

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada

Finding Aid - Community Days series (F01-S095)

Generated by Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada on April 30, 2025

Language of description: English

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Community Days series

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Summary information

Repository: Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada
Title: Community Days series
Reference code: F01-S095
Date: 1988-2004 (creation)
Physical description: 5.5 cm of textual records
Language: English
Dates of creation, revision and deletion: July 2, 2020May 22, 2023

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

The Sisters of St. Joseph of the Diocese of London, Ontario was first incorporated on February 15, 1891 under chapter 92 of the Statutes of Ontario, 1870-1. London, Ontario is on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, L'naapéewak, and Attawandaron Peoples.

On December 11, 1868, at the request of Bishop John Walsh, five Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto arrived in London, Ontario. Mother Teresa Brennan, Sister Ignatia Campbell, Sister Ursula McGuire, Sister Francis O'Malley and Sister Appolonia Nolan were accompanied by Reverend Mother Antoinette McDonald and were welcomed by Bishop Walsh, Rev. J.M. Bruyere, V.G., and Rev. P. Egan, pastor of St. Peter's Church. Awaiting the Sisters were sleighs that transported them from the train station to a temporary home at 170 Kent Street.

In accordance with their mission in London, three Sisters began teaching at St. Peter's School in January, 1869. After classes, they visited the sick, the poor and the imprisoned. They were also mandated to open an orphanage in the future. In order to accomplish these tasks, more Sisters and larger facilities were necessary.

On October 2, 1869, the Barker House at the corner of Richmond and College Street in North London was purchased and the Sisters moved there from Kent Street. The building was named Mount Hope, and it became the first Motherhouse of the Sisters, eventually housing the elderly, orphans, Sisters and novices. On December 18, 1870, the Sisters of St. Joseph became an autonomous congregation in the London diocese, independent of the Toronto congregation. Sister Ignatia Campbell was appointed Superior General, an office she held until 1902. On February 15, 1871, the congregation became legally incorporated.

On October 7, 1877, an addition was made to Mount Hope. This building stood until it was demolished on August 3, 1980, surrounded by the growing healthcare institutions founded by the Sisters, beginning with St. Joseph's Hospital which opened at 268 Grosvenor Street on October 15, 1888, and followed by the opening of St. Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing in 1895, and the construction of a new nursing school building in 1927, which saw its last graduation in 1977. On May 1, 1951, St. Mary's Hospital was opened,

followed by Marian Villa on January 12, 1966. In 1985, the hospital complex was renamed St. Joseph's Health Centre, and ownership was transferred in 1993 to St. Joseph's Health Care Society.

But it was not only in London that Sisters saw the need for healthcare and nursing education. On October 15, 1890, they opened St. Joseph's Hospital on Centre Street in Chatham, Ontario, which remained under their control until 1993. In 1895, they opened St. Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing, which saw its last graduation in 1970. On October 18, 1946, they opened St. Joseph's Hospital at 290 North Russell Street in Sarnia which remained under their control until 1993. In Alberta, they administered St. Joseph's Hospital in Stettler (1926), St. Joseph's Hospital in Galahad (1927), the General Hospital in Killam (1930), and St. Paul's Hospital in Rimbey (1932).

On April 10, 1899, the Sisters opened Mount St. Joseph Motherhouse, Novitiate and Orphanage at the former Hellmuth College at 1486 Richmond Street North in London. The orphans were moved to this new location from Mount Hope, which remained a home for the elderly and was renamed House of Providence on June 3, 1899. The orphanage remained at Mount St. Joseph until it was moved to Fontbonne Hall in 1953 (to 1967). The original Hellmuth College building was demolished in 1976.

Later, on September 14, 1914, the Motherhouse and Novitiate moved to Sacred Heart Convent at Colborne and Dundas Streets in London, with the orphans remaining at Mount St. Joseph. The Sisters lived at Sacred Heart Convent until 1953, when they moved back to the newly built Mount St. Joseph, on the original location of the former Hellmuth College. The new Motherhouse and Novitiate was officially opened on June 29, 1954. It was here that they continued a private girls' school which had begun in 1950 at Sacred Heart Convent, and was now known as Mount St. Joseph Academy (to 1985). It was here too that they continued a music school which had also begun at Sacred Heart Convent and was now called St. Joseph's School of Music (to 1982). The Médaille Retreat Centre began here in 1992, and the Sisters also administered a Guest Wing for relatives of hospitalized patients (to 2005). The Sisters departed Mount St. Joseph for their new residence, a green building at 485 Windermere Road in London, in 2007.

On September 4, 1873, St. Joseph's Convent opened at 131 North Street in Goderich, Ontario, followed by other convents in Ontario, including Ingersoll (1879), St. Thomas (1879), Belle River (1889), Windsor (1894), Sarnia (1906), Kingsbridge (1911), Seaforth (1913), St. Mary's (1913), Woodstock (1913), Kinkora (1916), Paincourt (1923), Maidstone (1930), Leamington (1932), Delhi (1938), Tillsonburg (1938), Simcoe (1938), Langton (1939), West Lorne (1957), and Zurich (1963).

The Sisters also opened missions in other parts of Canada, including in Alberta: Edmonton (1922), Wetaskiwin (1929), St. Bride's (1934); and in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories Yellowknife (1953), and in British Columbia in Haney, now Maple Ridge (1956), and Rutland (1970). Branching even further afield, Convento San Jose was opened in Chiclayo, Peru in 1962.

Over the years, as well as their service as teachers in the separate school system, as music teachers, as healthcare workers, as nursing educators, in providing care to orphans, and in providing parish ministry, pastoral care, and administering spiritual retreats, the Sisters were also involved in social service ministry. In Windsor, they opened the Roy J. Bondy Centre on September 13, 1970 which was a receiving home for the Children's Aid Society, withdrawing in 1982 but continuing to provide residential care for disabled children afterward. In London, they opened Internos, a residence for teenage girls attending school and later for troubled teens (to 1979). This was followed by the opening of St. Joseph's Detoxification Centre on September 13, 1973 (to 2005) and St. Stephen's House, an alcoholic recovery centre on February 1, 1982 (to 2000). Loughlin House in London opened as a residence for ex-psychiatric female patients in 1986 (to 1989), followed by the Home for Women in Need at 534 Queens Avenue in 1979 (to 2004).

Later, St. Josephs' House for Refugees was opened in 1987 (to 2005), followed by St. Joseph's Hospitality Centre, a food security program, on February 2, 1983.

On November 22, 2012, the congregation amalgamated with those in Hamilton, Peterborough, and Pembroke into one charitable corporation under the name Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in

Canada by the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada Act, a Private Act of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which received Royal Assent on June 13, 2013.

Scope and content

This series documents the Community Days. The series contains material covering ten different years. The Community Days were not held every year, but Assembly meetings were held every two years, and Chapter meetings were held every four years. The series contains various materials related to these meetings. Some of the most interesting materials include, for example, a Windsor workshop that taught Sisters to experience negotiation, meditation, and to practice active listening communication; the celebration of the 125th Anniversary (1993); a workshop on managing differences and conflict situations (2002); and other workshops and conferences.

The series contains schedules of congregational days, leadership style notes, spiritual exercises, prayers, workshop notes, “coming soon” reminders and “welcome” sheets, musical sheets for prayers and songs, short writings about the congregational history, correspondence related to the Community gatherings, reviews of new publications, ceremonies and celebrations, talks, corporate stances, photocopies of articles or short book chapters. It also contains printed brochures with prayers, theological reflections, other kinds of spiritual reflections, and conference materials.

Notes

Title notes

- **Source of title proper:** Title derived from contents of series.

Immediate source of acquisition

The records were transferred from the administration to the archives.

Arrangement

Chronological order was imposed by the archivist.

Location of originals

The records are located at The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada Archives.

Restrictions on access

The Archives reserves the right to restrict access to the collection depending on the condition of the archival material, the amount of material requested, and the purpose of the research. The use of certain materials may also be restricted for reasons of privacy or sensitivity, or under a donor agreement. Access restrictions will be applied equally to all researchers and reviewed periodically. No researcher will be given access to any materials that contain a personal information bank such as donor agreements or personnel records, or to other proprietary information such as appraisals, insurance valuations, or condition reports.

Conditions governing use

Permission to study archival records does not extend to publication or display rights. The researcher must request this permission in writing from the Archives.

Finding aids

There is a series and file list.

Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

Note [Sources]

Pers. comm., Sr. Loretta Manzara, July 2, 2019.

Note [General]

The “Community Days”, unlike the “Assembly” days, were not a necessary part of the congregation’s government. These gatherings had a non-formal nature and were meant for coming together for reflection. A Community Day lasted for one day, during which the Sisters met for conversations, mealtimes, and pleasant evenings. There were no formal reports about meetings or discussions. The series includes several years of Community Days records which differ by topics discussed.

During the Community Days of 1988-1990, the following topics were discussed: principles for understanding power, types of formal power, impact of experience on decision making, modes of religious life, and the ability to reflect critically on one’s own experience. The details and statements of a professional caretaker are provided, including such discussions as the nature and meaning of depressions, the sensitivity to the needs of others, and the origins of emotional difficulties that one may carry throughout the life. The Community Days of 1993-1994 included the following topics: communal graced history which is important “ so a person or a community can decide with the movement towards the Trinity and resist the self-centred movement”; steps towards selecting a leadership; understanding of the nature, aspects and models of church; reflections on charisms; and reflections on the nature and identity of religious life in Canada. The Community Days of 1999 discussed the experience of Chapter meeting; and training to understand the stages of community development. The Community Days of 2000 included morning prayer; a case study about child poverty; and reports on activities, including an article on destructive cycles in organizations.

Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published
- **Level of detail:** Partial
- **Status description:** Revised

Access points

- Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada (London, Ont.)
- Textual record (documentary form)
- Textual records (documentary form)
- Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada (London, Ont.) (subject)

- London (place)

Series descriptions

Subseries F01-S095-01: Gatherings

Date: 1988-2004, predominant 1999-2002 (creation)

Scope and content: This subseries contains: schedules, leadership style notes, spiritual exercises, prayers, workshop notes, “coming soon” reminders and “welcome” sheets, musical sheets for prayers and songs, short writings about the congregational history, correspondence related to the community gatherings, reviews of new publications, ceremonies and celebrations, talks, corporate stances, and photocopies of articles or short book chapters. It also contains printed brochures with prayers, theological reflections, other kinds of spiritual reflections, and conferences.

Physical description: 5.5 cm of textual records

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Reference code	Title	Dates	Physical description
F01-S095-01-01	File - Community days 1988, 1989, 1990	1988-1990	
F01-S095-01-02	File - Community days 1993, 1994	1993-1994	
F01-S095-01-03	File - Community days October 29-31, 1999	Oct. 29-31, 1999	
F01-S095-01-04	File - Community days August 3-6, 2000	Aug. 3-6, 2000	
F01-S095-01-05	File - Community days October 13-15, 2000	Oct. 13-15, 2000	
F01-S095-01-06	File - Community days March 16-18, 2001	Mar. 16-18, 2001	
F01-S095-01-07	File - Community days October 26-28, 2001	Oct. 26-28, 2001	
F01-S095-01-08	File - Community days March 15-17, 2002	Mar. 15-17, 2002	
F01-S095-01-09	File - Community days October 25-27, 2002	Oct. 25-27, 2002	
F01-S095-01-10	File - Community days October 21-24, 2004	Oct. 21-24, 2004	