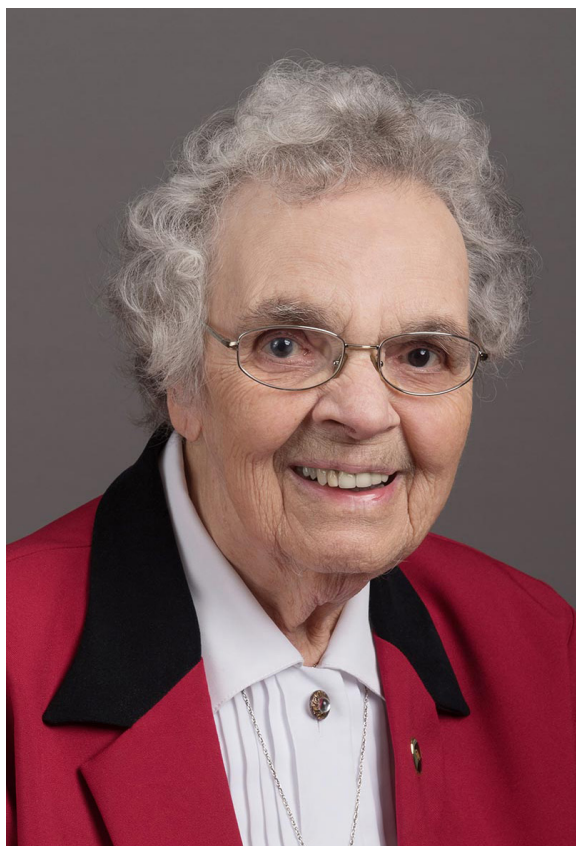


# 175 SISTER PROFILES: Sister Blanche White

**Ronnie MacDonald**



**S. Blanche White**

Not many of us can claim to have been born in a lumber camp. Sister Blanche White can! Her mother worked as a cook for a lumber camp in Northern New Brunswick. Her first born daughter was premature but ably cared for and placed in a slightly warm oven as a makeshift incubator. And, S. Blanche lived to tell the tale!

Growing up on a farm in Enfield, NS in the forties was endless hard work for women as well as men. Sometime after her younger

sister left home to work for the Charities in Halifax, S. Blanche opted to do likewise. She was hired to work in the Motherhouse scullery. In her twenties she felt called to a vocation as a Sister of Charity. Before her entrance date, S. Blanche went home for a final visit with her family. It was



CELEBRATING

# 175

YEARS OF JOYFUL WITNESS

1849 - 2024



**Sisters Blanche White and S. Mary Egbert Myers,  
St. Brigid's Home, Quebec, QC, 1964**

December, 1951. The very night she arrived home the Sisters of Charity motherhouse burned to the ground. Hence, S. Blanche and many other young women in formation learned right away how to be flexible as they had to take up residence at St. Joseph's Convent, or wherever there was sufficient room. The ability to adapt is a valuable asset for anyone called to serve.

North Sydney Hospital was S. Blanche's first mission. Her duty was to help feed over 200 people daily. S. Blanche admits that at that time she had never even baked a cake! However, her open mind and generous heart held her in good stead and she learned lots.

After several years S. Blanche went to St. Brigid's Home, Quebec

and loved it. Her local community was under the loving guidance of Sister Paule Cantin. It was S. Paule who suggested S. Blanche obtain her driver's license. S. Blanche didn't hesitate to do so and thus another mode of serving others became available to her. She would drive the Sisters to appointments, Mass or wherever they needed to go. Driving was also a good preparation for her future assignments.

While Quebec held a special place in S. Blanche's heart, she was open to any and all changes. So she was ready to head west to Edmonton when needed. St. Vincent's Convent housed about 26 Sisters who taught in various schools around the area. To S. Blanche's delight, the building also housed a kindergarten. She tells the story that one day Sister Clement Mary took the wee ones over to the convent section for some reason. Later when S. Blanche met the mother of one of the little boys she mentioned how excited her son was with the visit. He exclaimed to her "Mommy, all the beds were made!!" S. Blanche was happy it was a good first impression!

A new type of mission beckoned. A House of Prayer was established in Quincy, MA and S. Blanche was asked to be the homemaker. She enjoyed living in the small group led by Sister Frances Fay. While retreatants' spirits were being nurtured S. Blanche nurtured their bodies. After several years, the House of Prayer closed at the same time she was missioned.

S. Blanche came full circle and was stationed back in Halifax. Her primary duty was to drive Sisters to appointments. This could be extremely busy but she enjoyed it immensely. All these years, along with her culinary skills, I am sure she also shared her sewing talents. Even in retirement at Caritas these days, she is often seen at her trusty sewing machine.

Looking back over the years, it is clear that S. Blanche inherited her mother's ability "to make something out of nothing" in the kitchen. But far greater than that, she and all our talented homemakers gave to others constantly, especially healthy meals to their Charity sisters.

In serving in this way and providing a cared for home, they also gave the Sisters the gift of time in which they could prepare to serve their students, patients or clients et al. Housekeepers assisted those they lived with to better serve others in need.

To me, the "Blanches" in community truly empowered their companions as they made it possible for the Sisters of Charity to better serve others in the vineyard of the Lord.



**Sisters Blanche White and Anna Pottie  
Quebec, Carnival 1985**