

History and Directory

1899



St. Mary's Cathedral

Kingston

Preface.



The following Historical Sketch of St. Mary's Cathedral is respectfully submitted to our people and the public generally for their careful perusal. We trust it will prove interesting and beneficial, and that it will be carefully preserved for future reference.

Historical Sketch of St. Mary's Cathedral, Kingston, Ont.



THE See of Kingston is the oldest in Ontario, and the fourth oldest in America. As far back as 1799 mass was said in a frame building which stood upon the present site of Kilpatrick's' Marble Works, service being held there from time to time, when the village of Kingston was visited by missionary priests from Quebec. The first Catholic Church erected in Kingston was known as the " French " Church, and stood upon the grounds now occupied by the Convent of the Congregation de Notre Dame and St. Vincent's Academy. It was built of stone in 1808, and for nearly 40 years was the only place of worship for the Catholics of Kingston and vicinity. The inscription on the tablet, which stood over the door of the old French Church read as follows :

" St. Columba,
9 June, 1808.
Rev. Amd., V.G.
• F. X. Rochelau,
Master Mason."

It is somewhat remarkable that what was called the " French " Church should have been dedicated to an Irish saint. The tablet is now in possession of the Convent Sisters.

The Right Rev. Alexander Macdonell, the first Bishop in Upper Canada, was born in Inchlagan, Scotland, on July 17th, 1762. In 1798 he was appointed chaplain to the first regiment of Catholic soldiers attached to the British army since the days of the so-called Reformation. When the regiment was disbanded in 1804 he came to Upper Canada, where he found but three churches west of the Province of Lower Canada. In 1819 he was named by Pope Pius the VII. Bishop of Rhesine (in Mesopotamia), Suffragan and Auxiliary to the Bishop of Quebec—for the Province of Upper Canada—and was consecrated Bishop in the Church of the Ursulines, Quebec, on the 31st of December, 1820.

In 1826 Upper Canada was formed into a diocese by Pope Leo XII. and the Right Rev. Alexander Macdonell was appointed bishop, his title being Bishop of Kingston. For fourteen years he labored zealously for his Church in Upper Canada, frequently travelling over the whole province, and his remains were afterwards removed from St. Margaret's, Edinburgh, to their present resting place in the vaults of St. Mary's Cathedral, Kingston.

During his administration of the affairs of this Diocese he commanded a very great influence in public matters, and so highly were his services esteemed that he was called to the Legislative Council. He obtained from the Government 190,000 acres of land in what is known as the County of Glengarry, on which he induced a large number of his fellow-countrymen to settle. The wisdom of the Bishop's action is shown in the wealthy, influential and stalwart sons of those hardy pioneers who now so largely control the destinies of Eastern Ontario. In connection with his immigration scheme and other business connected with his extensive Diocese, the Bishop several times visited Europe. On October 19th, 1837, a meeting of the Catholics of Upper Canada was held in this city for the purpose of raising funds for the erection of a Catholic college and for the promotion of immigration. On the 11th of June, 1839, the foundation stone of the Regiopolis College was laid by Bishop Macdonell. He was assisted on this occasion by his coadjutor, the Right Rev. Bishop Gaulin, and several clergy. In compliance with the understanding of two years previous, Bishop Macdonell, then in his 78th year, left Canada in the summer of 1839, and visited his native land, and also travelled

through a large portion of Ireland. He impressed upon the Bishops and clergy of the Emerald Isle the importance of his mission, and, though he did not live to see the result of his labors, they, nevertheless, brought forth abundant fruit. When travelling in the west of Ireland he was exposed to a drizzling rain, which caused inflammation of the lungs. Under careful treatment he recovered sufficiently to resume his journey and proceeded to Armagh, and from thence returned to his native country. He arrived in Dumfries, Scotland, on the 11th of January, 1840, and was the guest of the Rev. Father Reid, where he spent the last days of his life. On the 13th of January the Bishop celebrated mass and during the day seemed in his usual health, but next morning he was seized with an attack of heart disease, from which he died in the course of a few hours.

The hardships and vicissitudes experienced by this godly man cannot be imagined. Many times he was compelled to walk for miles through the woods, the trail being marked only by the blazed trees. Often he was compelled to carry a valise containing his vestments and the necessary food to sustain him, but no trial seemed to difficult for him.

In 1841 the Right Rev. Bishop Gaulin was appointed to the Bishopric of Kingston, and shortly after his appointment, on account of ill-health, it became necessary that he should have a coadjutor, and on the 20th February, 1843, the Rev. Patrick Phelan was appointed to the position with the right of succession. In 1844 Bishop Gaulin retired and Bishop Phelan was made administrator, and on the death of Bishop Gaulin, in 1857, he succeeded him as Bishop of Kingston.

It was during the Episcopate of Bishop Gaulin, but mainly by the earnest and untiring efforts of his coadjutor and successor, Bishop Phelan, that the present church edifice was begun and brought to its then state of comparative perfection. He also placed the present bell in the tower which has ever since at morning, noon and night pealed forth the Angelus over the city. Up to the time of Bishop Horan, who succeeded Bishop Phelan in 1858, the altar in St. Mary's Cathedral, was but a temporary one. By him not only was the present high altar erected, but he added also those of the Blessed Virgin

and St. Joseph and otherwise added to the interior adornment of the House of God. Under the Episcopate of the lamented Bishop O'Brien, the present pews were added to take the place of the old rough and uncomfortable seats and benches which had hitherto occupied the nave of the church. Much more was intended to have been done by him and much more would have been done by him towards this object so near his heart, but in the unsearchable wisdom of God he was taken away ere the work he had planned could be more than fairly commenced. When he left Brockville to come here as Bishop of the diocese he was presented with a large sum of money by the priests of the diocese and others. This money the single-hearted Bishop devoted towards the liquidation of the indebtedness on the Cathedral, and also zealously applied himself by lectures and otherwise to procure funds for the laudable purpose of beautifying the sanctuary and making the place of God's presence glorious. Indeed it is but nineteen years ago that the electric wires thrilled with the mournful intelligence that the earnest minded prelate had yielded up his life in St. Louis Hospital, Quebec, having been stricken down by death while engaged in procuring funds for the further adornment of the sacred edifice. No alterations or additions, however, has been made to the exterior of the church, which up to that time presented the same appearance it had at the death of Bishop Phelan. It remained for the late Archbishop Cleary to cenceive and carry to a grand conclusion the work whose stately proportions and beauty of design are the pride and boast not only of the Catholics, but of all the citizens of Kingston, and which affords pleasure to the eye of the artistic and comfort to the soul of the devout.

Up to the coming of the late zealous and scholarly Prelate, there had been no improvements to the outward appearance of the church. On the arrival of Bishop Cleary in his new home, he learned the plans laid out by his predecessor, and with untiring zeal and earnestness he set himself to carry them out, with additions and improvements. His first act was to form a committee of management, with himself at the head. Through the efforts of this committee, which the congregation elected, and guided and assisted by the splendid and administrative ability of Bishop Cleary, their success has been

phenomenal. Thus far the seating capacity of the Cathedral was five thousand. But the congregation had increased to such an extent that it was found too inadequate, especially on Sundays and leading festivals. To meet this demand for space the old vestries were moved and the side altars placed further back, and new pews added, which increased the seating capacity to over seven thousand. The large windows, which had hitherto been filled with plain glass, were now adorned with magnificent and costly stained glass which is a credit to our city and an ornament to our holy religion. The cost was over \$5,000. The heating arrangements having been found inadequate to properly warm the immense building, a new system of steam coils and radiators was introduced, by which the entire building is made comfortably warm on the coldest day in winter—while the ventilation is so perfect that the air is pure and cool during the hottest days of summer.

However, the crowning work of all, and one that will bear down with honor the name of Archbishop Cleary to succeeding generations, is the grand tower and entrances which noble proportions lift up the Cross, the emblem of our Saviour, and raises our aspirations to that Heaven which we hope to gain. The old tower and belfry was found to be totally unfit to sustain a lofty spire, therefore, in 1899, it was torn down and the foundation of the present magnificent structure was laid. The height of the tower to the top of the golden cross is two hundred feet.

While this grand work was still in progress the Diocese of Kingston was erected into an Archiepiscopal See, and to mark the high honor conferred upon him as the first Archbishop of the Holy See, and to commemorate the fact, His Grace erected the beautiful chapel of St. James Boanerges to be used for assemblies of the clergy and other purposes when the immense proportions of the great Cathedral would not be required. The plans not only for the chapel, but for the greater work of the tower and entrance to the Cathedral were drawn by Mr. J. Connolly, architect, of Toronto, and were faithfully carried out by Mr. William Newlands, of this city. The building of the chapel, however, did not retard the progress of the tower toward com-

pletion, a full force of mechanics and workmen being employed upon the work until St. Mary's Cathedral has become one of the finest, if not the finest ecclesiastical structure on the American continent. Time and space will not permit us to give but a reference to the many additions and improvements made by His Grace Archbishop Cleary. The adornment of the altars, the statuary, the beautiful stained glass windows with their subjects illustrating the Gospels—all these and much more must be seen to be properly appreciated, for no description, however minute, can do them justice. Suffice it to say that they combine to form a monument to commemorate the earnest zeal and the grand administrative ability of the late Archbishop, and will cause the generations to come to remember his name with honor and keep his memory green.

The Most Rev. Charles Hugh Gauthier, whose consecration took place Oct. 18, 1898, is the second Archbishop and the seventh ruler of the Diocese of Kingston. He was born on the 13th of November, 1845, in the parish of Alexandria, in the historic County of Glengarry. He entered Regiopolis College in 1850 and in 1863 he graduated with the highest honors. He was afterwards appointed Professor of Rhetoric in Regiopolis. Having completed his course in theology, he was ordained priest in the Church of St. John the Baptist, at Perth, on August 24, 1867, by the Rt. Rev. Edward John Horan. Soon after his ordination he was appointed Director of Regiopolis College. In 1869, before leaving for the Vatican Council, Bishop Horan appointed Father Gauthier to the parish of Gananoque, his first parish which included Howe Island, Brewer's Mills and Lansdowne. While in this charge he added new churches and greatly improved the old ones. In January, 1875, he was transferred to Westport, but on the appointment of Father John O'Brien as Bishop of Kingston, he was the same year appointed to Williamstown, where his educational experience did him good service. As in Gananoque, his record for progress in religion and church building received well deserved praise. After a pastorate of eleven years he had wiped out a large debt and left over \$6,000 for his successor to proceed with. At Glennevis he built a \$45,000 church. In 1886, when appointed to the parish of Brockville, he

was promoted to the dignity of Dean, and on August 17, 1891, Archbishop Cleary appointed him Vicar-General of the Diocese. On the evening of Saturday, August 27, 1898, he received the Papal Bull appointing him Archbishop of Kingston.

“The Lord’s Anointed.”

TO MOST REV. CHARLES HUGH GAUTHIER, ARCHBISHOP OF KINGSTON.

Thus Spake the Lord :

“ And I will raise me up a faithful priest,
To do according to my heart and soul ;
And I a faithful house shall build for him,
All days ’fore my anointed he shall walk.”

So, to his kinsman, great, revered and wise,
The chosen youth for tutelage was given.
From cherub babyhood, the child had been
The crowning glory of a mother’s heart ;
And now—with young Apollo’s beauteous mien,
He came into the altar of the Lord,
Absorbing wisdom—growing aye in grace ;
So bloomed his soul exquisite. His fair brow
Shown with the gracious radiance of the morn,
And through perfection of the manly form,
Beamed crystal-clear, the spirit sweet within—
The matchless intellect ; the trenchant thought ;
The tender heart which stirred unceasingly
For human woe, with Christ-like charity.

Anon before him spread 'neath rose-flushed skies
The luring path that leads to wordly fame :
Nay ! still he chose the narrow, rugged way,
Nor honors craved—saved and alone to be
A Soldier in the Kingdom of the Lord ;
He crossed wide seas, 'mid shrines of art sojourned ;
Quaffed Wisdom's draught at many majestic springs,
And gained of many tongues, the mastery ;
Then to unfading home-won laurels, bore
From sages wise—the priceless jewelled crown
Of noblest crudition ;—he returned
As Michael, the Archangel, luminious ;
Yet, all he was, and all he was to be
Was shrouded in sublime humility,
Aspiring but to breathe the Master's word,
To be a lowly servant of the Lord.

And him, O Lord, this day hast Thou exalted :
Rejoice with us, O Seraphim, and Cherubim, and Princes :
O winds, bear your rejoicing through the caverns of the night ;
O towering hills and valleys sweet—rejoice, and fill the day exultant ;
Rejoice—O people ! for with you shall he abide :
His voice, divinely sweet shall be as music to your souls ;
His hands shall build a house unto our God—a house impregnable—whose
steadfast walls with precious gems shall burn ;
O'er it shall hover snow-white doves of Peace and Love ;
O sovereign God, far beyond shall flow the light, exceeding bright, which
clothes thy chosen one ;
Accept, O Lord, our canticles of praise !
Rejoice,—O heaven and earth—REJOICE !



INTERIOR OF OF ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL.