

Hello Monica

I would like to take a few minutes of your time to look back on your experience in Winnipeg. It was September 1984 and if I recall correctly you had just made your first vows. The General Superior missioned you to St. Joseph's Day Nursery in Winnipeg. This was a really huge transition for you seeing as you had always been a home body and came from a town with a population of 1,800.

The Sisters' residence was attached to the Day Nursery located on Portage Ave across from Polo Park, the Football stadium for the Winnipeg Blue Bombers and the Home of the Winnipeg Jets.

As the airport was close by and as you sat at the dining room table you, along with the rest of the community, you could almost welcome passengers arriving in the skies as they approached the runway. At times you were sure that you could almost see the passengers. This added to your homesickness which made the transition more complicated.

You were now part of a well-established local community of 4 plus 2 other sisters who lived and work at Yale House which was a home for boys who were mentally challenged. Each woman had strengths which complemented one another from administration to cooking and cleaning. All but one of the sisters you lived with has now completed their journey home to God and the last Sister is in her final stage of the journey.

Looking back you were able to be part of, and be witness to, the gifts of compassion, hospitality and wisdom of these sisters. You often experienced empathy for Sister Rita on those freezing cold mornings as she prepared to catch the bus that took her to the hospital where she worked. Rita would have to wrap her face till the only thing you saw as she said goodbye was her eyes. She was seriously asthmatic but it didn't keep from her ministry.

Sr. Grace was the administrator of the day nursery. She had her own charisma and was well loved by people of all ages. There were several experiences within the day nursery that I could share. However the one that comes to mind is her compassion for the staff as they struggled to bring forth the legislation that had been mandated. Grace had a wonderful sense of humour which she shared with everyone and at times that humour was just what was needed to get through a tough time.

Sr. Marcia and Sr. Mary Vincent's ministry was within the house where you experienced the aspect of communal compassion and hospitality. It appeared that they had established a Ministry of compassion and hospitality to the Priests in the city, because many a night Sr. Mary Vincent would prepare a delicious meal for our guests and Sr. Marcia, as local superior, would graciously welcome them. Several boys who had all been part of the original St. Joseph's

Vocational School kept in contact with us over the years. Do you remember when there would be at least two if not three Sisters who would go to celebrate Christmas Eve Mass with them?

There is one other thing to recall, it is Christmas season when your Mom and Dad sent you a parcel in the mail. You unwrapped the box and inside was a real Christmas tree just the right size to sit on a table. You had always had a real tree until you went to Winnipeg, and were very disappointed when you found out that an artificial one would be used. So needless to say they had saved Christmas for you.

Well it's time to bring this reflection to close and I hope you have enjoyed this look back into your history.