

Mary Alice Danaher, CND (1928–2005)

Mary Alice Danaher was born in Montreal on December 20, 1928, and baptized on the 30th. She loved her family and had a special relationship with her mother. She was taught by the CND Sisters and it was during her high school years that she decided to become a nun. “I have always wanted to become a nun. I thought there was nothing more wonderful than that vocation.” That statement reveals a lot about Mary Alice. She was an enthusiastic, vibrant, joyful person. She was also humble in spite of all the awards she received. It even worried her a little. She wondered if she would be well received in heaven after all the recognition she obtained on this earth...



At her profession on August 24, 1949, she received the name of Soeur St-Jean-du-Saint-Sacrement and one wonders if that was the beginning of her special devotion for the Eucharist. She was also fiercely loyal to the Church. Aware of the importance of education at the Congrégation de Notre-Dame, Mary Alice spent her life teaching in Montreal and Richmond (Quebec) and in Canim Lake (British Columbia) on a Shuswap reserve. She also obtained her Master’s in Psychology from the University of Toronto and a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Gonzaga University, in Spokane, Washington.

She is and always will be remembered because she touched the hearts of many people. She will be remembered in a special way for what she achieved for the First Nations people, especially those of Canim Lake. She had been on their reserve for two years before going back to Richmond in 1970. Though in 1978, the Canim Lake chief asked her to come back. Students were dropping out of school and there was alcohol abuse and many suicides. The chief knew she could help them turn things around and, through education and with a great deal of courage, she did. In 1993, twenty-one proud Canim Lake people were drummed in the Gonzaga hall to receive their Bachelor of Arts. This brought hope to this reserve.

A year before she died, she had said ‘it is time to see God, is it not? Aren’t you anxious to see God face to face?’. She passed away on August 13, 2005.

QUOTATIONS:

“Education gives people pride in oneself, an understanding of fellows from other culture, a means to live in harmony with nature”

“She is a free spirit who never loses her sense of wonder and passion for life” (Peggy Butts, CND)



“...the passion and intensity of her service was driven by the profound belief that each of us is a child of God, worthy of respect ...” (Nola Joyce, CND)

“If she feels you have it in you, she will dig it out. If you don’t have it, she will help you create it”.
(Chief Antoine Archie)

LINKS:

<https://www.tru.ca/convocation/history/honorary-degree/2001.html>

http://inside.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/2001_spring_network.pdf

<http://www.bclocalnews.com/lifestyles/tourism/126326258.html>