

Father M. Callaghan's Remarks Anent Consecration of St. Patrick's Church.

On Sunday last, Father Callaghan made some timely remarks regarding the coming consecration of St. Patrick's Church, which to the older parishioners will bring back pleasant memories of a day that is gone, and to the younger members will be instructive as well as interesting. The pastor spoke as follows:

There is a quantity of miscellaneous matter in which you are concerned to which I would like to draw your attention. It is both the time and the place to do so.

St. Patrick's Church was blessed in 1847—the year of the typhus fever, which caused a considerable loss of life and occasioned a rare display of Christian heroism. It was blessed by Bishop Prince on the 17th day of March. Rev. J. J. Connolly was the first priest who took charge of this church, and had Rev. Patrick Dowd as his immediate successor. He preached on the day it was blessed. He was the second individual of Irish Celtic origin—the first being Father Phelan—who was ordained a priest on the island of Montreal. He hailed from the Diocese of Waterford, and died in Boston. I recollect having seen him several times and having listened to his melodious voice during the office of Vespers. He had for an assistant Rev. Father McMahon, with whom I dined a few years ago in the Catholic University of Washington—an institution of which he has been considered the most liberal benefactor.

St. Patrick's Church will be consecrated on the 26th day of the coming June by His Grace Paul Bruchesi, who since the day he became the Archbishop of Montreal, did in the most telling way all that he could for all those who spoke the English language and submitted to his authority.

You might wish to know what is the difference between a church that is blessed and a church that is consecrated. I shall be brief in telling you. There is a difference in several ways. By being blessed or consecrated a church is withdrawn from the dominion of Satan and dedicated to the worship of the Most High. A church must be at least blessed. If it is not, the sacrifice of the Mass should not be celebrated within its precincts. Once blessed it is proper that it should be consecrated when there is no obstacle in the way.

You can hardly compare the ceremonial for the blessing with that for the consecration; the ceremonial for the latter being most imposing in grandeur, diversified in detail and rich in symbolism. A church may be blessed by a simple priest. It is necessary that he should be delegated by the Bishop of the place. It is a bishop and only a bishop who can by his ordinary jurisdiction consecrate a church. The consecrator has to be the bishop of the place. He can delegate the bishop of any other place to consecrate a church within the limits of his diocese. Several bishops may participate in the consecration. The leading role is reserved for the bishop of the place where the church is built. A simple priest can be empowered by the Pope to consecrate any church in the world. There is no fast prescribed for the day previous to the blessing of a church. Fasting is obligatory for the eve of a day when a church is to be consecrated. A church may be blessed without being free from debt. This is not so when there is question of consecrating it. When it is consecrated it cannot be employed for profane purposes of any description. A church which is merely blessed can be alienated but never a church which has been consecrated. It would be nothing less than the crime of sacrilege to sell, exchange or mortgage it.

St. Patrick's Church is minus the faintest shadow of indebtedness. It was only a month ago the title deeds were deposited in the vault of the presbytery. This church was purchased in 1885 from the Fabrique of Notre Dame for the sum of \$124,390, bearing interest at 4 1/2 per cent. This sum was paid by instalments. The first payment was made in 1887 by Father Dowd, and the last by myself on the 1st day of October, 1902. I then handed the Fabrique of Notre Dame a cheque for \$10,387.50. Our church debt would be still unextinguished were it not for the donation of \$20,000 on the part of James McCreedy and for the kindness with which we were treated by the gentlemen of the Seminary.

They lent us \$22,000 without interest. I returned them \$2000 and they cancelled the balance of \$20,000 at the transferring of our boys from the premises of the St. Lawrence school to the building situated on the corner of Lagachetiers.

St. Patrick's Church is our absolute property. We own it in the eyes of the law and in the eyes of the highest ecclesiastical authority. When it will have been consecrated there will be no other English-speaking church in a similar position upon the island or in the Province of Quebec or perhaps Ontario.

The custom of consecrating a church is not the product of modern times. It can be easily traced to the days of the Apostles—may, to the remotest period of the pre-Christian epoch. The Catholic history of Montreal is teeming with interest and edification. It has a chapter on the English speaking Catholics most deserving of being studied, remembered and rehearsed. Always have they challenged the profoundest respect and the most genuine admiration. Nobody is inclined to refuse them this twofold homage. It would be a flagrant injustice to assert or imagine that they have exerted little or no influence in promoting the prosperity in religion of which in all honesty our city can boast. Largely have they contributed towards the preservation, progress and prestige of our faith. By the English-speaking Catholics I understand principally all the Catholics of Irish birth, parentage or descent. In this connection I would be sorry to exclude or ignore all those who with the blood of other nationalities in their veins, have identified themselves with the Montreal Irish Catholics by worshipping at the same altar and by co-operating in the furtherance of the same objects. To what a magnificent class of people I am alluding! I would be pleased to see a class as good or even better. Where shall I find it? Nothing low, narrow or selfish could be detected in the complexion of their character. Have they not been supernaturally grand, lofty in their ideals, sound in their principles, deep and strong in their convictions, pure in their motives and spontaneously generous in their advocacy of every cause worthy of being upheld?

It is with the view of preparing you for the due celebration of the day St. Patrick's Church will be consecrated that I shall emphasize a few authentic facts consigned in our annals. You may derive much profit from what I shall relate.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century there was no sign or vestige of the Hibernian element in Montreal. Towards the end of the second decade the number of Irish Catholics did not exceed fifty adults. Since then it increased during an interval, at first slowly, and afterwards rapidly. In 1848 it reached 12,000. The Irish who settled upon the island fringed with the lippid waters of the St. Lawrence left the land of their ancestors with eyes streaming with the tears of sorrow and with bosoms convulsed with the sobs of regret. No longer could they dwell in a country where they saw all their aspirations crushed and had to undergo without any fault of theirs all sorts of hardships, in a country where they felt irrevocably doomed to inactivity, poverty, ignorance, slavery and persecution, though of all countries upon the planet we inhabit no other country was so dear, or could be so dear to their hearts. On bidding a most reluctant farewell to the green hills and smiling valleys, to the fertile fields and sparkling rivers, to the picturesque shores of sweet Innisfail, they confidently hoped that beneath a new sky, in a new atmosphere, and in a new land they would improve their condition. Were they disappointed? No. How could they be disappointed? Were they not the most desirable and should they not be the most welcome of exiles and immigrants? Were they not ambitious, industrious, indomitable in courage, law abiding in disposition, and virtuous in an uncommon degree? Did they not combine all the qualifications which should entitle them to the confidence of the community into which they were admitted, and which could not but reflect the most dazzling lustre upon the flag of any nation?

From the day of their arrival until the year our church was blessed all their spiritual wants were supplied. Nothing they could have desired was denied them. They attended the Notre Dame Church, the Bonsecours chapel, and the Recollet chapel. They were served by priests conspicuous for their learning, piety and zeal. Rev. John Richard Jackson was the first English speaking priest who had them under his special care. He claimed the State of Virginia as the residence of his parents, the place of his birth and the scene of his boyhood. Two centuries may dispute him—the

eighteenth and the nineteenth. He was a Protestant minister when he crossed the frontier. He fancied he was called to dispel the darkness of Popery which like a pall hung over the fair form of Ville Marie; and to spread the noonday light of the Reformation. Little did he suspect that he was intended by heaven to be like the Apostle of the Gentiles, a vessel of election. He went to see Father Roux, of the Sulpician Seminary, who refused to his satisfaction all his objections and impressed him with the divinity of Catholicism. The grace of conversion was offered him, and like Princess Ena of Battenberg, he accepted it readily and cheerfully. He became a priest in 1813 and thirty-four years afterwards he sacrificed himself on the altar of charity and duty. He died from the contagion he contracted whilst administering to those who were stricken down with the typhus fever. I was told by the priest who baptized me that fresh in his mind was the day when from a window in the old Seminary he saw Father Richard with a satchel in his hand passing through the gate and making his way as best he could to the Hotel Dieu Hospital, which was then close by.

The same day in October, 1843, he married two Irish brides, who during the nuptial Mass, took up a collection in aid of St. Patrick's Church. I was acquainted with one of the brides. Father Richard had an invaluable assistant in the person of Father Phelan. It happens I am a Phelan on the maternal side. He was from the County Kilkenny. So were both my parents. He did not spare himself in providing for the welfare of the flock to which he was assigned, and he won for himself, by the eminence of his merit, the signal honor of being appointed to the episcopal see of Kingston, Ontario, in 1843, the year when the corner-stone of St. Patrick's Church was laid and blessed. Rev. Patrick Morgan worked conjointly with the two priests I have mentioned. He was a cousin of Father Dowd. He was only five years in the priesthood when he took the typhus fever and died from the plague. He had scarcely passed the meridian line of life. He was greatly appreciated for the superiority of his attainments, and was thought to be destined for a long career of exceptional usefulness.

At the departure of Father Connolly for the United States, Father Dowd succeeded him as the director of the Irish congregation. He became the first pastor of St. Patrick's Parish when in 1873 it was canonically erected. At his death he was replaced by Rev. J. Quinlivan. The canonical parish of St. Patrick was enlarged and civilly constituted in 1903. I was then retained in the capacity of Pastor, though the Sulpicians divested themselves of all responsibility and Archbishop Bruchesi assumed the direct and exclusive control.

What shall I say of Father Dowd and Father Quinlivan, or of the priests who assisted them in the discharge of their functions? Could I be too loud in their praise? What little I might say is that the two pastors in question, as well as their curates, proved equal to the times in which they lived and did not lack anything that was calculated to sanctify their own souls or the souls of all those with whom they were brought into contact. They enhanced the sacerdotal dignity. They kept unswerving and intact all the traditions of our race. Their names will never perish. They are treasured in the memory of your hearts and emblazoned upon the pages of history.

What shall I say of the people to whom they devoted all their energies and resources? Nothing could surpass, if equal, their loyalty to the Sogarth Aroon. What shining examples! Never were they so much pleased as when multiplying testimonials of affection, docility and veneration.

On approaching the consecration day, thank God for having scrupulously watched over the children of St. Patrick and over their posterity from the beginning till the present hour. We have now a population of almost 40,000, and besides the parish of St. Patrick we have six other parishes entrusted to priests who are both esteemed and cherished—no less a credit to themselves and to their relatives than to the Archdiocese and to whatever portion of the Irish flock they look after.

Be not oblivious of the past. Revive and perpetuate it. Be grateful to your predecessors. In no small measure do you owe them the spirit which is animating you and the manifold advantages which you are enjoying. In a stained glass window of this church you can see the portrait of a personage without whom you would not have the kind of parish to which you belong—without whom I might not be its privileged pastor—without whom there would be no such things as the St. Bridget's Home and the

St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum of today, a personage whose most ardent and constant wish was that the two institutions which he founded, fostered, protected and patronized in all kinds of ways would be inseparably united to St. Patrick's parish. This personage is Father Dowd, who should never be forgotten in your prayers or in the prayers of subsequent generations.

Steadfastly cling to your church. Let nothing detach you. Love each inch of the ground upon which it is built, each stone in the walls, everything from the foundation to the steeple. Who could be jealous of St. Patrick's Church? Who is not proud to see and enter it? How solid the construction, how spacious the nave, how elegant the architecture and exquisite in taste the ornamentation! How singularly devotional! Prefer it to every other church. Whether you reside at a short or long distance, frequent it at least on holidays, Sundays and on all important occasions. Never be without a pew or at least a sitting. Stand by your parish. It may have had to suffer from being dismembered, invaded by foreigners or rendered less residential. Do not be uneasy or alarmed. Proclaim it still as the banner parish. Always will it remain the banner parish if you show yourselves the right thing and the right way.

On the day of your baptism you were consecrated to God, transformed into His living temples, the temples of His predilection upon earth. On that day you promised to have nothing to do with your arch-enemy, with his pomps or works. You then pledged yourselves to make common cause with our Lord, to believe only what He taught, and to observe whatever He commanded. Beyond the grave have you been prepared the home of homes, a mansion of unspeakable bliss and unfading splendor which when you will occupy it you will never run any risk of forfeiting. May the Sacred Heart of Jesus put you in possession of this home, of this mansion of mansions! Rest assured that heaven will be yours for all eternity if you persevere till the end in loving His Father and your Father and in accomplishing the will of His God and your God.

UNIFORMITY OF SCHOOL TEXT BOOKS DISCUSSED BY COMMISSIONERS.

At Monday's meeting of the Catholic School Commissioners the question of the uniformity of text books was taken up.

The Rev. Father O'Meara, referring to the recent letter of the Attorney-General, in which the opinion was given that the law imposed upon the commissioners the obligation to have a single series of text books in all the schools under their control, argued that eight schools only, Plateau, Montcalm, Champlain, Sarsfield, Belmont, Olier, Edw. Murphy, St. Joseph, are under the control of the Board, and as uniformity of books exist in those schools, he moved "that the statu quo be maintained concerning the use of books in the different schools under control of and the schools subsidized by the board."

Mr. Camille Piche opposed such a solution, and remarked that in the face of a positive declaration as to the board's duty in the matter, the statu quo would be nothing less than a defiance of the law and a refusal to obey, without any excuse.

Father O'Meara insisted on the legality of his motion. He remarked that out of the fifty schools in which the commissioners are interested only eight are under their control, the forty-two others, kept by religious communities, being simply "subsidized" by the board. His motion, he said, was based on that distinction.

Mr. Piche admitted that the text of Hon. Mr. Gouin's letter, taken in a literal sense, favored Father O'Meara's interpretation, but he could not approve such a settlement of a question the solution of which is awaited with the greatest interest by the public. Mr. P. G. Martineau, who first raised the question, was absent from this meeting, and he should be given an opportunity to express an opinion on the subject, and it would be better to adjourn the discussion for a special meeting.

Canon Dauth invited Mr. Piche to propose an amendment in that sense but the latter refused, saying that he did not wish to take any part in a motion in favor of which he could not vote, and declared that he would simply retire.

After Mr. Piche's departure, Mr. Sempie remarked that, in the absence of four members of the board, Messrs. Martineau, Laporte, Vallieres and Piche, it seemed preferable to adjourn the discussion.

All. Gallery said that there was no use voting for the statu quo, since

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abstention from deciding on the question of uniformity constituted a maintenance of the statu quo. It was finally decided to adjourn the discussion to a special meeting.

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LEAVING FOR MISSION WORK IN THE KLONDIKE.

The Rev. P. Rivet, O.M.I., is about to leave for mission work in the Klondike. A very pleasant reunion of his friends and classmates took place at his brother's home. The young missionary was ordained in 1902, and goes out to the mission field full of zeal and hopes of a bountiful harvest.