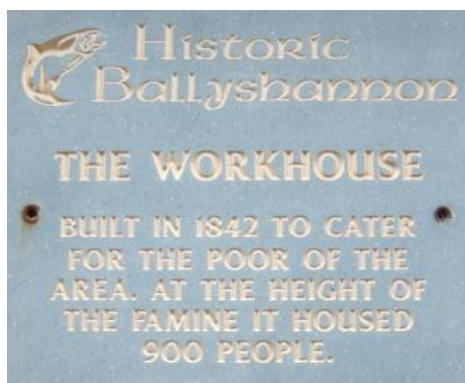


In 1890 the Sisters began nursing in the fever hospital attached to St. Brigid's Workhouse in the town. Ballyshannon Community Care facility is on that site today.



The old Workhouse



In 1894 Sisters were given charge of the Sheil Hospital which had been endowed by Dr. Simon Sheil.



Before the end of the century, the Sisters had extended their nursing apostolate and were caring for the poor in St. Patrick's Workhouse in Glenties (1898), St. Joseph's Workhouse, Stranorlar (1899) and St. Mary's Workhouse, Donegal Town (1900). Workhouses as such in Co. Donegal, ceased to be in the early 1920s. Each of these buildings continues to serve as a Community Hospital for the local area. Sisters nursed in these hospitals for many years.

Simultaneously with beginning the nursing foundations, Sisters began to expand their educational apostolate within and beyond Ballyshannon: Glenties (1890), Donegal Town (1895), replacement of original school in Ballyshannon (1900). In 1919 Sisters began teaching in Carrickboy National School, Ballyshannon.



Carrickboy National School

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

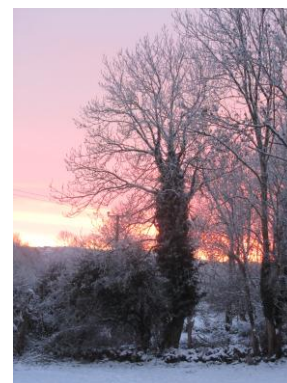


On May 4, 1917, the Sisters celebrated the 50th anniversary of their coming to Ballyshannon. In the decades which followed, Mercy became firmly established in the diocese of Raphoe and with the coming of the second half of the century, another period of expansion began, this time beyond the shores of Ireland to America and Africa.



In 1947 the new apostolate for secondary education had begun and in Ballyshannon the first students were prepared for second level examinations.

In 1961 the Sacred Heart Secondary School was established in Ballyshannon. In order to extend this service, Our Lady's Boarding School was opened in 1964.



In 1968 the Sisters were invited to take over the Finn College in Stranorlar. This subsequently became St. Columba's College.



Coláiste Cholmcille



During this time, too, old buildings were replaced:

In 1953, St. Catherine's new primary school was opened in Ballyshannon replacing the school opened in 1900. This left the way open for extending into secondary education on that site.



*St. Catherine's National School,
Ballyshannon*

In 1958 Stella Maris Hospital in Dungloe replaced the District Hospital in Glenties. It is now a Community Hospital for the wider area.





Other initiatives from this time included:

The opening of a holiday house for Sisters, Sancta Maria, in Rossnowlagh in 1962.



Rossnowlagh Beach, Donegal

From 1966 to 1973 Sisters were involved in Holy Cross College, Falcarragh, taking responsibility for catering and for care of the boarders.

In 1966, ten Sisters from the Raphoe Diocese went on their first missionary venture outside Ireland, to Billings, Montana, U.S.A., to the Diocese of Great Falls. While the invitation was given by Bishop W. J. Conden, it was Fr. J. Moore who was instrumental in bringing the Sisters to Montana. Four Sisters took up nursing posts at St. Vincent's Hospital, while the other six, following a period of initial training, began teaching at Billings Central High School. A second foundation in the Diocese at St. Luke's Great Falls was made in 1977. Sisters engaged in parish work there.



Rev. J. Moore, assistant pastor, St. Patrick's, Billings, with the Ballyshannon nuns who established the new mission from St. Catherine's Convent, Ballyshannon, in Billings. They are (front row from left): Sisters M. Evangelist, Margaret Mary, M. Monica, M. Perpetua. (Back row): Sisters M. Raphael, M. Eunan, M. Magdalene, (sister of Fr. Moore), M. Berchmans, M. Annunciata and M. Aquinas.



*142 Wyoming Ave, Billings,
Montana.
The Sisters came here in 1966.*



*2420 Elm Street
The Sisters' last residence in Billings, Sept 2011*



Scenic View of Montana

In 1971, the Sisters in Donegal town moved into their new home in Ardeskin.

Sisters were involved in the medical apostolate in the General Hospital in Letterkenny from 1972 and in 1977 the convent at Windy Hall was opened as their home.





Convent at Windy Hall, Letterkenny

In 1974 Sister Rose Harkin went as a Public Health Nurse to Tory Island, an island nine miles off the North West coast of Donegal, accessible only at that time by fishing boat, or by helicopter in cases of emergency. As the only medical person on the island, the doctor coming once monthly, she fulfilled many roles during that time.



Arriving by boat!



Arriving by helicopter!



Sister's first residence on Tory Island



View of Tory Island

Ceol na Coille, was opened for the Sisters engaged in various apostolates in Stranorlar in 1973.

In 1986, one of the Sisters joined with three other Sisters of Mercy from Northern Ireland, in a mission in Lagos, Nigeria. Within a short time after arriving there, they were teaching children in classes of fifty to eighty.



In 1989 a Sister Rose returned to Tory and for the next sixteen years fulfilled the role of Public Health Nurse there spending two months on and one month off the island during that time. Conditions had improved considerably for the islanders since her previous time there with the building of a new pier which allowed trawlers and a ferryboat to land. The provision of a secondary school, an hotel, a Community Centre and a state-of-the-art Health Centre also added significantly to the quality of life for the islanders. Going from house to house to tend to the medical needs of her patients, Sister Rose became well inserted into island life and was, in the words of the 'King of Tory' at the time, Patrick Rodgers, 'the best accepted outsider' on the island.



A Painting by Patrick Rodgers, 'King of Tory'.

Raphoe Mercy

Mission

