

**Data about Mt. Trinity Academy gleaned from The Rev. Sister Paschala Noonan, O.P. in her *Signadou: History of the Kentucky Dominican Sisters* Manhasset, NY: Brooksville Books, 1997. ISBN: 0879570164 (pbk.)**  
["Signadou" (French dialect meaning "sign from God")]

**Order's website: <http://www.opkentucky.org/>**

**Mt. Trinity Academy, Watertown, MA, was owned by the Kentucky Dominican community 1941-1969.**  
(p. 374)

**Nolan's teachers - 1942-1948 - (names and grades from his fallible memory)**

**Grade 1 (1942-43) – Sister Brendan Kelleher professed 03-07-1923 p. 344**

Sister Brendan Cox professed 04-30-38 p. 352 (probably too new to have been the teacher)

**Grade 2 (1943-44) – Sister Constance O'Brien professed 01-01-1909 p. 337**

**Grade 3 (1944-45) – Sister Patrice Hogan professed 03-07-1921 p. 344**

**Grade 4 (1945-46) – Sister Norberta Jenks professed 08-04-1916 p. 340**

Sister Norberta Cheetham professed 04-30-1936 p. 350 (probably too new to have been the teacher)

**Grade 5 (1946-47) – Sister Thomasina Murray professed 03-07-1926 p. 346**

**Grade 6 (1948-48) – Sister Edwina Carroll professed 03-07-1914 p. 339**

**Piano Teacher (c. 1943-48) – Sr. Mary Leonard McSorley professed 08-04-1920 p. 343**

**Principal – Sr. Dominic Marie Langley professed 03-07-1917 p. 341**

**Mother Margaret Elizabeth Walsh was Mother General of the Order 1942-1954; she visited Mt. Trinity at least once during the 1942-48 period. (picture opposite page 200)**



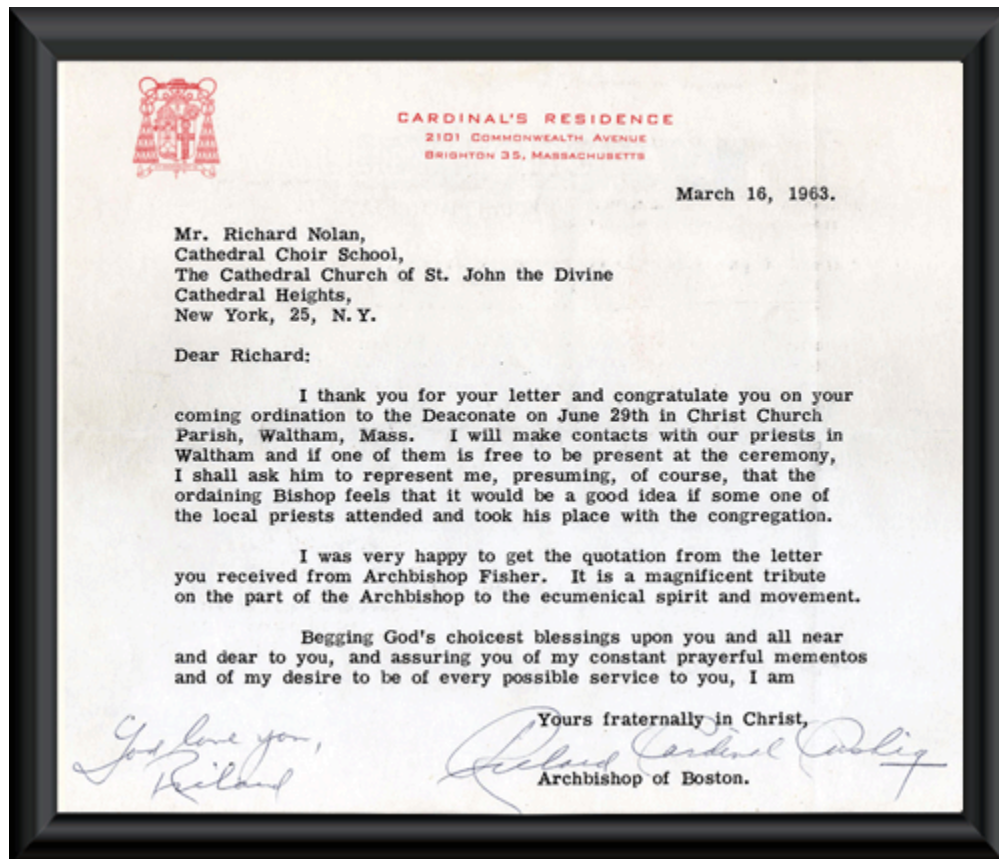
**Mother Mary Elizabeth Walsh**



Archbishop Richard James *Cardinal* Cushing (1944-1970)

visited Mt. Trinity, including the classroom in which Nolan was a pupil, sometime between 1944 and 1948. At that time he was Archbishop of Boston, but had not yet been named a cardinal. It was an awesome, paralyzing experience for the class to receive his blessing. After he left the room, Sister gently chided the class both for remaining in their seats (rather than standing when he first entered the room) and for not kneeling during the blessing.

YEARS LATER – in 1963  
(below)





**Rich (r) and Don (l) started first grade together at Mt. Trinity Academy, Watertown, Mass., and sat together on the roundtrip Academy bus from Waltham for the full six years and also shared some classes. The picture on right was taken during the first get together since they were about 18. Don visited us during February 2001 while his wife Norma and grandchildren went to Orlando! The picture on the left was about 1946 at Mt. Trinity, probably after a May Day "Mary" Service.**

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**AFTER A DIVERSE MINISTRY AND WRITING CAREER, DOMINICAN NUN RETURNS TO WHERE IT ALL BEGAN; NUN PONDERES MYSTERY, DIVINE AND OTHERWISE.**

(Arts and Lifestyle) Article from *The Boston Herald* (May 15, 2000 Author: Cox, Christopher)

**Sister Paschala Noonan, O.P., has a confession to make: She once plotted murder for money.**

**We can forgive the 81-year-old nun, however. Her deadly intent was fictional, and for a good cause. Noonan's story, written for a national magazine contest, benefited an impoverished overseas Catholic mission. Just don't expect an encore.**

**"I kind of stayed away from murder mysteries," said Noonan with a smile.**

**Understandable, since the Quincy native has been a member of the Dominican Sisters of St. Catharine of Siena for the last 63 years, during which time she has achieved a diverse ministry as a teacher, nurse, hospital administrator and writer.**

**The call came while Noonan attended high school at the old Rosary Academy in Watertown. She wasn't particularly anxious to answer, having already enrolled at Simmons College with the intention of studying medicine.**

**But she couldn't shake the words of "The Hound of Heaven" by the Roman Catholic poet Francis Thompson. Even today, Noonan can recite the poem:**

**(ITAL)"I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;**

**I fled Him, down the arches of the years . . ."**

**You can't get away from God, she decided. Her father forfeited the \$25 registration fee - a fortune in Depression-era 1935 - and Noonan entered the Kentucky-based apostolic order, the oldest active congregation of Dominican women in the world.**

**Her first mission, to Spalding, Neb. (pop. 600), came as a culture shock. On her first day of teaching, a student asked Sister Paschala where he should leave his tuition. On my desk, she replied.**

**"I went into the classroom and there was half a hog," she recalled. "They paid in kind out there."**

**From rural Nebraska, she attended DePaul University in Chicago, went to nursing school in Great Bend, Kan., then became obstetrical supervisor at a Catholic hospital in McCook, Neb. Her articles on various nursing issues won her a journalism fellowship at Creighton University.**

**In the early 1960s, after visiting an impoverished Catholic mission in Puerto Rico, Noonan decided to raise money by entering a contest held by Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine.**

**Drawing from her nursing experience, she produced a winning entry about a man scheming to kill someone by administering the wrong blood type - only to wind up hurt in an accident that requires a transfusion of the deadly blood.**

**"All retribution," said the nun, who must favor Old Testament-style conclusions.**

**By 1973, Sister Paschala was chair of the Nebraska State Board of Health, the first woman to hold the position. In the wake of Roe v. Wade, however, she resigned as administrator of Community Hospital in McCook, Neb.**

**"The doctors wanted to do abortions and that's contrary to my belief," she said.**

**She served as a ghostwriter for the U.S. Catholic Conference, then worked as a nurse supervisor in Kentucky. Twelve years ago, another mission brought her back to Boston. Everywhere she has traveled, her books and papers were sure to follow.**

**"Most of the sisters, when they move from one place to another, they're moving clothes," she said. "I'm moving unfinished manuscripts."**

**As director of elderly affairs for the archdiocese, Sister Paschala studied the needs of aged parishioners, then recruited and trained volunteers to deliver services. But bingo halls, said Noonan, are "terrible" places to recruit.**

**"Did you ever recruit somebody at a bingo?" she asked. "They're so anxious to get their cards lined up . . . It was a lost cause."**

**In 1990, the president of the congregation asked Noonan to think - and to pray - about writing a history of the order.**

**"Once they ask you that, they gotcha," Sister Paschala said.**

**The project would take seven years, because the order's records were destroyed in a 1904 fire. Noonan was able to assemble a thorough history from archives as far afield as Rome, Spain and the Philippines.**

**She is particularly proud of the efforts of the Dominican Sisters who nursed Civil War soldiers wounded at the bloody Battle of Perryville and tended the sick and dying during the yellow-fever epidemics that hit Memphis in the 1870s.**

**Her history, "Signadou" (French dialect meaning "sign from God"), also chronicles the order's work in the Boston area; its first East Coast mission was the St. Patrick School in Watertown (1888), followed by schools that served immigrants in Lowell and Charlestown.**

**"The original mission was to go where needed," said Sister Paschala. "And the need has changed."**

**The order now has a criminal-justice ministry; five Dominican sisters also work with the homeless at the Pine Street Inn.**

**Membership has changed as well. From more than 800 sisters in the early 1960s, the order has dwindled to 266 women.**

**Noonan, who lives in Charlestown, drives the backroads every weekday morning to work in Watertown; the journey has brought her full circle, to an office at St. Joseph's Hall, an elderly-housing facility in what was once Rosary Academy, her old high school.**

**Sister Paschala is juggling several projects, including an integrated history of all Dominican orders in the United States and a pictorial history of the Kentucky Dominicans.**

**"For a while, they said you retire when you're 65," she said. "I got to be 65, they said you retire when you're 70. I got to be 70, they said 72. I got to be 72, they said 75. And now they just said as long as you can."**