

# After 17 Years, Reading Lab Directorship to Change Hands

By PATRICIA KEOUGH

For 17 years, children of the Rochester area needing remedial reading aid have gone to the Blossom Road facilities of the Catherine McAuley Reading Laboratory, directed by two Mercy nuns, Sister Mary de Pazzi and Sister Mary Helena.

Tomorrow, as the center's spring session closes, both Sisters, pioneers in remedial reading work in Rochester, turn over to younger nuns their duties as administrator and registrar and step into retirement.

More than the passing of two distinguished contributors to education, the departure of Sister de Pazzi and Sister Helena from the reading lab reflects the 17 year accomplishment of their zeal and the never-slacking progress of the teaching techniques they have devised for pupils and for other teachers of the slow readers.

Heading the Summer Session, replacing Sister Mary de Pazzi as Administrator, will be Sister Mary Francis Cahill, current coordinator of the laboratory. Sister Marie Justin, having recently completed studies in the reading field at Syracuse University, will be the new coordinator.

The founding of the Catherine McAuley Reading Laboratory actually came about as a result of a need Sister de Pazzi herself discovered in her 31 years as teacher, principal, and supervisor. Con-

vinced that the failure of the majority of students academically stemmed from inability to read, Sister sought a means by which this situation might be remedied.

Having referred students with difficulties to existing educational agencies for diagnosis, Sister found no suitable facilities available to cure what the diagnosis had discovered—namely, poor reading. Such students required extra out-of-schooltime help in small classes.

Like the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, Catherine McAuley — for whom the school is named — who believed that "problems are only obstacles to be overcome," Sister de Pazzi immediately sought remedial aid in Rochester from the New York State Department of Education.

Seventeen years ago, Sister de Pazzi was the Dean of Catherine McAuley College, a small institution providing initial college education for the young Sisters of Mercy. The State Department's Consultant, Dr. Edward Mooney, advised Sister to incorporate her new reading program under the college charter. Such a step would enable the college to include classes in teaching teachers-to-be reading techniques.

Two key people, who have continued with Sister from the beginning, and who shared this 17th anniversary with her, are Sister Mary Helena and Sister Mary Peter.

Described by one young Sisterpupil as a "storehouse of knowledge and a powerhouse of strength," Sister Helena has individually met more pu-



Mercy novice Sister Mary Tobias learns first-hand some tips on teaching reading from one of the area's most expert counsellors, Sister Mary Helena, reading consultant ending 17 years service at the Catherine McAuley Center

pils, both in number and variety, than probably any other member of the staff. The reading problems of six-year-olds, seminarians, high schoolers, college students, and young nuns have filled Sister's daily teaching schedule as well as her hours in the laboratory's formal schedule. Sister's background — an

accomplished music teacher and an avid reader — have given her two great gifts for success in teaching reading, patience and a genuine love of reading.

Originally established as a laboratory for tutorial and class remedial reading, McAuley has grown to include classes in English and Math

skills; a Testing and Guidance Center; and a Speech Clinic.

From a very small beginning where a relatively few students received help in reading or speech, today, seventeen years later, enrollment often reaches 1000. Students from second grade through college, regardless of religious affiliation — about half

come from parochial schools and half from public schools take advantage of the Saturday morning, and/or summer school services.

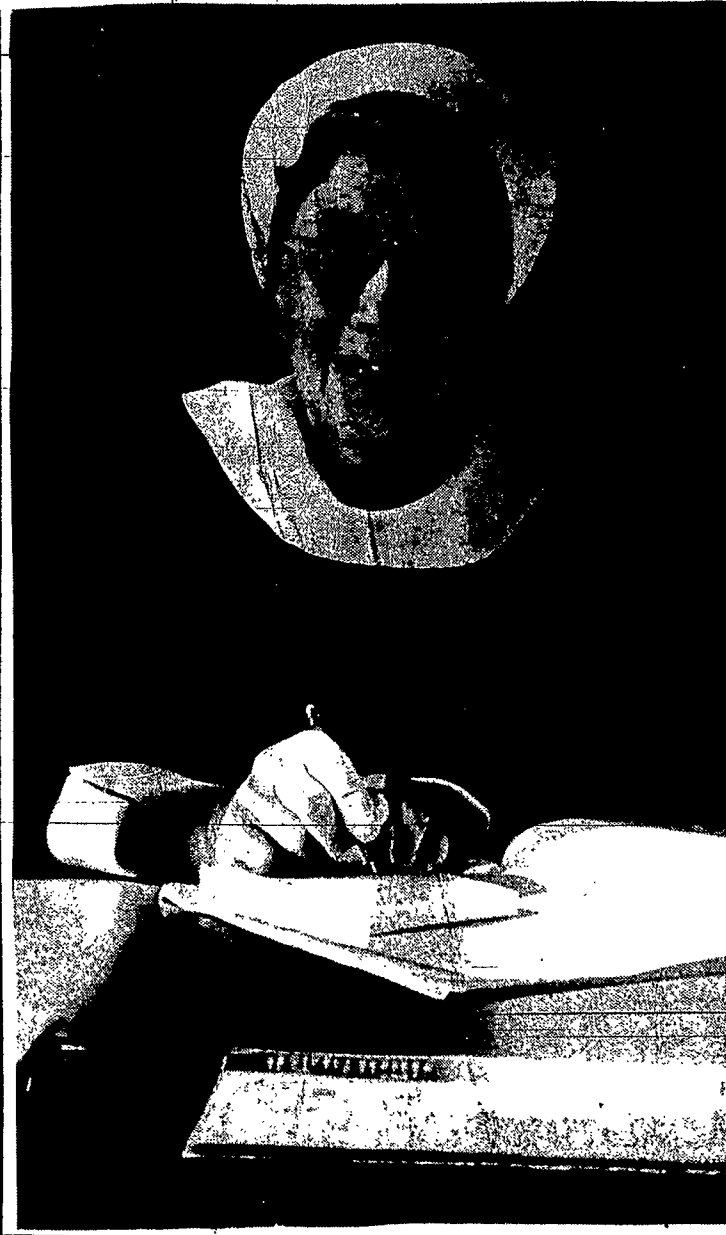
Grouped according to ability and needs, each child receives individual instruction in classes never exceeding eight students. Children receiving speech therapy work in much smaller groups. All reading students also take at least two standard reading and personality tests. A special feature of the program includes the interpretation of test results, a personality analysis, and parent guidance. A child with special needs may be referred to the Testing Center.

Complete psychological testing services with follow-up interviews interpreting test results by the Staff's Psychologist are available at the center, not only to enrolled students, but also to others as well.

A vital addition to the original Reading Laboratory Center came with the establishment of the Speech Clinic, now with a full-time Speech Therapist, Sister Mary Kristin.

In establishing Catherine McAuley Reading Laboratory, and supervising the erection of a beautiful new wing to house it in 1959, Sister de Pazzi has become known and respected throughout both the city and the state, as an educator.

Her vitality and seeming agelessness are striking. Sisters many years her junior find it hard to keep step with her as she speeds into her office each morning, armed with the New Testament and the New York Times. Few could guess that she has been fifty years in religious life.



Sister Mary de Pazzi, foundress of the Mercy Sisters' famous reading laboratory, Catherine McAuley Center, this week ends 17 years as its administrator.

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The announcement of his appointment was made by T. Murray McDonnell, chairman of the 16-member Committee on Catholic Education—established in April by Archbishop Terence J. Cooke.

The non-sectarian unit consisting of outstanding educators and civic leaders of all faiths is the first of its kind. It will study one of the world's largest non-public educational systems.

Dr. Binswanger, 37-year-old assistant professor of education at Harvard, is also director of the Advanced Administrative Institute and research associate for the Center for Studies in Education and Development there.

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