

Institute of Notre Dame des Missions

Diamond Jubilee Celebrations at Nelson

The Sisters of the Mission in Nelson, in common with the communities throughout the Dominion and elsewhere, have recently been celebrating their Diamond Jubilee (writes an esteemed correspondent). This year was also celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the arrival of the Sisters in Nelson—the third House founded in the Dominion.

The parishioners knew nothing of the Golden Jubilee celebrated on February 9 last, until the day before, and thus had no opportunity of honoring the occasion. On the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee, however, they had a few more days notice, and became enthusiastic about the matter, presenting an address (which later is to be illuminated), and also the promise of a handsome gift in cash later on. It was a real red-letter day for the Catholics and Sisters in Nelson, when the parishioners met them and made the presentation. There was marked evidence of the high esteem of the work of the Sisters amongst Catholics and non-Catholics, and the hope was expressed that this appreciation will be shown in a tangible manner.

Fifty Years' Noble Labor in Nelson Parish

A unique event in the history of the Nelson Province at present being celebrated is the Diamond Jubilee of the foundation of the Order of Our Lady of the Missions (says the *Evening Mail*, Nelson, for August 16). They came to Nelson on February 9, 1871, at the repeated requests of the Ven. Archpriest Garin, S.M., to whom so many of our oldest and most respected citizens of all denominations owe their education groundings.

On August 15, 1861, at Lyons, France, the Order of Our Lady of the Missions was founded, and the canonical erection of the novitiate took place on the following Christmas Day, when Rev. Father Yardin, S.M., well-known in New Zealand, blessed the oratory in which he celebrated his three Holy Masses. The Superior-General of the Marist Fathers also celebrated Holy Masses on the same day.

At present there are 21 convents in the Dominion with over 260 Sisters. The Order also has convents in Europe (the Mother-House being situated in Deal, England), Canada, India, and Australia.

The work of this Order is world-wide, but amongst the various labors are included education of the highest principles and importance and the noble work amongst the orphans and homeless children in the Dominion has always been carried out so quietly that very few outside are aware of the magnitude of this section of their work. The Sisters at present are catering for about 100 in Nelson alone, and the happiness and brightness of the children is most marked, and to further gladden the hearts of these unfortunate little mites, members of the local sodality of the Children of Mary, for the last few days have carried on a series of entertainments, etc., for the children's special benefit. On Saturday afternoon the Sacred Heart High School boarders entertained the old pupils. They had a basket-ball match, which was won by the boarders, and afterwards had tea in the schoolroom, and in the evening there was a most enjoyable concert. On Sunday afternoon the Children of Mary held a re-union in the convent, of the old girls and lady friends of the parish, who were treated to afternoon tea on the lawn, and the opportunity was availed of to make a suitable presentation to the Reverend Mother.

Monday afternoon was set aside for the orphans' entertainment in St. Mary's Hall, which included a sumptuous tea and a Christmas tree, which were greatly enjoyed by the children, and followed by a torchlight procession in honor of Our Lady by the various sodalities round the convent grounds to the grotto, and Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament was then given in the chapel.

The convent grounds were brilliantly illuminated for the occasion, and the arrangements reflected great credit on those responsible.

This morning Solemn High Mass was sung in the convent chapel. In the afternoon an address was presented to the Rev. Mother and community, and arrangements are being made to hand the Sisters a practical gift in the very near future as public appreciation of the noble work of the Sisters for the last 50 years in Nelson.

The Sisters have received many congratulations on attaining their Jubilee in Nelson.

Religious Celebrations and Presentation of Addresses

At the solemn High Mass, Rev. Father O'Sullivan, S.M., was celebrant, Rev. Fathers O'Reilly, S.M., and Heffernan, S.M. (Blenheim), deacon and sub-deacon respectively, and Father D. Campbell, S.M., master of ceremonies.

At the afternoon function, which was held in the schoolroom, Mr. L. Frank, on behalf of the parishioners, congratulated the Sisters and called on Mr. McBride to read the following address:—

Dear Revd. Mother and Sisters,—We, representing the Catholics of the parish of Nelson, come to-day to offer you our heartiest congratulations on the attainment of the Diamond Jubilee of the Foundation of the Order of the Sisters of the Missions. Here in our parish, was established one of the first branches of the Order in New Zealand, and it was our privilege only a few months ago to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of your arrival amongst us, and that celebration was for us, an occasion of thanksgiving and joy. It is to the wisdom and foresight of our late revered pastor, Archpriest Garin, S.M., that we owe the privilege of your advent to Nelson. A man of truly apostolic spirit, no one better knew the importance of Catholic education, no man labored more entirely for its efficiency in his parish, and we are reminded that he himself was the teacher of the school before the arrival of your Sisters. And what a contrast between then and now! The first primary school in care of the nuns opened on February 9, 1871, with only a few pupils, and to-day we see reared on the site of that humble beginning, magnificent buildings erected at great cost; and hardly capable of accommodating the pupils who flock in larger numbers every year to its halls. You have kept pace with the times in matters of education, and we venture to say that few convents, if any, in New Zealand can show better results at the public examinations, and the success of your pupils in the music examinations are well known. But there is one work which you have undertaken, essentially the work of our Holy Church and that is the care of the orphans. It is in that noble work of yours, where shines the spirit of the Divine Saviour in His love for the little ones.

Your works have borne abundant fruits throughout the Dominion; your example has given an impetus to religion, the Order has spread, so that you have now many Houses in the three dioceses of Wellington, Christchurch, and Auckland, and we are proud to see so many of our colonial girls embracing the religious state and becoming members of your Order.

It is our prayer that God may continue to bless your good work in our midst, and in all your Houses in New Zealand, and we ask you to remember us in your prayers.

Signed by parishioners of Nelson.

Rev. Father O'Sullivan thanked the people on behalf of the Sisters, and expressed his pleasure at being present on such a great occasion.

Refreshments were then partaken of and an entertainment given by past and present pupils of the convent schools.

Would we abide eternally, we must do the will of God, Who is eternal.—St. Cyprian.

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