

What's Up

May 2023

LORETTO CANADA | SINCE 1847

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



Founder Teresa Dease 1820 - 1889

175 YEARS

Change | New Beginnings

Jane McDonell

From the early 1900's, more than 100 years ago, Loretto College has housed and taught hundreds of women pursuing post secondary studies. The [agreement between USMC and us](#) (The Loretto Sisters) in which St Mike's assumes the management and operation of the Women's Residence and the building ensures that this



ministry will continue as long as there is need.

Sixty-five years ago, an exciting new development was taking place on St. Mary St.

A brand new 5 storey

brick building with a roof top was under construction. The Loretto Sisters at that time, made the decision to move their community and women's residence from St. George St to 'the upper east side' of St. Michael's campus. And so, it came to pass in September 1959 that the next chapter in the Loretto College herstory began.

No doubt at that time there were mixed feelings – anxiety, confusion, a sense of loss and excitement, gratitude, and possibly relief. No doubt similar feelings can be acknowledged in us in our own time. This is often the case when a decision is taken which requires a change, a transition in our lives. We know in our heads that change happens, that nothing stays the same, and yet ... When this happens, we are called as people of faith to stay with the Spirit of the Risen Christ, and to trust in, as Mary Ward would say, our 'Parent of parents and Friend of all friends'. A 'new thing' is being done through and with us. Can you not see it, feel it?

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175th celebrations

When the change and transition takes place on May 1 and USMC assumes management and operation of Loretto College and the Women's Residence it will be recorded in our archives - and so, it came to pass that in May 2023 the next chapter in the Loretto College herstory began.

New beginnings, new possibilities! New relationships!



Remembering Sr Sheila Smith

Mary Mallany

Sheila was the sixth daughter and tenth of twelve children. All her siblings and their spouses were so important to her that they are named in her obituary she prepared. According to her niece, Cathy, the Smith home was filled with lots of love, genuine concern for others, laughter, and song. Sheila carried these influences with her throughout her life.

Sheila was a Loretto Brunswick woman and entered the Loretto family shortly before her 24th birthday on Sept 8 1957. During her formation she gained her teaching certification emphasizing commercial courses and English. After a few short assignments, Sheila spent the bulk of her teaching ministry at Brunswick - some 16 years. A medical stroke ended her teaching career and, once recovered, she worked for 10 years as the Secretary General for the Canadian Generalate. Here she blossomed in another way, always keeping her wit and her songs. In her years as Secretary, besides her normal duties, her activities gave wonderful and necessary organization to our Archives benefiting them even today. Sheila was a storyteller of our presence in Toronto and many visitors were taken on a walking tour of the early places. Sheila mentions letter writing in her list of hobbies and for many visitors she was our Canadian ambassador to the other Mary Ward branches corresponding for years after their time in Toronto. It was a real treat to get on to Sheila's newsletter list that went around the world.

The Smith family and the Loretto family and community will miss Sheila's voice of love, support, laughter and song.



Remembering Sr Josepha Brown

Mary Mallany

Josepha's life, begun in Thunder Bay, tells us of her coming to know her Indigenous heritage story. Her mother, Mary Jane Adams, went to a residential school. Since her mother was born in Fort Frances this would have been St Margaret's School on the Couchiching Reserve north of Rainy Lake in Ontario. The first student there was Métis. Was her mother also? Josepha recalls "we grew up hearing wonderful explanations about all that occurred in Nature. It made our childhood a rich and meaningful experience and that experience remains very much part of me today." Were these stories

from her mother? Only much later in her life, when Josepha was in Estevan, Saskatchewan, was she able to search out her Indigenous heritage on her mother's side. It was wonderful to watch her participate knowingly in the Blanket Exercise for the Sisters at Loretto Abbey before Mary Ward Centre introduced it to the schools. She loved to laugh and tell stories and was down to earth practical. That was part of her heritage too.

At 18, Josepha joined us as a housekeeping sister and was to do that kind of service for 32 years, largely at Loretto Abbey in the kitchen and bake room but also in the West and at Niagara Falls. After a much deserved sabbatical from those duties, Josepha's ministry took on an entirely different and pastoral direction working with abused women in Estevan. This was deeply fulfilling for her and healing for them. Back in Toronto she was once more mistress of house and driving for the sisters. Then Superior, but this time for only a few months. She was the person who insisted that a fire drill be held at Brunswick and it was held the day before the sisters were wakened in the night to a real fire that engulfed the kitchen wing and ended our living there. As the Brunswick and Abbey communities merged Josepha became a valued Leadership team member for both groups. When she had the opportunity she loved to share her stories with young people notably in the Steeped in History project at Loretto Abbey. Many of these stories involved her relationship with Snuggles, the cat she shared with Sr. Laura Gaten to the delight of all three.

As with her experiences, her spirituality was humble and broad, encompassing Mary Ward - Ignatian traditions along with the Charismatic movement and ecumenism. We are sure Mary Ward is taking her hand now and singing Glory to God. Rest in peace Josepha.

Presentation Manor

So much to celebrate this spring! On St Patrick's Day we had a lovely Mass followed by lunch, starting with green beer, the Irish stew laced with Guinness, green salad and green jello, all served on shamrock covered place-mats. Our friend Zivile left us some green wrapped candy Bon Bons, which we all enjoyed.



Newly appointed Archbishop Francis Leo visited on April 15. There were special moments for all who met him.

From left: Archbishop Leo meets Lynn Cira, Helen Cameron & Francis Leo, Mary Laverly has a special moment with the Archbishop

And numerous birthday parties for our Sisters - Mary Julia, Pat, Helen, Angela & Norma, took place in March and April - with a very special one for our dear Donata Dean's 100th on April 24.

Left to right: Marianna, Yvonne, Rosemary & Angela; Donata with Norma; Donata with Rita Mary



Loretto Honoured by the Salvadoran Community in Canada

Evanne Hunter



Joe Grando, Evanne Hunter & Maria Griffin

On April 22, the Association of Salvadorans in Canada (ALSALCO) held their annual celebration of Romero and Refugee Rights Day. There was music, dancing, good food and a presentation of the unfolding of the "Historical Memory Project" in El Salvador. In late May, the first of four Memorial Parks will open at the site of the Rio Sumpul Massacre. Loretto is sponsoring the centrepiece, a large statue of St Oscar Romero. A delegation led by Professor Amanda Grzyb of Western University will be present. Hopefully, next year when the final phase is complete, there will be some Loretto representation in El Salvador.

For those of us present at the event, the highlight was the reception of a plaque recognizing the significant and long-standing relationship and contribution that Loretto Sisters and our friends have sustained for 33 years since we twinned with La Bermuda.

It was a pleasure to share the honour with Maria Griffin and Joe Grando who were the prime movers behind the annual Loretto/La Bermuda Brunch.

Archives

Michelle Pariag

The Archives team are hard at work continuing on with old projects and starting some new ones.

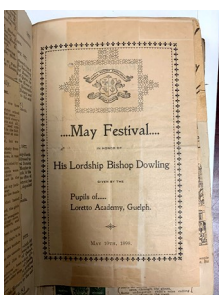
The traveling banner display to celebrate 175 years of the Institute in Canada continues its trip around to different affiliated schools having recently made its way from Guelph to the Niagara region schools.



Guelph students 1919

While visiting Guelph we were able to meet with the Archivists of both the Guelph Civic Museum (where there is a small gallery hall dedicated to the Loretto Sisters)

and also the Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate.



Left: May Festival programme, Right: Guelph students 1928



When dropping off the banners in Niagara we had an amazing tour guide, Sr. Mary Kay Camp, who spent the day showing us around and acting as our personal GPS.

Recently we have begun our “Voices of the Loretto Sisters: Sharing our Stories” project, where we visit with our Sisters and listen to their stories about their lives in their own words. These conversations with our Sisters help us record not only some of the history of our membership, but also to capture the essence of their personalities and spirit. We are privileged to be able spend this one-on-one time together with our Sisters and are enjoying the project.

Mary Ward Centre

Sarah Rudolph

Child and Youth Advocacy at the UN It is with great excitement that Sr. Sarah and Eva Rodriguez-Diaz are collaborating with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto and the CSJ Canadian Federation, as well as other community partners, to produce a parallel report for the



United Nations on Canada's achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This summer, the Canadian government will share a progress update at the UN on its

achievement of the SDGs and civil society will have an opportunity to respond.

Our parallel report will provide an ‘on the ground’ perspective of how Canada is achieving the SDGs. Our report will primarily examine the SDGs in relation to Just Transition - a process “towards an environmentally sustainable economy, which needs to be well managed and contribute to the goals of decent work for all, social inclusion and the eradication of poverty.”

It will be informed by current policies, research, and the experience of frontline and grassroots organizations serving newcomers, migrants, refugees, and youth.

We are also seeking the voices and experience of youth (aged 15 - 29 years) to understand how they are impacted by the SDGs, their concerns, and the solutions they would like to bring forward. Youth will bear the brunt of any failures to achieve the SDGs and have a right to participate in the review process. Specifically, youth are invited to engage in productive dialogue on the intersections of economic recovery from Covid-19, decent work and employment, and their impacts on youth. Youth can also highlight other SDGs they consider pressing.

Sr. Sarah is leading the youth engagement process. She is reaching out to Loretto and CSJ schools, other educational partners, interfaith groups, and youth-serving organizations in Ontario and across Canada. This is a wonderful opportunity for youth to not only learn more about the SDGs but to have their voices heard by government and UN officials. We invite youth to help us shape the final report and participate in ongoing advocacy at the UN and in Canada.

Loretto College

Emily VanBerkum

The Loretto community of Sisters, staff, and residents gathered for the year-end formal dinner, "Loretto Goes to the Oscars." House Council transformed the dining hall for an evening fit for celebrities, following the theme through every detail (there were even "Academy Award Nachos")! It was the year's best student turnout and a great opportunity to dress up, welcome a taste of spring, commemorate the year, and dole out a few student-nominated awards for fun (e.g. most likely to win a real Oscar).

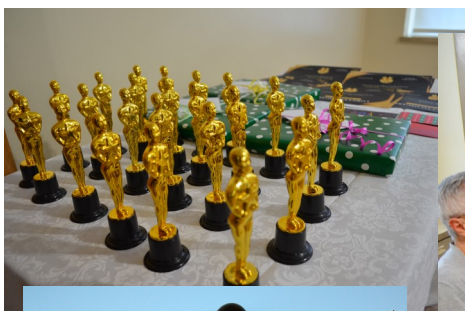
House Council coordinated staff appreciation that recognized all the contributions of house and food services staff, as well as the Sisters. The beautifully wrapped gifts and personalized cards were small signs of the resident community's enormous gratitude for all the ways (big and small) that staff and Sisters nurture a positive residence experience and support student success.

The menu featured fan favourites of jalapeno poppers, shrimp cocktail, sushi rolls, pizza, pasta (baked with brie!), and a selection of desserts (the chocolate mousse pot de creme was Dean Emily's personal favourite).

A highlight was the photobooth with a gold sequin backdrop and lots of fun props. Even Leadership got in on the action!

Following dinner, residents that submitted their application to return to Loretto College for the 2023-24 academic year participated in the tradition of 'room balloting' in which they were randomly selected to choose their room assignment for next year using a lottery system. Always a great way to see how many friends will be returning and to get excited about the transition from a double to a single room.

The Loretto Dean's Office, Sisters, and staff wish all residents a safe and relaxing summer. And we look forward to welcoming many residents back for the upcoming school year, and to continuing the time-honoured Loretto traditions that make our community so special!



Loretto Maryholme

Carol Ivens

The loveliness of the extraordinary warm weather here at Loretto Maryholme cannot be understated. The ice on the lake has disappeared once again from under the warm winds and hot sunny afternoons. The snowdrops and crocuses are bursting forth to announce that, yes, spring is here to stay! And the elusive jet black melanistic groundhog (an anomaly that affects only a small percentage of the species) is so energetic in its scrambling from over the west bluff near the wooden swing that we have yet to be able to photograph it for you - just another aspect of all things more than ordinary here in this sacred space.

Springtime is highlighting our [Stations of Light meditative walk](#) which begins just east of the Blackbird Cabin, entering the cedars from behind the Pondering Pond along the lake ridge. We invite you to enjoy this Way of the Light ('Via Lucis') from where you are at. May these contemplative 8 minutes guide you along the lake's bluff, touched by the sunlight and canopied ancient trees from above... Enjoy!

Deans of Loretto College Residence 1959 – 2023

Mother Mary Bernadette Culnan	Sr Cate McBurney
Mother Philomena Cassin	Sr Kathleen Heffron
Sr Maria Lanthier	Mary Hardie
Sr Caroline Dawson	Laurelle LaVert
Sr Diane Bridges	Sr Mary DiGirolamo
Sr Mary Frances Jordan	Angela Convertini
Sr Lenore Sullivan	Lauren Troncione
Sr Johanna D'Agostino	Emily VanBerkum

As of May, USMC assumes operational responsibility for the Residence and this change brings an opportunity for our last Dean, Emily, who has just completed her MSW studies. Emily will become the first SMC Manager of Community Wellness overseeing the mental health needs of SMC students and staff. Counselling, triage, referral, coordination of holistic programs and initiatives are some of her duties. She also will act as the Loretto Liaison by offering transitional support in capacity building to empower the Dean's Office staff to foster and continue the Loretto charism through various activities; by ongoing training or retreat opportunities for Dons/Loretto House Council; by incorporating Mary Ward mission into Don training and student leader development training as appropriate. Her office will be at Loretto. Congratulations, Emily!

Celebrating change & retirements

To mark the changes ahead for Loretto College, our sisters and staff, gathered to listen, to talk and acknowledge each other - taking the first steps to a new future alongside University of St Michael's College.



We celebrated two dear colleagues, Maria Barba and Solomon Marye, who made the decision to retire in May and July respectively.

A special afternoon was enjoyed by all!



From top: Maria Barba & family with Julie and Sr Carmen; delicious treats; Solomon with Angela, Alice, Sr Evanne and Joe; Maria, Sr Jane, Solomon, Sr Mary M and Sr Evanne



175th celebrations continue

On Sunday, April 30th the Toronto Catholic District School Board and the four Loretto Associated schools (Loretto Abbey, Loretto College School, Mary Ward and St Mother Teresa) joined forces to celebrate at St Paul's Basilica. This is the Church where the Loretto Sisters first worshipped in Toronto and St Paul's School is the first of more than 70 elementary schools which Loretto founded and/or led and taught in over the years.

Cardinal Collins and Bishop Kasun were present along with TCDSB Chair, Nancy Crawford, and Director of Education Brendan Browne, all of whom spoke about the significant role Loretto played in the development of Catholic schools in Toronto and beyond. Retired Directors Angela Gauthier and Rory McGuckin attended as well as many former and current, Superintendents, Principals, teachers and Loretto Alumuni. The TCDSB and the Angel Foundation for Learning (AFL) chose this event as the occasion to make the official, public proclamation of January 23 as the annual 'Loretto Sisters' Day and presented framed copies of the Proclamation to the Loretto Sisters and to each of the four secondary schools.

Attendees found the brief but comprehensive description of the influence of Teresa Dease and her followers given by Dr Elizabeth Smyth, historian and Professor Emeritus at the University of Toronto, quite illuminating. They also appreciated the archival displays prepared by our Archives team as well as the anniversary banners depicting the Irish pioneer Sisters.

All of the schools contributed to a commemorative booklet and the Mary Ward HS Principal presented each Sister who was present with a lovely silver pendant designed and made by one of the teachers. (blessed by Bishop Kasun)

Performances of music, vocal and instrumental, liturgical dance, drama and art showcased the amazing talent among the students of all of the schools. As each Principal introduced his/her performers, they included a brief history of their particular school.

The grand finale was the singing of the Maxims of Mary Ward. Retired Abbey teacher Nijoli Benotas gathered about 18 of her former students who did the initial rendition. They were then joined by Cardinal Collins and Sr Evanne for a second one. Then all the Sisters were invited to join the choir and the guests to stand and sing "so that Mary Ward could hear us in heaven".



From top left (clockwise): Loretto Sisters attending, musical interlude, Evanne Hunter receiving appreciation, singing Mary Ward Maxims, archival display, dramatic presentation

