

Mother Mary McGaghran - Pembroke

Sister St. Thomas, later known as Sister Mary, was born in Douglas, Ontario on May 1, 1905, to Thomas and Mary McGaghran on St. Joseph's Day. She entered the community on September 8, 1924, receiving the habit on March 19, 1925, and taking her first vows on March 19, 1927 and final vows on March 19, 1930. She taught for 19 years in Chapeau, Douglas, Calabogie and Renfrew. Sister Mary was then appointed Mistress of Novices in 1946, a position she held for until 1957.

In 1957, Sister Mary was elected General Superior, a position held for 12 years. She welcomed renewal and adaptation which came through Vatican II. As she herself noted in a letter at the time, "The 1968-69 sessions of the Chapter are doubly significant since they are summoned in answer to the Motu Proprio of Paul VI for the purpose of promoting renewal and adaption in religious life...To this end, Commissions of Sisters have been studying the various aspects of religious life, so that our apostolic activity may truly answer the present needs of the Church in the world today."

In 1960, Sister Mary attended the official opening of St. Francis Memorial Hospital in Barry's Bay, which was administered by the Sisters for the next 15 years. In 1962, she opened a house in Ottawa for a Juniorate where newly professed Sisters could further their studies by attending



university or nursing school or teachers' college. In 1964, a mission was opened in Chincha Alta, Peru. During her time as General Superior, two homes for the aged, and a 100-bed home named Santa Maria in Regina, Saskatchewan, were opened. There were also many new convents opened including Des Joachims, Whitney, Bancroft, Petawawa, Deep River, and Barry's Bay.

Upon her retirement from leadership, Sister Mary was appointed Administrator of St. Joseph's Renewal Centre, Chapeau, Quebec for five years. A founding member of the Federation, Sister Mary was granted the Proecclesia Et Pontifice medal by Pope John Paul II for outstanding service to church and state in 1986. She died on December 3, 1996. (image: Sister Mary McGaghran on left with Marilyn Conroy on right, looking at preserves)