



ARCHDIOCESE OF VANCOUVER
ARCHBISHOP'S OFFICE

NEWS RELEASE

After 8 decades, Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement leaving Vancouver

VANCOUVER, May 8, 2011 –The Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement, who have provided food, clothing and other charitable services to Vancouver's needy since 1926, are wrapping up their commitment to the Downtown Eastside, and a grateful Archdiocese of Vancouver is sorry to see them go.

The Graymoor, New York-based Sisters have served Vancouver's downtown poor and homeless for generations, but the time has come for a new generation of workers to take on the daily demands, said the Sisters.

Meanwhile, the Missionaries of Charity, the religious order established by Mother Teresa of Calcutta, will move into the convent being vacated by the Sisters of the Atonement in order to have a downtown presence.

[The Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement](#) arrived in Vancouver in 1926 and with the blessing of the Archdiocese of Vancouver assumed responsibility for the Catholic Japanese Mission School. The mission school and centre was the first of its kind in Canada.

Over the decades, the Sisters have offered language programs, kindergarten and day care programs, a clinic, room and board, adult convert classes, hot meals and lunches, as well as clothing for men in special need, such as a suit for a court appearance, shoes for a job interview, or steel-toed boots for men trying to get construction work.

Archbishop J. Michael Miller said the Archdiocese owes the Sisters of debt of gratitude for their longstanding service. "The Sisters of the Atonement have truly lived a lifestyle centred on the rule of St. Francis, who reached out to all regardless of race, colour or creed. They will be long remembered for their faithful service."

The Sisters provide food and clothing in the heart of the Downtown Eastside, serving more than 500 people a day at 385 East Cordova Street.

The Archdiocese says it will ensure that the services currently provided by the Sisters continue.

“The Sisters have provided those in need not only food and clothing, but respect and responsibility, 365 days a year,” said Archbishop Miller. “We owe it to the Sisters’ legacy, as well as to the people who live in the Downtown Eastside, to continue that service.”

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