

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada

Finding Aid - Mother Margaret Coughlin series (F01-S007)

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Mother Margaret Coughlin series

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Summary information

Repository: Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada
Title: Mother Margaret Coughlin series
Reference code: F01-S007
Date: 1909-1980 (creation)
Physical description: 4 cm of textual records
1 scrapbook
24 photographs : b&w
10 photographs : col.
4 negatives : col.

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

Josephine Hildegarde Coughlin was born in Mount Camel, Ontario on December 30, 1887 to Bartholomew Coughlin and Johanna Curtin. One of her sisters, Nora (1884-1957), also joined the Sisters of St. Joseph of London and took on the religious name Sister St. Francis. Josephine entered the congregation and received her habit on June 24, 1909. She was given the religious name Sister Margaret and professed her vows on September 16, 1911, in the Chapel of St. Anne at Mount St. Joseph, London, Ontario. After completing senior high school, she attended Ottawa Normal School and graduated in 1913. She then taught in St. Thomas, London, and Woodstock and was appointed the community's Supervisor of Schools, a position she held for 11 years. In 1945, Sister Margaret transferred to St. Patrick's High School in Sarnia where she took charge of building an expansion of the original school.

In 1947 she was elected as General Superior. During Mother Margaret's term as General Superior a great many projects were initiated. Among them were St. Joseph's House of Studies, which opened for Sisters in studies at London's University of Western Ontario; property at 353 and 534 Queens Avenue was purchased as a residence for Sisters; Sisters were missioned to housekeeping duties at the Holy Family Retreat House which the Diocese opened in Oxley, on Lake Erie; St. Mary's Hospital building project was completed and opened in 1951; Catholic Central High School was opened and a private school at Sacred Heart Convent began; a summer home was purchased in Kingsville for the Sisters; a new mission for Sisters in Yellowknife, NT was established; Holy Rosary Convent in Windsor was purchased to replace the overcrowded Cadillac Street convent; two Sisters went to Ireland to seek new candidates; an aspirancy was opened to train young women interested in becoming Sisters; St. Joseph's House of Studies was opened in Windsor; new Constitutions were approved and sod was turned for a new Motherhouse at Mount St. Joseph.

Under Mother Margaret Coughlin, the "Ireland project" was initiated and Sisters were sent to Ireland in the hopes of recruiting young women interested in joining the congregation. The Superiors' Institute was initiated in 1958 along with a tertianship program for Sisters, and held at Holy Rosary Convent in the summer with Rev. Embser, C. S. B, assisted by Sister Mary Angela Flaherty. In 1950, Mother Margaret

and Sister Placidia Walsh went on a Holy Year pilgrimage to Rome, Italy, and visited the Sisters of St. Joseph in Le Puy and Lyon, France, to celebrate the Sisters of St. Joseph's tercentenary. During her trip to Rome, she consulted with Monsignor Elio Gambari concerning papal approbation of the congregation's rule, and as a result the Constitutions received Pontifical Approbation on July 11, 1953.

Mother Margaret Coughlin was deeply involved in the designing of the chapel of the new Mount St. Joseph Motherhouse. It was she who insisted the windows from the old chapel should be incorporated into the new one. In designing the Chapel, her love of the Eucharist shone through as she worked with the architect and artisans to produce a masterpiece of artistry from the wrought iron grill, the pews and sanctuary furnishings which all bore hand-carved grapes and wheat design, symbolic of the Eucharist. The formal opening of the new Mount St. Joseph Motherhouse on June 20, 1954, presented to the people of London a building with heraldic towers and a beautiful chapel with stained glass windows personally chosen by her in consultation with the artist, Guido Polloni, of Florence, Italy.

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When Sister Julia Moore was elected General Superior in 1962, Mother Margaret remained as an elected Council member. She encouraged the opening of the first foreign mission in Cayalti, Chiclayo Diocese in Peru. A new regional house, St. Joseph's Convent, was opened in Edmonton, AB. She helped to plan for Ignatia Hall - a home for the senior Sisters and the sick, which was completed in 1969. It was she who suggested that Ignatia Hall be so named since Mother Ignatia must not be forgotten. Mother Margaret died on December 2, 1980.

Scope and content

This series contains records belonging to and created by Mother Margaret Coughlin. This series includes personal biographic material like Mother Margaret Coughlin's notebook, Bartholomew Coughlin's obituary, and Mother Margaret Coughlin's educational certificates. This series also includes various correspondence regarding Mother Margaret Coughlin's Feast Day, congratulations, expressions of gratitude, seasonal greetings, Mother Margaret Coughlin and Sister Placidia's pilgrimage to Rome, the erection of the stations of the cross at Sacred Heart Convent (some of which is in Latin), and correspondence from Sisters in Le Puy and Lyon, France (some of which is in French). Included with the correspondence is a St. Joseph's Alumni Bulletin and some pamphlets in French. There is also administrative correspondence with the Bishop of the Diocese of London, J. C. Cody, and a letter of thanks and congratulations from Rev. Durand. There are photographs of Mother Margaret Coughlin and a portrait of her father, Bartholomew Coughlin. There are also photographs, postcards, pamphlets, and news clippings from Mother Margaret Coughlin and Sister Placidia's travels to Rome and France and scrapbook of the Holy Year pilgrimage to Rome and visits to Lyon and Le Puy on the occasion of the tercentenary of the Sisters of St. Joseph which has photographs, news clippings, and postcards pasted inside alongside a typed account. There is also material, primarily correspondence, concerning the "Ireland project" and a sermon on Ireland by Bishop J. C. Cody. The "Ireland project" was a recruitment endeavor to establish a Juniorate in Ireland from which young women could come and become novices in Canada where the Sisters would provide them with training in nursing or teaching.

Notes

Title notes

- **Source of title proper:** Title is based on the contents of the series.

Immediate source of acquisition

These records were accumulated by the archivist.

Arrangement

Order was imposed on the records 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

Series and file list available.

Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

Note [Sources]

Dictionary of Biography of Sisters of St. Joseph of Canada.

Other notes

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

Access points

- Coughlin, Margaret (subject)
- Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada (London, Ont.)
- Multiple media (documentary form)
- Photographs (documentary form)
- Textual records (documentary form)
- Postcards (documentary form)
- Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada (London, Ont.) (subject)
- London (place)
- Italy (place)
- France (place)
- Ireland (place)

Series descriptions

Subseries F01-S007-01: Biography

Date: 1909-1980 (creation)

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Reference code	Title	Dates	Physical description
F01-S007-01-01	File - Mother Margaret Coughlin notebook	1951-1964	
F01-S007-01-02	File - Mother Margaret Coughlin certificates	1909-1946, 1980	

Subseries F01-S007-02: Correspondence

Date: 1949-1976 (creation)

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Reference code	Title	Dates	Physical description
F01-S007-02-01	File - Mother Margaret's Feast Day greetings watercolour card	1962	
F01-S007-02-02	File - Correspondence Reverend Mother Margaret Coughlin	1949-1976	

F01-S007-02-03	File - Mother Margaret Coughlin correspondence with Bp. J. C. Cody	1949-1959
F01-S007-02-04	File - Mother Margaret Coughlin and Rev. Durand	June 14, 1957

Subseries F01-S007-03: Photographs

Date: [19-?], 1953-1980 (creation)

Access points:

- Graphic material (documentary form)

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Reference code	Title	Dates	Physical description
F01-S007-03-01	File - Mother Margaret Coughlin Photographs	[19-?], 1953-1980	

Subseries F01-S007-04: Holy Year Pilgrimage

Date: 1950 (creation)

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Reference code	Title	Dates	Physical description
F01-S007-04-01	File - Pilgrimage photographs and memorabilia	1950	
F01-S007-04-02	File - Account of Holy Year pilgrimage to Rome and visit to Lyons and Le Puy on the occasion of the tercentenary of the Sisters of St. Joseph	1950	

Subseries F01-S007-05: Ireland Project

Date: 1950-1958 (creation)

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Reference code	Title	Dates	Physical description
F01-S007-05-01	File - Mother Margaret Coughlin, Gen. S. "Ireland project"	1950-1958	