

On the boat again to Ramea

Missionary sister
holds breath as
she prepares for
island journey

BY SISTER FRANCES MOLLOY, P.B.V.M.

*"I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my
heart."*

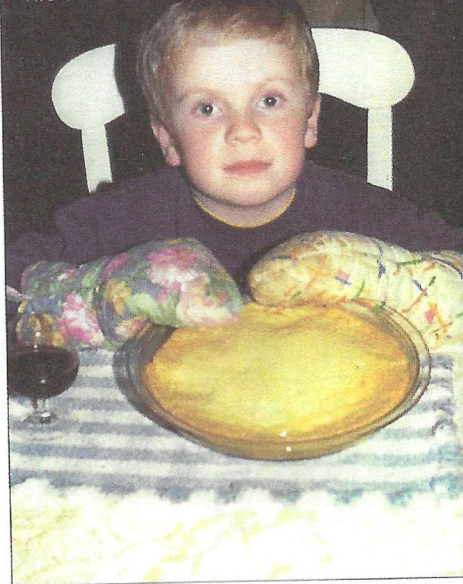
This is the refrain that rang through my mind and heart as I answered the call eight years ago to minister on the southwest coast of Newfoundland and Labrador as regional coordinator of catechetics.

Bishop Raymond Lahey of the Diocese of St. George's, communicated to my congregational leadership team the need for this ministry in the communities of Port Aux Basques, Margaree, Isle Aux Morts, Burgeo and Ramea—communities with no Catholic schools. Since then, Newfoundland and Labrador has lost its denominational school system in all of our parishes.

I began my ministry in September 1996 after I retired from teaching. I committed myself as coordinator for three years, but here I am eight years later, singing a different refrain, "On the Road Again," or holding my breath rocking to and fro on the boat to Ramea.

My ministry in these areas is both a challenge and an adventure, for at times there is a possibility of getting stuck in the snow on the Burgeo highway or having to travel through high winds in the Wreckhouse area to Port Aux Basques. But most of all, it has been a privilege and a blessing to be among people in small, isolated

John Mauger, a Grade 2 student in Port Aux Basques, proudly shows the bread he made in First Eucharist class with the help of his mom.



CATHOLIC MISSIONS IN CANADA



Sister Frances Molloy, p.b.v.m., presents catechetical program to Gerard and Rowena Doyle and their children, Jordon and Keshia.

communities who cherish their faith in the midst of many obstacles

The two most isolated areas to which I travel are Ramea and Burgeo. Ramea is a small island with a population that has decreased from 1,500 to 650.

Burgeo, an hour-and-fifteen-minute boat ride from Ramea, had a population of 3,000 and currently is 1,750. With the closure of the fishery, many young families left the area to seek employment.

The people in these communities are suffering economically and emotionally with the outmigration of families.

Because of the scanty Catholic population in Burgeo and Ramea, and the isolation of these communities, the Catholic people are

deprived of many of the services available in a regular parish. A priest from St. George's parish comes once a month for Sunday Mass. However, this is not always possible during the winter months when the Burgeo highway is blocked with snow.

When Mass is not celebrated, the small group of Catholics come together for Liturgy of the Word. This is one of the ways they endeavour to keep alive the spirit of their Catholic faith.

As a regional coordinator of catechetics, I work with families scattered over a large area. About 165 children are involved in home-based and parish catechesis.

I use the *Born of the Spirit* catechetical series which enables families to share their faith togeth-

er and to share stories, especially those from Scripture. I use the resource in a variety of settings because the Catholic families are scattered.



Beaming First Communicant:
Patricia O'Quinn of Port Aux Basques.

In some areas, I work with families one-on-one. In other areas, we come together in larger groups or in small family clusters. The family resource is a wonderful way for families to be formed in the faith by prayer, ritual and Scripture.

Since my initial call to Burgeo, Ramea and the Port Aux Basques area, my ministry has expanded to include Codroy Valley. With the demise of the denominational educational system in Newfoundland and Labrador in 1998, Bishop Lahey asked me to be a resource person to help parents begin home-based catechesis.

At present, 82 children are involved in family and parish catechesis. Lay catechist leaders have emerged in the Codroy Valley and in Port Aux Basques who generously give of their gifts and time to help the parents with family catechesis and to coordinate the parish activities related to the program.

I continue to assist leaders and parents in any way I can in these areas with the catechetical program and sacramental preparation.

With the continued movement of families from the remote areas of Burgeo and Ramea, there are fewer children

in the catechetical program.

My ministry in these two areas has changed to becoming a "presence" to Catholics, to encourage them in their faith, to celebrate Liturgy of the Word on my visits, to visit the seniors and the sick, and to be with them in times of celebration, death and tragedy. All of these continue to be graced moments for me!

The Catholic families on the southwest coast of Newfoundland and Labrador are deeply grateful to Catholic Missions In Canada, not only for providing funds to purchase the catechetical resources, but also for funding to maintain the churches.

Oblate Bishop Douglas Crosby, our new bishop in the St. George's diocese, leaves us with a message at the end of his Friday fax: Go! Be GOOD News! I hope that I live that in my ministry on the southwest coast of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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