

SISTERS OF PROVIDENCE OF ST. VINCENT de PAUL

READING ROOM

# Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul

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1200 PRINCESS STREET, KINGSTON, ONTARIO



## History of the Congregation

## A proud heritage

*The only religious congregation founded in Kingston, Ontario, the Sisters of Providence have a long history of service to the poor*



Bishop E.J. Horan

The Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul do not attribute their founding to a single originator, a practice which differs from that of many religious communities. Instead, the congregation views its founding as a process of history involving key people guided by a deep spirituality and passion for social justice.

**Our heritage is rooted** in the creativity and spirituality of Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac, in the willingness of Emilie Gamelin to risk and trust in Providence, in the responsiveness of the Montreal Sisters of Providence to the call of Bishop E.J. Horan, as well as in the courage and pioneer spirit of Mother Mary Edward McKinley and the original members of the Kingston community.

### KINGSTON, 1861 to present

#### Bishop E.J. Horan

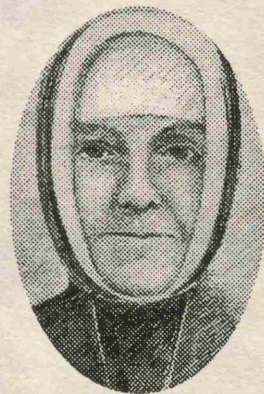
The mid 19th-century was an especially difficult time for the poor of Kingston. Particularly afflicted were the aged, orphaned and imprisoned, who had nowhere to turn for help. Many suffered without care in their homes, others were forced to beg in the streets.

To help alleviate the sufferings of the poor, E. J. Horan, the Bishop of Kingston, invited a congregation of Montreal Sisters of Providence to his episcopal city to establish an Institute to care for all of the poor, old and young.

#### Pioneering Sisters

On Dec. 13, 1861, four Sisters from Montreal arrived in Kingston to found what is now known as the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul. Under the guidance of Sister Mary of the Blessed Sacrament, the French Sisters began the task of building a new congregation.

In 1862 a Kingston milliner, Catherine McKinley, and another Kingstonian, Ann O'Reilly, joined the community. Five years later, when the founding Sisters returned to Montreal, Catherine became Superior as Mother Mary Edward, a wise and compassionate leader for many years. In a letter to her little community she wrote:



Sister Mary of the Blessed Sacrament

*"I trust that God in His infinite goodness may guide all hearts and minds and the present standard of our little bark may never be lowered, that from day to day superiors and subjects may continue to have but one aim in life — the good pleasure of God and the maintenance of the spirit of our institute."*

Armed with the congregation's virtues of humility, simplicity and charity and relying on the Providence of God, the pioneer Sisters embarked upon exhausting begging tours to support their works of compassionate service. They begged in the Kingston diocese and the New England states.

As their works across Canada became institutionalized in health care, social work and education, many lay co-workers collaborated with them. Often the work was difficult and could never have flourished without the goodness and generosity of the laity and clergy of the various dioceses. Today, the Sisters of Providence serve with compassion and trust in Providence, not only in Canada but in Guatemala and Peru.

### Montreal, 19th Century

#### Emilie Gamelin and Bishop Bourget

The ravages of war added greatly to the hardships of pioneer life in early 19th-century Montreal where, following years of recurring conflict, New France had passed into the hands of the British. Like St. Louise de Marillac, a wealthy lady of Montreal named Emilie Gamelin took steps to relieve some of the suffering of the poor by gathering into a small house, a number of aged and needy women. The Bishop of Montreal, Ignace Bourget, encouraged Madame Gamelin's efforts and built a new and larger home for her charges.

In 1845, under the direction of Bishop Bourget, Emilie went to New York to obtain from Mother Seton's daughters the adapted rule of St. Vincent de Paul. Thus, a new Canadian apostolic religious congregation was formed with Emilie as the leader and St. Vincent's rule as the official inspiration. The second article of that rule reads:

*"Their monastery will be the homes of the sick; their cells, rooming houses; their chapel, the parish church; their cloister, the city streets and hospital wards. They will suffer, for the love of God, all the inconveniences the contradictions and ridicule that they may encounter, even for doing good."*



Mother Mary Edward



Bishop Ignace Bourget



Mother Emilie Gamelin

Emilie Gamelin became the first Superior of the new Institute which the Bishop canonically erected in March 1844 under the title Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor. The people, however, gave the community the name Sisters of Providence.

## France, 17th Century

### St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac

Our spiritual roots reach back to 17th-century France to the inspiration of St. Vincent de Paul. Born the son of poor peasants, Vincent experienced poverty first-hand in a country which — like much of today's world — featured many contrasts. On one hand was wealth, power, beauty and pleasure, on the other destitution, oppression, squalor and misery. As a young priest, though a chaplain in the royal court, Vincent dedicated himself to serving and empowering the poor and oppressed.

Urged by the spirit, Vincent dedicated himself to meeting the spiritual and physical needs of the poor. He gathered together a group of priests — he called them the Congregation of the Mission — to preach to the destitute. He also organized Confraternities of Charity, groups of men and women to provide material help to the needy.

At this time all religious communities of women were strictly cloistered by the ruling of the Church, yet Vincent wanted to bring chastity, poverty, and obedience out of the cloister and into the traffic of everyday life. He would have these virtues practiced by young women who would go wherever there was someone in need of help.

His strongest support came from the widow Louise de Marillac, who had courage and vision similar to his own. To keep her deeply spiritual nature active and rooted, with Vincent's help she assembled a group of girls they called the Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor. In 1642 these first Daughters were allowed to pronounce the vows of religion and thus came into being the first uncloistered religious congregation of women, co-founded by St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac.



St. Vincent de Paul

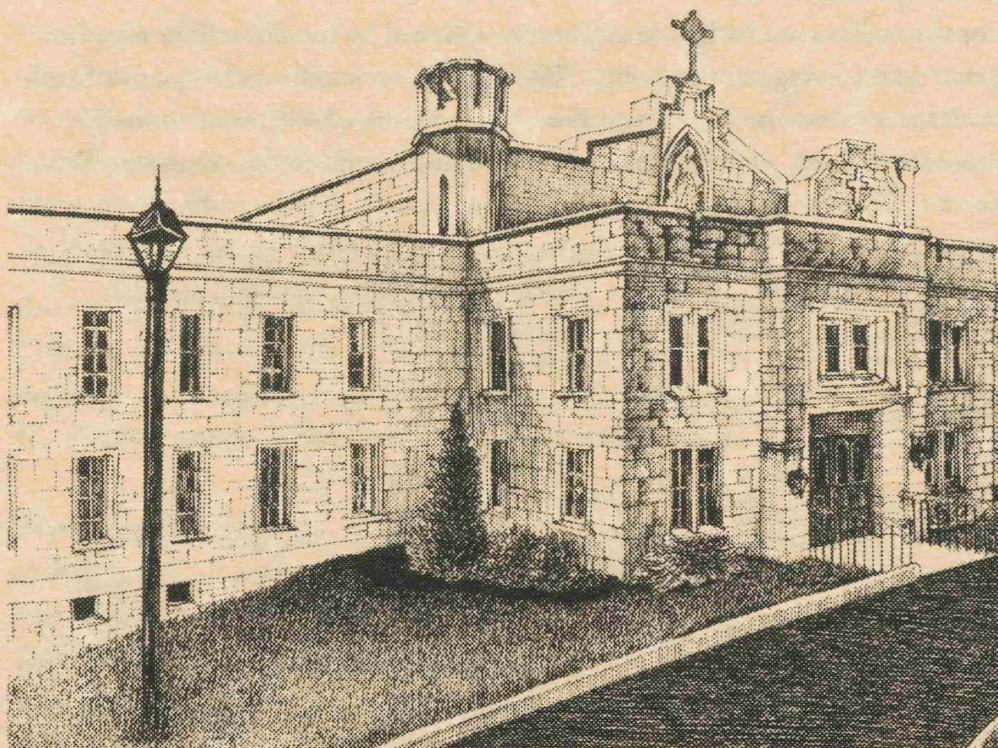


St. Louise de Marillac

# Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul

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1200 PRINCESS STREET, KINGSTON, ONTARIO



“Heathfield”

Providence Motherhouse

## Building for the future

*Once the home of Canada's first prime minister and now the nerve centre of the only religious congregation founded in Kingston, the property known as "Heathfield" has a long and proud history.*

The original villa, built in the 1830s, was described in an ad in the May 7, 1842, *Chronicle and Gazette*:

**"To be sold or let** to an improving Tenant, the House at present occupied by the Subscriber together with 8 or 10 Acres of superior Land, being part of Lot no. 19; and about one mile and a quarter from Town. There has lately been expended on the House and Premises a considerable sum of money, making it to consist of a large Cellar, with a well of the very best Water, the first floor, Drawing, Dining and Breakfast Rooms, Kitchens, two Servants' Bedrooms, Butlers and Cooks Pantries, with a well-arranged Water Closet; the second floor, Four Bed Rooms, one Dressing and Two House Closets all of which are heated by a single Stove; the offices are Stable, Coach House, Wood Shed and Summer Kitchen. Terms of payment will be made to accommodate a purchaser."

### Sir John A. Macdonald

#### A family arrangement

The property, including the square, stuccoed, two-storey Ontario cottage-style villa, passed through several hands until it was sold to Charles Heath in 1852. From this time on the property was known to Kingston residents as Heathfield. Heath sold the property in 1865 to Professor James Williamson, a brother-in-law of Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada's first prime minister. Sir John A. rented the home for his unmarried sister Louisa and, while he was prime minister, made it his home on his frequent visits from Ottawa.

When the Macdonalds arrived at Heathfield, a complicated family arrangement began. Louisa insisted she would live only in her brother's "home," so Williamson rented the whole house to John A. However, Williamson and his wife, Margaret, also lived there as Louisa's boarders. Since John A. was the official tenant he sat at the head of the table when he dined there, with Louisa at the foot. There was an even more convoluted arrangement about gardens. Louisa bought an acre from Williamson which she used as a vegetable garden. Margaret also gardened, but only on her husband's land, and the value of the vegetables used from the Williamson's garden was entered as an expense of Louisa's household.

In 1875, after 10 years at Heathfield, Sir John A. suggested the family move to a boarding house within what were then the city limits of Kingston, avoiding the isolation of a house in the country. But Margaret had not been well and a move would have been difficult. After her death on April 18, 1876, the family moved into the city.

Around 1879 George Sears purchased the property and was listed as its owner as late as 1895. Congregation records do not show who owned the property from this time until 1930, when the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul purchased the land for a novitiate.

#### A new home

Founded in Kingston in 1861 to look after the city's poor, orphaned and elderly, the congregation of the Sisters of Providence had grown rapidly from its humble beginnings. By 1910 their original home in the House of Providence — now known as Providence Manor — was crowded with Sisters and their charges and consequently St. Mary's of the Lake was purchased to house an orphanage and a novitiate. By 1930 the congregation had outgrown both sites and needed new quarters for their novitiate and general administration. The Sisters purchased Heathfield, then a 30-acre property just outside the western limits of the city.

The original villa served as a novitiate until 1932, when it became a residence for the Sisters teaching in the city. In 1941 the villa became a home for needy children when the Department of National Defence took over St. Mary's of the Lake Orphanage for a military hospital. In 1964 the villa was demolished to construct a new wing on the Motherhouse complex. An original marble fireplace from the villa still stands in the leadership team's meeting room.

#### Providence Motherhouse

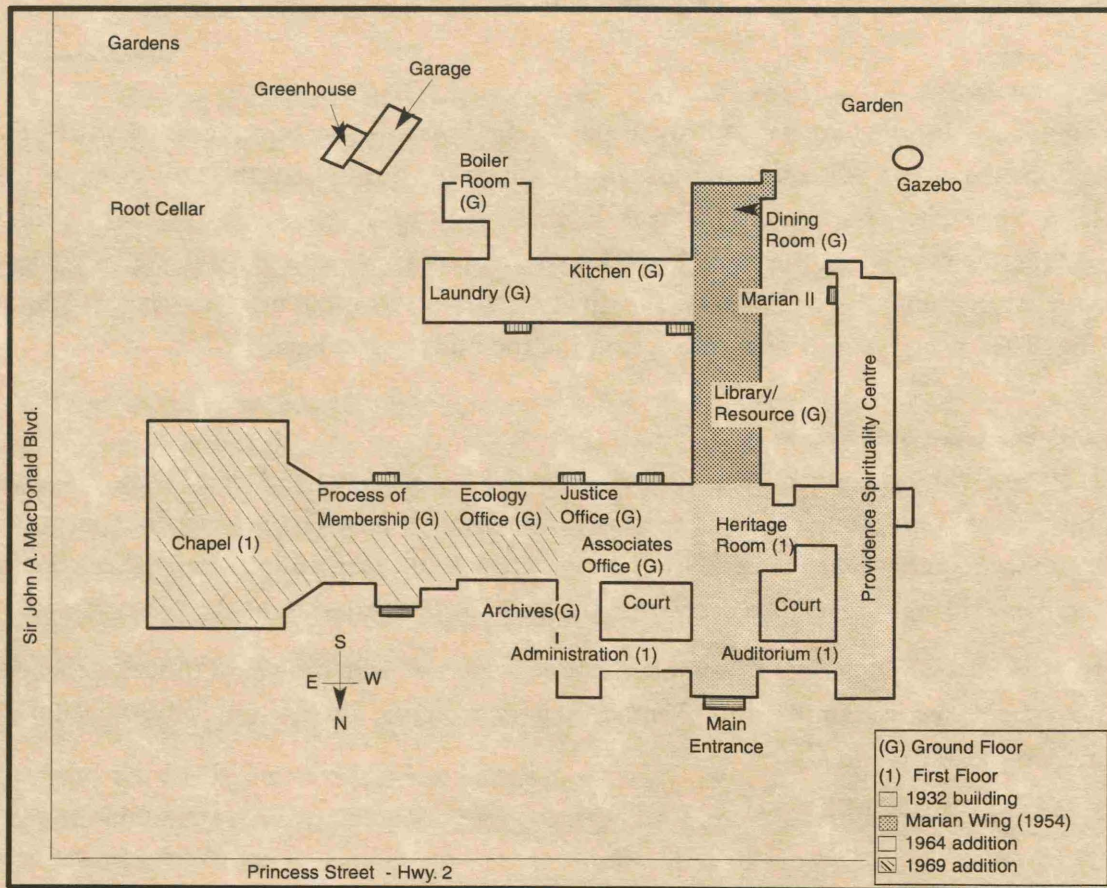
Construction of the building known as Providence Motherhouse — the term "motherhouse" refers to the official home base of a religious congregation — continued throughout the early years of the Great Depression and provided employment for many workers. Built of limestone quarried in the Kingston area, it was officially opened on July 6, 1932, and housed the novitiate and general administration of the congregation. At that time there was no sign of the beautiful landscaping now associated with the building; the "1932 wing," as it is now called, stood in the middle of a hayfield.

#### Changing with the needs of the times

- 1954 A 50-bed wing was added to serve as an infirmary for the aged and sick Sisters. The first and third floors were occupied by retired and semi-retired Sisters. The second floor was reserved for those requiring nursing care. Built during the Marian Year, an international celebration of the Blessed Virgin Mary, this section of the building is referred to as the "Marian wing."
- 1964 In 1964 a larger addition was completed. It consisted of administration offices, enlarged novitiate, 60 extra rooms for the Marian wing, new dining, kitchen and laundry facilities and a modern heating system.
- 1969 In 1969 the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception was built on the east end of the building. The former chapel became an auditorium.

- 1989 Renovations were completed on the ground floor of the 1964 administration area to accommodate the congregational archives.
- 1991 Renovations to the dining room area were completed. The new Electa Resource Centre moved into the north end of this area.
- 1993 Extensive renovations were made to the chapel, which was renamed the Chapel of Mary, Mother of Compassion.
- 2000 Extensive renovations to the Motherhouse were carried out over three years and completed in spring of 2000. Many of these renovations accommodated the changing needs of the congregation, with a view to special needs of senior citizens. At the same time, Providence Spirituality Centre moved to an expanded site in the west end of the building, part of "32 wing."

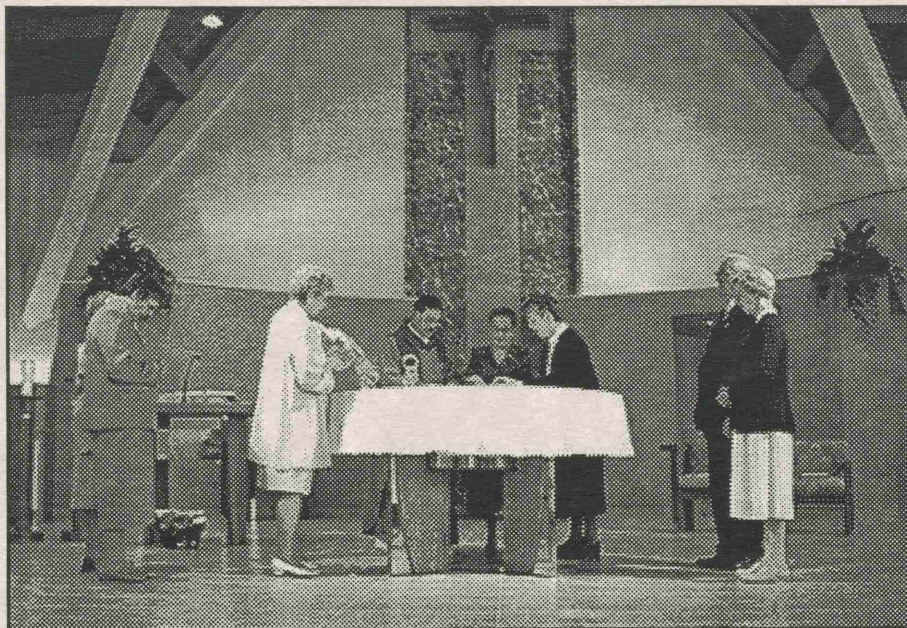
*A Heritage Room, located behind the auditorium, was opened December 13, 1999. Open to visitors, it contains more information on the history of the congregation and Heathfield, Providence Motherhouse.*



# Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul

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1200 PRINCESS STREET, KINGSTON, ONTARIO



Chapel of Mary  
Mother of Compassion



## A space for worship

*The chief features of the worship space are its flexibility, round feminine shapes, uncluttered simplicity and earth tones reminding us of creation.*

**I**N 1988, the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul began consultations with regard to renovating the 1969 Motherhouse chapel. In 1990, Father Dick Vosko, a liturgical design consultant, was engaged to assist in planning and designing the renovations. The process that Father Vosko facilitated included components on renewal in the Church and on the historical development of church art and architecture. It concluded with a design workshop where all the Sisters had input into the renovation program.

**The Kirkland Partnership**, an architectural firm in Toronto, was chosen to do the schematic design and to oversee the renovation.

**In May 1993** the Chapel was officially opened with the rite of rededication.

## The Structure

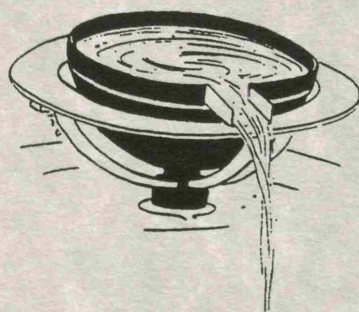
### The Narthex

The gathering space was made attractive and welcoming with comfortable furniture, glass doors allowing natural light, and new lighting. An art piece was installed depicting the foundation of the congregation with portraits of St. Vincent de Paul (our patron), Mother Emilie Gamelin (founder of the Sisters of Providence of Montreal) and Mother M. Edward McKinley (our first General Superior).

### Baptismal Area

The entrance of the chapel is a womb-like area with the beautiful, round, flowing Baptismal font as its centrepiece. This area reminds all who enter of their initiation into the Body of Christ through their baptismal commitment. It is covered by a canopy that houses special lighting and helps to create the impression of a womb. A cabinet to house the holy oils, used by the Church in the sacraments of initiation and of the sick, completes this area. The surrounding walls are semi-circular and covered by a material called Venetian stucco which gives a marble-like effect.

This area is used for vigil services and wakes for our deceased Sisters, for vow



ceremonies, for commitment ceremonies of our Associates and for sprinkling rites recalling our baptism.

### Windows

The windows were designed and built in Wales and shipped by boat. They feature strips of transparent, opaque and coloured glass that allow natural light to filter in and create beautiful patterns on sunny days. In the evening, each centre chevron is lit with a beam of light which creates the impression of a candle.

### Chapel Chairs

The former pews were replaced by comfortable, attractive chairs that can be placed in any configuration, depending on the need. For large celebrations, smaller matching stacking chairs are added.

### Flooring

A concrete tile patented in Germany and made in Canada was chosen for the flooring. Its earth tones complement the colour of the Venetian stucco walls. The hardness of the tile improves the acoustics of the Chapel.

### Sanctuary

The original crucifix and marble backdrop to the sanctuary were preserved. A rounded backdrop of Venetian stucco continues the semi-circular motif marking this area for the Eucharistic liturgy. A ramp and handrails allow those who need assistance to reach the sanctuary. The liturgical furniture is of red oak to complement the original oak ceiling of the chapel. A niche was created to house the hand-carved Celtic processional cross. The table of the Eucharist is round, signifying that the community gathers around the Eucharist.

### Music Ministry

The original Casavant organ console was moved to its current location to give the director of music and the choir a place from which to lead singing. Microphones for musicians can be plugged into the organ console.

### Reconciliation Room

The celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation takes place in this refurbished space.



#### **Shrine of Our Mother of Sorrows**

A niche was created to house the original statue of Our Mother of Sorrows. This is the principal devotion of our congregation and the root of our charism of compassion. Various devotions take place in this area.



#### **Eucharistic Worship Area**

Two semi-circular benches create the backdrop for the reservation of the Eucharist. The tabernacle (an art piece which matches the baptismal font) is globe-shaped, with a brass bottom and transparent top. The reserved sacrament is displayed in a handcrafted glass-covered dish. Since this area is the chief space for private prayer and adoration, it contains several prie-dieus or kneelers.

#### **Sanctuary Lamp**

The sanctuary lamp marking the presence of the Eucharist was designed by a local artisan to match the windows.

#### **Stations of the Cross**

The original stations of the cross are placed around the perimeter of the Chapel in wall indentations. They conclude at the statue of the Mother of Sorrows.

#### **Public Address System**

The public address system was updated with new speakers and a more powerful transmitter. The new system includes several stationary microphone sites and two portable microphones allowing for presiding from any area, including the narthex. The system contains a tape deck with remote control and an FM system for the hearing-impaired.

#### **Lighting**

New lighting fixtures were installed to improve lighting to all areas, to highlight the oak wood ceiling and to accentuate the special areas of the Chapel. A pre-set computer control allows different areas to be highlighted separately.



#### **Sacred Vessels**

The holy oils containers and the vessels used for the celebration of the Eucharist were handcrafted of glass by a local artisan.

The chief features of the worship space are its complete flexibility, its round feminine shapes, its uncluttered simplicity and earth tones reminding us of creation.

# Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul

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1200 PRINCESS STREET, KINGSTON, ONTARIO



## The Printing Room

## The story told

*For almost a century the printing room published important documents and raised funds to assist the congregation's work with the poor*

**I**N 1893 THE Sisters of Providence saw the need for a printing office to produce such congregational material as circulars, obituary notices, periodicals and small books in a manner that would "combine durability with cheapness."

An ambitious fundraising campaign began — with raffles for such prizes as a gold watch — and soon raised the \$480 required to purchase the first press and outfit the office with the necessary equipment. In 1899 the first printed work was completed, a selection of "Monthly Meditations" for the community, novitiate, infirmary, tertiaries and missions.

Later the office began doing work for outside companies, printing such material as dental charts, job application forms and business cards. The earnings from that work assisted the congregation's work with the poor, orphaned and aged.

**The Guardian Magazine**, a children's magazine distributed widely throughout the diocese and beyond, became so popular with the public that the printing room was commonly referred to as the "Guardian Office." On January 13, 1916, Sister M. Francis Regis wrote the following letter to her fellow Sisters describing the magazine's origin:

"I would like to encourage a project inaugurated by Mrs. Henry Smith of Kingston, viz: the Publishing of the "Catholic Guardian", a Sunday School Paper for children. It has the approval of His Grace, the Archbishop and the Priests of the City."

"This generous Lady purposes to issue the Journal monthly at the rate of one cent each per copy. A number of copies will be mailed to you about the 23rd. Inst. for distribution among the children of your School."

"The object of this most worthy enterprise is two-fold: 1st to afford good, wholesome literature for Sunday reading; 2nd to assist financially the Orphanage at St. Mary's of the Lake. The proceeds from the sale of the papers is to be given to the Orphanage. The price is so low I do not think there will be any objection to its publication throughout our Schools."

### Cover photo:

*Sisters Mary Daniel and Mary Emile, in their traditional garb, operate the type-setting machine in this photo from Nov. 16, 1946. As a newspaper report of the time noted "The flowing raiments, for centuries the wearing apparel of such orders, are worn daily by the Sisters as they go about their business of printing magazines and religious literature, operating a linotype and other machines as complicated as any to be found in this modern age."*

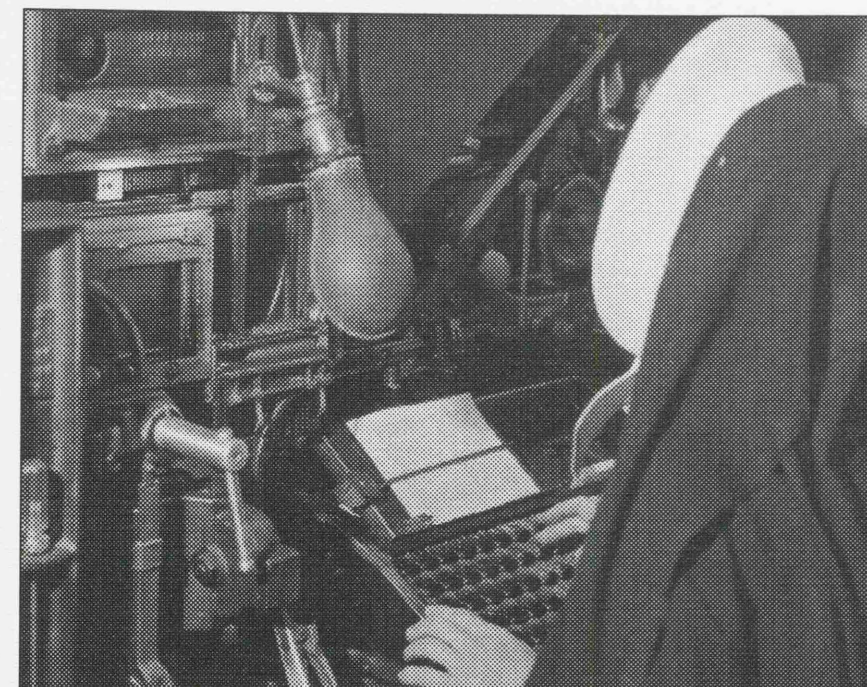
### Years of dependable service

Over the years, the printing room equipment was updated regularly as the operation continued to provide a valuable service to the Sisters of Providence and many outside clients. By the 1980s, however, advances in computer technology and the advent of desktop publishing meant a decision needed to be made regarding modernizing the operation.

In 1985 a proposal was made to consider establishing an Office of Communications that would oversee internal publications as well as media and public relations. Two years later the office opened at Providence Motherhouse. In 1989 the congregation closed the printing room and transferred the responsibility for producing internal documents to the Office of Communications.

Steve Haughian, an employee of 28 years, retired as the last person to manage the printing room for the congregation.

Today, using computer technology, the Office of Communications carries on many of the functions of the printing room with a mission focus and a thrust in social justice issues.



**Sister Mary Daniel is seen making up a page**



**Sister Mary Gabriel was known as a great communicator who helped found the congregation's printing room and edited *The Guardian Magazine*.**

# Sisters of House of Providence Operate Their Own Printing Shop

From the  
Kingston  
Whig-Standard,  
Nov. 16, 1946

UNIQUE, CERTAINLY IN Kingston and possibly in the whole of Canada, is a printing establishment operated by the Sisters of Providence here.

There is none of the usual noise of the modern printing shop, but rather a quiet, almost relaxing atmosphere, despite the fact that plenty of work is done for two national religious monthly magazines, and other religious literature of this order are printed there.

The operations are carried out in a large orderly room off Ordnance Street. Neat rows of type are in their racks down the centre of the room while one side is occupied by the make-up tables. At one end, near two large windows, stand the linotype machine and a small Gordon press, used for smaller printing jobs, while a separate room houses a larger press, used for the printing of magazines and large work of that type.

The two magazines printed by the Sisters are the *Canadian League*, which is the official organ of the Catholic Women's League, and *The Guardian*, a children's paper. The stories and articles in *The Guardian* are written by the children and the paper is bought mainly by them, any profits being used by the Sisters of Providence for the care of orphans. *The Guardian* has a circulation of some 1,845 copies per month and is gathered and edited by the Sisters of the order. *The Canadian League* is edited in Montreal and has a

circulation of 4,500 copies.

Printing was begun in a small way with the founding of the House of Providence in 1861, but it was not until the advent of Sister Mary Gabriel, formerly Mary Cunningham of Kingston whose father was a local merchant, that it was carried forward in a serious way. She took a great interest in the work and her success is attested to in the well-run shop of today. Sister Gabriel later rose to the position of Sister Superior of the House of Providence and Superior General of the Sisters of Providence of this diocese.

There are two Sisters operating the shop at present, Sister Mary Daniel and Sister Mary Emile. As neither Sister Daniel nor Sister Emile had any previous experience in printing they had to pick up their knowledge as they went along. Today the Sisters run the intricate machines with a quiet confidence that is amazing, considering their lack of formal training in the work. They are assisted in their work by Edward Burns, who has operated the large press for 16 years.

The Sisters work long hours, from just after mass in the morning to as late as 11 o'clock on some nights. They receive no salary in keeping with the spirit of their order, but are happy in the knowledge that any profit the shop shows is used by their order to help the orphaned and the aged.

# Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul

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1200 PRINCESS STREET, KINGSTON, ONTARIO



## Catherine McKinley

*(Mother Mary Edward)*

## A key figure

*The courage and pioneer spirit of Catherine McKinley are cherished as a lasting legacy by the only religious congregation founded in Kingston, Ontario*

The Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul do not attribute their founding to a single originator, a practice which differs from that of many religious communities. Instead, the congregation views its founding as a process of history involving key people guided by a deep spirituality and passion for social justice.

A crucial figure in the early development of the congregation was Kingston native Catherine McKinley (Mother Mary Edward). The courage and pioneer spirit demonstrated by Catherine McKinley and the other original members of the Kingston community left a legacy which lives on in today's congregation.

## Historical overview

### Mid-19th century

Although Kingston was a thriving port, the mid-19th century was an especially difficult time for the city's poor. Particularly afflicted were the aged, orphaned and imprisoned, who had nowhere to turn for help. Many suffered without care in their homes, others were forced to beg in the streets. It was into this society that Catherine McKinley was born on August 14, 1837, to ship owner John McKinley and his wife, the former Sarah McCaffrey.

The lot of the poor had not improved by 1861, when Monsignor E.J. Horan, the Bishop of Kingston, asked the Montreal Sisters of Providence to come to his city to establish an institute for all of the poor, old and young. On December 13, 1861, four Sisters from Montreal arrived in Kingston to found what is now known as the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul. The next year Catherine McKinley, by now a skilled dressmaker, joined the new community. When the Montreal Sisters returned to their community four years later, Catherine, now known as Mother Mary Edward, became the Superior of the new congregation.



Bishop E.J. Horan

### Pioneering Sisters

She was a wise and compassionate leader for many years. In a letter to her little community she wrote:

*"I trust that God in His infinite goodness may guide all hearts and minds and the present standard of our little bark may never be lowered, that from day to day superiors and subjects may continue to have but one aim in life — the good pleasure of God and the maintenance of the spirit of our institute."*

Armed with the congregation's virtues of humility, simplicity and charity, Catherine McKinley and the pioneer Sisters worked tirelessly to bring the compassion of the Provident God to the poor. In addition to their hands-on work with the orphaned, the sick and the aged, they devoted weeks and months to exhausting and humbling "begging tours," seeking money to clothe and shelter those in their care.

### Gifted leader

Catherine McKinley proved to be a leader with many talents. Her financial and organizational skills saw an unprecedented building of institutions for the poor, including facilities for orphans and the aged. Her success was also linked to her ability to maintain good relations with the clergy, whom she greatly respected but whom she was not afraid to challenge in her forthright manner when it was a matter of the care of the needy or the conditions under which her Sisters were working. Indeed, her warmth and affection for her Sisters was surpassed only by her love and consideration of the poor she served until her death in 1904.

At the time of her death, a newspaper of the day had this to say:

*"Her death closed a career of remarkable activity and labour in the cause of religion, education and charity. A visitor today to the House of Providence, Kingston, one of the largest charitable Institutions in the province, can hardly realize that so great results would be the outcome of the modest beginning some forty years ago. When we remember also that the Sisters extended their sphere of holy activity into the United States as well as all over the Diocese of Kingston in schools, hospitals, and homes for the aged and infirm, we can form some idea of the mental qualities of the late Superior, whose mind was the guiding light of its early years, whose faith and zeal overcame every difficulty in these first difficult days of the noble Institution which today challenges our admiration in its maturity of life and vigour."*



Catherine McKinley

## A lifetime of service

### Chronology

- 1837 Catherine McKinley is born in Kingston, Ontario, on August 14, 1837.
- 1861 Sisters of Providence from Montreal arrive in Kingston on December 13, 1861, to establish the new religious congregation.
- 1862 Catherine McKinley becomes the first candidate for the new congregation on March 25, 1862.
- 1864 Catherine McKinley pronounces her vows and becomes the first professed member of the new congregation.
- 1865 Catherine McKinley opens a teaching mission in Belleville, Ontario.
- 1866 The French Sisters return to Montreal and Catherine McKinley, now known as Mother Mary Edward, becomes the first General Superior of the new congregation.
- 1871 The first building project — an addition to the House of Providence, which is serving as both Motherhouse, orphanage and home for the aged — is undertaken and successfully completed by Catherine McKinley.
- 1873 A new mission is opened in Holyoke, Massachusetts, and Catherine McKinley is the first local Superior.
- 1884 Catherine McKinley becomes General Superior of the congregation for another two terms of office.
- 1887 St. Vincent de Paul Hospital is opened in Brockville, Ontario.
- 1892 A second addition to the House of Providence. The mission at Holyoke becomes an independent congregation.
- 1896 Catherine McKinley becomes First Assistant and serves two terms of office.
- 1898 Our Mother of Sorrows Chapel is completed at the House of Providence.
- 1902 The mission at Trenton, Ontario, opens and Catherine McKinley is the local Superior.
- 1904 Catherine McKinley dies in Trenton on November 21, 1904.