

**From the Chair – Éloi DeGrâce** (*Archdiocese of Edmonton Archives*)

The Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Patrimony of the Church published an important document in 1994 on the *Ecclesiastical Libraries and Their Role*. The Commission stressed the significant role of ecclesiastical libraries in the cultural patrimony of the Church. The Commission encouraged the Church to open its “heritage to those who intend to use it”, stating that “minor libraries” tied to parishes or associations are “instruments of culture for all”.

The members of the Commission noticed then that many diocesan and religious community libraries

“are destined to an irreparable decline.” Librarians and archivists realize that this situation affects all those who have “an appreciation of libraries in the context of ecclesial studies and communal life” to quote the 1994 document again.

In Canada, legal deposit took effect with the creation of the National Library in 1953. Since that time, it has been getting two copies of Canadian publications to ensure their preservation for generations to come. In 2004, the National Library merged with the Public Archives of Canada to create a new entity known as Library and Archives Canada (or LAC for short). It continues to get two copies of all material published in the country.

LAC also collects works published before its creation. When we consult AMICUS, Library and Archives Canada’s database, we find that it is missing many publications or has only one copy of books published by Church organizations before 1953.

In some religious institutions I have worked, I noticed that many publications, printed at 5,000 copies or more, never made it to the archives or the library. Often by chance, I was able to find treasures in convent or parish resource libraries.



LAC is in the same situation. Many books published before 1953 have not yet found a home in its collection of Canadiana. Our ecclesiastical libraries, great or small, can make important contributions to LAC by sending spare copies of books or booklets that researchers are unaware of because they are not listed in LAC's database.

Over the years, when I had multiple copies of an old publication printed by a diocese or a religious community, I checked with the LAC staff to enquire if it was in their holdings. I was able to enrich our Canadian cultural patrimony with my "gifts" to LAC. In doing so, I am convinced that the duplicates I sent to LAC would – in a way – continue to play a role in the mission of the Church.

If you have publications that may fit the mandate of LAC, feel free to contact Library and Archives Canada at this address: [gifts@lac-bac.gc.ca](mailto:gifts@lac-bac.gc.ca) or e-mail the chief of the gifts and exchanges department, Monique Dupre at: [monique.dupre@lac-bac.gc.ca](mailto:monique.dupre@lac-bac.gc.ca).



### **Archival Coincidence or Divine Intervention? – Diane Lamoureux (*Oblate Archives*)**

As of April 1<sup>st</sup>, I will have been employed in my current position as Oblate Archivist for eleven years. During those years, I have assisted dozens (probably hundreds) of researchers of all types – academics, grad students, authors, genealogists, governmental – you name it. Over the years, I have been struck by some seemingly strange coincidences – perhaps divine intervention? For example:

1. Several years ago, a student working on her Master's was researching something to do with French language rights involving a court challenge which was made by an Oblate Brother. She came to the Provincial Archives and I met her at the registration desk. We spoke briefly about the case and the files she was interested in viewing. During the conversation, the name of the Brother came up. Shortly thereafter, the person who had been filling in at the front reception desk, which was not her normal position, came up to me and asked about the researcher. Then she told me that the Oblate Brother in question had been her father – he joined the Oblates after his wife, her mother, died. So after getting permission from the daughter, I was able to put the two people together and the researcher was able to get a new perspective on the issue.
2. Another time, I was again at the main reception desk speaking to a couple who were interested in genealogy. There also happened to be an instructor there from a local post-secondary institution that was there with his photography class. In any case, the genealogists were interested in the Cunningham family – one of the older St. Albert families, and it so happens, the family of the first Alberta-born Métis Oblate priest. So as we were discussing possible sources of information, the instructor happened to mention that the Cunningham's were also his family....
3. A few years back a grad student was looking for information on the smallpox epidemic that spread across the prairies in about 1871. I found some references and sent them off to her. Shortly after that (within a few days), I was photocopying something for another researcher and came across a file of information pulled together by an Oblate some 65 or

- 70 years ago. This folder contained all the notes he had made and material he had found about famine and smallpox. I was able to provide an additional amount of information to the grad student. It also finally convinced me of the need to check out the papers of this particular Oblate (who served as their archivist in the 1930s and 1940s) as a potential source for almost every topic imaginable. And to this day, for almost every researcher, I am able to find something in his papers.
4. Just last year, I had not one, not two, but three requests for the same relatively obscure photo from our collection – all within a week’s time. It was a photo from Batoche, SK – and prior to that, over a ten year period, I probably had not had three requests in total for this photo. Nor have I had the one request since then!
  5. Last year, we scanned a copy of the Pictorial Catechism created by Fr. Albert Lacombe, omi, for a display at the Provincial Archives. It is often referred to as the Lacombe Ladder or the Catholic Ladder. It was created in 1876 and measures about 1 foot wide by 6 feet long and displays biblical stories in colour. This is the earliest one created by Fr. Lacombe, which was based on a more basic one created in the late 1830s or early 1840s by Fr. Blanchet, who was one of the two Diocesan priests, along with Fr. Demers, who travelled across Western Canada to the Pacific Northwest in 1838. After the display was up, a woman saw the Ladder and requested a copy of it. Shortly thereafter, I was in communication with an Archivist from Marquette University who was also interested in getting a copy. Then one of the staff from the Provincial Archives ordered a copy for her daughter’s boyfriend who had seen it while it had been on display. Finally, I had a request from a woman in the United States, who was looking for a copy, and after a lengthy back and forth e-mail communication, was delighted with the copy she received. Given the subject, the size, and the cost, I would never have guessed that this particular item would sell so well!
  6. Finally, over the last few months, I have had several researchers interested in the City of St. Albert. In 2011, the city will celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and of course, since it was founded by Fr. Albert Lacombe, omi and Bishop A. Taché, omi in 1861, I am involved with a City committee planning a Founders’ Walk. St. Albert is a notable community for a number of reasons – it had the first bridge west of St. Boniface – this too was the work of Fr. Lacombe, and is of particular interest to another researcher; the first mill, and the first telephone call in Alberta was made to the mission. Father Lacombe, omi introduced the river lot system used in his native Québec. With the arrival of the Grey Nuns a few years later, it had one of the first hospitals in the province. It was initially, a predominantly Métis community, but by the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, it was very much a Francophone community, and I have a grad student interested in this aspect of St. Albert. The original St. Albert chapel, built by Fr. Lacombe in 1861 is the oldest wooden building in Alberta, and it is operated as a Provincial Historic Site each summer.

So are these coincidences or are there some other powers directing things? I am not sure, but then, it may have been divine intervention that helped me secure this position to begin with – but that tale is for another day.

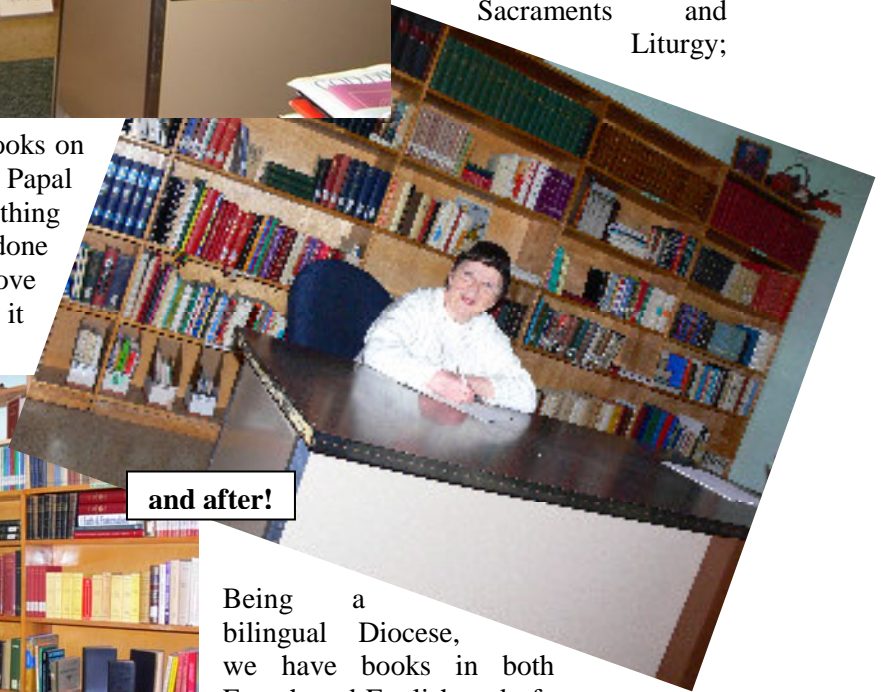
I have to say I really enjoy the variety of the researchers and questions that come into our Archives. Even with the many, many questions I have dealt with relating to Indian Residential schools, I have to say that I still find the work interesting! However, it does mean that I don’t have as much chance to work on the backlog of materials both at the Provincial Archives of Alberta and in our small Archives in St. Albert.

**Diocesan Library Project – SM Laurette Couture, CSSF** (*Diocese of St. Paul Archives*)



Less than a year ago, my Bishop asked if I was ready to tackle the library. At first glance I thought the project would take me at least ten years to complete – it seemed like an overwhelming task. Where to begin? That was the question. I started sorting books by category into cardboard boxes, Spiritual reading and meditation books; Bibles; books on Sacraments and Liturgy;

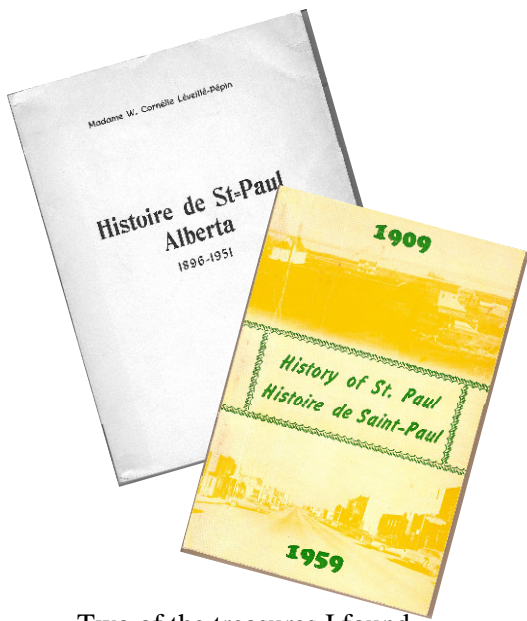
Lives of the Saints, Dictionaries, books on Priestly and Religious formation, Papal documents, etc... Just about everything but the kitchen sink! I had already done a lot of work before the photo above was taken, so you can imagine what it was like at the outset.



Being a bilingual Diocese, we have books in both French and English and of course a few in Latin as well.

I rolled up my sleeves and tackled the job which at first glance seemed so overwhelming but which soon became like a treasure hunt as I started finding

books of historical significance for our Diocese – real treasures, in fact, the covers of a couple of which are shown below. It gave me immense satisfaction to finally begin to see the floor in the room, not to mention relief at the prospect of some light at the end of that huge “tunnel” of books.



Two of the treasures I found

I was fortunate and very grateful to have had the assistance of two of our retired priests who came for a couple of hours almost every afternoon to help me with the task. I was glad indeed to have their help and also for their companionship as it sometimes got very lonely working by myself in the basement.

The reference room (pictured above) is finished. The circulating library, which is housed in another room, remains an ongoing project. Those books need to be added to the computer database and author labels affixed to the spine of each book prior to being made available to readers. Below is a photo of a section of the circulating library showing a completed shelf of French spiritual reading and meditation books.



My aim is to make the circulating library as user-friendly as possible since there will not be a librarian in the room all day. Colour-coding the author tabs will hopefully make identifying the various categories of books easier as well assist in proper reshelving. There is still a lot of work to be done in the circulating library, but the task will not take me 10 years as I had first predicted. Seeing the books properly catalogued, labeled, and lining the shelves gives me a lot of satisfaction and a great sense of accomplishment. Now what will the Bishop have up his sleeve for me next? I wonder!

## Looking Ahead to CAG 2009 – Monica Plante, SCIC (*Planning Committee Chair*)

Welcome/Bienvenue to Saint John, New Brunswick, the site of our Catholic Archivist Conference to be held from September 21-24, 2009.



This will be the first CAG Conference to be held in the Maritimes, in the 225<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Province, in Saint John, a unique Irish City in a bilingual province.

The conference will be held at the Villa Madonna Retreat House situated in rustic woodland on the beautiful Kennebecasis River, approximately 10 minutes east of Saint John. All rooms are private and contain a sink. There is also an elevator. Check out their website at [www.villamadonna.ca](http://www.villamadonna.ca) for more information.

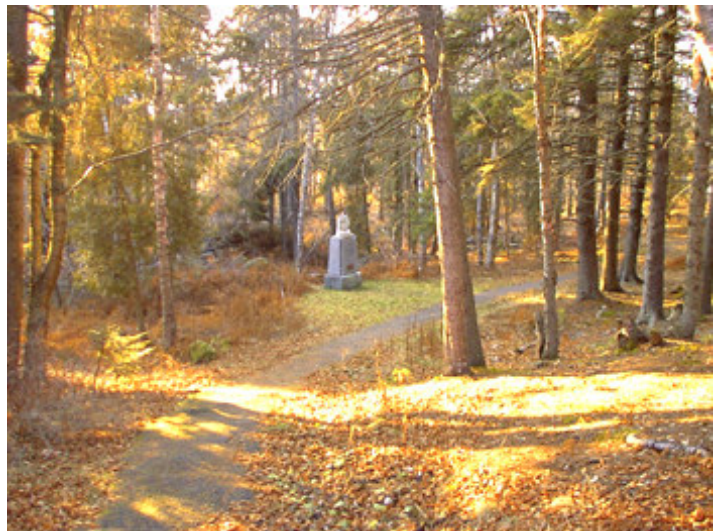
Air Canada and (West Jet during the summer) land in Saint John. When you land at the arrival gate, take a few steps, pick up your luggage, and team up with other CAG members, out the door where Taxi's are waiting for a fee of \$25 – \$30 to the Villa. If many are arriving at the same time we can arrange for a taxi shuttle.

Monday begins with registrations, a light supper and a welcoming reception.

The first day begins with a Mass celebrated by our Bishop Robert Harris. The day will highlight the importance of Heritage Rooms with a presentation from the Outreach Committee and from the NB Museum. We will visit a Heritage Room, followed by lunch at the Reversing Falls Garden Restaurant, a bus tour of historic Saint John. We will also explore the city market and a visit to the Jewish Museum. We will return to the Villa for dinner and a free evening. You may wish to walk the trails at the Villa or visit a one room Archive.

Wednesday we begin with Mass, followed by the Annual General Meeting and the Outreach Report. A session on Copyright, a session on Digitization of Records and Virtual Exhibitions and concurrent sessions for the Diocesan and Religious Archivist will be held.

Our Banquet will be held at the Villa Madonna, as we welcome once again Dr. Michael Higgins from St. Thomas University in Fredericton, as our guest speaker.

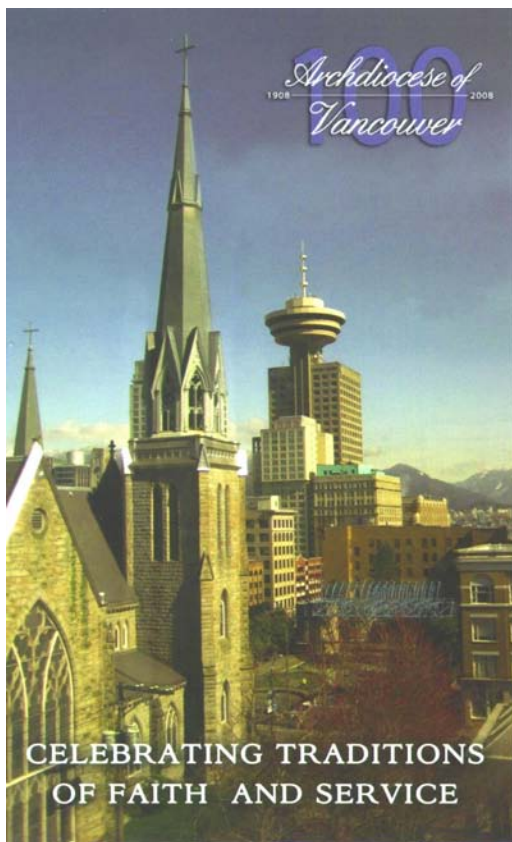


Thursday, we will have a closing Mass Liturgy, report on the CAG 2010 Conference, sharing, evaluations, thank you and lunch as we bid farewell to an historic, oldest incorporated city in Canada. Registration information will be mailed by June 15 with the deadline for July 15, 2009.

We hope you can join us for this unique experience.

### **Archdiocese Publishes a History – Anthea Seles (*Archdiocese of Vancouver Archives*)**

Last year was quite an active year for the Archdiocese of Vancouver and most especially for the Archives when we celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the diocese. I think any archivist who has celebrated a milestone at their institution will know that the word ‘active’ barely does justice to the frenetic activity that overtakes the archives and particularly the archivist during these events.



One of the great achievements of last year’s anniversary year was the publication of the first ever history of the Archdiocese: *Traditions of Faith and Service- Archdiocese of Vancouver 1908-2008*. The history is broken up into two constituent parts. The first part of the book is the popular history of the diocese spanning the period 1863-2008 written by Jacqueline Gresko. The anniversary year was really meant to commemorate our elevation to the level of Archdiocese on September 19<sup>th</sup>, 1908, but we felt it was important to recognize the early history of our diocese from 1863-1908 and in particular the contributions made by our founding religious orders the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and the Sisters of St. Ann. The narrative portion is divided according to the episcopacies of our Bishops. The second half of the book is parish profiles and most of the information in this section was submitted by our diocesan parishes and contains lists of pastors for each parish.

There are over 500 photographs included in this publication and they contain not only photographs from the archdiocesan photograph collection but also several from the City of Vancouver Archives, BC Archives, OMI Archives in BC, and some from private individuals. There are also reproductions of items from our artefact collection and even some archival documents.

During the Anniversary year, I definitely had to expand my skill set to non-archival tasks such as designing programs and acting as a stage manager, the latter being the most interesting task I’ve been assigned to since I began working at the Archdiocese. I was required to sit in the Tech booth at General Motors Place, a venue normally used by our NHL hockey team, to give technicians manning the jumbotron and cameras cues for the large-scale Mass officiated by Cardinal Marc Ouellet, p.s.s, Cardinal-Archbishop of Québec. I definitely had the best seat in the house.

For those of you who might be interested in ordering the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary book the cost is \$39.00 plus \$10.00 shipping and can be ordered online at [www.rcav.org](http://www.rcav.org) or a cheque made out to the Archdiocese of Vancouver and mailed to Archdiocese of Vancouver ATTN: Archives, 150 Robson St, Vancouver, BC V6B 2A7. You can also email me at [aseles@rcav.bc.ca](mailto:aseles@rcav.bc.ca) for further information.

**“Now That’s Using Your Head” – Suzanne Shank, sasv** *(Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie Archives)*



Father Johnnie Benoit was known as a maverick. He had some rather unusual and adventurous ways of doing things. He was a roly-poly fellow with the character of a Friar Tuck, elfin and mischievous. As he got older he used to take pleasure in looking over the rim of his glasses with a special grin on his face. He always had something on the go.

When he was pastor of the church in Cartier, Ontario, he began a raffle using the entire Sunday collection as the prize. To the amazement of everyone he made more money on the raffle than he would have had if he had kept the collection. Now that's using your head!

On another occasion Father Benoit telephoned Mgr. Humphrey, the pastor of Christ the King Parish in Sudbury. It was Boxing Day. He proceeded to thank the Mgr. for the beautiful and eloquent sermon that he had delivered at the midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. Mgr. Humphrey was a bit surprised. 'How did you hear it? Didn't you have your own midnight Mass in Cartier?' Yes he had! But Father Benoit could not be matched for his imagination and ingenuity. His preparation was inventive. He timed his Mass in Cartier to coincide perfectly with the Mass at Christ the King, which for many years was broadcasted over CKSO radio. Father Benoit merely took advantage of the service offered. After the Gospel was proclaimed and it came time for the sermon, he plugged the radio into the church's system so that he and his congregation could benefit from the powerful and well prepared sermon of Mgr. Humphrey. Thank God there was no copyright on those words. Such imaginative chicanery had provided a smaller out-of-the-way parish with much inspiration. Now that's using your head!

(Taken from the book 'The Lighter Side of Heaven' written by Greg J. Humbert, diocesan priest and former archivist of the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie)

**Advice Needed – Joe Keast** *(Sisters of St. Joseph of Peterborough Archives)*

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Peterborough have recently de-commissioned the chapel at their old Motherhouse. There are two altar stones which were removed from the altars. As the Congregation's archivist, I would like some advice on how to deal with these altar stones. Please contact me at [jkeast@mail.com](mailto:jkeast@mail.com) if you have suggestions. Thanks!



## Publication Schedule

The newsletter is published three times a year: February (*deadline January 15*), May (*deadline April 15*), and December (*deadline November 15*).

Email your news items, articles and photographs to [lcouture@mcsnet.ca](mailto:lcouture@mcsnet.ca) . Please keep text to less than 500 words if possible. All submissions will be subject to editing; however final approval from the author will be obtained whenever possible.

If you would like your photographs returned, kindly inform the editor.

## A Treasured Artifact – Patricia Brochu, p.m. (*Sisters of the Presentation of Mary Archives*)

In the years 2003-2006, a traveling display was organized in Manitoba through *La Société Historique de Lourdes Inc.* Its purpose was to recognize the contribution of Religious Orders to the preservation of the French language and culture in Western Canada. Since we, the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary, have been involved in the teaching of French, we decided to take part in the displays.

Two representatives came one day to view and choose a few artifacts suitable to their purpose. However, in the same room behind a glass cupboard door a certain item caught their eye: a bronze sculpture of one of our Sisters. To add to their interest, one of the representatives knew the sculptor personally! You may have guessed by now that the artist is none other than the famous Canadian Sculptor, Joe Fafard.

Way back in Joe's high school days, in the town of St. Lazare, Manitoba, there was a Sister of the Presentation of Mary by the name of Sister Marie Casavant, known at that time as Sister St. Anastasia. Sister noticed that Joe had a keen interest in drawing and encouraged him to do so as often as she could. One day after his assignments were completed she decided to give full vent to his talent. She installed, on a wall in the furnace room of the school, a very large piece of white paper and asked him to make a mural which he did very successfully and which was later displayed in the local restaurant. It is said to have remained there for quite a time, and then destroyed when the building burned. Needless to say that Sister St. Anastasia remained, for Joe Fafard, an encouraging force that gave him wings.

The years went by. Sister, after 33 years, moved on to another assignment while Joe pursued his profession, becoming a renowned sculptor.

In 1980 the town celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the arrival of the Sisters in 1930. Sister St. Anastasia was not about to miss the occasion nor was her art-loving student of many years ago. It was at this gathering that Joe Fafard unveiled and presented the bronze sculpture (see photo) to Sister St. Anastasia.



14 in. high



Sister Marie Casavant (Sr. St. Anastasia)

### It's that time again!

**Extra! Extra!**



Spring is elections time for the Catholic Archivist Group, and this year we will be looking for nominees for the position of Secretary as well as a volunteer to work with Jo-Anne Allison on the Outreach Committee.

According to our Constitutions, the Secretary shall:

- ensure that proper minutes are recorded for all the meetings of the CAG and it's committees
- be responsible for membership records and coordinates general mailings
- sign official documents and ensure preservation of the permanent books and records of the CAG
- perform such other duties as may be required.

The Outreach Committee shall:

- be composed of two (2) members accepted by the Executive
- serve for a term of three years and may be reappointed
- be of assistance to the CAG Executive for internal/external communications and development.

Note that editing the CAG Newsletter "Archival Connections" falls under the mandate of the Outreach Committee, so we need someone with editorial skills.

Our revised Constitutions and a Nomination Form will be mailed to you later this month.

# New members...

**Sylvia Best** - Diocese of Peterborough

**Shelley Myhres** - St. Ann's Academy National Historic Site

**Celine Widmer** –Jesuit Fathers' Archives

**Edie Kempe** - Archdiocese of Winnipeg

**Annette Dionne, NDSC** - Soeurs de Notre-Dame-du-Sacre-Coeur Archives

**Ellen Murray, NDSC** - Soeurs de Notre-Dame-du-Sacre-Coeur Archives

# and Changes!

**Rev. Jacques Monet** – is now historian for the Jesuit Fathers

**Marie Gillen**, Sisters of Charity, Halifax has retired and moved to the US.

## A Prayer for Archivists of Congregations of Women Religious

*Lord, let us remember that  
the trailblazers of yesterday  
Are our traditions today  
Boxed and labeled and catalogued  
They leap from our shelves  
Our forebears who fashioned  
new stories to tell.*

*Their spirit escapes in new  
patterns, new plans  
Our web site of findings that  
links and expands  
To whatever the future is  
waiting to give.*

*Lord, let your Spirit spur us  
To tell the pulse of our work  
In our quest for the best.*

*Amen.*



# From the editor's desk

Spring – season of hope, of new life, of regeneration. After a long, dark and cold winter, we all welcome spring with its promise of warmth, green boughs and colourful flora. In the words of poet C.P. Cranch in “A Spring Growl”:



If there comes a little thaw,  
 Still the air is chill and raw,  
 Here and there a patch of snow,  
 Dirtier than the ground below,  
 Dribbles down a marshy flood;  
 Ankle-deep you stick in mud  
 In the meadows while you sing: “This is Spring.”

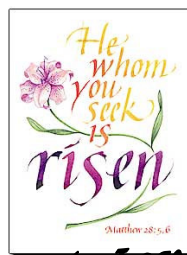
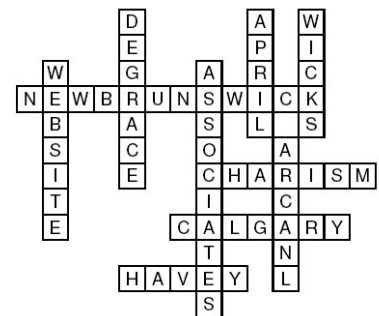
This issue of our CAG newsletter could not have been born without the generosity and cooperation of our contributors, and it is with heartfelt gratitude that I say “thanks” to them on your behalf. The deadline for submitting articles and photos for the next issue of our newsletter is **November 15<sup>th</sup>**, so please send your submissions to [lcouture@mcsnet.ca](mailto:lcouture@mcsnet.ca) so that we will have an interesting and informative newsletter for the Fall.



## Catholic Archivist Group Executive – Contact Information

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Solution to CAG Crossword featured in the February 2009 issue.



*"Rejoice, again I say: Rejoice!"*