

Sister Ida St-Onge was born August 6, 1927, in St-Jacques de Parisville, QC. She was the 9th of 19 children. Her father, Lorenzo, had inherited the family farm. Her mother, Émilie Guérard, was a very giving and amazing woman in this huge family where they lived with the paternal grandparents and 4 unmarried aunts. In this homely environment, Ida was cherished. She learnt to read and write. She wore dresses sown by her mother, a very gifted seamstress. Her aunt, a shoemaker, crafted her shoes. She was spoiled by her older sister Marie-Rose who had entered with the FMM when Ida was only three and half.

Growing up, she always loved to go to church for Sunday mass. When she got old enough, she was asked to stay home to care for the younger siblings. This was such a sacrifice for her, and she felt the void. One day the mother of her friend told her, *Ida, you will be a religious.* Ida, not wishing to reveal her secret replied, *No, never!* However, she stated, *every evening when I recited my rosary alone in my room, I asked the Holy Virgin to show me my vocation.*

Ida attended the village school. At 15, she suffered a very difficult experience. She quit school to the desolation of her parents. *I felt so misunderstood, and I decided to stay home to help my mother. Nobody understood my decision because in my family every girl was expected to complete their studies to become*

a teacher. Sister Marie-Rose, fmm, was affected by this event. She asked her sister to come to the residence she ran in Montreal. She wanted to support her sister through this difficult time. During these visits, Ida felt drawn to the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. She was also impressed by the lives of these sisters. She realized that God was calling her to a religious vocation. Before entering, she lived for a year with her parents. She desired to make her parents happy. She gave her all to all the house and farm chores.

At 17 on September 13, 1944, she entered the novitiate in Quebec City. During her formation, she was happy. She deepened her relationship with Jesus. She asked Him to deepen her faith. She longed for this presence in every aspect of her life. *I would have died if I had been told to leave.* In 1947, she celebrated her temporary profession. She then started her mission. She went to Montreal where she was a cook for 8 years. It was very hard and strenuous in such tough economic times.

In 1955, she was sent to the United States of America. She was a cook in the communities of Bell Street and Woonsocket with their 100 orphans. In Boston, she was a sacristan in our Perpetual Adoration Sanctuary for 10 years. She made the sisters' clothes. She made and sold mass ornaments. Several years later, she worked with handicapped children at

Kennedy Memorial Hospital and with our elderly sisters in Fruit Hill, Providence, RI. She discovered a passion for nursing.

In 1973, after 18 years of ministry in the States, she returned to Canada. As she worked in our Women's residence in Quebec City, she completed high school and nursing studies. At 50, she obtained her nursing license. She was tireless in her work. She was posted in the *Gouin* and *du Confort* residences. She was also in a senior center. *It was wonderful years of caring for the sick. At 68, I had to stop as I was worn out. Stop working really was not Ida.*

After a time of rest, she completed studies in podiatry. In a short time, she had quite a clientele. This new ministry was not only caring for people's feet but listening to them. They longed for comfort and encouragement. *Without knowing it, a kind word, a sharing can completely change a life and lead to a whole new way of thinking.* At 90, she still drove and made house calls. She wrote: *Even with my dwindling health, I keep busy. On the family farm, I learnt to be able to do many things. I enjoyed making ketchup, apple jellies, homemade wine, and sewing. I spend more and more time in the chapel deepening my relationship with my God. I am so grateful for my religious vocation.*

Perfectionist and hardworking, Sister Ida had a heart of gold. She strived to help, to save and collect money for the poor. As she got

older, her health failed more and more. In June 2021, she went to live in Providence Pavilion with the sisters of our infirmary. She adapted quickly to this new way of life. She lived calmly the ups and downs of her health. She recalled the happy times with her beloved family. She entrusted all to God. She kept in her heart all that could nourish her praise and thanksgiving.

After a bad fall, she was admitted for surgery. With the sister who went with her, she spoke of the coming of her God. Yes, in this very quick turn of events, it was truly *Him* that she saw at the dawn of the big day. He came and led her into his kingdom. Ida, our beloved sister, go in the peace of the Lord.



*My heart overflows with a noble theme
as I recite my verses to the king.
Card given for her 50th Jubilee
by Sister Maura O'Connor, fmm
(Gen. Sup 1984-1996).*



***Sister Ida St-Onge
(Marie Lorenzo)***

Franciscan Missionaries of Mary

***born in St-Jacques de Parisville, QC
August 6, 1927***

***entered the Institute in Quebec City, QC
on September 14, 1944***

***died in Montreal, QC
on September 16, 2023***

***in her 97th year,
the 79th of her religious life.***

May she rest in the peace of Christ!