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**ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CHURCH
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE**

(Concluded from last week.)

The following year, viz., 1832, the church was begun; Bishop MacDonell who was conspicuous not only in the ecclesiastical, but also the political life of the country, having secured a grant of four acres of land from the government on which it was erected. It is a frame building measuring 60 x 40 feet, with ten large Gothic windows of stained glass and a commodious sanctuary and vestry. There is also a tower with a large window surmounted by a steeple 50 feet high and a cross. The interior arrangements of the edifice consist of three aisles with two central and two side rows of pews. There are two galleries, the cost of those having been entirely assumed by the Catholic soldiers, who were stationed here at the time, and for whom one of the galleries was reserved. There are three altars, daintily finished in white and gold. Those are not the original altars, they having been discarded at the time the church was repaired. The altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary to the left of the main altar was a gift from the Barton family, and St. Joseph's Altar to the right of the main altar was presented by Mrs. Newton, daughter of Col. McDougall, mentioned as having been President of the first meeting held in 1831.

The church was completed in 1834, and Bishop MacDonell, on the 9th of November of that year, came over to Niagara and blessed it, giving it the name of "St. Vincent de Paul," and celebrated the first mass therein. There is an entry in the register that the first communicants were "Miss Dixon and Mrs. Duff."

At the rear of the church is the cemetery in which at least two headstones are still standing with the year 1832 legible but the names are unrecognizable.

Father Polin succeeded Father Cullen, but remained only a short time. During his tenure of office here he records ten baptisms and one marriage, one baptism having been performed in "Gravelly Bay," now Port Colborne, thirty miles from here. Father Edmund Gordon succeeded Father Polin in 1834 and completed the erection of the church and at once took the necessary steps for the erection of a Presbytery. A meeting was called and a subscription list opened in 1835. One Lieut. Coleman of the 15th regiment was appointed to collect among the soldiers here and in Toronto. He also appears to have collected from a number of the prominent Protestant citizens and business people of the town and of Toronto. Here are a few of the names that appear on his list: "Mrs. Lyons, Messrs. Stocking and Greer, Robert Dickson, E. C. Campbell, James Lockhart, W. B. Winterbottom, etc., belonging to the town. On the Toronto list some of the names are: The Hon. Mr. Elmsley, Capt. Coleman, Hugh Dougherty, J. Shaughnessy, etc." The Presbytery or "Glebe House," according to the records cost \$253 14s. 11d., but the amount collected up to the year 1840 was only \$50, and Father Gordon then paid the balance due from his own private funds.

On the 13th Sept., 1834, Bishop Gaulin, coadjutor of Bishop MacDonell, administered the sacrament of Confirmation, this being the first time it was administered in the mission east of Sandwich. There were

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five males and six females confirmed at that time, ranging in ages from 13 to 23 years.

Beginning with the pastorate of Father Gordon the Niagara Mission appears to have flourished. Some of the more distant places were detached from the mission, viz., Dundas, St. Thomas and London, but the pastor had still a large circuit to traverse viz., Niagara Falls, Port Colborne, St. Johns, Smithville, St. Catharines, Toronto Gore and Adala.

At a meeting held at the chapel on the 28th of April, 1835 (Easter Monday) the office of Church Warden was established, and Messrs. Hugh McNally and William Harris were appointed for that year, at the same meeting Mr. John Lyons was appointed to act as secretary and treasurer during the same term and Rev. Edward Gordon, Messrs. John Harris, and Thos. Heenan were appointed collectors of subscriptions for the finishing of the church and Mr. Farrell was appointed to collect "for the country." Father Gordon left a record of the total Catholic population for a thousand square miles, viz., 817 souls.

The first entry in the Baptismal Register by Father Gordon was made on the 27th of April, 1834, as follows: "April 27th was baptized by me the undersigned priest, John, aged four weeks, son of William Kay and Elizabeth Shean. Sponsors Edward McCann and Margaret O'Connor."

(Signed) Edward Gordon, M. Pt.

Father Gordon kept a very careful record of the baptisms, confirmations, marriages, professions of faith and burials, with occasional explanatory notes. For instance, opposite the entry of the baptism of James Moreau the following note appears: "This man was sentenced to death for participating in the rebellion. He was the insurgent at the 'Short Hills.'" He was 23 years of age and was received into the church in jail, 29th July, and was executed 30th July, 1838."

Among the burials of 1843 is an entry of a young priest, 26 years old, who died suddenly at the Falls while visiting relatives there, and is buried under the main altar of the church here. At the funeral were "Rev. Mr. Mullen, Mr. Charest and Mr. McIntosh."

In the old register, Father Harold discovered a petition from the congregation of St. Vincent de Paul Church, Niagara, asking Bishop Power to give the "necessary power and instructions to have the stations of the cross erected in order that we and all who are disposed may have an opportunity of receiving the many spiritual advantages to be obtained by devout prayer and meditation on Christ's passion; and your Petitioners as in duty will ever pray, etc."

(Signed) John McHenry, David Lang, for the rest of the congregation. The document bears the date "9th Dec., 1844," and is written on a full sheet of foolscap. The petition is on one side, the reply, granting the petition on page 2, a declaration by the pastor, that he has this day erected, etc., in the presence of the "undersigned witnesses" no names are inscribed, however, and on page 4 is the Bishop's name in full with the words "favored by Rev. M. P. McDonough" in one corner. The Bishop's letter, sealed with red wax, is countersigned by J. J. Hay, Secy, and recites that he has "authority from a decree of Gregory XIII. to delegate any priest to erect the Via Crucis, and hereby delegates, etc." The letter is given at Toronto 13th Dec., 1844.

The priest's declaration shows that the Stations were erected on the 5th February, Ash Wednesday. A copy of this declaration also exists in the archives, made out by Father Gordon, in obedience to the Bishop's orders to do so.

In 1844 Father Gordon called a meeting of the Catholic congregation in order to raise funds for the liquidation of the debt incurred for the painting, plastering, etc., of the Catholic Church. At that meeting it was unanimously agreed that each man would pay the sum of five shillings currency and each "single female" the sum of two shillings and sixpence. Among the names on the list who paid the sum stipulated appear the following: Alex. Lane, Hugh McNally, Daniel McDougall, Patrick Lawless, Mrs. Carpenter, Michael Morley, Mrs. Mary Stevenson, Thomas Daly, Richard Ryan, Nicholas Wall, Patrick Maddigan, Michael Maguire, Margaret Healey, Mrs. Hewitt, Mrs. Hall, Martin Kearns, William Walsh, Edward Scully, Wm. Primrose, Sergeant Murphy (King's Dragoon Guards), Bernard Roddy, Rev. John Carroll, Mrs. Morris, Mrs. Todd, John O'Donnell, Mrs. L. Donnelly, Maria McArdle, Patrick Mahar, Charles Toel, Alex. Davidson, E. Power (King's Dragoon Guards), Mrs. Duff, Annie McKenna, Catherine Doyle, etc.

Father Gordon was most thorough and conscientious in all his undertakings. He built churches at Niagara, Niagara Falls, Trafalgar, Toronto Gore and Adala. He was very particular and carefully looked after the spiritual welfare of his flock, as evidenced by the following correspondence in which he insists on Col. Kingsmill allowing the Catholic soldiers stationed here at the time, to attend mass, as there was a number of Catholic non-commissioned officers and privates who were not permitted to be present at the morning services, the Colonel claiming that the regimental doctor made his examination at that particular time.

Letter from Father Gordon to Colonel Kingsmill, dated "Saturday morning, April 13, 1839."
"Sir,—I regret to find that the Catholic soldiers of your regiment do not attend Divine service on the Sunday mornings. They have not been here but once since the time I first had the honor to speak to you in their behalf. Divine Service commences on Sunday mornings at eleven o'clock, precisely, at which hour you will have the kindness to allow them in future to attend."

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I have the honor to be, sir, etc.,
Edward Gordon,
Catholic Pastor of Niagara.

The soldiers were permitted to attend mass for a few Sundays after dispatching the above letter, when they again failed to be present, and on inquiry, Father Gordon learned that the Colonel had again prevented them. Another lengthier letter of explanation was sent by the priest to the colonel in which he states "All Catholics are obliged in conscience to give their attendance during the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass which is always offered up to God only in the forenoon." No attention being paid to his repeated requests, Father Gordon then laid the matter before the Major-General commanding the forces in Canada, who immediately commanded Col. Kingsmill to permit his Catholic soldiers to attend Divine Service at the hour named by their chaplain.

Father Gordon was removed to Hamilton in 1846 and was elevated to the dignity of Vicar-General. He died at the Episcopal residence, Hamilton, in 1870.

The next in succession was Father John Carroll who remained in charge of this mission until about 1855. He accepted a chaplaincy in Chicago, where he died in 1891, having reached the venerable age of 93 years. He was a generous subscriber towards the building fund of the church, as his name frequently appears on the different lists for a substantial sum. He was a distant relation of the Carrolls, of Carrollton, one of whom signed the Declaration of Independence; he was also a nephew of Rev. Edmund Burke, mentioned earlier in this article.

Fathers Leveque, Cullen, Boyle, Musard and Wardy each remained but a short term here, and thus we arrive at the year 1857, when Father Mulligan assumed the charge of Niagara Parish. While here he worked most zealously, being an ardent advocate for the cause of temperance; he also had three sisters of St. Joseph's Order, installed as teachers in the Separate school in 1857. This school was built on a corner of the church property about 1842, as we are informed by a resident of the town that he went to school there in 1843, and there was a meeting held in it in 1844 to consider the matter of putting pews in the church. The school was in a flourishing condition for a number of years and many excellent scholars received their early training within its walls. Father John Kennedy had been one of its pupils. This promising young priest was drowned near Penetanguishene.

This school was eventually closed in 1876 owing to the depletion of the Catholic congregation. Father Mulligan was removed from here in 1862 and was given the charge of Niagara Falls Parish, in which place he remained for several years. In 1866 he was inducted as pastor of St. Catharines and Dean of the Niagara Peninsula. He labored in that parish for about nineteen years with untiring zeal, but in 1884 his health had become so impaired that his physician advised a sea voyage, which suggestion was immediately acted upon and he went to Ireland, where his aged mother still lived. He never rallied sufficiently to return, but died in the land of his birth, in the arms of his mother.

Father James Hobin was next in succession. This reserved but pious priest was endowed with great mental gifts, being considered one of the best theologians of his day. He was very ready to assist the needy and distressed in a practical as well as a spiritual manner. He was succeeded by Father T. J. Sullivan in 1868, who only remained about a year. During his short pastorate here he began the refurbishing of the Presbytery and Sanctuary. He was removed to Thorold in 1869 and installed there as pastor, where he still remains one of Thorold's most prominent figures, laboring with his wonted energy for the salvation of souls.

Father Kelly was next appointed in 1869. He purchased a small pipe organ for the church, but it was so badly damaged during a severe thunderstorm when the lightning struck the church that it became practically useless. It was replaced by a smaller organ which was presented to the church by the late Mr. Joseph Petley.

Rev. Dean Harris in his history of the Catholic Church in the Niagara Peninsula relates an amusing incident which occurred during Father Gordon's periodical visit at Toronto Gore. A young man named Sweeney desired to have his child baptized. When asked by the priest the name he wished to give the child, the young man replied, "Vanus your Reverence." What! said Father Gordon, why, you rascal, I'll never give a Catholic child the name of a heathen goddoss. "Well, your Reverence," replied Sweeney, that's my father's name." Nonsense, man, replied the priest, no Catholic priest, particularly an Irish one, would give her name to any child, male or female, so go and get your father before a drop of water goes on the head of this helpless infant. When the father entered the priest asked him: "What's your baptismal name, Sweeney?" "Vanus, your Reverence," replied the man. "Why, my good man, surely you never got that name at baptism." No, sir," answered Sweeney. "I was baptized as Sylvanus but the neighbors always call me Vanus for short."

Father Labourau succeeded Father Kelly in 1871. He was highly educated and a good musician. He had a marked individuality and wielded a great influence for good among his parishioners. He made a number of necessary improvements around the church property, but was taken from here in 1872 and given the charge of the parish at Penetanguishene, where he still remains. He has erected at Penetanguishene a magnificent memorial church to the early Jesuit martyrs which will be a lasting monument to commemorate their heroic deeds and glorious martyrdom and will also bear testimony to the energy and zeal of its founder.

Father Berrigan, appointed in 1872, remained in charge until 1874. He was a strict disciplinarian and took a deep interest in the education of the children, carefully looking after their material as well as spiritual welfare. He died in 1904.

Fathers A. J. O'Reilly (1874-1876) P. J. Kiernan (1876-1878) and E. F. Gallagher (1878-1879) followed in succession. Those devoted priests neglected no opportunity of adding to the "treasure store of piety" and religious fervor, which is the

strength and glory of a parish. Father P. J. Harold next assumed the charge of the parish in 1879 and remained until 1882, when he was temporarily succeeded by Rev. A. M. Murphy, O.C.C., a priest of the Carmelite Order. In 1881 Father Harold again took charge, remaining here until 1888, when Father T. M. Shanahan was appointed pastor. This talented young priest was soon obliged to resign his parochial duties and leave Niagara on account of ill-health, bearing with him the affection and regret of the parishioners. He died shortly after his departure from here and his early death caused a heartfelt sorrow.

In 1890 Father Harold was a third time appointed pastor of this mission. He found the church and Presbytery in urgent need of repairs and being very energetic and exceedingly resourceful as to ways and means, he at once set to work to make the necessary improvements. The church was so thoroughly renovated from foundation to cross, that it will, we trust, weather a few more decades. The Presbytery or "Glebe House" was sold and removed from the premises, under Father Harold's supervision, and was replaced by a much larger and more commodious structure, which contains all the modern improvements, including furnace, electric light, etc. Those very necessary changes and repairs were made with very moderate expense to the congregation.

Father Harold possessed the gift of imparting knowledge in a remarkable degree and being a lover of children, he made them his special care, and in teaching them the way to live, he taught them how to die. He was an accomplished classical scholar and gifted with great literary ability. He wrote a very interesting Historic Romance of the First Century, "Irene of Corinth," the contents of which are both fascinating and instructive.

Being a practical musician, the choir, which was in a lethargic condition, also came in for a large share of his attention and time. The late Father Brennan, who was also a lover of sacred music, devoted much of his spare time to the choir and presented it with a number of pieces of valuable music.

The earliest choir consisted of members belonging to the Band of the Regiments stationed at Niagara, and later it was conducted by Sergeant Charles Conroy, who at present resides in Ottawa, but who will not be remembered by many residents of the town, for being an ardent admirer of the old town, he never forgets to pay it an occasional friendly visit.

A small melody was presented to the church by a friend and Mrs. Newton (nee McDougall) took charge of this and directed the choir for years with the assistance of Mr. Conroy, with great success. Miss Allinson (now Mrs. Richards) on the resignation of Mrs. Newton, then took charge of the choir, being a mere child at the time, and with the most untiring devotion and fidelity she played the organ, taught and directed the choir for years. Needless to say her success was remarkable. She also devoted much of her time to the instruction of the children in her class in Sunday School, and she did not relinquish her self-imposed but extremely praiseworthy tasks until a short time before her marriage. She organized a large Choral Society which was composed of members of all denominations. Several very successful concerts were given by this society, the proceeds from some of them being given for the benefit of the Public Library, in which institution she was much interested. It is often said, there is no one who cannot be done without. This, no doubt, is true, but Mrs. Richards was one of the few who left a very large niche to be filled in the hearts of the congregation of St. Vincent de Paul, and not alone in the Catholic congregation, for her departure was sincerely regretted by all lovers of music, irrespective of creed.

After Mrs. Richards' departure, the following ladies took charge of the organ and choir for a short time: Miss Murphy (now Mrs. Mooney) Mrs. Lamb, Miss McPaul and Miss Robinson. Miss Walsh then took the choir and presided as organist for several years with much ability and success. Her strength not being sufficient to sustain the strain which the duties entailed, she eventually resigned the position. Mr. Mulholland is the present organist and director of the choir, which position he has held for over six years with admirable executive ability and characteristic modesty. It may be stated here that in no instance has any of the organists or members of the choir received any recompense for their services other than perhaps a limited quantity of judicious praise, tempered with healthy criticism.

In 1894 Rev. Father Harold took his departure from here and was succeeded by Father Jno. J. Lynch in the same year. Energetic, zealous and scholarly, Father Lynch, apparently, had every prospect of many years of splendid opportunity before him to labor for the salvation of souls, but our Lord had willed otherwise. During his short sojourn here he was respected and beloved by his parishioners, not only because of his devotion to duty, his compassion for the sick and poor, without respect to creed or color, but also because of the affectionate warmth of his heart, his never failing to all both Catholic and Protestant, as "never to estrange a friend or create an enemy."

"He was of youth the guardian and of all, the friend." His life was closed in the morning of his priesthood, on the 9th of September, 1897. He was buried in St. Vincent de Paul's Cemetery where a monument was erected to his memory by his parishioners bearing the following inscription: "We hold his name in benediction." "To the memory of Rev. Father Lynch, who for three years was pastor of this parish. He died Sept. 9th, 1897, in the 34th year of his age and the 10th of his priesthood. Eternal rest give to him, O Lord."

After the death of Father Lynch in 1897 the Carmelite Fathers were requested to take charge of the parish, by Archbishop Walsh, and Father A. M. Murphy, O.C.C. again officiated here, until 1899, when he was removed and Father A. D. Brennan assumed the charge. His term of office was only temporary, for, being a highly educated man, he was transferred to Chicago, where he filled the duties of Professor of Theology in the Carmelite College there. Shortly after going there his health

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failed him and he was obliged to return to the Hospice at Niagara Falls. He died in 1903—"He needs no tears who lived a noble life." Father Murphy returned here after Father Brennan was removed and continued to officiate until 1902, when Father D. F. O'Malley took charge, Father Murphy having been selected to fill the position of Prior of the Carmelite College of Chicago. Father O'Malley, being a very eloquent speaker, was removed from Niagara after a short stay here and was succeeded by Father Murphy, this being the fourth time the Niagara parish was committed to his care. Father Murphy was heartily welcomed by his parishioners on each occasion of his return, as he had endeared himself to all by his unobtrusive virtues and simplicity of manner, never sparing himself where duty called him, but in every instance yielding his services unstintingly on behalf of his flock. He was removed from here in 1904, when Archbishop O'Connor received the parish back from the Carmelite Order and once more placed a secular priest in charge, viz., Rev. Father McEachern, who is the present incumbent.

The Presbytery has just now been thoroughly refitted and partly refurbished, owing to the laudable enterprise and energy on the part of several of the ladies and gentlemen of the parish. The congregation generously contributed the requisite funds, and as a result the presbytery presents a very pleasing and comfortable appearance.

This sketch would be incomplete were we to omit the names of such generous unselfish supporters of the church as Messrs. Peter Clarke, Geo. Greene, Patrick Healey and James Doyle, who, with others, deserve more than passing mention herein, would space permit. Suffice it to say they will live in affectionate remembrance in the hearts of the people of the parish. With the exception of Mr. Clarke, who returned to Ireland after the death of his wife, and eventually died there, they are resting peacefully in the little cemetery of St. Vincent de Paul in the rear of the church. In the cemetery also repose many of the pioneer residents of the early church, notably Mrs. Stevenson, who is mentioned in the old Niagara Gleaner, 1832, as performing a work of mercy by sending comforts to the prisoners. In the McDougall family plot is the grave of Colonel McDougall, whose name appears as Chairman on the original set of Resolutions drawn up in 1831, previous to the erection of the church. When Bishop MacDonell came to Niagara to consecrate the church he was entertained at Colonel McDougall's. Adjacent to the McDougall plot is a sarcophagus in which lie the remains of John Lyons, registrar for many years. His name appears on the records of a meeting held on Easter Monday, 1835, as Secretary-Treasurer for that year. There is a tablet erected in the church with the following inscription: "To the memory of Lieut. Adj't Reginald McDonnell, Royal Canadian Rifle Regiment, who died at Niagara, C.W., on the 20th Dec., 1851, aged 39 years. This tablet is erected by his brother officers as a testimony of regard." His remains are interred in the graveyard and a stone with a similar inscription marks the spot. Hundreds of other dear departed friends rest in our little graveyard, in fact it would be difficult to find one in the parish who has not some beloved relative resting there. "And with the morn those Angel faces smile which we have loved and lost are yet awhile."

In collecting the facts contained in this sketch I have consulted "Gallinee's Narrative, 'The History of the Catholic Church in the Niagara Peninsula,'" by Dean Harris. "History of the Church of Niagara" by Rev. P. J. Harold. I have also gathered authentic information from a few of the pioneer residents of the town and from ancient records of the parish. Imperfect and unpolished as this narrative is presented to you, it is history. The old pioneers are fast vanishing from our midst but the church of St. Vincent de Paul crowned with the sign of our redemption will bear testimony to their unselfish generosity and unwavering faith.

Work of Rev. Fr. Fitzpatrick

Rev. Father Fitzpatrick of Ennismore, is doing extraordinary work as parish priest of St. Martin's. In addition to the usual attention bestowed upon the spiritual wants of a flock, Father Fitzpatrick is an enthusiastic and effective temperance worker. He has erected a parish hall which local papers describe as a credit to the county. On this hall during the summer months, important alterations have been made. An excellent classroom has been fitted up and it is to be used by Rev. Father Fitzpatrick as a High School. The township had twenty-five successful candidates at the late Entrance Examinations, and it is expected that at least twenty of these will attend. Mr. J. A. O'Donoghue, a noted teacher, late of Campbellford, has been engaged as Principal, and Rev. Father Fitzpatrick himself will be classical master. A two years' course will be given after passing the Entrance Examination. Rev. Father Fitzpatrick is congratulated by the local press on laying the foundations for what promises to be a strong educational factor in the district. The Catholic Register wishes the zealous priest all success in his enthusiastic career.

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