

1921 Congregation Annals

Excerpts from pages 668-671, Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto Archives

The following account appeared in the North West Revue Winnipeg on January 14, 1921.

“St. Alphonsus Parochial School is a reality. Last Sunday January 9th and Monday January 10 were two red letter days in the annals of St. Alphonsus Parish. Our dearest ambitions have been realized at last. On Sunday afternoon, His Grace Archbishop Beliveau, accompanied by his Secretary, arrived at St. Alphonsus for the blessing of the new school. Great preparations had been made for the event. The Church and School were *en fete* for the occasion. Reverend clergy from St. Boniface and nearly every parish in Winnipeg were present. In the Sanctuary besides Archbishop Beliveau and his Secretary were: Monsignor Cherrier, Fathers Hilland, OMI, Mangan, OMI, McNeil, Morton, Heffron, Moore, Smith, McCandlish, CSsR (Pastor St. Alphonsus). Brother Joseph, Director of Provencher School represented the Brothers of the Society of Mary. The Sisters of St. Joseph under whose direction the school has been placed, the Knights of Columbus and a large number of parishioners and friends well filled the Church.”

“On Monday morning two Sisters of St. Joseph, Sister M. Gonzaga and Sister M. Alfrida, entered upon their sacred trust as the first teachers in the new school and both are very capable women. All grades will be handled in the school. Some sixty pupils are already enrolled.”

(The above excerpts were written by the Pastor, Rev. J. McCandlish, CSsR)

THE SCHOOL:

The building itself measures about 100ft. by 45ft. is of gray brick veneer surmounted by a cross with splendid lighting from south west and north. On the east are lunch and cloak rooms each having two windows. The school is heated with splendid steam heating, open plumbing, lavatories, large furnace, beautiful electric ceiling lamps, electric light throughout, statuary, beautiful framed pictures of the Sacred Heart and St. Joseph and others.

The main building is divided into two large rooms Junior and Senior by folding doors. Both rooms are practically surrounded by blackboards. In the Junior Room, long church benches have been cleverly converted into seats accommodating six or seven pupils each. There is one row of single desks. The Senior Room is supplied with double desks, a few still retaining under slats for books. – all of necessity loose since the school is used weekly as the Parish Hall. There is a large table in each room for Sister's desk.

Monday January 10, 1921 (Excerpt from Sr. Gonzaga)

This morning we made splendid car connections (public transit from College Street- the convent on Monroe Ave. had not yet been built) arriving at the school at 8:30AM.

School number of pupils, almost 60. Practically the whole morning was spent in the delightful task of grading. Sister Alfrida took Grades One and Two. I took Grades 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Tuesday January 11, 1921

Today we were able to commence regular studies. The children are most obedient, generous and quite bright and most enthusiastic about their new school.

Father McCandlish, CSsR, Pastor of St. Alphonsus wrote to Reverend Mother Victoria, General Superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph, in which he described his joy at the fulfillment of his goal in the establishment of St. Alphonsus School.

Excerpt from his letter dated January 10, 1921:

Dear Reverend Mother Victoria,

“I am a proud and happy man today. And since you and the dear Sisters of St. Joseph are in a great measure to be blamed for this legitimate pride and happiness, I must write to thank you and to bless you. I thank God and you most Reverend Mother, my most ardent longings have been realized: a parochial school with the Sisters of St. Joseph as teachers, and didn't you send me two gems! God love them! If they spend one unhappy moment in the wild and woolly West the blame will not rest with me for I shall do all in my power to make their sojourn here as happy as possible.”