

Marie-Thérèse Dionne, SSCM (1896-1973)

Marie-Thérèse was born in Saint-Philippe-de-Neri on November 21, 1896. When she is only 15 years old, she loses both her parents, who die the same year. Marie-Thérèse and her brother are adopted by their uncle. She continues studying at the convent school of Saint-Philippe where she graduates as a teacher when she is 17 years old.



In 1914, she enters the Congregation of the Sœurs Servantes du Saint-Cœur de Marie and receives the name of Sister Sainte-Eugénie. After taking her vows on August 13, 1916, she is assigned different roles in their schools. She is constantly concerned with the need of education.

In 1938, she becomes Provincial Superior for Canada of her community, the first Canadian to have this role, since the Congregation was of French origin. She accepts several educational institutions, mostly in the countryside, and works at improving professional and spiritual training of her sisters as well. She encourages them to take up initiatives to train and be fit for their mission as teachers.

At the General Chapter of 1947, held in France, she is elected General Superior. Two years later, the Congregation of Religious (Vatican), asks them to split the Canadian province in three different provinces, because they have become too numerous. She therefore works on preparing the community for this important change.

In 1950, at the request of the Prêtres des Missions Étrangères she accepts to open a mission in Caraballo, Cuba, and sends four Canadian sisters for this mission. At the General Chapter in 1953, she is elected once again General Superior. After receiving permission from the Congregation of Religious in Rome, she moves the General Administration of their community to Canada. This same year she accepts to begin a mission in MBalmayo, Cameroun, by sending sisters from their French Province. In 1955, a group of Canadian sisters joins them to open a mission in Yaoundé as well.

As ex-Superior General, she is very active in preparing and organizing the special General Chapter of 1968 that will include the updating following the Vatican II Council. Deeply human, a woman of faith, courageous but simple, she is remembered for her good judgement and her love for the Church. She dies on June 13, 1973, in Quebec City.

LINK: <http://www.soeurs-sscm.org>