

# The Sisters of St. Ann

## What is a Sister?

### Sisters of St. Ann Province Leader Sister Marie Zarowny

While some other Christian churches, such as Anglican, also have members called Sisters, a Sister is generally a Catholic woman who commits herself to the close following of Jesus Christ by taking religious promises called vows. Sisters take vows in a particular religious institute, such as one like the Sisters of St. Ann. Each institute (sometimes called a community or congregation) was created to respond to a particular human need in the world of its time. Each has a specified way of prayer, life and service approved by the Church.

Sisters have traditionally served as teachers, nurses, counselors, caregivers and pastoral workers. In recent years the forms of service have become more diversified, responding to the needs of the times. For example, many Sisters have become leaders in spiritual accompaniment, the faith-based social justice movement and in the care of the environment.

Sometimes the terms *nun* and *sister* are used interchangeably but they live different lives and have different goals. Generally, *nun* is used for a woman who is a member of a religious institute whose members dedicate their lives to God through prayer and contemplation. Nuns are found in a variety of faith traditions, including Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism.



Sister Marie-Angèle (Gauthier) one of the four pioneer Sisters of St. Ann who came to Victoria to teach. Credit: SSA Archives P0018

When the Sisters of St. Ann, came to Victoria in 1858, it was the early days of British Columbia. Their work strongly influenced the development of education and health care in our province.