

# Power, Position and the *pesante charge*: Becoming a Superior in the Congrégation de Notre-Dame of Montreal, 1693–1796

COLLEEN GRAY\*

*Research surrounding convents in mediaeval Europe, post-Tridentine Latin America, and eighteenth-century Canada has argued that well-born religious women achieved top administrative positions within their respective institutions primarily due to their social and financial connections. This study of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame in Montreal between 1693 and 1796, however, reveals that ordinary individuals were at the helm as superiors of this particular institution, and that they achieved this position largely as a result of their own demonstrated talents. This interpretation broadens the notion of an ancien régime in which wealth, patronage, and connections ruled the day to include the possibility that an individual's abilities were also important. The study also demonstrates the persistent efficacy of empirical social history, when used in combination with other methodologies, in historical analysis.*

*Les recherches sur les couvents de l'Europe médiévale, de l'Amérique latine post-tridentine et du Canada du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle donnaient à penser que les religieuses de bonne naissance obtenaient des postes supérieurs dans l'administration de leurs établissements respectifs en raison surtout de leurs relations sociales et financières. Cette étude de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame de Montréal entre 1693 et 1796 révèle toutefois que des femmes ordinaires ont été mère supérieure de cet établissement particulier et qu'elles accédaient à ce poste grâce en bonne*

\* Colleen Gray is adjunct professor in the Department of History at Queen's University. Her book, *The Congrégation de Notre-Dame and the Paradox of Power, 1693–1796*, will appear in the Fall of 2007 in the McGill-Queen's History of Religion Series. The author thanks Colin Coates for his forthright and encouraging suggestions and Valerie Kremer for her patient and skilful copy editing. My thesis advisors, Professors Catherine Desbarats and Dominique Deslandres, also deserve recognition for their comments upon numerous earlier drafts of this work, as do the anonymous readers of the article. Colleen Robson provided patient and energetic assistance with the formatting of the tables, figures, and maps. The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of an FCAR grant, which facilitated the research phase of this article.

*partie aux capacités dont elles faisaient manifestement preuve. Cette interprétation élargit la notion d'un ancien régime où la richesse, le favoritisme et les relations régnaient en maître pour inclure la possibilité que les aptitudes individuelles revêtaient également de l'importance. L'étude démontre aussi que l'histoire sociale empirique demeure un moyen efficace, en conjugaison avec d'autres méthodes, d'analyse historique.*

ONE DAY in June in 1790,<sup>1</sup> the *sœurs* of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame proceeded down the long corridor of the main floor of their convent, situated between rue Notre-Dame and rue Saint-Paul in the town of Montreal, towards their chapel, Sacré-Cœur de Jésus,<sup>2</sup> for the triennial election of their superior. The procession must have been an impressive sight. At its head were three figures — the bishop or his representative and his two assistants — robed in black.<sup>3</sup> These dignitaries, in turn, were followed by the *sœurs* themselves, who formed a row of black gowns — black covering hair upon heads, from the neck to the floor, arms to the wrists, with only a white strip framing faces and a large crucifix gleaming upon each black breast.<sup>4</sup> In all, 59 nuns processed towards the chapel in the same order in which they had been accepted into the Congrégation.<sup>5</sup>

The procession edged its way towards the chapel, for the election of the superior was a most solemn and time-honoured, imposing ritual. Usually it began in early June. At that time, and in this case, the incumbent mother superior, Véronique Brunet dit L'Estang, Sœur Sainte-Rose, advised the bishop or his representative, the vicar-general, that it was time to call an election. Three days before the actual voting, Brunet relinquished the keys of the community to her assistant, Marie-Louise Compain, Sœur Saint-Augustin, begging God for mercy to forgive her sins and the

1 See Archives de l'Archidiocèse de Montréal [hereafter AAM], 525.101, 698–1, *Règlements des Sœurs Séculières de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame établie à Ville Marie pour honorer la très Ste Vierge et imiter ses vertus*, article 34, p. 76.

2 Convent plans can be found in Robert Lahaise, *Les édifices conventuels du Vieux Montréal. Aspects ethno-historiques* (LaSalle, QC: Éditions Hurtubise HMH Limitée, 1980), pp. 140, 141, 149. Location of the election was derived from Archives de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame (Montreal) [hereafter ACND], "Anciens usages recueillis d'après la tradition par SS Marie-de-Liesse, 1919 et les notes des Vénérées Mères Sainte-Ursule et Sainte-Justine", p. 51.

3 The community's constitution stipulated that the bishop, in this case François-Olivier Hubert, be present at the institution's elections. In his absence, he would have been replaced by the vicar-general of Montreal, Étienne de Montgolfier. AAM, 525.101, 698–1, *Règlements*, article 34, p. 79.

4 This description of the nuns' costumes was derived from a painting of Marguerite Bourgeoys by Pierre Le Ber, on display at the Marguerite Bourgeoys Centre, Old Montreal.

5 For example, see AAM, 525.101, 698–1, *Règlements*, article 34, p. 82. For a complete profile of the individuals in the convent in 1790, see Colleen Gray, "A Fragile Authority: Power and the Religious Life in the Congrégation de Notre-Dame of Montreal, 1693–1796" (PhD thesis, McGill University, 2004), appendix 3.4, "Congrégation de Notre-Dame Professed Nuns, 1790". For a comprehensive list of individuals in the convent, 1693–1796, see appendix 7, "Congrégation de Notre-Dame, Professed Nuns, 1693–1796".

sisters to pardon her. From this moment, until the election of a new superior, Compain acted as the final authority of the institution.<sup>6</sup>

In the interim, two scrutineers were chosen by secret ballot, and these individuals prepared the ballots for the election.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, the entire community prepared itself for this event. Throughout the eight days preceding the occasion, the nuns sang “Veni Creator” during mass or at any other hour of the day. Strictly forbidden to discuss either the upcoming election or the person for whom they would vote, they were required to maintain this silence right up until the very day of the election.

On the day of the election, the *sœurs* filed into the chapel and waited for the bishop and his two assistants to celebrate mass. Once the ritual was enacted, certain *sœurs* such as the novices, who were not allowed to vote, withdrew from the chapel, and its doors were closed. Turning to those assembled, the bishop exhorted the remaining nuns to proceed with the election “according to God and the dictates of their conscience”.<sup>8</sup>

The voting officially began. The scrutineers handed out ballots upon which the *sœurs* — because they were permitted to vote neither for themselves nor for close relatives — were obliged to write, in addition to their selection, their names and those of “their mother, sisters, aunts and nieces”. Then, each *sœur*, one by one, “with respect and modesty”, in the same order in which they had entered the chapel, approached the ballot box and deposited her choice. The entire community then waited while one of the scrutineers mixed up the ballots, overturned the box, counted out the ballots, and announced the name of the new superior.<sup>9</sup>

All eyes must have turned at this moment to Marie Raizenne, *Sœur Saint-Ignace*. In a modest, reserved, and devout manner, she proceeded to the altar.<sup>10</sup> Here she pronounced a solemn vow to God, promising to work for the good of the institution and to safeguard its rules. She received a blessing and a confirmation of her election from either the bishop, if he was present, or his representative, as well as the keys and the seal of the community. Then each nun came forward, according to the order of her reception into the community, and embraced Marie Raizenne as the new superior.<sup>11</sup>

6 AAM, 525.101, 698–1, *Règlements*, article 34, pp. 76, 77.

7 *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 78.

8 *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 79.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 79.

10 As befits a *Congrégation de Notre-Dame* nun, according to Marguerite Bourgeoys, *The Writings of Marguerite Bourgeoys*, translated by Sister Mary Virginia Cotter, CND (Montreal: *Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, 1976), p. 5.

11 AAM, 525.101, 698–1, *Règlements*, article 34, pp. 81, 82. Research surrounding convent elections is scanty, but this is not surprising, considering that the process was secret. Laura Mellinger, “Politics in the Convent: The Election of a Fifteenth-century Abbess”, *Church History*, vol. 63 (1994), p. 529, utilizes notarized chapter minutes to reconstruct the political infighting that could characterize convent elections. Craig Harline also discusses the factionalism surrounding convent elections in *The Burdens of Sister Margaret: Inside a Seventeenth-century Convent* (New Haven: Yale

This description of the election of a Congrégation de Notre-Dame superior introduces Marie Raizenne, whose subsequent life story serves as a lens through which we can examine the twelve women who acted as the institute's superiors between 1693 and 1796 (Appendix A). This study utilizes such sources as the community's account books, profession contracts, and the general register of entrants into the institution during the period under examination;<sup>12</sup> the community's 1698 constitution and the correspondence of certain superiors;<sup>13</sup> an unpublished biography of one superior, Marie Barbier;<sup>14</sup> and notarial records.<sup>15</sup> These primary sources are supported by published works such as biographies of the superiors found in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*,<sup>16</sup> genealogical reference works,<sup>17</sup> Louis Pelletier's quantitative analysis of religious institutions in pre-Conquest Quebec,<sup>18</sup> and documents found in the institution's official history.<sup>19</sup> By combining both published and unpublished quantitative, biographical, and institutional sources, the study examines the life story of Marie Raizenne within the context of her own community, as well as the eleven other superiors who held this position between 1693 and 1796, and attempts to place the Congrégation de Notre-Dame superiors within the larger framework of superiors in the post-Tridentine Canadian colonial setting.<sup>20</sup> In particular, I address Jan Noel's most

---

University Press, 2000). Unfortunately, chapter minutes were not available for this study of the Congrégation's election.

12 ACND, 3A/02, *Registre des Recettes et Dépenses générales* (1753–1793); 3A/12, *Contrats de Profession* (1679–1800); *Le registre général*.

13 AAM, 525.101, 698–1, *Règlements*; Correspondence (1766–1793), various letters.

14 Archives du Séminaire Sulpicien (Paris) [hereafter ASSP], ms. 1233, Étienne de Montgolfier, ed., "Mémoires sur la vie de la sœur l'Assomption recueillis par Mr Glandelet prêtre du séminaire de Québec et son principal directeur".

15 Archives nationales du Québec à Montréal [hereafter ANQM], contracts pertinent to the Congrégation de Notre-Dame throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

16 Frances G. Halpenny, ed., *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966–), vols. 1–5.

17 René Jetté, *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles du Québec* (Montreal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1983).

18 Louis Pelletier, *Le clergé en Nouvelle-France. Étude démographique et répertoire biographique* (Montreal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1993).

19 Sœur Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame* (Montreal: Congrégation de Notre-Dame, 1913), vols. 1–6.

20 Very few studies have focused upon ordinary institutional superiors in the post-Tridentine era. Much recent research, however, has surrounded exceptional individuals such as Saint Teresa of Avila. See Jodi Bilinkoff, *The Avila of Saint Theresa: Religious Reform in a Sixteenth-century City* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989); Alison Weber, *Teresa of Avila and the Rhetoric of Femininity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); Carole Slade, *Saint Theresa of Avila: Author of a Heroic Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Gillian Ahlgren, *Theresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996). In this Canadian colonial context, Marie de l'Incarnation has also been a focus of intense scrutiny. See Françoise Deroy-Pineau, *Marie de l'Incarnation: Marie Guyart, femme d'affaires, mystique, mère de la Nouvelle-*

recent examination of the nuns of Hôpital Général de Québec. Noel demonstrates not only the consistently noble backgrounds of the superiors of this order, but also how their elevated status and concomitant networks — the clientage — that these nuns could command benefited this convent throughout both the French and then the British regimes.<sup>21</sup> But what about the Congrégation de Notre-Dame? What qualities were necessary for a superior to acquire and then retain the position in this institution devoted to the teaching of young girls of the colony within the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century context? Was pedigree, as Noel has argued in the case of the Hôpital Général de Québec, an essential qualification? Were connections mandatory? Or did the position demand other, perhaps exceptional personal qualities? In attempting to answer these questions, this study also addresses specific concerns that have emerged surrounding the reputed abandonment by contemporary scholars of empirical methodologies in historical analysis in favour of the “new” cultural history<sup>22</sup> and demonstrates, at least within the framework of this particular historical endeavour, the validity of such methodologies when used in combination with other types of analysis.

---

France (Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, 1989); Chantal Théry, “Marie de l’Incarnation, intimée et intime, à travers de sa correspondance et ses écrits spirituels”, in Manon Brunet and Serge Gagnon, eds., *Discours et pratique de l’intime* (Quebec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1993); Claire Gourdeau, *Les Délices de nos cœurs: Marie de l’Incarnation et ses pensionnaires Amérindiennes, 1639–1672* (Sillery, QC: Septentrion, 1994); Carla Zecher, “A New World Model of Female Epistolarity: The Correspondence of Marie de l’Incarnation”, *Studies in Canadian Literature*, vol. 21, no. 2 (1996), pp. 89–103, and “Life on the French-Canadian Hyphen: Nation and Narration in the Correspondence of Marie de l’Incarnation”, *Quebec Studies*, vol. 26 (Fall 1998–Winter 1999), pp. 38–50; Dominique Deslandres, “L’éducation des Amérindiennes d’après la correspondance de Marie Guyart de l’Incarnation”, *Sciences religieuses/Religious Studies*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 91–110, and “Qu’est-ce qui faisait courir Marie Guyart? Essai d’ethnohistoire d’une mystique après sa correspondance”, *Laval Théologique et Philosophique*, vol. 53, no. 2 (June 1997), pp. 285–300; Marie-Florine Bruneau, *Women Mystics Confront the Modern World* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998).

21 Jan Noel, “Caste and Clientage in an Eighteenth-century Quebec Convent”, *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 82, no. 3 (September 2001), pp. 465–490. For a later period, and within the Spanish colonial context, Kathryn Burns’s study of three cloistered convents in Cuzco, Peru (sixteenth to the nineteenth century), *Colonial Habits: Convents and the Spiritual Economy of Cuzco, Peru* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), also confirms that wealth and influence were important factors for achieving top administrative positions. In this Peruvian setting, contrary to constitutional rules, a hierarchy in the community divided the sisters into nuns of the black and white veil, and only the former, who had access to wealth and connections, ascended “to positions of control over important convent business”, a situation that perpetuated the convents’ position in the spiritual economy of that country (see p. 8, and especially chap. 5).

22 For a good discussion of the “crisis” of empirical social history in the face of the “new” cultural history, as well as a plea for the latter’s renewal, see William Sewell Jr., “Whatever Happened to the ‘Social’ in Social History?”, in Joan W. Scott and Debra Keates, eds., *Schools of Thought: Twenty-five Years of Interpretive Social Science* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 209.

### Marie Raizenne

It must have seemed, to Marie Raizenne at least, a very long way to her election in the community's chapel. Marie's parents, Josiah Rising and Abigail Nimbs, were from Windsor (Connecticut) and Deerfield (Massachusetts) respectively. They were New England captives who had been carried off from Deerfield to Canada as prisoners of Natives on a cold March night in 1704.<sup>23</sup> Like many of the captives taken as prisoners by Natives, they were brought to Sault-au-Récollet, on the south shore of Rivière des Prairies. Here, both Josiah Rising and Abigail Nimbs repeatedly refused all offers of redemption to their native land — in spite of the entreaties of their own parents in New England, Abigail's brother, and even the Reverend John Williams, the famous father of Eunice Williams, the captive who remained permanently in the Native village of Kahnawake.<sup>24</sup> It appears that, initially, Marie's parents lived with their Native captors and grew up in this mission *en sauvage*.<sup>25</sup> “In a solemn ceremony of adoption”, Josiah was named “Shoentakouani”, while Abigail, on another occasion, received the appellation “Touatagouach”.<sup>26</sup> Other sources, however, emphasize that their links with the colonial Catholic Church were far more enduring. At their baptismal ceremonies, they were both given Christian names: Josiah Raizenne and Marie-Elisabeth Nimbs. Marie Raizenne's mother actually attended the school of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame, located within the Sulpician fort at Sault-au-Récollet, and she married Josiah Rising in 1715 in a service conducted by a Catholic priest.<sup>27</sup> By 1719 the couple had produced two children, and in 1721 they moved to the nearby location of Lac-des-Deux-Montagnes when the Sulpician's Native mission was relocated to this site.<sup>28</sup> Here they received a grant of land “a short distance from the village”. They moved into a typical *habitant* dwelling with its dormered windows and sloping, wooden-shingled roof, and they produced a succession of five more children — including Marie.<sup>29</sup>

23 Emma Lewis Coleman, *New England Captives Carried to Canada Between 1677 and 1760 During the French and Indian Wars* (Portland, ME, 1925), vol. 2, pp. 107, 104.

24 John Demos, *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America* (New York: Knopf, 1994); Coleman, *New England Captives*, vol. 2, p. 104; Charles-Philippe Beaubien, *Le Sault-au-Récollet. Ses rapports avec les premiers temps de la colonie : mission/paroisse* (Montreal: C. O. Beauchemin & fils, 1898), p. 208; Sœur Saint-Jean l'Évangéliste (Guillemine Raizenne), *Notes généalogiques sur la famille Raizenne* (Ottawa, 1871), p. 6.

25 Quotation of Father Quéré found in Coleman, *New England Captives*, vol. 2, p. 107.

26 *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 104, 107, 106; Beaubien, *Le Sault-au-Récollet*, p. 193.

27 Beaubien, *Le Sault-au-Récollet*, pp. 144, 163, 193, 195; Coleman, *New England Captives*, vol. 2, pp. 103, 104.

28 Cornelius Jaenen, *The Role of the Church in New France* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1976), p. 75.

29 Coleman, *New England Captives*, vol. 2, pp. 108, 109; Saint-Jean l'Évangéliste, *Notes généalogiques sur la famille Raizenne*, frontispiece photo of the Raizenne house at Lac-des-Deux-Montagnes.

Marie Raizenne's parents became *cultivateurs*, farmers, and apparently fairly prosperous ones at that. Settled on their Lac-des-Deux-Montagnes property, over the course of the years, in addition to raising eight children, they were able to scrape together sufficient money to send their son Simon-Amable to school at the Sulpician seminary in Montreal and subsequently to enter him into the priesthood in 1744. As well, they came up with the requisite dowries to enable two daughters — Marie and her elder sister Madeleine — to become *Congrégation sœurs*. Finally, in the twilight of their lives, they passed their property on intact to their youngest son, Jean-Baptiste-Jérôme.<sup>30</sup>

Following their relocation to Lac-des-Deux-Montagnes, the family's ties to the Church continued to be close. As we have seen, Marie's brother Simon-Amable and her sister Madeleine both decided to enter into the religious life, but even her remaining brothers and sisters who chose marriage appear to have maintained the family religious tradition. Among three of them, they produced ten children who entered the colony's religious institutions. The contribution of Marie's brother Jean-Baptiste-Jérôme is noteworthy: seven of his eleven children took up the religious life.<sup>31</sup> Some of them, like Marie Raizenne, achieved notable positions in the Church, right into the nineteenth century. One daughter, Marie-Clothilde, eventually became the foundress of a new religious order, the *Congrégation de l'Enfant-Jésus*, in 1828.<sup>32</sup> Two of his grand-daughters, as Grey Nuns, ventured into the Upper Ottawa River area in 1866 — “the only women in all that vast country” — with the Oblate fathers.<sup>33</sup> In all, over the course of 40 years, Marie would witness a succession of her relatives or individuals connected to her enter the *Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, so that, by the time of her election in 1790, she could claim one sister, five nieces, and a connection to the three Sabourin sisters through her brother's marriage, as well as six relatives in other religious institutions.

Marie Raizenne herself entered the *Congrégation de Notre-Dame* in 1752, at the age of 17. At the time of her entrance, the *Congrégation de Notre-Dame* was an institution of impressive dimensions. Centred in

30 ANQM, gr. Danré de Blanzay, “Contrat de reception de Marie Rizenne”, January 25, 1754; gr. Raimbault, “Reception de Marie-Madeleine Sayars, Sœur St Herman”, October 9, 1733; gr. Panet de Méru, “Depot d'un acte d'accord [...] entre Ignace Raizenne et Jean-Baptiste Raizenne”, March 19, 1762.

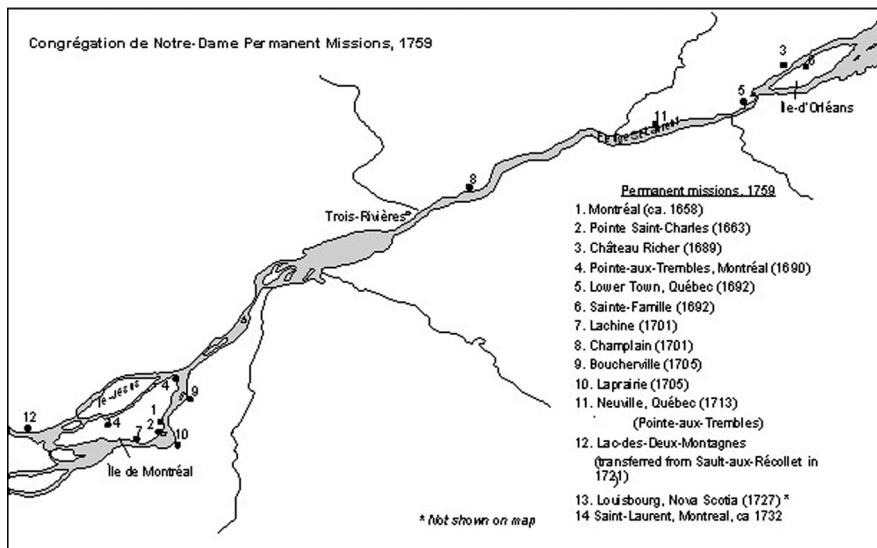
31 Saint-Jean l'Évangéliste, *Notes généalogiques sur la famille Raizenne*, p. 8; Université de Montréal, Programme de recherche en démographie historique [hereafter PRDH], #163187 (Jean-Baptiste-Jérôme Raizenne). The number of Raizenne children sired by Jean-Baptiste varies by account. Robert J. Scollard, “Marie-Clothilde Raizenne” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 6 (1987), claims 7 out of 10 children entered religion p. 627, while PRDH registers 11 children.

32 Scollard, “Marie-Clothilde Raizenne”, pp. 627–628.

33 Coleman, *New England Captives*, p. 111.

Montreal, the Congrégation had mission schools scattered throughout the colony's parishes: they stretched from Lac-des-Deux-Montagnes on the western edge of the island of Montreal through to Trois Rivières, Quebec City and the surrounding parishes, and extended to the colony of Louisbourg (see Figure 1).

The Congrégation had originally been established by Marguerite Bourgeoys and was among numerous religious institutions serving in Montreal in the eighteenth century: there were the nuns at the neighbouring Hôtel-Dieu (established in 1642), the Sulpicians (1658), the Récollets and the Jesuits (1692), and l'Hôpital Général de la pauvreté (1747), also



**Figure 1:** Congrégation de Notre-Dame Permanent Missions, 1759. Does not include ambulatory missions, but only those with permanent and legal status at the designated period. Sources: **(1)** Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 1, pp. 55–56, gr. Basset, “Donation”, January 22, 1658; **(2)** *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 327; **(3)** *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 302; **(4)** *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 275; **(5)** *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 304; **(6)** *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 295; ANQM, gr. Chambalon, “Donation”, September 5, 1692; **(7)** Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 1, p. 281, vol. 3, pp. 42–44; ANQM, gr. Pottier, “Donation”, December 3, 1701; **(8)** Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 3, p. 46; ANQM, gr. Adhémar, “Donation”, October 6, 1701; **(9)** ANQM, gr. Tailhandier, “Concession d’un emplacement”, March 7, 1705; **(10)** Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 3, p. 56; **(11)** *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 232, ANQM, gr. Dubreuil, “Donation”, October 5, 1713; **(12)** Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 3, p. 311; **(13)** *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 353; **(14)** *ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 35.



known as the Grey Nuns.<sup>34</sup> Marguerite Bourgeoys, influenced by the pioneers of the French Catholic Reformation, had travelled to Canada in 1653 to teach school and give religious instruction to the Natives.<sup>35</sup> Bourgeoys's initial endeavour consisted of a humble stable school in Montreal, which acted as a mother house; ambulatory missions scattered throughout the colony, to which the active, uncloistered *sœurs* travelled to teach the daughters of the colonists; and a permanent Native mission at the Sulpician Fort on the Mountain, the present site of the Sulpician Seminary on Sherbrooke Street in Montreal.<sup>36</sup> As the non-Native population in the colony grew and became more established, however, Bourgeoys's mission altered, and a more structured institution evolved more specifically devoted to the education of daughters of the colonists.<sup>37</sup> Concomitantly, throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, usually at the request of the people of local parishes and always with the approval of the Bishop of Quebec, missions were established throughout many of the colony's parishes. From the outset, agreements in the form of notarial contracts would be reached between the Congrégation and the respective parishes concerning living arrangements for the nuns and often pertaining to the duties they would be required to perform.<sup>38</sup> In this way, by 1715 the main outlines of the institution were consolidated, and they

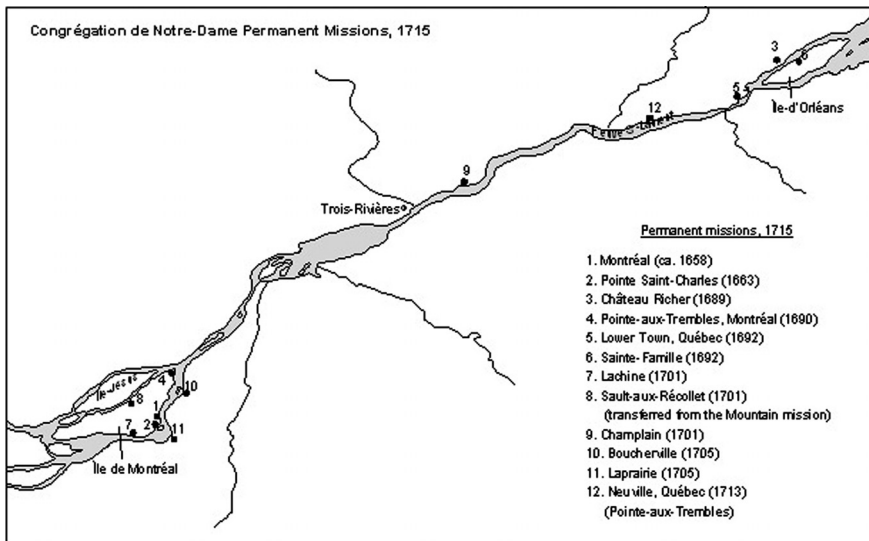
34 Lahaise, *Les édifices conventuels*, pp. 27, 103, 223, 329, 363, 387, 423.

35 For a detailed examination of the broader context of this movement, see Dominique Deslandres, *Croire et faire croire : les missions françaises au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle (1600–1650)* (Paris: Fayard, 2003).

36 There is no record of the stable school transaction in ANQM, but a printed copy appears in Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 1, pp. 55–56, gr. Basset, "Donation", January 22, 1658. Marguerite Bourgeoys also refers to this acquisition: "Four years after my arrival [1658], M. De Maisonneuve decided to give me a stone stable to make into a house to lodge the persons who would teach there" (*The Writings of Marguerite Bourgeoys*, p. 26). For information concerning the early missions, see Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 1. Some good insights into the early missions also appear in ASSP, ms. 1233, "Mémoires sur la vie de la sœur l'Assomption".

37 Bourgeoys, *The Writings of Marguerite Bourgeoys*, pp. 19, 14, 143; Elizabeth Rapley, *The Dévotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth-century France* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), p. 101. See Gray, "A Fragile Authority", for a precise delineation of the extent and growth of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame missions throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

38 Many of these contracts can be found in ANQM. See, for example, Sainte-Famille: ANQM, gr. Duquet de Lachesnaye, "Donation d'une habitation", September 25, 1687, and gr. Chambalon, "Donation de deux terres", September 5, 1692; Lachine: ANQM, gr. Pottier, "Donation d'un terrain par la Fabrique de la paroisse Sts-Anges-de-Lachine, à la Congrégation", December 3, 1701; Laprairie: gr. Adhémar, "Concession d'un emplacement", July 3, 1705; Pointe-aux-Trembles, Montreal: ANQM, gr. Senet dit Laliberté, "Don d'une terre", July 24, 1707; Pointe-aux-Trembles, Quebec: gr. Barbel, "Donation d'une terre", August 1, 1715; Saint-François-du-Sud: gr. Lévesque, "Fondation d'un circuit de terrain", May 13, 1764. Contracts for the Saint-Laurent mission could not be located. However, according to Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, the *sœurs* of this mission were in a house by 1732 (vol. 1, pp. 272–275), "on the north side of the church" (*au côté nord de l'église*) (vol. 4, p. 36).

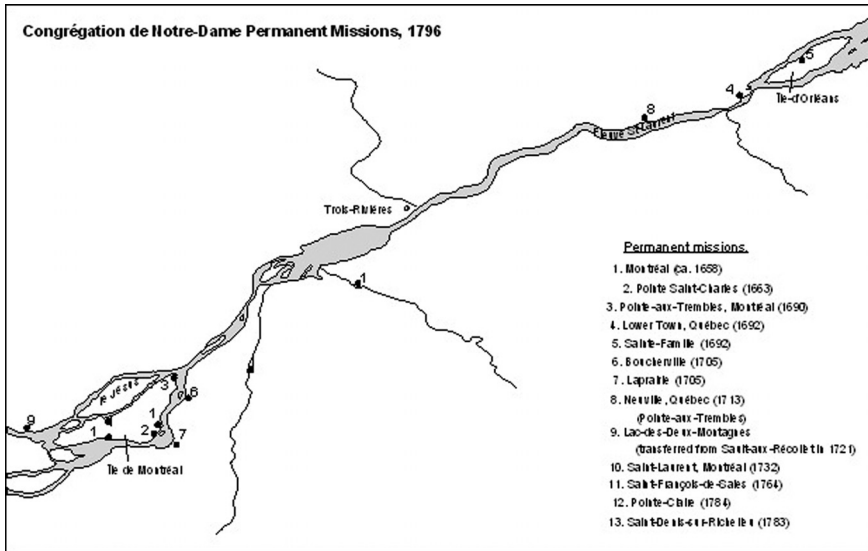


**Figure 2:** Congrégation de Notre-Dame Permanent Missions, 1715. Does not include ambulatory missions, but only those with permanent and legal status at the designated period. Sources: **(1)** Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 1, pp. 55–56, gr. Basset, “Donation”, January 22, 1658; **(2)** *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 327; **(3)** *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 300; **(4)** *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 275; **(5)** *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 304; **(6)** *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 295; ANQM, gr. Chambalon, “Donation”, September 5, 1692; **(7)** Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 1, p. 281, vol. 3, pp. 42–44; ANQM, gr. Pottier, “Donation”, December 3, 1701; **(8)** Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 3, p. 311; **(9)** *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 46; **(10)** ANQM, gr. Tailhandier, “Concession d’un emplacement”, March 7, 1705; **(11)** Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 3, p. 56; **(12)** *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 232; ANQM, gr. Dubreuil, “Donation”, October 5, 1713.

would change very little during the French, and then the British, regimes (see Figures 2 and 3).

Important within the context of these developments was the Congrégation’s somewhat reluctant and tempestuous acceptance, in 1698, of an official constitution from Bishop Saint Vallier.<sup>39</sup> The 1698 constitution served to delineate clearly and officially not only the internal rules of the Congrégation, but also its position within the wider church structure. Specifically, it defined the institution’s relationship with the Bishop of Quebec, as well as its position with regard to the Sulpicians, seigneurs of the island of Montreal, who officially became the

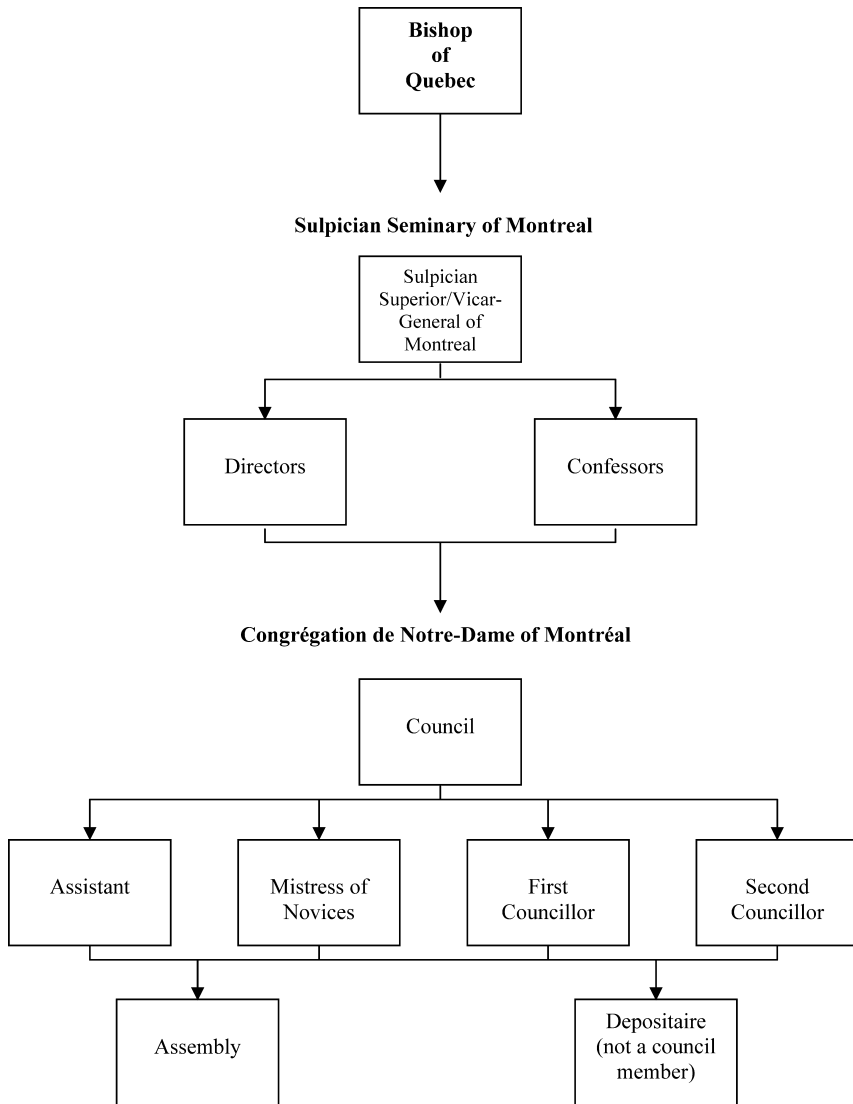
39 AAM, 525.101, 698–1, *Réglements*. For more on this, see Mary Anne Foley, CND, “Uncloistered Apostolic Life for Women: Marguerite Bourgeoys’ Experiment in Ville Marie” (PhD thesis, Yale University, 1991).



**Figure 3:** Congrégation de Notre-Dame Permanent Missions, 1796. Does not include ambulatory missions, but only those with permanent and legal status at the designated period. Sources: **(1)** Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 1 pp. 55–56, gr. Basset, “Donation”, January 22, 1658; **(2)** *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 327; **(3)** *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 275; **(4)** *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 304; **(5)** *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 295; ANQM, gr. Chambalon, “Donation”, September 5, 1692; **(6)** ANQM, gr. Tailhandier, “Concession d’un emplacement”, March 7, 1705; **(7)** Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 3, p. 56; **(8)** *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 232; ANQM, gr. Dubreuil, “Donation”, October 5, 1713; **(9)** Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 3, p. 311; **(10)** *ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 35; **(11)** *ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 39; ANQM, gr. Lévesque, May 13, 1764; **(12)** Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 5, p. 368; **(13)** *ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 415.

Congrégation’s spiritual and secular directors, and whose superior, the vicar-general, represented the bishop in his absence (see Figure 4). According to some scholars, the acceptance of the constitution also made inroads into the non-cloistered status of these women by restricting their movements far more than Marguerite Bourgeoys had originally intended.<sup>40</sup> For example, it laid down rules that resembled those of cloistered orders. The Congrégation *sœurs*, like cloistered women, were obliged to take permanent, simple vows, and, through the addition of the vow of stability, they lost their freedom to leave the institution at their own will. This created a hierarchy within the community based upon those who had made such a vow and those who had not. The

40 Foley, “Unclioistered Apostolic Life for Women”.



**Figure 4:** The administrative structure of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame, 1698–1864. The vicar-general of Montreal could also simultaneously be a director of the Sulpician Seminary, as well as the director and confessor of the Congrégation. Sources: AAM, 525.201, 698–1, *Réglemens*, article 32, p. 66; article 33, p. 73; article 34, p. 76. According to Danylewycz, *Taking the Veil*, the constitutions of many religious institutions, including that of the CND, changed in mid-nineteenth-century Quebec on the impetus of reforms instigated by Bishop Bourget (pp. 46–50, 163). *Codification aux constitutions primitives de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame pour assurer un meilleur gouvernement de la communauté*, 1864.

*sœurs* also accepted the imposition of a mandatory dowry, a concession that prevented women without means from freely entering the institution. Finally, although the rule of Saint Augustine was eliminated from the final version and the word “cloister” was deleted from the text, the *sœurs* nonetheless relinquished a certain flexibility in their spiritual and aesthetic practices by accepting, for example, the precept that they remain as much as possible behind convent walls.<sup>41</sup>

Although this development may have altered the fundamental nature of the active uncloistered life of these women, it did not change their adherence to many of Bourgeoys’s steadfast beliefs. The *sœurs* of the *Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, as advocated by Bourgeoys, continued to live a collective life devoted to poverty, chastity, and obedience. They still modelled their lives on the example of the Virgin Mary, who was, like the *sœurs* who followed her, a humble and poor teacher of children; chaste, despite her marriage to Saint Joseph; and obedient to the wishes of the apostles, whose work, in the name of Christ, was perpetuated by the seminaries and priests whom the *sœurs*, in their turn, obeyed. It was a way of life deeply embedded in European Catholic reform spirituality, designed to encourage the cultivation of an internal, strengthening solitude that would enable the individual to go out into the world and do the work of God.<sup>42</sup>

The ritual period known as the novitiate was a probationary period, during which the novice wore secular clothing and, under the care of a mistress of novices, learned how to adhere to the institute’s routine.<sup>43</sup> Marie Raizenne, after entering the *Congrégation de Notre-Dame* in 1752, completed this ritual in the requisite two years, and at the age of 19 she professed as a teaching *sœur*. The assumption of the position of teaching *sœur* would immediately distinguish her working life from that of a “labouring *sœur*”. The latter were women who, during their terms as novices, had been deemed to lack “the requisite qualities for the principal functions of the institute” (the inability to learn how to read or write);<sup>44</sup> although possessing, at least in theory, all of the same constitutional privileges as teaching *sœurs*, they were delegated to perform the *Congrégation*’s “heavy labour”.<sup>45</sup> Raizenne, on the other hand, as a teaching *sœur*, also was eligible to assume administrative duties, and this she did. When she was 26 years old, in 1761, she was charged with re-establishing the *Sainte-Famille* mission on *Île d’Orléans*, which had closed at the time of the Conquest. Later, in 1769, stringent

41 *Ibid.*, pp. 102–103, 110–111, 113, 121, 122.

42 Bourgeoys, *The Writings of Marguerite Bourgeoys*, pp. 47–51, 64, 69–70.

43 AAM, 525.101, 698–1, *Règlements*, article 35, p. 84.

44 *Ibid.*, article 2, pp. 3, 4 (“les qualités requises pour les fonctions principales de l’institut”).

45 *Ibid.* (“gros ouvrages”).

budgetary measures enabled her to rescue the failing Lower Town mission at Quebec and establish it on a firm financial footing. Also during this period, in 1765, she began her long span, with only a few interruptions, on the community's administrative council. By 1775 she was assistant to the superior, Véronique Brunet dit L'Estang, and three years later in 1778 she herself became superior for the first time. Although Marie Raizenne's first term as superior ended in 1784, she retained certain positions on the community's council until her second election in 1790 (described above). This would be her final term as superior, and it would last until 1796.<sup>46</sup>

### **The *Pesante Charge***

Extant sources leave little doubt that many superiors of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries faced serious challenges, and the superiorships of Marie Raizenne were no exception.<sup>47</sup> On one hand, and in part, this research of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century institution agrees with Marta Danylewycz's conclusions for the nineteenth century — that the superiorship of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame was indeed a prestigious charge.<sup>48</sup> A mother superior of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was keeper of the community's keys, *mère* to the women in her charge, and responsible for the overall management of the institution. She presided over the community's administrative bodies, the council, and the assembly at large (Figure 4), and in this capacity she engineered major financial and administrative decisions, touching upon not only the day-to-day operations of the community, but also the very survival of the institute itself. As mother superior, she possessed many privileges and powers accorded to no one else — extending from the more mundane details of everyday life, such as the ability to enjoy the right to absolute privacy within her bed chamber (the other *sœurs* were required to keep their doors open and to permit her to enter their rooms at any time),<sup>49</sup> to the larger and more

46 For Raizenne's profile as superior, see Appendix A; for a delineation of her administrative life, see Gray, "A Fragile Authority", appendix 3.8, "Congrégation de Notre-Dame Superiors: Administrative Experience, 1693–1796".

47 For more details concerning the crises faced by the institution, see Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vols. 1–6; Gray, "A Fragile Authority". For insights into the wider historical context, see Dale Miquelon, *New France 1701–1744: "A Supplement to Europe"* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1987); A. J. B. Johnston, *Religion in Life at Louisbourg, 1713–1758* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984).

48 Marta Danylewycz, *Taking the Veil: An Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood and Spinsterhood in Quebec, 1840–1920* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1987).

49 AAM, 525.101, 698–1, *Règlements*, article 6, pp. 9–13; article 32, pp. 66–73; article 26, pp. 53–55; article 11, p. 23.

impressive liberty to correspond, on a regular basis, with the major political and religious figures of the day.<sup>50</sup>

The Congrégation's constitution also endowed Marie Raizenne with considerable responsibility and power — both spiritual and temporal — over the very lives of the women not only within the convent itself at the mother house, but also over those women teaching in the outlying missions, and it left few aspects of their existences untouched. Within the spiritual realm, for example, in conjunction with the community's confessor, she could make decisions regulating the spiritual life of the nuns, determining the frequency of their communion, the severity of their bodily mortifications, and the length and time of their retreats. In other more practical areas, her influence was no less pervasive. According to the institution's constitution, these women could do very little on their own without the approval of the superior, for, as well as poverty, chastity, and the teaching of young girls, the rule of obedience was central to their sacred vows. In practice, this meant that the *sœurs* would have to account for their actions to her — for absenting themselves from religious rituals and daily tasks, for their behaviour outside the convent on an errand or local visit, and for their comportment in the *parloir* (the area of the convent reserved for visitors). Only the superior could approve visitors, and they could only be received by a *sœur* when she was accompanied by another *sœur* the superior herself had chosen.<sup>51</sup>

The prestigious dimensions of the position, however, when viewed from a less idealized viewpoint, can also be perceived as presenting serious challenges. Certainly, more than one superior — Marie Raizenne included — over the course of the eighteenth century referred to her charge as a “heavy burden”, a “load”, “a tiresome ... burden”.<sup>52</sup> Even the following cursory description leaves little reason to question the sincerity of these laments. In 1790, for example, the year of Marie Raizenne's second election, the Congrégation de Notre-Dame, in spite of certain alterations following the Conquest, consisted of 13 missions spread out over a wide area (Figure 3). Moreover, the teaching *sœurs* available and able to service these missions were not on the increase. In fact, the middle of the eighteenth century marked a distinct diminution in the number of *sœurs* in the convent, as well as a decided increase in their ages

50 Primarily the Bishop of Quebec, but Marie Raizenne, along with other superiors, also corresponded with the Abbé l'Isle Dieu, the aging but venerable Parisian churchman who became the protector of the colonial Church's overseas investments. See, for example, Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 5, p. 331. Marie-Josèphe Mauge-Garreau also corresponded with Governor Guy Carleton (vol. 5, p. 212).

51 AAM, 525.101, 698–1, *Règlements*, article 18, pp. 38–42; article 19, p. 42; article 6, p. 11; article 23, p. 49; article 24, pp. 40–51; article 25, p. 52.

52 For example, AAM, 525.101, 766–6, Marie-Josèphe Mauge-Garreau to Bishop Briand, October 28, 1766; 793–2, Marie Raizenne to Bishop Hubert, July 23, 1793.

**Table 1: Congrégation de Notre-Dame, Sœurs in Convent: 1700, 1725, 1750, 1775, 1796**

	1700	1725	1750	1775	1796
Professed nuns <sup>1</sup>	35	45	59	60	61
Probable professed nuns <sup>2</sup>	20	33	12	0	0
Total	55	78	71	60	61

1 Refers to women for whom professional contracts could be found.

2 Refers to women for whom professional contracts could not be found.

Sources: Compiled from Gray, "A Fragile Authority", appendix 7, "Congrégation de Notre-Dame, Professed Nuns, 1693–1796".

(see Tables 1 and 2). These trends would continue to the end of the century and posed a very real challenge to superiors whose duty it was to manage the institute's teaching enterprise.<sup>53</sup> But what did this responsibility involve?

The challenges posed by the decline in personnel aside, the teaching enterprise was a task all by itself. A superior had to appoint and then constantly monitor the progress and comportment of not only the teaching *sœurs* at the mother house, where she was stationed, but also those in missions that were often far away. At the mother house, a superior's proximity to the teaching enterprise must have facilitated her task. At any time, it was possible for her to slip over to the schoolroom unannounced, to ensure that all was proceeding correctly according to a routine that no mistress could alter "without the express permission of the superior, who could never give it without having consulted her council and having spoken with the general school mistress".<sup>54</sup> Moreover, at any moment of the day, the teachers were within sight and hearing of the superior — eating under her watchful eye in the dining hall, saying prayers with her in the chapel, following her in the evening procession — always open to her criticism, her approval, and perhaps even her praise.<sup>55</sup>

The mission schools, however, must have presented a very different situation. Although a superior possessed absolute authority over the missions, as she did over the mother house, they were scattered across the colony, in places often as far away as Quebec. A superior could not merely listen to a daily report recounted by a designated individual, summon a wayward *sœur* for reproach, answer questions, or deal with difficulties on the spur of the moment. Rather, her only way to monitor the missions was

53 AAM, 525.101, 698–1, *Règlements*, article 7, p. 14; article 31, pp. 62–66.

54 *Ibid.*, article 31, pp. 62–66; article 7, pp. 14, 15.

55 Details of the convent are based on convent plans found in Lahaise, "Bâtisses de 1768 à 1836", in *Les édifices conventuels*, p. 140.



**Table 2: Average Age of Congrégation de Notre-Dame Sœurs, 1700, 1725, 1750, 1775, 1796**

	1700	1725	1750	1775	1796
Average age	30	39	48	44	50

Source: Compiled from Gray, “A Fragile Authority”, appendix 7, “Congrégation de Notre-Dame, Professed Nuns, 1693–1796”.

through correspondence.<sup>56</sup> The importance of this correspondence should not be underestimated, for potential problems could arise in the missions for which the superior would have to answer not only to the bishop of Quebec, but also perhaps to the respective communities upon which the Congrégation depended for its pupils. Correspondence throughout the second superiorship of Marie Raizenne, for example, reveals difficulties with the Quebec missions: internal animosities over the timing of the community’s elections, as well as her concern and frustration over the machinations of Catherine D’Ailleboust de la Madeleine, Sœur de la Visitation, who appeared to be manipulating the Quebec superior, Charlotte-Ursule Adhémar de Lantagnac, Sœur Sainte-Claire, bringing “her finally and absolutely over to all of her wishes and fantasies”.<sup>57</sup>

Other more fundamental difficulties could surface in the outlying missions, particularly arising from the living conditions. Given what can be gathered from the scarce sources that remain, conditions were not exactly ideal. To be sure, the nuns had moved a long way from the primitive situations of the seventeenth century, when *sœurs* like Marie Barbier, Sœur de l’Assomption, conducted ambulatory missions, wandering from settlement to settlement as the needs dictated, often living in birch-bark cabins or without privacy in the homes of parish families.<sup>58</sup> By the middle of the eighteenth century, most Congrégation missions had been established on a more permanent basis, with the terms of agreement between the *sœurs* and the parishes stipulated in notarized contracts that, among other things, often ensured that teachers and their boarders

56 AAM, 525.101, 698–1, *Règlements*, article 34, pp. 63, 64.

57 AAM, 525.101, 791–1, Bishop Hubert to Marie Raizenne, February 16, 1791; 791–2, Marie Raizenne to Bishop Hubert, February 24, 1791; 791–5, Bedard to Bishop Hubert, October 3, 1791; 791–6, Sœur Sainte-Elisabeth and Sœur Saint-Michel to Bishop Hubert, October 1, 1791; 791–7, Sœur Saint-Olivier and Sœur Sainte-Cécile to Bishop Hubert, October 10, 1791; 791–8, Sœur Sainte-Marie and Sœur de la Présentation to Bishop Hubert, October 12, 1791; 793–4, Marie Raizenne to Bishop Hubert, July 18, 1793; Bishop Hubert to Marie Raizenne, in Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 6, p. 17.

58 Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 1, pp. 247–310; ASSP, ms. 1233, “Mémoires sur la vie de la sœur l’Assomption recueillis par Mr Glandelet pretre du seminaire de quebec et son principale directeur”, pp. 25–31.

were provided with solid living quarters.<sup>59</sup> Despite these improvements, however, the missions offered far from the comparative privacy of the walled convent in the town of Montreal. Isolated in the rural world, the convents were also close to parish churches and, concomitantly, to the priest and the lay community attending services.<sup>60</sup> While this proximity may have enabled both the mission *sœurs* and the priest to survey and attempt to edify the general behaviour of the laity of the missions through their pious example, it also appears as if the *sœurs* had very little room to move within this confined space. Their boarders often resided in the same dwelling or at the very least nearby, and the priest and members of the laity were in close proximity. A document promulgated by Bishop Dosquet in 1729 outlines the behaviour expected of Congrégation nuns in the missions and offers some insight into how restrictive living conditions in the missions could be: the *sœurs* were to respect the priest and refrain from familiarity with outsiders, amusements, or walks for pleasure, for their main devotion was to the “instruction of our children”.<sup>61</sup>

One must pause to ask exactly what this “instruction” entailed: a great deal, by all accounts. An undated deliberation, written probably around 1780 by the Congrégation *sœurs* to Étienne de Montgolfier, the bishop’s vicar-general and superior of the Sulpician seminary during the first superiorship of Marie Raizenne, is very revealing. It speaks of the difficulties of teaching these mission children as well as feeding and lodging them; of the “confusion of a multitude upon whom it is not possible to exactly keep one’s eyes”; of the “danger that with such a great number, one does not find some ill-willed spirit for whom it becomes more easy to hide and to disturb others”; and of the resulting “dissipation and fatigue ... for a mistress obliged to speak all day”.<sup>62</sup>

Moreover, the sources clearly indicate that “teaching” did not only mean simply teaching the mandatory subjects of religion, reading, writing, elementary arithmetic, and the domestic arts.<sup>63</sup> The presiding *sœurs* were expected to ensure that the students performed their duties and that they were disciplined both inside and outside school hours. Then again, “teaching” in the missions comprised still more than this. It

59 Many of these contracts can be found in ANQM; see note 38.

60 This was true of Pointe-aux-Trembles, Montreal (ANQM, gr. Senet dit Laliberté, “Don d’une terre”, July 24, 1707), and Laprairie (ANQM, gr Adhémar, “Concession d’un emplacement”, July 3, 1705). In both locations, due to the proximity of the church and the presbytery, the contracts stipulated that the proprietors could never have buildings or sites, nor any tavern built on the property (“à cause de la proximité de l’église et du presbytère, on ne pourra jamais tenir dans les bâtiments et emplacements, aucun cabaret...”).

61 Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 3, p. 370.

62 *Ibid.*, vol. 5, pp. 332–333.

63 AAM, 525.101, 698–1, *Règlements*, article 7, p. 14.

involved maintaining the mission itself — preparing the meals for teachers and boarders alike, baking the bread, perhaps making the soap and the candles, in addition to sweeping the floors, doing the laundry, tending the garden, if in fact there was one, and often, as part of their contract with the parish, caring for and cleaning the parish church and washing the church linen.<sup>64</sup> The mission *sœurs* also were expected to earn money to support themselves and to create a favourable impression on the local people and the priest, for the missions often had to rely on charity to supplement their incomes. True, the constitution allocated one mission *sœur* to perform household duties.<sup>65</sup> When one examines the amount of work involved in maintaining a mission, however, one can also surmise that the teaching *sœurs*, who were constitutionally obliged to perform household duties, were also engaged in some aspects of the daily maintenance.<sup>66</sup> Is it little wonder that at least one superior, Marie-Josèphe Mauge-Garreau, found that the nuns who returned from the outlying missions were jealous, bored, disgusted, shaking the yoke of obedience, and “whispering about everything, superior, directors, nothing is to their taste, nor approved”?<sup>67</sup>

These insights into the management of the teaching enterprise lean upon a larger responsibility of a superior: the image of the institution in the eyes of society, for that impression inevitably influenced parents’ willingness to send their daughters to the school. This meant, therefore, that not only must a superior ensure that the teaching enterprise was well managed, but also that the *sœurs* within the institution, as a whole, were strictly disciplined and were not a cause for scandal. As we have seen, the women placed within her charge were, by solemn vow, pledged to absolute obedience to her.<sup>68</sup> This does not mean, however, that discipline problems did not arise within the convent. The idealized image of a convent full of homogeneous groups of nuns dutifully saying their prayers and performing their tasks in the name of God, day in and day out without interruption, advocated by much of the traditional literature surrounding the Congrégation,<sup>69</sup> belies the entire reality a superior must

64 This refers, in particular, to the Lachine mission (ANQM, gr, Pottier, “Donation de Remy”, September 26, 1701) and Lac-des-Deux-Montagnes (“Conventions entre les Mess. du Séminaire et les très honorées Sœurs de la Congrégation du Lac”, July 14, 1772, in Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 5, pp. 288–289).

65 AAM, 525.101, 698–1, *Règlements*, article 31, p. 63, 62; article 23, p. 47.

66 *Ibid.*, article 23, p. 47.

67 AAM, 525.101, 768–4, Marie-Josèphe Mauge-Garreau to Bishop Briand, October 25, 1768.

68 AAM, 525.101, 698–1, *Règlements*, article 11, especially p. 19; article 6, p. 10.

69 As depicted in, for example, Étienne de Montgolfier, *La vie de la vénérable Marguerite Bourgeoys dite Saint-Sacrement* (Ville-Marie : William Gray, 1818); R. Rumilly, *Marie Barbier : mystique canadienne* (Montreal, 1936). On the other hand, Harline’s *The Burdens of Sister Margaret*, for example, provides a graphic illustration of disturbances, factionalism, and struggles with the bishop within a convent in seventeenth-century Belgium.

have faced. Of course, this is also not to argue that this convent was a hotbed of discontent, of seething nascent rebellion, only barely held in check by the superior herself. Nothing could be further from the truth, for research has revealed that, for this institution to survive, it needed to be well managed.<sup>70</sup> But an idyllic fortress of virtue and harmony it certainly was not. Documents, albeit scarce, throughout the eighteenth century provide glimpses of challenges to the superior's authority: fugitive *sœurs*, hostility and resistance to change among certain segments of the teaching *sœurs*, and overt internal discrimination, in spite of constitutional stipulations to the contrary, against the labouring *sœurs* by the teaching nuns.<sup>71</sup> More specifically, Marie Raizenne herself, in the course of her second superiorship, confronted her own set of difficulties concerning at least two nuns, and she hesitated to send both individuals out into the missions because of their behaviour: Thérèse Viger, Sœur Sainte-Madeleine, due to her refusal to take communion and her concomitant disruptive cries surrounding this denial; and Marie-Angèle Bissonnet, Sœur Saint-Pierre, for her "passion for drink", which "spreads dissipation in the missions".<sup>72</sup>

If the superior's duties had involved simply the management of the teaching enterprise and the women who executed this function, it would have been a very onerous responsibility indeed. At the very least, the task demanded exceptional qualities: tact, leadership, diplomacy, disciplinary skills, foresight, organization, insight, patience, and flexibility — characteristics that, when taken together, elude most mortals. The duties of a Congrégation superior, however, extended further, beyond the teaching enterprise into responsibility for the very economic survival of a complex and multi-dimensional institution that required considerable expense and activity to operate. After all, the *sœurs* had to be fed, clothed, cared for when ill, buried when dead, and prayed for thereafter. They had to be kept warm in winter, and fires had to be fuelled to bake the bread and cook the meals year round. The buildings, both at the mother house and the farm properties in Pointe Saint-Charles, Verdun, and Laprairie until they were sold, and then Île Saint-Paul following its purchase in 1769,<sup>73</sup> had to be constantly repaired or maintained —

70 Gray, "A Fragile Authority", especially chap. 2.

71 AAM, 525.101, 698–1, *Réglements*, article 2, p. 4. For example, insights into fugitive nuns can be found in AAM, 525.101, 766–2, 766–3, 766–5, 766–6, 766–7, Marie-Josèphe Mauge-Garreau to Bishop Briand; Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 6, p. 211; AAM, various correspondence in 525.101, 785–1, 785–2, 785–3, 785–4. For hostility, see AAM 525.101, 766–7, Marie-Josèphe to Bishop Briand, November 26, 1766; for discrimination, see AAM 525.101, 766–4, interrogation of Sœur Juillet by Mgr L'Evêque, September 30, 1766.

72 AAM, 525.101, 793–2, Marie Raizenne to Bishop Hubert, July 3, 1793.

73 For Laprairie, see ANQM, gr. Panet de Méru, "Vente d'une terre située à La Prairie", February 18, 1769; for Verdun, ANQM, gr. Panet de Méru, "Vente d'une terre nommée Verdun", December 20,

chimneys swept, laboratories cleaned, stonework repaired, roofs recovered, pastures enclosed; the *engagés* performing these tasks had to be remunerated for their labour. Bills had to be paid to local merchants, loan payments met, money scraped together to pay the *rentes* and the *dimes*.<sup>74</sup>

To be sure, the Congrégation possessed solid resources to meet many of these expenses. The outlying farms provided ample food to fill the pewter dishes on the convent table, while the wheat, oats, and peas regularly went towards paying the seigneurial dues owed to the Sulpicians. *Rentes* coming in from various properties the Congrégation owned grace the pages of the account book, as do moneys received from dowry agreements, boarders' fees, government annuities in the pre-Conquest period, and, at times, sums loaned.<sup>75</sup> As well, the institution possessed capital invested in France upon which it drew a steady, albeit increasingly diminishing, yearly income throughout the eighteenth century. In fact, during the second superiorship of Marie Raizenne, these investments were in a state of limbo due to the spoliation of properties belonging to the clergy in France.<sup>76</sup>

Research reveals, however, that these sources of income were insufficient to make ends meet. To compensate, the *sœurs* themselves performed numerous income-generating activities outside their teaching duties, which the superior was required to supervise and administer. These included making candles and communion hosts, selling needlework, making biscuits for the local merchants for the fur trade, washing church linen, adorning altars, making statues of Jesus, guarding livestock, and housing and sheltering retreatants. Moreover, the Congrégation also relied upon *engagés* either to perform the heavy labour the *sœurs* could not do themselves and tasks requiring specialized skills or to assist the *sœurs* in their assigned duties, for instance in the bakery or the laundry.<sup>77</sup> This labour, while lightening the convent's workload, added another dimension of responsibility to the superior's position: overseeing, with the *dépositaire*, the signing

---

1769; for Île Saint-Paul, ACND, 4A/04, "Contrat de vente [...] d'une partie de l'île St Paul Aux sœurs", August 25, 1769.

74 ACND, 3A/02, *Registre des Recettes et Dépenses générales* (1753–1793, 1766–1772), 133–142, 144–160, 162–170.

75 For example, regarding food and seigneurial duties, see *ibid.*, 132–141, 143–150, 153, 155, 156, 158, 159, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170 (1766–1772); for income, 132, 134, 135, 136, 137, 139, 140, 142, 143, 145, 146, 147, 149, 150, 152, 153, 154, 156, 158, 159, 160, 161, 163, 165, 167, 169.

76 Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 5, pp. 112, 120, 142, 149, 150, 162, 181, 183, 184, 186, 189, 206; Désilets, "Marie Raizenne", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 5, pp. 703–704.

77 For example, ACND, 3A/02, *Registre des Recettes et Dépenses générales* (1766–1772), 132, 134, 135, 136, 137, 139, 140, 142, 143, 145, 146, 147, 149, 150, 152, 153, 154, 156, 158, 159, 160, 161, 163, 165, 167, 169.

and fulfilment of *engagé* contracts as well as payment, either in cash or in kind, and, in the latter case, the concomitant exchange of goods.<sup>78</sup>

The entire enterprise, in itself, demanded constant systematization. Every four months, with her *dépositaire*, the superior would attempt to order the convent's myriad economic activities into the community's official account book. She would then ensure that it would be duly signed by herself, her *dépositaire*, her assistant, her mistress of novices, her two councillors, and once a year by either the bishop himself or his representative, the Sulpician superior, who was also the vicar-general in Montreal.<sup>79</sup>

The running of this enterprise — and an enterprise it certainly was — must have demanded a thousand daily decisions. As the signing of the account book so clearly illustrates, Marie Raizenne was not the person in sole command of the convent's business. The confessor played a role in the enactment of her spiritual duties, but, on a broader level, a superior making any decision was required to consult numerous bodies and individuals, the most important of whom was the Bishop of Quebec or, in his absence, the vicar-general of Montreal, who, as Sulpician superior, represented the spiritual and temporal directors of the institution (Figure 4). To complicate this situation, within the institute itself, a general assembly consisting of all *sœurs* who had taken their permanent vows assisted her in decision-making. Moreover, a council, comprising an assistant, a mistress of novices, and two councillors elected by the assembly, was required to report to the superior, support her in her duties, and also deal with all other matters, “unless this same council judged it appropriate to take them to the assembly”.<sup>80</sup> While on one hand responsibility for individual decisions would have been spread out among a wide variety of internal and external individuals and bodies, actually reaching any decision must have been an arduous and time-consuming task, requiring considerable political acumen, diplomacy, and laborious consultation.

It appears as if Marie Raizenne rose to the considerable challenges posed by the position, for her first term of office must have been a success. Characterized as it was by tough economic times, a combination of luck, external generosity, strict financial management, and deft political manoeuvring must have ensured her not only a place on the council in the interim between the two elections, but also a second term of office, which was to last until 1796. Although she was never again re-elected to the superiorship, she remained on the upper administrative council for at least three years until 1802. At this time, all record of Marie Raizenne disappears until her death on April 28, 1811, at the age of 75.<sup>81</sup>

78 AAM, 525.101, 698–1, *Règlements*, article 26, pp. 53–55.

79 As found in ACND, 3A/02, *Registre des Dépenses et Recettes générales* (1753–1793).

80 AAM, 525.101, 698–1, *Règlements*, article 6, p. 11; article 32, pp. 69–70, 71, 72.

81 Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 5, pp. 129–130; Désilets, “Marie Raizenne”, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 5, p. 703.

**Table 3: Birthplaces of Congr gation de Notre-Dame S urs in Convent in 1790**

District	Town	%	Country	%	Town & country	%
Montreal	16	28	22	38	38	65
Quebec	0	0	19	33	19	33
Trois-Rivi�res	0	0	1	2	1	2
Total	16	28	42	72	58	100

Source: Gray, "A Fragile Authority", appendix 3.4, "Congr gation de Notre-Dame Professed Nuns, 1790".

### Who Became a Superior?

To answer this question, I examine the background of Marie Raizenne — her place of birth, social group, and links to the Church — within the context of the *s urs* who elected her in 1790, the *s urs* within the institution between 1693 and 1796, and the 11 other superiors elected during the period covered by this study.

Born in the district of Montreal, a daughter of *habitant* parents who had forged strong links with the Church, Marie Raizenne on one level appeared hardly different from the 58 women in the Congr gation who elected her in 1790 in terms of place of birth (Table 3) and social group (Table 4), but also with respect to the numerous relatives she had within the Church.<sup>82</sup> With respect to links within the Church, for example, three sets of sisters in the Congr gation were among the women electing Marie Raizenne: the Audet sisters (Marie-Anne, S ur Sainte-Marguerite; and Marie-Fran oise, S ur Saint-Joseph), the Berry des Essarts sisters (Marie-Anne, S ur Sainte-Radegonde; and Fran oise, S ur Saint-Fran ois-de-Sales), and the three Sabourin siblings (Elisabeth, S ur Saint-Vincent-de-Paul; Catherine, S ur Sainte-Ursule; and Marie-Anne-Reine, S ur Saint-Barth lemy).<sup>83</sup> This was not an unusual situation; other women at this election could claim even more extensive linkages with the Church.  lisabeth Prud'homme, S ur Sainte-Agathe, had relatives within the Congr gation — a sister, two aunts, and a cousin — as well as a cousin at the H tel-Dieu of Quebec;<sup>84</sup> although Marie-Ursule Adh mar de Lantagnac, S ur Sainte-Claire,

82 Gray, "A Fragile Authority", appendix 3.4, "Congr gation de Notre-Dame Professed Nuns, 1790".

83 For Marie-Anne and Marie-Fran oise Audet, see Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congr gation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 7, p. 82; vol. 6, p. 106. For Marie-Anne and Fran oise Berry des Essarts, see Pelletier, *Le clerg  en Nouvelle-France*, p. 282; Jett , *Dictionnaire g n alogique*, pp. 85–86. For Marie- lisabeth Sabourin, see Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congr gation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 6, p. 202; for Catherine and Marie-Anne-Reine Sabourin, see Pelletier, *Le clerg  en Nouvelle-France*, p. 290.

84 For  lisabeth Prud'homme, see Pelletier, *Le clerg  en Nouvelle-France*, pp. 289, 288, 256; Jett , *Dictionnaire g n alogique*, p. 951.

**Table 4: Social Group for Congrégation de Notre-Dame Sœurs in Convent in 1790**

	Number	%
<i>Upper stratum</i>		
Officers, seigneurs, nobility	5	8.5
<i>Middle stratum</i>		
Royal notaries	—	—
Bourgeois	—	—
<i>Lower stratum</i>		
Merchants	4	7.0
Craftsmen, artisans	9	15.5
Farmers	9	15.5
Soldiers, labourers	3	5.0
Unknown from rural areas	27	46.5
Unknown from Montreal	1	2.0
Total	58	100.0

Source: Gray, "A Fragile Authority", appendix 3.4, "Congrégation de Notre-Dame Professed Nuns, 1790".

possessed no sisters in the Congrégation, she could claim that five of her sisters had entered other religious institutions in the colony.<sup>85</sup>

It is important to point out that these patterns were not peculiar to the 1790 convent. As Tables 5 and 6 indicate, the majority of Congrégation sœurs within the convent between 1693 and 1796 also came from the district of Montreal and from the lower stratum of colonial society. In fact, the composition of the Congrégation roughly mirrored the three-tiered

**Table 5: Birthplaces of Congrégation de Notre-Dame Sœurs, 1693–1796**

District	Number	%
Montreal	111	51.5
Quebec	65	30.0
Trois-Rivières	21	10.0
Outside Quebec	18	8.0
Unknown	1	0.5
Total	216	100.0

Source: Gray, "A Fragile Authority", appendix 7, "Congrégation de Notre-Dame Professed Nuns, 1693–1796".

85 For Marie-Ursule Adhémar de Lantagnac, see Pelletier, *Le clergé en Nouvelle-France*, pp. 279, 259, 293, 269; Jetté, *Dictionnaire généalogique*, p. 3.



structure of the colony, with the minority, the nobility, at the top and the majority of the population at its base.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, research has demonstrated that many women within the institution throughout the eighteenth century also possessed numerous links within the Congrégation, and many were connected with other religious institutions. Families such as Boucher de Boucherville, Adhémar de Lantagnac, Amyot, Constantin, d'Ailleboust des Musseaux, la Corne des Chaptés, and Jorian, whose members appear in the Congrégation throughout the eighteenth century, at one time or another had numerous members in several religious institutions in the colony.<sup>87</sup>

If Marie Raizenne was a typical Congrégation *sœur*, she was also a very typical superior. Most of the superiors — in fact, nine of the twelve — like Marie Raizenne, came from the district of Montreal (Table 7). Specifically, five women — Marie Barbier, *Sœur de l'Assomption*; Marguerite Le Moyne, *Sœur du Saint-Esprit*; Catherine Charly, *Sœur du Saint-Sacrement*; Marie-Angèlique Lefebvre-Angers, *Sœur Saint-Simon*; and Marie-Josèphe Maugue-Garreau, *Sœur de l'Assomption* — were born and grew up in the town of Montreal itself. Three women came from areas close to Montreal: Marguerite Piot de Langloiserie, *Sœur Saint-Hippolyte*, was born in Varennes; Véronique Brunet dit L'Estang in Pointe-Claire; and, of course, Marie Raizenne at Lac-des-Deux-Montagnes. Marie-Anne Thibierge, *Sœur Saint-Pélagie*, was also included in this Montreal group, for, although she was born in Quebec, her family was living in Montreal by the time she was seven years old.<sup>88</sup> This was also true of Marie-Elisabeth Guillet, *Sœur Sainte-Barbe*. Although she was born in the diocese of Trois-Rivières in Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pérade, it appears very possible that by the early 1690s — at least by the time she was ten years old — *Sœur Sainte-Barbe's* father had settled and was doing most of his business in Montreal.<sup>89</sup> The two remaining superiors were born outside Montreal: Marguerite Trottier, *Sœur Saint-Joseph*, in Batiscan in the district of Trois-Rivières, and Marguerite Amyot, *Sœur de la Présentation*, in Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré in the district of Quebec.

Marie Raizenne was not the only superior to emerge from the lower stratum of colonial society, for most were daughters of farmers, artisans,

86 Louise Dechêne, *Habitants and Merchants in Seventeenth-century Montreal*, trans. Liana Vardi (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992).

87 Names derived by cross-referencing individuals in Pelletier, "Repertoire biographique des prêtres, missionnaires et religieuses, 1615–1765" in *Le clergé de la Nouvelle-France*, pp. 169–304; they represent individuals with four or more siblings in the colony's religious institutions at any one period. See Gray, "A Fragile Authority", appendix 3.5, "Congrégation de Notre-Dame Sœurs Before 1766: Links Within the Institute".

88 ANQM, gr. Duquet de Lachesnay, "Apprentissage", November 6, 1679; gr. Genaple de Bellefonds, "Vente d'une maison", June 30, 1703.

89 ANQM, gr. Adhémar, "Obligations", October 21, 1689; September 13, 1693; September 22, 1694.

**Table 6: Social Group of Congrégation de Notre-Dame Sœurs, 1793–1796**

	Number	%
<i>Upper stratum</i>		
Officers, seigneurs, nobility	17	8
<i>Middle stratum</i>		
Royal notaries	6	3
Bourgeois	3	1
<i>Lower stratum</i>		
Merchants	26	12
Craftsmen, artisans	50	23
Farmers	41	19
Soldiers, labourers	4	2
Unknown	69	32
Total	216	100

Source: Gray, "A Fragile Authority", appendix 7, "Congrégation de Notre-Dame Professed Nuns, 1693–1796".

and small merchants (Table 8). Many of these individuals appear to have been industrious people, often pursuing more than one occupation to make ends meet. Marie Barbier's father was a *habitant* who also worked on various occasions as a tax collector, a "master" carpenter, and a surveyor;<sup>90</sup> Catherine Charly's father, in addition to being a *habitant*, on numerous occasions called himself a baker;<sup>91</sup> Marguerite Trottier's father, although identifying himself as a *censitaire*,<sup>92</sup> also worked as a wheelright;<sup>93</sup> and Véronique Brunet dit L'Estang's father, who appears in the archives as voyageur in the fur trade, may also have been a *habitant*, for his widow, Marguerite Dubois, sold their Pointe-Claire land in 1751 to her son Dominique.<sup>94</sup>

The artisans' daughters emerged from similar industrious backgrounds, with fathers who pursued a trade, but appear to have set their sights a bit higher. Jacques Thibierge, father to Marie-Anne Thibierge, apprenticed as

90 For Gilbert Barbier, see ANQM, gr. Basset, "Quittance", July 29, 1658; gr Adhémar, "Concession d'un emplacement", December 3, 1684; gr. Cabazie, "Contrat de mariage", June 12, 1684.

91 For André Charly, see ANQM, gr. Saint-Père, "Vente d'un maison", March 12, 1656; gr. Basset, "Vente de terre", June 25, 1659.

92 A *censitaire* refers here to anyone who paid "a cens for a concession which he could not subgrant". See Richard Colebrook Harris, *The Seigneurial System in Early Canada: A Geographical Study* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984), pp. viii–ix.

93 For Jean-Baptiste Trottier, see Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 4, p. 124.

94 For Jean Brunet dit L'Estang, see ANQM, gr. Lepailleur, "Obligation", September 15, 1717; gr. Lepailleur, "Engagement", April 15, 1721; gr. Adhémar, "Vente d'une terre", June 11, 1751.

**Table 7: Birthplaces of Congrégation de Notre-Dame Superiors, 1693–1796**

District	Town	%	Country	%	Town & country
Montreal	6	50	3	25	9
Quebec	0	0	1	8	1
Trois-Rivières	0	0	2	17	2
Total	6	50	6	50	12

*Source:* See sources for Appendix A, “Congrégation de Notre-Dame Superiors, 1693–1796”.

an armsmaker in 1679 in Quebec. Eventually he moved to Montreal and became a king’s gunsmith.<sup>95</sup> Gentien Amyot, Marguerite Amyot’s father, a master locksmith, engaged apprentices and possessed property that he was able to rent out to others.<sup>96</sup>

This pattern follows right through to the merchants’ daughters. Often the fathers of these nuns moved from other occupations to that of merchant. Jean-Baptiste Lefebvre-Angers, father of Marie-Angélique Lefebvre-Angers, who in 1707 declared himself to be a “master” carpenter and also, on occasion, worked as a “master surveyor”, identified himself in the later years of his life as a merchant.<sup>97</sup> The working life of Mathurin Guillet, Elisabeth Guillet’s father, followed a similar pattern. Although identified as a wealthy Montreal merchant, he first appears in the sources in 1684 as a *habitant*; by 1700, after a subsequent series of transactions, he claimed that he was a merchant.<sup>98</sup> This upwardly mobile pattern is also discernable in the working life of Pierre Garreau dit Saint-Onge, father of Marie-Josèphe Mauge-Maugue. In 1694 Garreau appears in the notarial records as a *voyageur*. By 1713, however, he began to contract out crews, and by 1720 he had declared himself a merchant. Also by this time he had married Marie-Anne Mauge, daughter of the distinguished notary Claude Mauge, in Montreal. In 1721 he

95 For Jacques Thibierge, see ANQM, gr. Duquet de Lachesnaye, “Apprentissage”, November 6, 1679; gr. Genaple de Bellefonds, “Vente d’une maison”, June 30, 1703.

96 For Gentien Amyot, see ANQM, gr. Rageot “Apprentissage en qualité de serrurier de Joseph-Alphonse-Martel ... à Gentien Amiot”, February 8, 1690; gr. Chambalon, “Vente d’une maison”, June 18, 1692; gr. Lepailleur, “Bail à loyer d’une portion de maison [...] par Gentien Amiot, Maître surruier et bourgeois”, July 17, 1702.

97 For Jean-Baptiste Lefebvre-Angers, see ANQM, gr. Adhémar, “Vente d’un emplacement”, October 25, 1701; gr. Adhémar, “Procuration”, September 24, 1729; gr. Adhémar, “Contrat de mariage”, April 16, 1731; gr. Adhémar, “Obligation”, March 21, 1733; gr. Adhémar, “Obligation”, June 22, 1738.

98 For Mathurin Guillet, see ANQM, gr. Rageot, “Compromise entre Mathurin Guillet, habitant”, February 21, 1684; gr. Adhémar, Various obligations, September 13, 1693; September 22, 1694; October 21, 1689; March 20, 1700; gr. Raimbault, “Accord entre Mathurin Guillet, marchand”, August 11, 1704; Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 4, pp. 1–2.

**Table 8: Social Group of Congrégation de Notre-Dame Superiors, 1693–1796**

	Number
<i>Upper stratum</i>	
Officers, seigneurs, nobility	1
<i>Middle stratum</i>	
	0
<i>Lower stratum</i>	
Merchants	4
Craftsmen, artisans	2
Farmers	5
Soldiers, labourers	0
Total	12

Source: See sources for Appendix A, “Congrégation de Notre-Dame Superiors, 1693–1796”.

officially appeared in a notarial document as a merchant and was engaged in building a stone house for his family in Montreal.<sup>99</sup>

In fact, only two of the twelve superiors throughout the entire period could claim truly elevated social backgrounds: Marguerite Piot de Langloiserie and Marguerite Le Moyne. Marguerite Piot de Langloiserie came from the Canadian elite. Although her maternal grandfather, Michel-Sidrac Dugué de Boisbriand, died in poverty, he was one of the earliest Montreal seigneurs, first of Senneville and then of Île Sainte-Thérèse near Repentigny. He also served, albeit very briefly, as military commander of Montreal. Her father, Charles-Gaspard, seigneur of Île Sainte-Thérèse and Mille-Île, also had a distinguished career. He was town major of Montreal and then Quebec, with the power to command in the absence of the governor. In 1703 (despite the hint of a scandal) he was made the king’s lieutenant at Quebec, and in 1705 he received the prestigious cross of the order of Saint Louis.<sup>100</sup>

99 For Pierre Garreau dit Saint-Onge, see ANQM, gr. Adhémar, “Engagement en qualité de voyageur”, September 18, 1694; gr. Lepailleur, various obligations, September 24, 1707; October 2, 1708; April 19, 1710; April 28, 1712; April 19, 1710; April 24, 1712; August 3, 1720; gr. Adhémar, “Engagement en qualité de voyageur de Joseph Cusson [...] à Marie Guertin épouse [...] de Pierre Garreau”, June 3, 1713; gr. Lepailleur, “Contrat de mariage”, February 12, 1720; gr. David, “Obligation”, August 11, 1721; Jean-Jacques Lefebvre, “Claude Mauge” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1, p. 498.

100 W. Stanford Reid, “Michel-Sidrac Dugué de Boisbriand” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1, p. 295; “Charles-Gaspard Piot de Langloiserie”, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1, p. 526; ANQM, gr. Senet de la Liberté, “Vente d’une part de terre”, April 27, 1714; gr. Adhémar, “Vente d’un emplacement”, March 22, 1696; gr. Adhémar, “Procuration”, September 18, 1700; gr. Genaple de Bellefonds, “Vente d’un emplacement”, August 11, 1708; gr. Genaple de Bellefonds, “Vente du fief et seigneurs de l’Île Ste-Thérèse”, November 20, 1706.

Unlike the family of Marguerite Piot de Langloiserie, Marguerite Le Moyne's kin did not belong to the nobility. However, many of her relatives pursued distinguished careers as prosperous merchants in the fur trade and then eventually became seigneurs. Her uncle, Charles Le Moyne, began his working life in Canada as an indentured servant to the Jesuit missionaries among the Hurons in the 1640s. He later became seigneur of Longueuil, Châteauguay, Île-Ronde, and Île Sainte-Hélène, as well as a wealthy merchant who, with Jacques Le Ber, dominated the fur trade.<sup>101</sup> Moreover, Marguerite's father, Jacques, pursued a career that followed a similar trajectory. Between 1658 and 1683, he variously declared himself to be a *habitant*, a merchant, a church warden, and a keeper of the king's warehouse. By 1689, nine years before Marguerite's first term as a superior, he claimed that he was a seigneur.<sup>102</sup>

Finally, like that of Marie Raizenne, numerous superiors' families also possessed strong links to the Church, a phenomenon not peculiar to the Congrégation, but widespread among many colonial families and well documented in Louis Pelletier's study, *Le clergé en Nouvelle-France*.<sup>103</sup> Within the Congrégation only one superior of the twelve — Véronique Brunet dit L'Estang — had absolutely no relative at all in any religious institution in the colony. Only three others — Marie Barbier, Marie-Elisabeth Guillet, and Marie-Angèlique Lefebvre-Angers — possessed no kin in the community itself, although some of their relations had entered other religious institutions. On the other hand, however, each remaining superior could claim at least one or more relatives not only in the Congrégation itself, but also in other religious institutions. For example, three of Catherine Charly's sisters became Congrégation nuns, while her nephew, André Joseph de Montenon de la Rue, was ordained a priest in 1713. Marguerite Piot de Langloiserie possessed only one sibling in the Congrégation, but her older sister and her two maternal aunts had entered the Hôtel-Dieu of Montreal, while a cousin became an Ursuline nun at Quebec.

Most notable in the ecclesiastical network were Marie-Josèphe Maugue-Garreau, Marie-Anne Thibierge, and Marguerite Le Moyne. A total of six

101 Jean-Jacques Lefebvre, "Charles Le Moyne de Longueuil et de Châteauguay" in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1, pp. 463–465. For a description of his activities in the Montreal fur trade, see Dechêne, *Habitants and Merchants*, pp. 116–117.

102 For Jacques Le Moyne, see ANQM, gr. Basset, "Bail à ferme de terre", September 29, 1662; gr. Basset, "Bail de terre", April 25, 1663; gr. Basset, "Obligation", January 20, 1669; gr. Basset, "Engagement", November 19, 1670; gr. Basset, "Aveu et dénombrement", September 17, 1676; gr. Maugue, "Bail d'un emplacement", September 4, 1683; gr. Maugue, "Concession de terre", December 1, 1683; gr. Adhémar, "Contrat de mariage entre Zacharie Robutel [...] et Catherine Le Moyne, fille de Jacques Le Moyne, seigneur", April 17, 1689; gr. Adhémar, "Bail à loyer [...] par Jacques Le Moyne, marchand", June 15, 1699.

103 Pelletier, *Le clergé en Nouvelle-France*, p. 80.

of Marie-Josèphe Mauge-Garreau's relatives could be found both within the Congrégation and in other religious institutions in the colony: an aunt, a step-niece, and a cousin were all Congrégation nuns; another cousin had been a Montreal Hôtel-Dieu *sœur*; and her two brothers became secular priests. Her brother Pierre distinguished himself enough to be appointed by Bishop Briand as vicar-general of Trois-Rivières in 1764, an appointment almost coinciding with Marie-Josèphe's first term as superior in 1766. Marie-Anne Thibierge's two sisters were also Congrégation nuns; three cousins were Hôtel-Dieu *sœurs*; and another cousin became a Récollet priest. Notably, her aunt, Marie-Catherine Thibierge, led a distinguished religious life at the Hôtel-Dieu of Quebec — on a regular basis, she was re-elected as this institution's mother superior until her death in 1757.<sup>104</sup> Marguerite Le Moynes's connections within the Church, however, were the most extensive: her cousins, Pierre and Jeanne Le Ber, were renowned for their generosity and close links to the community.<sup>105</sup> Moreover, these links to the Church were augmented by her two sisters and a niece in the Congrégation and two step-nieces, one at the Hôpital-General and the other with the Ursulines at Quebec.

### A Separate Breed

If geographical location, social background, and connections within the Church did not make a superior, what qualities distinguished a superior from the other Congrégation nuns — the majority — who spent their entire existences, far removed from the higher administrative echelons, either teaching or serving as labouring *sœurs*? First and foremost, as the above description of the institution so graphically illustrates, its operation required an exceptional individual: a person at once possessing administrative and organizational abilities, political acumen, and a great deal of endurance. An examination of the lengthy and productive working lives of the 12 superiors serves to illustrate this argument.

From the very inception of their religious lives, future superiors were distinct. For one, they entered religion at an age far younger than most

104 Raymond Douville, "Pierre Garreau dit Saint-Onge", in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 4, p. 287; Jean-Pierre Asselin, "Marie-Catherine Thibierge", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 3, p. 625.

105 Pierre Le Ber, on his death in 1707, left the community an annuity and cash bequest as well as a portrait of Marguerite Bourgeoys (now restored and hanging in the CND museum in Old Montreal). See Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 3, p. 36; vol. 5, pp. 71–72. Jeanne Le Ber, Pierre's sister, and the institution's recluse, made numerous bequests in the form of a chapel, cash, and a foundation to support the education of poor girls. See Cornelius Jaenen, "Jeanne Le Ber", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 2, p. 376; ANQM, gr. Basset dit Deslauriers, "Convention entre Jeanne le Ber de Ville Marie et le CND", October 4, 1695; gr. Adhémar, "Fondation d'une messe par Jeanne le Ber", October 25, 1708; gr. Lepailleur, "Fondation par Jean leber à la CND", September 9, 1714.

Congrégation *sœurs* (the average age was 22 years) for the period examined (Table 9). Certainly, the fact that Marie Barbier, Marguerite Le Moyne, Catherine Charly, and Marguerite Trottier entered the Congrégation at a much earlier age than the norm (at age 14) can be explained: at the time of their profession there were no constitutional stipulations in place regulating a novice's age. This, however, does not account for the consistently early age of the remaining superiors (16.4 years on average) who entered the Congrégation after the acceptance of the 1698 constitution and the establishment of the rule that a girl had to be at least 16 to enter the convent.<sup>106</sup>

One can only speculate as to why these women entered the religious life at such a young age.<sup>107</sup> On one hand, external factors could have contributed to this decision. Many of these women came from areas where Congrégation schools were in place and probably would have attended them. Marta Danylewycz, for example, has noted how in the nineteenth century the Congrégation *sœurs* utilized the classroom as a focal point for recruitment, and there is no reason to believe that this practice had not originated in an earlier period.<sup>108</sup> Perhaps, in these classrooms, teachers may have noticed and cultivated the fledgling intelligence of these girls and their leadership qualities and, in turn, encouraged them to choose the religious life. On the other hand, however, personal factors may have been more crucial to a decision made perhaps against the wishes of families and friends. The lives of the saints are replete with tales of young, head-strong girls disobeying the wishes of their parents, often running away to pursue spiritual inclinations — saints like Teresa of Avila, Catherine of Siena, and Catherine of Genoa — archetypal patterns long established within Church tradition, accessible to any like-minded girl to read and follow.<sup>109</sup>

Once these girls had professed as teaching nuns, unlike the labouring *sœurs*, they would have been sent out into the missions, where many of these future superiors began to distinguish themselves. We have seen how, at the age of 30, Marie Raizenne was recalled to the mother house from the Sainte-Famille mission, which she had been delegated

106 AAM, 525.101, 698–1, *Règlements*, article 1, p. 4, stipulates that a girl had to be at least 16 years old to enter the institution.

107 Most recent works exploring the question as to why women entered convents include Joanne Baker, "Female Monasticism and Family Strategy: The Guises and Saint Pierre de Reims", *Sixteenth-Century Journal*, vol. 28 (1997), pp. 1091–1108; Jutta Gisela Sperling, *Convents and the Body Politic in Renaissance Venice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

108 See Danylewycz, *Taking the Veil*, pp. 116–118, for a discussion of recruiting patterns among the Congrégation de Notre-Dame in the nineteenth century.

109 For example, O. Steggink, "Saint Teresa of Avila", *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1967), vol. 13, p. 1014; P. L. Hug, "St. Catherine of Genoa", *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 3, pp. 254–259.

**Table 9: Age at Entry, Congrégation de Notre-Dame Sœurs and Superiors, 1693–1796**

	Average age
Superiors	16.4
Sœurs, 1790	19.4
Sœurs, 1693–1796	21.5

*Sources:* See sources for Appendix A, “Congrégation de Notre-Dame Sœurs and Superiors, 1693–1796”; Gray, “A Fragile Authority”, appendix 3.4, “Congrégation de Notre-Dame Professed Nuns, 1790”, and appendix 7, “Congrégation de Notre-Dame Professed Nuns, 1693–1796”.

to re-establish. Subsequently, she was elected to the administrative council, on which she served with some impressive success until 1769, when she was sent to rescue the Lower Town school at Quebec. Like Marie Raizenne, Marie Barbier, in 1685 at only 22 years of age, also became known for her work in the missions as an exemplary teacher of the young girls of the Sainte-Famille community. About this time, she also distinguished herself for her intense spirituality, obvious from the beginning of her life as a nun, but which became particularly pronounced at the Lower Town mission at Quebec from 1687 to 1691.<sup>110</sup> Catherine Charly worked at this same Lower Town mission, not merely as a teaching *sœur*, but as an assistant to the mission’s superior, at least before she had reached the age of 36 in 1702.<sup>111</sup> Very early in her working life, Marguerite Trottier also proved to be a woman of diverse talents. In 1694, at the age of 16, she worked as a missionary at Château Richer. She returned to the community in 1705 and became its *dépositaire* when she was only 27. She remained in this position for 12 years until her election in 1722. As the primary manager of the convent’s finances, she also demonstrated editorial skills; she collected and transmitted information to Glandelet for his work on the life of Marguerite Bourgeoys. This facility with finances, however, was not exceptional to Marguerite Trottier: at least two other superiors besides herself and Marie Raizenne — Marie-Elisabeth Guillet and Marguerite

110 ASSP, ms. 1233, “Mémoires sur la ve de la sœur de l’assomption”, pp. 22, 26, 31–49. For a more detailed examination of Marie Barbier’s spirituality, see Gray, “A Fragile Authority” and “Imaging a Colonial Saint: Some Reflections on Representation and the Individual”, *Studies in Religion/ Sciences religieuses*, vol. 25, no. 2 (2006).

111 Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 1, pp. 329, 233.



Piot de Langloiserie — managed the community's finances for at least a part of their working lives before first being elected.<sup>112</sup>

No sources remain that are indicative of the formative working lives of the remaining superiors. What is clear, however, is that ten of these women had distinguished themselves enough in their early working lives to serve on the institution's administrative council before their first elections.<sup>113</sup> Only Marguerite Amyot and Marguerite Trottier do not appear in any record as council members before their elections.

Superiors spent varying periods in these administrative positions. For example, unlike Marie Raizenne, some could not claim a full six years' experience in administration before their elections. Marie Barbier, for example, returned from the Lower Town mission in 1692 to become Marguerite Bourgeois's assistant for only one year before her election in the subsequent year. Véronique Brunet dit L'Estang also acted as assistant to Marie-Josèphe Mauge-Garreau for only one year before her first term as superior in 1772, while Marie-Elisabeth Guillet served as Marguerite Le Moyne's assistant for only two years before becoming superior in 1734.

Most future superiors, however, served longer stints on council, for this administrative experience must have been not only an apprenticeship, but also a testing ground for the superiorship. As council members, *sœurs* were required to work closely with the superior. Not only did they report to her concerning the workings of the convent; they also were required to support her in her duties and help her to deal with all matters not specifically within the purview of the assembly.<sup>114</sup> This period of time would have given the *sœurs* direct insight into the inner workings of the position, the convent itself, and its administration.

Marie-Josèphe Mauge-Garreau spent three years on council before her election; Marie-Anne Thibierge, Marie-Angèlique Lefebvre-Angers, and Marguerite Le Moyne served four years; Marguerite Piot de Langloiserie acted as mistress of novices for five years, subsequently holding down the position of *dépositaire* for another six years before her election in 1751; and Catherine Charly spent a full nine years on council in diverse positions before her first election in 1708.

112 *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 124; vol. 3, p. 205. For an outline of Marguerite Trottier's administrative life, see Gray, "A Fragile Authority", appendix 3.8, "Congrégation de Notre-Dame Superiors: Administrative Experience, 1693–1796". Charles de Glandelet, *Life of Sister Marguerite Bourgeois*, trans. Florence Quigley, CND (Montreal: Congrégation de Notre-Dame, 1994). Officially, the community's *dépositaire* was not a council member and was not involved in council decisions unless simultaneously elected to a council position.

113 Gray, "A Fragile Authority", appendix 3.8, "Congrégation de Notre-Dame Superiors: Administrative Experience, 1693–1796".

114 AAM, 525.101, 698–1, *Réglements*, article 32, pp. 70, 71, 72.

Obviously, all council members did not become superiors. Marie-Ursule Adhémar de Lantagnac, Sœur Sainte-Claire, for example, served on council for 11 years of her working life and was never elected superior; nor was Catherine Dugast, Sœur de-la-Croix, for all of her 24 years either on this administrative body or as the community's *dépositaire*.<sup>115</sup> The true difference between these superiors, mission *sœurs*, and council members was, of course, the election — and it was never a reward for service in one's fading days. Rather, it occurred almost invariably at the prime of an individual's life. The average age for a first superiorship was 46, an age at which most of these women had work experience in the missions and on the administrative council firmly behind them and healthy, productive days ahead. Eight of the twelve superiors were in their forties on their first election: only Marie Barbier and Marguerite Le Moyne were significantly younger — Marie Barbier was not even 30 years old and Marguerite Le Moyne 36, while Marie-Anne Thibierge and Marguerite Amyot were both well over 50 at the time of their first elections to the position. Sources do not provide a direct explanation for the early ages at which both Marie Barbier and Marguerite Le Moyne were elected. From their working lives, however, one cannot discount precocity as a factor in the religious lives of these women.

One also cannot discard the possibility that perhaps certain superiors were elected because, quite simply, no one else was available to fill the position. Due to the absence of detailed qualitative sources enumerating the working records of nuns who did not become superiors, however, this is virtually impossible to determine. Nevertheless, the more the subsequent working lives of the 12 superiors are examined, the more obvious it becomes that these individuals were indeed elected because of their exceptional qualities. All superiors were re-elected to the position at some point during their lives.<sup>116</sup> In fact, with the exception of Catherine Charly, whose first superiorship lasted four years, from 1708 to 1712, every superior held the position for at least an initial two consecutive terms. Such a short first term in Catherine Charly's case, however, was not a reflection of her performance: she was re-elected in 1717, after serving one year as an assistant.

115 For Marie-Ursule Adhémar de Lantagnac, see Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 5, pp. 194–195; ACND, 3A/02, *Registre des Dépenses et Recettes générales* (1753–1793), 1776–1783, 1785–1786, 1787–1788; ANQM, gr. Descheneaux, February 1, 1785; May 4, 1787; May 4, 1789; December 22, 1788. For Catherine Dugast, see ACND, 3A/02, *Registre des Dépenses et Recettes générales* (1753–1793), 1753–1757, 1762–1768, 1772–1784; Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 5, pp. 129–130, 121–122, 138, 176; ANQM, gr. Panet de Méru, August 8, 1769; December 20, 1769. For the profile of these two women, see Gray, “A Fragile Authority”, appendix 7, “Congrégation de Notre-Dame, Professed Nuns, 1693–1796”.

116 Gray, “A Fragile Authority”, appendix 3.8, “Congrégation de Notre-Dame Superiors: Administrative Experience, 1693–1796”.

Notably and exceptionally, Marguerite Le Moyne served as superior for ten years for her first election, six for her second, and seven for her final stint as superior.<sup>117</sup> Four other superiors, like Marie Raizenne, were re-elected and returned to the helm after their first superiorship and a brief respite, during which time they invariably served on the community's council. This was true of Catherine Charly, as already noted, as well as Marguerite Piot de Langloiserie, Véronique Brunet dit L'Estang, and Marguerite Le Moyne. The latter superior is most worthy of mention: for 28 years, from 1698 until 1734, she was elected superior intermittently, serving in between these superiorships either as assistant or as mistress of novices.

Constitutional stipulations determined the length of a superiorship, and no woman, without the permission of the bishop, could remain in the position for more than 12 years. However, after a superior had handed over the keys and the seal of the community to a successor, her working life was another measure of her talent, for no *Congrégation sœur* was ever retired from administrative life immediately after her final term as superior.<sup>118</sup> With the exception of Catherine Charly, who died while in office in 1719, and Marie-Elisabeth Guillet, who passed away a few months subsequent to the end of her superiorship in 1739, each remained in an active administrative position, some even to the final days of their lives. Marguerite Amyot served for two years as a councillor until her death in 1747; Marie-Angèlique Lefebvre-Angers appeared on council until she passed away in 1766; while Marie-Anne Thibierge acted as an assistant to Marguerite Piot de Langloiserie for three years before her death in 1757.

To be sure, some superiors' stints on council after a final term as superior proved brief, and often for no apparent reason. This was true of Marie Raizenne. She remained on council for only three recorded years between the end of her final term in 1796 and her death in 1811. Was she too ill or fatigued to continue holding responsible positions? The sources are silent concerning this. On the other hand, however, Marguerite Le Moyne's brief four years on council after her final term are perhaps more easily explained, for they followed a very long working life in the upper administrative echelons of the community. Finally, certain superiors whose terms on council were brief applied their talents to other areas. Marguerite Trottier, for example, sat on council for only one year after her superiorship. Then, in 1733, at the request of Bishop Dosquet, she was sent to rescue the failing

117 The normal length of one term was three years. See AAM, 525.101, 698–1, *Règlements*, article 34, p. 76.

118 *Ibid.*, pp. 76, 78; Gray, "A Fragile Authority", appendix 3.8, "Congrégation de Notre-Dame Superiors: Administrative Experience, 1693–1796".

Louisbourg mission. Véronique Brunet dit L'Estang acted as councillor for only three years after her final term (1790–1793). Until she passed away in 1810, however, she was renowned for her assistance of the community's domestics and for her work promoting the education of poor girls.<sup>119</sup>

The remaining three superiors experienced long and distinguished years on council after a final term as superior. Marguerite Piot de Langloiserie served on council for nine years, while Marie-Josèphe Mauge-Garreau acted as either mistress of novices or councillor for 13 years, until her death in 1785. But no one could match Marie Barbier's record of post-superiorship service. Although this mystic's final term as superior ended in 1698, her record of service continued. She was elected as either councillor or assistant for at least 18 years until 1731, eight years before her death in 1739.<sup>120</sup>

### Conclusion

On the surface, most superiors of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame were barely distinguishable from the other *sœurs* — either teaching or labouring — who entered this institution throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in terms of place of birth, connections to the Church, and, most notably, social position. Like Marie Raizenne, Congrégation de Notre-Dame superiors predominantly emerged from the lower stratum of colonial society. As such, they offer a striking contrast to those women of the Hôpital-Général de Québec, studied by Jan Noel, who, in her view, were chosen for the position due to the wealth and connections at their command.

This examination of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame, as well as the working lives of the superiors who ran it, however, indicates that more than just wealth and connections were required to run the institution. Its complex and demanding nature, the superior's duties with respect to it, and the lengthy and productive working lives of these women testify to the crucial role of exceptional personal qualities — administrative, organizational, and leadership skills, political acumen, and endurance — in the enactment of the duties of a superior.

This does not mean to argue that the superiors of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame did not possess connections of their own that were potentially useful to their position. In fact, some of them most certainly did.<sup>121</sup> This

119 Andrée Désilets, "Marguerite Trottier", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 3, p. 629, and "Véronique Brunet dit L'Estang", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 5, pp. 117–118; Sainte-Henriette, *Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, vol. 4, p. 125, letter of Bishop Dosquet, n.d., and vol. 6, p. 205.

120 Gray, "A Fragile Authority", appendix 3.8, "Congrégation de Notre-Dame Superiors: Administrative Experience, 1693–1796".

121 *Ibid.*, especially chap. 3.

perspective, however, does not discount the crucial role of exceptional personal characteristics in bearing the weight of this *pesante charge*.

What ultimately emerges from this study, on one hand, is a broader perception of the eighteenth-century colony — a portrait of a milieu in which wealth, patronage, and connections existed side by side with a situation in which an individual's personal and exceptional qualities not only were recognized, but mattered in this rank-conscious society. On the other hand, it also demonstrates, in spite of the historical turn to the practice of the “new” cultural history, the persistent utility of empirical social history in historical analysis.<sup>122</sup> Of course, empirical methodologies alone would have revealed nothing more than the bare bones of the lives of these women — their place of birth and social group. Yet, when augmented by biographical and institutional analysis, empirical methodologies have served to deepen our understanding of not only the women in this analysis and their relationship to their positions, but also the wider society of which they were an integral part.

## APPENDIX A

### **Congrégation de Notre-Dame Superiors, 1693–1796**

In the following alphabetical list of professed nuns, the first line gives the family and religious names of each nun. The second provides the place and date of birth (B), followed by the place and date of death (D). Line three contains the date the individual entered the convent (ER), followed by the date of profession (P). The final line gives the names of both parents, as well as the profession of the father. Where data are missing, the sources could not be found.

#### **Amyot, Marguerite, Sœur de la Présentation**

**B** Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, January 5, 1675 **D** Montreal, August 1, 1747

**ER** 1693 **P** June 25, 1698

Daughter of Gentien Amyot (locksmith) and Marguerite Poulin

#### **Barbier, Marie, Sœur de l'Assomption**

**B** Montreal, May 1, 1663 **D** Montreal, May 20, 1739

**ER** 1678 **P** June 25, 1698

Daughter of Gilbert Barbier (habitant) and Catherine Delavaux

#### **Brunet dit L'Estang, Véronique, Sœur Sainte-Rose**

**B** Pointe-Claire, January 13, 1726 **D** Canada, June 12, 1810

**ER** 1744 **P** June 22, 1746

Daughter of Jean Brunet dit L'Estang (voyageur/habitant) and Marguerite Dubois

122 Sewell, “Whatever Happened to the ‘Social’ in Social History?”, p. 209.

**Charly Saint-Ange, Catherine, Sœur de Saint-Sacrement**

**B** Montreal, June 3, 1666 **D** Montreal, January 25, 1719

**ER** 1679 **P** June 25, 1698

Daughter of André Charly dit Saint-Ange (baker) and Marie Dumesnil

**Guillet, Marie-Élisabeth, Sœur Sainte-Barbe**

**B** Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pérade, September 3, 1684 **D** Montreal, October 23, 1739

Daughter of Mathurin Guillet (merchant) and Marie-Charlotte Lemoyne

**Lefebvre Angers, Marie-Angélique, Sœur Saint-Simon**

**B** Montreal, October 25, 1710 **D** Canada, April 28, 1766

**ER** 1726 **P** November 21, 1730

Daughter of Jean-Baptiste Lefebvre-Angers (merchant) and Geneviève-Françoise Faucher

**Le Moyne, Marguerite, Sœur du Saint-Esprit**

**B** Montreal, February 3, 1664 **D** Montreal, February 21, 1746

**ER** 1680 **P** June 25, 1698

Daughter of Jacques Le Moyne de Sainte-Hélène (merchant) and Mathurine Godé

**Maugue-Garreau, Marie-Josèphe, Sœur de l'Assomption**

**B** Montreal, December 29, 1720 **D** Montreal, August 16, 1785

**ER** 1738 **P** December 22, 1740

Daughter of Pierre Garreau Saint-Onge (merchant) and Marie-Anne Maugue

**Piot de Langloiserie, Marguerite-Suzanne, Sœur Saint-Hippolyte**

**B** Varennes, February 10, 1702 **D** Montreal, February 10, 1781

**ER** 1720 **P** April 29, 1722

Daughter of Charles-Gaspard Piot de Langloiserie (officer) and Marie-Thérèse Duguay de Broisbriant

**Raizenne, Marie, Sœur Saint-Ignace**

**B** Lac-des-Deux-Montagnes, July 14, 1735 **D** April 20, 1811

**ER** 1752 **P** January 25, 1754

Daughter of Ignace Rising (farmer) and Marie-Elisabeth Nims

**Thibierge, Marie-Anne, Sœur Sainte-Pélagie**

**B** Quebec, May 15, 1690 **D** Montreal, March 21, 1757

Daughter of Jacques Thibierge (gunsmith) and Marie-Anne Joly

**Trottier, Marguerite, Sœur Saint-Joseph**

**B** Batiscan, April 21, 1678 **D** Quebec, October 6, 1744

**ER 1692 P** August 6, 1698

Daughter of Jean-Baptiste Trottier (wheelright) and Geneviève de Lafond

*Sources:* Compiled from ACND, *Registre général*, a complete list of all of the entrants into the institution from the beginning to the present day; ACND, 3A/12, *Contrats de Profession*. Supplemental sources include: Louis Pelletier, *Le clergé en la Nouvelle-France. Étude démographique et repertoire biographique* (Montreal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1993); PRDH, Université de Montréal. Spellings of names as they appear in the archival documents were retained, except for those individuals who appear in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. Marguerite Bourgeoys, the foundress of the institution, was not included in the list, as she was never elected to the position. No entry or profession dates were available for Marie-Elisabeth Guillet or Marie-Anne Thibierge.