

Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The TCDSB's acquisition of Loretto Abbey brings the relationship between the Loretto and Catholic Separate Schools full circle. In 1847, on arriving in Toronto the Sisters opened an Academy for Girls, the root of the present Abbey High School. They also taught in elementary schools in the already existing Catholic School System. It is common knowledge that low salaried Religious enabled the system to survive. Even in 1962, according to Michael Power, the elementary system was on life support, grades 9 and 10 on even more tenuous life support, and grades 11, 12 and 13 operated hand-to-mouth. The deficits in 60% of Catholic High Schools in Ontario were the responsibility of Religious Communities like Loretto. The contribution of Loretto Sisters and other Religious, according to Power, was fundamental to the integrity and survival of Catholic education in this Province. Finally, in 1984, the burden was lifted when Catholic education funding was extended to the end of secondary school.

Loretto's decision to sell the Abbey to TCDSB reflects our trust that the Board treasures the legacy of those who put their life-blood into establishing and sustaining Catholic schools. The Sisters who came from Ireland in 1847 and their followers for more than 160 years made enormous sacrifices to ensure that young people learn Gospel values from faith-filled educators in the Christian community that is the true Catholic school.

Trustees, parents, administrators, teachers and students, please do not squander that legacy now that you own the Abbey. Keep it and all Catholic schools truly Catholic so that the next battle over funding for Catholic schools will be won because they are demonstrably good for society.