

175 SISTER PROFILES: Mother Rose McAleer

Sister Sheilagh Martin



When the Cunard steamship Cambria sailed into Halifax Harbor on May 11, 1849, among the passengers were four Sisters of Charity sent from New York at the request of Bishop Walsh. Their task would be to provide education in his cathedral school. They were accompanied by Fr. Michael Hannan, a priest from Halifax, who brought them to the Bishop's residence, where they were warmly welcomed. After Mass and breakfast they were taken to their first residence, St. Mary's Convent, the pioneer house of the institute.

The youngest among the four was S. Rose McAleer, who had entered the New York Sisters of Charity in 1847 and was newly professed in March 1849.



CELEBRATING

175

YEARS OF JOYFUL WITNESS

1849 - 2024



St. Mary's Convent on Barrington Street in Halifax, NS

School opened on May 24, 1849 at St. Mary's with approximately 200 pupils. This was also the day the first orphan was received. In addition to teaching, the Sisters were busy caring for orphans and rendering service to the sick and disadvantaged. In 1856 the Halifax mission became independent from New York and Mother Basilia McCann was appointed the Superior. Her Council was comprised of four members, one of whom was S. Rose who held the office of Procuratrix in which capacity she was responsible for "supplying the daily needs of the Sisters."

In the spring of 1857, S. Rose, with two novices, was directed to undertake the education of girls in the north end of the city at St. Patrick's. The Sisters

lived at St. Mary's and walked each day to the new mission. The conditions were not adequate for the job, but the Sisters prevailed. By fall of that year a new convent opened, and S. Rose was assigned other duties.

In September, 1858 S. Rose was appointed Sister Servant to open a new mission at St. Peter's Dartmouth. The year 1858 was when the original New York Sisters of Charity could choose to return to NY or stay in Halifax. In December of that same year, Mother Basilia told the community of her decision to return to New York. Sister Rose chose to stay in Halifax at that time. Elections were held and S. Rose was elected to office as Mother. These were peaceful times. Improvements were made to St. Mary's, two new Sister Servants were sent to St. Patrick's and St. Peter's and the works of the fledging community flourished. Mother Rose was re-elected in 1864 and at the request of Bishop Rogers of Chatham established a school in Bathurst and another in Newcastle, New Brunswick.



St. Patrick's Convent on Brunswick Street in Halifax, NS

As Procuratrix, Mother Rose had become aware of the "weaknesses of the current financial organization of the young institute"; control of finances was in the hands of ecclesiastical authorities. She undertook the necessary negotiations with the Nova Scotia government to provide legal incorporation

for the congregation. On April 18, 1864 an act to incorporate the Sisters of Charity was passed in the Nova Scotia Legislature. December 8, 1864 saw the election of Mother Mary Josephine Carroll. Mother Rose was assigned to St. Mary's. In 1867 Mother Rose and Sister Mary Teresa McDermott, a Halifax vocation, were missioned to Newcastle, NB, where Mother Rose served as Sister Servant.

In 1870, for reasons unknown, Mother Rose and Sister Mary Teresa left New Brunswick and the Halifax congregation. Returning to the New York community, they found the New York community reluctant to accept them. Mother Rose and Sister Mary Teresa then entered the Sisters of Mercy in New Hampshire - their acceptance with the understanding they would be part of the mission to California. Sister Rose died in 1895 in Eureka, CA as a Sister of Mercy.