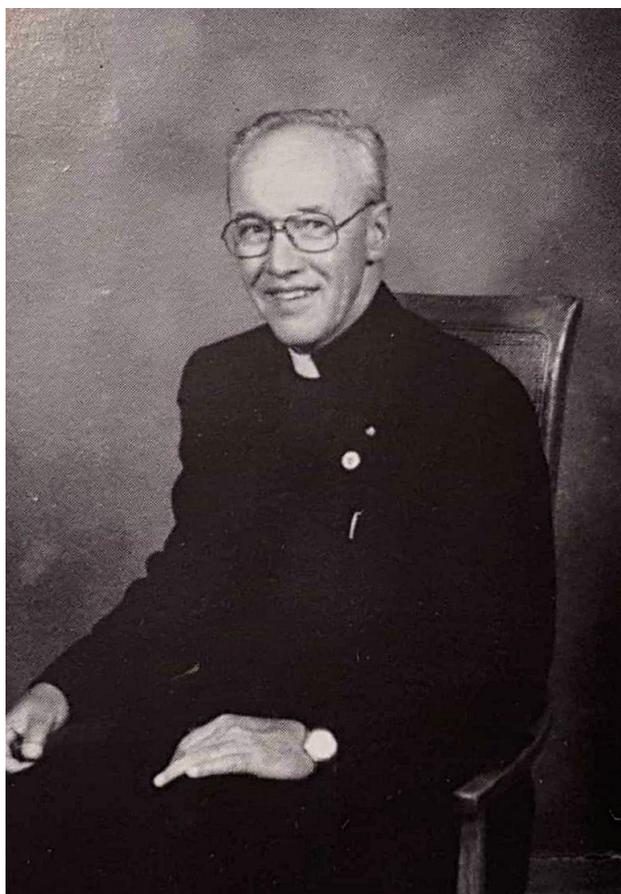


# **Parish History Update**

## **1929 – 1979**



**Fr. John J. Bensette**

A cover and photos were added to the original content in 2017. . Fr. Bensette asked Elaine Jeffrey to do the research for this update. He finalized the original document and submitted it to the Diocese as per their request ca 1979.

## FATHER LEO MARCHAND 1929-1938



Rev. Fr. Leo Marchand  
1929-1938

Father Marchand arrived on January 26, 1929 and remained until the 29th of May, 1938. The church was remodeled. Cedar shingles were put on the roof. Altars were placed in the alcoves and large tapestries were hung from the ceiling. Lanterns were hung from arches for lighting.



Side Altars and large tapestries in the alcoves pictured during the 1970s.

*The Corriveau Brothers*, a local ditch digging company, put in a septic tank, drains and catch basins. An Old Boy's Reunion was held on the 1st and 2nd of September, 1929 to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the dedication

of St Pierre aux Bouleaux Church and to pay for the cost of remodeling the church.



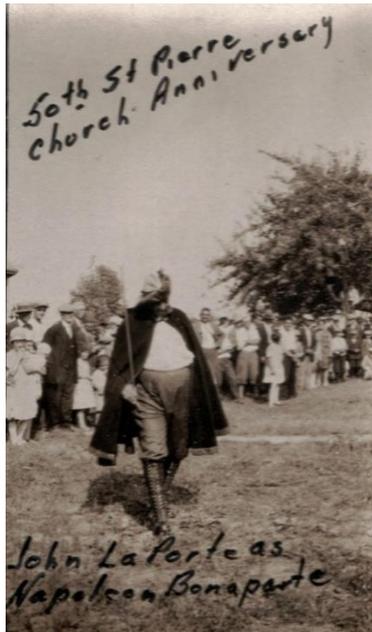
**Members of the Cast for play performed at the 1929 Old Boys' Reunion**

**Back Row:** Fr. Marchand, Edie (Denomme) Durand, Marie Mousseau, James Masse (Jesuit Priest), Oscar Ducharme, Jane (Geoffroy) Brisson, unknown, Johnny Charrette

**Front Row:** Sara (Masse) Jeffrey, Alphonsine (Ducharme) Stanberry, unknown, Joseph Ducharme, Frank Jeffrey

Hundreds of people attended. Chicken dinners were served and there were amusement for all. A pageant depicting the life of the martyrs was put on by the parishioners. (Zurich Herald, September 5, 1929, page 5) Other dramatic performances were also rendered. In keeping with the commemoration, Father Marchand wrote a book about the history of the parish. The booklet was published and sold as a souvenir at the Old Boy's

Reunion. The reunion was a great success and made \$2,200.00, \$2,000 was to pay the cost of remodeling the church and the remaining \$200 was presented to Father Marchand as a gift.



*John LaPorte  
as Napoleon Bonaparte*

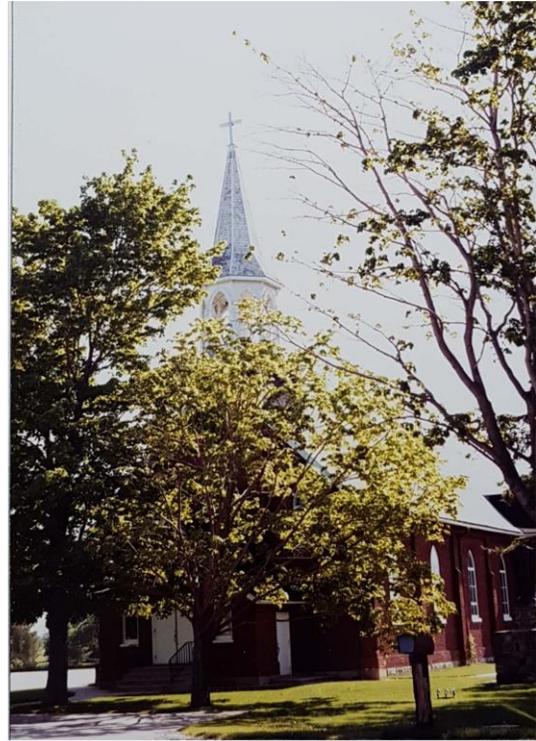
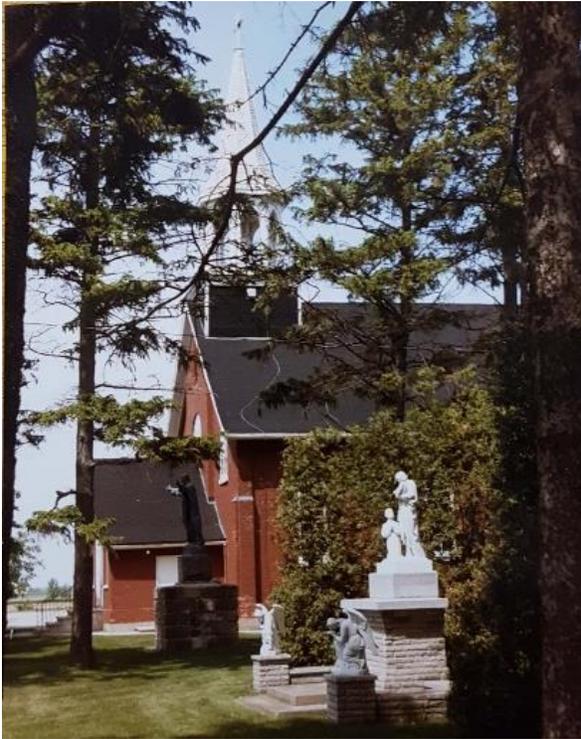


*Fortune Tellers – Eugenie Denomme &  
Beatrice Denomme*



In 1930, Miss Rose Kennedy, a sister to the Honourable William Costello Kennedy, donated to the diocese of London, a former Methodist Church. The English Martyr's Church in Bayfield was used as a mission chapel to St. Pierre aux Bouleaux.

Painting bees were organized in 1930 and the once white brick buildings were all painted red.



On Labour Day, September 5, 1932, "The Annual Festival" was held to mark the "First Anniversary of the decoration of the church. The following describes the interior of the church at that time.



"The interior is most beautifully and artistically decorated. The walls are of marble imitation and the ceiling is of ivory, trimmed with gold. Two beautiful hand paintings adorn the ceiling and the stained glass windows can compare with any in America. Three gothic arches erected now separate the body of the church from the sanctuary. On these are portrayed elegant hand painted angels. In the sanctuary stands foremost the altar of white marble imitation, ornamented with gold. Four beautiful oak pews accommodate some fifty altar boys. A pulpit, a craftsman work of art, stands on the gospel



side. The exterior of both church and house have also received a liberal coat of paint. The green tower and gold-leafed cross surmounting it, together with the red-brick background, form a most gratifying sight.”

Rev. Fr. Marchand beside church entrance with St. Mary's school in the distance.

## FATHER OSCAR MARTIN 1938-1945

Father Oscar Martin arrived at St, Pierre aux Bouleaux in June or July, 1938.



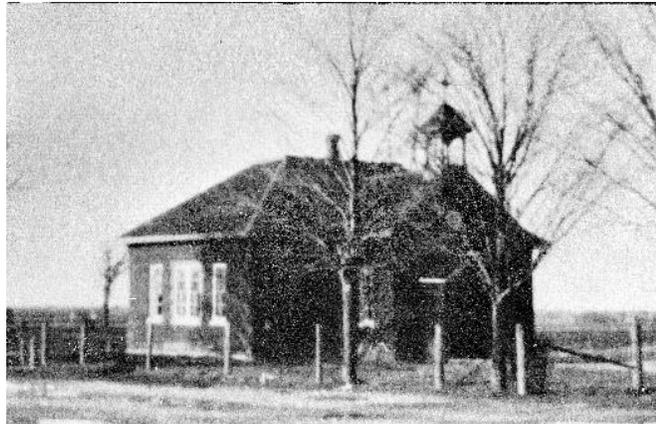
*Rev. Father Oscar Martin*

In 1939, hydro was put in the church and rectory.

In 1940, the parish purchased a house from Emily Denomme for the sum of \$1,500.00 to be used as a convent, with money donated by Charles A, Bedard.

The new convent was renovated and partly furnished by the parish. Later renovations added kitchen space, a dining area and additional bedrooms. At the request of

the late Most Reverend J. T. Kidd, then Bishop of London, the Ursulines went to St, Joseph's in September, 1941, in order to teach in the school. Grades 9 and 10 were taught for the first time and R.C.S.S. #1 Hay was made bilingual.

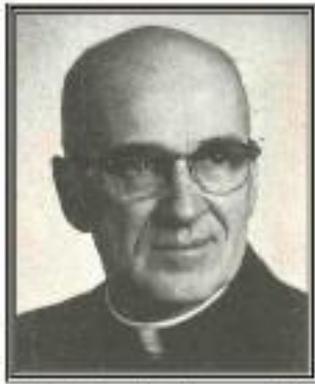


During this time (1941-1970) a coal furnace was put in the little log school house. A hall was built where the old horse shed had been. Many dances

were held. A new foundation was built underneath the school house and the exterior of the church was painted. A rock well was put in to serve the church,



rectory and convent. A detailed plan of the cemetery was made and the cemetery was expanded on the south side. Father Martin left in July, 1945.



*Father Edgar H. Robert*

Father Edgar H. Robert acted as administrator during the months of September, 1945 to March, 1946.

Mother Marie Estelle, Superior of the convent and principal, and Mother Louise Marie took charge of classes in Ecole Sainte Marie. The other sisters that

year were Mother Visitation and Mother Andrea. Grade 9 and 10 were taught for the first time, numbering 10 students. There were 38 in the junior classes. The sisters also did church work.

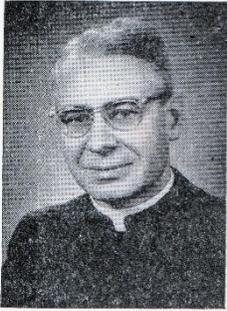
The sisters stationed here from 1941 to June, 1990 were:

- Sr. Marie Estelle
- Sr. Louise Marie
- Sr. Andrea
- Sr. Odille
- Sr. Rosella

Sr. St. Denise  
Sr. Eucharistia  
Sr. Francesca  
Sr. Jean Marie  
Sr. Doreen  
Sr. Norberta  
Sr. St. Mark  
Sr. Ste Edmond  
Sr. St. Pierre  
Sr. Ursula Marie  
Sr. Imelda  
Sr. Simone  
Sr. Agnes Claire  
Sr. Visitation  
Sr. Pauline  
Sr. Colette  
Sr. Anastasia  
Sr. Agnes Clare Rowland  
Sr. Julia

(Reference: Sister Mary Jane, Ursuline Motherhouse, The Pines, Chatham, received May 17, 1976, answering for Sister Jean Marie who has great difficulty writing).

## **MONSIGNOR WILLIAM BOURDEAU 1946-1954**



Rev. Fr. Wm.  
Bourdeau

Monsignor William Bourdeau was appointed as pastor in 1946. He attended to the needs of this parish on two separate occasions. In 1946, Monsignor Bourdeau began remodeling the various parish buildings

Church: pillars were added to the arches; the altar railing was moved and steps were put in the sanctuary; a new wall with arches was erected behind the altar to prevent condensation; rubrical arches were installed; vestry was partially insulated and refurnished completely, including linoleum; a hot water furnace was installed in the sanctuary and a rubber mat for the vestibule of the church; the stained glass windows were repaired; and the church and vestry were redecorated in 1949 by E. Alston of Ridgetown.

Hall: a 25 foot addition was built for restrooms and a complete cafeteria with service for 200 was added; a storage shed, a hot air furnace from the school and hot and cold running water were installed; the stage was erected and a public speaking system, tables and folding chairs for 200 were purchased.

Rectory: Floors were covered with masonite and linoleum; main entrance and stairway were rearranged to make a waiting room; the kitchen was completely modernized; the housekeeper's quarters were given privacy and a toilet was installed; a root cellar, incinerator and work bench were built in the basement; a few doors were walled up and a porch was added to the kitchen.

School: a fan was installed on the heating system; a piano and desks were purchased and a hardwood floor was installed.

Garage: an attic with a stairway was added and a garden tractor was purchased. All buildings were given two coats of paint; new sidewalks were laid and the lighting of the grounds was increased.

On July 3rd, 4th and 5th, 1948, an Old Boy's Reunion was held to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone of the church and to pay for the remodeling of the buildings. Besides special liturgical celebrations, the festivities included booths of chance, games, bingo, races, contests, tug of war, raffles, dances and speech. It was an enjoyable time for all. The parish made a profit of approximately \$6,000 .00

In May of 1949, the first parish council of the Catholic Women's League was established in this parish.

On June 3, 1949, the Honourable Louis St. Laurent, the Prime Minister of Canada, his wife and daughter had lunch in St. Pierre aux Bouleaux's hall while on a campaign tour.

In July of 1949, a pilgrimage was made to the Martyr's Shrine at Midland .

A supper and picnic was held September 3rd and 4th of 1949 to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the solemn blessing of the completed church. A new addition had been added to the church and the installation of the Stations of the Cross had occurred in 1899. The addition consisted of the sacristy or winter chapel, and the two transepts. Rededication services were held Sunday, September 4, 1949 with the Most Reverend C. L. Nelligan as guest speaker. Three masses were celebrated Sunday morning in thanksgiving for the many favors which had been granted to the parish over the past 50 years. Father J. I. Ducharme, a



native of the parish, sang the high mass at 11:00 A.M. In 1953, Monsignor Bourdeau had the honour of hosting the last Diocesan Eucharistic Congress in the diocese of London. During the month of May in 1953, the Joint Enthronement of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary was held in each home

In October of 1953, a revised financial report was made in which pew rent for specific pews disappeared. On May 20 and 21, 1954, the Ave Maria Van brought the Statue of Our Lady of Fatima to St. Peter's Parish. A Tridium of prayer was held in preparation for the visit. Three hundred received communion and two hundred and seventy-five were present for the departure of the statue. Thirty cars rode with the motorcade. A press release was sent to the local newspaper explaining the significance of the visit of the statue.

A Centenary Supper and Picnic was held July 3 and 4, 1954, to commemorate the official establishment of St. Peter's as a parish mission. A centenary mass of thanksgiving was offered by his excellency Bishop Cody. Special devotions were held and Father Foley delivered the sermon. A banquet, dance, fireworks display, raffles and games of chance and skill were also a part of the festivities.

An article in the The Huron Expositor, 1954-07-23, Page 7 described the event as follows:

**St. Peter's Parish, St. Joseph, Observes Centenary**

One hundred years ago, St. Peter's Parish in St. Joseph, Ont., was officially established by Most Rev. Marie de Charbonnel, second bishop of Toronto. That was in 1854. On July 1, 1954, centenary celebrations were officially opened with a tridium preached by Father Foley, C.S.S.R. Then on Saturday, July 3, the real celebration began. The ceremonies opened with a centenary Mass celebrated at 4 p.m. by Most Rev. J. C. Cody, D.D., LL.D., Bishop of London assisted by Rev. J. J. McCormick, Secretary to the Bishop. The acolytes were Napoleon Denomme and George Overholt., Louis Masse was cross bearer. Father Foley delivered an impressive sermon in church filled to capacity by both religious and laity. At 6 p.m. the centenary banquet took place in the parish hall. The hostess was Mrs. Alvin Rau, and Charles Rau was toastmaster. A prayer for the Holy Father and

grace were recited by Most Rev. J. C. Cody. His Excellency was principal speaker at the banquet. L. E. Cardiff, M.P. for Huron, also spoke. Lawrence Ayotte in responding to a toast to the Old Boys, said that the people of St. Peter's have a challenge before them if they are to retain the heritage that is theirs in the parish. Fred Ducharme traced the history of the parish through the course of its hundred years. In midsummer 100 years ago ten or twelve families immigrated to the south of St. Joseph. They endured much misery and hardship from wolves, storms and lack of roads. A hundred years ago the parish was officially established by Most Reverend [sic] Marie de Charbonnel, second bishop of Toronto. On January 20 the new pastor, Father P. Scheider, [sic] had the pleasure of baptizing together six babies of various ages: Angus McDonnell, Pierre Gravel, Mathelde [sic] Denomme, Marie Emilie Champagne, Hedwige Geoffrey and Louise Mailloux. The very next day he united in holy wedlock Joseph Ducharme and Marie Papillon as well as Andre Schmitt and Therese Beuparlant. In the meantime the present Diocese of London was founded and Bishop Pinsonneault visited it in 1860 to confer Confirmation on 89 boys and girl. Mr. Ducharme is himself a descendant of one of the families of those early pioneers. For about eight or nine years he stated, these devout families formed a small parish known as Birch Pointe. It was in the fifth year that Mass was first celebrated by a priest from Goderich. In 1850 the highway was opened and named the Sauble Line. The average farm was from 15 to 20 acres. The parish has had nine priests, 20 nuns, two doctors, two lawyers, several teachers, etc. Monsignor Bourdeau, pastor of the parish, welcomed the guests and thanked all the speakers mentioning the sincerity of the parish in everything it did. Music for the banquet was supplied by Miss Marilyn Denomme and Gerard Geoffrey After the banquet many booth were opened on the grounds. The weather was perfect. Many people from far and near thronged to St. Joseph to meet former friends and enjoy this gala affair.

Monsignor Bourdeau left this parish in 1954 and took up a post as pastor of the Immaculate Conception Church in Pain-Court. Among his many duties here, Monsignor, also, acted as the Diocesan Director of the Papal Missionary Societies for the Diocese.



A set of wooden Stations of the Cross are currently stored in the church basement. These may be the set referred to above.



## FATHER ISIDORE POISSON 1954-1961

Father Poisson became pastor of St. Pierre aux Bouleaux in 1954. He added a boiler in the rectory and changed the entire heating system in the church, vestry and rectory to oil. He also had the foundation of the church repaired.



On October 16, 1955, Father Poisson officiated at the unveiling of the monument of Brother André kneeling at the feet of St. Joseph. Father Rondot, a former pastor of St. Pierre aux Bouleaux, received the honour of blessing the statue. Reverend Father Henri Bernard of

the Oratory of St. Joseph was guest speaker.

More than 200 people attended the ceremony. Among them were Father A , A, Rondot, Father Auguste Caron, Father E, J. Chevalier, Father Leo Charron, Father Henri Van Wyncki, Father J, P. Gleason, Father M.D. Monahan, Father Charles Lanaue, Father A. Marentette, Mr. and Mrs, Thomas Pryde of Exeter, as well as, many parishioners.



The Kneeling St. Brother André Statue, 2017

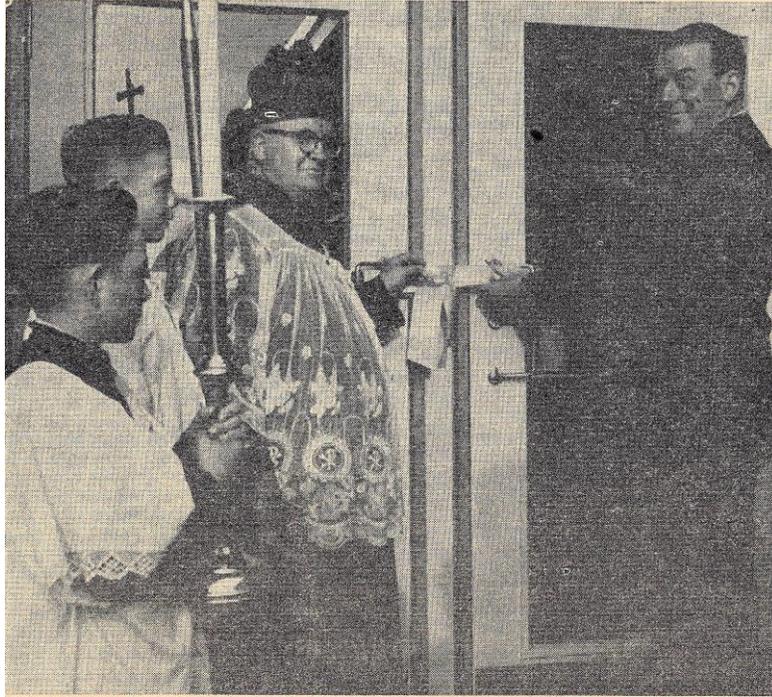
The monument was made by a Montreal firm. Carlie Petrucci. The base was constructed by Fred Turnbull of Grand Bend. Mr. Narcisse Cantin's son, Joseph, organized the campaign to provide funds for the statue. Joseph Cantin, also, chose the design of the statue.

Under Father Poisson's leadership and aided by the committee of Messrs, Ted Geoffrey, Chairman, Charles Rau, William Ducharme, Clement Regier and Noel Laporte, the excessive fears of increased taxes were overcome (actual increase was about \$20.00 per farm) and a union school project was embarked upon, i.e. a union between R.C.S.S. Stanley and R.C.S.S. Hay, the St. Joseph School no longer being in existence. The architectural work was done by W.H. Dawes and on August 30, 1960, the contract for building was awarded to Frank Van Bussel & Sons. The cost of the building alone was set at \$70,000.00.

School was carried on as a union school in the parish hall from September, 1960 to February 14, 1961, when unofficial entry took place in the new Ecole Ste. Marie.



The official ribbon cutting took place on May 14, 1961 — after classes had begun by CCS, MacNaughton, MLA for Huron County.



**RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY** — C. S. MacNaughton, M.L.A. for Huron, officially cuts the ribbon which marks the opening of the Ste. Marie School at St. Joseph, last Sunday evening. Assisting the member of parliament is Father I. J. Poisson, the Parish Priest, who is also the secretary of the school board. Looking on are two altar boys, Dennis Rau and Dennis Ducharme. The upper photo shows the front of the fine new building, which was just recently completed. *May 14 1961* (Citizens News Photo)



**DISCUSS SCHOOL** — Shown here discussing the new Ste Marie School at St. Joseph after the opening ceremonies on Sunday, May 14, are left to right, Charles Rau ( chairman of the board of trustees, Father I. J. Poisson, parish priest and secretary of the board, and C. S. MacNaughton, Huron MLA, who cut the ribbon to officially open the new building. *May 14 1961* (Citizens News Photo)

On July 18, 1961, Father Poisson passed away suddenly from a heart attack. His body was laid in state in this church where a constant guard of honour was kept until his funeral mass. A solemn high mass was offered by Monsignor A. P. Mahoney and Monsignor William Bourdeau acted as deacon. Sub-deacon for the mass was Reverend Father Auguste Caron and Reverend Father O. Martin delivered the sermon. The body was brought to Sts. Simon and Jude Church, Belle River.



The question of renovations begun by Father Poisson to the convent now had to be dealt with, since they had to be completed before the September, 1961 opening of Ecole Ste Marie in order to make adequate room for the four sisters. A new story above the kitchen was added during August, 1961 by the Jeffrey Brothers Contractors in time for the September opening.

Father J. Bensette became administrator from July to September, 1961.

# The London Free Press

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1955—SECOND SECTION

200 Attend Service

## Statue Honoring Brother Andre Is Unveiled At St. Joseph Rite



### STATUE OF BROTHER ANDRE UNVEILED

ST. JOSEPH, Oct. 17 — More than 200 attended a service and ceremony at St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church here to witness the unveiling of a memorial statue in honor of Brother Andre.

Brother Andre founded the Oratory of St. Joseph at Montreal. Thousands went there to be healed and the Oratory is known internationally.

Brother Andre visited this community north of Grand

Some who recall these visits say several residents were helped by him.

The statue, which commemorates the visits, shows Brother Andre kneeling before St. Joseph.

When he visited here Brother Andre stayed at the home of Narcisse Cantin. Mr. Cantin's son, Joseph, organized the campaign to provide funds for the statue which was made in

The Rev. Father Henri Bernard, of the Oratory of St. Joseph which Brother Andre founded, was guest speaker. Father Bernard said the Oratory attracts 2,000,000 visitors per year.

The Rev. Father A. A. Rondot blessed the monument. Father Rondot was parish priest here from 1913 to 1924 and now is retired at Stoney Point. The Rev. Father I. J. Poisson, parish priest here, unveiled the monument.

## **MONSIGNOR WILLIAM BOURDEAU 1961-1971**



Right Reverend W. Bourdeau,  
St. Peter's Parish, Zurich.

In 1961, Monsignor Bourdeau returned to St Pierre's for a second time. During the same year of his return, he redecorated and remodeled the church here and the English Martyr's Church in Bayfield in accordance with the new liturgy. The first parish council was established in 1961.

An Open House and Tea was held on October 14, 1962 for all to view the newly decorated and remodeled churches.

The communion rail was removed; the altar was replaced with a new oak table; a new confessional with better sound-proofing facilities was added; the church was re-wired; a new 100 amp service was installed; new lighting in the church; better washroom facilities; a new plywood floor with linoleum and vinyl rug coverings; a large red curtain was hung in back of the altar; the church was repainted and redecorated on the inside; some repairs were made on the areas that needed it

In 1969 or 1970 the organ was removed from the upstairs area and was placed in the alcove. Monsignor Bourdeau suffered a heart attack in 1970 and retired in June 1971. The Ursuline Sisters also left this parish on July 4, 1970

In honour of Monsignor Bourdeau's and the Sisters' departure, the students of Ecole Ste. Marie put on a pageant. There was singing, musical renditions and poetry was read. Monsignor and the Sisters were presented with parting gifts.

## FATHER ALPHONSE A. ROBERT 1971-1972



Rev. A. A. Robert

Father Robert became pastor in 1971. In August of 1971, the parking lot and driveway were paved. Father Robert was the first pastor to publish Sunday bulletins. In 1972, a generous parishioner donated money for a processional cross.

On July 16, 1972, an historical plaque honouring Narcisse Cantin was unveiled and dedicated at Memorial Park, St, Joseph. The erection of the plaque was sponsored by the Huron County Historical Society. The unveiling was held on

the corner of Highway 83 and Highway 21 at Memorial Park. The programme began with a few words from the chairman of the society, Harold S. Turner, Goderich. Addresses of welcome were heard from St. Peter's Parish. Greetings were extended by Charles MacNaughton, M.P. Bob McKinley, M.P. and Murray Gaunt, M.P. The Historic Sites Board Representative Father Lorenzo Cadieux, also spoke to the gathering. Historical background was provided by Mr. Joseph Wooden, the author of A Drum To Beat Upon. Napoleon Cantin unveiled the plaque and Right Reverend Monsignor William Bourdeau performed the dedication.



On July 22, 1972, Bishop Gerald Emmett Carter made an official pastoral visit. On August 17, 1972, a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady at St. Mary's was made by the Catholic Women's League.

Father Robert was transferred to another parish in 1973. Monsignor Bourdeau returned to this parish for a few months until Father Ring arrived. Father Ring remained for a few months until another pastor could be appointed

## FATHER JOHN J. BENSETTE 1973-



Reverend J. J. Benseite,  
Christ the King College, London.

Father Benseite arrived as new pastor on the 10th of June, 1973, although a typing error on his letter of appointment declared him pastor on the 1st of June, 1973. There was a small gathering of parishioners held on the 24th of June for the formal installation by Father Carl Keane, Dean of Stratford.

This was followed very closely by another slightly more elaborate celebration on July 8, 1973 recognizing the laying of the corner stone of the main part of the present church one hundred years previously (1873, 6 July). There was little time for preparation as the new pastor discovered this centenary mark in history only by accident two weeks before the event. Of the former pastors only Father O. Martin and Monsignor William Bourdeau were available and a sung Mass was concelebrated by the new pastor, Father Martin reading the Gospel and Monsignor giving the homily in both French and English. Games and a picnic on



ATTEND CENTENNIAL EVENT - A large crowd of present and former parishioners attended the centennial celebration last Sunday at St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church, St. Joseph. Shown here watching four-year old Darryl Rau enjoy a bottle of pop are Monsignor W. Bourdeau, who took part in the centennial mass, Mrs. Rau, Peter Ducharme and Father John Benseite, the parish priest.

FR: Darryl Rau BR: Msg. W. Bourdeau,  
Tillie Rau, Pete Ducharme, Fr. J. J.  
Benseite Citizen News July 12, 1973

the spacious parish grounds were enjoyed by some 200 parishioners. Three more historic events were to come to pass in the next six years with only two being celebrated: the 50th anniversary of Monsignor William Bourdeau's ordination to the priesthood (June 12, 1977), 125th anniversary of the founding of the parish (1979-1980?) and the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Bayfield Mission. The second event was not celebrated due to the inadvertance of the pastor.

The response to campaigns of various kinds was generally very good, but the most dramatic was the response to the plight of the South East Asian refugee situation, beginning about 197? or

1978. After much work by a small

committee and the cooperation of the parish, a Chinese-Vietnamese-Laotian family, the Daravongsas, arrived. This participation in the fully on or about November 9, 1979, Catholic or universal love in this parish was a great blessing to all. Changes and their effects continued to occur, having brought



The Daravongsa Family



Formerly used as a convent

some rather difficult years in the whole church as well as great blessings, and this parish was not isolated from them. In November, 1976 the convent was sold to one of

the parishioners for an amount of approximately \$18,000.00 since there appeared no future hope that religious nuns would return to teach at Ecole Ste. Marie. Of special interest to the parish was the declaration by Pope Paul VI that Brother André (Alfred Bessette) of the religious order of the Holy Cross, was worthy of the title "Venerable Brother Andre had been a guest here in 1917 and 1922 (cf. supplement) occurred in June, 1978. There were various major maintenance projects carried out, such as, the replacement of the main wooden supports for the church tower and the new roofing for the church, house and garage. During this time of renewal there were programs for the youth sponsored by St, Boniface Parish under Reverend A. J, Durand and P. F. Mooney, and by St. Joseph Parish, Stratford, which were helpful, and also for the adults in this parish with moderate attendance but with enthusiastic participation. At the core of programs for both groups was the strengthening of marriage and the family which was suffering from attack and break-down throughout the Diocese. The change in this parish was reflected especially at this time in a drop in birth rate, e.g. in 1929 there were 18 Baptisms and one marriage; in 1979 there were 5 Baptisms and three marriages. The CWL continued its loyal and valuable help and celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1978. The Cemetery Board did very good work in the maintenance of the grounds, the raising of the Perpetual Care Fund from \$700.00 to \$8,105.00 and in general operations. The Parish Cemetery is no longer dependent upon the parish finances for maintenance

and operation. The number of families at present is about 100 and the number of Catholics, practicing and non-practicing, is just over 1400. The percentage for Sunday Mass participation and in the sacraments is high according to averages throughout the Diocese. The depth and sincerity of faith is still rather exceptional as best as can be judged, in a human sense, but the future lies with the youth and the young married couples. May they exceed their ancestors in faith, hope and love in the practice of their Catholic faith.

## SUPPLEMENT submitted for period 1929—1979

*NOTE: Family lore states that Brother André visited twice. Based on recollections of his visits by Edward N. Corriveau, Rev. Fr. John J. Bensette felt that a 1920 visit was probable which is why the three years were recorded in the title of this document. (Note added by Elaine (Jeffrey) Coxon, 2017)*

### BROTHER ANDRÉ 'S VISITS TO ST. PIERRE AUX BOULEAUX AND ST. JOSEPH 1917, 1920 and 1922

Brother André of the Holy Cross order came to St. Pierre Aux Bouleaux Parish with Narcisse Cantin, a native of the parish

Narcisse Cantin was the founder of the village of St, Joseph and the man behind the dream of building a canal from Lake Huron to Lake Erie, which would then become part of the St. Lawrence River system. He named his village St. Joseph because of his devotion to Brother André and St. Joseph. Narcisse met Brother André in Montreal and brought him to this area for a vacation. During Brother André's visits he would visit the people and pray for those who were ill. While here, Brother André would always walk to church. He stayed with the Cantin family and slept in the late Valerie Cantin's home, which is at the northwest corner of St. Joseph. (Sources: Sara (Masse) Jeffrey; A Drum To Beat Upon, Joseph Wooden, Cantin Archives, Newspaper articles on display).

Brother André's visits were omitted in former histories of the parish. The following accounts are stories of the healing powers which Brother André displayed in St, Pierre aux Bouleaux Parish.

Peter Denomme was dying from fluid on the lungs Doctor O'Dwyer told Edward Corriveau that he felt Mr. Denomme would not last the day. Brother André carne to his bedside and prayed with Mr. Denomme. Mr. Denomme was able to get out of bed immediately. Prior to Brother André's visit, Mr. Denomme was unable to swallow a teaspoon of water. By noon of that day, he was sitting up without choking on it, enjoying a huge meal. This happened in 1920 according to the memory of Mr. Ed Corriveau and in accord with the date of his army discharge certificate. Mr. Denomme died on

February 8, 1922, without any re-occurrence of his former illness, (As told by Edward Corriveau)

Zoe Toussaint/Toussignant was unable to walk without a cane Brother André told her to throw the cane away and she was able to walk much to her surprise. Zoe was the second wife of Norbert Denomme. (As told by Edward Corriveau)

Mrs, Edward Denomme was suffering from "a running sore" in her mouth, which was caused by a bad tooth. This sore had been present for six or seven years. Edward Corriveau and his mother, the late Mathilda (Gravelle) Corriveau took Mrs. Denomme to see Brother André. After her visit she was completely cured and the sore never returned. (As told by Edward Corriveau who was present)

Delore Duchame was unable to walk because his legs were frail Brother Andre rubbed his legs and Mr. Ducharme was able to walk. (As told by Bertha (Ducharme) Corriveau who present)

Armeline Jeffrey was cured of a toothache by Brother Andre (As told by Lucille Jeffrey)

Maxime Jeffrey suffered from adenoids and was forced to breathe from his mouth Brother Andre placed his fingers on Mr. Jeffrey's nose and head and the problem with the adenoids disappeared. (As told by Maxime Jeffrey)

Jessiah Bedard was unable to walk without crutches, Brother Andre told him that he did not need the crutches, Jessiah was able to walk without the crutches but was in a bent over position. (As told by Sara (Masse) Jeffrey and Maxime Jeffrey)