

Antoinette Guinebrière, FCSCJ (1903 – 1973)

Born on October 12, 1903, in Saint-Hilaire-du-Bois (department of Maine-et-Loire), in France, Antoinette attends the grade school of her municipality, a school run by the secularized sisters of the Filles de la Charité du Sacré-Coeur de Jésus (Daughters of Charity of the Sacred Heart). In November 1923 she enters this community and takes the name of Sister Renée du St-Sacrement.



She feels a call to come to Canada and in October 1926 arrives in Sherbrooke where her community was already established since 1911. She graduates in Education from the Institute of Education of Montreal and from the University of Montreal. She teaches at the Scholasticate-École Normale (Teacher's College) of her community that opened in Sherbrooke in 1940 and shortly after is appointed Academic Director for the FCSJ, role that she fulfills till 1969.

Since 1942 she works at improving the learning of written and spoken French in primary schools, by using a global approach. This approach stresses the ability to learn rather than the traditional imparting of knowledge. Sister Renée develops the active global approach, later on called the “dynamic method of reading”, that is officially recognized by Quebec’s Department of Public Education in 1953. Between 1964 and 1969, the name “dynamic method” is changed into “dynamic education”, to signify the new “spirit” in education rather than a new learning method. This type of education is applied in more than 2,800 classes in Quebec and also recognized in other Canadian provinces for the teaching of French in francophone minorities’ schools and in immersion classes.

A strong team of FCSCJ teachers and lay collaborators work with her and accomplish great things under her guidance, also after her death. Her remarkable contribution to history of education in Quebec is recognized by the Département de l’Instruction publique, who appoints her Commander of the Order of Merit. In 1967 she also is awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Sherbrooke. Sister Renée is the first woman to receive such honor. She is appointed member of the Catholic Committee of the Quebec’s Conseil supérieur de l’Éducation in 1967 and will stay on this committee until her death on April 8, 1973. She is remembered as a woman of profound faith and of tenacious and bold action.

LINK: <http://www.fcscj.net/accueil.php> - http://www.fcscj.org/sitemonger_angl/index.html