

Mother Marie-Aristide, SCSL (1901-1972)

Born on November 2, 1901, at Buckland, Bellechasse, on her family farm, Marie-Claire Dion is the oldest of ten brothers and sisters. Since she was a child, she always had a strong desire to learn. When she turns 16 years old, she enters the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint-Louis, and takes her first vows on July 26, 1923. She receives on this occasion the name of Sister Marie-Aristide.



She begins teaching in different, rural and urban, parishes of Quebec. At the same time that she works as a teacher, she takes courses at the University in Human Science, Religion and Business in order to offer more to the students who she is assigned. From 1923 to 1946, she teaches in primary and secondary schools.

The Commission of the Order of Educational Merit recognizes her pedagogical skills and in 1948 gives her the medal and diploma of the second level of the Order of Educational Merit. In 1946, the Catholic Committee of the Council of Public Education allows the opening of the École normale Saint-Joseph in Pont-Rouge (QC). Sister Marie-Aristide is appointed the president of this educational institution whose mission is that of preparing teachers for rural schools.

From 1951 to 1959, she is also the General Director of studies for her Congregation. She creates an Education Office to provide help, advice and to accompany the sisters teaching in the 70 schools under her jurisdiction: she organizes weekly catechetical sessions, annual visits, writes newsletters, sets exams and gives out prizes for deserving students. She also organizes summer classes to allow her sisters to obtain higher teaching certificates and renew the spirit of their vocation as teachers.

After having covered different functions in her Congregation: teacher, president, local, regional and provincial superior, and in the end responsible of an old people's home, Sister Marie-Aristide dreams of writing a book, "L'évolution des Soeurs de la Charité de Saint-Louis au Québec de 1902-1972" (The Evolution of the Sisters of Charity of Saint-Louis from 1902 to 1972). However, sudden sickness stops her and obliges her to give up her project. After three weeks in the hospital, Sister Marie-Aristide dies on October 7, 1972, at the age of 71, after a life totally consecrated to the Lord and to the works of education and charity.

LINK: <http://www.soeursdelacharitestlouis.org/en>