

What's Up

February 2022 ♦ IBVM CANADA



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Remembering Sr Caroline Dawson

Born in Niagara Falls, the eldest of 5 children, she was proud of her roots, particularly of her French-Canadian ancestry. Her Quebecois heritage may have been the catalyst for a great love of history, which she passed on to high school students in

Guelph, Toronto and Saskatchewan.

Extraordinarily gifted, she was able to take on and enter into every ministry with enthusiasm and flair, bringing her own special personality and talents to bear on every situation. Among her many ministries one which gave her great joy and which provided her with close and lasting friendships was her ministry with the Basilian Fathers, beginning with campus ministry in the early 1970s, when she was Dean at Loretto College, and in her involvement with Theological Field Education at the University of St. Michael's College from the mid 1970s to late 1980s.

She embraced not just the wisdom and insights of Vatican II but its aftermath, becoming a rebel with a cause: she pushed the edges of developing theology as her various ministries invited her to do. In all of this, she was a true companion of Mary Ward, whose spirit and spirituality Caroline loved and desired to emulate.

Thank you, dear sister, companion and friend, for sharing your life and your gifts with us. We will miss you.

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MARY WARD WEEK 2022

We celebrated Mary Ward's legacy at many events this year. These included a special Mass, an online liturgy, Teresa Dease lecture, and a historical display at Loretto College.



People



Mary Di Girolamo, ibvm celebrated a special birthday in December with her friends at Loretto College. And the best gift was her sister being here with her!

Above: Sr Mary blowing out the candles

Right: Sr Mary, Sr Angela and Jeanette Regan, her sister enjoying the birthday dinner



Can you believe it's already 5 years!

Evanne Hunter



That Marren was bubbling on the stairs of the Abbey, and giving free canon law tutorials at dinnertime at the Abbey and dancing and singing songs from Africa at the Abbey!

That Marren was always fretting with every approaching winter.

That Marren was enjoying ginger bread and lemon tea after dinner in the company of Norah, Marianna and Marion Pacey at the community room on the second floor!

That Marren would be being back to the Abbey from Ottawa at end of term!

That Marren was enjoying the memorable Sunday masses at the Infirmary chapel.

That Marren finally brought the hard earned doctorate degree home and the Abbey went into a frenzy mood of celebration which lasted for several days!

That Marren had to finally and sadly say goodbye to the sisters, to the Abbey, to the brief but most enriching life experience of joy, laughter, fun, and celebrations in Toronto!

What is happening with Marren now?

Marren is teaching canon law full time to about 30 priests and 10 sisters at the Catholic University in Nairobi-Kenya. Marren conducts seminars, workshops and conferences to the bishops conferences in some dioceses, formators and major superiors of religious in different countries in Africa and talks at the UISG in Rome. She is also involved in publishing books, which has now become her new passion. A new book on MARY WARD (Carmen Diston helped in the editing) is just out written by Marren and 11 temporary professed sisters both from IBVM and CJ.

Marren also offers canonical services of consultation and advocacy to individuals. And in the province, Marren is having sessions with the sisters to explain the canonical meaning of merger or “fusion” and “union” as we prepare for the voting on Becoming One with the CJ.

Did Marren forget all the beautiful experiences with her sisters in Canada?

Not at all! Marren follows the happenings and thinks and prays for you all always.

Marren is very sorry for not keeping in touch as often as she should.

Marren is well and so are the sisters in the Province, which recently celebrated 100 years of IBVM presence in Africa.

Marren is now 5 years older than when she left Canada!

Above all what more has Marren to say?

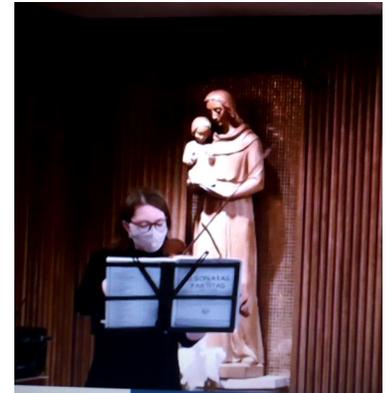
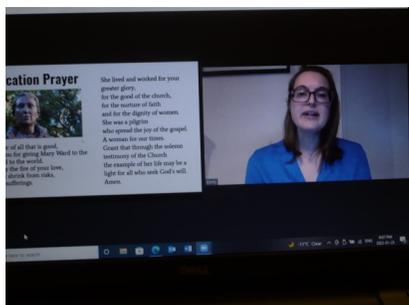
May the Lord keep you in strength, health and happiness!

May you keep the joy of knowing that you have faithfully served Him who called us.

May MARY WARD'S Sisters be “one” as she desired!

MARY WARD WEEK 2022

Our Mary Ward Week 2022 planning group organized an outstanding week of celebrations. Our Sisters, Associates, co-workers, students and friends from around the world participated in the different events. Many remarked how meaningful this week was for them and surely strengthened the bonds in our communities until we can meet again in person.



From the top: Angela McAuliffe and Mary Di Girolamo at a special celebratory feast; photos of the Mary Ward Week display at Loretto College

Views from our online liturgy - A Celebration of Mission

From top left: Mary Mallany ibvm, Ursula Witkowska ibvm, associates Rita Mary and Adrienne, Dean Emily VanBerkum, songstress Jane Fingler (St. Basil's Schola Cantorum), student Claire Heinrichs on violin

Mary Ward Centre

Sarah Rudolph

Our programming is well underway for 2022, in response to our January visioning session.



Indigenous and Community Relations: This program is dedicated to nurturing and supporting the work and process of truth, healing, relationship-building and reconciliation in Canada. Sr. Petite Lao, RNDM is in the process of establishing an advisory circle composed of indigenous and non-indigenous individuals to help vision and shape this work.



Prevention of Human Trafficking: Eva Rodriguez-Diaz is working on a campaign to prevent human trafficking, in collaboration with community organizations and the Toronto school boards. Beginning on February 8th to mark St. Bakhita Day, we started a social media awareness campaign to bring attention to the presence and growth of human trafficking in Canada and how it affects vulnerable populations. Every two weeks for the next three months we will feature new posts through the MWC website, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts. "End human trafficking in Canada - a commitment for all" is our motto. You can see the first posts [here](#).



Children's Rights Promotion & Participation in Decision-Making Processes: Sr. Sarah Rudolph is actively engaging girls in the lead up to the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in March. Two students from Toronto schools (Loretto Abbey Secondary School and St. Joseph's Wellesley) are members of a core team participating in a Girls Caucus and Statement Writing initiatives through the NGO coalition Working Group on Girls. The Girls Caucus members are advocating with Member States to negotiate the language of the CSW outcome document. The Statement Writing group is collectively writing an oral statement that will be delivered by one of the girls at CSW and shared through social media. Through several gatherings throughout February and March, these girls are making their voices heard at the UN.

Spirituality and Retreats: High schools are now into the second term and the chaplains are beginning to inquire about possible online and in person Retreats.

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Loretto Abbey has booked us to do a new hybrid Retreat model which would entail in person and online participation of 180 students at the same time. There is no end to the challenges of these times! Sr. Petite is presently working with Kathy Murtha to develop a new Gr. 11 Retreat on the 7 Sacred Teachings of the Indigenous Peoples.



On Feb. 7 Kathy conducted an online presentation on "The Principles and Practices of Interfaith Dialogue" for the Interfaith Diploma Program at St. Michael's College. On Feb. 11 she did a one-hour interview along with Paul McKenna on Interfaith in the Classroom. This was recorded and will be used in high schools as well as in the Interfaith Diploma Program.

Kathy also worked with the Toronto Archdiocese and the TCDSB on a World Interfaith Harmony Week Event: "Justice and Reconciliation: Listen, Learn Engage" on Feb. 24. On Feb. 28 the MWC along with the students of SMC and The Awakening Project offered an online program entitled "A Youth Interfaith Journey in Synodality for the World."

Kathy and members of the Laudato Si Movement Canada are assisting the team at Jericho House Retreat Center in designing a Laudato Si Retreat for the weekend of April 29 to May 1. Thanks to a generous grant Jericho House is offering this Retreat free of charge.



Intern: Zindzi Malanca is supporting the whole team through her social media and website design skills, creating the posts for the human trafficking awareness campaign, making updates to the MWC website, and assisting the Working Group on Girls campaigns. She, along with other CJ/IBVM youth interns, is organizing a youth webinar on girls' leadership and climate change for the CSW. Stay tuned for more details!

Loretto Maryholme

Winter transforms the retreat centre - blanketing the landscape in stillness and serenity.



Archives

Michelle Pariag

2021 was a year of big challenges and changes for the Archives, culminating with the long planned move at the end of October from the Loretto Abbey to our new home at 830 Bathurst Street. We are thrilled with the new state of the art location and facilities and are overjoyed to report that the history of the Loretto Sisters in Canada are safeguarded according to top archival standards.



Michelle, Sr. Juliana and Robert at the new Archive location

We would like to thank all those who supported and prayed for us during our recent move, and we were overjoyed to have a visit from Sr. Juliana the Archivist Emeritus.

Loretto College

Nishitha Shashidhar, 3rd floor Don

Loretto College celebrated Mary Ward Week which concluded the month of January. Sr. Sarah and our very own Mary Ward Centre Intern, Zindzi Malanca, were able to promote both virtual and in person ways of engaging with the legacy of Mary Ward to the residence community. Chef David and the kitchen staff also prepared very special desserts for students as a celebratory end to Mary Ward week - chocolate lava cakes and tiramisu parfaits - along with Loretto-themed prizes from the Deans! Some other exciting events that have occurred recently include a newly formed Loretto Book Club hosted by Don Claire, a virtual movie night hosted by House Council, a Winter Olympics themed crafts night and watch party by Don Nishitha and best friend challenge event hosted by Don Thandi. In the spirit of Valentine's day and spreading joy and love, House Council prepared treat bags for all the residents.

In the weeks ahead, we look forward to hosting a Black History Month themed film screening in celebration of Black cinema, a skate night at Nathan Phillips Square, and a coffee shop themed study session by the Dons in the cafeteria over reading week.



Residents gather at a fun quiz on how well you know your best friend and show off prizes to be won at the "Best Friend Challenge" Feb. 9, 2022

Loretto Abbey

Evanne Hunter

Would you believe that it has been 11 years since the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) bought the Loretto Abbey/Infirmary in March of 2011 and more than 4 years since the Sisters moved out in November of 2018? What has happened in the meantime?



Heritage designation: In August of 2011, the City of Toronto stated its intention to “designate” the property under the Ontario Heritage Act. This enables City Council to “refuse applications for dem-

olition and protect the site’s cultural values and attributes”.

The main building, the addition to the north wing, and the Chapel, were deemed to constitute ‘a well crafted example of Neo Gothic Design applied to a convent and school that is historically significant in Toronto for its association with the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Loretto Sisters)’.

The “heritage attributes” described in the application include those on the exterior and on the interior, as well as the landscaped setting.

Those on the interior include the main entrance, the 2-story rotunda, the panelled wood doors with stained glass, vaulted ceilings in the ground floor corridors, entrance to the chapel and all the stone detailing and even the terrazzo flooring. In the chapel, it specifies the choir loft and organ loft, the statuary and painted detailing, and the side chapels of Our Lady and St Joseph. All of these are deemed to display “a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit”. Of course it also includes “the monumental stained glass window” executed by Yvonne Williams, one of the best known glass artisans of the 20th century in Canada.

External attributes include the stone cladding and detailing, the tower with the turret, the pointed arch entrances, the mediaeval inspired fenestration, the buttresses and gabled frontispieces. “With its expansive setting, its substantial scale highlighted by stonework and a distinctive tower, and its visibility from many vantage points, Loretto Abbey is a local

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landmark and worthy of protection and preservation”, says the application.

The local Ratepayers Association spearheaded the move to “designate” Loretto Abbey because they see it as a rare and iconic building making their neighbourhood unique. For the TCDSB, while the designation will present logistical and financial complications, “It is a good thing from an historical perspective. They don’t build buildings like that anymore.”

In June 2019, Premier Doug Ford, Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce, and MPP Robin Martin appeared at the Abbey to make a long hoped for announcement ... \$24,000,000.00 for the retrofit of the existing building and for the building of a new gymnasium and specialty classrooms. That day MPP Martin said: "Loretto Abbey Catholic Secondary School is one of the oldest historic educational institutions in Toronto. Today's investment will ensure the school can meet the needs of our growing community with modern classrooms for students and staff, while preserving the heritage of this storied building."

For us as Loretto Sisters, the response to the heritage designation of the Abbey is a simple “Deo Gratias”.

The true heritage of the Abbey lies not only in the “storied “ building but, more importantly, it lies in the thousands of young women who graduated from the school into a world in which they have proved true the words of Mary Ward, “women in time to come will do much”.

When making the announcement in the Provincial Legislature, Minister Lecce recognized this saying that “this funding will enable the on-going provision of quality education for future generations of young women who will make a difference in our world”.

The heritage will live on!



Front entrance to Loretto Abbey

Thoughts on Lent 2022

February is on its way out and what a month it has been in Canada! Quarrels about easing pandemic restrictions, the blockades of the ‘truckers’, the winter storms and all the hardships that seem to make up daily life during the reign of COVID.

March is on its way in and, as of Ash Wednesday ushers in the season of Lent, what St Oscar Romero in his homilies for Holy Week called the most important season of the year, a season of austerity, introspection and renewal.

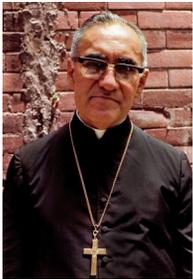


In his recent homily on the World Day of Consecrated Life, Pope Francis reflected on Luke’s account of the visit of Simeon and Anna to the temple where they encountered the child Jesus and Simeon was “moved by the Spirit” as he took the child in his arms. The Pope then exhorted us to ask some questions that seem to offer guidance for our personal prayer during Lent so that we move towards a Holy Week that is transformative and culminates in a true resurrection.

Pope Francis prompts us to ask ourselves: What mostly moves us? Is it the Holy Spirit or the spirit of this world? What is the love that keeps us going? Is it the Holy Spirit or the passion of the moment? Do we act merely out of habit? Do we really open ourselves to new ways to see ourselves and others, to look into the very cracks of our weaknesses and failures, to allow God to soften our hearts? Are our eyes turned only inward, yearning for something that no longer exists?

For Francis, if our arms no longer embrace Jesus, enthusiasm will fail and our hearts will fall prey to bitterness, to complaining, to rigidity and inflexibility. The forty days in the desert of Lent help us to focus on these questions and to pray for a renewal of mind and heart.

The big question is: will this Lent be a time that culminates in a Holy Week that truly renews us or will it leave our hearts as materialistic and selfish as before? Will we emerge with a “spiritual makeover” having allowed God to create a new heart and renew a right Spirit within us?



Romero encouraged his people to enter fully into “the pilgrimage of Lent so that the coming of Easter Sunday, the Sunday of the resurrection, will bring not only the memory of the Risen One of centuries ago but also the true resurrection of all God’s people.” and a renewal of ourselves.

Recognizing the physical and mental toll that COVID is exacting everywhere and the conflicts and natural disasters that are affecting families and nations, let us affirm our trust that through the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus, our God is assuring us that Easter Sunday is a new “spring” that brings life and hope:

**The Spirit is that little flicker of fire
Burning at the bottom of the woodpile.
Rubbish is piled on,
Rains douse the flame,
Wind blows the smoke away.
But underneath everything
Still an ember burns unquenchable.
The Spirit sustains the feeble breath of life
In the empire of death.**

(adapted from Leonardo Boff)