

Catholics to Honor Sister Mary Eulalia



Sister Mary Eulalia

Jubilee Brings Out Lustre Of True Alaskan Gold

GLENNALLEN, Alaska—In 1920! Anyone remember back that far? Sister Mary Eulalia does!

That was the year Sister Mary Eulalia came to Alaska, via slow trains, steamers, and river boats.

Where was Sister going? To a gold mining field? No, Sister passed up the allure of Juneau, of Skagway, of Fairbanks—of various other potential “get rich” sites.

Along the Yukon River, river boats were plying. Sister came all the way down the Yukon to “the Smile of the Yukon,” old Holy Cross Mission. This was a boarding school established in 1888.

There many hearts were waiting to be loved by Sister; there much work was waiting to be done.

Sister often speaks of her arrival at Holy Cross—of the lonely hours of the night, of the mud bank, of the howling dogs. All these were first impressions of a place Sister loved more and more each year.

At Holy Cross Mission, Sister's work varied throughout the 37 years of her unselfish, devoted, loving year-round concern for the children, the village, and neighboring areas.

Some of Sister's varied occupations included: care of the very small children (many of whom were homeless) at what came to be known as the “babyhouse.”

This was one of the oldest buildings at Holy Cross, put together by wooden nails under the expert carpentry of old Captain Ivan Demientieff.

Sister was also teacher for a number of years of the Primary Class. Recollect—

(continued on Page 6)

Catholics to Honor Sister Eulalia . . .

(continued from page 3)

ions of the wood-burning (and apron-burning) stove bring back other memories of small faces, eager minds, talented fingers.

Other years brought changes in the nature of Sister's service. Successively Sister had charge of the intermediate girls, then the older girls.

Sister's concern brought her to take part in berry trips—excursions of two or three days for blueberries, cranberries, raspberries.

Fishing season brought other chores. Dog-fish cleaning and drying, salmon-strip making and processing.

Sister learned much of her skill at preserving Alaska's resources from the older people who came to talk with Sister, ask for prayers, or seek advice.

This skill blossomed a hundred-fold with the organization of a fur "industry" encouraged by Sister: fur parkas, mukluks, beaver hats, bear mitts, Eskimo dolls.

Even today, Holy Cross work still has a distinctive note about it. Originality and art—somehow permeated with love—is part of that distinctive note.

Holy Cross gardens thrived under Sister's care. One of the Eskimo boys, new to the Mission, thought that Sister Mary Eulalia's name was Sister Mary Early Cabbage, because he saw her so often with boxes clearly marked indicating the seedlings started.

In 1956, Sister was transferred to Lower Post Indian School in northern British Columbia. After just a year

there, Sister returned to Alaska.

With the arrival of Sister Mary Eulalia at Copper Valley in 1957, a new era in Sister's life began.

Her experience with the laundry at Holy Cross (irons heated on a stove, dripping ceilings, sweat-filled drying rooms) made her appointment to the laundry at CVS seem like a passport to heaven.

Indeed it was! Pipes freeze even here at CVS; laundry is laundry wherever one goes!

Sister's love brings her even now up to the attic for crepe paper streamers students need for dances, to the plant room for horticultural touches needed to prepare beautiful plants for the church, to the laundry for someone's forgotten runningshoes, to the community-room and her work-basket where an ever present pile of mending (boy's socks, in particular) is awaiting attention.

Now, after fifty years of religious life—of a life of poverty, of obedience, of love for all—Sister has a long road to look back upon. Much of that road is paved with Alaskan gold—the love of its people.

These people are the parents and grandparents of some of CVS's present students. Some of these people are gone before Sister into heaven.

All remember the quiet Sister who has been such a witness to Christ for so many people for so many years. How many years? Fifty years!

Congratulations, Sr. Mary Eulalia! Happy Golden Jubilee!