MERCY WELLSPRINGS
FORMATION MOMENT

Vol 1, Issue 14 – November 3, 2026



Self - Reflection:

- **What remains with you as you ponder the story of the beginnings of Mercy in Newfoundland and Labrador?**
- **What questions would you have for any of these early women of Mercy?**

For more Formation Information please visit:

Formation page

Formation Moments page

A word from Catherine...

"We have ever confided in Divine Providence, and shall continue to do so..."

Look here if you would like to know more about the early years of the Sisters of Mercy in Newfoundland and Labrador: https://www.sistersofmercynf.org/our-story/early-history/

The Sisters of Mercy of Newfoundland—the Early Years

A dream is launched on Baggot Street, Dublin

In early 1840, Catherine McAuley and Bishop Michael Anthony Fleming of Newfoundland met in the Convent of Mercy on Baggot Street. That meeting would shape the future of Mercy in Newfoundland and Labrador and beyond. Bishop Fleming had already set his sights on sponsoring a Mercy foundation in Newfoundland when in 1839 he had sent a young woman named Marianne Creedon to Dublin to enter the Sisters of Mercy, and to be trained by Catherine McAuley. Irish-born Marianne had lived in St. John's for six years, knew the critical needs of the area and had a strong desire to help the people of her adopted homeland. On August 19,1841 Marianne, now Sister M. Francis, professed her vows, hoping to be sent to the Newfoundland mission.

Across the wide (and wild) Atlantic

The opening of the Newfoundland mission was delayed as a result of the death of Catherine McAuley in November 1841. In May 1842 Sisters M. Francis Creedon, M. Ursula Frayne and M. Rose Lynch began their voyage to Newfoundland, arriving in St. John's on June 3. They spent their first year in visitation and care of the sick and those suffering from poverty and wretched living conditions, and this ministry continued even when the sisters opened their first school on May 1, 1843.

In late 1842 Maria Nugent joined the Sisters of Mercy. She took the name of Sister Mary Joseph and professed vows on March 25, 1843. In November of that year Sisters M. Ursula and M. Rose returned to Ireland, leaving Sisters M. Francis and M. Joseph to carry on the work of a very fragile and demanding mission: teaching and visiting the sick in their homes and in hospital. In June of 1847 Sister M. Joseph died, having contracted typhus while nursing at the hospital, leaving Sister M. Francis the sole Sister of Mercy in Newfoundland. For the next ten months she faithfully and courageously tended the mission. She must have wondered about the future.

New life emerged. Soon, other Irish women joined the Newfoundland mission of Mercy. The first orphanage was opened in 1854, and in 1855 they welcomed the first native Newfoundland Sister of Mercy. New schools were opened. The seeds were beginning to sprout!