

In 1878 a decree of the Bishop ordained that a new church be built at Cap de la Madeleine. The stone necessary for the structure was prepared at Sainte-Angèle, on the opposite side of the river. It was, however, too costly to transport it in boats, and it was decided to await the ice bridge in winter to haul it across. The winter that followed was an unusually mild one. The months of January and February passed and no ice formed on the St. Lawrence. Sunday after Sunday public prayers were offered at the conclusion of the High Mass; but in vain it seemed, for already the month of March was fast passing away, and at that advanced season it was very unusual for ice to form. Then it was that Father Désilets made the vow that, if the Blessed Virgin obtained a favorable answer to the prayers of the people, he would preserve the old church and dedicate it to Mary, as an ex-voto offering. About the middle of March the ice caught from shore to shore. In a few days the necessary stone was transported, and, —what adds another element of wonder—immediately the ice broke up. There are many of course, who will see nothing out of the ordinary in this; but they, who realize to what little things the Providence of God descends in the care of His creatures, may see in it a manifestation of His almighty will. It is surely preferable to share the humble faith of the parishioners who called the ice-bridge “the bridge of Rosaries,” than to be classed with the generation who in the midst of miracles, are ever seeking a sign.

*In course of time the new church was finished; the old one dedicated as a shrine to Our Lady of the Holy Rosary. For many years, however, the fame of this new sanctuary did not spread beyond the limits of the parish, for, many minor events which are concerned chiefly with affairs of administration being passed over, 1883 marks the date of the first public pilgrimage to the shrine. In 1900, Rt. Rev. F. X. Cloutier, Bishop of Three Rivers, in a Pastoral letter, designated it as a place of diocesan pilgrimages. Two years later the same prelate entrusted it to the spiritual care of the Oblate Fathers of Mary Immaculate. The ever-increasing work of the ministry, consequent upon an almost continual stream of pilgrims made it necessary that some religious Congregation should take charge of it, and it was fitting indeed that the Oblates, devoted children of Mary, the wonder-workers in the mission-*