

*Discovering the convent complex of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph,  
the pioneers of health care in Montreal.*

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### Stop 1 - Introduction



© Point Du Jour Aviation Ltée, 1999

In the late 18th century, the industrial expansion of Montreal caused a spurt in population growth. By the 19th century the Hôtel-Dieu, founded on May 17, 1642 by Jeanne Mance, the first lay nurse and cofounder of Montreal, was no longer adequate to house the city's sick in its premises in Old Montreal. The Congregation of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph, who had taken over from Jeanne Mance, decided to move on to the spacious property it owned at the foot of Mount Royal, as the land offered more space and convenience and the air was healthier.

Since its annexation on October 1, 1996, the Hôtel-Dieu has been part of the *Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal – CHUM* (University of Montreal Health Centre), which comprises three university hospitals. Administered by the nuns for over 300 years, the Hôtel-Dieu still cares for a large number of patients every year and is involved in research and in the training of health professionals.

For the next hour, we invite you to visit the convent complex of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph. One of the starting points for the vibrant district of the Plateau Mont-Royal, this property, where construction began in 1859, witnessed the birth of this neighbourhood that developed around its monastery, chapel and hospital.

It is our pleasure to accompany you as you discover this historic place, whose influence is intimately tied to the work of caring for the sick that is the mission of the Hospitallers. You will find many things to delight you here.

*To start your tour, we invite you to walk to the intersection of Avenue du Parc and Avenue des Pins. Please stand on the north-west sidewalk.*

The visit begins outdoors with a look at the immediate surroundings along Avenue des Pins, from Avenue du Parc to Saint-Urbain Street. This part of the tour will enable you not only to admire the external architecture of the chapel and the buildings around it, but also to understand the particular socio-historical context in which this complex was built and the development of the neighbourhood.

Later we will invite you to enter the chapel. Its clean lines and refined style enable you to focus on the ornamentation, which dates from the time of its construction in 1861.

The flyer you received or downloaded with this podcast shows the recommended tour route and points of interest. The numbers appearing on the diagrams indicate the starting point for each of the Stops on the tour.

We invite you to set off to *discover the convent complex of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph, the pioneers of health care in Montreal.*

*To begin your visit, please select Stop No. 2.*

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### Stop 2 – The neighbourhood

You are at the intersection of Avenue des Pins and Avenue du Parc, the two roads leading to Mount Royal. To the west are the Percival Molson Memorial Stadium and the Royal Victoria Hospital, which are both built on the mountainside. To the east are Jeanne-Mance Park and the Plateau-Mont-Royal. Notice the stone wall encircling the property of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph: this is the western edge of the convent complex, which comprises a residence for the nuns, a chapel for the community and the sick, and a hospital for the population of Montreal.



Intersection of Avenue des Pins and Avenue du Parc  
© Dominique Trudeau, 2009

The Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph lived for over 200 years in Old Montreal. In 1861 they moved to the land they owned on the lower slopes of the mountain. The polluted environment of Old Montreal and the ever-increasing population were the reasons for their move. It is important to remember that in the 19th century, the land north of Sherbrooke Street was countryside. The Congregation was prepared to open up new territory in order to forge ahead but mostly, to improve the quality of care they had been giving the sick since 1659.

*Please select Stop No. 3 to learn more about Jeanne Mance.*

### Stop 3 – Jeanne Mance



Jeanne Mance  
L. Dugardin (France), Oil on wood  
Second half of the 19 century  
Collection of the RHSJM

Born in Langres, Jeanne Mance devoted herself wholeheartedly to her brothers and sisters left orphaned after the death of their mother. It must be remembered that France in the 17th century was a country rife with war and plague. It was in this context that Jeanne Mance discovered the mission to which she would devote her life: to care for the sick poor. The accounts of the missions in New France she heard from her cousin Nicolas Dolebeau, a chaplain in Paris who had made a trip there in April 1640, awoke in her the desire to go to Canada.

She therefore travelled to Paris in May 1640 to meet Charles Lallemant, a Jesuit and procurator of the missions in Canada. In May of the following year, she joined a group sailing for Montreal. After a long voyage and some months in Quebec City, in August 1641 she arrived in Ville Marie – the original name of Montreal – on May 17, 1642. She was accompanied by the city governor, Paul de Chomedey, Sieur de Maisonneuve, and about forty settlers. Jeanne nursed the sick and wounded in the dispensary of the fort of Ville Marie and later in the Hôtel-Dieu, built in 1645. When the colony was threatened with extinction for lack of new settlers, Jeanne Mance advised Maisonneuve to use part of the hospital funds to go to France and bring back a hundred men, thus saving Montreal in

1653. Meanwhile, the nursing Hospitallers of La Flèche, France, were preparing to establish a community in Ville-Marie. In 1659 Jeanne brought back from France three Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph who were coming to help her care for the sick. Jeanne Mance administered the hospital until she died in 1673. The Sulpician Fathers managed it from 1673 to 1676, and then the Hospitallers took over the administration from that period on.

*We invite you to walk east on Avenue des Pins. Please stand on the sidewalk on the south side; thus facing the convent.*

*If you wish to learn more about the Congregation of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph, please select Stop No. 4.*

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**Stop 4– The Congregation of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph**

*To get a good look at the buildings, while respecting the sisters' privacy, we suggest you remain on the sidewalk on the south side of Avenue des Pins.*

When it was founded at La Flèche, France, in 1636 by Jérôme Le Royer de La Dauversière, the Congregation of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph formed a community with simple vows, that is to say, the nuns took their vows once a year and lived communally without the strict rule of monastic life. It was in 1671, following the orders of the Church, that the Hospitallers became cloistered. Thereafter they had to make solemn vows and take the black veil. They then added the Rule of Saint Augustine to their constitution.



Jérôme LeRoyer de la Dauversière  
© BAnQ (Engraving, 1892)<sup>1</sup>

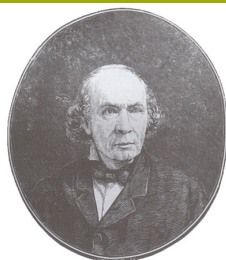
The new Hôtel-Dieu, built in 1861, reflected the cloistered nursing life of the nuns. It was in this part of the building – the western branch of the 'E' – that they lived. This allowed them to take care of their patients in the hospital without ever having to go outside the convent walls.

Over the years the number of sisters increased, and the convent had to be expanded at the back in 1932 to respond to the needs of the community. The building was expanded again in 1950, this time at the front, when there was an administrative reorganization of the Congregation. The building then became the "Mother House".

*If you wish to learn more about Victor Bourgeau, architect of the convent complex, please select Stop No.5.*

*To continue your visit with a brief description of the gardens, please select Stop No.6.*

**Stop 5– Victor Bourgeau**



Victor Bourgeau, Architect  
J. H. Walker, wood engraving  
Journal *Le Bazar* (Sept., 18 1886)

Victor Bourgeau was born in Lavaltrie on September 26, 1809 and died in Montreal on March 1, 1888. He served his apprenticeship as a joiner and carpenter by working with his uncle. He inherited the knowledge and skills of a long family tradition of carpenters and woodworkers, and may have been influenced by the works and prints of American architects such as Minard Lafever and Samuel Sloan. Although little is known about Bourgeau's career, a number of experts, such as Luc Noppen, agree in saying that he certainly studied draughtsmanship, in addition to working on several projects with the architect John Ostell. This would explain the excellence of his work both in technical terms and as regards architectural aesthetics, which made him one of Quebec's leading architects.

His first achievement as an architect, the Church of Saint-Pierre-Apôtre, was so admired that Monsignor Bourget appointed him official architectural advisor to the diocese. Bourgeau thus obtained numerous contracts and was involved in the construction of over a hundred places of worship in Quebec. Among other things, he drew up the plans for Mary Queen of the World Cathedral and the cathedrals of the Assumption in Trois-Rivières, Saint-Germain in Rimouski and Saint John the Evangelist in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, and earned high praise for the beauty of his interiors, which include that of Notre Dame Basilica in Montreal. The convent complex of the Hôtel-Dieu in Montreal was Victor Bourgeau's first such project as an architect.

*To continue your visit with a brief description of the gardens, please select Stop No.6.*

<sup>1</sup> SULTE, Benjamin, *Histoire des canadiens-français, 1608-1880 : origine, histoire, religion, guerres, découvertes, colonisation, coutumes, vie domestique, sociale, et politique, développement, avenir*, Montréal, Wilson (Société de publication historique du Canada), 1882-1884, vol. 1, page 80.



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### Stop 6– The Gardens

*The gardens of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph lie behind the stone wall facing you. This is private property. The gardens are open to the public for guided tours that must be booked ahead. We invite you to contact the Musée des Hospitalières de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal for the schedule of these tours.*

The gardens of the Hospitallers represent one of the last green spaces in the estate known as La Providence, which originally comprised almost 150 acres. It was ceded to the nuns in 1730 by the sons of Bénigne Basset, Montreal's first notary, in exchange for their lodging and nursing until their death. The property extended from Sherbrooke Street beyond Fairmount Street and from Durocher Street to Saint-Urbain Street, an area some three kilometres by half a kilometre. There the nuns farmed the land, raised and grazed livestock worked a quarry and tended a vegetable garden and an orchard.



View of the gardens  
© Luce Tétreault, 2006

When in 1859 the Hôtel-Dieu had to be moved from its original location in Old Montreal, the estate called La Providence, also known as Mont Sainte-Famille, was chosen as the site for a convent, a hospital and a chapel. As already mentioned, vegetables were grown there to feed the community and the patients, and there was an orchard. Thus, until 1932, the nuns did not have to buy milk, cream or eggs; they were self-sufficient for most of their requirements in fruit and vegetables, and the stable in the garden housed 28 dairy cows and several hundred hens<sup>2</sup>.

A stone wall surrounded the new property, which stretched from Duluth Street to behind the Jeanne-Mance wing near Saint-Urbain Street. Today the gardens are still enjoyed by the patients of the hospital and by the sisters of the Congregation.

*Now cross at the traffic lights at the intersection of Avenue du Parc and Avenue des Pins and walk to the chapel. We invite you to remain on the sidewalk opposite Sainte-Famille Street and to select Stop No.7.*

### Stop 7 – Façade of the chapel



© Gilbert Langlois, 2009

You are now facing the entrance of the chapel dedicated to the Holy Trinity, which constitutes the link between the hospital and the convent. As a place of Roman Catholic worship, the chapel is open to the public during religious services.

As you walked towards the steps to the chapel, you will have noticed the cast-iron fence marking off the land. It came from the second Episcopal palace, built from plans by John Ostell. Looking more closely, you will observe that each vertical of the railings is topped by an Episcopal crozier, the staff symbolizing the bishop's role as the shepherd of his flock.

As for the bishop's palace, commissioned by Monsignor Ignace Bourget, the second bishop of Montreal from 1840 to 1876, it stood at the corner of Saint-Denis Street and Sainte-Catherine Street, where the Université de Québec à Montréal (UQAM) now stands. The palace unfortunately burned down during the Great Fire of July 8, 1852, which destroyed many of the buildings in the Faubourg Saint-Laurent and Viger Square.

Let's now look at the façade of the chapel, made of Trenton limestone, also called Montreal greystone. Until the 19th century, Trenton limestone was one of the materials preferred for the construction of prestigious buildings: brick was generally used for common buildings. The use of cut stone gave a more dignified and permanent look to any edifice. Moreover, the solidity of stone symbolized the permanence and stability of institutions like a chapel, a convent and a hospital.

<sup>2</sup> HÉBERT, Sœur Béatrice, r.h.s.j. *Avant que ma lampe ne s'éteigne...*, Classic Ltée, 1991., p. 47.

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Observe that the façade is composed of three horizontal and three vertical sections in perfect symmetry. If you imagine a vertical line running through the large central door and the window above it, you will see that the two sides are exactly the same.

In designing the chapel, architect Victor Bourgeau opted for the neoclassical style. This style is recognizable by, among other elements, smooth cut stone, a symmetrical façade and a balance of volumes in the arrangement of the windows and doors, as well as by a triangular pediment crowning the Tuscan pilasters, which are also perfectly symmetrical. On the top of the pediment is a wrought-iron cross installed in 1926. In its centre we see the letters IHS, the initials of the Latin words *Iesus Hominum Salvator* – Jesus Saviour of Men.

Please note that the chapel stands high above ground level. This is due to the fact that it was built over a crypt in which deceased members of the order are buried.

*Please select Stop No. 8 before entering the chapel.*



*Please note that the entrance to the chapel is unfortunately not accessible to people with limited mobility.*

### Stop 8 – Development of Sainte-Famille Street

*Stay near the façade of the chapel and turn around so you can see the central place this building occupied in the era at the time of its construction.*

The chapel stands at the heart of the complex, between the hospital and the convent where the nuns live. It thus has a twin function, serving the hospital's patients, staff and visitors as well as the sisters. It was used as the parish church in some periods, for the faithful whose church was not yet built and for immigrant communities.

With the building of their convent complex, the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph contributed to the harmonious development of the district. Observe how the creation of a new street, Sainte-Famille Street in front of you, opens up a beautiful view of the chapel, crowned with its majestic dome. This was actually the first avenue of its kind in Montreal.



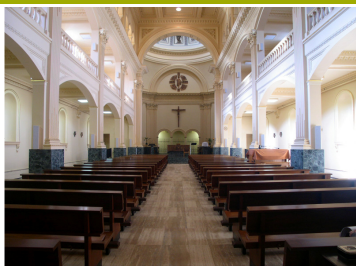
© CPRQ, 2003

When they first moved on to the property, the nuns marked out lots 50 feet wide (15.24 metres) on either side of Sainte-Famille Street and put them up for sale, which had the effect of developing a new neighbourhood. The deeds of sale for the lots along Sainte-Famille Street specified that the owners must agree to build a stone house of two storeys in addition to the cellar and the attics, and to plant a tree at the front of the house. If you decide to walk down Sainte-Famille Street, you will see that some of the houses on the street still retain these characteristics.

*We now invite you to open the door and walk quietly towards the nave. Remember that this is a place of meditation and prayer. Absorb the beauty and simplicity of the interior décor of the chapel. Sit down on a pew and select Stop No. 9.*

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**Stop 9– The interior of the chapel**



© CPRQ, 2003

The interior of the chapel forms a rectangle with a choir extending at one end. It seats about 200 people. The central space, the nave, is punctuated by pilasters, that is to say flat columns attached to the walls, projecting slightly. The shafts of the pilasters are fluted, and each is topped by a gilt capital in the Corinthian style.

One of the main characteristics of this interior is the balance of volumes. On either side of the nave there are two series of galleries overhanging the side-aisles. The galleries served to enable the patients to attend Mass.

The vault of the nave is coffered, that is, set with sunken panels that serve as decoration. Architect Victor Bourgeau liked to include this stylistic element in the churches he designed. We invite you to look at the gilt roses in the centres of each coffer in the central row.

Most of the decorative elements in the chapel are made of plaster covered with gold leaf. Because of its malleability, plaster was much used in architectural design for mouldings and ornamentation. The sculptor created a perfect model in wood and then reproduced it with a cast, and this, as many times as necessary. This technique was also used for the series of statues you see in the niches along the side-aisles. They represent the Apostles, who are shown with the instruments of their martyrdom or their attributes. They are the work of Carlo Catelli, a sculptor and moulder from the north of Italy who arrived in Montreal in 1845 to direct a leading statuary studio.

Observe the choir of the chapel. It was originally the place where the cloister and the hospital met. To the west, the cloistered Hospitallers attended Mass and recited the Divine Office in the choir of the chapel. To the east, on the hospital side, there was a place for the patients to attend Church services. At the time the chapel was built, this area could be reached directly from each floor, connecting the hospital wards to the chapel.

This arrangement was altered in 1967 when the chapel was renovated to conform to the new liturgical rules imposed by Vatican Council II. These new rules required the priest to celebrate Mass in the vernacular, that is, in the spoken language of the country, and facing the Congregation to enable them to participate more fully. These changes had a major impact on the arrangement of church interiors, including that of the chapel of the Hospitallers. As a result of the Reform, the nuns replaced the furniture and had the decoration of the choir renovated. The nuns' choir was transformed into an entrance to the chapel, and the Hospitallers attended the religious services in the nave.

*To learn more about the works of Claude Théberge, please select Stop No. 10.*

**Station 10 – Works of art by Claude Théberge in the chapel**

Born on September 4, 1934, in Edmundston, New Brunswick, Claude Théberge was a multidisciplinary artist known mainly for his paintings; especially the series entitled *The Umbrellas*. But it was his abstract and Surrealist work that launched his career, with murals, stained-glass windows and sculptures in many public places.

Théberge began his training at the École des beaux-arts in Quebec City, where he studied from 1950 to 1954. Between 1954 and 1960 he lived in Paris, attending the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts, the École nationale supérieure des arts décoratifs and the École du Louvre. In 1961 he trained as a teacher at the École des beaux-arts de Montreal, and later in 1969 and 1970, he studied design management at the École des hautes études commerciales in Montreal.



© www.claudetheberge.com

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Upon his return to Quebec in the early 1960s, Théberge founded a studio devoted to the integration of art into architecture. It closed down in 1968. It was through the studio that he was involved in designing the metro stations at Papineau, Rosemont and Guy-Concordia in Montreal, the windows of the Saint-Jean-Baptiste-de-Lasalle Church in Montreal and the art works for the parliament buildings and the Capitole Theatre in Quebec City.<sup>3</sup>

After studying at the École des hautes études commerciales in Montreal, Théberge joined Antoine Lamarche and Michel Dernuet to establish a second studio. Together, they executed art works for several metro stations in Montreal: the bas-reliefs in the De l'Église and Verdun stations (1978), the sculpture *A Tree in the Park* in the Georges-Vanier station (1980) and the granite sculpture *Forces*, in the park at Viger Square (1985)<sup>4</sup>.

Subsequently, Théberge abandoned this form of art to devote himself to painting, a career that brought him awards and enabled him to show his work in numerous exhibitions. Claude Théberge died on May 15, 2008, in Notre-Dame Hospital in Montreal.

*Walk over to the walls of the side-aisles to get a better look at the Stations of the Cross.*

When the chapel was restored in 1967, artist Claude Théberge was chosen to execute the art works, and commissioned to produce a group of stoneware pieces: two statues, a crucifix, two *bas-reliefs* and a Way of the Cross.

Mounted on the walls around the nave, the fourteen Stations of the Cross, made in sandstone, are surmounted by a small wooden cross and the numerals of the Steps towards Calvary. The stylized shapes of the ceramic conformed to the aesthetics of the day, which advocated “the use of contemporary elements that would not impair in any way the architecture of the chapel, and would remain valuable as contemporary works”<sup>5</sup>.

As Raymonde Landry-Gauthier, architectural historian, explains:

“We must remember the debate that shook architectural circles in the western world in the 1960s, when contemporary architecture came into prominence. This movement, derived from the Bauhaus school created in Germany in the early 20th century, advocated the repudiation of classical architecture as it had been practised since the Ancient Greeks, preferring the use of simple, uncluttered lines in which form followed function.”<sup>6</sup>

Look towards the choir. On one side is the statue of the *Virgin and Child* and on the other, *Saint Joseph* with his carpenter's tools. On the wall at the back of the choir is a *Christ on the Cross* in a simple iconography and minimalist style.

Above the *Christ on the Cross* a bas-relief by Claude Théberge shows the *Resurrection of Christ* surrounded by symbols. We invite you to look at these going clock-wise from the upper right.

The first symbol is the monogram of Christ, xP being the first two letters of *Christo* in Greek. On either side of the monogram, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, Alpha and Omega, symbolize the beginning and the end, referring to God and Christ. You can also see two doves, the symbol of peace, representing the Holy Spirit. The third symbol, the lamb and cross, evokes the lamb sacrificed by the Hebrews at the Exodus, foreshadowing Jesus sacrificing Himself on the cross. Finally, the two fishes on a plate symbolize the miraculous draught of fishes on Lake Tiberias. It should be remembered that the word *fish* is an acronym of the name Jesus. The Greek word *ichthys* means *fish*. Each letter or digraph (a group of two letters making a sound) in the Greek word stands for the initial of another Greek word: *I* for *Iesous*, *CH* for *Christos*, *TH* for *Therou*, *U* for *Uios* and *S* for *Soter*; the whole word translates as “Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour”.

<sup>3</sup> [http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claude\\_Th%C3%A9berge](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claude_Th%C3%A9berge) (2009-08-31).

<sup>4</sup> [www.metrodemontreal.com/art/theberge/index-f.html](http://www.metrodemontreal.com/art/theberge/index-f.html) et [www.stm.info/info/infostm/2005/051207.pdf](http://www.stm.info/info/infostm/2005/051207.pdf) (2009-08-31).

<sup>5</sup> ARHSJ, *Restauration 1967*, assembly no. 2, January 31, 1967.

<sup>6</sup> GAUTHIER, Raymonde. *La chapelle des Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal*, research report, February 15, 2008 (in-house document).



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The altar of the choir is covered in textured sandstone in which are embedded relics of saints. Théberge also contributed to the altar by creating a sculpted *bas-relief* representing the Holy Trinity – the Father, the Son and the Holy-Spirit – by a radiating triangle. The triangle signifies the presence of the divine in its double aspect, Trinity and Unity. In the Christian faith the Trinity means “God in three Persons”, separate but equal in a single and indivisible nature. Notice also the boat floating on the waves, symbolizing the Church, whose head, Saint Peter, was a fisherman. It will be remembered that Jesus said to Peter and his brother when they first met, “Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.”<sup>7</sup>

*To continue your visit, please select Stop No.11.*

**Stop 11 – Decoration of the dome**

*Walk over to the choir. We suggest that you ask the superintendent for a mirror so that you can see the vault of the dome better.*

At the time this chapel was built, domes were rare in Montreal. Except for the coffered dome of Bonsecours Market, built in 1844, and the double-lantern dome of Monsignor Bourget’s episcopal palace, which burned down on July 8, 1852, it was not until 1886 that another was constructed: the dome of the Cathedral Mary Queen of the World, located on René-Lévesque Boulevard. It should be noted that the dome of the Hospitallers’ chapel stands 140 feet (or 42.67 metres) above street level.



© Gilbert Langlois, 2009

*Extract from documents of the archives of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph.*

“One day, the Sister in charge of overseeing the workmen sent a note to Reverend Mother to inform her that the contractor would not agree to mount the dome of the Church because of the bitter weather. This decision would considerably delay the completion of the Chapel, since the men could not work inside in the winter unless the vault was in place. Reverend Mother went immediately to the worksite and ordered the dome to be prepared piece by piece and put up while she watched. The contractor and his helpers did not dare to object, cowed as they were by the dominating personality of this woman with the courage of a man. The fervour that burned in her great soul made her oblivious to the fact that she stood there for three full hours in snow up to her garters in the freezing cold. It was then the 26<sup>th</sup> of December.”<sup>8</sup>

To execute the decoration of this magnificent dome, the services of the German artist John Held were commissioned. Although we have little information about this character, we know that as a result of a recommendation by influential citizens of Munich, he had some fame as a painter of murals in late 19th century Montreal. Historical sources tell us that he executed the paintings in the dome of the chapel of the Hôtel-Dieu, and also the former decoration in the chapel of the Grand Séminaire of Montreal in the years 1864-1865.

For the paintings in the chapel, Held probably used a variation of the technique of fresco, which consists of applying coloured pigments suspended in water on to dry or damp plaster. It is interesting that this technique, widely used during the Renaissance, found a place of honour in many Montreal churches of the period.

The central motif in the cupola shows the Eternal Father as an old man. You will also notice the subjects of the *Resurrection of Jesus*, the *Ascension of Jesus* and the *Assumption of Mary*. These figures are surrounded by cherubs, angels and, at the bottom of the scene, a Roman soldier standing guard over the tomb of the risen Jesus, also surrounded by angels.

<sup>7</sup> Gospel According to Saint Mark 1, 16-20 : [www.interbible.org/interBible/ecritures/bu/index.php?bible=acebac&page=passage&ref=Mc%201,%202016-20](http://www.interbible.org/interBible/ecritures/bu/index.php?bible=acebac&page=passage&ref=Mc%201,%202016-20) (2009-08-31).

<sup>8</sup> ARHSJ, *Circulaires des religieuses décédées dans notre monastère depuis 1883 à 1901*, Hôtel-Dieu de Saint-Joseph de Montréal, *Circulaire de notre très honorée et chère Sœur Marie Pagé décédée le 3 janvier 1893*, pp. 261-300.



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Under the sixteen tambour windows that illuminate the entire dome, we see eight figures from the Old and the New Testaments. Starting with the one facing you, we will continue towards the right:

1. The first figure is Saint John the Baptist. You can recognize him by the sheepskin he is wearing and the cross in his hand. He is the forerunner of Christ, the one who announced His coming among us.
2. The second is Saint Basil the Great, holding to his chest a pastoral crosier symbolizing his role as a bishop. In the Western Church he is one of the four principal Doctors of the Church and the author of a treatise on the Holy Spirit. A Eucharistic rite known as the rite of *Saint Basil the Great* is still used in some Orthodox churches.
3. The third is the prophet Isaiah whose writings announced the coming of the Messiah from the line of Jesse, the father of David. He is holding a branch from the tree representing the genealogy of Christ.
4. The fourth figure is Saint Gregory the Great carrying the pontifical triple cross.
5. The fifth is Saint Francis de Sales, bishop of Geneva and Annecy, and theologian. He is wearing a stole around his neck.
6. The sixth is Saint Augustine, bishop of Hippo in North Africa, a great preacher. He can be identified here by the book he holds. It is his Rule, which inspired many communities and religious orders.
7. The seventh figure is the prophet Ezekiel. We recognize him by the fact that he holds in his right hand a quill pen evoking his many writings, which are found in the Old Testament.
8. The last figure is Saint Jerome, the learned monk, shown here with the lion whose paw he healed according to the legend. He spent his life translating and interpreting the Holy Scriptures.

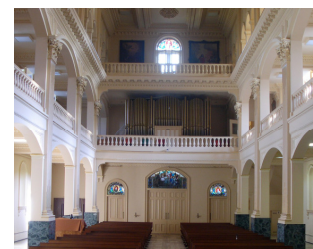
This fresco was restored in 1928, in 1967 and in 2001. It is the heritage gem of the chapel.

*To continue your visit, walk up the centre aisle and sit down on a pew in the middle of the chapel. Select Stop No. 12, in which Professor Christopher Jackson, from Concordia University in Montreal, introduces you to the organ.*

*You can listen to an excerpt from the benefit concert given by Pierre Grandmaison for the Musée des Hospitalières de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal on May 21, 2008. To do this, please select Stop No. 13.*

### Stop 12 – The organ

The Opus 445 of the chapel de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal was built by Casavant Frères of Saint-Hyacinthe in 1911. Monsignor Paul Bruchesi offered it to the Hospitallers who installed it in the nuns' choir. In 1963, Casavant replaced the console, adding new divisions and coupling systems. After the major restoration in 1967 the organ was moved to the large chapel. Two more new divisions were added and the pipes were stripped and gilded<sup>9</sup>. The organ now comprises 51 façade pipes and resounds throughout the chapel during the religious offices of the community and at special events such as the benefit concert presented in May 2008.



© CPRQ, 2003

*Remain seated and turn towards the organ loft behind you to admire the instrument. We invite you to select Stop No. 13 to listen to an excerpt from the benefit concert given by Pierre Grandmaison for the Musée des Hospitalières de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal on May 21, 2008.*

*Should you wish to continue your visit, walk towards the outside of the chapel and select Stop No. 14.*

### Stop 13 – Musical excerpt

The piece you will hear is the “Offertoire sur les Grands jeux” (Offertory on the Great Divisions) by François Couperin (1668-1733), taken from the *Mass for Convents*. It is played by Pierre Grandmaison, organist at the Basilica of Notre-Dame in Montreal.

The musical excerpt lasts 5 minutes 42 seconds. We hope you enjoy it!

*To continue your visit, walk towards the outside of the chapel and select Stop No. 14.*

<sup>9</sup> ARHSJ, *Restauration 1967*, assembly no. 2, January 31, 1967, section III.

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### Stop 14 – The crypt



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Walk outside and turn to the right as you leave the steps. You will see a commemorative plaque on the wall of the crypt indicating that the remains of Jeanne Mance are buried underneath the chapel. It reads, “To the glory of Jeanne Mance. Here lie the precious remains of the servant of God, foundress of this hospital, who died in Montreal on June 18, 1673.”

The Hospitallers adopted the custom, widespread in religious communities, of burying their deceased sisters in a crypt underneath the chapel. In 1861, when they left their premises on Saint-Paul Street, they exhumed and took with them the remains of the nuns who had died since their arrival in New France. They buried them again in the crypt of the new chapel on the Mont Sainte-Famille.

*To continue your visit, walk to the front of the steps and select Stop No. 15.*

### Stop 15 – Commemorative plaques

To conclude your examination of the exterior façade, look at the two other commemorative plaques on the chapel walls. These recall significant moments in the history of the Hospitallers.

On the wall to the right of the central door, a copy (executed in 1934) of the white marble plaque presented in 1892 by the Montreal Numismatic and Archaeological Society sums up part of its history. It reads, “Hôtel-Dieu of Ville-Marie founded in 1644 by Jeanne Mance. Relocated in 1861 to this land given in 1730 by Benoît and Gabriel Basset. Transference of the remains of Jeanne Mance and 178 Sisters in 1861.” This plaque cites 1644 as the year of the foundation, but this date actually refers to the start of the construction of the hospital at the corner of Saint-Paul Street and Saint-Sulpice Street.



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The bronze plaque, executed by Gilles Sainte-Croix, which you see to the right of the main staircase was presented by the administration of the Hôtel-Dieu of Montreal to the Religious Hospitallers in 1986. This gift was to mark the 350th anniversary of the foundation of the Congregation of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph. The plaque shows the two founders of the Congregation, Jérôme Le Royer de La Dauversière and Marie de la Ferre. You can also read the following inscription: “God wishes to make use of us to establish a new Congregation. We must work to achieve this end.”

*To learn more about the “false chapel”, walk to the intersection of Saint-Urbain Street and Avenue des Pins. Please do not block the entrance to the hospital. You will get a good view and feel safe beside the railings a little to the west of the entrance. Select Stop No. 16.*

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**Stop 16 – The “false chapel” and the monument to Jeanne Mance**



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Facing you is a greystone building with a three-storey façade. In the middle is a majestic door barred by a white wood guard rail. The staircase has been demolished. There are three arched windows in each storey and dormer windows in both sides of the roof. On either side of the façade angular buttresses each topped by a turret complete the dignified appearance of the building. In the centre we see a statue of *Saint Joseph*, by Olindo Gratton, installed in 1924.

This annexe was built in 1886. It was originally intended to serve as a mortuary chapel for the sick poor who had no family, hence the monumental architecture with a central door. The project was modified during construction, and it was decided to use it to house a laboratory, a dispensary and an operating room with an amphitheatre. The hospital's chaplains lived there until their own residence was built in 1925<sup>10</sup>.

This part of the hospital is known as the “false chapel”, probably because of its architecture or because of its purpose at the time it was built.

To the left, you will see another doorway with a disused white door. The turret above the arched window is topped by an inscription that reads, “Hôtel-Dieu”. This is the old entrance to the hospital built in 1861.

Closer to you is the monument erected in 1909 to the memory of Jeanne Mance, the noble foundress of the hospital, to mark the 250th anniversary of the arrival of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph. The statue portrays the first nurse of Ville-Marie caring for and comforting a wounded soldier. It evokes the nursing of the poor that was the principal mission of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph. In the early 20th century on May 17 each year – the anniversary of the founding of the Hôtel-Dieu by Jeanne Mance – the nurses from the various schools of the city gathered to lay flowers at the foot of the monument in honour of the foundress. It was an impressive ceremony, where every nurse was wearing her uniform and cape with pride. Still today at their yearly reunion, the members of the Association of Nurse Graduates of the Hôtel-Dieu continue this tradition.

This monument is the work of Louis-Philippe Hébert, a sculptor often called upon to create monuments in many parts of Canada. One of his most celebrated works is the monument to Madeleine de Verchères in the city named after her. In Montreal you can see numerous monuments by Hébert, notably the one to Octave Crémazie in Carré Saint-Louis (1906), to Paul de Chomedey, Sieur de Maisonneuve, in Place d'Armes (1895) and to John Young in Old Montreal (1908).

*To continue your visit, walk westward to the Musée des Hospitalières de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal. Be careful to stay as close as possible to the building, as this is a parking lot with a great deal of traffic.*

*Walk carefully through the parking lot and select Stop No. 17 to learn about the Hospitallers' building, which, in the 19th century, was known as “the poor people's wing”.*

<sup>10</sup> BUSSIÈRES, Sœur Nicole. « L'Hôtel-Dieu de Saint-Joseph au mont Sainte-Famille (1861-1961) », in. *L'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal d'hier à demain...*, October 2, 1991, 16 pp. (in-house document).

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**Stop 17 – The former poor people's wing and the old garden**

The building facing you is the eastern end, in the shape of the letter E, which held those who were called “the poor”, a medieval term for people who required care.

At a time when those who could afford it were nursed at home, the sick in the Hôtel-Dieu were treated in communal wards. In 1871, two private rooms were inaugurated, which were available at \$ 1.00 per day. As was mentioned before, these patients could attend chapel at the same time as the staff, as long as they used the east galleries of the chapel.

When the building was completed in 1861, the new Hôtel-Dieu was one of the most modern in Montreal. With its wood and steam-powered central heating system, its gas lighting and running water, it was much better adapted to the city that Montreal had become. The hospital had 150 beds for patients and kept 60 beds for children of the orphanage. Each floor had a common ward of 44 beds, and the top floor served as storage space.



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As you can see where the wall of the wing and the chapel choir meet, all the wards for the sick communicated with the chapel.

At the turn of the 20th century, new medical treatments were invented. Furthermore, requests for hospitalization in a private room from citizens ready to pay for this additional comfort were becoming more numerous. Thus in 1902, a four-storey annexe was built further along towards Avenue des Pins to house 60 or more patients in private and semi-private rooms. The admissions and accounting offices were also expanded, as was the archives department, and a medical bureau, a library and a reception hall were added.

The slight difference you may notice in the stonework of the walls and in the grey moulding on the false-mansard roof is the result of the joining of the 1861 building and the 1902 extension.

In 1906 large balconies were built along the wall of each storey. These additions were in tune with the new beliefs of the period about the positive benefits of “fresh air cures”<sup>11</sup> in the convalescence process. At that time “fresh air” was considered the best remedy for tuberculosis. Incidentally, in that era there was a flower garden where the parking lot stands today.

*Now please walk towards the entrance to the Museum and then select Stop No. 18.*

<sup>11</sup> LAHAISE, Robert (editor). *L'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal 1642-1973*, Montreal, Éditions Hurtubise HMH, 1973, 346 pp.



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**Stop 18 – The staircase of the Hôtel-Dieu de La Flèche**



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You are now standing in front of the Musée des Hospitalières de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal, which since 1992 has displayed the medical and religious heritage that the Congregation of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph has conserved since its establishment in Montreal. Through the great bay window in the façade, you will see an unusual wooden structure.

This is the staircase of the Hôtel-Dieu of La Flèche, France, used in the 17th century by the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph. It stood in the extension of the building constructed in 1651 as the nuns' residence.

Jeanne Mance undoubtedly trod these stairs during her time in France when, in 1659, she brought back to the Hôtel-Dieu of Ville-Marie the first three nursing Sisters: Judith Moreau de Brésoles, Catherine Macé and Marie Maillet.

In the aftermath of the Revolution, the nuns were expelled from the Hôtel-Dieu in La Flèche, and the convent was turned into a police station, courthouse and prison. The staircase, attached to an inside wall, was forgotten for almost two centuries.

En démolissant une partie de l'ancienne prison, on redécouvre l'escalier de chêne. Le Département de la Sarthe l'offre à  
When part of the old prison was demolished, the oak staircase was rediscovered. The Department of La Sarthe presented it to Montreal in 1963 as a symbol of the long alliance between La Flèche and Montreal.

Over 300 years after the arrival of the first three Hospitallers, the staircase was brought to life in Montreal by the gifted hands of the Compagnons du Devoir du Tour de France. "In the purest respect for traditions, they cut out with precision the pieces of wood that needed to be replaced and grafted them on following the original plans, making new pegs that were a perfect imitation of the old ones."<sup>12</sup>

Since May 17, 1992, the staircase from La Flèche has been welcoming visitors and testifying to the strong links between La Flèche and Montreal. Day and night it is lit up so that Montrealers can see it.

*Before you leave us, select Stop No. 19, in which Mrs. Louise Verdant, the Director of the Musée des Hospitalières de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal, will present the closing remarks.*

**Stop 19 – Closing remarks**

By moving from the Hôtel-Dieu in Old Montreal to Mont Sainte-Famille, the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph demonstrated a great desire for modernization and great audacity. The construction of the new Hôtel-Dieu enabled them to offer the sick the best care and the latest technologies, as far back as 1861. The many expansions of the hospital on this site testify to the importance of the nuns' mission.

We have come to the end of the visit. We hope that this guided tour has enabled you to visualize the earliest days of the Hôtel-Dieu on Mont Sainte-Famille. To learn more about the history of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph and that of its backdrop, the city of Montreal, we encourage you to visit the Musée des Hospitalières de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal. You will discover heirloom furniture, heritage buildings and the rich archives of the Hospitallers, evidence of their mission to the sick and of the way of life in their community.

<sup>12</sup> VIRLOGEUX, Jean. « L'Escalier. Comment fut sauvé cet élément précieux du patrimoine fléchois et montréalais », *Cahier Fléchois*, no. 13, 1992.

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