

Some 600 mourners, including 40 sisters, ignored a snowstorm to celebrate the lives of four remarkable women who touched and changed so many lives before theirs ended tragically on Easter weekend

'It's just unbelievable. God bless them all... they're four stars in Heaven'

SCOTT CROWSON
CALGARY HERALD

For Glee Holden, mourning the loss of four Sisters at their snowed-in, packed funeral Saturday was like losing her parents all over again.

The Sisters of Charity of St. Louis had become her surrogate family when she was 12 years old, just after her own parents died in a traffic accident.

"All the sisters, I know them," Holden said. "My parents were also killed in a truck accident, in 1957. And so they raised me."

The retired city worker was one of 600 people who came to pay their respects to Sisters Norma Basso, Joan Flaherty, Rita Proulx and Theresa Tetrault at Saturday's funeral mass.

"I've had a long connection with the sisters," said Holden, now 58. "The Sisters of Charity of St. Louis have always been an integral part of my life. They gave me the fortitude to go on because I was only 12 years old when my parents were killed. Now the sisters will have to draw strength from within to carry on from losing their buddies."

After Holden's parents died she moved to a convent in Moose Jaw and the sisters taught her at school and helped to raised her.

Holden said Calgary was going to miss their contributions to those in need.



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"There's going to be such a void. All four of them, all at once, gone. It's just unbelievable," Holden said. "God bless them all, they're under His wing now. They're four stars in Heaven."

The service at St. Mary's Cathedral began at 10:30 a.m.

Forty sisters, some wearing habits and all holding candles, lined both sides of the cathedral's centre aisle as the service began. The honour guard represented the female religious orders of the Calgary Catholic Diocese. Sister Mary Anne Mulvihill carried the processional cross as the four caskets were wheeled to the front of the cathedral. Each casket was covered in a white pall, with a book of Common Prayer and flowers placed on top.

"Easter is supposed to be a time of hope and joyous celebration," Bishop Frederick Henry told the gathering. "But, this year, we find it a little bit difficult to find it joyous and filled with hope. . . . We're dealing with the tragic death of four sisters."

He later told the Herald that the funeral brought a sense of relief.

"A lot of the sadness is over with now," he said. "We have celebrated their lives. We have told the stories. We have shared an awful lot of memories — the good times, the pleasant times, the painful times. Now we've come together to celebrate their lives and pass them on to God."

He said the four elderly roommates, who ranged in age from 72 to 82, were remarkable women.

"They didn't engage in competition but focused on God. They didn't give in to the individualism of our times but looked at community."



Main, top left: Mourner puts her hand on one of the four caskets as she makes her way to the front of the church.

Above right: Flowers lay across the top of one of the caskets during the collective funeral.

Below right: Bishop Frederick Henry blesses the caskets (the other two were under the balcony).

Left: Pallbearers carry out the four caskets after the collective funeral for the four sisters — killed in a car crash recently — at St. Mary's Cathedral on Saturday morning.

over on back

FUNERAL: Caring hearts will be missed

"They did all those sorts of things that marked them as strong witnesses of faith in the world," the bishop said.

During the service, the congregation was asked to pray for Serge Major, the Ontario trucker who couldn't stop in time.

His huge truck ran over the sisters' sedan, crushing it. The fatal Easter Sunday collision was one of the worst in Calgary's history.

At the conclusion of the service, four white hearses took the sisters on their last ride, to St. Mary's Cemetery. After the graveside services, friends and relatives gathered in the parish hall for a reception. They shared memories of the sisters.

Several young women recalled their connection to Basso, assistant director of Elizabeth House, which provides a home to pregnant teenagers in need.

"She was really nice and caring," said Diana McKnight, 21. "I miss her a lot."

Gwen Thompson said Basso had a big influence on all the girls.

"Sister Norma has been a part of our lives for about a year now," said Thompson, holding 10-month-old daughter Claudia.

"She's looked after us and given us a good start to be a parent."

The 21-year-old noted that the senior's small size didn't match her large personality.

"She was a petite woman with a big attitude," she said.

"She had a big heart, big voice. No one looked at her like she was little."

Family members from across the country flew to Calgary for the funeral service.

"I was proud of her," said Basso's nephew, Frank Voit. "She was very dedicated to what she did."

The 57-year-old safety consultant said he last saw her in February when she visited him in North Bay, Ont.

"She managed to make the rounds before we all lost her," he said.

Sister Helen Hengel, the lone survivor of the accident, couldn't attend the funeral mass. She was still in the intensive care unit.

"My thoughts are with her but also with the four sisters that they buried today," said friend Ian Watson, 55.

"It's a very tragic thing that's happened, but it brings the religious communities close together."

Hengel is recovering after suffering multiple fractures, including 13 cracked ribs.

"Helen is doing better," said Sister Yvette Plessis of Yorkton, Sask.

"She's on the mend but still in very serious condition. Helen's off the critical list. She is beginning to respond but she's being kept very heavily sedated. The doctors are hoping she'll make a full recovery."

The 79-year-old counsellor doesn't remember the accident and has asked why she's in the hospital.

"She's been told what happened," Plessis said.

"Whether she remembers or not, we don't know that."

Plessis, acting as a spokeswoman for the sisters, said the order appreciated the support of the community.

"It's been overwhelming," Plessis said. "We're really grateful. It's helped us in our grieving tremendously."

All 41 members of the order who live in Western Canada attended the service.

Two came from Eastern Canada. Members of other orders also attended.

"Some need to go back home right away because of their work," Plessis said.

"Some of us are staying a little bit longer to help with the aftermath of the funeral and to be of support to each other."

The 14 remaining Sisters of Charity of St. Louis who live here are struggling to deal with the tragedy.

Plessis said the order will gather in Calgary next month for the 200th anniversary of the congregation, which was created to deal with the social fallout of the French Revolution.

"We'll use some of that time for the ongoing grieving process," she said.

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Welcome for pregnant teens

By BYRON PRICE
Special to the WCR

Calgary's Elizabeth House provides hope when life is dark

Calgary

Like Elizabeth who opened her arms to the youthful pregnant Mary, Elizabeth House also serves as a house of welcome for single pregnant or parenting teens.

Over the past two years, Elizabeth House has provided a home-like environment for 20 young women, some of whom had numerous and complex problems.

"My response to the young women is, I will be there for them."

- Sr. Pat Derbyshire

Sister Pat Derbyshire runs the home along with assistant director Sister Norma Basso. The home can house up to three women and three children at a time for up to six months.

Derbyshire tells of one girl who had never

experienced real love and who was only able to relate to men through her body.

Another young girl had to be asked to leave because of her own abusive behavior, says Derbyshire. "We tried everything, but there was nothing else left to say or do," the director says with tears in her eyes. "I had to say, 'God, it's in your hands. We did all we could.'"

"The young women have shown me another side to life — the death side," she continues. "Some people's lives are in constant pain and suffering which they have to endure daily.

"My response to the young women is, I will be there for them. Maybe I've become more aware of my own weakness. I



- Photo by Byron Price

Sister Pat Derbyshire says Elizabeth House is a way for her order, the Sisters of Charity of St. Louis, to return to their founder's original vision.

know I can't do it on my own. I need God's help."

Elizabeth House, operated by Catholic Charities and directed by the Sisters of Charity of St. Louis, grew out of the religious order's self-examination.

The community was doing pastoral ministry, counseling, parish education and other programs, but was also searching for other directions in which the Spirit

might be leading them.

In 1992, Derbyshire visited the town of Vannes in the Brittany region of France where Marie Louise Mole began the order in the wake of the French Revolution. Mole had responded to the growing number of orphans and other young girls who fell into prostitution in the Vannes harbour.

Even though she and her sisters had

little themselves and lived in a falling-down monastery, Mole reached out to the young women.

Derbyshire says seeing the town where her order began led her to connect to the inspiration of the foundress. She and Sister Anne Honig began to look for a way to work with young pregnant women.

Although Honig was killed in a car crash in 1993, the order pursued the vision. It found a small house which enabled the community to develop a small, but intimate, residential program where the educational, emotional, spiritual and other needs of pregnant young women could be met.

In June 1996, Elizabeth House opened. Since then, there have been many positive stories.

"I remember one girl who came to us who had a baby but who was subject to rages," Derbyshire says. "We persevered and helped her develop goals for herself and her baby.

"She called me awhile ago and said, 'You guys really saved my butt.' She finished high school and registered in university. Her little girl is in day care and she is working hard at her job.

"When you see changes like this, you know why God doesn't give up on us."

"If I had one wish for these girls, it would be that they would get in touch with their spiritual life and see there is more to life than materialism," Derbyshire continues.

"If they could get in touch with their spiritual side and know that God is there for them, they would have more roots and more support."

Pioneer sisters serve west

The Sisters of Charity of St. Louis are pioneers in the Calgary diocese. They're also celebrating 75 years of service to the people of southern Alberta.

**BY LAURETTE TESSIER,
SCSL**

Special to the WCR

The Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of St. Louis were founded primarily for educational purposes in the aftermath of the French Revolution.

It was in 1912 when Bishop Emil Legal controlled the vast diocese of St. Albert and the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart had charge of St. Patrick's Parish in Medicine Hat that the Sisters of Charity of St. Louis were invited to open their first mission in western Canada.

After the opening of St. Louis School in Medicine Hat, other foundations soon followed in Saskatchewan: Moose Jaw (1913), Radville (1915), Wilcox and Swift Current (1920), Regina (1924) and Shaunavon (1945).

The main apostolate of the sisters in the early years was the care and education of children in boarding schools. Local children also attended these schools.

Between 1927-1929, a small hospital in Willowbunch, Sask., came under the nursing care of the sisters.

Depression and beyond

From the early 1930s to the late 1960s, many sisters dispersed every summer throughout the rural areas to catechize the children.

During the school year, the local Catholic children who were not attending the separate schools were also instructed.

In the 1950s when the children from rural areas were being transported by bus into the larger school units, the trend was to discontinue boarding schools.

However, the sisters continued to open new foundations in various parishes where they resided in smaller houses. These later foundations included Melville, Sask. (1950), Marquis, Sask. and St. John's, Calgary (1951), Burnaby-New Westminster, B.C. and Regina (1958), Lethbridge (1961), Edmonton



Sister Therese Theriault in ministry to the sick.

(1962), St. James, Calgary and Saskatoon (1966) and St. Albert (1976).

A foreign mission was established in 1965 among the destitute of Peru. One adventurous sister gave several years of service with developmental agencies in Africa.

Until 1947, the sisters in western Canada formed part of their French province in Quebec. At this time, however, since numbers and works had increased sufficiently, a western province was formed. Presently the provincial administration is based in Calgary while the Centre of Formation resides at Newman Theological College, Edmonton.

New ministries

Embued with the spirit of renewal following Vatican II, the sisters sought to implement its apostolic directives by assuming a variety of new ministries.

Some became parish assistants participating in all aspects open to women. Some were drawn to the nursing profession and related ministries in care of the sick, the elderly, the dying and the very poor.

Others found fulfilment in social work, home care, directing retreats, counselling and chaplaincy. Some continued in the teaching profession at all levels from kindergarten to university.

In keeping with the increasing role of the laity in the church, two sisters in 1981 began work in the

parishes of the Weyburn deanery training teams of lay people to assist their pastor by holding "lay-presided Eucharistic services" in his absence and by organizing the adult education and sacramental preparation programs in the parish.

Currently, four sisters are employed as administrators of a number of parishes in the Archdiocese of Regina. Two others are serving with the native population in the diocese of Nelson, B.C.

To commemorate 75 years of ministry, 47 members of the order embarked last summer on a pilgrimage of 1,410 miles over southern Alberta and Saskatchewan to 10 of the places where the earliest seeds of their apostolate were sown.

Celebrations included graveside services wherever their sisters were buried and Eucharistic liturgies or prayer services in the local churches.

The theme of each liturgy was developed according to the history of each particular place.

Sisters renewed

Several goals were met as the sisters paused in each location. While reviewing their history — graced and sinful — they gave thanks for their accomplishments as Sisters of Charity of St. Louis in western Canada.

They honored their pioneer sisters and prayed for the people who had been part of their lives over the 75 years. Where pain had been experienced, memories were healed and the past was reconciled.

Sr. Pat Derbyshire faces change, challenges

Newly-elected leader of Sisters of Charity of St. Louis wants sisters in the field to keep living out their faith

STORIES by RAMON GONZALEZ

WESTERN CATHOLIC REPORTER

ST. ALBERT — Sister Pat Derbyshire is the new provincial leader of the Sisters of Charity of St. Louis in Western Canada.

The Calgary native was just appointed to a three-year term as leader to replace Sister Mary Anne Mulvihill, the provincial superior for the past six years.

Derbyshire will move to the order's headquarters in Calgary ahead of her installation as leader in mid-August.

Her move and that of her roommate

'I'm a collaborative leader.'

Sister Mary Spence, the last two sisters remaining in St. Albert, will end the Sisters of Charity of St. Louis ministry in the Edmonton Archdiocese.

As superior, Derbyshire will be responsible for 25 sisters stationed in various centres in Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia.

Derbyshire will make decisions with the help of a team. "I'm a collaborative leader. We work together in decision-making and I sort of animate the group



WCR PHOTO | RAMON GONZALEZ

Sr. Pat Derbyshire, left, and Sr. Mary Spence will be moving to Calgary.

and call the group together and put forth the items that we need to discuss."

The team's duties include organizing the order's annual assembly and making sure the sisters are happy and well looked after. "Also, as we diminish in age, there is also the area of selling property that we no longer need."

The Sisters of Charity of St. Louis in Western Canada are part of an interna-

tional congregation and so Derbyshire can expect to attend a number of international meetings during her term. Her order has sisters in Quebec, France, England, Haiti, Madagascar, Mali, Senegal, Mexico and Martinique.

The average age of the sisters in Western Canada is 75. The last time the congregation had a vocation was in the late 1980s.

"This tells me we are not flourishing," Derbyshire said. "We are looking at the fact that in our Western province we will not continue as a province; like we are going to die out."

The Western province could become part of one of three Quebec provinces, which have a total membership of about 450 sisters. Aging aside, Derbyshire wants to keep the sisters in the field living out their faith.

HER DREAMS

"My dream would be to have the sisters stay wherever they are as long as they can be a vital presence in their community," she said. "Maybe another dream would be we use our finances sensibly."

Born and raised in Calgary, Derbyshire attended Catholic schools and joined the sisters in 1964. She has served as a teacher, a pastoral assistant and in native ministry in Alberta and B.C.

In 1994, she helped to open Elizabeth House in Calgary, which offers pregnant teens a safe place to live.

Four years ago Derbyshire found a job with Catholic Social Services in Edmonton and moved in with Spence.

"I'm a little sad," she confessed. "I really like St. Albert and the community, the parish here and my involvement."

During her stay here, Derbyshire played piano with a music group for Sunday liturgy at Holy Family Church and became involved with the Action Coalition on Human Trafficking.

TO SCHOOL FOR FIRST TIME



It was not just some of the children at St. Gabriel's School in Edmonton who were there for the first time last week — it was the first time the teachers had been there also. The Sisters of St. Louis are newcomers to the Arch-

diocese of Edmonton and are here being welcomed by Rev. A. D. O'Brien of St. Michael's parish. Sister Adele is at right and the other is Sister Margaret. —(Photo, Academy, Edm.)

Created with preservation

The Sisters of Charity of St. Louis



St. Matthew

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On a dark April evening, in the year 1793, while France languished under the "Reign of Terror", a young cleric slipped, unobserved, into a dimly lit mansion. He was bringing a heart-rending message to the young Countess Mole of Mery and Champlatreux. Her husband had fallen victim to the guillotine. As the grief-stricken widow comforted her three small children, a noble resolution was born in her mind. Henceforth, she would consecrate her life to God. By prayer and suffering she would atone for the atrocities committed by her countrymen; by multiplying her works of charity she could alleviate some of the misery perpetrated by the Revolution.

A few years later, under the guidance of her spiritual director, the saintly Mgr. de Pancemont, Bishop of Vannes, she planned and wrote the Constitutions for a new religious order. In 1803, Pontifical approval was obtained and the Institution was placed under the patronage of St. Louis IX, King of France. Now to be known as "Mother St. Louis", Countess Mole and a small group of dedicated women, including her aged mother, vowed their lives to God and the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of St. Louis was launched.

Their first apostolate was to provide shelter and education for many destitute orphan girls in Vannes. As other women were attracted to the new order, orphanages, boarding and day schools, hospitals and retreat houses were opened in different parts of France. Anticlerical laws passed in 1903 provided the impetus for the Sisters to move out of France and begin apostolates in several other countries.

The Sisters came to Western Canada in 1912 when Father Cadoux, a missionary of the Sacred Heart, invited them to work in his parish in Medicine Hat. Here they opened St. Theresa Academy which was to be the first of several foundations in Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Fifty Years with the Sisters of Charity of St. Louis in Medicine Hat, Alberta

"All you works of the Lord, bless the Lord
Praise and exalt Him above all forever."

To God alone be all the glory and thanksgiving for these fifty years of progress of Catholic Education in Medicine Hat. To the Sisters of Charity of St. Louis whom He has deigned to associate with Himself in this great work, we pay a respectful tribute on this occasion of the 50th anniversary of their arrival in the city. The noble work so courageously undertaken fifty years ago in spite of countless difficulties, has flourished. To the Sisters, the Separate School system of Medicine Hat owes very much.

In 1911, Father Cadoux, Missionary of the Sacred Heart, invited the Sisters to take charge of the Separate School in his parish. Reverend Mother Theresa of Jesus, Provincial Superior, was willing but sought first to know the will of God before venturing so far West.

If the Canadian Pacific Railway Company would consider a greatly reduced fare for the Sisters who had little of the wealth of this world, the authorities would consider their benevolence a sign of God's good pleasure. The favor was granted. Accordingly, Reverend Mother Theresa and a companion visited Medicine Hat and Calgary in June of that year. Immediately plans were made to staff the school. Mother Anna Mary who had just arrived from England and Mother Mary Veronica from the Provincial House in Quebec were asked to go to Edmonton to qualify for teaching certificates in Alberta.

On the third of January, 1913, St. Louis School was officially opened. In the meantime, Mother St. Gurval, the first Superior, Sister M. Philomena, a music teacher and Sister Mary Albert, a housekeeper, had arrived as co-foundresses. The school was blessed by Father Cadoux on January 26. A beautiful large crucifix was to occupy a place of honour in the main entrance. Throughout the years, it has remained a symbol of the many sacrifices, disappointments and sufferings inherent to such an undertaking conceived as it was solely in view of God's greater glory and the welfare of souls. That first small community drank long and deep of the chalice of sufferings. To the Catholic youth of this City, these valiant women and their successors throughout the years have given their all, intellectually and spiritually. There were years when the resources of the School Board were hardly adequate to maintain the Separate School in existence, the Sisters carried on, supplementing by private lessons and boarding school revenue, the meagre income of the teaching staff. Long before the St. Louis Separate School District could support a High School, the Sisters taught Grades IX to XII at the Academy as a private school venture, providing teachers, locale and equipment without government aid or school grant of any kind. How well these pioneers understood the value of a thoroughly Christian training in the formative years of adolescence. All this was done in the spirit of their foundress, Madame Mole, who had made a pact with the Cross and who expected her daughters to follow in her footsteps beneath the shadow of that same Calvary.

For almost the whole of these fifty years, alone of religious teachers in the growing school system, the Sisters of St. Louis have passed on the torch of Catholic education from one to the other. Today, students of these early religious teachers are perpetuating with a remarkable degree of faith and courage the legacy of devotedness to duty and dedication to youth handed down to them by their noble predecessors.

The many vocations to the priesthood and to the religious life are evidence of the thoroughness with which these self-sacrificing women impart spiritual ideals with the secular knowledge expounded day after day to the students attending the Separate schools of the city.

In 1930, due to the efforts of Mother Aimee, St. Therese Academy became affiliated with the University of Ottawa. This was indeed a blessing and a great favor. It enabled students to receive their degree in Arts without leaving the City. A few students availed themselves of this opportunity but unfortunately not enough to warrant expansion, hence the Sisters felt obliged to confine their instruction to elementary and High school students. However, the Sisters did profit by the affiliation to further their own studies with continued attendance at the University of Ottawa as well as at Provincial Universities have kept well ahead of Departmental requirements as holders of professional certificates and degrees. In addition to the three Vows of Monastic rule, their foundress added that of education of children. They are educators, therefore, by Vow as well as by training. The services they have rendered and still render to the Catholic population of Medicine Hat has always been of the highest calibre.

We, the generation of Catholics who have been formed in the traditions of our religion by their zealous teaching must follow the pattern they have set. We must continue the work they have begun. We must assure them that their labor and their sacrifice and their prayers will continue to bear fruit in time and eternity.

And those who are reaping the fruit of that labor and who must remember when they enjoy greater prosperity and more progressive school buildings, what Jessica E. Money so aptly wrote:

"Think not that ye,	Think not that ye,
In all your might of youth,	Who in your later years,
Have done these things	Have made the wonders
That round you be;	That the eye can see:
'Tis they who've gone before.	'Tis they who've gone before.

So also then must be left to eternity the reward for so many anonymous a work, but let us repeat with the Psalmist on this occasion of the Separate School's Golden Jubilee:

"I will give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart,
Proclaim all your wonderful works."

A former pupil, 1917-20

catholic education in sou



The original St. Louis School, Medicine Hat, circa 1913.

— Medicine Hat Museum



MOTHER FETTER - Easter Monday was a busy day for the Sisters of Charity of St. Louis, which members of the order from both in the east and New Westminster in the west and points between gathered here to bid farewell to

Rev. Mother Beatrice who is to leave shortly to take up residence in Rome. Altogether 90 Sisters were gathered for the occasion. Mother Beatrice has been stationed in Medicine Hat for the past three years as provincial of the or-

der for the western provinces, and to begin the day in which she was honored high mass was celebrated in the convent chapel, followed by a banquet in the auditorium of St. Mary's school. After a pleasant afternoon the Sisters partook of a

buffet supper and the day was closed by a concert staged by the novices. The highlight of the evening was an address by Rev. Mother Mary Louise, the presentation of an illuminated spiritual bouquet and a portable typewriter. The position

of provincial will be filled by Mother Mary Louise after Mother Beatrice's departure. At present Mother Louise is superior of St. Mary's Academy and St. Mary's Coy. School. She plans to remain until the end of June. - Freelance Photo

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Make room
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— Page B4



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New mural graces St. Louis School

ATALIE BANK

ne Hat News

The Sisters of Charity of St. Louis are now a part of the walls at St. Louis school. On Friday the school unveiled a Jim Marshall mural depicting the foundress of the sisters helping children and the saint, St. Louis. A breathtaking sight for some, the sisters gathered at the school Friday. A handful of them made trip from all over the prairies to and celebrate 200 years of service around the world. They taught at Catholic schools in Medicine Hat as part of the Sisters of Charity, the group of women who founded the school and developed it in the city. Sister Anne Murtagh, a leader of women for Sisters in western Canada, told those who gathered the Sisters made their way to the city and marked the beginning years of service here. After the local parish asked for the Sisters to come to help set up school, two arrived just a month after the St. Louis school opened in May 1913. Eventually there were classrooms during the day, moving to rooms above the school at night. Sister St. Theresa's Academy was where the Sisters lived there, with a walk down the hill from Mount Heights to work at St. Louis every day. Sister Anne Murtagh, who once taught at the high school, said the spirit of the work women did in those early years can still be felt today. It's the reason why the Sisters joined there.

St. Louis school has always been close to our hearts because it's the first one."

Sister Anne said it's also a chance to remember the foundress of the city, Marie Louise Elizabeth de la Pionne, who took in young girls in the time after her she lost her



—NEWS PHOTO TIM

Father David Meadows blesses a new brick mural that was unveiled moments earlier at St. Louis School in Medicine Hat, on Friday

family almost 200 years ago.

"We wanted to celebrate her life and all the women who followed her, especially to here."

Sister Joan Burns teaches at St. Mary's school. She is the last of the Sisters in Medicine Hat, but it only reminds her of the work and dedication of the women who came before her.

"For me it's a celebration of what

we began here and how wonderful things still are. When you come to St. Louis you can still see the blessings of their work and dedication and that spirit continues."

For students, Friday's unveiling of a mural encompassing the history and spirit of the school was the final lesson for the month's theme: Be thankful for the Sisters of Charity of

St. Louis.

Kelly Wilkinson, principal, said the kids have been waiting for more than a year for the event, and she thinks of a better place for it.

"It's something that's really special to make a difference at our school. A lot of the themes in the mural are caring, giving and service to others — follow the things that are important at our school."

Medicine Hat started with two teachers

From humble beginnings the system today educates 2,100 students under a staff of 117 providing for every level of student ability.

Only six years after Alberta became a Province, St. Louis Separate School District No. 2121 came into existence under provisions governing the acceptance of this Province into Confederation. From these humble beginnings as a 2-teacher system, we have developed into a system responsible for the education of nearly 2100 students under the guidance of a professional staff of 117 persons, plus support staff.

The pioneer school in this system is St. Louis. Following the formation of the District on June 26, 1911, the School Board made up of Rev. A. Cadoux, J.G. Millar, F.B. MacKinnon, L.P.O. Noel, and J.B. Barreau borrowed funds and purchased the St. Louis School site for \$5,250.00. Construction was commenced immediately and on January 3, 1913, Sister Anna Mary and Sister Mary Veronica of the Sisters of Charity of St. Louis, commenced classes in the new structure.

From 1915 to March, 1957, St. Theresa's Academy also served the needs of students in the City. Through co-operation of the University of Ottawa, it served as a degree-granting institution for several years. Initially, this was a private institution but in later years, it became part of the Separate School System through an agreement with the Order.

Two temporary structures, the Little Flower and the Marian School, offered temporary relief following the post-war population rise. In 1952, St. Patrick's School on Riverside was constructed. Initially, it housed all elementary students in the Hill area — the Marian School being closed, and all Junior High and Senior High students in the City.

In a very short time, it became evident that a new structure was required offering expanded facilities for the High School. On April 10, 1961, McCoy School was opened and the High School was transferred to this building. Elementary students from Crescent Heights were housed in the North Wing of McCoy.

Within two years a new elementary school was completed so that

McCoy became a High School in its entirety.

St. Francis Xavier was opened in 1963 and until 1966 adequately housed the elementary pupils from both North East and North West Crescent Heights.

St. Thomas Aquinas School was also completed in 1963, taking some of the pressure from the St. Louis School attendance area as well as providing for the newly developed Crestwood Area.

Rapid expansion of North West Crescent Heights necessitated the building of St. Michael's School. The original building which opened in 1966, was doubled in area for the 1968 School Year.

The post-war population was finally reflected in high enrolments at the High School level and in 1968 the expansion of McCoy High School was completed. It included Home Economics and Industrial Arts facilities, a Business Education Suite, a modern Media Centre and the staff work space. During this period Mr. C. MacPahil, Medicine Hat, was President of the Canadian Catholic School Trustees Association.

In 1969, a four classroom relocatable school was placed on the St. Mary's School site. The complex is self-contained and classrooms are carpeted.

A second relocatable building was purchased in 1975 to accommodate expanding enrolments at St. Thomas Aquinas School. This four-roomed cluster has ready access to the core facilities in the main building through a heated corridor.

Since 1975, a Catholic Education Centre, a provincial model Mother Teresa School and several additions have brought the district complement of nine buildings to its present good state of accommodation.

From the beginning the trustees, the staff and most important of all, the Catholic people of Medicine Hat have built a proud Catholic tradition of education. They suffered with great patience the drought of financing until the 1970's and the shortage of Roman Catholic teachers which has been alleviated only in recent years.

Today, Catholic Education stands firm in upholding the Catholic religion in the Medicine Hat schools.

The schools are more identifiably Catholic in philosophy, teachers and curriculum. There is an appreciation for ecumenism without giving up the solid base of Catholicity. The schools provide an education where all who are called to Christ may say yes. The education of our children has the values of love, justice and mercy as the first priority with academic achievement as a twin first priority, but not replacing religious values.

Our system gives adequate compensation to its employees, according to the Church's standard of social justice. And we provide for every level of student ability. The district has one of the more advanced programs for high-tech competency with every effort made to see that computer values do not replace human values.

The provincial standardised test results and departmentals show our schools as achieving better than the other schools in our comparative area of similar characteristics.

There is an attempt to develop local control through the partnership of board, parents and community. The ways of the world may beat incessantly on our shores, but our values and tradition will not break for they are deep and traditional.

The current trustees of the Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education are: Mr. C.P. Potter, Chairman; Mr. P. Barth, Vice-Chairman; Mr. T. Bulanda, Mrs. V. Neigum, and Mrs. V. Swan, Trustees.



UNIVEF SUPPLY

Lenten R

- 1) Mary's Way o
- 2) The Blessing for Lent
- 3) We have a go

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Agents for: I.T. Verdin Co.

Bishop lauds sisters' work

Funerals planned for women

By MIKE D'AMOUR
Calgary Sun

While funeral preparations are underway for four Catholic sisters killed in an Easter Sunday road crash, members of the order said they're praying for the man who killed them.

"We offer prayers for (trucker) Serge Major," Sister Joan Flaherty, 82, died en route to hospital.

"We hope he can recover from the tragedy, to heal and carry on with his life."

"Our hearts go out to him."

Major was behind the wheel of a big rig westbound on the Trans-Canada Hwy. near Bowfort Rd. N.W. Easter Sunday when he rear-ended an older model Chevy Cavalier carrying four elderly Sisters of Charity of St. Louis who were on their way to Bragg Creek for the afternoon.

Two of the sisters — Norma

Basso, 77, and Theresa Tetrault, 72 — were killed on impact.

Sister Joan Flaherty, 82, died en route to hospital.

Sister Rita Proulx, 74, succumbed to her injuries Monday morning.

Only 79-year-old Helen Hengel survived her severe injuries and she is, in what some are calling a miracle, expected to pull through.

"Helen has shown marked signs of improvement," Sister Yvette Plessis said.

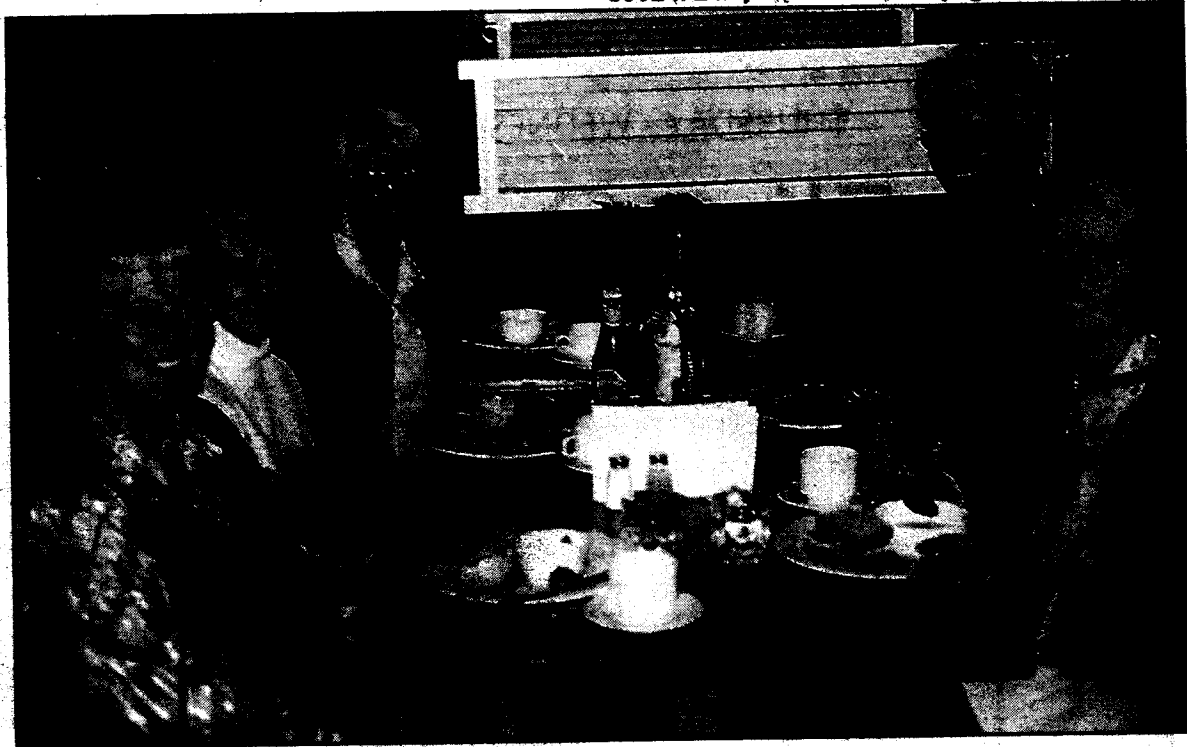
While she "still has a long way to go," Hengel is off the critical list, is responding to nurses' instructions and is now breathing

on her own without the help of a respirator.

While the joy over Hengel's improving condition is cause for celebration, it's weighed against the grief felt for the loss of those

**"We hope
(the trucker)
can heal and
carry on
with his life."**

— Roman Catholic Sister
Joan Burns



CRASH VICTIMS ... The five sisters involved in an Easter car wreck that claimed the lives of four of them. From clockwise at left: Helen Hengel, the sole survivor, Norma Basso, Theresa Tetrault, Rita Proulx and Joan Flaherty.

who did not survive, said Bishop Fred Henry.

"We're in a little pain still," he said.

There is tremendous joy and satisfaction with the knowledge the dead sisters are in a better place, but: "The way they got there is shocking and disheartening for us," Henry said.

The loss will also be felt in the communities the sisters served,

he added.

"The sisters have been constantly breaking new ground going to those places where the needy are," he said.

Dozens of sisters from Canada and the U.S. are expected to be here this week to pay their respects to, and celebrate the lives of, their dead sisters.

Prayers will be at St. Mary's Cathedral, 219 18 Ave. S.W., at 7:30

p.m. tomorrow.

The funerals for the sisters will take place the following day at 10:30 a.m. at St. Mary's.

Police say they are still investigating the crash and several witnesses have come forward in the past couple of days.

Charges are still pending against Major.

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The retreats offer a healing period that includes: quiet listening, private reflections, self-evaluation, meditation, prayer and spiritual renewal. And the retreat requires candidates to have the "serious consideration of wellness as opposed to illness in our attitude toward life."

When Sister Helen began at AADAC, she found that most retreats were for men. When the FCJ Sisters remodelled their home in S.W. Calgary, Sister knew she would use their centre for local retreats. Sister soon gave a retreat there for women, based on AA and Alanon principles. Since then, retreats for both men and women have been held in increasing frequency.

Sister Helen finds that alcohol is probably the most accessible and cheapest of all drugs available. And while the problem of alcohol has probably increased over the years, so has the awareness of alcoholism as an illness increased, as have the self-help agencies. In fact, AA will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 1985, with over two million recovered alcoholics in 91 countries over the world.

Sister Helen's greatest joy is seeing people recover and turn towards a spiritual entity. One of the hardest obstacles to hurdle is for the client to admit he/she has a problem. Once that is done, half the battle is over and Sister Helen can begin rehabilitation either through retreat programs or individual counselling or both.

She encourages clients to have faith in a being greater than themselves and to later believe that we, as human beings, are spiritual beings connected to a Creator. Once these objectives are met, clients can easier find a spiritual serenity abounding in their lives. When that happens, one's everyday life is much easier to face courageously.

Janice Michaud

Abuse Commission (AADAC). To see her clients blossom again is an additional reward she receives by helping people with drug addictions overcome them through her Serenity Retreats and counselling programs.

"It's most rewarding to see people coming along, living one day at a time and wanting to be useful to God and to others."

A certified psychologist with a Masters Degree in Counselling from the University of Calgary, Sister Helen counselled students at the U of C; she did this for 11 years until she joined AADAC. And prior to counselling, Sister Helen made a contribution to education by teaching - at one time or another - every grade possible.

Over 40 years ago, Sister Helen joined the Sisters of Charity after becoming acquainted with the order while in high school. She admired these Sisters a great deal and that only helped to confirm her future decision. Born in Saskatchewan, Sister Helen has lived extensively in Alberta and for some time in Quebec.

It was in Quebec, as the director of a school where young women studied to enter the convent, that Sister had the opportunity to visit the homeland of her spiritual ancestors. While director, she was elected to attend an International meeting in France which led her to stay for a full year in Europe. The Sisters of Charity of St. Louis were originally from France, and it was a great experience to visit the area.

In 1903, the Sisters (in France) had the opportunity to secularize. As a result, some Sisters went to England, some to Canada, while others remained in France.

Although active as a female educator for many years, Sister Helen considers herself a person liberator rather than a women's liberator. One of her main goals is to help free the human spirit and this she does through her Serenity Retreats which are offered to those who are familiar with the Twelve Step way of life (based on Alcoholics Anonymous).

February, 1985

Nun counsels alcoholics

As certified psychologist, Sr. Hengel works for AADAC

Sister Helen Hengel, a fair-haired slender woman, knows a blessing in disguise when her clients say they're glad they're alcoholics!

On more than one occasion, a client has remarked to the sprightly Sister, "Thank God, I'm an alcoholic." The meaning became clearer when one man explained further: "This is my eighth birthday (in AA) and everyday I thank God. I don't know if I ever would have really lived each day (at a time) if I hadn't been an alcoholic...God has given me the serenity to face my problems."

This kind of honesty is well known to Sister Helen Hengel, a special program consultant with the Alberta Alcoholism and Drug



Sister Helen Hengel