

Memories & Mirth

Baker for the Motherhouse

Photo & text courtesy of the Western Province Archives



Sr. Mary Ernesta at work in the bakery of the former motherhouse.

The following is from an account by Sr. Mary Ernesta Gander as told to Sr. Delphine Wedmore. It is taken from **SCCs Touching the Heart of America**.

When Sister Mary Ernesta Gander entered the convent in 1919, the motherhouse in Wilmette had just been built three years earlier. Since the chapel was not yet finished, they had Holy Mass in the gym. A priest from St. Joseph Parish came to say the Mass, and they could always tell when Fr. Neismader, the pastor, was coming by the shuffle of his feet.

Everything was new and shining. There were no screens in the chapel windows, so there were many flies and even a bird came in and flew around during the Investing ceremony (on May 24, 1920).

There were gas lights all along the corridors and in the chapel. The Sister Procurator would light them, but only those near those gas lights got enough light to see.

With the start of her novitiate, Sr. Mary Ernesta was sent to work in the laundry and also in the bakery whenever the Sister there was sick. Sr. Assisia Riedel was in charge of the laundry and the bakery, but it was too much to handle. So, Sr. Mary Ernesta was asked to take charge of the bakery. She was only a novice, but she stuttered, "I'll, I'll try."

So she began, and she learned very much about baking. Sr. Jerome Wends gave her the section of the daily paper on baking to read.

There were 135 Sisters in the house for whom to bake, and Sr. Mary Ernesta loved to bake. She also made altar breads and baked two or three times a week for the whole house. She made over a hundred loaves: some white, rye, and brown bread. Besides that, she helped in the laundry and had to leave at times to make sweet dough for biscuits and large buns for supper.

The novices helped in the bakery and laundry, and the young Sisters also helped. They had to buy very much flour and had to sift it all. The loaves of bread were packed on shelves in the cupboard. Each evening, someone from the kitchen would come to get all the bread needed for the next day.

To this day, whenever fresh bread appears on the table, one or the other Sister at Sacred Heart Convent will reminisce about the delicious baked goods made by Sr. Mary Ernesta. †



Sr. Caritas Archer, narrator of this account

Was My Face Red!

Photo courtesy of the Western Province Archives

Text taken from **SCCs Touching the Heart of America**

Many years ago, I was in New Orleans. It was a hot day in September, and I was wearing our original habit, so I was really perspiring. With me there were 65 little five-year-olds. I had a very simple lesson for them. They were to find their green crayons and color the grass; find the blue crayon and color the sky, and color the lady's dress.

In no time one little boy was sitting there, his work all finished. He had his arms folded, was looking up and didn't know what to do. I went over to him. "Chrissy," I said, "what's the matter?"

"I got a problem, Sister," he said.

"What's the trouble?"

"I can't get finished," he said.

I looked at the picture. "Why, Chrissy," I said, "you're more than finished. Look at that lady's face! It's as red as your crayon. No one has a red face like that."

"Uhhh-huhh, Sister. I was looking at you the whole time. But now I don't know how to finish. I don't know what color to make the legs!" †