

## Sr. Margot lived Gospel as radical educator

Socialist, activist and militant. These are some of the words used to describe Sr. Margaret Mary (Margot) Power, RSCJ. But she always just considered herself an educator and a religious, said her sister, Sr. Mary Power, RSCJ.

Sr. Margaret died Feb. 25 at age 96. She was born in Montreal in 1908 and baptized at St. Patrick's church. Her family later moved to Ascension of Our Lord Parish. She earned her BA from McGill in 1929 and entered the Society of the Religious of the Sacred Heart in 1933, making final profession in 1940.

For more than 30 years, she worked as an educator in RSCJ schools, and eventually served as headmistress of the Sacred Heart School of Montreal. When Sr. Margaret retired from private girls education in 1973 at age 65, she took on a much larger classroom, Little Burgundy. There, she became known as "Margot," Sr. Mary said.

She embraced a life of poverty and simplicity and became a community educator. Her new lifestyle had been inspired by a visit to Rome three years earlier, when she met Dominican Gustavo Gutiérrez, a pioneer of Liberation Theology.

Back in Little Burgundy, she rented a storefront and established the *Organisation d'aide aux assistés sociaux* (ODAS). Its mission was to educate welfare recipients about their rights and responsibilities, and to develop within them a sense of their rightful place in society, Sr. Mary explained.

"At the first meeting she held for ODAS, there was one person," recalled her 84-year-old sister. "By the time she left, there were 100 people meeting every Thursday evening."

Sr. Margot fought for systemic change and never hesitated to speak her mind, said Fr. Ernie Schibli, a founder of the Social Justice Committee. They collaborated on social justice projects and set up the Social Action Office



Sr. Margot Power, RSCJ, opens the door of her Little Burgundy flat in the early 1990s.

of the Archdiocese of Montreal in the 1970s.

Sr. Margot's work among the people was more than social work, said Schibli. "She was a sister and she was always tying in the Gospel message," he said.

In recognition of her work, she was awarded honorary doctorates from the United Theological College of McGill University (1980) and Concordia University (1994).

Sr. Margaret retired at age 87 and lived in the RSCJ residence in Montreal North before moving to the Halifax infirmary three years ago. At her request, her body was donated to Dalhousie University for medical research. A memorial mass will be held in the chapel of the Sacred Heart School of Montreal March 31 at 5 p.m.

---

*Sr. Margot's work among the people was more than social work. 'She was a sister and she was always tying in the Gospel message.'*

---

— Fr. Ernie Schibli

Laura Ieraci