



SISTER CELEBRATES 100TH BIRTHDAY



SAINT JOHN, N.B. – Sister Eleanor Bednar celebrated her 100th birthday at Ruth Ross Residence Oct. 8, 2017 among other Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception (SCIC), Associates, staff and family members from Nova Scotia. Father Michael LeBlanc presided and offered the homily during the eucharistic liturgy in Carmel Chapel. Celebrations continued with a festive dinner on Thanksgiving weekend.

Enjoying the party, Sr. Bednar played a medley of songs on piano.

Expressing thanks as the liturgy began, Sister Mary Beth McCurdy said, “Your life among us has sown seeds of love, justice (and) risk-taking.” The SCIC congregational leader also noted that Sister Eleanor was blessed with “big picture thinking, as well as the creative energy of music and art.”

“You continue to be transformed in your love for religious life and we love you . . . for the spark you are,” she added.

Sister Eleanor has spent more than 77 of her 100 years in religious life. Originally from Ponoka, Alta., she travelled by train to enter the SCIC in Saint John in 1940, taking the religious name, Sister Mary de Prague. She helped open the SCIC mission in Wetaskiwin in rural Alberta where she taught school and served as principal.

She also taught in Winnipeg, Man. and then ministered in catechetics back in Wetaskiwin, as well as in Saint John and Winnipeg. As a pastoral assistant, she served in Fort Saskatchewan, Alta. and then offered music and parish ministry in Digby, N.S. before retiring to Saint John.

An artist and musician, Sister Eleanor painted in water colour, played guitar and organ and continues to play piano. Blessed with healthy curiosity about the world, she was long committed to learning about and responding to social and ecological concerns.

In a 2006 interview, she said we are “here to build a better world.” She added that today, religious life involves being “on the cutting edge” while “giving justice and changing structures.”

Sister Mary Beth presented Sister Eleanor with two congratulatory certificates from Bishop Robert Harris, the clergy and people of the Diocese of Saint John, as well as from Saint John Mayor Don Darling.

During the liturgy, Sister Eleanor walked unaided to the microphone to offer thanks, while also describing her recent swim in the Saint John YMCA pool. The adventure fulfilled one of her birthday wishes. *(SCIC photo)*