

Gift of St. Patrick's Convent to City of St. John's  
3 November 2016  
Comments by Sister Betty Rae Lee  
Provincial Leader



Thank you, Marilyn (Butland) and a pleasant good morning and welcome to all the groups represented here who do their best, day in and day out, to make life better for the people in our city, province, nation and world. I am delighted to announce today that the Presentation Sisters of Newfoundland and Labrador are gifting this building, our beautiful and historic St. Patrick's Convent, to the City of St. John's to be used specifically for supportive and affordable housing for senior citizens. I express appreciation to Sister Sharon Fagan, Sister Lois Greene and the former Presentation Sisters' Leadership Team for all they did to make this dream about the future use of our building become a reality.

We, Presentation Sisters, indeed all of us, are all called to serve the community, locally and globally with care and compassion. In keeping with the spirit of our foundress, Nano Nagle, a fearless Irish woman who did all she could to alleviate the suffering of the poor of 18<sup>th</sup> century Ireland, we decided to gift this property to help the City provide safe, supportive and affordable housing to seniors. Housing is considered affordable when the cost of rent and utilities is less than 30% of the before-tax household income.

Through our work with the Sisters of Mercy and the wider community at *The Gathering Place* and our collaborative efforts with other initiatives on housing and ending homelessness in the city, we see more and more elderly people having difficulty finding safe, affordable and comfortable places to live. In giving the City of St. John's this wonderful property, we are doing so to acknowledge in a special way our relationship with the people of St. Patrick's Parish that dates back to January 1856 when our four pioneer sisters arrived in what was then the town of Riverhead. As we hold tenderly the lives of the 205 women who lived and ministered at St. Patrick's School and the thousands of students they taught since 1856, we recognize that this chapter of our treasured narrative is now completed.

However, a new story is waiting to be told in this place and we are indeed grateful that we can give back to you, the people of the City, who allowed us to share so fully in your lives for 160 wonderful years.