

A SITE THAT HAS WITNESSED MORE THAN 2400 YEARS OF HISTORY

History

Located on the shores of the Saint Lawrence River in the historic centre of Old Montreal, the Marguerite Bourgeoys Museum opened its doors to the public on 24 May 1998. It offers visitors the memorable experience of discovering its history, heritage and archaeology.

The Museum focuses on Marguerite Bourgeoys, a woman of courage and compassion who lived during the 17th century. Her many accomplishments recall the great courage of the early colonists who built Montreal.

The museum offers two attractions on the same site to its visitors. As well as exploring the exhibition rooms of the Marguerite Bourgeoys Museum, they can also visit Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours Chapel to which the museum is connected. This tri-centenary chapel of pilgrimage is Montreal's first and oldest chapel of pilgrimage.

Mission

Both the Marguerite Bourgeoys Museum and Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours Chapel open a window onto our heritage and religious art, witness to the faith of our ancestors.

They also present the life and work of Marguerite Bourgeoys, Montreal's first teacher and founder of the chapel, in the hope of keeping the charism of this remarkable woman alive.

Finally, Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours Chapel is a special place of prayer, worship and pilgrimage.

Collection

Our objective is to conserve, document and showcase sacred objects, works of art and other physical witnesses to the religious, social, cultural and educational history of Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours Chapel as well as objects connected to the life and work of Marguerite Bourgeoys.

The permanent collection of Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours Chapel and the Marguerite Bourgeoys Museum includes works on paper of contemporary artists, paintings, sculptures, books, relics and medals and a variety of objects connected to the school.

Moreover, the museum is the guardian of collections of the Sulpicians, the Congrégation de Notre-Dame and the *ministère de la Culture et des Communications*. These collections include the works of art and objects in the chapel, objects connected to the life of Marguerite Bourgeoys and to the Congrégation de Notre-Dame, to the teaching of the arts and finally archaeological objects.

An exceptional archaeological site

Located under the nave of the chapel and accessible through the crypt, the archaeological site of the Marguerite Bourgeoys Museum houses surprising discoveries. During the 1996-1997 dig, the archaeologists uncovered the remains of Montreal's first stone chapel founded by Marguerite Bourgeoys in 1675. Constructed in fieldstone, the chapel's foundations are precisely outlined close to remains of First Nations sites among the oldest found in Old Montreal. On this site, we are introduced to a past both tantalizingly close and yet far distant.

Recognition for a museum

In 2002, the Marguerite Bourgeoys Museum accumulated significant honours. First, the *Prix Ulysse* of Tourism Montreal recognized the development and innovation of the Marguerite Bourgeoys Museum in the category of Tourist Attraction – 100 000 visitors or less. In fact, the Marguerite Bourgeoys Museum was singled out for the diversity and quality of its cultural activities and for the beauty of the site.

Then, the Marguerite Bourgeoys Museum / Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours Chapel received the prestigious *Phoenix Prize* of the American Society of Travel Writers for the renovations and the archaeological research carried out between 1996 and 1998 that made this site an important centre of Montreal's history and heritage.