



St. Patrick's Mercy Home Foundation

Special 50th Anniversary Newsletter

January 2008

The St. Patrick's Mercy Home Foundation
Congratulates
St. Patrick's Mercy Home on its
50th Anniversary
of Care and Service to
the Elderly of the Province

St. Patrick's Mercy Home *From Vision to Reality*

Timeline (The Monitor 1953 – 1958)

- Jan. 1953** - Archbishop Skinner announces a plan for a Home for the Aged and Infirm, to ***“provide a desired haven of quiet and care for the aged and infirm, open to all creeds, and to all classes, with or without sufficient means”***.
- Feb. 1953** - Archbishop Skinner outlines financial campaign to support Social Welfare projects, including Home for Aged and Infirm, with an objective of \$150 000. Each family is asked to give an average contribution of fifteen dollars, and anticipated substantial donations from people of means, and generous support from Catholic societies and sodalities. A Cent-A-Meal Fund and an annual special envelope collection is also announced. The Cent-A-Meal Fund, was under the direction of Rev John J Murray, parish priest of St. Kevin's, with Rev. Gregory L. Hogan of St. Patrick's Parish as assistant, with members of the women's sodalities acting as collectors. Anticipated revenue was about \$10 000 a month.
- Oct. 1953** - Financial campaign yields a total of \$185 400.15 and the Cent-A-Meal Fund for the period March to August grossed \$52 615.16, giving a net total of \$238 112.71.
- Dec. 1953** - Archbishop meets and thanks women of Archdiocese who collected Cent-A-Meal, noting that the Campaign netted \$70 000 in 8 months.
- Mar. 21, 1954** - Archbishop announces that Sisters of Mercy agreed to operate the Home for the Aged and Infirm.
- Oct. 3, 1954** - Archbishop Skinner turns sod for St. Patrick's Home. His Grace prays that those who live within its walls would find solace in the evening of life and peace at the last.
- Sept. 1955** - Archbishop reminds people of importance of Cent-A-Meal. ***“Now that the work on St. Patrick's Mercy Home for the Aged and Infirm has begun, we feel sure that our people will dedicate themselves anew to the ‘family fund’ and give full support to the plan to provide a home for the aged from his people's coins of sacrifice”***.
- Oct. 2, 1955** - Archbishop Skinner blesses and lays the cornerstone of the new St. Patrick's Mercy Home for the Aged and Infirm. He dedicates the building to the glory of God and the service of the aged and infirm.
- Oct. 1955** - A special envelope collection in aid of the Home for the Aged and Infirm was taken up in the six City Parishes on Sunday, October 9th. The Archbishop stated that ***“any assistance offered to the poor and the aged is regarded by Our Divine Lord as done to Himself and is assured of His blessing and reward”***. Over \$22 000 was realized, three thousand more than previous year. Parishes outside St. John's would set their own times for the collection.

Mar. 1956 - Contracts are awarded for building of St. Patrick's Mercy Home - the largest building in the Archdiocese, exclusive of the Basilica, designed to accommodate 164 aged people, to be a four-storey building measuring 210 ft by 250 ft, and built in the shape of a cross. Home estimated to cost \$1.5 million.

May 1956 - An announcement is made in all churches that the Cent-A-Meal campaign will begin again on Sunday May 13th. Nine priests will travel to all the parishes in the Archdiocese promoting the Campaign.

June 3, 1956 - Annual Collection for Social Welfare Programs (includes St Patrick's Mercy Home) receives a 'splendid response' - \$44 664.94

Oct. 1956 - Annual Collection for Mercy Home for Aged and Infirm announced.

Sept. 8, 1957 - (Feast of Nativity of Our Lady) – official opening of St Patrick's Mercy Home by Archbishop Skinner. The Home is described by the Archbishop as '**being at once peaceful and relaxing without being detached from the life and movement of the City**'. At the Opening Ceremony the Archbishop also said: "**We thank God in advance for the blessings we are sure will be associated with this Home. We thank God for the great privilege that is given us to care for the old and the infirm, whom we shall consider as our special charges in this Institution**".

Jan. 6, 1958 - Official opening of St. Patrick's Mercy Home. The first chaplain in residence was Father John Power. First female guest was Miss Teresa Antle of Burin; first male resident was Mr. J. Pearson of Paradise, PB. The first administrator of the Home was Sister Mary Alexius.

Jan. 1986 - Official opening of extension to the Home by Archbishop A. L. Penney, now 214 beds.

Nov. 1998 - Sisters of Mercy establish St. Patrick's Mercy Home Foundation.

Sept. 24, 2007 - Feast of Our Lady of Mercy. Eucharistic Liturgy in the Chapel at St. Patrick's Mercy Home to 'Celebrate 50 Years'.

Jan. 7, 2008 - Archbishop Martin Currie celebrates Eucharistic Liturgy at St. Pius X Church, followed by Reception, to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of St. Patrick's Mercy Home.



What Was the Cent-A-Meal Campaign?

In February, 1953 Archbishop Skinner announced a financial campaign to support his Social Welfare Programs. The campaign consisted of:

- ◆ **Direct Campaign**
- ◆ **Envelope Collection in Churches**
- ◆ **Cent-A-Meal Campaign**

Members of the women's sodalities in the parishes collected the **Cent-A-Meal**, under the direction of Rev. John J. Murray, assisted by Fr. Greg Hogan. Nine priests traveled to the different parishes seeking support for the **Cent-A-Meal Campaign**.

The **Campaign**, started March 1953, was an opportunity for each Catholic home in the Archdiocese to make a small daily contribution of three cents a day. Each parish set up, with the help of the women's sodalities and groups, a plan for collecting the money, and families were encouraged to make an offering in a container (or special **Cent-A-Meal** box) placed on the table at each meal. In this way, the family invited to their table the unfortunate and the aged who were to be provided for from the fund. The women collectors called at each home once a month to collect the money.

The **Campaign** met with great success and in the period March to August 1953 brought in \$52 615.16. Several times during the construction of St. Patrick's Mercy Home the Archbishop reminded families of the importance of supporting the **Cent-A-Meal** Fund that contributed so much to the success of the building of the Home.

Blessing and Laying of Cornerstone for St. Patrick's Mercy Home, Sunday October 2, 1955

The **Cornerstone**, with the customary sealed weather proof box embedded in the masonry beneath the corner stone, "**contained the Centennial issue of the Monitor and the most recent Social Welfare edition of the same paper; the Daily News and the Evening Telegram special Cathedral Centenary issues; coins of the realm; the 1955 Centenary Medal; a medal commemorating the hundredth anniversary of the definition of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception and parchment describing the cornerstone blessing**" (Monitor, October 1955).

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