pupil was a black lady named "Lydia" who worked in the kitchen at the nearby Maternity Hospital. After three years of instruction, she had made very little progress in the art of reading but it was not a skill she really needed because she was filled with the Spirit and loved to speak up in her congregation and testify for the Lord. She came to pay her respects when she heard of Margaret's death and between her sobs of real grief, she cried: "She was real...you's all real but she was very real. I's gonna miss her terrible. She was jus like a mother to me." Perhaps her remarks sum up Margaret better than any other words.

One could go on indefinitely giving instances of the wide spectrum of people with whom she made contact during her last years of so-called retirement: members of the nursing staff at St. Vincent's Guest House where her brother and then her sister, Jane, were patients; a woman who occupied the bed next to her when she was hospitalized in 1983; nurses at the Civic Hospital where she visited over the years. One particular patient was a young man who was completely paralyzed as the result of an accident, so much so that he could neither move nor speak, but his sight, hearing and mental faculties were unharmed. She would take him anything she thought might interest him and above all, she would make him laugh. His parents appreciated her visits more than they could say.

One day she was asked by the rector of St. Mary's Basilica if she would be willing to help an Indian priest from Kerala who had been assigned to the staff. He could write English very well and spoke it with a certain fluency but no one could understand him when he preached. Margaret accepted to work with him to try to improve his pronunciation and intonation. She would listen to his Sunday sermon many times and persuade him to make it shorter until there was an improvement. When he left Halifax, he kept in touch, writing several times a year and very evidently appreciating her letters to him.

And what about her spiritual life? Her prayer life over the years was simple and based on her deep faith. She was a firm believer in novena prayers and for desperate situations, she would resort to the thirty-day prayer to St. Joseph. Her little book of retreat notes gives glimpses of her soul and her life-time struggle with her own self. On one occasion she realized that she had not learned "to dialogue with God" in her prayer nor did she know how to use scripture to feed her soul. Quotations which she wrote indicate that her director was always exhorting her to put all her sins into the hands of Our Lord and to realize that His love is more powerful than any sinfulness - that a loss of peace of mind comes from the evil spirit. One of the retreats made in the eighties which touched her profoundly was given by Father George Maloney, S.J. at Bethany in Antigonish. After one of the conferences she wrote: "no words can describe this talk - how good God is to me to let me be present at this retreat. I find myself saying 'Lord, I am not worthy' and I am beginning, after so many years of religious life and so many retreats, to realize that God loves me - always did and always will." She came from this retreat with a new and deeper understanding of contemplative prayer, which previously, she said, was not for her.

From clippings she saved and quotations she copied on the "aging process" and growing old in general, one realizes how hard she had to fight to accept a role of diminishment, of unimportance, of pain and dependency. She struggled to believe that her inactivity could have any meaning though she tried to live her life each day asking for faith and courage to keep on. She found the new vocabulary used in the Society with words such as "discernment", "co-responsibility", "charism" incomprehensible and she resented the paperwork given to communities, especially retirement communities, as the Society worked at involving all its members in decision-making at every level. Shared prayer was something she could not understand and hence she disliked it. Yet she continued to pour out her concern for her many friends and to be a source of support to many people failing to realize that her gift of herself to others was the expression of her love of God. We found out, for example, when she died, that for over ten years she had phoned daily a man who had once been a pupil of College Street but had become an invalid when still young and hence housebound. Her call was a life-line for him.

God, in His inscrutable wisdom, chose to purify Margaret during the last months of her life by severe suffering. Around Easter she became very suffering but did not consult her doctor. In May she fell in her room and her condition necessitated hospitalization. She was admitted to the Halifax Infirmary and subjected to five weeks of painful testing which gave the report that there was no disorder beyond her arthritic condition. So she returned to Barat Residence and began therapy which seemed to help her but she had a second fall and broke her hip. More

hospitalization, surgery and then a return home while she was still very ill and confused. Then very evident symptoms of internal trouble took over, preventing her from retaining any nourishment. She herself asked to be admitted to the Civic Hospital where she had so often visited her paraplegic friend. Here she was received by a loving staff who knew her and also knew that she was dying. Two days after admission, she died quietly and peacefully while her sister, Sister Agnes Lahey, was praying with her. Her own community were at Mass on the feast of St. Clare, saying the entrance antiphon "Come bride of Christ, and receive the crown which the Lord has prepared for you". There was rejoicing that her suffering was over but her death brought a sense of emptiness to many and an awareness that a bright light had been extinguished.

According to her own wish the wake was held at a local funeral parlour where large numbers of relatives and friends came to pray beside her and to recall their relationships with her as well as to express consternation at her unexpected death. Some 300 friends filled St. Mary's Basilica for her funeral, giving witness to the many whose lives had been touched by Sister Margaret Lahey during her eighty-four years. Monsignor Albert O'Driscoll celebrated the Mass, Monsignor Richard Murphy gave the homily and Bishop William Power the final blessing. She was buried in Mount Olivet Cemetery. A wreath laid on her grave came from a College Street boy in Newfoundland - a fitting tribute to one who never seemed to forget a friend.

Appendix 1.

Letters with dates and authors

1. July 21, 1919	Halifax	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
2. July 27, 1919	Halifax	C.M. Lowth RSCJ
3. July 6, 1920	Halifax	C.M. Lowth RSCJ
4. July 15, 1920	Halifax	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
5. July 10, 1921	Halifax	M.L. Ryan RSCJ
6. Aug. 4, 1921	Halifax	C.M. Lowth RSCJ
7. Summer 1921	Halifax	M.L. Ryan RSCJ
8. August 17, 1921	Halifax	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
9. Summer, 1922	Halifax	M.L. Ryan RSCJ
10. Summer 1922	Halifax	M.L. Ryan RSCJ
11. July 14, 1922	Halifax	C.M. Lowth RSCJ
12. July 16, 1922	Halifax	M. Wauters RSCJ
13. July 23, 1922	Halifax	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
14. July 25, 1922	Sault	M. Jensen RSCJ
15. July 31, 1922	Halifax	M.L. Ryan RSCJ
16. Summer 1922	Halifax	M.L. Ryan RSCJ
17. Aug 18, 1922	Sault	C.M. Lowth RSCJ
18. August 21, 1922	Halifax	M.L. Ryan RSCJ
19. August 28, 1922	Halifax	M.L. Ryan RSCJ
20. September 3, 1922	Halifax	C.M. Lowth RSCJ
21. September 3, 1922	Halifax	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
22. October 2, 1922	Halifax	C. M. L. [C.M. Lowth RSCJ]
23. Undated	Halifax	Olive
24. October 11, 1922	Halifax	M.L. Ryan RSCJ
25. Sunday	Halifax	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
26. October 13, 1922	Montreal	B. Pacaud RSCJ
27. October 16, 1922	Halifax	M.L. Ryan RSCJ
28. November 1922	Halifax	M.L. Ryan RSCJ
29. November 27, 1922	Halifax	C.M. Lowth RSCJ
30. December 29, 1922	Halifax	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
31. January 1, 1923	Halifax	C.M. Lowth RSCJ
32. January 1923	Halifax	M.L. Ryan RSCJ
33. January 14, 1923	Halifax	Margaret Lahey [later RSCJ]
34. January 21, 1923	Halifax	Alice Harris
35. January 21, 1923	Halifax	Margaret Lahey [later RSCJ]
36. February 25, 1923	Eden Hall, PA	Gertrude Bodkin RSCJ

37. March 4, 1923	Charlottetown	Queenie (Margaret) Jenkins
38. March 12, 1923	Kenwood	May Ryan RSCJ (& Bodkin RSCJ)
39. March 25, 1923	Halifax	Alice Harris (& Ryan RSCJ)
40. March 25, 1923	Halifax	M. Wauters RSCJ
41. March 29, 1923	Halifax	M. Wauters RSCJ
42. April 4, 1923	Halifax	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
43. April 4, 1923	Sault	M. Coughlin RSCJ
44. Avril 8, 1923	Albany	B. Lecroix RSCJ
45. April 8, 1923	Halifax	M.L. Ryan RSCJ
46. April 17, 1923	??	A. Spies RSCJ
47. April 22, 1923	Manhattanville	Mary Byrne RSCJ
48. April 28, 1923	Sault	Mgt. M. Nealis RSCJ
49. April 29, 1923	Halifax	M.L. Ryan RSCJ
50. May 5, 1923	Halifax	Alice Harris
51. June 17, 1923	Halifax	M.L. Ryan RSCJ
52. June 24, 1923	Halifax	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
53. July 2, 1923	Halifax	C.M. Lowth RSCJ
54. July 3, 1923	Halifax	M. Wauters RSCJ
55. July 10, 1923	Halifax	M.L. Ryan RSCJ
56. July 22, 1923	Halifax	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
57. August 1923	Train to Montreal	M.L. Ryan RSCJ
58. August 19, 1923	Dartmouth	Margaret Lahey [later RSCJ]
59. August 29, 1923	Sault	M.L. Ryan RSCJ
60. September 14, 1923	Halifax	M. Wauters RSCJ
61. November 1, 1923	Sault	Mgt. M. Nealis RSCJ
62. November 1923	Sault	M.L. Ryan RSCJ
63. November 4, 1923	Halifax	M. Wauters RSCJ
64. November 4, 1923	Dartmouth	Margaret Lahey [later RSCJ]
65. November 11, 1923	Halifax	J. Naud RSCJ
66. November 15, 1923	Halifax	A. Turgeon RSCJ
67. December 17, 1923	Charlottetown	Queenie (Margaret) Jenkins
68. December 24, 1923	Halifax	Audrey Martin [sister of Pauline Martin RSCJ]
69. December 27, 1923	Halifax	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
70. December 27, 1923	Albany	G. Bodkin RSCJ
71. December 27, 1923	Albany	Rose M. Sinnott [later RSCJ]
72. December 27, 1923	Halifax	M. Wauters RSCJ
73. December 1923	Dartmouth	Margaret Lahey [later RSCJ]
74. December 31, 1923	Halifax	Audrey Martin [sister of Pauline Martin RSCJ]
75. January 1, 1924	Vancouver	I. Seymour RSCJ
76. January 1924 ?	Halifax	J. Naud RSCJ

77. January 3, 1924	Albany	F. Smith RSCJ
78. January 3, 1924	Halifax	P.G. Duffy RSCJ (Phoebe)
79. January 15, 1924	Vancouver	M. Conwell RSCJ
80. January 26, 1924	Manhattanville	A. Spies RSCJ
81. 1924	Halifax	Audrey Martin [sister of Pauline Martin RSCJ]
82. February 3, 1924	Halifax	Connie McGuiggan [later RSCJ]
83. February 3, 1923	Halifax	Audrey Martin [sister of Pauline Martin RSCJ]
84. February 3, 1924	Halifax	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
85. April 20, 1924	Halifax	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
86. April 23, 1924	Halifax	M. Wauters RSCJ
87. June 12, 1924	Sault	A. Turgeon RSCJ
88. June 15, 1924	Halifax	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
89. June 15, 1924	Sault	M.L. Ryan RSCJ
90. June 15, 1924	Halifax	M. Wauters RSCJ
91. June 29, 1924	Halifax	Audrey Martin [sister of Pauline Martin RSCJ]
92. July 5, 1924	Manhattanville	A. Spies RSCJ
93. August 5, 1924	Sault	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
94. September 12, 1924	Halifax	M. Wauters RSCJ
95. September 15, 1924	Grosse Pointe	F. Smith RSCJ
96. October 19, 1924	Manhattanville	A. Spies RSCJ
97. October 23, 1924	Halifax	M. Wauters RSCJ
98. October 26, 1924	Sault	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
99. November 23, 1924	Sault	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
100. December 31, 1924	Kenwood	Rose M. Sinnott RSCJ
101. January 2, 1925	Sault	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
102. January 2, 1925	Albany NY	G. Bodkin RSCJ
103. February 22, 1925	Point Grey	M. Conwell RSCJ
104. February 25, 1925	Sault	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
105. April 13, 1925	Manhattanville	A. Spies RSCJ
106. May 10, 1925	Kenwood	Margaret Lahey RSCJ
107. May 31, 1925	Sault	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
108. May 31, 1925	Sault	M.L. Ryan RSCJ
109. July 5, 1925	Sault	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
110. August 1925	Sault	M.L. Ryan RSCJ
111. August 17, 1925	Halifax	J. Naud RSCJ
112. October 11, 1925	Sault	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
113. October 18, 1925	Halifax	P.G. Duffy RSCJ (Phoebe)
114. November 6, 1925	Halifax	J. Naud RSCJ
115. November, 1925	Vancouver	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ

116.	November 28, 1925	Halifax	M.B. Wallace RSCJ
117.	December 1925	Vancouver	M.L. Ryan RSCJ
118.	May 16, 1926	Vancouver	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
119.	September 12, 1926	Vancouver	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
120.	November 9, 1926	Sault	Mgt. M. Nealis RSCJ
121.	January 30, 1927	Vancouver	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
122.	November 28, 1927	Vancouver	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
123.	January 29, 1928	Vancouver	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
124.	April 15, 1928	Vancouver	MaryA. McDermott RSCJ
125.	April 16, 1928	Sault	Mary Byrne RSCJ
126.	April 1928	Sault	M.L. Ryan RSCJ
127.	July 1928	Maplehurst	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
128.	October 14, 1928	Sault	Mary Byrne RSCJ
129.	December 29, 1928	Halifax	Eileen Burns
130.	February 12, 1929	Sault	Mary Byrne RSCJ
131.	February 12, 1929	Vancouver	Mary A McDermott RSCJ
132.	June 3, 1929	Sault	M.L. Ryan RSCJ
133.	August 25, 1929	Halifax	G. Dillon RSCJ
134.	September 2, 1929	Vancouver	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
135.	October 27, 1929	Halifax	Mary Byrne RSCJ
136.	December 1, 1929	Vancouver	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
137.	December 18, 1929	Point Grey	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
138.	December 19, 1929	Montreal	Sheila Conroy RSCJ
139.	December 22, 1929	Halifax	Mary Byrne RSCJ
140.	January 10, 1930	Vancouver	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
141.	February 8, 1930	Montreal	Sheila Conroy RSCJ
142.	February 8, 1930	Montreal	J. Naud RSCJ
143.	February 15, 1930	Vancouver	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
144.	February 15, 1930	Halifax	Margaret Conroy [later Henley]
145.	February 16, 1930	Kenwood	Amy McEvoy RSCJ
146.	March 4, 1930	Halifax	Mary Byrne RSCJ
147.	March 31, 1930	Halifax	M. B. Wallace RSCJ
148.	April 22, 1930	Vancouver	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
149.	February 17, 1931	Vancouver	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ
150.	October 25, 1931	Vancouver	Mary A. McDermott RSCJ

Appendix 2.

Some RSCJ Graves in Canada



Photo by Jennifer Eichenberg

N.B. Many monuments for RSCJ at Saint-François d'Assise Cemetery (Montreal) do not have the year of death. However, the cemetery website has the year of birth and death, and the parents' names. See:

<https://www.rsfa.ca/recherche-d-un-defunt.htm>

Last name	Given Names	Other markings on stone	Birth	Death	Location	Notes
Agnew	D.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Alschner	C.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Amyot	Alice	Sr.	1915	2004	Hfx. H. Cross	
Amyot	Sophie			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Arcand	Helene		1894	1980	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Archambault	Annette		1902	1992	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Archambault	Albina			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	d. 1926 *
Aubry	D.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Barbeau	Josephine			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Barette	Fabiola-Ursule			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	b. 1869, d. 1941
Barnard	Josephine		1883	1972	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Barnard	Mary			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Bartley	Edith	Miss		1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Bastide	H.			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Bastien	Helena			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Bathurst	Eileen	Sr.	1905	1996	Hfx. H. Cross	
Baudouin	Marthe		1907	1993	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Beauchamp	Mathilde			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Beaudry	H.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Beaulieu	R.			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Beaulieu	Elise			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Beaulieu	Virginie			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Beaulieu	Claudia			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Bedard	Alexina		1884	1974	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Bedard	Marie-Anne		1904	1984	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Belanger	Aurelie			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Bergeron	Marie			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Bessette	Jeanne			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Bienvenu	D.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Bispinck	Anna			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	

Bissonnette	M.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Blagdon	Mary-Ann		1865	1941	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Blais	Alphonsine			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Blais	Marie			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Blanchard	A.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Blanchet	A.			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Blanchet	Philia			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Boilone	L.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Boily	Marie			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Boily	Marie A.			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Bonin	Mary Louise	Coad. Prof.	1885	Feb. 20, 1933	St. Peter's Van.	
Boucher	Irene		1897	1981	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Boudreau	Ellen L.	Sr.	1909	1996	Hfx. H. Cross	
Bourque	Marie Jeanne		1906	1999	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Bourque	Josephine			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Boutin	Ludivine			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Boutin	Philomene			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Braceland	Phyllis	Sr.	1913	2004	Hfx. H. Cross	
Brangier	A.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Brazeau	Delina		1892	1978	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Brennan	Margaret		1866	1920	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Brennan	Mary		1865	1926	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Brennan	A.	CX., Aged 68		April 16, 1881	Hfx. H. Cross	
Brisset Des Nos	Suzanne		1904	1989	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Burns	E.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Burton	Elizabeth		1863	1919	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Byrne	Mary			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	b. 1871; d. 1945
Cable	Lillian		1876	1980	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Cable	Madeleine		1908	1984	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Cadieux	Emma			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Campion	C.			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Caplice	Catherine			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Carroll	Ellen		1851	1925	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Carter	Mary		1904	1998	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Carvill	Agnes		1870	1937	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	

Carvill	Catherine			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Castonguay	Maria			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Champagne	E.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Champeaux	Domitille			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Chaput	F.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Charbonneau	Cecile		1900	2001	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Charlebois	E.			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Charlebois	Charlotte			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Charlebois	Philomene			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Chedal	Augustine			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Chevalier	Josephine			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Chisholm	Katherine		1896	1956	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Chisholm	I.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Clapin	Corinne	S.V.		1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Clarke	Mary			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Clement	Elise			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Cloutier	E.			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Cochran	Margaret			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Codie	Teresa	Choir Prof.	July 15, 1888	May 2, 1954	St. Peter's Van.	b. Halifax N.S.
Colford	Jane		1886	1947	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Collins	Gertrude		1886	1981	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Comte	Victorine		1845	1904	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Conaughton	Alice		1889	1972	Mtl. St. F. A.) siblings
Conaughton	Cecilia		1893	1979	Mtl. St. F. A.) siblings
Connolly	Elizabeth		1831	1905	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Connolly	Margaret	Sr., RSCJ.	1921	2012	Hfx. H. Cross	
Conrod	E.	CH., Aged 28		May 22, 1889	Hfx. H. Cross	
Conroy	Sheila M. G.	Sr.	1904	2000	Hfx. H. Cross	
Converse	Evelyn	Miss		1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Conwell	Mary	(Rev. Mother)	Aug. 24, 1858	June 23, 1929	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	b. Digby NS
Corbeil	Augustine		1903	1989	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Corcoran	M.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Corcoran	J.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Coster	Grace			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	

Coster	Clare			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	d. 1919 **
Cote	H.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Cote	Josephine			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Coughlin	Madeline			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.) siblings
Coughlin	Mary			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.) siblings
Couren	Lucie			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Coutu	Celine			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Couture	Celina			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Cowan	Regina	Sr.	1913	1998	Hfx. H. Cross	
Cremor	Isabelle			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	d. Jan.2/25 ***
Crevier	Clara		1854	1939	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Crevier	Marie			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Croke (also Croak)	Annie	Choir Prof.	Feb. 2, 1868	Mar. 22, 1963	St. Peter's Van.	b. Halifax N.S.
Crowe	Delia		1868	1950	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Crowley	Catherine		1855	1948	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Cullinen	Emma			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Cunat	Z.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Currie	Maureen	Sr.	1932	2005	Hfx. H. Cross	
D'Inguibert	Marie			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Dallaire	Adele			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Daly	Agnes	Choir Prof.	1868	July 26, 1933	St. Peter's Van.	
Daly	Louise		1903	2004	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Dandurand	A.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Dandurand	Leodile			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Davenne	Mary		1850	1920	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
David	J.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Davis	Mary Christina	Professed	Oct. 27, 1885	Aug 20, 1969	St. Peter's Van.	b. Windsor Ont.
De Bury	Jeanne			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
De Grangeneuve	Agnes			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
De La Goupilliere	Jeanne		1872	Aug. 10, 1960	St. Peter's Van.	
De Monestrol	A.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
De Monpoly	Marie			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	d. 1926 *
De Poncheville	Berthe T.			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
De Schauenbourg	H.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	

De Traversay	Isabelle			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
De Vantini	M.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Dechaunac	Florence	Professed	1878	Oct. 17, 1963	St. Peter's Van.	
Decloux	F.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Demers	S.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Dery	Annette		1909	1989	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Des Grees Du Lou	E.			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Desbarats	Cecile			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Desjardins	E.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Dillon	Gertrude		Mar. 22, 1863	June 12, 1947	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	b. Hamilton Ont.
Doherty	Margaret Agnes	Choir Prof.	Dec. 28, 1897	May 1, 1948	St. Peter's Van.	b. Montreal Que.; run over
Doherty	Mary		1836	1906	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Donahoe	Agnes		1898	1988	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Donohoe	Mary			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Dorion	Cephise			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Doyle	Eveleen		1857	1944	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Doyle	Anne		1847	1939	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Driscoll	Annie	Choir Prof.	1863	Feb. 17, 1943	St. Peter's Van.	
Dube	Marie			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Duchastel	Gabrielle			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Dudomaine	Anna			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Duffy	Ethel		1893	1984	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Duffy	Phoebe Gertrude		Dec. 5, 1853	March 3, 1929	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	b. St. John NB
Duffy	Mary			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Duffy	Josephine			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	d. 1926 *
Dufresne	Exilda		1873	1960	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Dufresne	Caroline			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Dulong De Rosnay	Alix			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Dumouchel	Josette			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Duplessis	H.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Dupont	Bernadette		1894	1982	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Dupuis	D.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Dupuis	Octavie			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	

Egan	Rita	Sr.	1917	1998	Hfx. H. Cross	
Elliott	Maude	Sr.	1913	2006	Hfx. H. Cross	
Fahey	M.	CX., Aged 29		Oct. 8, 1878	Hfx. H. Cross	
Filion	Henrietta		1895	1992	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Fillion	Adele			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Finn	Evelyn	Choir Prof.	Nov. 9, 1877	Apr. 19, 1959	St. Peter's Van.	b. Saint John N.B.
Fitzgerald	Mary		1850	1929	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Fitzpatrick	R.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Fitzpatrick	M.	CX., Aged 74		Apr. 18, 1900	Hfx. H. Cross	
Flaget	E.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Flanigan	Margaret		1852	1914	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Flynn	Sarah		1866	1940	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Flynn	Annie			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Fontaine	Julienne			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Forbes	Sophie			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Forster	Eleanor	Coad. Prof.	1866	May 5, 1938	St. Peter's Van.	
Fortune	Bridget		1873	1942	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Fox	Anna		1839	1914	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Frejeau	Arthemise			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Gagnon	Z.			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Galarneau	A.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Gallant	Marie Madeleine		Jan. 31, 1885	Sep. 7, 1965	St. Peter's Van.	1911 Pioneer teacher; b. Hope River P.E.I.
Gallant	Judith		1875	1966	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Garriveau	D.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Gary	Ernestine			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Gauthier	L.			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Gauvin	Claire			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Gendron	Vitaline			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Genest	Josephine			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Gervais	Z.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Gervais	Emilie			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Gillen	Catherine			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Gockelin	Marguerite			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Gorden	Madeleine			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	

Gough	M. Alberta	Sr.	1911	2001	Hfx. H. Cross	
Gratton	Georgianna			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Gravel	Marie			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	d. 1926 *
Grise	A.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Grundell	E.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Gubernator	J.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Guenot	A.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Guitton	Gaetane			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Haley	Josephine		1886	1972	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Hamel	E.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Hamel	Zenaide			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Hamilton	Marie			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Hanraty	C.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Hartigan	E.	CX., Aged 54		Jan. 24, 1903	Hfx. H. Cross	
Hayes	Ann E.			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Healy	Ella			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Hegglin	Sophie			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Henrion	Katherine		1895	1974	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Hoban	Catherine			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Hogan	Bridget	Coad. Prof.	1856	Feb. 13, 1927	St. Peter's Van.	
Homme	Jeanne Marie	Choir Prof.	Aug. 20, 1869	Mar. 8, 1951	St. Peter's Van.	b. Alencon, France
Houde	Angeline		1901	1980	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Howard	Mary	Sr.	1905	1995	Hfx. H. Cross	
Hoyt	K.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Huber	Octavie			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Hudon	Flora			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Hudon	Theresine			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Hudon	Blanche		1898	1978	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Hughes	Gertrude		1899	1977	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Hughes	Rose		1844	1925	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Hughes	Marie			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Ipperciel	Rose			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Iser	Amelie			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Jacques	Arthemise			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	

Jennison	C.	CH., Aged 49		Sept. 24, 1889	Hfx. H. Cross	
Jensen	Mary			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	b. 1874; d. 1941
Johnson	Margaret	Sr.	1920	2007	Hfx. H. Cross	
Jourdain	Marie			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Juteau	Alexine			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Kammerer	Bertha			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Kearney	E.	CH., Aged 71		May 10, 1904	Hfx. H. Cross	
Kelly	Margaret		1872	1936	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Kennedy	M.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Keogh	Mary		Feb. 2, 1861	Aug. 30, 1930	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	b. Bonavista Bay, Nfld.
Keough	Anne-Marie			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Khun	H.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Kinsela	Blanche			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
La Pierre	Helena			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Labrecque	Marie		1905	1978	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Lacasse	Marie			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	or Anne-Marie
Lach	Elisa	Choir Prof.	1862	Mar. 22, 1931	St. Peter's Van.	
Lafleur	Irene		1912	2000	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Lafond	A.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Lahey	Margaret		1903	1987	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Lahey	Agnes		1914	1995	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Lambert	E.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Lamere	Marie			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Lanctot	Rita		1904	1987	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Lanctot	Rachel			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Lanctot	Rose-Alma		1903	1983	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Landry	Lena	Sr.	1902	2007	Hfx. H. Cross	
Langlais	Marie			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Langlois	Philomene			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Lanigan	Margery M.	Sr.	1905	2000	Hfx. H. Cross	
Lapalme	Alexandrine			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Lapierre	Marie-Anne	Professed	Jan. 13, 1885	Jan. 3, 1978	St. Peter's Van.	b. Montreal Que.
Lapierre	Gertrude		1913	1993	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Latour	Mathilde			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	

Lauzon	Pomela		1886	1973	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Lauzon	Anathalie		1884	1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Lavoie	P.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Laya	M.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
LeBlanc	Brigitte		1896	1990	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
LeBlanc	Marguerite		1882	1953	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Lecavelier	Denise			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
LeCavelier	Marguerite		1910	1992	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Lee	Lucy			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Legris	Nina		1900	1976	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Lemieux	P.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Leonard	Josephine			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Lesota	Anne	(Kenya)	1933	1982	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Leveque	C.			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Levesque	Rose-Anna			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Lewis	Jacqueline		1913	1998	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Liffiton	Doris			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Limoges	Sarah			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Lionais	H.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Loeser	Mathilde			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Lowth	Catherine			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	d. Dec.24/24 ***
Lynch	Margaret			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
MacDonald	Beatrice		1900	1979	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Maher	Maude			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Mahony	Ellen	S.V.		1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	d. Jan. 16, 1925
Maloney	Bridget		1844	1915	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Maloney	K.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Manahan	T.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Manley	Florence		1892	1970	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Mannette	Ida		1898	1987	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Marchand	Emma			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Marson	Harriet			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Martell	Jane		1893	1978	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Martin	Pauline	Sr.	1910	2008	Hfx. H. Cross	
Masson	E.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	

Masson	M.			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Mathieu	Louise			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Mathieu	Berthe			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
McArtt	E.	CX., Aged 27		May 14, 1896	Hfx. H. Cross	
McAvoy	Sarah		1859	1945	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
McCaffrey	Katherine		1911	1992	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
McCarthy	Josephine	Sr.	1918	2007	Hfx. H. Cross	
McCarthy	Bridget			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
McCormack	Belinda			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
McCurry	Anna		Apr. 12, 1882	Feb. 21, 1972	St. Peter's Van.	b. Owen Sound Ont., Housekeeper
McDermott	Mary A. B.		Mar. 8, 1880	Dec. 6, 1967	St. Peter's Van.	b. Boston Mass.
McDonell	Flora		1871	1933	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
McDonnell	Mary			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	
McEvoy	Amy			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	b. 1895; d. 1963
McGee	Mary			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
McGinn	Margaret		1859	1919	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
McGovern	Margaret		June 29, 1849 ****	Jan. 10, 1929	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	b. Cavan, Ireland
McGrath	Katherine		1879	1932	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
McGuiggan	Constance		1905	1973	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
McGuiggan	F.	(Miss)	1902	1979	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
McGurt	Mary-Ann			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
McKenna	Margaret			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
McManus	Katherine		Feb 19,1883	Jan 13, 1962	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	b. Memramcook NB
McManus	Ann	Sr., RSCJ.	1918	2012	Hfx. H. Cross	
McNamara	Gertrude		1903	1986	Mtl. St. F. A.	
McNiff	Stella			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
McSweeney	Barbra	Sr.	1934	2006	Hfx. H. Cross	
Meehan	C.	CX., Aged 65		Feb. 28, 1898	Hfx. H. Cross	
Messier	Josephine			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Metayer	Valerie		1896	1986	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Metzler	Edith	Sr.	1903	1998	Hfx. H. Cross	
Michaud	Agnes			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Mielke	Joanna		1860	1943	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Miller	Mary		1856	1919	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	

Millet	Marie			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Minette	Julienne			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Montmigny	A.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Montreuil	S. A.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Moore	M. A.	CX., Aged 34		Dec. 29, 1895	Hfx. H. Cross	
Moore	Margaret			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Moore	Anna			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Morin	Germaine		1899	1991	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Morin	Cecile		1895	1977	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Morin	Berthe		1892	1988	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Morrison	Mary-Ann			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Morrison	Teresa			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Moss	Elizabeth		1895	1983	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Murphy	Mary J.		1871	1903	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Murphy	Clare	Professed	May 15, 1889	July 5, 1967	St. Peter's Van.	b. Halifax N.S.
Murphy	Alice		1898	1973	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Murphy	Elizabeth	Sr.	1917	2008	Hfx. H. Cross	
Murphy	Evangeline			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Murphy	E.			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Murphy	Eliza			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Murray	B.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Murray	Eva-May		Jan. 21, 1876	Aug 15, 1946	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	b. Wilton Grove, Ont.
Murray	Annie	Choir Prof.	1857	Oct. 22, 1940	St. Peter's Van.	
Myatt	Rose		1878	1954	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Nadeau	Marie		1842	1923	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Naher	E.			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Nahrings	Teresa Anna Maria	Choir Prof.	Oct. 8, 1876	Apr. 19, 1949	St. Peter's Van.	b. Chicago Ill.
Naud	Josephine			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	b. 1870; d. 1956
Nealis	Margaret Mary		Dec. 9, 1876	Dec. 17, 1957	Mtl. St. F. A.	b. Fredericton, NB
Newbery	Faustina			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Noble	Ann	Choir Prof.	Nov. 21, 1867	Apr. 7, 1948	St. Peter's Van.	b. Collingwood Ont.
Nolin	Philomene			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
O'Connor	Genevieve		1888	1948	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	

O'Connor	Bridget			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	
O'Donovan	M.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
O'Farrell	K.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
O'Farrell	Conchessa			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
O'Hara	Mary		1826	1919	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
O'Neil	M.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
O'Reilly	M.	CH., Aged 77		May 10, 1902	Hfx. H. Cross	
O'Shea	C.	Coad. Prof.		July 6, 1948	St. Peter's Van.	
O'Shea	Mary			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	
O'Toole	Christine			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Obold	H.	CX., Aged 38		Nov. 20, 1861	Hfx. H. Cross	
Odet	A.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Ouellet	Malvina			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Ouellette	Josephine			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Pacaud	Blanche	Mother	Nov. 3, 1887	June 8, 1965	St. Peter's Van.	b. Bay City Mich.
Padberg	Bertha	S.V.		1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Page	Isobel	Sr.	1913	2004	Hfx. H. Cross	
Page	A.	CH., Aged 41		Mar. 27, 1893	Hfx. H. Cross	
Pageot	Marie			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Palmer	Edith		1895	1972	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Paquet	Marie			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Paquin	Anastasie			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Pare	Valerie			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Parent	Evelyn		1917	1982	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Patry	Maria		1900	1987	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Pelletier	A.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Pesant	Delia		1901	1981	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Pesant	Esther			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Pesendorfer	Pauline		1863	1946	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Pichet	Marie			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Piette	G.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Piette	Celina			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Pigeon	Emma			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Pigeon	Blanche		1898	1987	Mtl. St. F. A.	

Pillet	Gertrude			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Pinard	Sophie			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	d. Dec 1924 ***
Pineau	Aubeline			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Pineault	Stephanie		1889	1973	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Pineault	Marie		1893	1985	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Plamondon	Malvina			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Powe	Mary		1873	1937	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Power	Margaret	Sr.	1908	2005	Hfx. H. Cross	
Power	Elizabeth	Sr.	1911	2006	Hfx. H. Cross	
Power	Mary V.	Sr., RSCJ.	1920	2012	Hfx. H. Cross	
Pozzesi	Josephine			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Purdy	Josephine			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Quigley	S.	CH., Aged 52		Jan. 21, 1892	Hfx. H. Cross	
Quinlan	Josephine			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Raborg	Emilie			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Ralston	Helen	Sr.	1929	2006	Hfx. H. Cross	
Ramsey	Susan		1878	1958	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Reilly	Mary			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Richard	N.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Richards	Mary			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Rigney	E.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Roach	M. A.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Roberge	D.			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Roberts	Margaret		1903	1991	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Rousseau	Marie		1917	1994	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Rousseau	Elise		1889	1992	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Roussel	Roseanna			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Roy	Ada			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Rutledge	Elizabeth			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Sampson	Henriette		1870	1946	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Sargeant	Ellen	Coad. Prof.	1897	Oct. 11, 1937	St. Peter's Van.	
Sauvageau	Maria		1888	1987	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Sauvageau	Adeline			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Sauvageau	Rosa		1896	1993	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Sauve	Antoinette	Sr.	1907	2002	Hfx. H. Cross	

Sauve	Anastasia			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Sauve	Alma			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Scanlan	Mary			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	b. 1869; d. 1942
Senecal	Agnes		1905	1990	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Servant	Virginie			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Seymour	Ida (Mary Helen)			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	b. 1874; d. 1968
Shanks	E.			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Shannon	Julia		1858	1938	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Shea	M.	CH., Aged 27		Feb. 6, 1863	Hfx. H. Cross	
Sheridan	Elizabeth		1847	Sep. 14, 1926	St. Peter's Van.	
Shute	Madeleine	Sr.	1917	2003	Hfx. H. Cross	
Siegrist	Louise			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Singer	A.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Sinnott	Rose		1895	1979	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Sirois	S.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Skelly	Margaret			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Smith	A.	CX., Aged 71		July 16, 1891	Hfx. H. Cross	
Smith	E.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Sneringer	C.	CH., Aged 34		July 31, 1864	Hfx. H. Cross	
Soucy	Marie			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Spattz	Elmire			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
St-Denis	A.			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
St-Denis	Eugenie			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Starner	E.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Stone	Rosa	Choir Prof.	1858	Jan. 25, 1936	St. Peter's Van.	
Story	Ursula	Sr.	1905	1994	Hfx. H. Cross	
Story	Monica		1896	1995	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Sullivan	Eleanor		1867	1942	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Sullivan	M. E.	CH., Aged 52		Nov. 21, 1891	Hfx. H. Cross	
Sullivan	E. F.	CH., Aged 31		Sep. 26, 1897	Hfx. H. Cross	
Surveyer	C.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Talbot	Marie			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Tallon	T.			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	

Tavernier	Antoinette			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Thevenon	M.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Thibodeau	D.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Tierney	K.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Tremblay	C.			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Tremblay	Philomene			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Trincano	Theresine	S.V.		1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Turcotte	L.			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Turgeon	Rachel			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Turgeon	Adele			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Tynan	Johanna		1831	1903	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Urquhart	A.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Vallieres	Marie		1911	2000	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Van Den Hoeven	Maria			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Vigeant	Georgianna			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Viger	Lucie			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Villeneuve	Albertine		1888	1980	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Villeneuve	Eleonore			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Villeneuve	Marie			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Villeneuve	Azilda			1954 to 1969	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Vincent	E.			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Vinet	L.			1874 to 1892	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Wall	Sarah			1928 to 1938	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Wallace	Mary Blanche	Choir Prof.	July 25, 1885	Jan. 23, 1954	St. Peter's Van.	b. Halifax N.S.
Walsh	Mary			1938 to 1954	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Watson	A.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Whelan	Mary		1857	1930	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Whelihan	Gertrude Catherine	Choir Prof.	Feb. 2, 1869	Mar. 15, 1947	St. Peter's Van.	b. Stratford Ont.
White	Mary		1886	1973	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
White	A.			1850 to 1874	Mtl. St. F. A.	
White	A.			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
White	Elizabeth		1895	1935	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Whitehead	Eleanor F.	Sr.	1907	1997	Hfx. H. Cross	
Wilkins	Alice		1892	1970	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Winter	Catherine			1905 to 1918	Mtl. St. F. A.	

Wood	A.			1892 to 1905	Mtl. St. F. A.	
Wynne	Mary-Alice		1882	1959	Hfx. Mt. Olivet	
Yell	Pamela	Sr.	1918	2007	Hfx. H. Cross	
Yserentant	Jeanne			1919 to 1928	Mtl. St. F. A.	

* See letter from Margaret Mary Nealis November 9, 1926.

** See letter from Mary McDermott July 21, 1919.

*** See letter from Mary McDermott Jan. 2, 1925.

**** Cemetery monument says born in 1846; death certificate says 1849.

Halifax Cemeteries - Mount Olivet and Holy Cross

Montreal Cemetery - Saint-François d'Assise

Note: There was a cemetery at Sault au Récollet but, when the Convent closed, the graves were moved to Saint-François d'Assise.

Vancouver Cemetery - St. Peter's

Note: There was a Cemetery on the Vancouver Convent grounds but, when the property was sold, the graves were moved to St. Peter's.

Source for Vancouver Information:

Dale and Archie Miller

A Sense of History Research Services Inc.

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