



The Sisters in Cookstown began by conducting a Night School for poor girls in the Reading Rooms adjacent to the parish church. At the first assembly 150 girls were enrolled. Soon afterwards, the Sisters took charge of a Day School. This was a very fine building attached to the Convent, opened in 1891 and approved by the National Board. Besides the ordinary curriculum, pupils were taught vocal and instrumental music, painting, sketching and French. Sunday school classes, dedicated to instruction in the faith, were provided for pupils who were unable to attend school.



The Reading Rooms, Cookstown

In 1935 the Commercial Class was established by one of the Sisters. Type-writing, Shorthand, Booking-keeping and Business Methods were taught in the Reading Rooms. The pupils qualified at the Royal Society of Arts Examinations with great success, many of them obtaining good positions in the Civil Service after leaving school.

In September 1965 Our Lady's Secondary School was opened and a Sister was appointed Principal. The school has since amalgamated with St. Patrick's Secondary School to form Holy Trinity College. www.holytrinitycollege.org



Alongside the ministry of Education, Sisters continued the Mercy tradition of visitation of the sick in their homes, in hospitals and in Westland Home where they visited those who were elderly, infirm or lonely.



Other aspects of their ministry included:

- Making altar breads for the local and neighbouring parishes.
- Supporting the work of the parish by care of the sacristy, sacred vessels and vestments; arrangement of flowers; maintaining book stalls/ Shrines; training of altar boys.



Making Altar Breads



Flower Arrangements

Sisters also took charge of the Apostolic Work Class which made and mended vestments for priests in missionary countries.



Sacred Vessels

Today, over one hundred and twenty years later, Mercy continues in Cookstown, though the form of the Sisters' ministry has changed to take account of many changes. Most visibly, the big Convent has given way to a smaller residence on Fairhill Road.



Mercy Convent, Fairhill Road, Cookstown, Co. Tyrone