

"To tell the story of anything, you have to tell the story of everything"
Thomas Berry

2024 CHRONICLE OF DISCOVERY EMBRACING RNDM CANADA'S PAST

From July 15-19, we embarked on a heartfelt journey with the Sisters of Our Lady of the Mission in Canada, guided by the wisdom and grace of Sister Veronica Dunne. Together, we explored the story of the province, through the stories of some early Sisters who came to Canada. We caught glimpses of the faith, compassion, and service that illuminated their path.

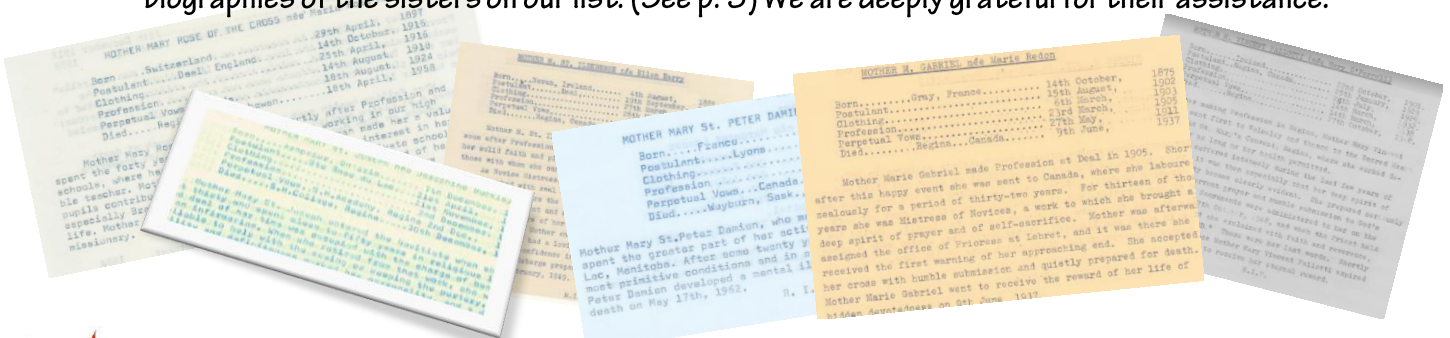
Our primary text for this study was the Chapter about Canada in the book *Zeal for Mission*, edited by Sr. Susan Smith RNDM, and published in 2012. That chapter is also available at the RNDM Canada website at: <https://rndmcanada.org/our-history/>

We also "went on pilgrimage" to the old Regina cemetery, where our beloved pioneer sisters rest. Their lives are a testament to devotion and sacrifice. We opened ourselves to the spirit of these ancestors, and all they had to teach us.

*From left: Pricilla
Lugun, Thien
Nguyen,, Veronica
Dunne, Nwe Ni Oo,
Jacinta Dkhar,
Giang
Pham/Thuong
Truong*



Sister Carmel Eberius and Margaret Scott in Rome skillfully searched the archives for the biographies of the sisters on our list. (See p. 3) We are deeply grateful for their assistance.



In our sharing circle, we also listened to the stories of the pioneer sisters, through the memories of Sr. Claire Himbeault, Sr. Melvina Hruska, and Sr. Marilyn LeBlanc. As we listened, we felt the pioneer Sisters close to our hearts, stirring deep feelings within us.



HISTORY OF RNDMS IN CANADA

Veronica Dunne

The interest of the international Sisters in learning the history of the Canadian province was very meaningful for me. Sisters from Vietnam, India North East, India South, and Myanmar - now members of the Canadian province - wanting to know more of the context, culture, and significant moments of the country in which they presently live. A second highlight was being at the old Regina cemetery, walking among the graves of the Sisters, feeling the presence of our ancestors in the Congregation, drawing strength from their witness:

*Bonds deepened in the quiet moments,
In the shared breath of history's tale,
Here, where cultures intertwine,
And new roots find fertile soil.*

I was also very happy to listen to the experiences of Sr. Clare, Sr. Marilyn, and Sr. Melvina, who knew Sr. Joseph (a Sister I chose) and shared stories about her. Through their sharing, I learned more about the first Canadian sisters and those from other countries, and how times have changed since then. I feel that we RNDM sisters continue to follow the signs of the times, responding to the needs of the people and ecological concerns. I feel proud to be a part of Canadian RNDM history and am pleased to be on mission in Canada. (Nweni Oo)

"I am grateful for the opportunity given to learn, listen, read, reflect, and share as a group about the history of the foundations of our RNDM Sisters, especially to get to know our ancestors who sowed the seeds before they departed into eternity. I was moved deeply visiting their graves at the cemetery in Regina" (Jacinta Dkhar)

This morning, gathered with the sisters,
Sr. Claire, Sr. Veronica, Sr. Marylyn, and Sr. Melvina.
We shared the stories of our pioneers' bold stride,
Reliving their courage, with hearts open wide,
Laughter rang crisp, mingled with awe profound,
Questions echoed, sobs softened each sound.
In each tale, a flame of spiritual zeal,
Passed down through ages, a legacy real,
Thank you, dear mothers, thank you, sisters' dear,
For nurturing the fire, years after years.
In pain and in joy, your lessons impart,
We carry your spirit deep in our hearts,
United by the journey, our souls entwine,
As we honor your legacy, a bond Divine. (Giang Pham)

When we went to the old cemetery to visit our ancestors, my attention was immediately drawn to Rev. Mother Mary Imelda du Saint Sacrament. In the stillness of that sacred place. I began a silent dialogue with her spirit, listening intently as if she were there, and sit in quiet contemplation beside her. It was powerful moment. After receiving her biography from Sister Margaret Scott, I found myself having more conversations with her. She embodied the true essence of a missionary with love, energy, and a fervent zeal for the mission. Beside that I was surprised by how quickly Sister Margaret Scott responded and provided all the information we required. I deeply admire and thank her dedication and the quality of her work. In this case, we walk together. (Thuong Truong)

One of the most important parts during our studies touched me was to research about our sisters who have gone before us in the early days and those who came as missionaries in the beginning. I wanted to know who they were and how they looked. What was their desire and ambitions when they came? Did they have enough clothing or did they have good shoes to walk in this freezing cold? Questions were popping in my head. I did study about the different sisters while learning about Foundress Euphrasie. But now I was looking to know more about the wonderful sisters who carried the legacy of Euphrasie Barbier in this beautiful Canadian soil. It was not just a step of sisters but it was many steps of sisters. Thank you to Margret Scott for providing for us Biographies of sisters which were wonderful and very valuable. (Pricilla Lugun)

Just as water hidden in a well sustains the plants and earth above, the rich yet simple stories of RNDM's deceased members, often remembered in our daily conversation, are crucial for uplifting the present and providing a strong foundation for the Congregation. Reviewing our sisters' biographies with a respectful heart, I have drawn from "the well" the gifts of faith, hope, and love, enriching my sense of what "zeal for the Divine Missions" means. These missionaries' ancestors' stories and legacies are shared during our study week and have nourished the growth of our RNDM identity throughout cultural and societal history. My appreciation for and study of historical roots have deepened my understanding of how I, as a current member, can "treasure the past" to "shape the future" and fully "embrace the present" in participating in the Congregation's Divine Missions wherever I am sent and whatever missions I undertake. (Thien Huong)

Of the twenty-four Sisters buried at the old Regina Cemetery, each of us chose two sisters, to whom we felt drawn. We spent time at the graves of these women, and let ourselves be drawn into a relationship with the Sisters we had chosen. (Or who had chosen us?). We sought the biography of each Sister from Carmel Eberius and Margaret Scott at our Archives in Rome. Through this process of silence, communion, research and conversation with Canadian elders, we gathered, amplified, and interiorized their inspiring stories.



Num.	Religious Names	Family Names	From	Date of Born	Date of Death
1	Sr. Mary Augustin Ota	Ruth Donnelly	SK, Canada	2 August 1914	10 January 1960
2	Sr. Marie St-Alix	Maria Ollier	France	13 April 1878	6 June 1933
3	Sr. Mary St. Rosaline	Frances Lehane	SK, Canada	23 December 1898	18 January 1960
4	Sr. Marie Ste-Isabelle	Attala Plante	Dakota	3 Jan 1885	26 July 1919
5	Sr. Mary St. Ange	Violet McFarlane	ON, Canada	21 Sept 1888	10 Sept 1911
6	Sr. Marie Gabriel	Marie Madeleine Redon	France	27 Oct 1876	9 Jun 1937
7	Sr. Mary St. Joseph	Josephine Buckley	ON, Canada	7 Dec 1880	10 Dec 1961
8	Sr. Marie – Rose de la Croix	Marie –Rosa Matter	Suisse	29 April 1897	18 April 1958
9	Sr. Mary Vincent Palloti	Mary O'Farrel	Ireland	22 Oct 1901	27 Oct 1947
10	Sr. Marie Imelda du Saint-Sacrement	Catherine Couvert	France	26 Jan 1868	29 Jan 1953
11	Sr. Mary St. Andrew Ashburton	Gertrude Adams	New Zealand	17 April 1882	25 July 1956
12	Sr. Marie St-Pierre Damien	Josephine Buissons	France	2 Aug 1875	17 May 1962
13	Sr. Mary St. Ildeberge	Elie M. Barry	Ireland	4 Aug 1885	6 Feb 1949
14	Sr. Mary St Bruno Ennskillen	Elisabeth Fannin	Ireland	12 Feb 1880	6 Nov 1956