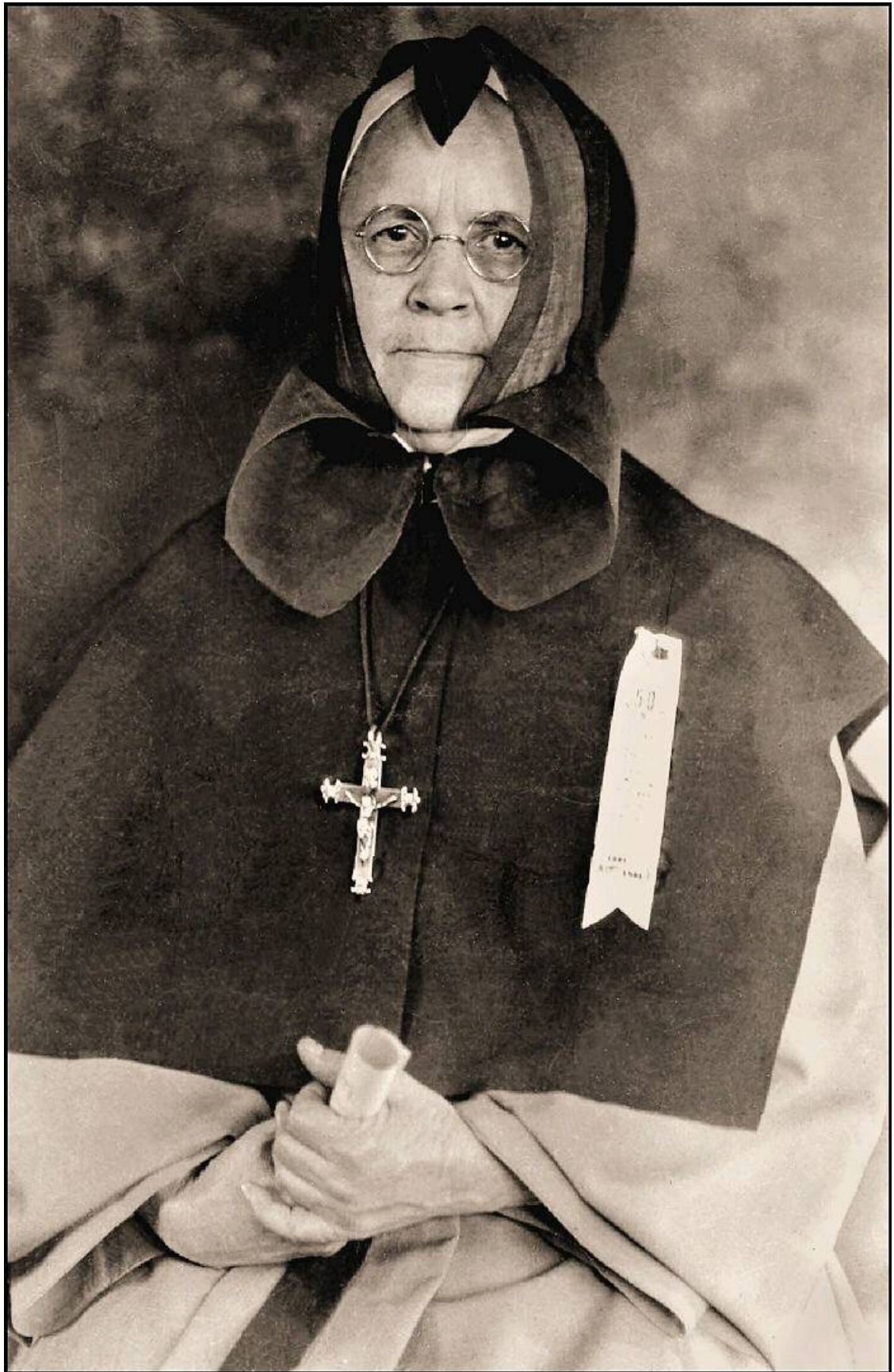


**Face of our history:
Sister Rose-de-Lima
Bonneau helping the
most deprived.**

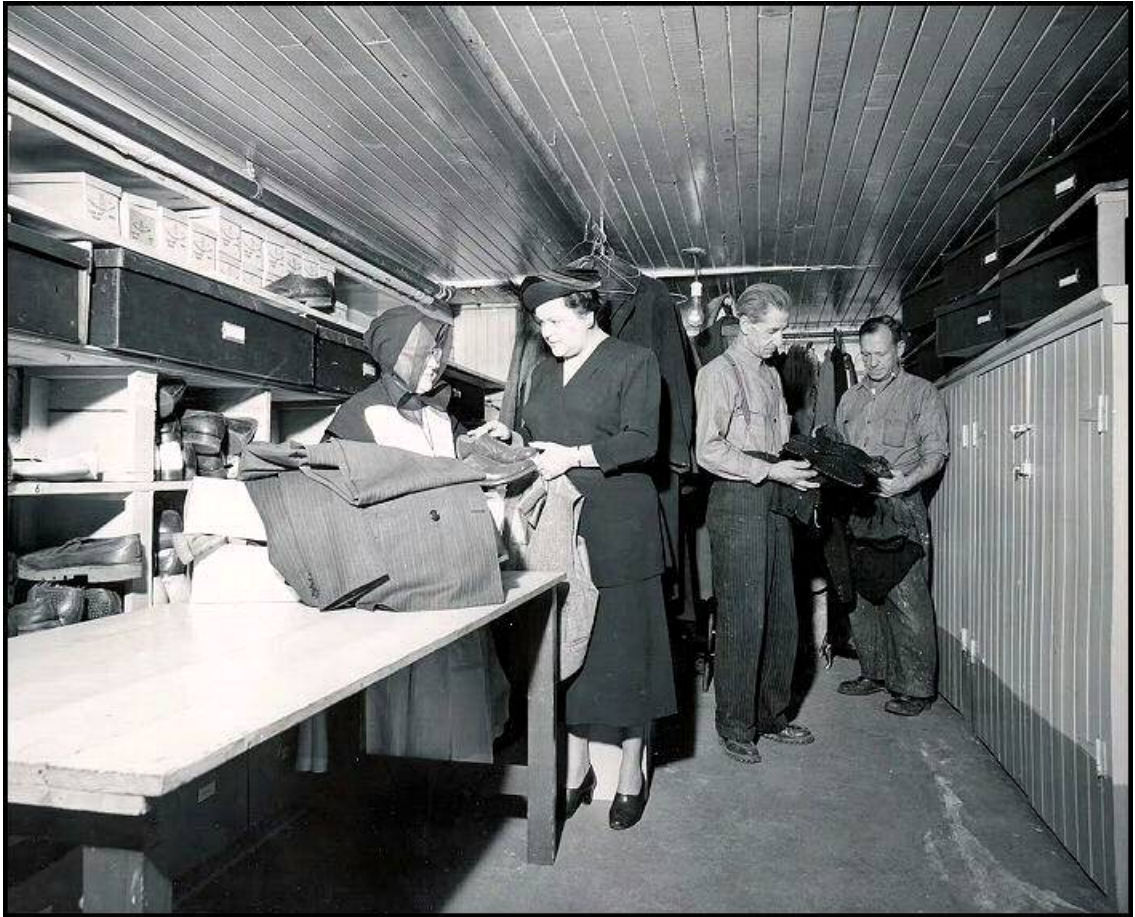
1. A tireless sister



Sister Rose-de-Lima Bonneau during her golden wedding anniversary in 1931. Photo courtesy, Archives of the Grey Nuns of Montreal: L035-J,1,1,2-p01.

Born in 1859 in Iberville (Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu), Rose-de-Lima Bonneau was the daughter of Jules Bonneau, a blacksmith, and Émélie Granger. At the age of 22, she took her perpetual vows, which made her a Sister of Charity of Montreal. More commonly known as the Grey Nuns, this congregation has been dedicated, since its founding by Marguerite d'Youville in 1737, to helping the poor. This mission is at the heart of Sister Bonneau's commitment. Valiant, she proved to be a unifying, efficient manager with great compassion for her fellow man. She helped expand the Saint-Antoine-de-Longueuil asylum at the beginning of the 20th century. According to the story, she miraculously revitalized the institution. By placing a statue of Saint Joseph above empty barrels, she caused an unexpected delivery of bags of flour! Looking after the poor and the destitute, her many experiences prepared her for her life's work: Accueil Bonneau.

2. Working for the homeless



The work of the Vestiaire des pauvres, 1950. Photo courtesy of the Grey Nuns of Montreal Archives : L035-J,1,1,2-p44.

In 1910, Rose-de-Lima Bonneau became the director of “l’Œuvre des sans foyer, le Vestiaire des pauvres”, today l’Accueil Bonneau. Founded in 1877 and located on rue Saint-Paul Est since 1904, the Work distributes food to people in need and provides them, if necessary, with clothing and shoes. For the nun, this was a challenge that

was worthy of her. In addition to securing financial assistance from local merchants, Sister Bonneau obtained food from farmers who came to sell their products at the Bonsecours market. Sensitive to the inconvenience of some who did not dare to come in person, the nun brought food and clothing to their homes. When the economic crisis hit in 1929, Sister Bonneau refused no one, doubling the number of meals distributed. When she died in 1934, she left a vivid memory: that of a generous woman who would stop at nothing to help the most deprived.

3. A resilient work



Photo courtesy, Grey Nuns of Montreal Archives : L035-Y1B.

“I’m going to Sister Bonneau’s,” can still be heard decades after the nun’s death. The institution was renamed Accueil Bonneau in 1968. The challenges were many. Growing problems related to drug addiction and the gradual deinstitutionalization of formerly institutionalized patients led many people without resources to the streets. To adapt to these new realities, Accueil Bonneau continued to offer shelter and meals, but also added social

services to help homeless people find stability and a home. On June 9, 1998, a terrible gas explosion destroyed Accueil Bonneau, killing three people and injuring about ten others. In times of misfortune, solidarity prevailed and led to the reconstruction of the institution. Following the example of Sister Bonneau's extraordinary ability to adapt during the 1929 crisis, charitable work has been reinventing itself since the 19th century.

Research and writing by historian Maude Bouchard-Dupont

<https://www.journaldemontreal.com/2022/02/05/visages-de-notre-histoire-sur-rose-de-lima-bonneau-au-secours-des-plus-demunis>

More information

Rose of Lima Bonneau (b. 14 dec. 1859 in Iberville (Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu), Lower Canada - died. 3 Aug. 1934 at the community's mother house in Montreal. She was the daughter of Jules Bonneau born 1833, a blacksmith, and Émélie Granger.

=====