

SISTER FLORENCE McCADDEN - VOCATION STORY

In 1835, St. Mary Euphrasia founded the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd in France. She had a holistic concern for each person's human and spiritual development. "One person is of more value than a world. "SME" Today we are serving in seventy two countries.

St. Mary Euphrasia Pelletier, July 31, 1796 -April 24, 1868. Canonized May 2, 1940 by Pope Pius XI his first canonization.

"Our mission is to bring good news to the poor, to set free the oppressed, to heal the contrite of heart, to seek and to save what was lost." (Congregation Constitutions)

January 17, 2015

Dear Younger Self,

I wish to remind you, June 2015, I will celebrate my sixtieth anniversary as a Religious of the Good Shepherd. It has been a blessed and rewarding sixty years.

I have been reflecting on the many blessings and all that has happened over these many years. When asked where is home, I fumble for an answer. Few persons have heard of Berwick. I tell them it is in the Ottawa Valley a distance from Cornwall. So many things happened, I am going to share with you some of my memories.

Our childhood days were not always happy days. When I was eight years old mother and baby sister died. Dad had the responsibility of parenting two girls and three boys. Arnold, our youngest brother was four years old.

Following Mother's death, our paternal Grandmother became an important and loving person in our lives. Arriving at home while exiting the car, she would be putting on her apron. Immediately she would check the kitchen to see what was available for the next meal. During the time of her visit she checked the house, did laundry, mended clothes, cooked meals, listened to our prayers, stories, etc. When satisfied things were in order she would take off the apron and announce, "I must go home." We always looked forward to having grandma with us. Seven years later when dad was sick and bedridden she stayed with us full time. I am sure things were not easy for dad during these seven years. At times he would be

annoyed when others were telling him what he should do. One day a friend was visiting and said to dad, " Perhaps the children should be placed in care." Dad responded, " Over my dead body." Dad expected us to behave, do as told, etc. etc. The following are a few memories.

One Sunday at church the Pastor announced they were taking The Parish Census and would be at our home Thursday. Dad was unable to be home. We were responsible to host the visit. I believe we were eight and ten years old. We welcomed Father, answered his questions and told him how smart and wonderful we were. How we cleaned the house and everything we did to prepare for his visit. We told Father how we were going to prepare supper, etc. etc. Father asked if we would like him help prepare supper. Our answer, " Oh no, we know how to make supper." When giving dad an account of the visit, he asked if we invited Father for supper. Our answer, " Oh, no, we know how to cook and make supper. It did not occur to us that it would be right to invite him. Can you imagine the information we shared with Father and the impression we made?

One evening Father was not home, time to do the dishes. We argued as to whose job it was. We went to bed leaving the dishes not washed. When Father arrived home, seeing the dirty dishes, he woke us up and asked why the dirty dishes. He didn't want any excuse. He made us get up wash and put away the dishes, etc. Following this experience the dishes were always washed before going to bed. Another time when we arrived at church for Sunday mass everyone was lining up for a procession - perhaps the Feast of Corpus Christi. We were asked to get in line and join the procession. We were wearing runners. When home Father asked, "Why are you going to church wearing runners?" He did not like to hear any criticism on how we were dressed, what was happening etc. He was proud of us. Dad spent his last Christmas in a Montreal hospital having surgery. He recuperated to a degree but was never again his old self. I believe it was the following June when his suffering was such that he became bedridden. He worried a great deal re what was going to happen to the family. Our grandmother, his mother, and other family members tried to comfort and assure him not to worry the children will be looked after.

Following Father's death, I was chosen to move to Toronto to live with a caring and loving Aunt, Uncle and their daughter. While with my aunt and uncle it was always important to them that I did well in school and participate in community activities, especially within the church. Our parish was St. Cecilia's on Annette Street. It was a very active parish with lots of activities. Among the many activities at St. Cecilia's there was an active Young People's Club, Young Christian Workers, a Sodality of Mary Society, etc. The Sodality members

planned a Christmas party for the children in the care of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, Lawrence and Dufferin. This is where and when I was introduced to the Good Shepherd Congregation. The rest is history. The leadership of the priests, Father Thompson, Father Lacey (later Bishop Lacey), etc. were an influence on the lives of many. At a chance meeting forty years later, I was surprised Bishop Lacey, without any prompting, not only recognized me but remembered my full name.

My life as a member of the Good Shepherd Congregation has been grace filled, busy and rewarding. The following is copied from an old internal news letter.

A SHEPHERDESS MOVES TO NEWER, GREENER FIELDS

Sister Florence McCadden, came to Winnipeg from beautiful B.C. in the spring of 1975. She came for the same reason she entered the Good Shepherd Order: to respond to the call of Jesus who chose to image himself as the Good Shepherd, All of us who know Sr. Florence experience that singleness of purpose which she lives: to care for the lost, wandering, and wounded people.

For ten years, at the group home, many youngsters experienced a stable and nurturing home shepherded by Sr. Florence. In 1985, an abrupt change occurred with the departure of Sr. Elise to a more global responsibility as General Councillor in Rome. Sr. Florence then assumed many administrative responsibilities, never losing sight of the reason for Marymounds existence. Indeed, the telephone and postman still bring reminders to Sr. Florence of those she served and the staff who worked with her.

In the fall of 1988, Sr. Florence took a leave of absence from Marymound for a well earned year of spiritual enrichment. Halfway through the course, she was asked to accept the leadership of a community of Good Shepherd Sisters at Regina Mundi, located on a beautiful 90 acre tract of land just north of Toronto. She accepted the appointment.

At Regina Mundi her new and challenging service will include leadership and administration of a renewal centre that caters to well over 1000 people yearly; people who come from all walks of life, needing time to reflect and recreate their lives. For example, for several weekends in the summer, upwards of 100 people bring tents and their families and experience a (Peace Festival). This venture has been going on for at least 15 years.

We will miss you, Sr. Florence: your wisdom, your smile, and your readiness to respond to any and every need in the Marymound system. Take care. You may hear from or even see some of us who need, from time to time, to reflect and recreate our lives. God bless you always!

During my sixty years of service with the Good Shepherd, I have served the Congregation from coast to coast. I have received many blessings. Over three hundred children have been placed directly in the units under my care. Today, many of these children, now grandmothers, keep in touch to share their memories and life experiences