

## Anniversary of Mercy Foundation in Newfoundland

### *Preamble:*

*(Marianne Creedon, born in 1811 in Coolowen, Co. Cork, went to Newfoundland with her sister's family when she was 22 years old. Bishop Fleming, an Irish Franciscan, negotiated with Catherine McAuley to send Marianne back to Dublin to prepare to establish a convent of the Sisters of Mercy in Newfoundland. Marianne entered in 1839, was received in 1840 and professed in August 1841 with the religious name, Mary Francis.)*

### **Arrival Day- June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1842:**

On June 3, 1842, Sisters Ursula Frayne, Rose Lynch and Francis Creedon arrived in St. John's, Newfoundland from the port of Kingstown, Ireland, on the ship the *Sir Walter Scott* to establish the Sisters of Mercy, the first foundation outside of Ireland and England.



St John's Harbour Newfoundland

What must have been their thoughts as they looked upon the forbidding landscape with its towering rocky cliffs and craggy headlands? Although they had seen poverty in Ireland, the abject poverty of this place with its rude shacks and derelict fishing stages perched on the side of the hills, would have seared their hearts and minds. Sister Francis had lived in the colony for six years, but for Sisters Ursula and Rose the scene before them must have caused some dismay and distress.

After a harrowing climb from the ship's deck down to the small boat bobbing on the heaving sea, they made their way through the Narrows to St. John's wharf. There they found a throng of people waiting to welcome them. Undoubtedly, the family of Sister Francis was among them, eager to see her after an absence of three years. Bishop Fleming transported them in his own carriage to his house on Henry Street, where they were to reside until their convent was built. What a momentous day this was! They were literally and figuratively transported to a new world, a world full of promise and full of challenge. What relief they must have felt to sleep in a bed after a month of rolling and tossing on the Atlantic! How they must have prayed, thanking God for a safe journey and begging for the courage and strength to carry out the mission entrusted to them.

We are grateful for the spirit of Mercy that impelled them and for the legacy of compassion, courage, creativity, and commitment that we have inherited as Sisters of Mercy of Newfoundland. We celebrate this day with great joy and gratitude.

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Some links:

<https://www.sistersofmercyntf.org/remembering-our-newfoundland-mercy-story-6-arrival-day/>