



# What's Up

December 2023

LORETTO CANADA | SINCE 1847

*Mission is at the heart of who we are,  
and love is the driving force that urges us on.*



Once again, as on a silent night long ago,  
We are challenged to live and love  
With outrageous hope.

May the still, small voice of love within each of us  
Once more give birth to shouts of hope,  
Songs of Peace on Earth.

(Doris Klein CSA)

*Ewase Jane Mary*

Loretto Sisters | IBVM Canada Leadership

Image courtesy of the Angel Foundation for Learning  
[www.angelfoundationforlearning.org](http://www.angelfoundationforlearning.org)

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Fall was a special time with our 175th closing celebration and Visitation with Carmel Swords IBVM

L to r: Srs Rosemary, Jeanne, Marianna, Cabrini, Celima, Carmel, Ursula, Helen and Juliana

## Presentation Manor

Ursula Witkowska

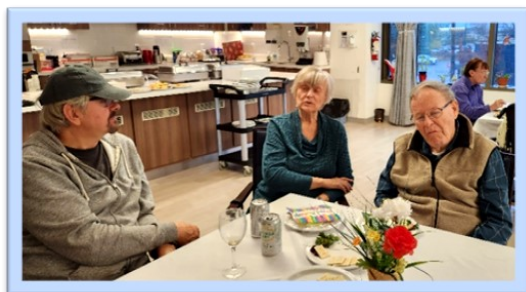
**Our friends old and new:** One of the many blessings of living at Presentation Manor is the pleasure of making new friends and meeting old ones. Each month brings our Loretto community together to celebrate birthdays. The Country Kitchen in the 2nd Floor Assisted Living becomes party central – celebrating ‘ours’ as a community but ‘others’ (our new and old friends) join us as well.

THE cake is the highlight of the party, and it is served accompanied by the singing of Happy Birthday (in a low key of course!)

The staff are amazing – from set up, cutting the cake and clean up – they jump right in and assist as needed. Fortunately, there are always ‘leftovers’, which are then shared at breaks and dinner time. Here are some of our friends.



Clockwise from top left: Happy 100 Birthday Mavis!; Maria Lanthier & Bill Irwin, CSB; Sheila Zettel & Brian Swords, SFM; Jordi, Zophia and Ted



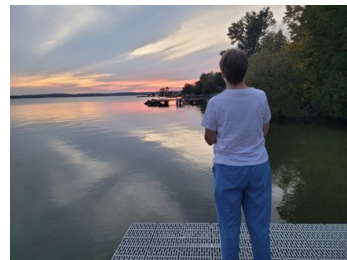
## Loretto Maryholme

Carol Ivens

The docks have been drawn in and the tender trees wrapped in their burlap



blankets as we prepare for the coming snows and cold season ahead. We are already welcoming 2024 registrations for silent retreats and bookings by private retreatants/groups for our cabins, Fensom Cottage and Edgar House.



The gratitude expressed by our guests for the many opportunities to restore, rest and go back into their busy lives refreshed are plentiful (spending time in these sacred spaces of beauty & stillness on the grounds, taking in the forest's fragrances of fallen leaves underfoot, snoozing on the swing in the wrap-around porch, sitting with a trusted spiritual director for holy listening...). So many are carrying heavy burdens and enduring painful losses in these days – truly we are blessed to be able to provide a safe space in which they can take some time to catch a breath and nurture their mind, body & spirit as they resume their journeys.



Click on the labyrinth and find your centre at our Centre

*"We deeply respect the spiritual journeys of all those who are seeking wholeness for themselves and a better world for all."* Laurie van den Hurk



## 175th Closing Celebration - September 16, 2023

IBVM Canada Leadership

We have warm memories of a wonderful afternoon for our 175th closing celebration - with Mass in the crypt at St Michael's Cathedral followed by a well attended reception at Loretto College. A number of dignitaries were present, our Institute leader, Sr Carmel Swords IBVM, along with sisters who travelled from the community in the USA. Our Archives team prepared a very special display of unusual historical relics that are not normally available to view, for example, the rosary of Teresa Dease.

You can watch the Mass on the [Daily TV Mass channel](#). We hope to have speeches available for viewing soon.



From top: Sr Angela, Lynn and Theresa at Loretto College, guests Mary Eileen Donovan & Don Walker in the crypt, archival display



From top: Sr Jane McDonnell & Michelle Pariag, Sisters in the crypt, Sr Cabrini and Mary Fohr at Loretto College



## Archives

Michelle Pariag

The Loretto Archives is pleased to have concluded our contributions to the 175th Anniversary Celebrations in September. We had 4 groups of people from all walks of life come together and participate on the Walking Tour to celebrate and educate participants on the conditions and social climate that the First Five Loretto Sisters who came to Canada would have arrived in. The last group of the walking tours happened at the start of November and was attended by the teachers of Loretto College School. We hope that everyone who went on the tour got a taste of the rich history of the Irish community in Toronto and got a sense of the challenges our First Five Sisters took in hand.



Loretto College School staff at tour conclusion in crypt at St Michael's Cathedral



Legacy wall at Loretto Abbey

In September we were asked to once again put on a display of Archival Holdings at Loretto Abbey during their grade 8 open house. We put out a number of items ranging from old vinyl records of school concerts to old uniforms (always very popular with the young prospective students, in particular the light blue blazer that Abbey students wore at one time). While at this open house we caught our first glimpse of the Legacy Wall that the Abbey had put up in their main floor hallway with a large picture of some of our Sisters.

In October we were contacted by a Loretto College School Alumnae from the class of '63. Clara Creglia had a number of items relating to her time as a student that she was interested in donating to the archives. Over two wonderful visits with Clara we heard great stories about the life

long friends she made at LCS, and were presented with a number of memorabilia from her time as a student. These donated items will add to the rich history of the Sisters and give us another glimpse into the proud tradition of Loretto Sisters as educators.

The oral history project also continues. We have spoken with more of our Sisters to learn about their histories and works in ministries in Canada and across the globe. We have been continually fascinated and amazed by all the stories we have heard of the incredible adventures and perseverance of our Sisters, as well as touched by their stories of growing up and how they came to join the Institute.

As we approach the new year we are getting back to our core projects and working on sorting and processing the rich history of the Loretto Sisters.



Clara Creglia standing between her Loretto College School graduation dress and a painting of foundress Mary Ward



## El Salvador

Evanne Hunter

On Sunday, November 19th the Salvadoran Canadian Association once again had a memorial Mass in the Loretto College chapel to commemorate the death of six Jesuits, their housekeeper and her daughter at the UCA in San Salvador. They were brutally killed at dawn on November 16, 1989, by an elite battalion of the Salvadoran Armed Forces in the garden of their residence. Fr Bert Folio S.J. was the presider and we enjoyed Salvadoran “sweets” afterwards. The names of the “martyrs” are displayed on the front of the altar.



We did not resume the traditional Loretto/ La Bermuda Brunch fundraiser this fall for several reasons. However, we do plan to gather on Saturday, March 23 at Loretto Abbey at 2:00 p.m. This will be a triple whammy! The Salvadoran Canadian Association memorial Mass for the anniversary of the assassination of St Oscar Romero; the 35th anniversary of Loretto's Twinning with La Bermuda; a late celebration of my 65th anniversary as a Loretto Sister!

**Mark down the date so that you can join us!** We will begin with Mass with Salvadoran music and follow up with simple finger food in the Abbey Parlours ... maybe with Salvadoran goodies. Thank you to TCDSB and the Admin team at the Abbey school for allowing this to happen.

## Cardinal's Dinner 2023

This event has grown to become Canada's largest annual dinner. The head table (which welcomed Sr Evanne) includes representation from government, religious and business leaders. A wonderful evening was had by all!



Left (l to r): Kathy Murtha & Ursula Witkowska  
Right (l to r): Mary Ann Leon, Jeanne Cover and Jane McDonell

## Mary Ward Centre

Audrey Ferrer

It has been a busy autumn at the Mary Ward Centre - with fully booked high school retreats at Loretto College and engaging elementary schools with new workshops highlighting our Loretto Sisters.



Grade 1 students in Ms. Zupan's class learn all about the saints and the Loretto Sisters as holy helpers -- through dance, stick puppet storytelling, dolls, board books and bingo.



High school students from the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board engage in the Migrant Worker Exercise facilitated by the Collaborative Network to End Exploitation. This session was hosted by CSJ, The Mary Ward Centre, and the University of Toronto.

## Arrabon House - Another seed planted and flourishing

Evanne Hunter with excerpts from an article by Bob McElhinney

In 1973, under the leadership of Maria Lanthier, IBVM, Arrabon House opened at 29 Wilson Park Rd in Parkdale, Toronto. Arrabon is a Greek word meaning “a promise of things to come”.

Bob McElhinney, a member of the founding Board of Directors of Arrabon, recalls the early years when he was one of the small group that Maria Lanthier gathered together to help her bring her vision to life.



Maria Lanthier

Bob writes that “Without any exaggeration, Maria was the driving force that got Arrabon off the ground and made the agency successful. She saw the need for an agency to provide adolescent girls who needed shelter, emotional support and who, in some cases, had brushes with the law. Maria demonstrated more tenacity than anyone I have ever met and worked tirelessly to create Arrabon. She built relationships with Provincial Government agencies that funded Arrabon with per-diem financing. She deserves all the credit for Arrabon's success.

The house came to Arrabon through the generosity of the St Vincent de Paul Society. The acquisition led to a challenge for the initial board because of the renovations required by City of Toronto fire and other regulations. Board member Ted Landry was key to finding and managing contractors to get the work done. Early fundraising helped but money was always tight and I am sure the Loretto Sisters came to the rescue many times. I remember one meeting with Maria when I advised her that we did not have enough money to meet the payroll for staff. Typical of Maria, she patted me on the arm and said, “Don’t worry Bob. It will all be provided.”

A wonderful atmosphere existed at Arrabon. As an example, every Board meeting started with dinner at the house with the staff and all of the girls who were in residence. As a Board member, you never lost sight of why you were there. Maria held an annual barbecue at her parents' farm in Bradford. Paul Hansen would offer Mass on the lawn and we all attended with our families and the young women.

My wife, Nancy, reminded me that as a placement officer for Toronto Catholic Children's Aid she loved placing girls at Arrabon because of the homey, loving and supportive atmosphere. Under Maria's leadership, excellent staff were recruited and turnover was very low.”



Maria remained at Arrabon until 1983 when Sr Rosemary Albon took over and was responsible for establishing a second facility, Lanthier House, where girls who moved on after their time at Arrabon continued to be supported during their transition back to society. Rosemary remained until 1997 when she was replaced by Karen Prosper who kept the original vision alive until a change occurred in 2021.

For many reasons, including the fact that the Provincial Government mandated small agencies to merge together or lose funding, Arrabon became part of Loft Community Services but the vision and mission of Arrabon-Lanthier House continues.

The attached article includes testimonies from young women who lived at Arrabon and Lanthier Place. For them, the “promise of things to come” made to them as they entered Arrabon has been fulfilled.

## The Loretto Sisters receive Catholic Education Foundation of Ontario (CEFO) Medal of Honour

Evanne Hunter

Mary Mallany, Jane Dunbar and Evanne Hunter were present at the gala dinner on October 28, 2023; when CEFO presented their Medal of Honour to the Loretto Sisters. The presenters were Ab Falconi, Executive Director, Bishop Robert Casun CSB and Mary Eileen Donovan of the Board of Directors and Mike Paulter who nominated the Loretto Sisters for the Award.

This award is presented to an individual or organization “whose outstanding contribution to Catholic Education merits the commendation of the entire Catholic Educational Community”.



Left to right: Michael Poelter, Bishop Cashun, Sr Evanne, Mary Eileen Donovan, Ab Falconi

CEFO annually celebrates the fine work done in Catholic Schools. Students (one from each Catholic Secondary School in the Province), and a school which has made an outstanding contribution to the school and community are honoured. Usually, one individual receives the Medal of Honour but, this year it was presented to the IBVM (Loretto Sisters).

Evanne expressed thanks on behalf of all of the Loretto Sisters who have laboured in so many Catholic elementary and secondary schools since 1847.

The letter of nomination, which is essentially the same as the citation given by Mike Paulter is a beautiful tribute. You can read it as an appendix to this newsletter.

## Feast of the Immaculate Conception

In 1854, Pius IX proclaimed: “The most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin.”

Pope Francis says that at the Annunciation, God addressed Mary by “a new name that she did not know: full of grace. Full of grace, and therefore free from sin.” It is with this new name that we celebrate today.

By tradition, on December 08, Pope Francis goes to the Spanish Steps to perform the traditional act of homage and prayer at the foot of the monument to Mary Immaculate. He says that this gesture “expresses filial devotion to Mary, to whose intercession we entrust the universal desire for peace, in particular for martyred Ukraine, which suffers greatly. I think of the Angel’s words to Mary: “With God nothing will be impossible”. With God’s help, peace is possible; disarmament is possible. However, God wants our good will. May Our Lady help us to convert to God’s plans.”

For Pope Francis, Mary is a “mother who never stops loving her children ... and in the darkest night and in the darkest souls, she can reflect the light of Christ who alone breaks the chains of evil, liberates from the strongest dependencies, dissolves the most criminal bonds, and softens the most hardened hearts.”

Our world these days seem to be in the throes of such a dark night and in desperate need of liberation. It is hard to find hope. We can pray, trusting in the promise of resurrection, through the intercession of Mary whom Gerard Manley Hopkins compares the Blessed Virgin Mary to the air we breathe.

I say that we wound  
with mercy round and round  
as if with air.

The same is Mary more by name.  
She, wild web, wondrous robe,  
mantles the guilty globe  
Since God has let dispense  
Her prayers His providence.  
World mothering air, air wild,  
Fold home, fast fold thy child.