

Tell Us a Story

Kay O'Connell, SSND, interviewed Mother Pascal Carton, age 91, in 1984.

Interview

Sister Kay: Mother Pascal, could you tell me about your first years as a teacher?

Mother Pascal: I was a candidate in 1910 and was teaching first grade at St. Leo's in Baltimore.

Sister Kay: Do you remember anything about your students?

Mother Pascal: I had 100 names in my roll book and about 80 children, ages 5 – 13, were actually in my classroom.

Sister Kay: How did you get so many in one room?

Mother Pascal: The students were seated on tiers and I had to walk up a flight of low stairs to reach the last pupil.

Sister Kay: Did they all speak English?

Mother Pascal: Oh no. Many of them only spoke Italian.

Sister Kay: How did you communicate to them?

Mother Pascal: There was one little Italian boy, I think his name was 'Alexander,' who was bilingual. When I asked him if he understood what I was saying, he replied, "Yes." So he stood right up at the blackboard or at his seat, turned this way and that and spoke Italian to the class.

Sister Kay: (Seeing that she was weary she asked) Is there anything else?

Mother Pascal: Yes, she added, He became the mayor of Baltimore.

She was speaking of Thomas D'Alesandro, Jr. who had a distinguished political career in Maryland from 1927 on. He was U.S. Representative from Maryland's 3rd District from 1939 – 1947 and mayor of Baltimore from 1947 – 1959.

He was seven years old in 1910.

His daughter was also educated by the School Sisters of Notre Dame at the Institute of Notre Dame, Baltimore. She is Nancy Pelosi, who serves as the first woman Speaker in the U.S. House of Representatives.