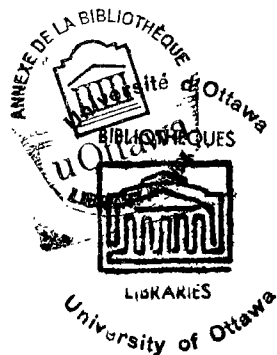


THE ROLE OF MARY
IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN NEWFOUNDLAND

by

Sister Mary Patricia Hogan

Thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts
of the University of Ottawa as partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts.



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CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

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INTRODUCTION

Newfoundland has a long tradition of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary; indeed Marian Devotion is as old as the country itself, as the map of Newfoundland shows in the names of Conception Bay, Conception Harbor, Harbor Grace, St. Mary's, St. Mary's Bay, Cape St. Mary's, Marystown, Marysvale, Lourdes, Mount Carmel, Notre Dame Bay, Notre Dame Island, Point Mary, Regina Island, Assumption Passage, and Mary's Bay.

The above place-names, as well as the number of churches, chapels, schools and halls which from very early times, were dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, bear eloquent but silent testimony to the loving devotion to Our Blessed Lady, which animated the hearts of the great explorers and the pioneer inhabitants of the Island. With these, however, this work is not concerned. Rather is it an attempt to trace devotion to Our Blessed Lady down through the years which have elapsed since the establishment of the first Catholic Colonies by the English and the French, to the present time.

Chapter One dwells on the brave and noble efforts of the English and the French to establish Catholicity at Avalon and Placentia, respectively, and the reasons for their subsequent withdrawal.

Chapter Two deals with the Irish Catholics and their great devotion to the Mother of God through which they kept their faith in spite of the repressing and crushing policy of the British Government.

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Chapter Three gives an account of the organization and growth of the Church under the Franciscan Bishops and of their Marian accomplishments.

In Chapter Four follows an account of the new Diocese of Harbor Grace erected in 1856, and dedicated to the Immaculate Conception.

Chapter Five treats of the planting of the Faith in West Newfoundland by the Acadians and the French-Canadians; of their devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of the West's spiritual progress from Mission to Prefecture, Vicariate and Diocese.

Chapter Six furnishes information on the Diocese of St. John's under the first Non-Franciscan Bishop and last Irish Bishop, and on his Marian works.

In Chapter Seven is given an account of the Archdiocese of St. John's governed by native Metropolitans.

The final chapter treats of the full flowering of Marian Devotion closing with the triumphant note of the Centenary of the Cathedral and its elevation to the rank of Minor Basilica.

CHAPTER I

FIRST ATTEMPTS TO ESTABLISH THE CHURCH

"Queen of the Missions"

The English. The Ark and the Dove

To Sir George Calvert, great English Convert of the seventeenth century, belongs the undying fame of planting the first Catholic Colony in British North America.

The praise-worthy ambition of this grand Catholic Philanthropist, was to provide a refuge for his co-religionists who were suffering persecution for the Faith at home.¹

With this noble end in view, Calvert, when Secretary of State to King James I, by whom he was created Lord Baltimore, obtained a grant, conveying to him the whole southern portion of Newfoundland. Here, in 1622, he sent a number of men under Captain Wynne, who became the first governor of the new colony. In 1627 Baltimore came to Newfoundland, accompanied by two Jesuit Priests, Father Anthony Smith and Father Thomas Longville and another contingent of colonists. Towards the end of the year, he returned to England and in the spring of 1628, he came out again, having with him, his wife, about forty colonists and another priest, Father Hackett, to replace Father Smith

¹ Joseph Hatton and the Rev. M. Harvey, Newfoundland, Its History, Its Present Condition, and Its Prospects in the Future, Boston, Doyle and Whittle, 1883, p. 25.

who had returned to England with Baltimore the previous year.²

The coming of Lord Baltimore with his priests and his colonists augured well for Newfoundland. His famous enterprise was a splendidly-organized effort to carry out the settlement of the country as well as to plant the Faith, for the charter granted Baltimore by James I, in 1623, gave him extensive powers, some of which are:

The patronage and advowsons of all Churches to be built there. Civil rights as full as the Bishop of Durham. (...) That the region may be Eminent above all other parts of Newfoundland and graced with larger titles we have thought fit to erect the same into a Province, to be called the Province of Avalon. Power to make laws, appoint judges; to Pardon, on an emergency to make special laws without the consent of the freeholder; to muster and train men and declare martial law; to confer titles and incorporate towns. (...)

No interpretation be admitted whereby God's holy and true Religion or the allegiance due to us suffer any prejudice- Signed at Westminster the 7 day of April in the 21 years of our reign of England.³

Wishing to perpetuate the religious memories of the English Church in his new Plantation, Baltimore gave the name of Avalon to his Province, and his Colony he called Verulam.

² Very Rev. M. F. Howley, Ecclesiastical History of Newfoundland, Boston, Doyle and Whittle, 1888, p.106

³ D. W. Prowse, "The Charter of Avalon to Lord Baltimore," in A History of Newfoundland, from the English, Colonial and Foreign Records, London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1896, pp.131-132

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This was afterwards corrupted into Ferulam and later into the modern Ferryland.⁴

Writing on this subject, the Right Reverend Dr. Mullock said:

It was a tradition in the early British Church, (...) that St. Joseph of Arimathea, after the Passion of Our Divine Lord, fled from the persecution of the Jews, and took refuge in Britain. He came, it is said, to Avalon, afterwards called Glastonbury, in Somersetshire, and founded there a Church, which was looked upon subsequently, by Britons, Saxons and Normans, as the cradle of British Christianity. A splendid Abbey, which covered sixty acres, was later erected, but perished in the so-called Reformation, along with the other glories of Catholic England. There is an ancient Roman town now called from the great Abbey, subsequently built there, St. Alban's, but in ancient times called Verulam. The Proto-martyr of Britain, St. Alban, there shed his blood for Christ, and the Abbey and town afterward took his name. Calvert, wishing then to revive those Catholic glories of his country, called his Province Avalon, in honor of St. Joseph of Arimathea, and his town Verulam in honor of St. Alban.⁵

It was in Ferryland, therefore, in the new Province of Avalon, that Christianity and freedom of Religion were established by Lord Baltimore. Here too, for the first time - most probably in an English-speaking Province of British North America, the First Mass was said and the Author and Giver of life took up His abode in the holy Tabernacle of the Altar. Hence, as stated by Reverend P. J. Kennedy:

⁴ Right Rev. Dr. Mullock, Two Lectures on Newfoundland, January 25 and February 1, 1860, p.14.

⁵ Ibid., p.14.

Though Baltimore and Maryland are often regarded as the cradle of religious freedom and Catholic Eucharistic Worship in America, Avalon and Ferryland have a prior claim to be the rugged Bethlehem of the Eucharistic Christ in these wild lands beyond the Western Seas.⁶

To show the analogy that exists between Baltimore's grand design in coming to Newfoundland with his priests, and King Arthur's Knights of Avalon in their quest of the Holy Grail, Father Kennedy says:

Baltimore's English Priests were the first Eucharistic Standard-bearers in the English-speaking Colonies of the New American World. They, like King Arthur's Knights of Avalon, had a vision of the Holy Grail. (...)

Determined, as Baltimore wrote, to convert the heathen in the New World, devoted to their King and country, in spite of persecution, heroic in their Eucharistic Catholic Faith, offering the Holy Mass, as spies reported, constantly and solemnly for the first time in the English-speaking region of America; surely these first Priests of Avalon had much in common with the glorious Knights of Arthur's earlier day, who were:

"A glorious company, flower of men,
To serve as models for the mighty world
And be the fair beginning of a time."

Sailing for months over the stormy seas on Baltimore's frail and tiny ships the "Ark of Avalon" and the "Dove" bearing the Eucharistic Chalice of the Mass to a new and holy land of religious peace and freedom, these brave and fearless pioneers of God might say, each one of them, in the words of Galahad, bravest and purest of Arthur's Knights, he only who found the Holy Grail:

"My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure."⁷ (Sir Galahad)

⁶ Rev. P. J. Kennedy, "Avalon and the Holy Grail", in The Monitor, Newfoundland's Catholic Journal, Vol. 16, No. 7 and 8, issue of July-August, 1949, p.5, Col.1.

⁷ Rev. P. J. Kennedy, "Avalon and the Holy Grail," in The Newfoundland Quarterly, Vol. 49, No. 1, pp.17-23.

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Though there is no documentary evidence of Marian devotion in Baltimore's Colony, it may be assumed that the English Jesuits in Newfoundland, as they later did in Maryland, and as the French Jesuits had previously done in Canada, formally dedicated their new colony to the Blessed Virgin, and that she had an honored place in their devotions. This is but a logical conclusion to the fact that the Jesuits were the spiritual Sons of the great Ignatius Loyola, who, after offering his sword at Montserrat, consecrated himself and his future work to Our Lady and the Infant Jesus; and were they not Sons also of that England, which in the fourteenth century, was known throughout Europe, as "Our Lady's Dowry?"

From the complaint made against Baltimore, to the Board of Trade in England, by the Reverend Mr. Stourton, first Anglican Clergyman to reside in Newfoundland, that "he had Mass celebrated regularly, and all other ceremonies of the Church of Rome were used in ample manner as 'tis used in Spain",⁸ it may be assumed that "all other ceremonies of the Church of Rome" included the Rosary and other devotions in honor of the Blessed Virgin.

He (Baltimore) seems to have been so thoroughly imbued with the idea of establishing Christianity in the New World, that it lends a tinge to each incident of his enterprise. Thus we find that he gave the name of "The Ark of Avalon" to his principal ship, and that of the "Dove" to her pinnacle. And on a coin which he had stamped, is seen a thorn with the motto 'Spina

⁸ Howley, op.cit., p.106.

Sanctus' (sanctified by the thorn), in allusion to the original Avalon, where there is a miraculous thorn which blossoms at Christmastide, and is believed to be the veritable staff of St. Joseph of Arimathea, (...) thus picturing himself at one time as a new Joseph of Arimathea, inspired to plant the Christian Religion in a heathen land; and as a modern Noah, sailing in the Ark over the waste seas, to found a better community than that which for him, was doomed and lost beyond the watery horizon.⁹

Lord Baltimore's high expectations regarding his Province were doomed to disappointment. Adverse circumstances, such as the encroachments of the Indians and the French, as well as the severity of the climate, forced him to leave Newfoundland and to establish another Colony in Maryland.

Writers of Newfoundland History agree that the Baltimores continued to take an interest in the Province of Avalon, and that they exercised authority over it by the appointment of Governors.¹⁰

That the spiritual welfare of the Colonists who remained, was provided for by Baltimore, is the opinion of Dr. Mullock:

It is to be supposed, that such an ardent Catholic who stamped forever the mark of Catholicity on the very soil by the names of Avalon and Verulam, did not leave those who followed him to the wilderness, without making sufficient provision for their spiritual wants.¹¹

⁹ Ibid., p.88.

¹⁰ Rev. Charles Pedley, The History of Newfoundland, London, Longman, Roberts and Green, 1863, p.23.

Howley, op. cit., p. 125.

¹¹ Howley, op.cit., pp.106-107, quoting Dr. Mullock, History, p.14.

In the History of Newfoundland by Joseph Hatton and the Rev. Mr. Harvey,¹² it is said that after Lord Baltimore's departure, Viscount Falkland, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, sent out Irish emigrants to increase the scanty population. At a later date, these were largely reinforced by other settlers from Ireland.

The Rev. Mr. Pedley in his History of Newfoundland states:

The planting of a Colony by Lord Baltimore and the sending out Irish settlers, contained the origin of a peculiarity which distinguishes this possession from the other American dependencies of the Empire. At the present day it includes a larger portion of the Catholic population than is found elsewhere. The magnitude of this element in proportion, is doubtless due to recent importations from Ireland, and also the proselytizing zeal and efforts of the priesthood.¹³

The French. Our Lady of the Angels

On the other side of the Peninsula of Avalon, the French had settled at a place, which they called Plaisance a pleasant place, now called Placentia. They early saw the importance of this acquisition and provided for its security by strong fortifications.¹⁴ With Placentia as their capital, they established themselves over a territory of two hundred miles.

¹² Hatton and Harvey, op.cit., p.27.

¹³ Pedley, op.cit., p.23.

¹⁴ Mullock, op.cit., p.16.

About the year 1660, they erected a church on the site of one that had been founded by the Portuguese some 150 years before.¹⁵ Shortly after this, Placentia became a dependency of Quebec.

The second Bishop of Quebec, Monseigneur de Saint Vallier, in 1689, the year after his arrival in his Diocese, seeing the vast field of his future labors, and being anxious to seek out collaborators, issued a mandement to the Guardian of the Franciscans in Quebec, calling on the Religious of that Community, to assist him in his apostolic labors. In the same year, in company with two Franciscans and a secular priest, he made a pastoral visit to Newfoundland, and established a "Convent of Franciscan Recollets, a branch of the Convent of Our Lady of the Angels at Quebec." ¹⁶

At St. Pierre, the Bishop blessed a chapel which had been built the preceding year, and left there a secular priest whom he had brought from Quebec. This Mission, the Bishop placed in charge of the Recollets in 1692.¹⁷

The Recollets as well as the Bishop anticipated the Royal confirmation for the establishment of Placentia. It is probable that this authorization

¹⁵ Rev. P. J. Kennedy, "The Church in Newfoundland", in Report 1952, The Canadian Catholic Historical Association, LeClerc Printers Limited, Hull, Quebec.

¹⁶ Mullock, op. cit., p. 16.

¹⁷ R. P. Hugolin, O. F. M., L'Etablissement des Recollets de la Province de Saint-Denis A Plaisance en L'Ile de Terre-Neuve 1689, Quebec, 1911, p. 12.

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was accorded in 1689; in any case, in March, 1692, Louis XIV confirmed the Recollets in all their establishments, present and future of Canada, Acadia and Newfoundland, including those of Placentia and of the Island of St. Pierre, where they were also established.¹⁸

With the foundation of the Franciscan Church and Convent at Placentia in 1689, the seeds of Marian Devotion were sown in large areas of Newfoundland, for Mary's cult and the Franciscan Order are inseparable terms. The Founder of the Order, "St. Francis Assisi loved Our Lady with an ineffable devotion. In her he trusted most after Christ and he chose her as his Advocate for himself and his Sons."¹⁹

There are no records of the accomplishments of the Franciscan Fathers who labored in Placentia, as the "Parish books or archives were probably taken to France when the French retired".²⁰ It can be safely assumed, however, that the Religious of that Order, whose Members, only sixty-eight years before the foundation at Placentia, had bound themselves by oath, to teach the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, both in public and in private, and had confirmed the election of the Immaculate Mother as the Patron of the

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁹ Mrs. Thomas Concannon, The Queen of Ireland, An Historical Account of Ireland's Devotion to the Blessed Virgin, M. H. Gill and Son, Dublin, 1938, p. 85.

²⁰ Right Rev. Dr. Mullock, "The Roman Catholic Church", in the History of Newfoundland, by the Rev. Charles Pedley, London, Longman, Green and Roberts, 1863, p. 456.

Order,²¹ gave Mary an honored place in their public and private devotions.

Unfortunately, when the British, after the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, took possession of Newfoundland, the French were obliged to relinquish all claim to Placentia, where the "Apostles of the New World", had at the cost of so much labor and sacrifice, laid the foundations of the Church, and had implanted in the hearts of the people, a love and reverence for the Immaculate Mother of God. For this, there is abundant evidence in the devotion to the Blessed Virgin in her Immaculate Conception that has been handed down from one generation to another in Placentia and the surrounding settlements.

Speaking on this subject in 1915, the late Archbishop Roche, one of Placentia's noblest sons, said:

Although these foundations of the Church have long since passed away, and have had to be reconstructed, nevertheless, there were begun those grand Catholic traditions, which have come down from generation to generation.²²

By the Treaty of Utrecht, freedom of worship was granted to the French residents of Placentia, but with this limiting clause, "as far as the laws of England permit".

²¹ Concannon, op. cit., p. 65.

²² Most Rev. Edward Patrick Roche, D. D., "Reply to Placentia Address", in Memorials of the Consecration, Installation and Investiture of the Pallium of Most Rev. E. P. Roche, D. D., Archbishop of St. John's, Newfoundland, 1915, p. 44.

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Of this the British Governor took advantage, and caused the French Priests and their people such annoyance, that the majority of them left the country.²³

Besides the French settlers who had remained in the homes which they had founded, there were some English and Irish; the latter had settled in isolated places of the District during French tenure.²⁴

Between the years 1713 and 1763, the Irish came in greater numbers. At this time the merchants of Placentia were doing business with Waterford, New Ross and Cork, and many Irish came out on the ships carrying goods. In the many secluded islands and coves, they found a haven of rest and protection from the religious intolerance and persecution so widespread at the time.²⁵

As to the Priests who served Placentia at this period, it is stated that "from 1713 to 1770, there is no certain knowledge except fugitive references to Augustinians, Dominicans, Jesuits and Diocesan Priests coming from Ireland and ministering to the people in the quiet and safety of their own homes." ²⁶

²³ Howley, op. cit., p. 166.

²⁴ Right Rev. Monsignor Flynn, "Placentia", in St. Bride's College Annual, June 1940, p. 27.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 28.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 28.

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It is interesting to note that the memory of the Franciscans is preserved in the title of another great Marian centre in Placentia, the Convent of the Presentation Sisters, which is also dedicated to Our Lady of the Angels. From the classrooms of this Institute, have gone out, since its opening in 1864, hundreds of teachers into the various schools of the District, to show others the way to God and Mary, as they had learned it at "Our Lady of the Angels".

As a fitting close to this chapter, the following excerpt seems appropriate:

This grand old Catholic centre, this grand old historic town, might well claim to be the cradle of the Church in Newfoundland.

.

These reminiscences of our ecclesiastical past invest our town with a sacred interest of which all its children have reason to be justly proud. But more than that you have reason to be proud of the good traditions that have been handed down here from generation to generation. The Faith and Catholicity of the people of Placentia are known far and wide, and that Faith and Catholicity have ever shown themselves in the virtue of its people which is our proudest boast. These traditions have come down unchangeable in the changing vicissitudes of the years. ²⁷

²⁷ Most Rev. Edward Patrick Roche, D. D., "Reply to Placentia Address", in Memorials of the Consecration, Installation and Investiture of the Pallium of Most Rev. E. P. Roche, Archbishop of St. John's, Newfoundland, 1915, p. 44.

CHAPTER II

THE IRISH PLANT THE FAITH

"Our Lady of the Rosary"

After the final departure of the French from the Island, when Catholicity seemed forever extinguished, and efforts were being made to establish and support the Protestant Religion, the Irish Catholics, who were to play so prominent a part in the future history of the country, began, as has been said in the previous chapter, to come into the Island in ever increasing numbers, notwithstanding the disabilities under which Catholics labored.¹ They made homes for themselves in the various bays and harbors, although unjust and injurious laws, enacted by the British Government, forbade settlement on the Island.²

From time to time came Irish priests, usually disguised in the fishing vessels; they seldom stayed long, as they had no regular mission and the surveillance of the Local Government was too strict. At the same time, however, Protestant Ministers were stationed in the principal settlements.³

¹ Joseph Hatton and Rev. M. Harvey, Newfoundland, Its History, Its Present Condition, and Its Prospects in the Future, Boston, Doyle and Whittle, 1883, p. 52.

² Very Rev. M. F. Howley, Ecclesiastical History of Newfoundland, Boston, Doyle and Whittle, 1888, p. 167.

³ Right Rev. Dr. Mullock, Two Lectures on Newfoundland, 1860, p. 18.

All attempts at colonization were forbidden by the British Government. "The Island was regarded as a great ship moored in mid-ocean, to be yearly manned and put in commission by the fishermen of England and the Channel Islands."⁴

Of the condition of the country at this time, Bishop Mullock⁵ writes: "The state of the population was miserable in the extreme: no law, no security, the uncontrolled will of the ignorant Fishing Admirals⁶ being the only rule".

To misrule and social oppression were added intolerance and persecution, which, for almost a century, exerted a baneful influence on society, and sowed the seeds of bitterness and strife. Iniquitous laws against the Irish were enforced by successive governors after their appointment in 1729. Of these, the two most notorious were Governors Dorrill and Palliser.⁷ The former, it is said, "played the part of a little Cromwell. He pursued the Catholics with a hatred that could scarcely be exceeded by his great prototype."⁸

⁴ Howley, op. cit., p. 166.

⁵ Mullock, op. cit., p. 18.

⁶ The first three fishing captains arriving in the Island each summer, took the names of admiral, vice-admiral and rear-admiral, and without any qualification except the priority of arrival, became magistrates, empowered to decide all fishery rights and civil causes.

⁷ Howley, op. cit., p. 172 and p. 178.

⁸ Rev. Edward F. Curran, "Newfoundland and Its Fisheries", in Donahue's Magazine, Vol. 17, No. 3, issue of March, 1907, p. 233.

Dorrill's persecuting spirit was exemplified particularly in Harbor Grace, Carbonear and Harbor Main, where houses were burned to the ground because Mass was said in them, and many Catholics were convicted and sentenced to fines, burning of their property and banishment - some from the settlement and some from the country.⁹

One of the proclamations issued by Sir Hugh Palliser was that not more than two Catholic men should dwell in one house during the winter, except those who had Protestant masters. Another ordered that all Catholic children born in the country should be baptized according to law.¹⁰ Of this edict Bishop Howley wrote:

The Turks required a tithe of the children born of Christian parents as recruits for the Janizaries, it was reserved for a British colonial governor to surpass that barbarity, by obliging the parents, not conquered slaves, but free-born Britons, as they were absurdly called, to give up all their children to the ministers of the Anglican sect.¹¹

From all offices of distinction in the country, Catholics were debarred. All government officials and all who wished to obtain any position whatsoever, were obliged to sign a declaration in which they abjured the distinctive tenets of Catholicism. The form of the oath is as follows:
"We, . . . , do declare that we do believe that there is not

⁹ Howley, op. cit., pp. 173 - 174.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 178.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 178 - 179.

any Transubstantiation in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, at or after the consecration thereof by any person whatever".¹²

To those who protected a priest, or who permitted the celebration of Holy Mass in their houses, no mercy was shown. For this reason, "the priests were obliged, for the most part, to omit the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, and be content to recite for the people, the Rosary, amid the rocks and woods, as was the case with their forefathers in Ireland".¹³

Of the sufferings which the Catholics underwent in eighteenth-century Newfoundland - sufferings by which their persecutors sought "to suppress all private as well as public worship among them"¹⁴ - many more examples could be quoted, not indeed to show the wantonness of their persecutors, but to show the pertinacity with which the Irish Catholics, undeterred by fear of floggings, fines, arrests, imprisonment, house-burning or deportation, clung to the "Faith of their Fathers".

What was the secret of their perseverance in the face of such dreadful odds? The answer is to be found in their two great sources of strength, which were, next to Divine

¹² Howley, op. cit., p. 174.

¹³ Ibid., p. 181.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 174.

Providence, their love for and devotion to the Blessed Virgin and the fidelity of their priests.¹⁵ Those faithful priests who shared the toils and hardships of the poor Catholics they had come to feed with the Bread of Life, incurred the most appalling dangers, as has been said above, yet they never deserted their spiritual children, to whom they must have been a tower of strength in those terrible days of stress and strain. Of them Boshop Howley writes:

The records or traditions of the lives and hardships of these early priests are but meagre; indeed, of some of them, we know only the dates of their arrival in and departure from, the island; sometimes only the mere fact that they were here; of others we learn just enough to let us conjecture how they strove to keep alight the flickering lamp of Faith amidst the most overwhelming difficulties. They came and went periodically. We hear of their being aboard the fishing craft in the disguise of fishermen, and thus escaping the fury of their persecutors.¹⁶

The foregoing quotation shows that the same bond of union which existed between the priests and the people of Ireland, and which was established by St. Patrick himself,¹⁷ existed also in Newfoundland. Thus it is forever to the glory of those Irish priests, that their expatriated countrymen kept the Faith during almost a century of intolerance and persecution in Newfoundland.¹⁸

¹⁵ Very Rev. Thomas N. Burke, O.P., "St. Patrick", in Lectures on Faith and Fatherland, London, R. and T. Washbourne, Ltd., (no date) pp. 14 - 15.

¹⁶ Howley, op. cit., p. 181.

¹⁷ Burke, op. cit., p. 18.

¹⁸ Howley, op. cit., p. 185.

The other great characteristic of St. Patrick's doctrine which he instilled into the hearts of the Irish people was devotion to Mary, who was known in their tongue as their darling Virgin.¹⁹

And so it was that Patrick sent his Catholic doctrines home to the hearts of the people. He preached Jesus Christ under the name by which He is still known and adored in that far western land: Mac na Maighdine, the Virgin's Son, thus admirably insinuating the great mystery of the Incarnation, and preaching Jesus through Mary; and Mary herself he preached, with all her graces and glories, as Mary Mother. The example of her virginal purity and maternal love he made the type of the Irish maiden and mother; and so well did they learn their high lesson, that they have been for ages the admiration of the world, and the glory of their afflicted country. The devotion to Mary sank deep into the heart of the nation. So well had they already learned to love and appreciate her, that, in a few years after their conversion to the faith, when they would express their love and admiration for the first great Irish Virgin saint - St. Brigid - they thought they had crowned her with glory when they called her the Mary of Ireland. This devotion to Mary was a protecting shield over Ireland in the day of her battle for the Faith.²⁰

Wherever the Irish went, they brought with them the devotion to the Mother of God which St. Patrick taught them,²¹ and nowhere, perhaps was that devotion more forcibly shown than in eighteenth-century Newfoundland, where until 1784 there was no place of worship and where "there was no mercy for those who protected a priest or who connived at the

¹⁹ Burke, op. cit., p. 25.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 17.

²¹ Mrs. Thomas Concannon, The Queen of Ireland, M. H. Gill and Son, Dublin, 1939, p. 44.

celebration of Mass in their houses",²² therefore it can be readily understood that Mass was celebrated but seldom and it became the custom to gather in secret places to say the Rosary.²³ Sometimes, too, Mass was said in such places.

One of these "secret places" was in Ferryland of "Lord Baltimore" fame, on a rock atop a high hill called The Gaze, because it was necessary to keep a sharp look-out for warships, naval officers or other officials, who were ever ready to interfere with Catholic worship. Here, in the early part of the eighteenth century, Holy Mass was celebrated. The story of this event is quite authentic. It has been handed down by an old resident whose grandmother told her that she could remember the priest celebrating Mass on the top of The Gaze.²⁴

Another such "secret place" known as the Mass Rock is in Renews a small town near Ferryland, and "one of the earliest place names in America".²⁵ Here, too, in the penal days, Mass was said. Behind the Rock is the Midnight Hill so

²² Howley, op. cit., p. 181.

²³ Ibid., p. 181.

²⁴ H. F. Shortis, "Christmas Stories and Traditions of Ferryland", in The Evening Telegram, St. John's, Newfoundland, 1920.

²⁵ Leo F. English, "Renews and Its Shrine", in Newfoundland Quarterly, Vol. 28, No. 4, 1929.

called because of the devotion secretly held there.²⁶

It has been said that in the convict ships that carried so many of the '98 men from Ireland to penal servitude in Botany Bay, went the foundation of the Church in Australia, so also it may be said with equal truth, that in the fishing boats that sailed year after year from Ireland, in the eighteenth century, came the foundation stones of the Church in Newfoundland.²⁷

These "foundation stones" brought with them the faith which had withstood centuries of persecution - a persecution which made them cling "to God and St. Mary the Virgin only more closely for all attempts to sever them".²⁸

And when commending themselves to that dear Mother in heaven, who had been their support and consolation, they bade adieu to their home, they brought to the land of their adoption the same unshaken fidelity to their religion. (. . .) and wherever they went they called to them Saggart aroon, the priest of their love; and when he came, the new little church of St. Mary soon rose, and the ancient Salve Regina resounded beneath the heavens in a new land.²⁹

²⁶ Letter from Right Rev. C. A. McCarthy, P. P., Renew, to the Superior General, Mercy Order, St. John's, Newfoundland, October 19, 1953.

²⁷ Dr. Helena Concannon, "Saggart A Ruin", "Some Irish Priests and Their Missions", in The Monitor, issue of April, 1950, Vol. 17, No. 4, taken from The Irish Messenger of the Sacred Heart, July, 1934.

²⁸ Rev. Xavier Donald Macleod, History of the Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary in North America, New York, Virtue and Yorston, 1866, p. 26.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 26.

Religious Toleration

Towards the end of the eighteenth century freedom of worship was granted to all persons in Newfoundland. This "toleration" was forced from the British Government by the following circumstances:

The American War was then raging, and the victory of the Continentals loosened the grasp upon the sword of persecution in the hands of colonial tyrants. It was dangerous to exasperate men who could not be expected to retain their allegiance to the British Crown, and who, incited by the example of their neighbors, might be driven into rebellion. Accordingly open and legal persecution was abolished, and gave way to a kind of niggardly toleration, accompanied by a contemptuous social exclusiveness.³⁰

On October 24, 1784, forty-five years before the passing of the Emancipation Act, a proclamation was published according to the instructions of His Majesty King George III, granting "liberty of conscience" to all persons in Newfoundland, and the "free exercise of all modes of religious worship as are not prohibited by law, provided people be content with a quiet and peaceable enjoyment of the same without giving scandal or offence to the Government".³¹

First Prefect Apostolic

In the same year in which freedom of religion was granted to Newfoundland, the Holy Father, Pope Pius VI

³⁰ Howley, op. cit., p. 179.

³¹ Ibid., p. 180.

selected Reverend James Louis O'Donel, O. F. M., to organize the Church. He was appointed Prefect Apostolic with power to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation.³²

Father O'Donel had received the holy habit of his Order at the Franciscan College of the Immaculate Conception in Prague, one of the four national establishments on the continent of Europe. Before coming to Newfoundland he had been Provincial of the whole body of Franciscans in Ireland.³³

It is worthy of note that the Franciscan College of Prague was dedicated to the Immaculate Conception nearly three hundred years before the dogma was defined, and that a declaration of faith in the doctrine was embodied in the motto on the College seal: Nodus originalis non est in te.³⁴

Having been a member of the Community in such an institution, Father O'Donel must have been well versed in Mariology, and an ardent lover of Mary, and no doubt placed the Newfoundland Mission under her loving care and protection. Surely it was she who obtained for him the strength and courage necessary for such a tremendous undertaking, beset, as it was, with almost insurmountable difficulties; for though religious toleration had been granted, the Catholic Church

³² Ibid., p. 188.

³³ Ibid., p. 187.

³⁴ Concannon, The Queen of Ireland, p. 239.

in Newfoundland was for many years afterwards, a victim of persecution, as is shown by the "letter of accusation" written against Father O'Donel by a Surrogate named Pellu, in 1788, when he had completed the erection of the first chapel, had secured some priests and had organized the Catholics of St. John's. Referring to Pellu's letter, Father O'Donel wrote on November 16, 1788:

The letter was not only read in the court-house, where the Surrogate publicly denounced Pope and Popery, priests and priestcraft (. . .), but also requested of the Governor that the priests should be turned out of the country; that circular letters should be sent to the magistrates, that if any more priests arrived, to ship them off immediately; and that no priests should be left but where there was a garrison to keep them in awe.³⁵

Undaunted by Pellu's letter, Father O'Donel continued to plead on behalf of his Catholic population, and made application for permission to erect some chapels in other parts of the country, "for without this permission not a stick could be laid".³⁶ To his request, the Governor (Milbanke) made the following reply:

The Governor acquaints Mr. O'Donel that, so far from being disposed to allow of an increase of places of religious worship for the Roman Catholics of this Island, he very seriously intends next year, to lay those established, under particular restrictions. Mr. O'Donel must be aware that it is not the interest of Great Britain to encourage people to winter in Newfoundland, and he cannot be ignorant that many of the lower order, who now stay, would, if it were not for the convenience with which they obtain absolution

³⁵ Howley, op. cit., p. 190.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 191.

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here, go home for it, at least once in two or three years (!); and the Governor has been misinformed if Mr. O'Donel, instead of advising their return to Ireland, does not rather encourage them to winter in this Colony.³⁷

In a letter to Dr. Troy, Archbishop of Dublin, Father O'Donel refers to the above as follows:

Our very numerous and increasing congregations have brought the eye of the enemies of our Faith upon us, as you will find by the enclosed answer to a Memorial drawn up by the people of Ferryland for leave to build a chapel in that district. I wrote to Father Callenan of Cork, requesting him to use his influence (. . .) to apply to some member of the Privy Council to prevent these prejudicial restrictions. (. . .) Criminals of all kinds are allowed the unreserved privilege of a Clergyman, why not an industrious set of men who are inured to the hardships of the sea, and ready upon any emergency to serve His Majesty? (. . .) Many of those hardy fellows would never obtain their parents' consent to cross the seas if they had not the consoling prospect of the presence of a Clergyman in case of sickness or death. Moreover the ingredients which make up the Sacrament of Penance, and the prerequisites of Absolution are not of such easy digestion to a set of fishermen as to induce them "to go home for it at least once in two or three years"! I really look upon these intended restrictions as a breach of public faith.³⁸

Notwithstanding the indignities referred to above, Father O'Donel persevered in his arduous labors which were finally blessed with success as will be seen from the following:

After ten years of missionary life, working and organizing ecclesiastical matters, we find Dr. O'Donel also ingratiating himself into the favor of the civil authorities, and gradually acquiring that influence

³⁷ Howley, *op. cit.*, p. 191. The letter was written: on board the "Salisbury", St. John's, 2nd November, 1790.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

and weight, even in secular affairs of the Colony, which has ever since been exercised by his successors, the Roman Catholic Bishops, placing them in a recognized position of the highest importance, second only to the representative of majesty himself, and indeed on many occasions causing the latter to look to them as the only power in the country capable of saving it from ruin in grave and serious cases.³⁹

³⁹ Ibid., p. 194.

CHAPTER III

PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH UNDER THE FRANCISCAN BISHOPS

"Our Lady of Victory"

Bishop O'Donel, O. S. F.

By 1794 Catholics had become so numerous and influential in Newfoundland, that the priests of the Mission appealed to the Holy See, that Father O'Donel be raised to the episcopal dignity, and in their petition to Pope Pius VI, they made allusion to the recent appointment of Father John Carroll to the See of Baltimore.¹

The appeal was graciously responded to by the Holy Father, and on January 5, 1796, "the customary Bulls were expedited for the consecration of James Louis O'Donel as Bishop, with the title of Thyatira in partibus infidelium, and at the same time he was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Newfoundland".²

On the Feast of St. Matthew, September 21, 1796, Father O'Donel was consecrated by Bishop Francois Hubert in the Cathedral of Quebec, the nearest place for such a ceremony in those days.³

The consecration of Bishop O'Donel as first Bishop of Newfoundland, established in the Island a Hierarchy, which

¹ Howley, Ecclesiastical History of Newfoundland, Boston, Doyle and Whittle, 1888, p. 196.

² Ibid., p. 199.

³ Ibid., p. 200.

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yields priority only to the ancient and venerable historic Churches of Quebec and Baltimore.⁴

One of the first episcopal acts of the new Prelate was the issuance of a body of Diocesan Statutes for the guidance of his priests, all of whom were Franciscans. The Vicariate was divided into four jurisdictions or districts which were placed under the direction of experienced Missionaries.⁵

Being obliged to discharge the duties of a missionary priest, as well as those of a Bishop, the saintly Prelate's health began to fail in 1806. About this time he wrote to the Bishop of Quebec: "I got a slight stroke of apoplexy without any warning in the pulpit, at the heel of a long sermon. I believe it to proceed from too much mental labor. Thank God for so friendly a warning. My top-light (as the sailors say), is growing somewhat dim".⁶

Seeing that he was unable to fulfil his arduous duties with the constant attention which his strict sense of their responsibilities demanded, and the resources of the Vicariate not being sufficient to maintain a Co-adjutor, Bishop O'Donel, first Bishop and Apostle of Newfoundland,

⁴ Archbishop Roche, "Address", in Memorials of the Consecration, Installation and Investiture of the Pallium of Most Rev. E. P. Roche, D. D., Archbishop of St. John's, Herald Print, 1915.

⁵ Howley, op. cit., p. 204.

⁶ Letter to Bishop Plessis of Quebec, 1806, Archives de L'Archeveche, Quebec.

resigned his charge, and on the appointment of his successor, retired to Waterford, Ireland, in 1807, where he died in 1817.⁷

Bishop O'Donel laid deep and permanent the foundation of the Church in Newfoundland. In the accomplishment of this great work, the role of Our Blessed Lady must have been tremendously important, for she is the Mediatrix of all graces. St. Bernard of Siena writes:

From the time in which the Virgin Mary conceived in her chaste womb God's own Son, she obtained a certain jurisdiction or a special authority over the temporal mission of the Holy Ghost, so that no creature has obtained from God either grace or merit save by the dispensation of this Holy Mother. Stronger thoughts come out of the heart of the great St. Bernard when he says that not a single grace descends from Heaven to earth that does not come through the hands of Mary.⁸

Bishops Lambert and Scallan

Bishop Lambert, O. S. F., succeeded Bishop O'Donel in 1807. The Catholic population at this time was about 14,000.⁹ Several chapels were built during the episcopacy of Bishop Lambert. In 1817, he was obliged, through ill health, to return to his native Ireland.¹⁰

⁷ Howley, pp. cit., p. 212.

⁸ A Member of the Ursuline Community, Sligo, "The Power of Mary's Intercession", in A Garland for Our Lady, London, Burns, Oates and Washbourne, Ltd., 1920, p. 176.

⁹ Howley, op. cit., p. 224.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 239.

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Right Rev. Dr. Scallan, O. S. F., who had become co-adjutor to Bishop Lambert in 1816, succeeded him in 1817. Because of the difficulties of the Mission, the want of priests and the labors to be undergone, Bishop Scallan in 1828 petitioned Rome for a co-adjutor, recommending at the same time Father Michael Anthony Fleming, O. S. F., the principal missionary in St. John's. His request was granted, and Father Fleming was appointed Co-adjutor of the Vicar Apostolic of Newfoundland, with the title of Carpasia in partibus, and with the right of succession. On the 28th of October, 1829, Bishop Scallan consecrated his successor in the "Old Chapel", the first time that an episcopal consecration was ever performed in Newfoundland.¹¹

During the Vicariate of Bishop Scallan, Catholics increased "in numbers, wealth and social standing".¹² Schools were built in the principal places, and the Bishop encouraged his people "to erect churches where they could fittingly meet for public worship".¹³

As there were only seven priests in the country in 1830,¹⁴ "public worship" for the greater part of the Catholic

¹¹ Ibid., p. 247.

¹² Ibid., p. 254.

¹³ Right Rev. Monsignor Thomas J. Flynn, "The Catholic Church in Newfoundland", in The Book of Newfoundland, edited by J. R. Smallwood, Vol. 2, p. 275.

¹⁴ Howley, op. cit., p. 263.

population of 25,000, was, tradition says, the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin. Thus, in the absence of priests, did the Catholics of those days, safe-guard and transmit to their children, the treasures of the Catholic Religion. Their spirit of Faith, sustained by devotedness to the Mother of God, has penetrated through the centuries and has extended its fertilizing influence to the furthestmost parts of the country. Today, in Newfoundland, there are many small settlements where the parish priest holds a "Station" only three or four times a year. In such places it is still the beautiful custom for the people to assemble in the chapel or school-chapel on Sundays and holydays for the Rosary which is usually led by the teacher or by some resident of the settlement appointed by the parish priest.

Bishop Fleming O. S. F.

On the death of his predecessor in 1830, Bishop Fleming assumed charge of the Vicariate. His first duty was the procuring of priests, accordingly he visited Ireland where he secured nine Missionaries.¹⁵

He next busied himself with the cause of education, and succeeded, in spite of grave difficulties, in establishing Catholic Education of youth on a firm basis. This was the beginning of the great struggle for Catholic Education in Newfoundland.¹⁶

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 263.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 230.

First Marian Congregations

The Presentation Order

Up to 1833, the work of education in Newfoundland had been carried on in mixed schools. In his letters to Dr. O'Connell, P. P., St. Michael's, Dublin, Bishop Fleming gave the reasons which actuated him in establishing a Community of Presentation Nuns. One of these is quoted below:

I judged it of essential importance to fix the character of the female portion of our community in virtue and innocence (. . .); for I felt that which all must feel, namely, that when once the future mothers are impressed with the truths of religion, once they are solidly instructed in the divine precepts of the Gospel (. . .), the domestic fireside is immediately made the most powerful auxiliary to the school, and instruction and true education, the basis of which is virtue and religion, are instilled into the little ones at their mother's knee, and they go abroad by and by, into school or into society, with all the elements that fit them to become virtuous citizens.

These feelings and opinions were the motives that led me to consider the establishment of a Presentation Convent essential to the permanent success of the Mission.¹⁷

In the early summer of 1833, the Bishop visited Ireland for the sole purpose of securing a Community of Presentation Nuns, "to come out to educate our poor little girls."¹⁸

The four Nuns who came to Newfoundland, on September 21, 1833, founded the first Presentation Convent on the Continent of America, and laid the foundation of Catholic education in Newfoundland.

¹⁷ Howley, op. cit., p. 276.

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 277.

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Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy

In the plans - religious and educational - of Bishop Fleming, in 1837, was the introduction of a Community of the Sisters of Mercy, who would open a pension school, "where children could be taught the elegant and fashionable accomplishments of the day, and at the same time have their minds properly imbued with the principles of religion".¹⁹

With Bishop Fleming's scheme, Mother Catherine McAuley, the Foundress of the Congregation of Our Lady of Mercy, "was in hearty sympathy, and had she but her own ardent zeal to consult, no vessel leaving her native shores could bear her thither as quickly as her love for souls desired".²⁰

It was not however in the designs of Providence, that the saintly Foundress should lead her daughters to Terra Nova, for she was called to her eternal reward in November, 1841.²¹

In May, 1842, Bishop Fleming's request was granted, and on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, June 10, three Sisters of Mercy from the Mother House in Dublin, arrived in St. John's, the first Sisters of that Congregation to make a

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 278.

²⁰ A Member of the Order of Mercy, "Voices of the Irish", in Leaves from the Annals of the Sisters of Mercy, New York, The Catholic Publication Co., London, Burns and Oates, 1899, p. 4.

²¹ Howley, op. cit., p. 371.

foundation of the New World.²²

The establishment of the Presentation and Mercy Congregations in 1833 and 1842 respectively, became in time, the nucleus of a wide-spread devotion to the Blessed Virgin which would eventually embrace every town and village in the country.

A glance at the Marian obligations of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Presentation, as laid down in their Constitutions, and which are identical with those of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, is sufficient to prove the truth of the above statement:

Devotion to Mary ever Virgin, and Mother of God, has always been the favorite of all religious persons, and is particularly recommended in every regular Institute. But as this Congregation is immediately under her special protection, as she is, under God, its principal Patroness and Protectress, the Sisters shall have the warmest and most affectionate devotion to her, regarding her, in a special manner as their Mother, and the great model they are obliged to imitate, that by her intercession and powerful protection, they may be enabled to fulfil the obligations of this holy Institute, and implant Jesus Christ in the tender hearts of those poor little ones whom they are charged to instruct.

They shall have, individually, unlimited confidence in her; have recourse to her in all their difficulties, and spiritual necessities, and by the imitation of her virtues they shall study to please her, and to render themselves worthy of her maternal protection. They shall solemnize her Festivals with all spiritual joy and devotion, and shall instil into the minds of the poor children, and of all such as they can influence, the greatest respect, veneration, and love for

²² Ibid., p. 371.

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her. They shall recite every day five decades of the Rosary in her honour.²³

It is not necessary to say with what fervor those pioneer Sisters labored to "instil into the minds" of their young charges and of all those whom they could "influence", the greatest love and veneration for the Mother of God. How well they fulfilled the injunctions of their Holy Rule in this respect, is seen in the intense love and practical devotion to the Blessed Virgin for which the Island is noted. In the schools of both Congregations were trained the first teachers who were to go out into the smaller settlements, and implant in the tender hearts of little children, a great love of God and Our Blessed Mother.

First Marian Association

To Bishop Fleming belongs the honor of establishing in Newfoundland, the first Marian Association, the Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is the oldest Society in the country having been founded in 1839.²⁴ It therefore calls for more than passing mention.

In the booklet of Rules of the Society is written:

This Society shall be composed of females distinguished for leading virtuous and religious lives,

²³ Constitutions of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Chapter 28, "On Devotion to Our Blessed Lady", p. 56.

²⁴ Rules for the Government of the Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary, p. 1.

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whose example, it is hoped, will prove a source of public edification, and whose united prayers, and other good works, it is expected, will attract those graces upon the community which are most necessary to insure salvation.²⁵

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of the part this very excellent Society has played and still plays in the Catholic life of the country, especially in St. John's, where the members now number almost seven hundred. Not only are the members themselves exemplary Catholics, but by the stimulus of their good example, they excite others to piety, and lead them also into the service of the Most Holy Virgin. Thus a greater number "of united prayers and other good works" are offered to God, and many graces and blessings are drawn down on the community.

According to the Rules, the members of the Society meet in the Parish Church once a month, usually on the first Sunday. Kneeling before the Altar of the Blessed Virgin, all recite the Rosary which is led by the Spiritual Director, who also preaches a sermon, in which he points out the special devotions of the month, the great Feasts, especially those of the Blessed Virgin, and the best means of observing them etc. Then follows the ceremony of enrollment of new members. After Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and the singing of a Marian Hymn, the officers of the Society retire to their official room for the transaction of business. "At the conclusion of the meeting the President, or in her absence the

²⁵ Ibid., p. 3.

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Vice-President, will recite five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the members, and the beads of the Immaculate Conception." ²⁶

When admitting members into the Society, the Spiritual Director reminds them that they are dedicating themselves particularly to God's service, and making a special profession of honoring His Holy Mother. The members, in their "Form of Offering", firmly purpose to love, serve and honor our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by imitating those virtues which adorned our Blessed Lady's life, and to procure, as far as it is in their power, that all others might be attracted to her service.²⁷

The immense spiritual benefits to be derived from membership in the Society may be seen from the following Rules:

The funds of the Society shall be devoted to procuring the offering of the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the members and of their families; for the eternal repose of the souls of the deceased members, and the friends and relations of all members, both living and dead; for the souls in Purgatory, and any other purpose determined on by the Society, with the approval of the Spiritual Director.

Besides the above, a Solemn Requiem Mass will be celebrated for the repose of the soul of each member.

On March 25th, Feast of the Annunciation, and on August 15th Feast of the Assumption, there will be Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

²⁶ Rules for the Government of the Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary, p. 8.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 7.

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Members are requested to send flowers for decorating purposes on the feast days of the Blessed Virgin.²⁸

Some of the more important benefactions of the Society in St. John's are the beautiful statue of the Immaculate Conception in Carrara marble, surmounting the Altar of the Blessed Virgin, in the Cathedral, and one of the magnificent stained-glass windows. Many outport churches have also received large donations from the Society.²⁹ Of more recent date are its generous gifts to St. Clare's Mercy Hospital, and the provision for hospital care for its sick needy members. To the Archbishop Skinner Social Welfare Fund, the Society contributed the munificent sum of \$ 2,500, and to the newly-erected Marian Chapel of the Cathedral, a set of wood-carved Stations of the Cross.³⁰

First Marian Shrine

An outstanding event in the history of the Church and of Marian Devotion during Bishop Fleming's episcopate, was the erection of the first Marian Shrine, the Cathedral of St. John's.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 5.

²⁹ Archbishop Howley, Newfoundland Quarterly, October, 1908.

³⁰ Minutes of Meetings of the Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. John's.

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From the year 1834, when he applied to the Government for a valuable piece of ground, on which to build the Cathedral, until the year of his death, 1849, the Bishop was occupied with this great and absorbing undertaking.³¹

It was not until 1838, that he began the actual work, having had to cross "the Atlantic back and forth five times before he succeeded" in obtaining from the British Government, the desired piece of land.³²

At this time in letters to Rev. Dr. A. O'Connell, "on the State of Religion in Newfoundland", the Bishop wrote:

The Catholic Church of the Capital has hitherto been the meanest house devoted to public worship in St. John's. It is so far inadequate to the accommodation of our rapidly-increasing congregation, that in the midst of winter, on every Sunday, you may behold several hundreds of the poor people assisting at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass exposed to the piercing winds, to the pelting of the bitter snow-drift, and kneeling imbedded in snow; (. . .) I thought it my duty to God and to the people committed to my care, to give them, if possible, a temple superior to any other in the Island - a temple at once beautiful and spacious, suitable to the worship of the Most High God, and that may be regarded in after times as a memorial of the piety of the faithful, a pledge of the permanency of our holy religion, and an object of holy pride to the fervent Catholic.³³

These words of the great Bishop corroborate what has been already said in this work of the strong faith of the people in whose "warm hearts and pious dispositions", the

³¹ Howley, op. cit., p. 341.

³² Ibid., p. 341.

³³ Ibid., p. 338.

Bishop said he "had a mine of wealth, calculated to sustain and support" him, in the arduous work which he was beginning "literally without a penny".³⁴

"On May 20, 1841, the foundation-stone was solemnly blessed and laid by Bishop Fleming, with all the imposing ceremonies of the Catholic Church, and the work really commenced."³⁵

The Programme of the Order of Procession from the "Old Chapel" to the Cathedral grounds, mentions the following: "Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary, three and three, preceded by two persons bearing a painting of the Blessed Virgin".³⁶ This was an eloquent testimony to the advancement of devotion to the Blessed Virgin in a land where some fifty years before, public worship was held to be a penal offence.

Bishop Fleming erected the Cathedral "to the honor and glory of God, under the patronage and invocation of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, of St. John the Baptist and of St. Francis Assisi".³⁷ Finished exteriorly by 1850, the Bishop had the supreme happiness of celebrating, for the first time within its walls, the Holy Sacrifice of

³⁴ Howley, op. cit., p. 339.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 357.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 359.

³⁷ Rev. P. J. Kennedy, "Immaculate Conception Title of the Cathedral", in The Monitor, Vol. 16, No. 12, issue of December, 1949.

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the Mass, on the Feast of Epiphany, January 6, 1850.³⁸

Erection of Parishes. - Bishop Fleming erected eleven parishes, four of which were dedicated to Our Blessed Lady under the following titles: The Holy Rosary, Portugal Cove, 1830; The Assumption, St. Kyran's, 1830; The Holy Rosary, Argentia, 1834; The Assumption, St. Mary's, 1843.³⁹

Erection of the Diocese of Newfoundland. - An important event of far-reaching significance was the erection, in 1847, of the Diocese of Newfoundland, from the Vicariate Apostolic; "Bishop Fleming being thus translated from the nominal See of Carpasia in partibus infidelium, to the actual See of Newfoundland".⁴⁰

Bishop Mullock, O. S. F.

The fifth and last of the Sons of Saint Francis of Assisi to preside over the Church in Newfoundland, was the illustrious Bishop John Thomas Mullock, who at the time of his Consecration in Rome, 1847, had been appointed Bishop Fleming's Co-adjutor, with right of succession. On the death of Bishop Fleming, in 1850, Bishop Mullock became Bishop of Newfoundland, and under his "energetic government,

³⁸ Ibid., p. 11.

³⁹ The Catholic Directory, 1952.

⁴⁰ Howley, op. cit., pp. 386 - 387.

ecclesiastical affairs took giant strides".⁴¹ His greatest achievement was the completion and adornment of the Cathedral.⁴²

Consecration of the Cathedral. - Near the entrance of the Cathedral are three mural tablets, beautifully executed in marble. On two of these are recorded, in simple dignity, its erection and consecration. In translation the Latin inscriptions read thus:

To God the best and greatest, M. A. Fleming, Bp. of Carpasia, Vicar Apostolic, from the gifts of the faithful, built this Church, in honor of B. M. the Virgin, St. John the Baptist, and St. Francis of Assisi, in the year of grace, 1841.⁴³

In the year of Our Lord, 1855, September 9, this Cathedral, the Mother Church of Newfoundland, was consecrated in honor of the Immaculate Virgin Mary and of St. John the Baptist and of St. Francis, by the Rev. John Thomas Mullock, Order of Friars Minor, Bishop of Newfoundland.

There were present Their Lordships the Most Reverend John Hughes, Archbishop of New York; Armand Charbonel, Archbishop of Toronto; Colin MacKinnon, Bishop of Arichat, and Thomas Connolly, Order of Friars Minor, Bishop of St. John, New Brunswick.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Bishop Howley, "Roman Catholic Church in Newfoundland", in A History of Newfoundland, by D. W. Frowse, London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1896, p. 607.

⁴² Ibid., p. 608.

⁴³ "Archbishop Howley's Description of the Cathedral" in The Monitor, Vol. 7, No. 9, issue of July-August 1940, p. 12.

⁴⁴ "Ninetieth Anniversary of the Consecration of the Cathedral", in The Monitor, Vol. 12, No. 9, issue of September, 1945, p. 1.

Because of the title of the Immaculate Conception given to the Cathedral, and because, just nine months previously, the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception had been defined as an article of Faith, by Pope Pius IX, the first great public function to take place in the newly-consecrated Cathedral, was a Pontifical Triduum in honor of the Immaculate Conception, held on the three days following the Consecration Day.⁴⁵

It is believed that the Cathedral of St. John's was then, the first Cathedral Church in the whole world, to be consecrated under the title of the Immaculate Conception, after the definition of the Dogma.⁴⁶

It (the Cathedral) constitutes a material witness and memorial of that historic doctrinal definition destined to have such remarkable effect in the religious life of the Catholic Church and in the world-wide amplification and development of the influence of the Blessed Mother of God over the destinies of mankind.⁴⁷

Cathedral Marian Art. - Of the many works of art adorning the Cathedral, only those of Marian inspiration will be referred to here. Of these the fifty-seven magnificent stained-glass windows are of first importance. Five of the larger windows represent the following subjects: the Annunciation, the Nativity of Our Lord, Our Lady of the Rosary, Our

⁴⁵ Rev. P. J. Kennedy, "Immaculate Conception Title of Cathedral", in The Monitor, Vol. 16, No. 12, December 1949, p. 11.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 11.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 11.

Lady standing at the Foot of the Cross. On fifteen of the smaller windows in the ambulatory are depicted the Mysteries of the Rosary. The statue of the Immaculate Conception surmounting the Altar of the Blessed Virgin, has been already referred to.

In the centre of the piazza, directly opposite the main entrance, stands another statue of the Immaculate Conception. It is of white marble and is of unique workmanship. Pointing the way, as it were, to the great Mother Church, which was erected and consecrated in honor of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, the statue is a grand evidence of our Heavenly Mother's pre-eminence as Queen, inaugurated in the history of the Church in Newfoundland, on the day of the Consecration of the first shrine erected in Mary's honor.

Since the Son of God made Man is the Author and Finisher of Faith, one must recognize His Most Holy Mother as the sharer in the divine mysteries, and, as it were, a guardian of them, and that upon her as a foundation, the noblest after Christ, is built the edifice of faith for all ages.⁴⁸

Parishes and Convents. - Of the parishes erected by Bishop Mullock, one of them, the Parish of St. Lawrence was founded in 1854,⁴⁹ the year memorable in the Church for the infallible definition of the Immaculate Conception. The first

⁴⁸ Pope Pius X, "Mary Helps to Restore All Things in Christ", in Ad Diem Illum, Encyclical Letter on the 50th Anniversary of the Definition of the Immaculate Conception, A Marian Reprint, The Marian Library, University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio, No. 25, April 1954, p. 2.

⁴⁹ The Catholic Directory, 1952.

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church in the Parish of St. Lawrence was dedicated to the Immaculate Conception.⁵⁰

Ten Convents of the Presentation Order were founded:

1. Harbor Grace, July 2, 1851, dedicated to Our Lady under the title of the Visitation.
2. Carbonear, May 2, 1852, St. Joseph.
3. Harbor Main, July 9, 1853, The Holy Family.
4. Renew's, September 23, 1853, Our Lady of Mount Carmel.
5. Riverhead, St. John's, January 10, 1856, St. Patrick.
6. Ferryland, October 2, 1858, The Sacred Heart.
7. St. Mary's, August 10, 1859, St. Anne.
8. Witless Bay, June 3, 1860, The Holy Trinity.
9. Placentia, August 3, 1864, Our Lady Queen of the Angels.
10. Torbay, October 8, 1865, St. Michael.⁵¹

Five Convents of Our Lady of Mercy were founded:

1. Belvedere, November 16, 1859, St. Michael.
2. Brigus, September 11, 1861, The Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph.
3. Conception, May 24, 1869, The Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of God.
4. Burin, July 12, 1863, St. Anne.
5. Petty Harbor, Pentecost Sunday, 1866.

⁵⁰ Sister Margaret Mary, St. John, Convent of Mercy, Belvedere, St. John's.

⁵¹ Annals of the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary, Mother House, St. John's.

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Because of the need of Sisters in larger centres, the Convents at Burin and Petty Harbor were later closed.⁵²

Girls' Orphanage Dedicated to the Immaculate Conception. - The first Orphanage in Newfoundland was established at the Convent of Our Lady of Mercy, Military Road, St. John's. Here on December 8, 1854, date of the Definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, the first orphan was admitted and the Orphanage formally opened under the Patronage of Mary Immaculate. The accommodation in this building becoming inadequate, the orphans were removed in 1859, to the old Monastery of Belvedere, which had been the home of Bishop Fleming. To the Sisters of Mercy, the Bishop bequeathed all his property for the maintenance of the Orphanage.⁵³

Pastoral Letter. - On the first Sunday of Advent, 1854, Bishop Mullock issued a Pastoral Letter, the first in the history of the Church in Newfoundland. This Pastoral will appear in its entirety in the Appendix.

⁵² Annals of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, Mother House, St. John's.

⁵³ Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

A NEW DIOCESE DEDICATED TO THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

"Blessed Be the Holy and Immaculate Conception"

The rapid progress made by the Church during the episcopate of Bishop Mullock, demanded the division of the Diocese of Newfoundland. Consequently in February 1856, the northeast portion of the Island, including that part of the coast of Labrador under the jurisdiction of Newfoundland, was erected by the Holy See into the Diocese of Harbor Grace.¹

Because of the promulgation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception a little more than a year previously, the Diocese was dedicated to the Immaculate Conception.²

Bishop Dalton, O. S. F.

The first Bishop of the new Diocese was the Right Rev. John Dalton, an Irish Franciscan, who had been Pastor of St. Patrick's Church, Carbonear, for some years. He was consecrated by Bishop Mullock on May 12, 1856, in the Cathedral of St. John's.³

Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

One of the greatest achievements of the thirteen

¹ Felix D. McCarthy, "Diocese of Harbor Grace", in The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 7, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1910, p. 133.

² Most Rev. J. M. O'Neill, Bishop of Harbor Grace, Questionnaire on Marian Devotion in Newfoundland, 1954.

³ McCarthy, "Diocese of Harbor Grace", op. cit., p. 133.

years of Bishop Dalton's episcopate was the erection of the Cathedral which was consecrated and dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, on December 8, 1868.⁴ "The Cathedral of Harbor Grace is situated on the shores of Conception Bay, and fittingly the sole titular of the Diocese of Harbor Grace and of the Cathedral is the Immaculate Conception."⁵ The crest of the Diocese of Harbor Grace is the Moon and Twelve Stars and the Motto of the Immaculate Conception, proper to the Cathedral of Conception Bay, Tota Pulchra, (Thou art all fair O Mary! and there is no stain in thee!).⁶

Early Foundations of Parishes and Convents

Prior to 1856, the Parishes of Harbor Grace, Carbonear, Harbor Main, Brigus and Northern Bay had been erected, and Convents of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary had been founded.⁷

In a previous chapter of this work, reference was made to the persecution which the Catholics of Harbor Main and Carbonear were forced to undergo, in the early part of the eighteenth century, when fines, imprisonments and

⁴ Bishop Howley, "Roman Catholic Church in Newfoundland", in A History of Newfoundland, by D. W. Prowse, London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1896, p. 612.

⁵ Rev. P. J. Kennedy, "Marian Devotion in Newfoundland", in Report 1954, The Canadian Catholic Historical Association, LeClerc Printers Ltd., Hull, Quebec, p. 80.

⁶ "The Life and Influence of Archbishop McNeil", in The Monitor, March 1951, Vol. 18, No. 3, p. 4.

⁷ O'Neill, Questionnaire on Marian Devotion, 1954.

house-burnings were the order of the day. Writing in the nineteenth century, Bishop Howley said of Harbor Main: "Now the jail exists no longer; a church, a convent and schools supply its place, and the people are, without a single exception, Catholics. Such are the fruits of persecution."⁸

Carbonear has a similar history. It has a large population. It has one of the finest churches in the country, a Convent High School, a St. Patrick's Academy, which numbers among its alumni, twenty-five priests, two of whom became distinguished Jesuits.⁹

It is interesting to note also, that of the eight Convents of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the Diocese, the first three were founded in Harbor Grace, Carbonear and Harbor Main, under the titles of the Visitation of Our Lady, St. Joseph, and the Holy Family respectively.

The Convent of Our Lady of Mercy, Brigus, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, was established by Bishop Dalton on September 11, 1861, and on May 24, 1869, after the good Bishop's death, the Convent at Conception was opened under the Patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of God.¹⁰

⁸ Howley, Ecclesiastical History of Newfoundland, p. 173.

⁹ Rev. P. W. Browne, "An Educational Epopee", in The Catholic Educational Review, April 1931, p. 195.

¹⁰ Annals of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, St. John's.

With reference to Catholicity in this part of Newfoundland, it may be said that as the blood of the early Christians was the seed of the Church, so also the ashes of the burned houses and fishing-stages prepared the ground for Catholicity, especially in Harbor Grace, Carbonear and Harbor Main.

Bishop Carfagnini, O. S. F.

The successor of Bishop Dalton was Right Rev. Henry Carfagnini, an Italian Friar, who was consecrated in Rome in 1870. He increased the number of Clergy from six to fourteen and completed and embellished the Cathedral.¹¹ The Marian character of this Shrine will be seen from the following quotation taken from the newspapers of the day:

What the temple was to Jerusalem, (. . .) this Cathedral was to the fishermen of Harbor Grace and surrounding country. It is a magnificent temple which they have erected for the worship of God for themselves and for their children all down the ages. (. . .) The ceiling is richly ornamented in elaborate stucco work. In the centre panel is a painting of the Madonna, after Murillo, by one of the Presentation Nuns of the Harbor Grace Convent, and is a beautiful work of art. (. . .)

Around the frieze at the foot of the dome are the following words taken from the Dogmatic Bull on the Immaculate Conception - "Definimus B. V. Mariam a primo instante suae conceptionis fuisse ab omni originali labe praeservatam immunem".¹²

¹¹ McCarthy, "Diocese of Harbor Grace", op. cit., p. 133.

¹² "Two Accounts of the Cathedral of Harbor Grace", in The Newfoundlander, June 15, 1869, and in The Evening Mercury, September 10, 1889, quoted by Centenary of the Diocese of Harbor Grace, booklet, 1956, pp. 46 - 47.

It is said that Bishop Carfagnini, being a renowned artist, did much of the interior ornamentation of the Cathedral with his own hands, being so absorbed in the work that the administrative affairs were almost entirely taken care of by his Secretary, Right Rev. D. Falconio.

Bishop Carfagnini returned to Italy in May 1880, and was appointed Bishop of Gallipoli.¹³

Bishop McDonald

The third Bishop of Harbor Grace, Right Rev. Ronald McDonald ruled the Diocese for twenty-five years, during which much progress - spiritual and material - was made. Many parishes were founded and churches and schools built.¹⁴ In the Parish of Bay de Verde the Church and School were dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary under the titles of Our Lady of the Assumption and St. Mary's respectively. At Fogo Island the Church was consecrated in honor of Our Lady of the Snows. A new Church at Brigus was dedicated to Our Lady Help of Christians. Over the high altar was a magnificent stained-glass window depicting Our Lady Help of Christians, St. Pius V and the heroes of Lepanto.¹⁵ This Church was unfortunately destroyed by fire in 1935.

¹³ Centenary of the Diocese of Harbor Grace, p. 11.

¹⁴ Howley, "Roman Catholic Church in Newfoundland", op. cit., p. 612.

¹⁵ Questionnaire on Marian Devotion, 1954.

From 1889 until his resignation of the Diocese, the great and absorbing work of Bishop McDonald was the restoration of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception which was destroyed by fire in 1889. The new Gothic Shrine was dedicated to Mary Immaculate on November 8, 1899.¹⁶

Bishop McDonald belonged to the foremost standard-bearers of the devotion to Our Blessed Lady due to his fruitful endeavours to cultivate it especially in the tender hearts of the little ones in his fold. On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1896, the Sodality of the Children of Mary was first established in the Diocese by this great Bishop. On that day over ninety girls were received into the Sodality.¹⁷

Bishop March

The thirty-three years of the episcopate of Bishop John March, first native of Newfoundland to be consecrated Bishop of Harbor Grace, were marked by the building of churches, convents and schools in order to bring the consolations and benefits of Religion to every part of his extensive Diocese.

¹⁶ Centenary of the Diocese of Harbor Grace, p. 13.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 52.

Church of the Immaculate Conception in Grand Falls

Of the many parishes founded by Bishop March, that of Grand Falls, raised to the status of a parish in 1912, calls for special mention. Its beautiful church, dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, has fifteen magnificent stained-glass windows, representing the mysteries of the Holy Rosary.¹⁸

Convent of the Immaculate Conception

On August 19, 1933, centenary year of the coming of the first Sisters of the Presentation of Mary to Newfoundland, the Convent at Grand Falls was blessed and dedicated to the Immaculate Conception by Bishop March. From an account of the opening of this Institution, the following is taken:

The corner stone of this building is of white marble, emblematic of the virtues which the Sisters will instil into the minds of the children under their care, and bears the legend, "Salve Sancta Parents", above which are two shamrocks, as a delicate tribute to the Sisters, who, a century ago, came from the Land of the Shamrock, to dedicate their lives and work to the Christian education of the youth of Newfoundland. Under this inscription are two lilies with the dates 1833 and 1933 on either side. The Convent is dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady, the Spotless Virgin Queen.¹⁹

The Sisters' Academy is also under the special protection of the Mother of God, having the title Notre Dame, appropriately named, not only because of the title

¹⁸ Questionnaire on Marian Devotion, 1954.

¹⁹ "Opening of the Immaculate Conception Convent at Grand Falls", in The Newfoundland Quarterly, Vol. 33, No. 2, October 1933, p. 19.

"Immaculate" given to the Church and Convent, but also because the great Bay of Our Lady, in whose vicinity Grand Falls is situated, was named Notre Dame by our early French explorers.²⁰

Indian Missions of Newfoundland Labrador

Before Confederation, the Indian Missions of Newfoundland Labrador, were under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Harbor Grace. Yearly visitations of these far-flung Missions were made during the summer months by the Bishop of the Diocese or by a priest delegated by him.

That the Indians have great confidence in the Blessed Virgin is evident from the following account given by Father O'Brien of Northern Bay:

I had the happiness of looking after those children of the Wilds for twenty summers. Originally the Oblate Fathers took care of those congregating, during the off-hunting season at North-West River. For some time chance meetings with Missionaries were the only order for a faithful tribe. It is true to say that during this trying time of many long years, Mary's Rosary faithfully recited, and Mary's scapulars and medals faithfully worn, kept alive the Faith, so wonderfully adhered to by those once worshippers of the elements only.

In 1927, I was privileged to bring the Faith of the Montagnais to the pagan Nascopi of the farther North. It was not long before the Nascopi, children of the barren ground, were on equal footing with the Montagnais, in their devotion to Mary. They took to her Rosary like a duck takes to water.

²⁰ Ronald J. Doucet, "Our Lady in Newfoundland", in The Monitor, January 1948, Vol. 15, No. 1, p. 10. According to Centenary of the Diocese of Harbor Grace, p. 102, Our Lady was honored also under the same name by the Grand Falls Branch of the Knights of Columbus which was instituted in 1919, and named Notre Dame Council.

I cannot more fittingly end this brief account, than by using the Indians' own soft spoken dialect of praise: Tshima miluatshimaganit Mali e teshalashku eut kie uetuassimituat Tshe Manito. "Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary Most Holy".²¹

Father O'Brien thus "extended the Faith of Immaculate Conception's Cathedral farthest north in the Diocese of Harbor Grace".²²

Bishop O'Neill

The inspiring Marian achievements of the present Bishop of Harbor Grace, Most Rev. J. M. O'Neill, D. D., show his great zeal in making Mary Immaculate more loved and honored throughout his Diocese.

His efforts find their immediate emanation in numerous Marian writings. Chief among Bishop O'Neill's Marian publications are his Pastoral on the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary on the occasion of the Definition of the Dogma, November 1950, a Pastoral on the Rosary, October 1953, and the Pastoral on the Marian Year, February 1954.

Establishment of the Redemptorist Congregation

An important centre of Marian Devotion in the Diocese of Harbor Grace, is the Monastery of the Redemptorist Fathers established at Whitbourne in 1950. The Fathers conduct Missions, Retreats and Novena Services throughout the Diocese,

²¹ Rev. Edward J. O'Brien, P.P., Northern Bay, Paper on Marian Devotion, October 1953.

²² Centenary of the Diocese of Harbor Grace, p. 93.

and thereby propagate a sincere devotion to Our Blessed Mother, under the title of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, the special Patroness of the Redemptorist Congregation. At Whitbourne there is a Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help and weekly devotions are held in her honor. The same devotions are given every week in the smaller Missions. The Mission at Chapel Arm is dedicated to Our Lady of Perpetual Help.²³

Convents of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Four Convents of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary have been established: Windsor, St. Joseph's, September 5, 1943; Bishop's Falls, Mary Queen of Peace, September 2, 1945; Badger, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, September 2, 1953; Buchans, St. Margaret's, August 26, 1953.²⁴

Co-Cathedral of the Harbor Grace Diocese

By a Decree of the Sacred Consistorial Congregation, dated May 25, 1953, the Church of the Immaculate Conception at Grand Falls was elevated to the dignity of Co-Cathedral of the Diocese of Harbor Grace. On December 8, 1953, day of the inauguration throughout the world, of the Marian Year, the Bishop of Harbor Grace celebrated Pontifical High Mass in the Church of the Immaculate Conception at Grand Falls, to mark the formal raising of this Church to the status of

²³ Rev. Gerald Murphy, C. S. S. R., Rector, Account of Marian Devotion, 1954.

²⁴ Annals of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother House, St. John's.

Co-Cathedral of the Diocese of Harbor Grace. The Archbishop of St. John's read the Papal Decree and the Bishop of St. George's delivered the sermon for the occasion.²⁵

Marian Societies

In nearly every parish of the Diocese, Marian Societies are flourishing, particularly the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary; the Sodality of the Children of Mary; the Altar Society; the Star of the Sea Society and the Legion of Mary. Many Churches, Mission Chapels, Convents and Schools are especially dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and the Family Rosary is recited in almost every home.²⁶

Marian Devotion in the Parish of Buchans

In a work of this nature, it would be impossible to write of the many devotional practices in honor of the Blessed Virgin, carried out in all the parishes, but the following edifying account of Marian devotion in the Parish of Very Rev. L. J. Fitzgerald, P. P., Buchans, is especially worthy of note: This good priest, having obtained a statue of the Pilgrim Virgin for his parishioners, placed a list of the families in the Church. Each family retains the statue for a week, gives it a place of honor with a light burning before it, and around this shrine the Family Rosary is recited. On

²⁵ "Grand Falls Church Raised to Status of Co-Cathedral", in The Monitor, Vol. 20, No. 12, December 1953, p. 14.

²⁶ Questionnaires on Marian Devotion, 1954.

Sunday the statue is passed on to the next family, and thus the "Pilgrim Virgin" makes a round of the parish, until every family has had the privilege of saying the Rosary before it, when the "Pilgrimage" starts all over again. This Rosary, before the portable shrine, is said at a stated time, and to it the family invites some friends, particularly of the "floating population", from the men's quarters of the mining town.²⁷

Another favorite devotion in this parish, as it is in many other parishes in Newfoundland, is to Our Lady of Mount Carmel. To quote Father Fitzgerald again:

All the people are enrolled in the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and are very faithful in wearing the Scapular or Scapular Medals, as well as being faithful to the Rosary, hence, cures, and prevention of accidents are constantly being attributed to Our Lady. In ten years there have been only two fatal accidents.²⁸

On devotion to the Blessed Virgin in the Diocese of Harbor Grace, Father O'Brien wrote what may very fittingly bring this chapter to a close:

It is significant that Conception Bay in its inland Capital of Harbor Grace, has the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception dominating the scene. Along the north shore of the great Bay, the Eucharistic Presence of the Virgin's Son, holds the centre of the picture of Faith, as from the Tabernacle of Corpus Christi in Northern Bay, He looks out over the great expanse of clear blue water, recalling, no doubt the

²⁷ Rev. L. J. Fitzgerald, P. P., Buchans, Marian Devotion in the Parish of Buchans.

²⁸ Ibid.

Sea of Galilee and the Lake of Genesareth, on whose wathers He tested the Faith of those He bade to follow Him, "and be fishers of men", making Simon the "Rock", against which tempestuous seas would forever break, but would make no dent, because "the seas and the winds obey Him".

On the opposite shore, the beacon light of St. Francis, throws a kiss to the sanctuary light of Northern Bay, Bay de Verde and Harbor Grace, inviting safe passage for storm-tossed mariners from Him Who called to fearful boatmen, "It is I, be not afraid".

Where Conception Bay trails into Trinity Bay, Bay de Verde has her Church of the Assumption; and so a continuation of Conception, Incarnation, Trinity and Assumption testifies to the Faith of our progenitors, who followed the sea for a living, and dedicated their fishing waters, their Churches, their Schools and their homes to Mysteries which speak fully for their Catholicity, their belief and their trust in the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Christ and the Motherhood of Mary.²⁹

²⁹ Very Rev. E. J. O'Brien, P. P., Northern Bay. Paper on Marian Devotion, 1954.

CHAPTER V

CATHOLICITY ESTABLISHED IN WEST NEWFOUNDLAND

Our Lady of the Assumption

The Acadians and the French Canadians

The first contacts of the West Coast of Newfoundland with the Catholic Faith, were made by the Acadians and the French Canadians, as is related by the late Reverend Michael Brosnan, in the Pioneer History of St. George's Diocese:

If the honor of establishing Catholicity in the Eastern part of the Island, must be conceded to the Sons of Ireland, the honor of implanting it in the West must be given to the Sons of French-Canada. And indeed as the story unfolds itself, one cannot but notice the formidable difficulties which the poor Acadians had to face and which they survived, which were never presented as obstacles to the settlers on the East. For one thing the Irish settlers were to some extent at least, followed by priests of their own race who provided the ministrations of religion for them and kept them together. In addition to this they lived among people, that is the earlier English settlers, with whom, in spite of the fact that they differed in race, they had yet many things in common if not in religion then in language and institutions. With the French settlers we find none of these aids. Their lot was cast amongst a people whose language and ways were totally foreign to them. Their coming was haphazard and, above all, they were for nearly fifty years without a resident priest.¹

Because of the unfriendly relationship existing between the French and the English Governments, regarding the French Shore Question towards the close of the eighteenth century, the poor Catholics of the West Coast were deprived,

¹ Very Rev. Michael Brosnan, "Religious Condition of West Newfoundland Before the Time of a Resident Priest", in Pioneer History of St. George's Diocese, Mission Press, Toronto, 1948, p. 3.

not only of the salutary influences of religion and education, but even of a just civil administration. Indeed it may with truth be said, that morally, materially, socially and politically, they were an entirely neglected people; yet they clung tenaciously to the Faith.²

The test put to the Faith of the Acadians and the French-Canadians resident in Newfoundland, was no less severe than that which their fathers had to withstand years before in Nova Scotia, with this difference, that here the unfortunate people were without their natural and trusty leaders, Catholic Priests.³

The only opportunity Catholics had of practising their Religion, were provided by the occasional visits of Chaplains from some of the French Navy or fishing vessels, or whenever a priest from the Canadian Government boats visiting the Lighthouses came. On such occasions many children were baptized. But this privilege could only be enjoyed by those who lived near the points of anchorage of such boats. Other less favored Catholics were obliged to go great distances to receive the Sacraments or to have their children baptized; and this they did even at the risk of their lives.⁴ The following are examples:

Monsignor Sears tells the story of a man who related that his parents took him to Quebec, a distance of 600 miles, to have him christened. Another told him that in his case he was taken to Arichat for the same purpose. These cases are only two of many; in fact such heroic deeds were the rule not the exception. In the

² Ibid., p. 4.

³ Ibid., p. 4.

⁴ Ibid., p. 5.

light of these facts we can only entertain feelings of highest admiration for these poor people, who amidst such terrible temptations to the contrary, kept the spark of faith burning, even though sometimes dimly. Peace to their ashes.⁵

How these poor benighted people "kept the spark of faith burning", may be summed up in the words: "Qui dit Acadien dit Catholique et serviteur de Marie."⁶ They were descendants of those Catholics who came from France in the seventeenth century, the century in which Louis XIII dedicated France and its Colonies to the Blessed Virgin and chose the fifteenth of August, Feast of the Assumption, as the national Feast.⁷ Hence Our Lady of the Assumption is the Patroness of the Acadians and the French-Canadians, and their devotion to her may be thought of as being both religious and national. The praise-worthy gesture of Louis XIII in making his kingdom the "kingdom of Mary" had important consequences, not only in France, but in all the French Colonies which after that time were founded in the New World. Like the Irish who brought with the Faith to Newfoundland, a filial love and veneration for Our Blessed Mother, so also the French brought with them to Canada and to all their Colonies a Christianity permeated with Marian devotion. One of the characteristics of

5

Ibid., p. 5.

6 Soeur Rose-Marie, Marie Dans L'Education Nationale en Acadie, Fides, Montreal, 1944, p. 23.

7 Very Rev. Frederick Lynch, S. J., "Marian History in the Archdiocese of Halifax", in Report 1954 The Canadian Catholic Historical Association, LeClerc Printers Ltd., Hull, Quebec, p. 67.

this devotion was a great love for Mary's Rosary, for it is said that "le chapelet ne quitte jamais le vetement de l'Acadien".⁸

The Rock Virgin. - On the shores of St. George's Bay, there is a huge rock, from which, by the action of the sea, a natural grotto was formed, the rock formation itself resembling a statue of Our Lady. Here in the days when there was no church nor organized Religion, the French and the Acadians would gather to say the Rosary and sing their national Hymn, "Ave Maria Stella". Here, too they would come to ask Our Lady's blessing before setting out on their fishing voyages and again on their return to thank their bright "Star of Ocean" for her protection. It was the lovely custom also to salute the "Rock Virgin" from their boats. From the "Rock Virgin" the little settlement of Lourdes gets its name. Both Parish and Parish Church are dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes.⁹

First Visit of a Priest. - The first time a Newfoundland Priest visited the West Coast was in 1820, when Reverend William Hearne travelled across the country, a distance of two hundred miles of trackless forest, accompanied by a single Indian. He visited Sandy Point and Robinson's Head.¹⁰

⁸ Soeur Rose-Mary, op. cit., p. 50.

⁹ Rev. Roderick White, Corner Brook, Account of Marian Devotion, 1954.

¹⁰ Very Rev. M. Brosnan, "Religious Condition of West Newfoundland", op. cit., p. 6.

Father Hearne was Parish Priest of Placentia Bay, which charge included Fortune Bay with the whole West, and at that time the Island of Anticosti also. The missionary journey of this heroic priest thus antedated by two years, the journey of William Epps Cormack, who is supposed to have been the first white man to walk across Newfoundland, from Sea to Sea.¹¹ Father Hearne stated that there was a goodly number of Catholics in the areas which he visited.¹²

With advancing years the Catholic population grew when the French settlers intermarried with their English neighbors or with compatriots from France or Canada, and also by the advent of Scottish and Irish settlers from Cape Breton.¹³

First Visit of a Bishop. - On the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Mary, August 27, 1848, Bishop Mullock of St. John's, arrived at Sandy Point, the principal settlement of Bay St. George. Here he marked out a site for a church and promised the people that he would send them a resident priest. With his assistant priest, the Bishop made a visitation of the Coast as far as Ferrole, attending to the spiritual needs of a "people who but awaited the arrival of a priest to make their peace with God, have their marriages blessed, their

¹¹ Ibid., p. 7.

¹² Most Rev. Michael O'Reilly, Bishop of St. George's Pastoral Letter, Given at Corner Brook, January 8, 1947.

¹³ Ibid.

children baptized, and experience the holy joy of assisting once again at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.¹⁴ It was two years before the Bishop was able to fulfil his promise to the Catholic population of the West, numbering at this time, about 2,000.¹⁵

First Resident Priest. - On September 7, 1850, Reverend Alexis Belanger of the Diocese of Charlottetown, P. E. I., arrived at Sandy Point. Of his missionary activities in St. George's Bay, Codroy, and Bay of Islands, the present Bishop of St. George's has said: "Had we not authentic proof for them, we should class them amongst either the mythical or the impossible".¹⁶

Worn out by the labors of his arduous mission, Father Belanger died at Sandy Point on September 7, 1868, just eighteen years after his arrival at that place.¹⁷

First Prefect Apostolic

From his friend Bishop McKinnon of Arichat, Bishop Mullock procured a priest to replace Father Belanger. The future Apostle of the West was Father Thomas Sears, whose "love for God and for God's destitute children in West

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Very Rev. M. Brosnan, "Religious Condition of West Newfoundland", op. cit., p. 7.

¹⁶ Most Rev. M. O'Reilly, Pastoral Letter, Jan. 1947.

¹⁷ Very Rev. M. Brosnan, "Religious Condition of West Newfoundland", op. cit., p. 11.

Newfoundland outbalanced all apparent impossibilities and discomforts.¹⁸

In 1870 West Newfoundland was constituted a Prefecture, and was taken out of the Diocese of St. John's. in 1871 Father Sears became the first Prefect Apostolic. The new Prefecture consisted of the whole of the Western seaboard and a part of the South Coast; in all about five hundred miles.¹⁹

In his Report to the Society of the Propagation of the Faith in 1873, the Prefect gave a vivid account of the Prefecture, which he begged would be viewed with interest as it related "to the spiritual and even the temporal well-being (. . .) of natives in many instances of La Belle France and the descendants of the same race - the faithful children of L'Acadie".²⁰ He praised particularly their devotion to the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, and their respect for all things sacred.²¹

Of his Church buildings he gives a full account, beginning with his "principal Church", at Sandy Point, which is dedicated to the Immaculate Conception.²² This is the Church whose site was selected by Bishop Mullock on the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Mary in 1848, as mentioned above. His

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 32.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 33.

²¹ Ibid., p. 41.

²² Ibid., p. 42.

Churches and chapels must have been many, for, says the author of the Pioneer History of St. George's Diocese, "scarcely a year opened, but found him beginning to prepare for the construction of some new church building in one place or another".²³ The titles of some of these churches are: Church of the Holy Family, Bay of Islands; Church of Our Lady of Mercy, Benoit's Cove; and the principal church, that of the Immaculate Conception at Sandy Point, the first church erected on the Coast.²⁴

Notwithstanding the many arduous tasks connected with his extensive Mission, Monsignor Sears' "religious exercises were never omitted; his Mass, his meditation, his Office, his daily Rosary, had their time day after day".²⁵

This great and holy priest, who had laid so well the foundation of the Church in West Newfoundland, passed to his eternal reward in November 1885.²⁶

The Vicariate

Under Right Rev. Michael Francis Howley, who succeeded Monsignor Sears, the Prefecture was raised to a Vicariate, and Dr. Howley became Vicar Apostolic and Titular Bishop of

²³ Ibid., p. 88.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 92.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 88.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 136.

Amastris in 1892.²⁷

First Marian Congregation

The new Bishop established the first Marian Congregation, that of Our Lady of Mercy, in West Newfoundland in 1893. This foundation has an interesting history: It was provided by Mrs. Brownell, a wealthy American lady who had been introduced to the Catholic Faith by the finding of a medal of the Blessed Virgin, when travelling on a boat on which two Sisters of Mercy were also passengers. Being anxious to make some return for what she deemed a great gift from God, she decided to found a House of the Daughters of Mother McAuley in a missionary country. To the Sisters of Mercy in the Diocese of Providence, R. I., whom she had met through the "miraculous medal", she made known her wishes. One of the Religious of that Community who had been in St. John's and had become acquainted with Bishop Howley, wrote to him of the offer. The Bishop hastened to the United States, obtained the munificent gift from Mrs. Brownell, and having procured canonical dispensation, conducted the Sisters who had volunteered for the Mission, to Sandy Point, then the chief settlement in St. George's.²⁸

²⁷ Most Rev. Michael O'Reilly, Pastoral Letter, January 8, 1947.

²⁸ Annals of the Sisters of Mercy, St. John's.

The Bishopric Under Bishop McNeil

In 1904, Golden Jubilee Year of the Definition of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, the Vicariate of St. George's was erected into a Bishopric, with Bishop McNeil as first Bishop, his predecessor having been transferred to St. John's.²⁹ The Church of the Immaculate Conception at Sandy Point was the Pro-Cathedral of the new Bishopric.³⁰

With the coming of the Railway, St. George's became an important centre, and there the Bishop built the Cathedral, schools and Convent to which the Sisters of Mercy were removed from Sandy Point.³¹

Bishop Power

When Bishop McNeil was transferred to Vancouver in 1910, Bishop Michael Mary Fintan Power was chosen to succeed him. As in the case of his predecessors, the Church in the West made marked progress in every direction, during his episcopate.³²

Of the four parishes erected by Bishop Power that of Lourdes as well as its Parish Church he dedicated to Our

²⁹ M. Brosnan, op. cit., p. 112.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 115.

³¹ Annals of the Sisters of Mercy, St. John's.

³² Most Rev. Michael O'Reilly, Pastoral Letter, January 8, 1947.

Lady of Lourdes.³³

On the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, 1917, Bishop Power established the Convent of Our Lady of Mercy, St. Mary's on the Humber, at Curling, Bay of Islands.³⁴

Bishop Renouf

On December 8, 1920, Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Right Rev. Henry T. Renouf was consecrated Bishop of St. George's, Bishop Power having died the previous March.³⁵ During his episcopate Marian Devotion continued to make progress.

Establishment of the Redemptorist Congregation. - For the extensive Parish of Corner Brook and its outlying Missions, Bishop Renouf established the first foundation of the Redemptorist Congregation in Newfoundland.³⁶ For twenty-three years, these devoted Priests labored untiringly on the West Coast and spread far and wide a great love and devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Though the Redemptorists no longer have a Monastery on the West, the Devotions to Our Lady of Perpetual Help are conducted in many churches each

³³ Rev. Roderick White, Corner Brook, Account of Marian Devotion, 1954.

³⁴ Annals of the Sisters of Mercy, St. John's.

³⁵ Most Rev. M. O'Reilly, Pastoral Letter, January 8, 1947.

³⁶ Rev. P. J. Kennedy, Report 1954 The Canadian Catholic Historical Association, p. 32.

Wednesday afternoon and evening and are well attended.³⁷

New Convents. - Two Convents of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary were established by Bishop Renouf; Stephenville, The Little Flower, November 21, 1925; Corner Brook, The Sacred Heart, October 2, 1927.³⁸

Marian Parishes. - On the Feast of the Assumption, August 15, 1925, Bishop Renouf dedicated the Church at Port au Port, to Our Lady of Mercy. In 1937, on the same beautiful Feast, he erected the Parish of Stephenville Crossing and dedicated its Church to Our Lady of the Assumption.³⁹

Bishop O'Reilly

On the death of Bishop Renouf in 1941, the present Bishop of St. George's, Most Rev. Michael O'Reilly, D. D., was selected by Rome to rule the Diocese.⁴⁰ His Excellency is a native of Ireland which has given so many illustrious Missionaries to the Church in Newfoundland.

That this Marian-minded Bishop has contributed, and is contributing largely to the Catholic life of the West Coast cannot be doubted. The following are some of his Marian achievements:

³⁷ Rev. Roderick White, Account of Marian Devotion in Corner Brook, 1954.

³⁸ Annals of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. John's.

³⁹ Questionnaires on Marian Devotion, 1954.

⁴⁰ Catholic Directory, 1952.

Erection of Parishes. - Of the many parishes and Missions founded by His Excellency, the principal are Deer Lake, dedicated to the Immaculate Conception,⁴¹ and Maria Regina Parish, Berry Head, Port au Port, established in 1954.

Marian Congregations. - Four Convents of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary have been established by His Excellency:

St. Francis Xavier's, Corner Brook, January 9, 1947.

All Halows, Humbermouth, November 1, 1949.

Immaculate Conception, Deer Lake, November 9, 1953.

Immaculate Heart of Mary, Port au Port, September 9, 1952.⁴²

On the Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, November 21, 1950, a Convent of Our Lady of Mercy, dedicated to the Assumption of Our Lady, was opened at Stephenville Crossing. This title was selected because it was the same year and month in which the Dogma of the Assumption of Our Lady was defined as an article of Faith, and the parish and parish Church were also dedicated to Our Lady of the Assumption.⁴³

Translation of See. - On January 8, 1947, the Translation of the See of St. George's to Corner Brook was solemnly enacted in the Church of the Most Holy Redeemer at

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Annals of the Sisters of the Presentation, St. John's.

⁴³ Annals of the Sisters of Mercy, St. John's.

Corner Brook. Following the reading of the Papal Decree, authorizing the transfer, Solemn Pontifical High Mass was offered by His Excellency the Bishop of Harbor Grace. The Co-adjutor Archbishop of St. John's represented the Metropolitan. In commemoration of the historic event, His Excellency, the Bishop of St. George's issued a Pastoral Letter.⁴⁴

The Cathedral. - The beautiful Cathedral which has been erected by His Excellency, will be consecrated in honor of the Most Holy Redeemer and the Immaculate Conception.⁴⁵

Monastery of the Christian Brothers. - In September of the Marian Year, 1954, His Excellency established at Corner Brook, a Monastery of the Christian Brothers, the first foundation outside St. John's.⁴⁶

Regina Regional High School. - This most modern school, the first Regional High School for boys in Newfoundland, was blessed and formally opened by His Excellency in September of the Marian Year. The school is dedicated to Our Blessed Mother, and is staffed by the Christian Brothers.⁴⁷

Marian Publications. - His Excellency has issued four Marian Pastorals as follows: November 1950 on the occasion of

⁴⁴ "Translation See St. George's to Corner Brook", in The Monitor, Vol. 14, No. 1, issue of January, 1947, p. 1.

⁴⁵ Rev. J. Molloy, Lourdes, Account of Marian Devotion in the Diocese of St. George's, August 1956.

⁴⁶ Rev. Brother P. J. Keane, Paper on the Christian Brothers of Ireland in Newfoundland, 1954.

⁴⁷ Rev. J. Molloy, Account of Marian Devotion in the Diocese of St. George's.

the Definition of the Dogma of the Assumption; Holy Year, 1951; Two Pastorals on the Rosary: September 24, 1952 and Feast of the Most Holy Rosary, 1953.⁴⁸

From His Excellency's Pastoral of the Holy Year, 1951, the following excerpt is taken; it will show that devotion to Mary is a living vital part of the people on the West Coast of Newfoundland:

It inspires us with unwavering hope to know that devotion to the Rosary has ever marked the faithful of the Diocese of St. George's. With all the earnestness and persuasiveness at our command, we ask you dearly beloved in Christ, to make sure that during this Holy Year and for all time to come, the Rosary shall be fervently recited, day after day, by each and every family of our beloved Diocese.⁴⁹

Marian Associations. - The Confraternity of the Holy Rosary, the Legion of Mary, the Sodality of the Children of Mary have been established in many parishes, especially in the larger centres.⁵⁰

Marian Devotions. - Our Lady of Perpetual Help Devotions initiated by the Redemptorist Fathers still flourish in the larger parishes. On June 1, 1956, the Devotions to Our Sorrowful Mother were established in the Parish of Lourdes.⁵¹

To the Rosary Crusade, the Marian Year and general Marian Devotions, reference will be made in another chapter.

⁴⁸ The Monitor, Vol. 20, No. 8, p. 7.

⁴⁹ Most Rev. O'Reilly, Holy Year Pastoral, Feb. 4, '51.

⁵⁰ Rev. R. White, Paper on Marian Devotion, 1954.

⁵¹ Rev. J. Molloy, Account of Marian Devotion in the Diocese of St. George's.

CHAPTER VI

DIOCESE OF ST. JOHN'S UNDER FIRST NON-FRANCISCAN BISHOP

Our Lady Star of the Sea

In an earlier part of this work, it has been seen that Bishop Fleming became first Bishop of Newfoundland when the country was erected into a Diocese, and that during the episcopate of his successor, Bishop Mullock, the country was divided into two Dioceses, St. John's and Harbor Grace, Bishop Mullock thereby becoming first Bishop of St. John's. Later when the Western portion of the Island became a Prefecture, it was separated from St. John's. This was during the episcopate of Bishop Mullock's Successor, Right Rev. Thomas Joseph Power, of Wexford, Ireland, who was consecrated in Rome in 1870 Bishop of St. John's.¹

Marian Societies

Star of the Sea Society. - In 1871, eight month after his arrival in the country, Bishop Power became the Patron of a great Marian Society, destined to become the largest in St. John's, the Star of the Sea Society, which was, in its inception a Fishermen's Society, including Ships' Captains of the city, and drew from the very outset, a large membership. "From the beginning it was under the spiritual patronage of

¹ Rev. P. J. Kennedy, "The Church in Newfoundland", in Report 1952 The Canadian Catholic Historical Association, LeClerc Printers, Limited, Hull, Que., pp. 42 - 43.

Mary the Mother of God, otherwise in Church Liturgy, Maris Stella, Star of the Sea."²

From the address of Archbishop Roche, on the occasion of the seventy-fifth Anniversary of the foundation of the Society, the following quotation is taken:

Your venerable Society has its roots deep in our Newfoundland soil. Its name - Newfoundland Fishermen's Star of the Sea - speaks of its early close association with the staple and country-wide industry of Newfoundland. Its religious origin is emphasized by the beautiful title by which it is most generally and familiarly known throughout the country, the Star of the Sea. This title reminds us that it was instituted under the auspices of the Church and dedicated to Our Lady, Star of the Sea. Indeed from the very beginning, it has been bound to the Church by close and sacred ties. You are all aware that your hall is built on one of the most hallowed spots in Newfoundland, the site of the Old Palace and the Old Chapel, which for so long, was the centre and fountain head of the Church, not only in St. John's, but throughout Newfoundland.³

Sodality of the Children of Mary. - For the first time in Newfoundland, the Sodality of the Children of Mary was established by Bishop Power, at the Presentation Convent, Cathedral Square, 1875, and at the Presentation Convent, St. Patrick's, 1876. Both Sodalities were affiliated with the Prima Primaria in Rome, soon after their erection.⁴

² William F. Graham, "The Star of the Sea Society", in The Book of Newfoundland, Vol. 2, Newfoundland Book Publishers, Ltd. St. John's, p. 196.

³ Most Rev. E. P. Roche, "Star of the Sea Observes the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of Foundation", in The Monitor, Vol. 13, No. 2, February 1946, p. 7.

⁴ Annals of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother House, St. John's.

Society of the Immaculate Conception, Burin. - This Society for men, was established on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1874. Its purpose was twofold: the spiritual advantages of individual members, and works of charity. The members are banded together under the protection of Mary, Mother of God, and are expected to lead edifying lives.⁵

Marian Parishes

Five parishes were erected by Bishop Power: St. Joseph's, Salmonier, 1872; Renew's, dedicated to the Holy Apostles, 1874; Bell Island, St. Michael, 1875; Witless Bay, St. Patrick, 1877; "and elegant churches were erected in different outports".⁶

One of these "elegant churches", the Church at Mount Carmel, Salmonier, was dedicated to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, by Bishop Power in 1886. A striking adornment of this Church is the artistic lettering in gold leaf, of one of the antiphons from the Office for the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel: Caput tuum et Carmelus et comae capitis tui sicut purpura regis vineta canalibus. Gloria Libani data est ei decor Carmeli et Saron. Beata Dei Genitrix Maria Virgo perpetua templum Domini sacrarium Spiritus Sancti succurit miseris juvat

⁵ Constitutions and Bye-Laws of the Immaculate Conception Association of Burin, 1874, p. 3.

⁶ Very Rev. M. F. Howley, "Roman Catholic Church in Newfoundland", in History of Newfoundland, Prowse, p. 608.

pusillanimes. Refovet flebiles orat pro populo, intervenit pro clero, intercedit pro devoto femineo sexu sentiunt omnes suum juvavamen quicumque celebrant suam solemnem commemorationem.⁷

Until the year 1909, the tower of this Church was surmounted by a statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, a gift from Pope Leo XIII to the then Pastor of the Parish, Right Rev. Monsignor St. John, on the occasion of his visit to Rome. The statue is of white pine and is hand-carved. It is six feet in height and when standing on the tower of the Church was ninety-five feet from the ground. It was thus visible for twelve miles out at sea and was a welcomed sight to many a storm-tossed vessel entering St. Mary's Bay.

During a severe storm on January 1, 1909, the statue was blown down, and though falling on icy ground, received no damage, while the tower which also fell was broken in several pieces. After this happening, the people began to look upon the statue as "miraculous", and as a consequence their devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel increased. This statue, the most precious possession of the Church at Mount Carmel, now stands near the entrance, where the faithful daily kneel to offer their homage to their beloved Mother.⁸

It was at the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel that the prescribed devotions of the Marian Year were performed by the people of Salmonier.

⁷ The Breviary, Office of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

⁸ Letter of Mrs. B. Fowler, Mount Carmel, June 9, 1954.

Marian Congregations

Two Convents of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary were opened by Bishop Power; Trepassey, dedicated to the Most Pure Heart of Mary, August 5, 1882; Harbor Breton, 1872. During the episcopate of Bishop McNeil, of St. George's, this foundation was removed to St. Jacques's, on August 12, 1894, but owing to a greater demand for Sisters in the more populous centres, this Convent was closed in 1943.⁹

The Convent of Our Lady of Mercy, St. Lawrence, dedicated to the Sacred Heart, was opened on September 21, 1870. The Convent of Our Lady of Mercy, Littledale, under the patronage of Our Lady of Mercy and St. Brigid, was opened as a Boarding School for young ladies on August 20, 1894.¹⁰

Congregation of the Christian Brothers of Ireland

In his account of the "Roman Catholic Church in Newfoundland" for Prowse's History, Bishop Howley wrote of the coming of the Christian Brothers: "The great glory of his (Bishop Power's) episcopate is the introduction of the Christian Brothers as teachers of the Benevolent Irish Society's Schools".¹¹

⁹ Annals of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

¹⁰ Annals of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy.

¹¹ Very Rev. M. F. Howley, "Roman Catholic Church in Newfoundland", op. cit., p. 603.

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These schools, founded and maintained by the Benevolent Irish Society, were, with the exception of the four years during which the Irish Franciscan Brothers were in charge, taught by secular teachers. With the coming of the Christian Brothers, in January 1876, the enrolment of the schools increased from sixty-six to three hundred. To cope with this the Benevolent Irish Society financed the erection of St. Patrick's Hall which was solemnly blessed by Bishop Power on the Feast of Our Lady's Assumption, August 15, 1880. On August 21 of the same year, the Brothers' permanent residence, the Mother House of the Brothers in North America, was ready for occupation. It was dedicated to St. Francis de Sales and was known as Mount St. Francis.

The coming of the Christian Brothers initiated a new era in the history of Catholic Education in Newfoundland and infused new life into the Catholic community.¹²

St. Bonaventure's College. - In 1856, the year following the Consecration of the Cathedral, St. Bonaventure's was founded by Bishop Mullock, as a Catholic College and preparatory Seminary, under the direction of priests and lay teachers. The first President was Rev. Henry Carfagnini, afterwards Bishop of Harbor Grace.

In 1889, the Brothers were requested to take charge of St. Bonaventure's. That the College has fulfilled and

¹² Christian Brothers of Ireland, edited by J. B. Ashley, Seventy-fifth Anniversary, St. John's, Newfoundland, p. 13.

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continues to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of its Founder, may be seen in the following excerpt:

The record for scholarship, admirable as it is, which the College pupils have maintained through the years is overshadowed by the more inspiring record of those who have consecrated their lives to God. To date the College counts among its ex-pupils, one hundred-fifty priests, four Archbishops and four Bishops. Besides those already referred to, other ex-pupils elevated to the episcopacy include Archbishop Roche, Bishop Renouf, Bishop Power, Archbishop Flynn, the present Archbishop of St. John's, Most Rev. P. J. Skinner, C. J. M., and Bishop O'Neill of Harbor Grace.¹³

Nor are Vocations to the Religious life lacking, for the American Province of the Christian Brothers of Ireland, has seventy-seven Brothers of Newfoundland birth, who number about one-sixth of the Province's members and who carry on the noble work of the Venerable Founder in the various schools of the Province in Canada and the United States.¹⁴

The Brothers conduct all the Catholic Schools for boys in St. John's; the number of boys under their instruction presently, is over three thousand. This includes the Boarding Students at St. Bonaventure's College.¹⁵

The provision of St. Bonaventure's for boarding students makes the beneficial influences of this seat of learning, felt in every section of Newfoundland.

¹³ A Christian Brother, "Throughout Our Latter Century", in Lovest Thou Me? May 1953, p. 31.

¹⁴ A Christian Brother, "The Christian Brothers of Ireland in Newfoundland", op. cit., p. 2.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 3.

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The Christian Brothers and Our Lady. - The principal Patroness of the Christian Brothers is the Blessed Virgin. The Patronal Feast of the Congregation is that of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, and liturgical authorization of the Feast of June 27, has been granted for every House of the Institute.¹⁶

The following is the list of devotions to Our Blessed Lady, as practised in the Monasteries and Schools of the Brothers:

1. Each House of the Congregation must have a statue or shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

2. On all Feasts of Our Lady the Little Office must be recited in common. This is likewise true of all Sundays.

3. The Rosary and Litany are prescribed parts of the Night Prayers of the Brothers.

4. On four days of the week each Brother must say an additional Rosary with an extra decade for a prescribed intention.

5. For all the major Feasts of Our Lady, novenas are prescribed.

6. Reading at meals, etc., on Saturdays throughout the year must deal with some phase of Our Lady's Life and Virtues.

1. Each classroom must have a statue of Our Lady. During May each classroom must have a "May-Altar". A hymn must be sung each day and special prayers offered.

2. In each classroom the Hail Mary must be recited at the start of each hour or period of the school day.

3. The Angelus and Litany of Our Lady must be recited in all classes each school day.

¹⁶ Rev. P. J. Kennedy, "Marian Devotion in Newfoundland", in Report 1954 The Canadian Historical Association, LeClerc Printers, Ltd., Hull, Quebec, p. 82.

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4. Each school is recommended to have its own special devotion to Our Lady.

5. Where possible, outdoor shrines are encouraged. At St. Bonaventure's College and Mount Cashel Orphanage, shrines to Our Lady of Fatima were erected during the Marian Year. (At Mount Cashel during the summer months, the Rosary and Litany are recited at the shrine each night.)¹⁷

The following quotation from the letter of an ex-pupil, a member of the Foreign Mission Society, to the President of St. Bonaventure's College, on the occasion of the seventy-fifth Anniversary, shows the appreciation of this Priest and his Brother Missionaries for the love and devotion to Mary taught at St. Bonaventure's:

Your well wishers will recount to you the blessings ye have brought to Newfoundland; may I add a few words of the blessing ye have brought down on far-off pagan China. Ten of your ex-pupils, inspired by the devotion and self-sacrifice of the Brothers answered the call of their Divine Master and went forth to preach in that mission field. In this pagan land they have labored for several decades, teaching the same lessons of love of God and of His Mother that they learned in your classrooms. (. . .)

(. . .) Then there is the love of the Mother of God, Mary, Queen of our Hearts; her statue graces and commandeers all your classrooms; who can tell of the graces poured down as all the boys recited the Hail Mary at the stroke of the hours? Who can recapture the joy of erecting the May altars in her honor and of lovingly praying to her before them? How often I recall these first Retreats made in the College Chapel and the stories which gave us the great loves of our Faith.¹⁸

¹⁷ Letters of H. P. Tarrant, President of St. Bonaventure's College, and F. C. Carroll, Superior of Mount Cashel Orphanage.

¹⁸ Rev. Craig Strang, S. F. M., Lishui, Chekiang, China, Letter to Rev. Brother Fleming, President of St. Bonaventure's College, April 4, 1952.

St. Bride's College, Littledale

As stated above this Institute was opened in 1884 as a Boarding School for young ladies under the patronage of Our Lady of Mercy and St. Brigid. Like St. Bonaventure's College, its influence extends to every section of the Island, as the following account of the College shows:

In 1895, St. Bride's Academy was officially recognized by the Government of Newfoundland as the training centre for Catholic female teachers. It was raised to the status of a college in 1917. An affiliation was made in 1942-1943 between the Memorial University College and St. Bride's. As of July 1, 1952, formal affiliation of St. Bride's College, Littledale and the Memorial University of Newfoundland came into effect.

Students of the Sisters had the privilege, from the very beginning, which is theirs today, of assisting daily at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in the Convent Chapel, of weekly Confession and daily Communion.

The Sodality of the Children of Mary was begun in 1897 with a ceremony of reception following a three days' Retreat. This Retreat concluded on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, has been an annual feature of the school year since then, and at its close, Aspirants to the Children of Mary are received into the Sodality. They number about forty annually.

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In 1925 a resident Chaplain was appointed to Littledale. He is the Director of the Children of Mary.

Our Lady is honored daily with the recitation of the family Rosary and the Litany of Loretto by the Sisters and by the Students. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament is given on her chief feasts as well as daily during the months of May and of October. On the Feast of the Holy Rosary, the Sisters and Students recite the fifteen decades of the Rosary in procession through the college grounds. Each classroom has its "May-Altar" in her honor. The Students at assembly each morning recite the Act of Consecration to Our Lady during the month of May.

In May, too, World Sodality day is celebrated with a special program which concludes with the Crowning of Our Lady. Grammar Grades have their own ceremony of the Crowning of Our Lady towards the end of May when they can have an outdoor procession and an altar erected to Our Lady in the school grounds.

A beautiful indoor shrine of Our Lady of Fatima was erected in 1950. This shrine was the gift of the Hon. P. J. Lewis, Q. C., whose wife is an alumna of Littledale. He had seen the statue of Our Lady in a shop-window in New York, and had been inspired to present it to Littledale through one of the Sisters.

On June 9, 1956, a Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes erected on "The Mount" behind the college was formally

blessed. This grotto was obtained as the result of the accumulation of small gifts to the Sisters, over a period of years. The Children of Mary also contributed a small sum towards its erection. The annual procession of the Blessed Sacrament which takes place in June, had in 1956 and will continue to have, a halting place at the Grotto for Benediction.

During the Marian Year, besides the regular classroom projects in honor of Our Lady, two scholarships of fifty dollars each were offered by the College.¹⁹

¹⁹ Letter of Sister Mary Basil, Superior, St. Bride's College, Littledale, June 1956.

CHAPTER VII

NATIVE ARCHBISHOPS GOVERN METROPOLITAN SEE OF ST. JOHN'S

Our Lady of Fatima

Archbishop Howley

Right Rev. Michael Francis Howley was consecrated on June 24, 1892, in the Cathedral of St. John's by Bishop Power. He was the first native of Newfoundland to be raised to the episcopal dignity. In March 1892, he was appointed Vicar Apostolic of St. George's and titular Bishop of Amastris in Asia Minor. On the death of Bishop Power 1893, Bishop Howley was appointed to the See of St. John's, his native city.¹

Newfoundland an Ecclesiastical Province. - In 1904, Golden Jubilee Year of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, a new honor was conferred on the Church of Newfoundland, as well as on the country itself, by His Holiness Pope Pius X, now St. Pius X,: the Diocese of St. John's was elevated to the "dignity of an Archiepiscopate as Metropolitan See of the newly-created ecclesiastical Province of Newfoundland", and Bishop Howley was appointed the first Archbishop.²

The conferring of the sacred Pallium took place on the Feast of St. John the Baptist, June 24, 1905, in the Cathedral of St. John's; Archbishop Howley being attended by Bishop McDonald of Harbor Grace who conferred the Pallium,

¹ Centenary Volume Benevolent Irish Society of St. John's, Newfoundland, p. 276.

² Ibid., p. 284.

and Bishop McNeil of St. George's. On one of the largest stained-glass windows in the Cathedral of St. John's is depicted in brilliant colors this most historic ceremony. The scene is composed from photographs.³ The window is a donation of the Society of the Blessed Virgin.⁴

Our Lady of the Fiords. - On the morning of the conferring of the Pallium, there appeared off the "Narrows" of St. John's Harbor a wondrous iceberg, modelled exactly in the figure of a pure white statue of the Blessed Virgin. It remained stationary outside the harbor for some days, during which photographs were taken which show perfect representations of the image of the Immaculate Conception. Archbishop Howley commemorated the event in a sonnet, "Our Lady of the Fiords",⁵ which will appear in the Appendix.

Historian and Poet. - Archbishop Howley was the author of the Ecclesiastical History of Newfoundland, one of the sources used in this work. From his prolific pen have come many brochures on a variety of subjects, lectures, papers, and studies given to learned Societies in other lands, the Newfoundland Name-Lore, as well as poems, dramas, etc.⁶

³ Rev. O. J. Kennedy, "The Life and Influence of Archbishop McNeil", in The Monitor, Vol. 18. No. 3, p. 4.

⁴ Archbishop Howley, The Newfoundland Quarterly, October 1908.

⁵ Miss S. English, Christmas Greeting, 1952, p. 19.

⁶ Right Rev. Monsignor Thomas J. Flynn, "The Roman Catholic Church in Newfoundland", in The Book of Newfoundland, Vol. 2, p. 276.

Among the poetical works of the Archbishop are many Marian poems. Five of the best known are: "Our Lady of the Fiords", mentioned above; "A Hymn for Christmas"; "Stabat Mater", a translation which remains close to the original, preserves its metre and may be sung to the same music; "Ave Maris Stella", an invocation for a Church at Black Head, near Cape Spear, Newfoundland, which Church was dedicated to Our Lady Star of the Sea, on the Feast of the Assumption, August 15, 1861, by Bishop Mullock, O. S. F.; "Lines on the Immaculate Conception"; Eight of these beautiful lines are:

To thee Sweet Virgin of the Father Blessed,
We owe all good of which we are possessed -
Let every tongue throughout the world proclaim
The wondrous glories of thy holy name,
As thou, thyself, Sweet Mother dost command,
"Blessed my name shall be in every land",
All hail thee then, Immaculate and Mild!
Creator's Mother, yet a Creature's Child!⁷

The Apostolic Delegation. - On May 12, 1910, during the episcopacy of Archbishop Howley, Newfoundland came under the jurisdiction of the Apostolic Delegation at Ottawa, the envoy of the Holy See becoming "Apostolic Delegate to Canada and Newfoundland". Now, Newfoundland being a Province of Canada, the envoy's title is again "Apostolic Delegate to Canada".⁸

⁷ Right Rev. M. F. Howley, Poems and Other Verses, J. Fischer and Bro., Bible House, New York, p. 44.

⁸ "The Golden Jubilee of the Apostolic Delegation", in The Monitor, Vol. 16, No. 7 and 8, July and August, 1949, p. 11. - It is interesting to note that the first permanent Apostolic Delegate to Canada, who was appointed in 1899, was, prior to his diplomatic career, an assistant priest to Bishop Carfagnini of Harbor Grace. In 1902 he became Apostolic Delegate to the U. S. A., and later was raised to the Cardinalate.

Mount Cashel Orphanage. - Though Bishop Power who brought the Christian Brothers to Newfoundland, was anxious to have the orphan boys of the country placed under their care, he died before negotiations were completed. Bishop Howley took up the matter in 1894, and on August 28, 1898, the Orphanage opened, the Bishop giving his own family estate at Mount Cashel to form the nucleus of the Orphanage. Extensive repairs were made and on the Feast of St. Raphael, Archangel, October 24, of the same year, the Bishop said the first Mass in the house which he blessed and dedicated to St. Raphael.⁹

In the daily programme of the boys at Mount Cashel, Our Lady is featured in a very special way as has been shown in the section on the Christian Brothers.

Archbishop Roche

On the death of Archbishop Howley, 1914, Right Rev. Monsignor Roche was named Administrator, and on June 29, 1915, consecrated in the Cathedral of St. John's by the Apostolic Delegate, Most Rev. P. F. Stagni. On December 12, Feast of Our Lady, Queen of all the Americas, he was invested with the Sacred Pallium by Most Rev. John March, Bishop of Harbor Grace.¹⁰ His reign of nearly thirty-six years, the longest in

⁹ Christian Brothers of Ireland Seventy-fifth Anniversary, edited by J. B. Ashley, p. 48.

¹⁰ Memorials of the Consecration, Installation and Investiture of Most Rev. E. P. Roche, Archbishop of St. John's, edited by Right Rev. Monsignor J. J. McDermott, p. 3.

the Catholic Annals of Newfoundland, was filled with magnificent achievements for the honor of God and Our Blessed Mother.

Amalgamation of the Two Marian Congregations. - One of the first acts of the new Archbishop was to bring about the amalgamation of the various Convents of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of Our Lady of Mercy under a central authority for each Congregation, and to establish two Novitiates for the young Sisters, where they would be thoroughly grounded in religious and secular knowledge, and thus prepared for the work of Catholic Education.¹¹

Marian Convents. - In the Archdiocese seven Convents of Our Lady of Mercy were established during the episcopacy of Archbishop Roche: St. Edward's, Bell Island, Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, September 24, 1917; St. Patrick's, Bay Bulls, Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, 1917; Immaculate Conception, Bell Island, Feast of the Purification, February 2, 1927. The title Immaculate Conception was also given to the Academy connected with the Convent. Holy Name of Mary, Marystown, September 12, Feast of the Holy Name of Mary; St. Teresa's, Mundy Pond, St. John's, February 19, 1945; Sacred Heart Convent, Goulds, opened on the First Friday of September, 1949.¹²

¹¹ Right Rev. Monsignor Thomas J. Flynn, "The Catholic Church in Newfoundland" in The Book of Newfoundland, Vol. 2, p. 278.

¹² Annals of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, Mother House, St. John's.

St. Clare's Mercy Hospital. - From a Golden Rosary began a great work of Mercy in St. John's in 1913, St. Clare's Home for Working Girls, which in 1922 became the nucleus of the splendid Catholic Institution, know today as St. Clare's Mercy Hospital.

The idea of a Working Girls' Home was first conceived by a Presentation Nun, Sister Mary Clare English of the Mother House of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Cathedral Square, a former pupil of the Sisters of Mercy. Knowing the good accomplished in other countries by means of Homes for Working Girls, when conducted by Sisters, and seeing the need for such an Institution in St. John's, Sister Mary Clare made known her wishes to Archbishop Howley and began at once to plan ways and means of financing the worthy venture. She endeavored to raise funds by various undertakings, but her progress was slow until a Rosary, every bead of which was a golden nugget strung on a golden chain, was given to her by Mr. James Funchion who had come from the gold fields of the Klondyke to visit his home in St. John's. At this time the Supreme Knight of Columbus, Mr. James O'Flaherty was in St. John's. When visiting the Presentation Convent, he saw the golden Rosary, and thinking that it would be an appropriate gift to offer to Cardinal Gibbons on his approaching Golden Jubilee, he purchased the rosary for one thousand dollars. This sum and other moneys collected, Sister Mary Clare gave to the Archbishop who bought the

"White House", private residence of Honorable E. M. Jackman, Le Marchant Road. A year after the death of Sister Mary Clare, the Home was formally opened and blessed, Mass being said by the Archbishop. In accordance with the deceased Sister's wishes, the Institution was placed under the direction of the Sisters of Mercy.¹³

As a Home for Working Girls, St. Clare's functioned for nine years, but Archbishop Roche, soon after his Consecration, seeing the greater need for a Sisters' Hospital, made plans accordingly, and on May 22, 1922, the Old St. Clare's was opened as a small Hospital under the care of the Sisters of Mercy.

On the Feast of Christ the King, just two years after the Archbishop's announcement of plans to enlarge the facilities of St. Clare's, the new hospital, with capacity for one hundred patients, and fitted with most modern equipment, was formally opened with the celebration of Holy Mass and the blessing of the building by His Grace the Archbishop.¹⁴

With the Charity of Christ urging him, Archbishop Roche munificently contributed his entire Golden Jubilee gift of eighty thousand dollars towards the extension of the Hospital. The new "Wing" containing the magnificent Golden

¹³ M. Harrington, "Origin and History of St. Clare's Mercy Hospital", in The Monitor, Vol. 14, No. 5, May 1947, p. 8.

¹⁴ A Sister of Mercy, "History of St. Clare's", in Silver Jubilee Booklet, St. Clare's Mercy Hospital, St. John's June 1947, p. 8.

Jubilee Memorial Chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Mercy, was opened on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1949. On the Feast of St. Joseph, March 19, 1949, His Grace said the first Mass in the Memorial Chapel.¹⁵

Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary. - The Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary, was canonically erected in the Cathedral of St. John's on May 1, 1932, by authority of Archbishop Roche. The Altar of the Blessed Virgin, consecrated by Bishop Mullock on September 9, 1855, under the title of the Immaculate Conception, was designated also as the Altar of the Holy Rosary.

The first Sunday of each month is a day of special observance for the Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary. Religious functions include recitation of the Rosary, sermon, Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament and reception of new members. The Spiritual Director also blesses beads with the Rosary, Crosier, and Apostolic Indulgences. The Indulgence of the Way of the Cross and the Plenary Indulgence for the hour of death are also applied to Crucifixes.

In the Cathedral of St. John's, a campaign was inaugurated in 1948, to procure new members for the Cathedral Confraternity, which has the honor of having the Archbishop personally as its Rector. Lists of names for inscription were

¹⁵ "First Mass in Memorial Chapel, St. Clare's Mercy Hospital", in The Monitor, Vol. 17, No. 3, March 1950, p. 1.

forwarded from the Dioceses of Harbor Grace and St. George's, as well as from many parishes of the Archdiocese, bringing the total membership up to about 15,000.

With the permission of the Archbishop, Confraternities were erected in many other parishes of the Archdiocese.¹⁶

In the Parish of Torbay, the Pastor established the Confraternity of the "Living Rosary" in which by the help of Promoters who distribute the leaflets which tell the prescribed Mystery to be said, the members recite a decade of the Rosary in honor of that Mystery. Thus an unbroken chain of Rosaries is maintained.¹⁷ This Confraternity is also active in many of the older parishes in the Province.

As early as 1833, the first church in the Parish of Portugal Cove, was dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary by Bishop Fleming. The Confraternity of the Holy Rosary was established here at an early date. In the history of this old Parish, the first in the Island dedicated to the Holy Rosary, it is written that between the first settlement of the Cove and the building of their first Church, two hundred years elapsed, and during that time, the pioneer residents, mostly of Irish birth, kept their Faith alive by devotion to Our Lady's Rosary.¹⁸

¹⁶ "Holy Rosary Crusade", in The Monitor, Vol. 16, No. 1, January 1949, p. 5.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁸ "Portugal Cove Revives Custom", in The Monitor, Vol. 21, No. 10, October 1954, p. 9.

The Confraternity of the Holy Rosary was the first and greatest devotion to the Blessed Mother practised in the Cove. The Confraternity was established there before it was established in St. John's. The concentration of the people on devotion to the Rosary especially on the first Sunday of October, gave rise to "Cove Sunday", when over one hundred years ago, appropriate ceremonies began to be held in the Church of the Holy Rosary at the Cove. These ceremonies would be generally graced by the presence of the Bishop and of the priests of St. John's.

Evidence of devotion to the Mother of God is everywhere in the parish, even in the interior decoration of the parish buildings, where the predominating colors are blue and white. One of the principal schools is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin under the title of Immaculate Conception.¹⁹

The Church at Portugal Cove, "by the very fact of its name, Church of the Holy Rosary, is automatically a Shrine of the Virgin Mary".²⁰

Archconfraternity of Our Lady of Montilegeon. - In 1949 this Confraternity for Forsaken Souls in Purgatory, was organized at the Cathedral in St. John's, and since then over 6,000 members have been received. The small fees are united in a central fund for the procuring of Masses for the Souls

¹⁹ Rev. J. L. Lacey, Account of Marian Devotion in the Parish of Portugal Cove, Letter, December 1954.

²⁰ The Monitor, October 1954, p. 9.

in Purgatory who are most abandoned. The centre of the Archconfraternity is established at the Basilica of Our Lady of Montilegeon, Orne, France, which was consecrated in 1928, under the title of "Our Lady Liberatrix of the Souls in Purgatory."²¹

The Monitor. - Newfoundland's only Catholic paper, The Monitor, was established by Archbishop Roche in 1934, and is now reaching every parish in the Province. Each month this journal carries one or more inspiring and instructive articles on Our Blessed Mother and is thus instrumental in making her better known and loved, as the following quotation shows:

It is much to be appreciated that all these centres (Holy Rosary Centres), were brought into contact with the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary, and the great increase of membership of 3,000 made possible through the publicity given by our Catholic Monthly, The Monitor. It proves in a notable manner how widely-separated units of our far-flung Catholic population may be brought into co-operation with one another by means of the written word.²²

Archbishop Flynn

In April 1945, Monsignor Thomas Joseph Flynn, then Pastor of St. Patrick's Parish, and Editor of The Monitor, was appointed Co-Adjutor Archbishop, with right of succession to Archbishop Roche. He was consecrated by His Excellency, Most Rev. Ildebrando Antoniutti, Apostolic Delegate to Canada

²¹ The Canadian Catholic Historical Association, p. 84.

²² "Holy Rosary Crusade", in The Monitor, Vol. 16, No. 1, January 1949, p. 8.

and Newfoundland, in the Cathedral of St. John's on June 29, 1945. A fruitful career had been predicted for Archbishop Flynn, by a people who loved and revered him, but Divine Providence ordained otherwise. Stricken by an incurable illness, His Excellency died at St. Clare's Mercy Hospital, September 1, 1949.²³

Most Rev. Patrick James Skinner, C. J. M., D. D.

To the Metropolitan See of St. John's in 1951, came Most Rev. Patrick James Skinner of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, the first Eudist Archbishop of North America. On his mitre, crozier and episcopal insignia is emblazoned the crest of the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary.²⁴

Since the Archbishop's appointment, the growth of the Archdiocese - both spiritually and materially - has been phenomenal. Literally His Grace has been fulfilling his sublime motto: "To serve Christ and His Church".²⁵

Marian Projects. - Archbishop Skinner has been truly named a Marian Archbishop.²⁶ He came to the Archdiocese "imbued with a benignly infectious love of God and His

²³ "Church Mourns the Passing of Most Rev. T. J. Flynn", in The Monitor, Vol. 16, No. 9, September 1949, p. 5.

²⁴ Report 1954 Canadian Catholic Historical Association, p. 82.

²⁵ The Monitor, Vol. 20, No. 1, January 1953, p. 7.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 8.

Immaculate Mother",²⁷ and this love is being exemplified in all the Archbishop's words and works. His first great work was the complete renovation of the Cathedral. This includes the erection of an Annex providing for a Marian Chapel, a Sodality Meeting Room, a Baptistry and Sacristies.²⁸

His Grace's Social Welfare Programme, launched in 1953, included a Residential Club or Hostel to be operated by the Sisters of Service from Toronto; a new parish in the northern suburbs of St. John's; a Home for the aged and infirm under the care of the Sisters of Mercy and a Home for delinquent girls to be directed by Good Shepherd Nuns of Halifax.²⁹

The first named went into effect in 1953, when on October 2, Feast of the Holy Guardian Angels, the Archbishop said the first Mass in the Oratory of the Club. On November 11, His Grace blessed the Hostel and dedicated it to Our Lady of the Rosary.³⁰

The chief Patron of the Sisters of Service is Our Mother of Perpetual Help, with whose assistance they endeavor to foster Marian ideals in their young charges. Each evening, kneeling in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament and near

²⁷ "Address of the Clergy to His Grace the Archbishop on the occasion of His Grace's Silver Jubilee", in The Monitor, Vol. 21, No. 6, June 1954, p. 5.

²⁸ The Monitor, Vol. 21, No. 9, p. 1.

²⁹ The Monitor, Vol. 20, No. 1, p. 1.

³⁰ A Sister of Service, Paper on the Sisters of Service.

the shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, the girls give honor to Our Divine Lord and His Holy Mother by reciting the Rosary. A shrine to Our Lady of Grace has a place of honor in the front hall of the residence, and here the girls are often seen in prayer when entering or leaving the hostel.

Working in conjunction with the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Sisters of Service in St. John's are also engaged in visiting the sick poor in their homes.³¹

The preliminary steps in the erection of the proposed new parish were taken on January 15, 1956. On that day the Archbishop, after having blessed and dedicated the new School Chapel to St. Pius X, celebrated Holy Mass. The second floor of the building accommodates the School proper. The Sisters of Mercy began classes there in September 1955.³²

The Archbishop's third Marian project, the Home for the aged and infirm, was initiated by His Grace on October 3, of the Marian Year, when he turned the sod for the Home and blessed the ground for this and the new chapel mentioned above. Dedicating the Home to the Glory of God and placing it under the protection of Our Lady of Mercy and St. Patrick, His Grace prayed that those who lived within its walls, would find solace in the evening of life and peace at the last.³³

³¹ Paper on the Sisters of Service.

³² "His Grace Blesses St. Pius X School Chapel", in The Monitor, Vol. 23, No. 1, January 1956, p. 3.

³³ "His Grace Dedicates St. Patrick's Home", in The Monitor, Vol. 21, No. 10, October 1954, p. 5.

With the establishment of the Good Shepherd Nuns in the Archdiocese, the Archbishop will have accomplished another great Marian project very dear to his heart.

Marian Congregation. - On September 3, of the Marian Year, 1954, the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary opened a new Convent in the Parish of the Most Holy Rosary, Freshwater, Placentia Bay, and on October 3, of the same year, a new modern School, dedicated to the Most Holy Rosary was blessed and officially opened by His Grace the Archbishop. Special Marian ceremonies marked both days.³⁴

Vocational Campaign. - Under the special Patronage of Our Blessed Lady, His Grace in May 1953, inaugurated a Campaign for Vocations, which was conducted simultaneously in all the parishes of the Archdiocese. Three Priests of the Order of Mary Immaculate, Ottawa, Specialists in this field, were invited by the Archbishop to conduct the Campaign. In the parishes not reached by the Oblates, the Pastors carried out the prescribed programme. At the same time a booklet Lovest Thou Me? was published, containing articles on the Priesthood and the religious life.³⁵

Holy Heart of Mary Regional High School. - On Sunday, October 28, 1956, the Archbishop blessed the site of the new Regional High School for Catholic Girls from St. John's and

³⁴ "Presentation Convent at Freshwater, P. B.," in The Monitor, Vol. 21, No. 10, October 10, 1955, p. 2.

³⁵ "Our Lady and Vocations", in The Monitor, Vol. 20, No. 4, April 1953, p. 4.

surrounding parishes.

On the significance of the title of the School, the Editorial of the October Monitor says:

The new School will be known as the "Holy Heart of Mary Regional High School". (....) It is hoped that the High School will be completed by late 1958. Since the year 1958 will mark with great religious ceremonies the centenary of the Apparition of Our Lady at Lourdes, the appropriateness of the title of the new school will be clear to all. It will honor for all time the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady and this is singularly becoming since Our Lady is the Patroness of the Presentation and Mercy Sisters who will staff the new school. His Grace asks for the fervent and constant prayers of our people, that under the protection and patronage of Our Blessed Lady, this school may shine and prosper in every way, to further the all important Apostolate of Catholic Education.³⁶

Marian Pastorals. - A brilliant testimony of Archbishop Skinner's deep devotion to the Mother of God is given in his Marian Pastorals: two on the Rosary; the first on the occasion of the Rosary Crusade, September 1952, and the second in October of the same year. The third was the Lenten Pastoral of the Marian Year.³⁷

The Memorare. - A fitting Marian Souvenir from a Marian Archbishop to his people in May of the Marian Year, was a copy of the "Memorare". His Grace later ordered that this prayer to Our Blessed Mother be recited by Priest and people after Mass for the Archdiocesan Educational and Social Welfare Projects.

³⁶ "An Educational Milestone", in The Monitor, Vol. 23, No. 10, October 1956, p. 4.

³⁷ The Monitor, Vol. 19, Nos. 9 and 10, and Vol. 21, No. 12.

CHAPTER VIII

FULL FLOWERING OF MARIAN DEVOTION IN NEWFOUNDLAND

Our Lady Queen of the World

The Rosary

The Family Rosary

From the earliest days of Catholicity in Newfoundland, the Family Rosary was an institution. Nothing was ever allowed to interfere with it. In those days too, it was usual to read the meditations on the mysteries, and in Lent and Advent the prayers following the meditations. The general rule was to have Rosary immediately after supper, before any member of the family went out for a social gathering or for any other reason. The story was told by an old Sister, long since gone to her reward, that in a certain remote settlement in Placentia Bay, where, before entering the Convent, she had taught school, in the early nineteenth century, she heard a certain father tell his sons and daughters and their friends, who were going to a wedding celebration, to go in the same spirit in which the Blessed Virgin Mary went to the wedding at Cana.

In the Ecclesiastical History of Newfoundland, it is related that Bishop Fleming, on one of his visitations of the North Coast, found at Fortune Harbor, forty families well instructed in their religion. This, he attributed to the fathers of three families, who assembled the entire population alternately at their homes on Sundays and holydays, for

public prayer and spiritual reading, and in the evenings of Lent and Advent for the Rosary and a lecture.¹

The Family Rosary Crusade

What proved to be the greatest organized Crusade of Catholic Action as well as the greatest pageant of praise to Mary Mother of God in Newfoundland, was organized in August 1952, by the direction of His Grace, the Archbishop of St. John's, and Their Excellencies the Bishops of Harbor Grace and St. George's, under Rev. Patrick Peyton, C. S. C., modern Knight of Mary and Apostle of the Family Rosary Crusade.^{1a}

The main objective of the Rosary Crusade, the signing of the Rosary pledges, was successfully reached; almost one hundred per cent of the Catholics having signed the pledges. There were also 467 non-Catholic pledges. A magnificent response to the appeal of the Hierarchy on August 24:

All Catholics of the Ecclesiastical Province of St. John's, Newfoundland, are called today, by His Grace, the Most Reverend Archbishop of St. John's and Their Excellencies the Most Reverend Bishops of Harbor Grace and St. George's, to join in a Crusade of Family Prayer, to invoke the powerful intercession of Our Lady of the Rosary to gain lasting peace among nations and to bring God's blessing on all families and homes.²

¹ Howley, Ecclesiastical History of Newfoundland, Boston, Doyle and Whittle, 1888, p. 305.

^{1a} "Famed Family Rosary Leader Directing Newfoundland Crusade", in The Monitor, Vol. 19, No. 9, September 1952, p. 1.

² "Newfoundland Takes Active Part As Rosary Crusade Encircles World", in The Monitor, Vol. 19, No. 9, September 1952, p. 3.

In St. John's on September 15, more than fifteen thousand people stood for almost two hours in a downpour of rain to recite the Rosary and to hear the Addresses of Archbishop Skinner, Father Peyton, and Sir Albert Walsh who spoke on behalf of the laity. A procession through the town, featuring floats depicting the Fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary had to be cancelled because of inclement weather. Attending this rally were representatives from every section of the Archdiocese.³

On September 15, the Archbishop of St. John's, and Their Excellencies the Bishops of Harbor Grace and St. George's accompanied the Crusade to Grand Falls. Here the stadium was filled to capacity as the people came from all over the Diocese.⁴

On the morning following the rally, the three Prelates offered the Holy Sacrifice simultaneously in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, in thanksgiving for the success of the Crusade in the Archdiocese and in the Diocese of Harbor Grace.⁵

With the arrival of the three Prelates at Corner Brook, the climax of the week of Rosary Rallies was reached. Pilgrims from all over West Newfoundland came to pay tribute to Our Lady. It was the greatest demonstration of Faith ever

³ Ibid., p. 3.

⁴ Ibid., p. 3.

⁵ Ibid., p. 4.

witnessed there. This function was most fittingly closed by the Holy Father's congratulatory message to the Archbishop, Bishops and Clergy, and conveying the Apostolic Blessing which was bestowed by the Archbishop after reading the message.⁶

Of the Faith and genuine piety of the Catholics of Newfoundland, Father Peyton has this to say:

I would never forget that day in St. John's, as the rain fell from the Heavens upon God's and Our Lady's blessed and dear children, who came out in that downpour and stood in the drenching rain, because there was a fire within them - a fire of love and appreciation of Our Blessed Mother, that did not let them feel the inconvenience that that torrential rain put upon them.

Only in two other places in the whole world, where God has permitted me to work, have I seen noble men and women do the same as in St. John's, and those two places are noted all over the world for their Faith just as Newfoundland is, and especially for their devotion and love for Our Lady, and those two places are Ireland and Ceylon. At the two Family Rosary Rallies in those two countries, the rain fell down as it did on the people of St. John's, they too did not mind the rain, and the rain could not stop them from showing an extraordinary appreciation of the excellence of the person of Somebody's Daughter, who became the Mother of an Incarnate God.

After that great manifestation of love and devotion to Our Lady and the Family Rosary in St. John's, I then witnessed another unique and extraordinary appreciation of Our Lady and the Family Rosary, when the Archbishop of St. John's and all the Monsignori and a great number of his priests occupied at least one, if not two carriages of a train, as they went to help the Bishop of Harbor Grace and the Bishop of St. George's, as they went to help the families of their Diocese guarantee for themselves and the homes they live in, the great graces that the Family Rosary brings to the homes that use it.

But long before I had this personal experience of the richness of the devotion of the people of Newfoundland, to Our Lady, I had heard of it, as I had the

⁶ The Monitor, October 1952, Vol. 19, No. 10, p. 5.

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privilege of working for the Family Rosary Crusade in other parts of Canada.⁷

The Rosary and "Those That Go Down to the Sea in Ships"

That the devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary which in 1871 led to the establishment of the Fishermen's Star of the Sea Society in Newfoundland, was no mere sentimental devotion, has been proved on many occasions in various parts of the Province. There are many authentic stories, which demonstrate the intervention of Our Immaculate Mother on behalf of her sea-faring children. Three of them will be given in the following:

Saved through prayer. - About forty years ago, the north-east coast of Newfoundland was swept by a storm in which many schooners were lost with all on board. Only one small boat with all the crew escaped. The Captain declared that they owed their miraculous deliverance to the Rosary, and to their complete trust in the Blessed Virgin. In the height of the storm, a member of the crew tied the Rosary beads and a bottle of Holy Water to the rigging while all kept on reciting the Rosary until the storm abated and the frail craft reached port safely.⁸

Captain McDonnell and the Rosary. - Of Captain McDonnell it is said that once when he lost his rosary beads while

⁷ Letter of Rev. Patrick Peyton, C. S. C., Crusade Director, to the writer, dated August 6, 1955.

⁸ Rev. M. J. Kinsella, P. P., Bay de Verde, Account of Marian Devotion in the Parish of the Assumption, 1954.

fishing on the Banks, he made a pair from fishing twine. On his return home, he had the "new" rosary blessed by a Mission Father.⁹ In this devotedness to Our Lady he found the strength for the bravery of his last hour. "Recited Rosary, Saved Crew and Died Gallantly" is the caption given to one of the newspaper accounts of the death of Captain Mike McDonnell of the Parish of St. Joseph's, Salmonier, on the Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel, April 26, 1932:

Here is a story of indomitable heroism, buoyed up by glorious faith in God and devotion to Our Lady, that has come to light. Mike McDonnell was one of Newfoundland's sturdiest sea-going sons. (. . .) And when his vessel piled up on the rocks at Mistaken Point in the grip of a late April storm, Mike McDonnell's code was simple. He bound his two boys to the main rigging, encouraged them through the dark of a storm-ridden night, by repeating the Rosary, as James Ellison, the fourth member of his crew, called back the responses, above the wind's screaming in tangled rigging, and in the morning saw the three safe ashore, before a curling wave swept him to death.¹⁰

Saved from Shipwreck through the Rosary. - Another triumph for Our Lady of the Rosary is found in the story of Captain James McCarthy who, with only two men, left St. John's in a small boat on Sunday evening, November 1915, hoping to reach Red Island in a day or two. Being overtaken by successive storms, they resigned themselves to Divine Providence, invoked the aid of the Blessed Virgin and continuously recited the Rosary. In their homes and in the little Church at

⁹ Letter of Miss Sadie O'Rourke, who sent also Newspaper accounts of Captain McDonnell to the writer.

¹⁰ The Catholic Monthly, June 17, 1932.

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Red Island the Rosary had been recited daily ever since the storm had begun. On Thursday evening in the height of the gale the captain standing on deck, his rosary around his neck, crossing the waves with his crucifix, was washed overboard. Catching a rope thrown by one of the men he was rescued. Later a passing ship threw a cable. It broke. The ship went on. Seeing no hope the men tied themselves to the cordage of the boat, and letting her drift out to sea, prayed the Rosary. On the ninth day of their battling with wind and waves, an English ship signalled to them. A cable was thrown to tow the boat, but in vain. The captain of the ship advised abandoning the boat. He took the three men on his ship. Enroute to London, they met the S. S. "Cabot", sent out by the Newfoundland Government in search of the missing boat. They boarded the "Cabot" and were landed safely in Fermeuse. When the telegram conveying the news of their safety reached Red Island, the Family Rosary was being recited for their safe return.¹¹

The Rosary and the Labrador and Bank Fishermen. - During the fishing season on the Labrador coast, the Catholic captains of the various vessels see to it that the men, as far as they are able, practise their religion. A blessed candle, crucifix, holy water and blessed palm are kept in a conspicuous place on the vessels. Each man, wherever possible, says the Rosary daily. On Sunday there is a Rosary gathering

¹¹ Interview with Sister Mary Chrysostom, S. M., to whom the story was given by Captain McCarthy.

on board;¹² the men who fish from the shore, joining the vessels. In some cases this occasion is made more solemn by having a blessed candle lighted before a picture of the Blessed Virgin.¹³

Devotion to Our Lady of Fatima

In answer to Our Lady's appeal at Fatima the First Saturday devotions and devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary are spreading rapidly in Newfoundland. In the Cathedral of St. John's the second Parish Mass, that of the Blessed Virgin, is said at the altar of the Immaculate Conception on the first Saturday of each month, and large numbers of children and adults receive Holy Communion. Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament is given after Mass. Before the singing of the Tantum Ergo, the priest reads the Act of Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. These devotions are practised all over the Province.¹⁴ At Humbermouth in the Diocese of St. George's Our Lady of the Immaculate Heart Devotions began in June 1950. Devotions are held twice in the afternoon of every Wednesday and of the First Saturdays.¹⁵

¹² "Lessons from Sea Disasters", in The Franciscan Review, July 1931, pp. 259 - 260. This article, besides showing these gatherings, tells an incident of Mary's intervention.

¹³ Interview with Sister Mary Anthony, S. M., Convent of Our Lady of Mercy, St. John's.

¹⁴ Parish Questionnaires on Marian Devotion, 1954.

¹⁵ Rev. J. J. Murray, P. P., All Hallows Parish, Humbermouth, Paper on Marian Devotion in Parish, October 1953.

Portuguese Gift. - In the first chapter of this work it is stated that the Portuguese, in the early part of the sixteenth century founded a church at Placentia and that on its site the French erected a church about the year 1660.¹⁶

In 1955, the wheel had turned full cycle. The Portuguese were celebrating two anniversaries - the discovery of the Grand Banks in 1455 and the beginning of organized fishing in 1555. The Catholics of Newfoundland were also celebrating an important anniversary - the Centenary of their Cathedral and Mother Church. And thus it was that on May 27, 1955, the gaily-bedecked Portuguese ship "Gil Eannes" entered St. John's Harbor bearing the magnificent statue of Our Lady of Fatima that had been blessed and crowned by the Bishop of Leiria in the Chapel of the Apparitions at the Basilica of Fatima, and which was to be presented to the Cathedral of St. John's by the ship-owners and fishermen of Portugal in gratitude for the friendly welcome and the kindness shown to them in St. John's all through the years.¹⁷ As it was the Centenary of the Cathedral, they were anxious to erect a Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in the Cathedral.¹⁸

As the statue was being removed from the Chapel of the "Gil Eannes", the sun, which had not been seen for days,

¹⁶ Rev. P. J. Kennedy, "The Church in Newfoundland" in Report 1954 The Canadian Catholic Historical Association, LeClerc Printers Ltd. Hull, Quebec, p. 35.

¹⁷ Monitor, Vol. 20, No. 6, p. 4.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 5.

lighted up the faces of the fishermen bearing an expression of faith and devotion. The procession of 4,000 fishermen was led by Father J. A. Rosa, Chaplain of the fleet, and as it moved off from the ship, there was a spontaneous chorus of Portuguese hymns, which alternated with prayer until it reached the Cathedral. Several hundred men carried lighted flambeaux on tall wooden staffs and acted as a Guard of Honor to the image, which was arranged on a portable altar. As the procession passed the Cathedral and St. Patrick's Schools, the students joined in the chorus to Our Lady of Fatima.¹⁹

At the Cathedral the statue was carried to the Sanctuary by the Representative of the Government of Portugal and the Officers of the visiting fleet. In presenting the gift, Father Rosa said that it was the most precious gift that they could present to the Cathedral and to the people of Newfoundland.²⁰

After an address of the Archbishop, the Solemn Votive Mass of the Immaculate Conception was offered. Then with the entire congregation of Portuguese fishermen singing hymns to Our Lady, the portable altar was carried in procession to the specially prepared alcove in the Cathedral. An Act of Consecration, in which His Grace led the entire congregation, brought this grand Marian ceremony to a close.²¹

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 5.

²⁰ "Presentation of Portuguese Statue" in The Daily News, St. John's, issue of Saturday, May 28, 1955, Vol. 62, No. 117, pp. 3 and 9.

²¹ Ibid., p. 9.

The Immaculate Conception and the Miraculous Medal

Devotion to the Immaculate Conception seems to have had a strong hold on the people from early times. This would necessarily follow from the teachings of the Franciscan Bishops and priests in the first days of Catholicity in the Island, the Franciscan Order having been "the great protagonist and defender of the dogma and of devotion to the Immaculate Conception for hundreds of years in the history of the Church".²² All over the province the three "Hail Marys" in honor of the Immaculate Conception and the Beads of the Immaculate Conception are familiar to Catholics. During the Marian Year the children in some schools were taught to say the beads as a special Marian activity.²³

Devotion to the "Miraculous Medal" - medal of the Immaculate Conception - is also very popular. Nearly all Catholics wear it.²⁴ Silver medals often figure on the annual prize list of Convent Schools. The medal's aspiration, "O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee", is frequently invoked. In the schools, it is said after the "Hail Mary" at the beginning and close of each class period, and before and after music and singing lessons.²⁵

²² "Monument to Mary Immaculate", in The Monitor, Vol. 22, No. 5, May 1955, p. 6.

²³ Interviews with Sisters on Marian Year Activities.

²⁴ Questionnaires on Marian Devotion, 1954.

²⁵ Interviews with Sisters on Marian Devotion.

The Angelus

In all the parishes in Newfoundland, the Angelus bell rings three times daily either from the church or the Convent or from both, to honor the great mystery of the Incarnation. The scene portrayed by Millet in his famous painting "The Angelus", is frequently a reality in Newfoundland, when devout Catholics are engaged at outside work, at the ringing of the noon or evening "Angelus". Such scenes the writer has often witnessed. From Marian Year Questionnaires, responses such as the following are taken: "The people are very faithful to the Rosary and the Angelus". "Marian chimes ring three times daily from the church towers, and the people recite the Angelus". "The people listen to the Sacred Heart Program on the radio and recite the Angelus with it".²⁶

Our Lady of Good Counsel

Each year, preparatory to the Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel, April 26, a Triduum is held at the Cathedral of St. John's. A picture, replica of the celebrated image of Our Lady of Good Counsel of Genazzano, Italy, is placed on Our Lady's altar for veneration during this triduum. The April Monitor also carries a special article, the Novena prayer and picture.²⁷

²⁶ Parish Questionnaires on Marian Devotion, 1954.

²⁷ "Our Lady of Good Counsel", in The Monitor, Vol. 23, No. 4, April 1956, p. 14.

Mother of Happy Delivery

The above title has been borrowed from Our Lady's Digest²⁸ for this section which describes a lovely custom in many parts of Newfoundland, that of consecrating the unborn child to the Blessed Virgin, and of the expectant mother saying five decades of the Rosary daily "that the child might be born with its five senses in normal condition".²⁹

In the days when doctors and nurses were few and far between in some parts of the country, a certain midwife who had assisted at the birth of over five hundred babies, related that while the baby was being expected, she would pray a decade of the Rosary - the third joyful mystery - to beg God's blessing on the unborn child.³⁰

Another story is told of a young mother lighting a candle before a statue of Our Blessed Lady during the hours of labor, and invariably when the candle was burned out, the mother was safely delivered of her child. Her many friends adopted the practice, and all of them attest the protection of the Mother of God in their crucial hour.³¹

²⁸ Our Lady's Digest, Vol. 7, No. 1, May 1952, p. 45.

²⁹ Letter of Mother Mary Francis to the writer, dated May 20, 1955.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Rev. E. J. O'Brien, P. P., Northern Bay, Account of Marian Devotion in Parish, 1954.

In another part of the Island, it is customary for the friends of the expectant mother to go to the little chapel and recite the Rosary in honor of the Blessed Virgin and St. Anne for the protection of the mother and her child.³²

Our Lady of Mount Carmel and the Brown Scapular

Devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Newfoundland, most probably, owes its beginning to Bishop Mullock, who "had been a student at the famous Carmelite University of Salamanca in Spain, and no doubt had learned to esteem the great traditions of the Carmelite family".³³

From St. Teresa's Convent in Alcala, which figured in the Carmelite Reform of the sixteenth century, Bishop Mullock procured a large red stone of polished granite, bearing the monogram letter "M". The present Mother House of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy being erected during the episcopacy of Bishop Mullock, the stone was placed in the rising wall near the chapel entrance. The Bishop wished the stone to be a solid link with the European spirit of Mount Carmel.³⁴

³² Mrs. M. V. Farrell, St. John's, Account of Marian Practices in Bay du Nord.

³³ "Carmelite Souvenir at Mercy Convent", in The Monitor, Vol. 21, No. 4, April 1954, p. 3.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 3. - The Convent of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Renewa, founded during the episcopate of Bishop Mullock, is dedicated to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, as are also the parish, parish church and school at Mount Carmel, Salmonier.

Of the two Catholic cemeteries in St. John's, consecrated by Bishop Mullock in July 1855, one is dedicated to Our Lady of Mount Carmel.³⁵ Each year on the Sunday nearest the Feast in July, Holy Mass is celebrated in the cemetery.

In the Brown Scapular of Mount Carmel or in the Five Scapulars, most, if not all Catholics are enrolled.³⁶ It is the custom in all Catholic Schools to have the children enrolled in the Scapulars on the day of First Holy Communion. In order to share in the full benefits of the Sabbatine Privilege, many, especially amongst the older people, abstain from meat on Saturdays. Many, too, still retain the grand old custom of clothing the dead body in the Brown Habit. This is a larger form of the Brown Scapular and is blessed by a priest with the Blessing of the Brown Scapular.³⁷ Those assisting the dying, place the hand or arm of the dying person in the "Habit" so that it will be worn at the moment of death.

Our Lady of Lourdes

The devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes plays a prominent part in the religious life of Newfoundland. This is not only demonstrated by the great number of churches, altars, schools, convents and the like dedicated to Mary under that title, but

³⁵ "The Centenary of Cemeteries", in The Monitor, Vol. 22, No. 7 and 8, July-August, p. 21.

³⁶ Questionnaires on Marian Devotion, 1954.

³⁷ Rev. P. J. Kennedy, "Vestment from Heaven", in The Monitor, Vol. 14, No. 7 and 8, July-August 1947, pp. 9 and 12.

especially by the grottoes of Our Lady of Lourdes. These outdoor shrines are frequented by old and young people and are often the scene of special devotions. Only the most important places shall be mentioned:

Renews. - The Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes at Renums is built on a "Mass Rock", a hallowed, historic spot, where according to tradition, Mass was celebrated more than two centuries ago. "Church history says Father Fitzsimmons who came to the shore in 1712 (. . .), used to celebrate Mass beneath this rock, and used to recite there also the Rosary and prayers".³⁸ This Grotto with its beautiful marble images, of Our Lady and the kneeling Bernadette, and the stream issuing from the rocky wall, is, as far as possible, a replica of Lourdes. Inserted in the Grotto in a marble setting, is a piece of the rock on which Our Lady stood at Lourdes.

Each year on the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, August 15, a "Pilgrimage" is conducted in which every parishioner takes part. The Children of Mary, bearing the banner of the Immaculate Conception, lead the procession to the shrine to which all roads lead on that day. The ceremonies also attended by people from neighboring parishes, conclude with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and hymns to Our Lady.

St. Clare's Mercy Hospital. - The Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes on the grounds of St. Clare's Mercy Hospital is a

³⁸ "Newfoundland's Miniature Lourdes", in The Irish Catholic, issue of October 6, 1928, quoted by Renews and Its Grotto, Booklet, p. 20.

gift of the late Archbishop Roche. His ardent wish was that a shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes would "play a beneficial role in the daily life of an institution dedicated to the relief of pain and sickness".³⁹ This Grotto is flood-lighted at night and many of all creeds pause reverently to pray there. Under the direction of the Hospital Chaplain, many inspiring Marian ceremonies are carried out, especially during the months of May and October.⁴⁰

St. Joseph's Parish. - Another wayside Shrine which attracts many devout lovers of Our Blessed Mother is the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes at St. Joseph's, St. John's East. In 1937, this Shrine was erected to the memory of Rev. A. M. Gibbs, first Spiritual Director of the St. John's Boy Scouts.⁴¹ The people of the parish show true devotion to the Blessed Virgin by their frequent and fervent visits to the Shrine.⁴²

Allan's Island, Lamaline. - The Shrine at Allan's Island is a gift of one of the parishioners in fulfilment of a promise to erect a Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes if she were cured of tuberculosis. Our Lady's client made a complete

³⁹ "Grotto Blessed at St. Clare's Mercy Hospital", in The Monitor, Vol. 28, No. 6, June 1951, p. 5.

⁴⁰ "St. Clare's Mercy Hospital Nurses Observe Rosary Sunday", The Monitor, Vol. 19, No. 11, November 1952, p. 14.

⁴¹ "Father A. M. Gibbs Memorial Shrine", The Newfoundland Quarterly, Vol. 39, No. 2, October 1939, p. 22.

⁴² Questionnaires on Marian Devotion in Parish of St. Joseph's, 1954.

recovery. The shrine is a centre of Marian devotion, not only to the people of the parish, but to many who come from the neighboring parishes to invoke Our Lady, Health of the Sick. Because of the setting - a natural cleft in a cliff top, it is a reminder to the fishermen that Our Blessed Mother, Star of the Sea, is their Protectress in all dangers and difficulties.⁴³

May and October Devotions

It can be safely stated that in every parish church in the province, May and October Devotions are held and are well attended.⁴⁴

In all Catholic Schools the children, from earliest childhood are taught to love the month of May, because it is Our Lady's month. Every classroom has its own "May-Altar" which the pupils delight in decorating with candles and flowers. Special devotions include the Litany of Loretto, Act of Consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary and a Marian Hymn. During May, children wear the traditional blue ribbon and medal which in June is changed to red for the Sacred Heart.⁴⁵

⁴³ "Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes at Lamaline", in The Monitor, Vol. 20, No. 9, September 1955, p. 13.

⁴⁴ Questionnaires on Marian Devotion in Parishes, 1954.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Devotion to Our Lady fostered by Marian Congregations

In Schools. - Since the Constitutions of the Presentation and Mercy Congregations oblige the Sisters to inspire the children under their care with a sincere devotion to the Immaculate Mother of God,⁴⁶ it is not difficult to see the results of their teaching in this respect. In all the Sisters' Schools the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary is said daily and the Rosary once a week. Then there are the Sisters' own devotions which include the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, Rosary, Litanies, Novenas preparatory to her Feasts and many others.⁴⁷

The majority of the female teachers comes from the Sisters' Schools and receive their professional training at St. Bride's College. Hence, when they go out to the remote and often isolated settlements, they carry with them that "sincere devotion to the Immaculate Mother of God", which by precept and example was instilled into their minds by the Sisters of the two Marian Congregations.

One of the results of the Sisters' efforts is found in the Sodality of the Children of Mary which is flourishing in about fifty centres in the province. Being affiliated with the Prima Primaria in Rome, the members are participators in

⁴⁶ Constitutions of the Presentation and Mercy Sisters. - In Newfoundland today, about 15,000 children are being educated by the Sisters of both Congregations.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

all the indulgences and spiritual blessings granted by the Holy See. Ever since its first establishment in St. John's at the Presentation Convent in 1875, the members of this Sodality are doing excellent work in every phase of Catholic Action. The Little Office of the Immaculate Conception is recited in common every Sunday. An annual Retreat is made, wherever possible, on the three days preceding the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. World Sodality Day is observed and the ceremony of crowning the statue of Our Blessed Lady takes place in May of each year.⁴⁸

In Hospitals and other Institutes. - In the many works of Mercy peculiar to the Congregation of Our Lady of Mercy, ample scope is found for fostering devotion to Our Blessed Lady. Outstanding among these are the administration of hospitals, the visitation of hospitals and prisons for the purpose of imparting instruction, and the care of the aged and homeless.⁴⁹

At St. Clare's Mercy Hospital, many tributes of love and devotion are offered to Our Lady, especially during the months of May and October and on her Feasts which are always days of great devotion. In common with every House of the Institute, Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament is given on these days. The Sodality of the Children of Mary has been

⁴⁸ Questionnaires on Marian Devotion, 1954.

⁴⁹ Revised Constitutions of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy of Newfoundland.

established at the Hospital and every member is an active Sodalist.⁵⁰

In St. John's the Sisters visit the General Hospital and the Sanatorium every Sunday. The hospitals at Corner Brook and at St. Lawrence are also visited by the Sisters in those areas. By the distribution of rosaries, medals and Catholic Literature, this work of Mercy is productive of much good. Wherever possible the Sisters visit the sick and poor in their homes.⁵¹

Care of the aged and the homeless is taken in the new St. Patrick's Mercy Home, already referred to, and in the Immaculate Conception Orphanage where now more than two hundred orphans are educated and prepared to take their places in the world.

In Prisons. - Since the early days of the foundation of the Congregation in Newfoundland, the Sisters of Mercy have been paying frequent visits to the penitentiary. On Sunday mornings, two Sisters from the Mother House pray the

⁵⁰ Annals of St. Clare's Mercy Hospital.

⁵¹ A Member of the Order of Mercy, Leaves from the Annals of the Sisters of Mercy. Vol. 3, The Catholic Publication Society, New York, 1889, p. 25. - In connection with the visitation of the sick, the name of Sister Mary Joseph Nugent who died on June 24, 1847, is inseparably connected. This martyr to charity contracted the "famine-fever" from a victim who had turned a deaf ear to the exhortations of the priest. to whom he had sworn that he would never forgive the captain who had brought the terrible scourge into port. All day long Sister Mary Joseph prayed and pleaded by his bedside. At last he said: "Well, Madam, I'll forgive him for your sake." He made his peace with God and died comforted and consoled by the devoted Sister who was giving her life for his soul.

Rosary, first in the women's department with the females and give a short instruction; then in the building assigned for the purpose, they recite, with the forty to sixty male prisoners, alternate decades of the Rosary; all say aloud the "Salve Regina" and the "Memorare". During the year the Rosary is explained and instructions on the principal feasts of Our Lady are given at the approach of the feasts. In the weeks preceding Christmas and Easter, a choir is formed from among the male prisoners, and a Mass is prepared and sung on those great Feasts.

To augment the instructions, the Sisters try, every week to have a movie show of a religious program. They have shown Father Peyton's films of the Mysteries of the Rosary; the Marian Congress at Cap-de-la-Madeleine; a film on Our Lady of Lourdes and others.

That one boy, at least, has been faithful to his Rosary Pledge (which all the Catholics at the prison signed at the time of the Crusade), is evident from the fact, that since his transfer to the prison camps two years ago, he has had the warder gather the Catholic prisoners every evening, and with them, this boy recites the "family" Rosary.

Thus the Sisters labor with indefatigable zeal in the shadows of the floodlights of this world to bring those unfortunate ones to the feet of Mary, the Refuge of Sinners.⁵²

⁵² Mother Mary Francis, Paper on the Visitation of the Penitentiary.

Observance of the Marian Year

In accordance with the wishes of the Holy Father in proclaiming the Marian Year, that "pilgrims publicly and in the open, give glorious expression to their common faith and their common love toward the Virgin Most Holy",⁵³ the faithful of the Province of Newfoundland "responded with a wonderful demonstration of their traditional piety and love for the Blessed Virgin".⁵⁴

In the Marian Pastoral Letters of His Grace, the Archbishop of St. John's and of Their Excellencies the Bishops of Harbor Grace and St. George's, the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was explained and programs for the Marian Year were outlined.⁵⁵

To inaugurate the Marian Year, a Triduum of Prayer was held in every parish of the province.⁵⁶

The Archdiocese. - At the Cathedral in St. John's, the triduum of prayer coincided with the Forty Hours' Adoration which concluded on December 8, Feast of the Immaculate Conception. On every Saturday, the second Parish Mass was

⁵³ Pope Pius XII, Encyclical Letter, Fulgens Corona, September 8, 1953, p. 8.

⁵⁴ Most Rev. P. J. Skinner, "His Grace Writes Clergy Re Close of Marian Year", in The Monitor, Vol. 21, No. 11, November 1954, p. 2.

⁵⁵ Rev. P. J. Kennedy, "Marian Devotion in Newfoundland", in Report 1954 The Canadian Catholic Historical Association, p. 84.

⁵⁶ The Monitor, Vol. 20, No. 12, December 1953, p. 10

celebrated at the Blessed Virgin's Altar, and whenever the rubrics permitted, the Mass of the Immaculate Conception was said. Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament and recitation of the Marian Year Prayer followed Holy Mass.⁵⁷ This procedure was followed as far as possible in the other parishes of the Archdiocese.⁵⁸

In St. John's, the new Marian Chapel "erected to the glory of God and in honor of His Blessed Mother",⁵⁹ was opened in the Marian Year. Particular mention must be made of the magnificent stained-glass windows, four of which depict the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption of Our Lady, the Immaculate Heart of Mary and Our Lady of Fatima.⁶⁰

In all parishes of the Province the months of May and October were particularly devoted to honoring Our Blessed Mother. Special "Marian" days were held during May for children and adults. On these days perpetual Rosaries were recited in the Marian Year shrines.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 10.

⁵⁸ Questionnaires on Marian Devotion, 1954.

⁵⁹ "Marian Chapel Donors", in The Monitor, Vol. 21, No. 9, September 1953, p. 1.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 1.

⁶¹ Questionnaires on Marian Devotion, 1954. - During the Marian Year outdoor shrines of Our Lady of Fatima were erected at St. Bonaventure's College, Mount Cashel Orphanage, Immaculate Conception Orphanage, Presentation Convent at Witless Bay. At the Convent of Our Lady of the Angels, Placentia, and at St. Patrick's Convent, St. John's, Grottoes of Our Lady of Lourdes were erected. The statuary at St. Patrick's represents the Ninth Apparition of Our Lady.

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Harbor Grace. - On Sunday, August 29, an outdoor Pontifical High Mass was celebrated at the main entrance to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, "to mark the re-consecration of the Diocese and of the Cathedral to the Immaculate Mother of God. The Archbishop of St. John's was the celebrant. Priests and choir members from the Cathedral of St. John's accompanied the Archbishop for this great Marian event. The Preacher was His Excellency the Bishop of Harbor Grace, who, in outlining the history of Marian Devotion in Newfoundland, referred to the faith of the early settlers and their strong love for Mary the Mother of God. At the conclusion of the sermon His Excellency read an Act of Consecration of the Diocese to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.⁶²

In the Co-Cathedral Parish, Grand Falls, a similar ceremony was carried out on Rosary Sunday. His Excellency, the Bishop of St. George's and his priests being present on this occasion. His Excellency, Bishop O'Reilly pontificated and the Bishop of Harbor Grace preached the sermon, taking for his text: "Thou art all beautiful O Mary and there is no stain in Thee". The ceremony at Grand Falls was another grand demonstration of filial love towards Mary Immaculate.⁶³

St. George's. - Marian Year observances were in line with those in the Archdiocese and in Harbor Grace. From time

⁶² "Marian Celebration at Harbor Grace", in The Monitor, Vol. 21, No. 9, September 1954, p. 12.

⁶³ "Sermon at Grand Falls", in The Monitor, Vol. 21, No. 11, November 1954, p. 5.

to time during the year, His Excellency, Bishop O'Reilly issued to his priests special instructions governing its proper observance. "It is desirable", he said, "that every possible effort on our part be made to carry out Our Holy Father's wishes, so that devotion to Our Blessed Lady may be even more widespread and more fervent".⁶⁴ His Excellency ordered that one special day, November 28, be consecrated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, as a "sick day" - a day on which appropriate religious exercises would be carried out by the sick, special prayers being offered by them. On that day everything possible was done, in order to have the sick enter into the true spirit of the year. Members of Parish Societies assisted by visits of a joyous and religious nature. On the evening of November 28, a special radio broadcast for the benefit of the sick was featured.⁶⁵

Throughout the entire Province, the program for the closing of the Marian Year was in accordance with the suggestions proposed by the Council of the Marian Year in Rome. A Novena in preparation for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception was begun on November 29. On each day of the Novena, there was an uninterrupted recitation of the Rosary concluding each evening with the recitation of the Marian Year

⁶⁴ Most Rev. M. O'Reilly, "Directions for the Observance of the Marian Year". December 1, 1953.

⁶⁵ Most Rev. M. O'Reilly, "Directions for the Observance of the Marian Year". March 3, 1954.

Prayer and Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament. On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, a Marian sermon was preached at evening devotions.⁶⁶

At the Cathedral in St. John's the day's prayer began immediately after the parish Masses with the recitation of the Rosary by the school children, who came class by class until four-thirty in the afternoon. Then the women's groups in the parish - the League of the Sacred Heart and the Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary - alternated in the recitation of the Rosary until six-thirty. Beginning at seven o'clock, the recitation was taken up by the Sodalities of the Blessed Virgin from Presentation and Mercy Schools and by the men's Societies: the Holy Name Society; Total Abstinence and Benefit Society; Knights of Columbus and Star of the Sea Association. Each evening at nine o'clock the continuous Rosary concluded with the Pope's new Prayer for the Queenship of Mary and Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament.⁶⁷

To the various Marian Year Shrines, there were numberless "Pilgrimages", during which thousands of the faithful made public demonstration of their intense love for Our Blessed Lady.

To attempt to write of the Marian activities in the schools of the Province during 1954, would be to attempt the

⁶⁶ "His Grace Writes Clergy Re Close of Marian Year", in The Monitor, Vol. 21, No. 11, November 1954, p. 4.

⁶⁷ "Continuous Rosary in the Cathedral", in The Monitor, Vol. 21, No. 12, December 1954, p. 12.

impossible, so many, so varied and so elaborate were they. Some idea of their nature will be seen from some of the practices used in Newfoundland Schools and which served as a basis for the Marian Year Activities: Monthly novena beginning on the last day of each month; The eighth day of each month is a day of special devotion to the Immaculate Conception; Grades One to Six make a weekly visit in a body to Our Lady's altar in the Church; The "Living" Rosary is recited as follows: Each day Grade Four says the First Mystery, Grade Five, the Second Mystery and so on to Grade Eight; Middle Grades make a Mary Book of drawings, pictures, poems, etc.; The children bring magazines and pamphlets on Our Lady for use in the classroom; Art Classes compose at least one Marian Poster weekly; Pupils read about the authorized Apparitions or Shrines of Our Lady and report to the class; Essay Contest on Marian topics; Each classroom has a Marian Shrine; School days begin and end with a hymn honoring Our Lady.

At a Catholic Teachers' Conference Meeting, plans were discussed for activating devotional practices during the Marian Year, and these practices already in use, were co-ordinated to form the basis of a general plan for all schools. All suggestions of this plan were carried out in the large schools and thus also the children contributed to the province-wide praise of Our Lady during the Marian Year.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Rev. Brother P. J. Keane, Chairman, Catholic Teachers' Conference, St. John's Board, May 1954.

Centennial Celebrations

In June 1955, the Centenary of the Cathedral of St. John's was observed with great religious splendor. This grand occasion brought to St. John's many distinguished Prelates from all over the mainland, and, to preside over the ceremonies, a Prince of the Church came, His Eminence, Cardinal McGuigan.⁶⁹

The centennial celebrations marked not only that one hundred years had elapsed since the erection of this first Marian shrine of the island, but they were even more celebrations marking the permanent establishment and the vigorous growth of the Roman Catholic Church in Newfoundland during these hundred years, as well as celebrations marking the permanency of the Faith and of the devotion to Mary, symbolized in the dedication of this Cathedral to the Immaculate Virgin.

In recognition of the pre-eminent position of the Cathedral of St. John's as the Mother Church of Newfoundland, His Holiness, Pope Pius XII elevated it to the rank and title of Minor Basilica. The Brief of Our Holy Father testifies:

Newfoundland, surrounded as it is by the blue waves of the ocean, is widely celebrated for the great quantities of fish (. . .); but considered under the aspect of Christian piety, the Island is far richer because of its faithful people, among whom, enclosed as it were in the net of Christ's salvation, the Catholic Faith has marvellously spread and grown.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ The Evening Telegram, Cathedral Centenary Issue, St. John's, Vol. 77, No. 150, June 30, 1955, p. 5.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 9, and p. 20.

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It has been shown in this study that though the English Jesuits at Avalon and the French Franciscans at Placentia, did not succeed in permanently establishing the Catholic Religion in Newfoundland, yet, there were sown those seeds of Catholicity that were to bear fruit in later years.

After the withdrawal of the French priests, Father James Louis O'Donnel, O. S. F., was the first authorized Missionary. He found the 15,000 Catholics, most of whom were Irish, devoid of all the consolations of holy Religion. But they had brought with them from Ireland, the devotion to the Rosary for which Ireland is so justly famed, and this it was that kept the light of Faith glimmering, and together with their sufferings and sacrifices, obtained for them the grace and strength to triumph over those who would wrest from their hearts, their dearest treasure, their faith in Christ and in Mary.

It has been seen also that the Rosary, especially the Family Rosary, was always an integral part of the Catholic life in Newfoundland. For years it took the place of Holy Mass, and even today, in many parts of the country, where people have not the blessing of Sunday Mass, their second central point of devotion is the Rosary, recited in the little church or in the privacy of their homes.

The history of the Church and of Marian devotion is rich in the achievements of its Irish Bishops. To their successors, the Archbishops of St. John's, and to the Bishops of

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Harbor Grace and of St. George's, they handed down a glorious inheritance, attributable to the fervent and frequent supplications offered to Our Lady of the Rosary, by the great Prelates and their spiritual children.

What the Irish did for the Church in East Newfoundland, the Acadians and the French did for the Church in the West, and they too, brought with them to the land of their adoption, a lively devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, which apart from their faith and trust in God, accounts for the fact, that though they were without a priest for fifty years in the West, none fell away from the Faith of their Fathers.

It is significant that the Cathedrals in the three Dioceses of Newfoundland, have the Immaculate Conception for title; that many parishes, parish churches, convents, schools and institutions for charitable and social purposes are dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, under one or other of her several titles; that the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of Our Lady were, from very early times, regarded as a part of the Catholic Faith; that four parishes and parish churches were dedicated to Our Lady's Assumption, more than one hundred years before the definition of the dogma. These facts together with the number of religious houses, Marian Associations, Societies and Confraternities, and the many Marian place-names that dot the map, help to prove that Mary's Role has been manifested in a very forceful way in the history of the Church in Newfoundland.

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Appendix I. Pastoral

The Right Rev. Dr. Mullock on the Jubilee
to the Clergy and Laity of Newfoundland
Health and Benediction in the Lord.

Reverend Brethren and Dearly Beloved Children:

Our Holy Father, Pius IX., contemplating from the summit of the Apostolic Throne where he has been placed by Jesus Christ, over Princes, Kingdoms and peoples, the disasters which at the present time afflict Society - Wars, Famine and Pestilence - calls on his children over the entire world to pray for their Heavenly Father that He may cease to scourge them for their sins; and that their prayers may penetrate the Heavens, as proceeding from contrite and humble hearts, he grants them the Plenary Indulgence of a General Jubilee.

Never was there more occasion to do violence to Heaven by our prayers than at present. Wherever we turn our eyes, sorrow and woe meet us, "Abroad the sword destroyeth, and at home there is death alike". - Lam. I. 20.

The most powerful nations of the world send forth their armies, terrible ministers of God's vengeance, and the blood of Christians and infidels alike flows like water. The destroying angel, as in the days of the Royal Prophet, goes forth, not to one nation, but over the entire earth striking down thousands with the awful disease of Cholera. Even we who, through God's mercy, had hitherto been spared, are now

the victims of this awful calamity. "Death is come up through our windows; it is entered our houses to destroy the children from without, the young men from the streets". Jer. 9, 21.

But even a worse plague (from which we are happily exempt) than War or Cholera, is abroad. The impious enemies of Christ, the children of darkness, affiliated to secret societies, leagued with heresy and infidelity, plot the destruction of Religion and the ruin of Society; their emissaries and their dupes are at work in Europe and America; and the Holy Father, well knowing "that unless the Lord keep the City, he watcheth in vain who keeps it", - Ps. 126, 2.- calls on the children of the Church to implore the Divine Founder's protection, that, according to His promise, the gates of Hell may not prevail, even partially against it. Another object of the general call on the faithful is that God may enlighten the mind of the Supreme Pastor that he may publish the Dogmatic Decree relative to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin. The universal pious belief of the Church nourished through ages, is that the Mother of God, all Holy in her life, was Immaculate in her Conception, and never for an instant was a slave of Satan, through original sin, like the rest of Adam's race. Our reverence for the Incarnation of her Divine Son would not allow us to believe the contrary, and now this pious belief of all Catholics is, we hope, according to their prayers for centuries, about to be dogmatically defined. Such are the objects the Holy Father

has in view when he calls on the countless millions of his spiritual children of every race, of every clime and of every tongue, to join in one universal prayer to their Father in Heaven for their attainment.

The Jubilee will open in this Diocese on the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, 8th December, or as soon as this notice reaches the remote Outports, and will continue for three months.

The conditions requisite to obtain it are: 1. Confession and Communion; 2. To visit the Churches appointed, three times, and pray for the intention of His Holiness. In St. John's the visits are to be made to the Cathedral twice and to the Old Chapel once; 3. To fast one day during the Jubilee; 4. To give some alms to the poor, each one according to his means and devotion. This Jubilee is applicable to the souls in Purgatory, and the usual faculties are granted to Confessors. Those who cannot comply with the above conditions, may obtain the Indulgence by the performance of other good works, imposed by their Confessors, who can likewise dispense with children who have not, as yet, made their first Communion.

"Therefore, Dearly Beloved Brethren, be nothing solicitous, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, let your petitions be known to God, and the peace of God, which

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surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus". Phil. 12, 6-7.

John Thomas

Bishop of Newfoundland.

First Sunday of Advent, 1854.

Appendix II. Poem of Archbishop Howley

Our Lady of the Fiords

Hail, Crystal Virgin! from the frozen fiords,
Where far-off Greenland's gelid glaciers gleen
O'er Ocean's bosom soaring, cool, serene; -
Not famed Carrara's purest vein affords
Such sparkling brilliance, as, mid countless hordes
Of spotless glist'ning bergs thou reignest Queen
In all the glory of thy opal sheen: -
A shimmering shrine; - Our bright Atlantic Lourdes!
We hail thee dual Patron, with acclaim,
Thou standest Guardian o'er our Island home.
To-day, four cycles since, our rock-bound strand
First Cabot saw: - and gave the Baptist's name;
To-day we clothe with Pallium from Rome,
The first Archbishop of our Newfoundland.

Appendix III. Poem by Rev. Peter P. Sheehan

The following poem "The Mass Rock at Renews" was written by Reverend Peter P. Sheehan, an Irish priest who spent many fruitful years on the Newfoundland mission, and who was noted for his singular devotion to the Blessed Virgin. This devotion he planted deep in the parishes where he laboured. A musician, a poet and an artist of note, he is the author of many poems to Our Blessed Lady. Though he has retired from the Newfoundland Mission, his facile pen is still busily engaged in Mary's honor, and his contributions to The Monitor are anxiously looked forward to.

The Mass Rock at Renews

Within the Grotto at Renews,
There stands a stone, tradition says,
Where Holy Mass was offered up
In persecution's evil days.

Under the canopy of Heaven,
Upon the carpet of the sod;
Hid in this Sanctuary of the hills
The Priest and flock communed with God.

This Grotto's by Our Lady crowned,
As seen at Lourdes with Bernadette.
A spring flows from the "Midnight Hill";
A tablet on the stone is set.

To "say the beads", to place a rose,
Here pilgrims crowd on holyday.
It's said that in the moonlight pale,
Shadowy figures come to pray.

This "Mass Rock" speaks the steadfast Faith,
Of those who in the centuries dim,
"In spite of dungeon, fire and sword",
Were always faithful unto Him.

Sir George Calvert, together with two Jesuit Priests, established in his Province of Avalon in Newfoundland, the first Catholic Colony in British North America.

In 1688, Monseigneur de Saint Valier, Bishop of Quebec, founded a Franciscan Monastery at Placentia, and apparently, Catholicity was well established. But the Treaty of Utrecht, leaving little religious liberty to the French, forced them and their Priests to relinquish Placentia, and with their departure, Catholicity began to die out.

Against the Irish Catholics who had been settling in the country, a siege of persecution was now directed by the British Government. This seemed only to intensify their Faith to which they clung tenaciously with the help of a few Irish Priests who surreptitiously came to minister to them. Deprived of Holy Mass, the central point of their Faith, their chief bulwark lay in devotion to Mary, especially her Rosary.

Finally their prayers were heard. In 1784, Pope Pius VI sent Rev. J. L. O'Donel to organize the Church. He was consecrated in 1796, and was thus the first of a long line of Irish Bishops, five of whom were Franciscans, who governed the Church in Newfoundland until 1893.

Under Bishop Fleming, great Marian projects were brought to a successful issue - the erection of the Cathedral of St. John's, the establishment of the Congregations of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of Our Lady of Mercy, and the organization of the first Marian Association.

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With Right Rev. J. T. Mullock, came the Consecration of the Cathedral, the erection of the Diocese of Harbor Grace and the spread of the Religious Congregations.

The Acadians and the French-Canadians planted the Faith in West Newfoundland. Almost fifty years without a priest, they, through devotion to Our Blessed Lady, kept the Faith alive under the most formidable difficulties. In 1870 the Western territory became a Prefecture, in 1892 a Vicariate and in 1904 it became the Diocese of St. George's.

During the episcopacy of Right Rev. T. J. Power, first Non-Franciscan Bishop of St. John's, the Congregation of the Christian Brothers of Ireland was founded in St. John's; the Star of the Sea Society and the Sodality of the Children of Mary were established and further extensions of the Presentation and Mercy Congregations were effected.

In 1904, Newfoundland attained the dignity of an ecclesiastical province, and the first native Bishop, Right Rev. M. F. Howley, became first Archbishop of St. John's. Since then, more than fifty years have passed - years filled with the magnificent Marian achievements of Archbishops Howley and Roch of the Archdiocese of St. John's; MacDonald and March of Harbor Grace and of Bishops McNeil, Power and Renouf of St. George's.

Under Most Rev. P. J. Skinner, C. J. M., present Metropolitan of St. John's and his two Suffragans, their Excellencies, Most Rev. J. M. O'Neill, of Harbor Grace and

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Most Rev. M. O'Reilly of St. George's, the ecclesiastical province of Newfoundland is making rapid progress in every direction and is reaching still greater magnificent heights of Marian glory.