

## Mother Mary Greene, F.C.J. (1843–1933)

Mother Mary Greene of the Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus is remembered for her academic excellence as well as for her holistic manner of guiding her students to develop intellectually, morally and spiritually. As a person she seems to have been gifted with courage and great determination.

Born in Golden Bridge, Co. Tipperary, Ireland, August 15, 1843, Mary Greene entered the FCJ Society in Bruff, Co. Limerick, Christmas Day 1860. After professing her vows in Paris in 1863, she trained in English colleges. The French immersion of the novitiate along with formal teacher training equipped her well. She had responsibility for the boarders in Laurel Hill, Limerick and then returned to Bruff as superior.



In 1883 the General Superior responded to Bishop Vital Grandin, OMI's plea for sisters in his missionary territory. Mother Greene was one of the eight pioneers sent. Long voyages by ship and train were followed by 14 days in covered wagons from Qu'Appelle (SK) to St. Laurent where Mary Greene and three others remained. The austerity of sleeping in buffalo robes on the floor, arising at 4 am and being taken to begin classes the next day were a challenge which Greene recalled were put in perspective by Bishop Grandin reminding them that they were companions of Jesus in his pains and sufferings.

Having lived through the turmoil of the Riel Rebellion, Bishop Grandin considered it dangerous for the Sisters to stay and asked them to go to Calgary. They arrived July 26, 1885 and were ready to open a school on September 1<sup>st</sup>: "Protestants as well as Catholics were happy to have a good school and sent many children." (cf. M. Greene, Memoirs, p.27)

R.C. School District Number One, recognized December 18, 1885, had M. Greene as Superintendent while she continued as principal, teacher, superior, organist and leader of children's church choir: "Because of its existence when Alberta became a province, the Catholic Schools have always enjoyed equal rights with the Public Schools." (cf. Calgary Catholic Schools – Historical Sketches, N. Cummins, "Mother Mary Greene", p 18)

A fervent prayer life including annual retreats with FCJs of Alberta fortified Mother Greene. In 1913 she went to Australia and was superior in Richmond until 1920. She returned to Calgary in 1923 and died there in 1933.