

A Brief History of the Parish of St. Simon and St. Jude Tignish, Prince Edward Island

by
Emily Elizabeth Cran



**The Thomas More Institute, Montreal, 1971
Digitised, reformatted and reissued in pdf format, 2019**

**A Brief History of the Parish of
St. Simon and St. Jude
Tignish, Prince Edward Island**

**by
Emily Elizabeth Cran**

**Under the Sponsorship of the Liturgical Committee
1970**

*We study the past to understand the present in order to make
decisions for the future.*

**The Thomas More Institute, Montreal
1970**

This manuscript by my friend and mentor Elizabeth Cran was printed in Montreal using an early photocopying machine, stapled together and bound with green sheets of paper. Due to the process, the pages were smudgy and there were no illustrations. The whole edition of ? copies was given to the Parish in 1970 and it quickly sold out. It was never published as a book.

To ensure its survival, Reg Porter digitized the typescript and re-formatted it. He also provided illustrations where they would be desirable and available, using photos collected by the Tignish Arts Foundation and the Public Archives. This *pdf* edition of the work, the first manifestation of the reformatted manuscript, is an attempt to make this important parish history available to a new audience.

Reginald Porter
Belle River, PEI
March 13, 2019

© 1970, 2019 Emily Elizabeth Cran

Introduction

This history is meant simply as an outline of the main events in the parish from 1799 to 1970. It has been written at the request of the Liturgical Committee of the parish for both parishioners and visitors. The material for it has been collected from a number of books and pamphlets, listed below, from the Parish Registers, and from information furnished orally. Much more information could be found by consulting other sources not available in Tignish itself. It is hoped eventually to do this and to write a detailed, book-length history. Meanwhile, the aim has been to make this outline as accurate as possible. If any reader knows facts about parish history not included here or has more accurate information on any point mentioned, it is hoped that he will furnish this information either directly to the author or to the Chairman of the Liturgical Committee.

The books used in compiling this history have been: *The Early History of the Catholic Church in Prince Edward Island* (Quebec 1905), *The Catholic Church in Prince Edward Island from 1831 to 1891* (Quebec 1913), both by the Reverend John C. MacMillan, and *Le clergé français dans l'Île du Prince-Edouard 1721-1821* (Quebec 1967) by the Reverend Wilfrid Pineau. These books are carefully written in every way and excellent for the periods they cover. Reference has also been made to *The Acadians of Prince Edward Island 1720-1964* (Quebec, 1964) by the late Professor J.-Henri Blanchard. Other books consulted simply repeated information taken from these or our other sources.

The special number of the Tignish newspaper *l'Impartial*, published for the centenary of the village in 1899 is a mine of information. So, to a lesser degree, is the *Souvenir Program* prepared for the Centennial of the Church in 1960. Other printed sources used were the souvenir album prepared for the Convent Centennial in 1968, the Diocesan Yearbooks for 1967 and 1969, annual financial reports of the parish, literature pertaining to the Diocesan Catholic Charities Canvass of 1957, a souvenir booklet prepared for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the ordination of the Reverend Alexander J. MacDougall and newspaper clippings. Most of this material is the property of the Tignish Arts Foundation to which we extend many thanks. For the rest of the printed material used, we have to thank Father Michael J. Rooney, pastor of the parish.

We owe special thanks to Father Rooney as well for making the Parish Registers freely available and allowing us to quote from them. These Registers begin in 1831 and contain notes and descriptions of important events in the life of the parish, as well as records of baptisms, funerals and marriages. These first-hand accounts are of the greatest value for this history and most of them appear never to have been published before.

When names of persons and places have been spelled in various ways, we have chosen one and used it throughout the history. In the quotations from our sources, different spellings, spelling mistakes and, occasionally, other types of mistakes occur because these quotations have been copied exactly. The translations into English are our own.

We wish to thank the following people who have contributed information orally:

Mrs. James Ahearn

Mrs. Charles Gaudet

Mr. J. Henry Gaudet

Mr. J. Mark Gaudet

Mrs. Laurette O'Connor

Mr. James Reginald Porter

Reverend Michael J. Rooney

Mrs. Ernest Tousinard

Finally, we wish to thank the Liturgical Committee and especially the Chairman, Mr. J. Henry Gaudet, for providing the opportunity to compile this history and for much help and encouragement.

thirty feet by twenty-five with a shingle roof fastened on with clamps of maple wood. It stood just at the North-East corner of the old cemetery which also dates from that period. At that time, there were almost no priests on the Island and the very few churches, were almost completely without furnishings, vestments, etc..



Impression of what the log church might have looked like, from the 1899 l'Impartial Illustré.

The following quotation (from page 5 of the special centenary number of the Tignish newspaper L'Impartial, produced in 1899) probably describes quite accurately the way in which the first settlers came together on Sundays, except when a priest was able to visit them.

The faithful came together in the little church and the best educated of them acted as “prior”. Morning prayer took place in common; the epistle and gospel of the day were read and the Kyrie, the Gloria and the Credo were sung. The service ended with the Angelus which was recited and the hymn was sung, all the congregation taking part. When the office was over, they stayed at the church and waited for vespers, which took place an hour after the prayers. In the interval, the children were brought together for catechism in the church... For want of a bell, a conch-shell was used to summon the faithful.

Later, a horn was used, and both of these instruments were still in existence within living memory. The first sexton of the church was Jude Arsenault, after whom Jude’s Point is named.

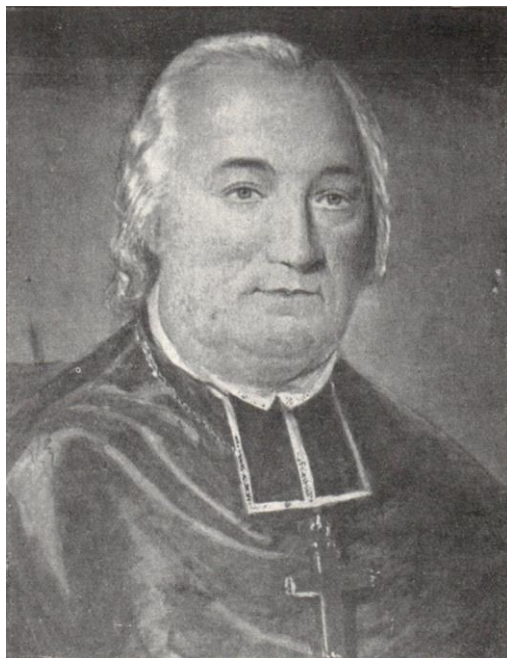
We learn from Father Wilfrid Pineau's *Le clergé français dans l'Ile du Prince-Edouard 1721,-1821* that in 1800, Father de Calonne, the first French priest to come to the Island after the British Conquest, described the Acadians in general as "well instructed in their religion, very attached and faithful to their duties and very grateful for the trouble one takes for them" (p. 69). It was he who placed another priest from France, Father Amable Pichard, in charge of all the Acadian missions, with his headquarters at Rustico. Father Pichard, who is described as "a man of mediocre ability and talents, but very modest and very good-natured and also very virtuous," (*Le clergé français* p. 60) was to spend four months of each year at Rustico, Malpeque and Fortune Bay and visits to Tignish were added to his schedule.



Father de Calonne. Photo: from MacMillan, *Early History*

Father de Calonne's letters also tell us that he and Father Pichard added teaching school to their other duties. "Up to now, there have been no schoolmasters but the priests who do it voluntarily and without pay. Now, since because of the great extent of their district they cannot have a very settled place of residence, their functions call them sometimes to one place, sometimes to another, they teach school where they happen to be. However, we are thinking of setting up fixed schools as soon as possible..." (*Le clergé français* pp. 79-80).

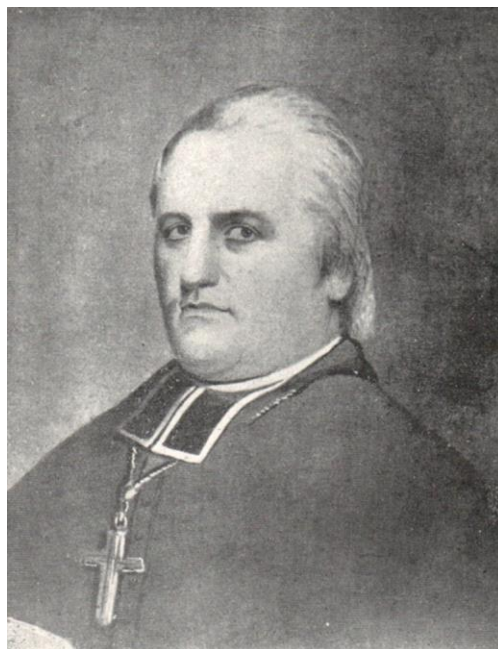
In 1803 Bishop Denaut of Quebec, under whose jurisdiction were the Catholics of what are now the Maritime Provinces, paid a visit to the Island. He travelled as far as Malpeque and we may assume that people from Tignish came there to be confirmed by him, as we know many did from other outlying missions. Bishop Denaut's records and the Pastoral Letter he sent just after his visit tell us that at Tignish (which he calls Tayouniche) there were sixteen families -- 102 people -- of whom fifty-two were communicants. The priest's house and chapel were "without ornaments," but not as badly off as those at Cascumpeque which had "nothing" (*Le clergé français*, p. 98). The Bishop decreed that the people were to provide "ornaments, linen and sacred vessels" (*Le clergé français*, p. 96) as soon as possible. The inhabitants were already paying tithes of all kinds of grain and the Bishop ordered them to pay in potatoes too. They were to build pews and auction them, fence the church land and build a barn and stable for the missionary. Finally, the finances of the church were to be administered by three *marguilliers* or churchwardens. It was Bishop Denaut too who ordered the church at Tignish to be dedicated to St. Simon Apostle.



Bishop Denaut. Photo: from MacMillan, *Early History*

For several years, the mission at Tignish seldom saw a priest. Father Pichard was sent elsewhere, Father de Calonne briefly took over his missions and then, from 1804 to 1812, there was only one active priest on the whole Island -- Father

MacEachern, later first Bishop of Charlottetown. He could not spend more than a few weeks a year in any one mission. This situation was particularly unsatisfactory to the Acadians, as they had no French priest and had a higher standard of religious practise than the other Catholic colonists. During this period too arrived the first Irish people to be part of the mission of Tignish. The earliest Irish settlers, Edward and Michael Rielly, landed at Nail Pond in about 1811 and others followed steadily.



Archbishop Plessis Photo: from MacMillan, *Early History*

Eventually, in 1812, the then Archbishop of Quebec, J.O. Plessis, came to the Island and again Acadians from Tignish, Cascumpeque and Kildare came to Malpeque to receive the Sacraments. The Bishop's diary gives the following picture of the Island churches and chapels:

In Canada we have little idea of the poverty of the Acadian chapels of Prince Edward Island, and no idea whatever of the utter destitution of the Scottish churches. ... In one, there are no altar-breads nor irons for making them, in another no missal. Here you find a chalice with a cup of gilded copper, there one entirely of tin. In most of the churches there are neither cruets nor albs, nor chalices, nor altar-cloths, nor credence tables, nor surplices, nor ciboriums, nor holy water fonts, nor baptismal water. In the whole of Prince Edward Island,

neither censer nor ostensorium has been seen within the memory of man.
(translated and quoted by Fr. John C. Macmillan on pp. 156-7 of his *The Early History of the Catholic Church in Prince Edward Island*. (Quebec, 1905).

In his Pastoral Letter, he ordered that the churches should be properly appointed and provided with bells and steeples.

With Archbishop Plessis had come Father Jean-Louis Beaubien, to whom he entrusted the Acadian Missions and those of the Magdalen Islands. Father Beaubien, a native of Yamaska County, Quebec, was the first priest from that province to exercise his office on the Island. With so large a field, it is not surprising to find that he could only visit each mission regularly twice a year. Added to the ordinary difficulties were epidemics of “pleuritic fevers” for four successive winters which kept him travelling almost constantly on sick calls. Father Beaubien continued this arduous missionary work until 1818, when he returned to Quebec. His place was taken by a priest from Nicolet County, Quebec, Father Joseph Etienne Cécile. At the same time Father Cécile’s field was limited by the Bishop to the Acadians of Prince Edward Island, and he made Miscouche his headquarters. Father Cécile is thus described by a priest who knew him later:

His exterior was by no means prepossessing. Austere and brusque in his manner, he laid aside all outward manifestations of feeling. He was severe but just, and gave expression to his opinions curtly and without oratorical effect. His charity was unobtrusive; his left hand knew not what the right hand had given; but at the same time he was as pitiless for the lazy as he was distrustful of those whom he found wanting in sincerity. He was fond of study, and though not what could be called a learned man, he was able to give excellent advice to those who needed wise counsel, and his deep knowledge of Holy Scripture he always turned to good account in the religious instruction of youth. His post of duty was the sacristy, where he transacted all parochial business and where his flock were sure to find him should any of them need his assistance. ... His memory is in veneration, and the old people who knew him mention his name always with religious respect. (MacMillan, *Early History*, p. 214)

At the very beginning of his work in Tignish, Father Cécile found a young man there with a vocation to the priesthood. He was Sylvain-Ephrem Perrey, who was

born at Tignish in 1802, the son of one of the original settlers, Pierre Poirier or Perrey, known as Grand' Couette. It may be of interest to add that Sylvain Perrey nearly always spelt his name this way; the other forms, Poirier and Perry, only become common later in the century. Father Cécile arranged for the boy to study at the Seminary of Nicolet where he remained from 1818 to 1826. As a student, he was noted for his piety and hard work and also for his beautiful singing voice. For the first two years, his expenses were paid by Father Cécile out of money collected for dispensations; the latter had written to Archbishop Plessis about him as follows:

I told the people of Tignish that they should all contribute to his support and they replied that they would do it if the religious authorities asked them to do it. If they all agreed on this subject they could easily furnish the resources necessary for the education of young men as the Scots do. If you order me to have each one pay a small contribution I will do it. There would be other students in the future if we could raise the necessary funds. (*Le clergé français*, p. 119)

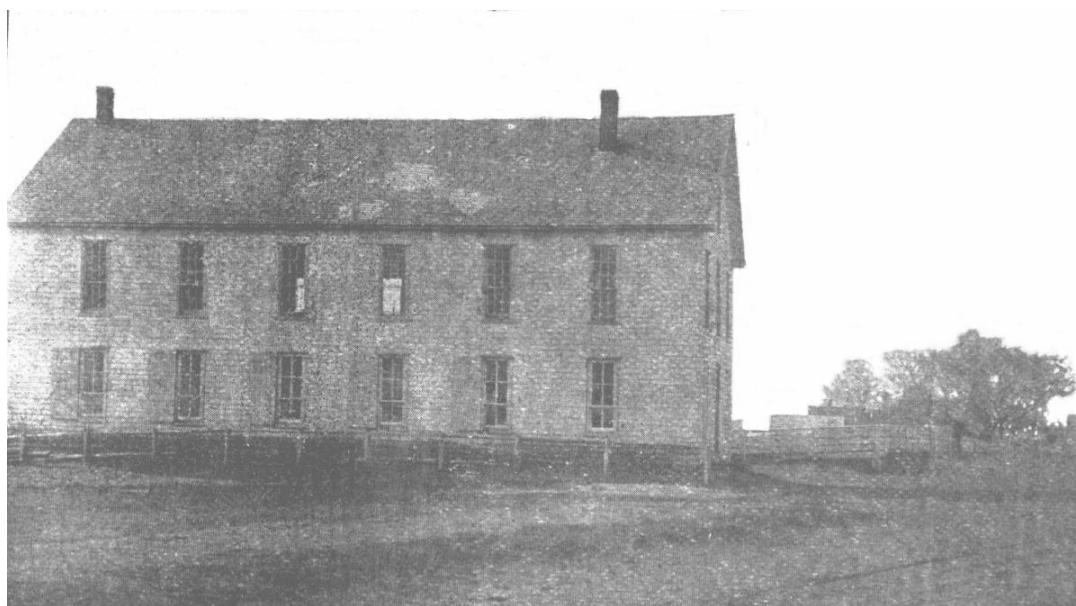
Unfortunately, Father Cécile did not receive permission from the Archbishop and was warned to send no pupils without furnishing the means for their support. The Seminary was poor and about 1821, after Father MacEachern (who had been made Suffragan Bishop in 1819) had made a thoughtless remark to Archbishop Plessis, Sylvain was nearly sent home.

It seems that His Lordship had boasted of the fertility of the soil on Prince Edward Island, and of the enormous crops that were raised, especially in certain sections of the country. As an instance of this truth, he mentioned the number of bushels of wheat raised in the preceding year by the father of Sylvain Perry at Tignish... The authorities concluded at once, and not without apparent reason, that a man who could raise so much wheat should be able to contribute more generously to the college, in which his son was receiving the blessings of a good education. (MacMillan, *Early History*, p. 265)

Father Cécile would appear to have come to the rescue and to have helped personally with the expenses. When Sylvain finished his "cours classique", he returned to the Island and acted as secretary to the Bishop until his ordination in

1828. He was the first Acadian and the third native-born Islander to enter the priesthood.

Meanwhile Father Cecile had returned to Quebec in 1822 and Father Bernard Donald MacDonald, the first Island-born priest, later to be second Bishop of Charlottetown, took over the care of the Acadians. He too lived principally at Miscouche, but it was while he was missionary to Tignish that the second church was begun. It stood on the first road in the parish which ran west from the shore past the south-west side of the old cemetery to Ascension. A frame building, two stories high and more than sixty feet by forty-five, it served as church until 1860. Not long after its completion, it was finished and decorated inside by William Harper, a Frenchman from the Gaspé in spite of his name, who later returned to Tignish to settle and built a mill at what is now called Harper Road. When the present church was built in 1860, the old church was hauled by eighty teams from its original site, just off the road to North Cape and north-east of the road to the old cemetery, over a winter road to a spot between the present cemetery and the Regional High School. Here, then, the historic building, renamed St. Mary's Hall, stood after it ceased to be used as a church and served at various times as Grammar School and Parish Hall. In or about 1958 it was abandoned, but it was still in fair condition in 1964 when it collapsed as a result of a second attempt to haul it.



The second church (St. Mary's Hall) after it was moved to Tignish. Photo: *l'Impartial Illustré*.

A first division of the Acadian parishes was made in 1828, when Father Sylvain Perrey was appointed to the charge of Tignish, Cascumpeque, Mont-Carmel and Egmont Bay. It was he who had a frame parish house built at Tignish, close to the church completed by him. Later, this little building became a private house, later still a shed and it was still use in 1965, when it burned. Now the only visible trace of the first centre of the parish is the old cemetery near The Green which was in use until about 1865. It is fenced off and contains a large cross and a few tombstones with writing that can still be read, but most of the graves must have been marked with wooden crosses, long since crumbled into dust.



Father Perrey's Parochial house 1965. Photo Tignish Arts Foundation

In 1829, Father Perrey had to take charge of all the missions west of Miscouche. He visited each three or four times a year. The following is a description of what one of these visits involved; taken from pp. 135-6 of *Le clergé français*.

He was not only the director of conscience, but the lawyer, the judge and the doctor of the whole community. People waited for the missionary's visit in order to settle a dispute between neighbours or members of the same family and the missionary's decision was always final...

When all these difficulties had been resolved in a friendly way, the work of the day, properly so called, began. Baptisms and weddings demanded considerable time, then there was the blessing of rosaries, medals and objects of devotion. Confessions came next, followed by visits to the sick and old people who could not go to church. The following morning, the people met together again, and the work went on. Dressed in priestly vestments the priest knelt before the altar and recited in French the acts of faith, hope and charity, a summary of Christian doctrine and prayers for the king and the royal family. Then began the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass...

When the Mass was over, Father Perrey never failed to give a short instruction aimed at the improvement of the spiritual and temporal welfare of the people... Speaking of his qualities as an orator, a priest who knew him well used to say: "He was not what I would call a good preacher, but was an excellent scolder".



Fr. Sylvain Ephrem Perrey. Photo from Tignish Arts Foundation Collection.

After that, Father Perrey would leave for the next mission. At some point in each visit, however, he would take time for choir practice. He taught his choirs Gregorian Chant and seems to have done much for the Acadian tradition of fine sacred music and first-class choirs which is not dead yet.

Meanwhile, two events important for all Island Catholics took place. In 1829 Charlottetown became an independent episcopal see, comprising the Island, New Brunswick and the Magdalen Islands. Then in 1830 civil rights were granted to Island Catholics, following the Catholic Emancipation Act in Britain.

The registers of the parish of Tignish begin in 1831, although records must certainly have been kept by the missionaries before that time. All births are recorded, but only some of the deaths and marriages, so far as can be ascertained. In addition, the first register contains the records of a number of other matters of importance to the parish, noted mostly by Father Perrey, and these give us some details of life in the 'thirties. For example, the following extract describes the election of a new churchwarden:

The year one thousand eight hundred thirty-two, the 22 January, following an announcement made the same day at the "prone" [the announcements made after the mass and before the final blessing] of the parish Mass of SS. Simon and Jude of le Tagnish, summoning a meeting of the former and present churchwardens, there assembled at the end of the said parish Mass in the parish house of the said parish Messrs. Rufin Richard, Joseph Perrey and Melaine Chiasson churchwardens of the funds and building of the said Church, and Pierre Chiasson, Jude Arsenaux, Joseph Gaudet, Alexis Richard, Zosime Perrey, all former churchwardens of the same parish, who having proceeded, after the invocation of the Holy Spirit, to the election of a new churchwarden, and given their votes, it was found that Zosime Gaudet, tenant farmer of the said parish, had received the great majority and, in consequence, the said Zosime Gaudet was declared the new churchwarden of the said funds... (here follow some unintelligible words) and Zosime Perrey signed with me, the others having declared they did not know how.

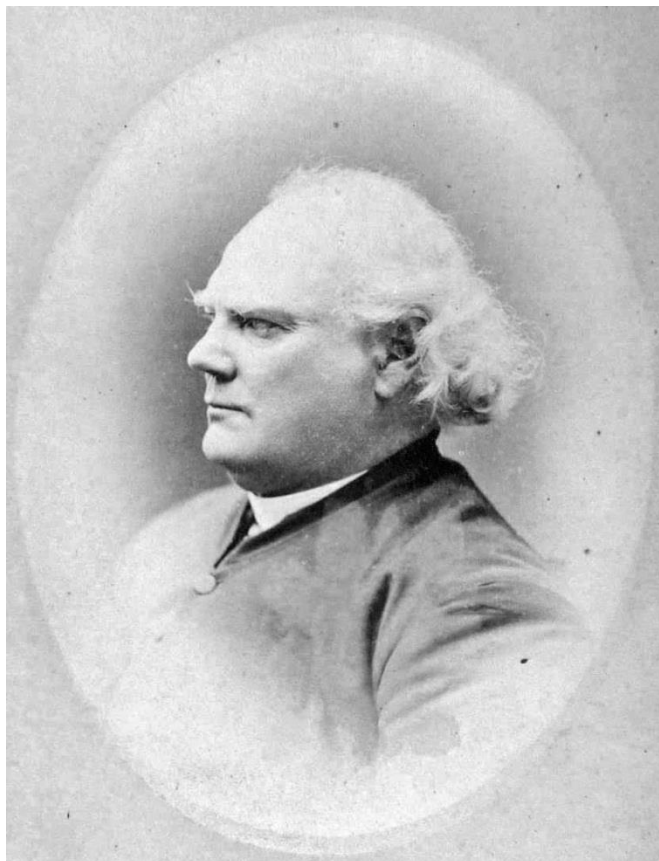
Several other entries show the churchwardens giving account of the parish funds, for example:

The 7th April one thousand eight hundred thirty-four, the churchwardens in charge last year appeared before me and rendered their accounts, in which the expenditure comes to £21/11/10 and the receipts to £11/1/0 which has been added to the sum in the strong-box as above-mentioned which comes to £58/11/4 which makes up in all that of £69/12/4.

Two mysterious entries, the second dated 1839, concern sums to be sent to Canada (probably Quebec); as both sums are large and the second is no less than £116. It is likely that they were to be used to buy church furnishings of some kind.

A final undated note, possibly also written in 1839, records that “For Sunday the 13th for first Communion in this parish 61 French & Irish children.”

Part II -- 1843-1886



Father Peter McIntyre. This is the only known photo of Fr. McIntyre while still a priest. Photo: private collection

The first resident priest of Tignish arrived in the summer of 1843. He was Father Peter McIntyre, a native of St. Peter's, King's County, who had studied at Quebec and had been ordained there earlier in the year. His official position was that of assistant to Father Perrey, who was in poor health, and his field included all the missions of West Prince County -- Cascumpeque, Lot 7, and Brae. In the following year, Father McIntyre became the first pastor of Tignish. One of the first notes in his handwriting in the Parish Register states that in July 1843, 76 French children received their First Communion and, on 16 August, 40 Irish children. Incidentally, this note, like all entries in the registers up to 28 March 1845, is in French. After that date, everything is in English, including the Christian names of nearly everyone mentioned, no matter what their origin.

Early in his pastorate, Father McIntyre improved the appearance and fittings of the church considerably. The improvements are not mentioned in detail in any of our sources but consisted at least of painting the interior; the work was done by the firm of McLellan Brothers, Georgetown. Perhaps it was at this time that the following undated note in the Parish Register was written:

Received for a funeral cloth to be brought from Rustico from Zosime Perry £1/15/0 from Joseph Gaudet £1/5/0 from Joseph Richard £4/1/3 from Francis Buote £2/10/0 cash

P. McIntyre

Father McIntyre was equally interested in seeing that the missions under his care had suitable buildings. One of the first acts of his independent jurisdiction was to organize a committee of Lot 7 for the purpose of taking the preliminary steps towards the building of a new church. In 1848, he had a church built at Brae, Lot 9.

...to encourage them in the enterprise, he himself practically assumed the task of superintending the work. A droll experience it must have been, for even in his old age he loved to speak of the difficulties that attended the undertaking, as well as the ingenuity displayed by the good people in devising ways and means. They were not carpenters in the received sense of the word, nor indeed mechanics of any kind. In the matter of building appliances they possessed little more than the axe and the shovel. But what they wanted in conveniences they made up in ingenuity, and on certain days, as Father McIntyre arrived at the scene of the building operations, he found some men dexterously laying mortar with trowels made from the pieces of an old broken saw. (Macmillan, *History of the Catholic Church in Prince Edward Island*, Quebec, 1913; p. 75)

In the Parish Register is preserved a letter in Latin from Bishop Bernard Donald MacDonald, dated at Tignish, 1st of July 1849. It is concerned with the placing of the Stations of the Cross in the church, in accordance with instructions received by the Bishop from Pius IX. Since the Pope had ordered Stations to be placed in every church in the diocese of Charlottetown, we may assume that few, if any churches had had them before and that this is when Tignish first acquired a set. In the

autumn of 1851, Father McIntyre had an organ installed in the church -- probably the first organ in Tignish and certainly the finest one in the diocese at that time.

Now there were nearly 300 Acadian and Irish families in the parish and a much larger church was needed. Furthermore, the centre of the district was now some distance inland, at the present site of the village of Tignish, and thus the existing church was no longer in a convenient location for most parishioners. When Father McIntyre decided to build one that would not only be adequate for the needs of the parish, but equal to if not better than any hitherto built in the diocese, he was asked how he expected to carry out such a project in parish so far from wealthy. He answered, "With the obedience and good will of my parishioners." His methods are described as follows in the *Impartial Illustré*, p. 10:

Never did he order severely; never did he take to himself absolute sway over the enterprise. From his oldest and most responsible parishioners he chose a committee of twelve whom he brought together on all important occasions. He listened with the greatest goodwill to all the ideas which these councillors had to suggest and after having passed with them the resolutions which tended most advantageously to the forwarding of the project, he sent these councillors back to the different districts which had been assigned to them so as to inform all the parish of what had happened in the council and with orders to find out exactly the attitude of the people and to return and give an account of it at the next meeting of the committee.

When someone pointed out that it would be simpler for him to make all the arrangements himself, he replied, smiling:

The father who wants to be respected and who wants to deserve the confidence of his children must inform them of his intentions when it is a question of their interests. A parish is a family; the pastor is the father; the parishioners are the children.

Among other matters, this committee arranged for various groups of the parishioners to provide the different building materials. Except for the grey stone used in the trimmings at the top of the buttresses and the slates for the roof, both now removed, all the building materials were found within the parish itself and assembled by the parishioners. This work of assembling and preparing materials

took place in 1856. Over half a million bricks were made at Hughes' brickyard which stood about a half a mile south of the village. The following description of how the bricks were made is taken from the Souvenir programme prepared for the 1960 centennial of the Church:

The method used was primitive, but the results lasting. The clay was dug and placed in what was called a pug-mill. This contained staves and blades. The power used was furnished by a horse going round and round to rotate the blades. The mass of clay was then taken out, mixed with shore sand and kneaded like bread, placed in wooden moulds, wheeled to a "hake" where the wind swept through the layers of brick, partly drying them. A kiln was built, lined with brick and covered with sod. Huge sticks of hardwood were burned to bake the brick.

Stones for the foundation were brought by boat from Lot 7 to Nail Pond, then hauled by horses to Tignish. The twelve pillars each consist of one tree "cut out of the virgin forest on the Center Line Road, and shaped with hand tools." (1960 Centennial) These were cut by young men of the parish during the winter and hauled to the building site on four bob-sleds each. One huge oak, nearly six feet in diameter, cut near Harpers Railroad Station, supplied enough wood for all the original wainscoting, now covered with plywood. Gravel was brought from Miminigash, as was stone from a lime quarry there, which was also hauled to Tignish by the young men and made into lime. Sand was brought from local shores. A New York architect, P.C. Kielly (Keely), drew the plans and sent an assistant to supervise the construction. A heating system, said to have consisted of stoves raised on framework above the pews in the side aisles was to be installed. McLellan Brothers, by now of Summerside, were responsible for the interior work. It was craftsmen employed by them, such as William Profit who later settled in the parish, who carried out the carving and finished woodwork and built the spiral staircase to the organ loft. The actual building is said to have taken only fourteen months, but it is not clear what work went on continuously or when men could take time from farming.



William Profit – Photo: Tignish Arts Foundation Collection

Some sources give 1857, others 1859 for the actual beginning of construction.

Meanwhile, in 1857, Father McIntyre was sent to Montreal by the Bishop to arrange for members of some teaching order of nuns to come to the Island. A few weeks later, in September, he returned with four sisters of the Congregation de Notre-Dame, who, almost immediately, opened a school in Charlottetown. In the following year, he acquired his first assistant, Father Fortunat Aubry, also from the Diocese of Montreal.

The first large-scale religious ceremony in the parish of Tignish took place on the 9th of June 1859. It was the blessing of a cornerstone for the new church. The stone was shaped from a huge granite boulder found in a field near Kildare Cape and selected by Father McIntyre himself. The Bishop of Charlottetown, whose health was failing, was not present but the Bishop of Arichat, Nova Scotia came to the Island for the purpose and six other priests also came for the ceremony.

At Charlottetown he (the Bishop) was met by Father McIntyre and conveyed by carriage along the Western Road to Tignish... The first day's journey brought them as far as St. Eleanor's where they passed the night, and on the following morning they resumed their travel and about noon reached

Cascumpec where they were met by crowds of people from the neighbouring settlements, who formed into procession and swiftly made their way towards Tignish. As they neared their destination the bell of the little church rang out a glad note of welcome, guns were fired at regular intervals and the people clad in holiday attire lined the highway on either side to catch a glimpse of the Bishop and clergy. (Macmillan, *History 1835-1891*, p. 114)

As soon as they arrived, the Bishop gave solemn Benediction and the following morning he blessed the corner-stone, laid it in place, celebrated Pontifical High Mass and preached the sermon.

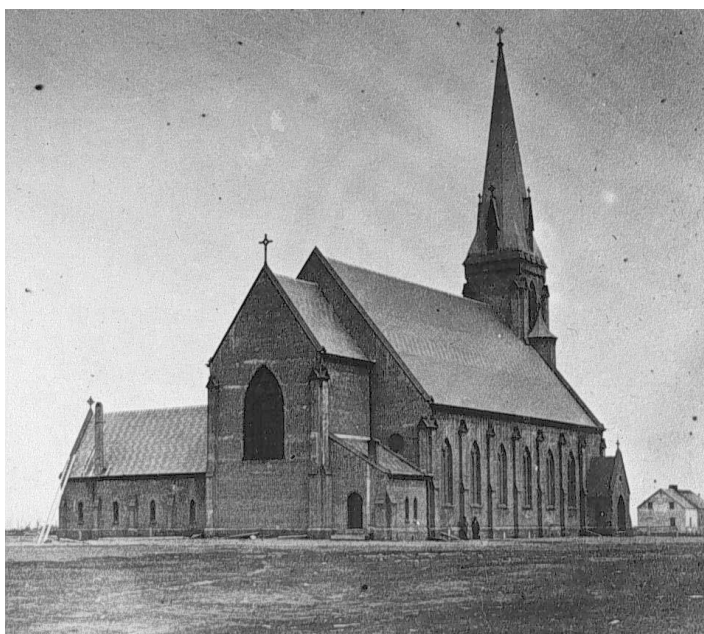
In spite of drizzling rain during the morning, everything went according to plan. The proceedings throughout were highly successful, and particularly so from a financial standpoint; for the collection broke all previous records and added corresponding breadth and depth to the usual pleasant smiles of the genial Father McIntyre. (MacMillan, *History 1835-1891*, p. 115)



The newly-consecrated Bishop Peter McIntyre. Photo by Notman in the McCord Museum collection, Montreal.

Before the church was entirely finished, the Bishop died, and Father McIntyre became third Bishop of Charlottetown. His consecration was the first to take place on the Island and was also notable in that his lifelong friend, Father J. Rogers of Halifax, who had just been appointed first Bishop of Chatham, New Brunswick, was consecrated at the same time. The ceremony took place on 15 August, 1860 and on Sunday the 19th the dedication of Tignish church took place. Bishop McIntyre had invited all the clergy who had been present at his consecration to come to Tignish with him and the majority accepted his invitation, Archbishop Connolly of Halifax and three other bishops among them. The ceremonies began at half -past seven in the morning and were followed by Pontifical High Mass.

The occasion brought together a great concourse of people from all the missions of the far west, many of whom could not gain admittance to the church, and on that account were unable to follow the proceedings as closely and as intelligently as they would desire. For the benefit of these a platform was erected in front of the church, and immediately after mass Archbishop Connolly ascended the steps and delivered an address which was listened to with the greatest attention by the vast multitude who filled the open space in front of the sacred edifice. (MacMillan, *History 1835-1891*, p. 157)



Photos of the newly-constructed church taken by Henry Cundall in 1860. Photo: DuVernet Album, PEI Museum & Heritage Foundation. PARO

We do not know exactly when in that year the church was finished. The only information, or perhaps better tradition, on that subject is that when all was finished, one of the young men “stood on his head on top of the steeple where the cross now stands, in sheer joy of work well done, then calmly slid down a rope to the ground” (1960 Centennial booklet) As for Bishop McIntyre, he continued to visit Tignish frequently for the rest of his life. He had previously bought a property, situated about five minutes’ walk north of the church, on which stood a house suitable for use as a Parish House and he also owned a large piece of land extending from where the Bank now stands to the Lady-Slipper Drive. These he retained for many years, although with the building of the present parish house in 1872 the old parish house became a private residence, as it still is.

Bishop McIntyre's place as pastor was taken first by Father Roy, a priest from Quebec who had been in the diocese of Charlottetown for about a year and who lived at Cascumpeque, and then briefly by Father Quevillon, a priest from Montreal, and Father D.S. MacDonald. Finally in November 1861, the newly ordained Father Dugald M. MacDonald, of St. Andrew’s, King’s County, was sent to the parish, where he remained until 1863.



Father Dugald M. MacDonald Photo: Tignish Arts Foundation collection.

By this time, the parish of St. Simon and St. Jude comprised only the inhabitants of what are now Tignish and Palmer Road. The other missions of West Prince County had become parishes within a few years of one another and the pastor no longer had to spend much of his time travelling.

Father Dugald J. MacIsaac, a newly ordained priest from China Point, P.E.I., became pastor in 1863 and stayed until 1867, when Father Dugald M. MacDonald returned to remain until 1923.

A list of cash paid for pew rents in 1865-1866 gives the typical rent as one pound ten shillings, but it was apparently, possible for families to share pews, as some paid only fifteen shillings.

Bishop McIntyre took a keen interest in education on all levels. While pastor of Tignish, he had himself taught Classics to promising boys from the parish and missions. He arranged to have a convent built in Tignish, so that Sisters of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame might open a day and boarding school there too. Contributions in goods and money ranging from one pound ten shillings to one shilling and six pence were made by the parishioners towards the building of the Convent. For example, we find in the Parish Register of the period a note in Bishop McIntyre's hand to the effect that contributions as of 3rd August 1867 came to twelve pounds, fifteen shillings and six pence. He then adds:

This amount may have been paid in produce fish or butter or to some of the merchants with whom the Convent has a running account. It is however, entered in Mr. MacIsaac's books and in his own handwriting as cash payment.

In the summer of 1868, the convent building was finished and dedicated to Our Lady of the Angels. It had much the same outward appearance as it has to-day and was stocked with "enough provisions of all kinds, including firewood, to last the year", in preparation for the arrival of Sisters from Montreal. The first three Sisters were Sister St. Antoinette, who was to be the first Superior, Sister St. Joseph of Nazareth, who was to teach English and Music, and Sister St. Adelard, who was to teach French. Father Dugald M. MacDonald met them at Summerside and escorted them to Tignish, where Bishop McIntyre was waiting to welcome them. On October 14, classes began; the number of pupils is variously given, but the Convent's own records state that there were eleven day-pupils and three boarders

and that the number of the latter had increased to twenty-two by December. The first Mass was celebrated in the Convent chapel on 21 February 1869, by Father Angus MacDonald, then Rector of St. Dunstan's College, just after the blessing of the house and the consecration of the altar had taken place. In the spring, the Sisters began their work in the parish itself by helping to prepare children for their First Holy Communion and preparing other children for enrolment in the Societies of the Infant Jesus, the Guardian Angels and the Children of Mary.



The Convent photographed from the church spire in 1926. Photo: Tignish Arts Foundation collection.

The following events from the earliest days of the Convent illustrate not only Bishop McIntyre's careful following up of his establishment of the Sisters in Tignish, but also his continuing interest in and fondness for the parish itself. At the official closing of the first school year on July 17, 1869 not only was he himself present, but Bishop Rogers of Chatham and Father Sylvain Perrey as well as a number of distinguished lay people were in attendance also.

Before their departure, Bishop McIntyre suggested that all the Sisters on the Island make their annual retreat in Tignish. The thoughtful Bishop knew that this would give the Sisters an opportunity to visit the new Convent and also to enjoy a few days of relaxation in his beloved Tignish.

For Bishop McIntyre to have a suggestion accepted was the impetus needed to bring it to fruition. Accordingly in true princely fashion, he sent his own coachman with his double seated carriage to drive the Charlottetown Sisters to their retreat in Tignish. The driver had instructions to remain until the Sisters desired to return. Fourteen sisters made the retreat preached by Father Dugald M. MacDonald, lasting from July 30 to August 6. This was followed by a week's vacation. (Convent Centennial souvenir book, p. 14)

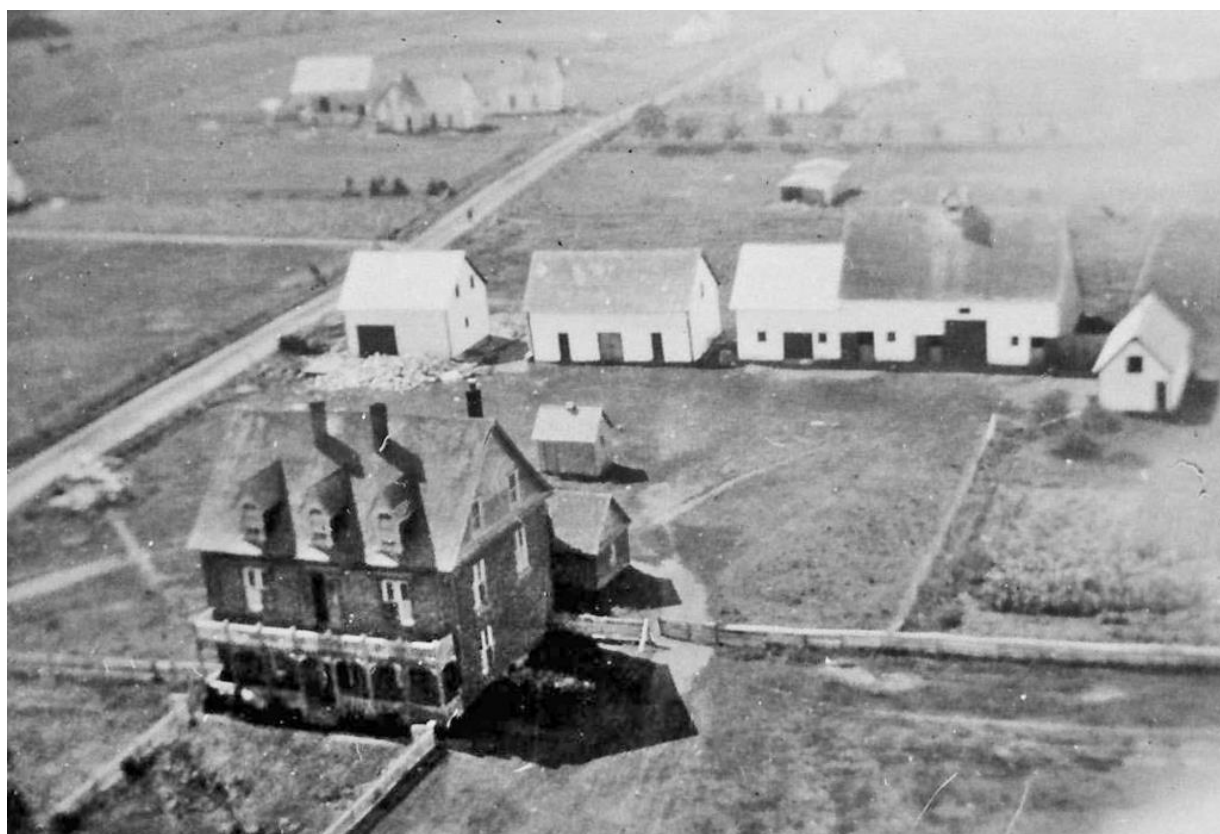
Several years later, when the railway was first being constructed on the Island, the Bishop promised to take the Sisters and boarders of the Charlottetown Convent to visit Tignish as soon as trains were running there. Accordingly, on 18 May 1875, the trip took place and seventeen Sisters, seventy-five boarders (from Charlottetown, Summerside and Miscouche), the Bishop and three priests paid a short visit to the Tignish Convent.

Meanwhile, in 1870, the mission of the Immaculate Conception was founded at Palmer Road.

....the people residing in and around Tignish had increased with marvellous rapidity, and many were obliged to move away in quest of places whereon to erect homes. Not wishing to go a great distance from their kindred, they took up lands on Lots Two and Three which up to this time had been only sparsely settled. (MacMillan: *History 1835-1891*; pp. 291-2)

Encouraged by Father Dugald M. MacDonald, they built a little church in which Mass was first said in the autumn of 1870.

In 1872, Father Dugald M. MacDonald built the present parish house of Tignish, putting the last touch to the striking picture which that part of the village presents, scarcely changed, to this day.



The Parish House as it appeared in 1926, photographed from the church steeple. Photo: Tignish Arts Foundation collection.

We do not find mention of important events in the parish for the next few years. However, we may note in passing that when the partly constructed church in Alberton, the first to be built there when Cascumpeque had ceased to be the centre of that district blew down, the people of Tignish helped to build it up again. Mention too should be made of the second native of Tignish to be ordained: Father Jean Chaisson, D.D., later Rector of St. Dunstan's College. This took place in 1878 and in the same year Father Sylvain Perrey celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination and retired to Egmont Bay, where he died in 1887 and is buried.

The Confraternity of the Scapular of Mount Carmel was organized in the parish in 1880 and, by the end of that year, it had 536 members.

Two events of importance in the life of the parish occurred in 1882. First, Palmer Road became a separate parish under Father A.J. Trudelle leaving Tignish parish with the boundaries it has to-day. Secondly, the present pipe organ was installed by Father Dugald M. MacDonald in Tignish church. It was the one hundred and twenty-ninth organ, made by L. Mitchell of Montreal, and costing \$2,400.00. It has tracker action, two manuals, nineteen speaking stops, nine auxiliary stops (manual and pedal couplers, tremolo, pedal check, etc...), three separate wind chests, (one for each of the manuals, Swell and Great Organ, plus a separate wind chest for the full Pedal section). The smallest pipe is approximately eight inches high; the largest pipe measures sixteen feet in height and has a perimeter of fifty-two inches. Until the mid-nineteen-fifties, it was pumped by hand.



The Mitchell organ in 1970. Photo: Tignish Arts Foundation collection.

In 1885, or possibly 1888, the interior painting of the church was completed. In 1886, the larger of the present two bells was blessed and installed in the steeple. This bell, weighing 2100 lbs. was manufactured by McShane Bell Foundry of Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A. in 1886 and is the one familiar to all residents and visitors as it was until recent years used three times daily to ring the Angelus, as well as to ring death knells and announce the Sunday Masses. The smaller bell is dated 1836, came from abroad and is inscribed “Cowgill & Comer Fecit, Liverpool”. It is not known when it was blessed and installed in the steeple. A third bell is believed to have been given to the parish of Palmer Road some years ago.



The church bells. Photo: Tignish Arts Foundation collection.

When, in 1885, Bishop McIntyre celebrated the Silver Jubilee of his consecration, he received the following address from the Parish of Tignish:

There are two principal reasons why the people of Tignish should be represented here on this festive occasion. First, because they yield to the inhabitants of no other parish in this diocese, either in their love, respect and loyalty to their Bishop, or in their attachment to the holy religion of which Your Lordship is the chief exponent, and highest representative in the Province; and secondly, because it has been their invaluable privilege to have had Your Lordship as pastor for many years prior to your appointment to the Episcopal See of Charlottetown. The ties of love and friendship towards Your Lordship

that were then formed in the breasts of your spiritual children, are as fresh and firm today as they were twenty-five years ago, when you left Tignish to take up your residence permanently in Charlottetown.

During these happy years the people of that district saw the earnestness with which you always laboured to promote the interests of religion in your parish; how you strove in season and out of season to sow in the minds of your spiritual children the wholesome seeds of sound doctrine, and how untiring and persevering were your efforts to erect to the honour and glory of God the beautiful brick church -- the first of the kind built in this Province -- which will ever remain as a standing monument of Your Lordship's zeal and cultivated taste, as well as an evident proof of the cordial relations and good understanding existing between yourself and parishioners. In view of these and many other facts of a kindred nature that might be here stated, it is not surprising to find in Tignish, even at this day, so much warmth of feeling towards one who had, by his many virtues and social qualities, endeared himself to all those under his pastoral care. (MacMillan, *History 1835-1891*; pp. 437-8)

With this event and a brief mention of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Father Dugald M. MacDonald's ordination in the following year, another period in the history of the parish seems to come logically to an end. The church, convent and connected buildings had taken on the appearance they have retained almost to this day and so, it seems, had the life of the parish. From that time until very recent years there were no pioneering ventures or remarkable developments of any kind; the parish of Tignish continued on its way, in spite of intellectual, economic and political changes, which affected it only indirectly.

Part III -- 1887-1956

The last part of the nineteenth century appears to have been a time of few incidents in the life of the parish of Tignish. The Parish Register gives us a glimpse of this life. It shows, for instance, ninety-six first communions in 1887 and another group of twenty-five, who may have been adults. These figures are typical of the period. Regular records of burials also began to be kept in 1887 and we may note that the ages of the old people are usually approximate in these entries until the very end of the century. The following is not a typical extract, but shows that people whose memories went back to the beginning of the century were still living at this time, "On the 13th March 1889, James Fitzgerald, a man of about a hundred years of age, was interred today..." By this time, the population of the parish seems to have been nearly equally divided between families of Acadian, and those of Irish origin. In 1889, for example, fifty-three French-speaking children received First Communion together and, a little later in the year, forty-five English-speaking ones. The majority of the entries of marriages note that the parties had to be dispensed from the impediment of consanguinity, usually in the third or fourth degree and sometimes double. Again in 1889, there were 105 births, twenty-four deaths and twenty-one marriages in the parish. It is noteworthy that the number of marriages varies little throughout the late nineteenth century, but the number of births goes as high as 162 in 1879 and as low as eighty-nine in 1899.

Father Dugald M. MacDonald remained pastor throughout this period, assisted by a series of younger priests.

As regards the church, we find the following note in the Parish Register:

By virtue of faculties granted to me on the 31st May 1883 by the Superior-general of the Franciscan Order at Rome and which were duly approved by Rt. Rev. P. McIntyre Bishop of Charlottetown, I have this tenth day of September 1891, erected in the Church of Saints Simon and Jude of Tignish, the Stations of the Cross and attached thereto all the indulgences granted by the Church to that devotion.

This is the set of stations which hung in the side chapel until recent years. A Latin note in the Register, dated 30 June 1894, tells us that the bishop (Rt. Rev. J.C. McDonald, who succeeded Bishop McIntyre in 1891) had had Stations of the

Cross set up also; this set cost \$600.00 and was one of only three such sets in Canada. It still hangs in the church. Also, before 1895 furnaces were installed in the Church and Parish House.

The *Association du Rosaire Perpetuel* was organized in the Parish in 1889 and the *Ligue du Sacré-Coeur* in 1893. By 1899, at least two other parish organizations, the *Ligue de la Croix* and the *Dames de la Sainte-Famille* were also in existence.

When the village of Tignish celebrated its centennial on 19 July 1899, there must have been special Masses and other ceremonies in the Church, but we have so far been unable to find any specific details of them.



Photo of the church and congregation believed to have been taken during the 1899 Centennial celebrations. Photo: Tignish Arts Foundation Collection.

An important result of the village centennial was the first collection and publication of material relative to the history of both parish and village in the

special number of the *Impartial* newspaper which had been published in Tignish since 1893, known as the *Impartial Illustré*. At that time, many people were living who could remember not only Father McIntyre's pastorate, but also the mission period under Father Perrey. Tradition about the earliest days must have been widespread and detailed, considering how much is still known to-day by those who were children in 1899.



Father Alexander J. MacDougall. Photo: Tignish Arts Foundation collection.

The year 1900 was marked by the arrival in September of Father Alexander J. MacDougall, widely remembered as "Father Mac." By this time, Father MacDonald had been thirty-nine years a priest and, although he continued to be active for many years, he stood in need of an assistant who would stay longer and take over more duties than is common with newly-ordained men. Father MacDougall was thirty-nine at this time, but had been a priest only seven years. In addition to strictly pastoral duties, he devoted much time to training the choir

which became known as “one of the best in the Maritimes”. He also taught Latin in the Convent school from 1903 on.

Although the number of births and marriages drops sharply in this first decade of the twentieth century -- in 1909, for example, there were only seventy-four of the former and fifteen of the latter -- there are almost as many families in the parish as there were fifty years later; a Parish Census list, undated, but belonging to this period, lists 399. From 1908 to 1914, there were so many notes in the Parish Register recording marriages of parishioners solemnized elsewhere, usually in Maine, Massachusetts or New Brunswick, that it would seem that the parish must have ceased to grow in those years. Similar records, of course, appear before and after those dates, but not in such numbers.



Father Dugald M. Macdonald's Golden Jubilee celebration 1911. Photo: Tignish Arts Foundation collection.

On 21 November 1911, the fiftieth anniversary of Father Dugald M. MacDonald's ordination took place. He was made a Domestic Prelate to the Pope, Pius X, an honorary position which gave him the title of Monsignor.

In 1913, we find the following note in the Register, by the fifth Bishop of Charlottetown, Henry J. O'Leary:

On the 29th day of June 1913 we performed our episcopal visitation in the Church of St. Simon and St. Jude and in St. Joseph's Convent (Our Lady of the Angels Convent) and found everything in a most satisfactory condition... Our reception by the people of Tignish was truly a most enthusiastic one.

The decade 1911-1921 was marked by no less than three jubilees -- Father Dugald M. MacDonald's fiftieth and sixtieth in 1911 and 1921 and Father Alexander J. MacDougall's twenty-fifth in 1918. The following extracts from a souvenir booklet prepared for the last-named occasion give a detailed picture of how these occasions were celebrated:

Wednesday, June 25, 1918, was a day long to be remembered in Tignish. In the early hours of the day throngs of people wended their way towards the spacious Church of St. Simon and Jude, till at 9 o'clock a.m. upwards of 1,200 were present...

At nine o'clock Solemn High Mass was celebrated by the Jubilarian... Rev. P.C. Gauthier, D.D., assisted the very efficient choir, led by Mr. J.J. Chiasson.

The church was very tastefully decorated for the occasion.

Then followed addresses in French and English with the presentation of purses containing "\$250.00 in silver, \$10.00 for each year of the Jubilarian's priesthood"

The following quotations from the addresses will give some further details of Father MacDougall's work and the impression it made on the parishioners:

Your noble efforts to make the worship of God solemn and impressive are well known; also under your direction, chant and sacred music have reached a degree of perfection which it is difficult to find elsewhere, and your piety has

understood how to give the religious ceremonies of our parish, a pomp and brilliance worthy of admiration... (from the French address)

For eighteen years you have shared the toils and the labors of our venerable and most revered pastor, Monsignor MacDonald. You have always shown yourself ready and willing to take up the burden which weighed heavy upon our dear pastor, who had for so long and so faithfully borne it. In return he has been to you a counsellor and a friend, and to him you have been a faithful and efficient assistant and a cheering companion. To us you have ever been a father, kind to the wayward, sympathetic to the afflicted, mindful of the poor, faithful attendant of the sick, and a friend to all.

Neither are we unmindful of what you have accomplished with regard to the education of our children. A real teacher by taste and profession, your teaching in our convent school was a labor of love. The young ladies who had the good fortune to come under your tuition in this institution will ever be grateful to you for the training you gave them, and will ever associate their success in other institutions of learning and in the teaching profession with the name of dear Father Mac... (from the English address)

The reply of Father MacDougall to these addresses is summarized in the souvenir booklet and also fills in some of the gaps in our picture of the parish during the First World War:

On all occasions when they (the parishioners) were called upon to do good, they responded in a manner that surpassed other localities. For instance, when asked, some years ago, at the outbreak of the World War, to contribute oats for patriotic purposes, their response was 1,500 bushels of oats, with \$1,500.00 cash to defray expenses of its trans-shipment. From the very inception of the War the Red Cross workers here have been indefatigable in their good work. When, last year, the big drive was made for subscriptions to the Patriotic Fund, the Tignish Poll alone, not including all the Parish, magnanimously donated upwards of \$1,500.00, the largest... of any Poll in the Province....

See the throngs that attend Divine Service; ALL are present regularly, rain or shine, no fair weather Christians among you. You are constantly increasing in religious fervor. From 10,000 communions but a few years ago, 40,000

approached the Holy Table in 1917, and up to this date, this year, we have had 29,000. So that for 1918 we expect close to 60,000 communions. I have only to say that we would wish a little more work of this kind: hearing confessions; attending sick, of which there were 187 last year, and giving Holy Communion...

In the afternoon of that same day, “the many young ladies, who had been taught Latin by the Jubilarian waited upon (him), presenting him with a well filled purse” ...and an address in Latin.

By 1921, Father Dugald M. MacDonald, now well over eighty, had for several years been leaving the larger part of the parish work to Father MacDougall. In the Parish Register, for instance, we find him only officiating at marriages though at a surprisingly large proportion of these, and entering the records in an almost illegible hand. On 22 November 1921, the sixtieth anniversary of his ordination was marked by a Pontifical High Mass, sung by Bishop Louis James O’Leary, with sermons in both languages one after the Gospel, one after the Communion and addresses in French and English read immediately after the Mass. “To these Mgr. MacDonald replied in both languages with very chosen words of thanks”, says Bishop O’Leary in his account of the proceedings in the Parish Register. He continues: “We then addressed the people and the Rt. Rev. Jubilarian in both languages expressing our joy and pleasure in taking part in so splendid a celebration.”

It was in the following year that the Convent became a public school with a Board of Trustees under the Provincial Department of Education, giving Grades I-X to girls only until 1933.

The year 1923 saw great changes in the parish. The first was the illness and death of Father Alexander J. MacDougall. A note in the Parish Register gives the details:

Father MacDougall became sick on Monday Feb. 26th after returning from a sick call and he was attended by Dr. ’s Johnston and MacMillan also had two trained nurses. Bronchial pneumonia developed rapidly and on Saturday March 3rd at 9:15 P.M. he passed away. Elaborate funeral preparations were made but a terrible snowstorm came on. Trains were cancelled and only a few priests

could attend. The last rites of the Church were administered by Rev. P.C. Gautier. Final absolution by Mgr. MacDonald.

Father MacDougall was buried in Tignish cemetery on 8 March 1923 with eight priests in attendance in spite of the continuance of the storm. His tombstone which is the biggest and one of the finest in the entire cemetery stands in a prominent position on the right side near the front with the following inscription:

In memoriam
Rev. Alexander J. MacDougall
Born February 20, 1861,
Ordained priest
June 25, 1893,
Died March 3, 1923

Lovingly erected by the people
of Tignish in recognition of
twenty-two years of consecrated
service

Requiescat in pace

Monsignor MacDonald retired a little later in the year to Charlottetown, where he died in 1925. He too, was buried in Tignish cemetery. This monument, a Celtic cross of reddish granite is on the left side not far from the entrance, but the inscription is now difficult to read, and we accordingly give it here:

Sacred to the memory of
Rt. Rev. Mgr. Dugald M. MacDonald
a native of the Parish of St. Andrew's P.E.I.
Born July 21, 1838
Ordained Priest Nov. 21, 1861
Made a Domestic Prelate Nov. 21, 1911
Died Dec. 15, 1925
R.I.P.

The Beloved pastor of St. Simon and St. Jude Parish Tignish P.E.I. for 50years.

His place as pastor was taken by Father G. J. MacLellan, whose assistant was the present pastor Father Michael J. Rooney, then newly ordained.

Father McLellan kept regular notes of the number of births, deaths and marriages each year. These seem to indicate that the parish remained much the same size as it had been at the beginning of the century. For example, his figures for 1923 are: births sixty-four, deaths twenty-eight and marriages six, while for 1930, the last complete year he spent in Tignish, the figures are: births sixty-seven, deaths twenty-eight, marriages fifteen.

A note by Bishop O'Leary in the Parish Register mentions the setting up of the Stations of the Cross in the Convent on 17 July 1924.

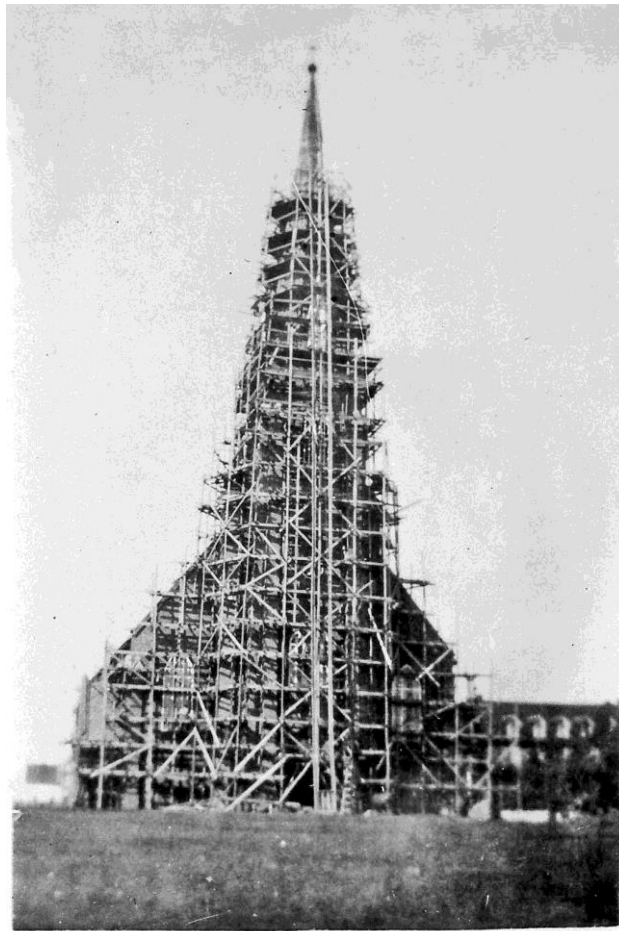


Bishop Leo Nelligan. Photo: Tignish Arts Foundation collection

The first ordination to the priesthood to take place in the parish was the main event of 1925. It was held on the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity, 7 June, with the Bishop celebrating Mass and the Archbishop of Edmonton, Alberta, many other clergy and “a very large concourse of the faithful” present. The new priests were Father John Buote, who was ordained for the diocese of Charlottetown and Father Leo Nelligan, (since 1935 Bishop Nelligan), ordained “with proper dimissionals

for the Archdiocese of Edmonton”. Father Buote was a native of the parish, having been born at St. Felix. He died in 1941 and is buried in the parish cemetery where his grave can be seen next to that of Father Dugald M. MacDonald. Father Nelligan was also a native of Tignish and had taught school in the village before studying for the priesthood. He is the only native of the parish to have become a bishop, and has now retired to the University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario. The newly ordained priests remained in the parish for some days and several baptisms are recorded as having been administered by them.

On that same day, Bishop O’Leary rededicated the old Stations of the Cross dating from 1883 which had been placed in the side chapel. As only the side chapel was heated on week-days during the cold weather, Father McLellan had decided to make it possible for the faithful to make the Way of the Cross there.



The church covered with scaffolding, 1926. Photo: Tignish Arts Foundation collection

It was in 1926 that the steeple was re-covered with copper, and some time afterwards the old slate roof was replaced by one of shingles. In or about 1929, cement ornaments at the tops of the buttresses replaced the original stone ones. That same year an authentic relic of St. Simon was presented to the church.



Relic of Saint Simon. Photo: Tignish Arts Foundation collection.

Father McLellan published detailed annual statements which make interesting reading and incidentally give a clear idea of how the value of money has changed since that time. In 1929 for instance, 428 people contributed by means of envelopes. A good average contribution was fifteen dollars, with sums as low as five cents and as high as \$110.00 being listed. The parish debt was \$10,400.00 and its receipts were \$9,282.14. The organist received \$110.00, the organ blower \$67.00 and the sexton \$550.70. Lightning rods had been installed that year at a cost of \$200.00. Everything was insured, the church for \$45,000.00, the organ for \$2,000.00, the parochial buildings and furniture for \$8,500.00 and the school (the second church building) for \$1,000.00.

On the First Sunday in Advent, 1931, Father MacLellan's departure from Tignish for Summerside was marked by addresses in French and English "both

written on a large parchment sheet, in script print surrounded by a border of wheat and grapes... in the centre of which was a hand-painting of Tignish church..." and the presentation of "... a beautiful morocco purse inscribed with letters of gold and well filled with bank notes..." The church was filled to capacity. A note on the music from this same newspaper account adds that "On account of it being the First Sunday of Advent, the organ was not played, but the full choir under the masterful direction of J.J. Chaisson rendered the First Advent Mass and the solos thereto were sung with impressive effect by Messrs. Adrien Richard and Henry Gallant."

Father John A. MacDonald succeeded Father McLellan as pastor. Not long after his arrival in February 1932, we hear of him walking to the scene of the great train wreck to bring the Last Sacraments to the victims. A son of one of the victims was to be ordained in Tignish a few years later, in 1936. He was Father Oswald Murphy, ordained on 7 June that year and now in the United States.

The years of the Depression were not the time for great changes or splendid ceremonies. The parish remained much the same size, according to statistics kept by Father John A. MacDonald in these early years of his pastorate. We find for example, that in 1932 there were seventy-one births, thirty deaths and ten marriages, while in 1939, almost the last year in which he made such notes, there were sixty-seven births and fifteen marriages; the number of deaths is not recorded.

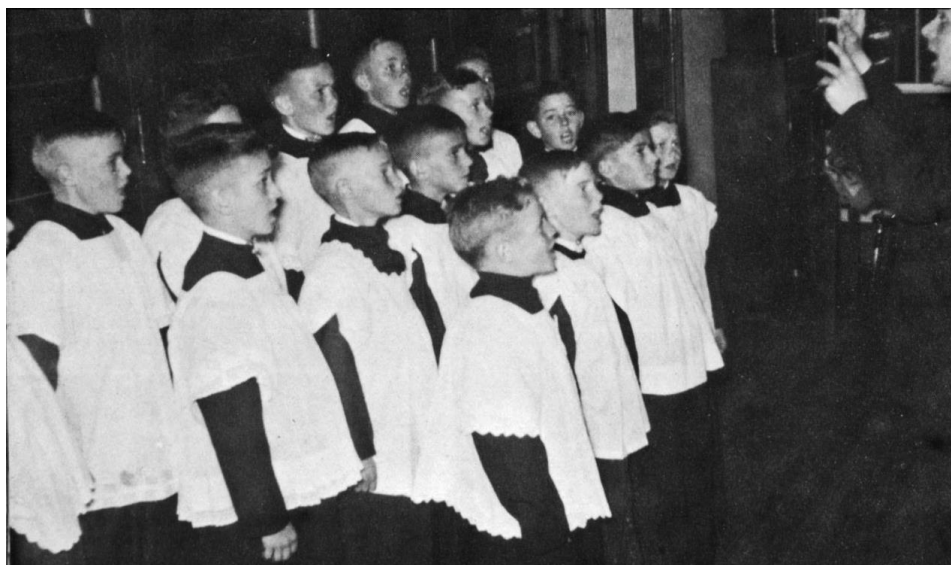
In 1938, Father John A. MacDonald would appear to have been away, probably due to illness, from May to December. During that period, his assistant Father J.N. Trainor, was in charge.

When the Second World War broke out in 1939, its impact was not immediately felt on the parish. However, for several years after 1942, there were no assistants in the parish, due, no doubt, to the departure of the younger clergy for the Armed Forces. As a result of the War and the Depression, the finances of the parish suffered considerably and most of the farmland belonging to the church had to be sold.

The church building too, began to need repairs and renovations. During the years 1950-52, it was entirely redecorated inside by parishioners and former members of the parish. The ceiling of the main body of the church which had been

in the traditional design of dark blue with gold stars was painted in greys and creams, like the walls, with a design adapted by the decorators, Adrian Richard, Harold Cormier and Alonzo McInnis, from those on the walls and the ceiling of the side aisles. The Stations of the Cross were taken down and repainted by Miss Mary Shelfoon and rearranged so that all were in the nave of the church, whereas previously the first and last were in the sanctuary. The statues were repainted by Alma Buote. Only the large paintings in the sanctuary and the Twelve Apostles were left untouched except for being washed. One elderly parishioner claimed not to have seen them clearly for fifty years.

Father John A. MacDonald's last assistant arrived in 1951. He was Father Denis Gallant, now pastor of St. Ann's, Hope River, who remained for about five years and whose assistantship was marked by a great development in the sphere of church music. Soon after his arrival he selected about twenty boys with fine voices and, by vigorous daily training, chiefly in Gregorian Chant, brought them to such a level of achievement that they became widely known, attended many music festivals on the Island and invariably won all the prizes open to them. The men's choir, originally trained by Father MacDougall, was also still in existence and there was a girls' choir which sang hymns, and which was briefly taken over by Father Gallant towards the end of his stay in Tignish.

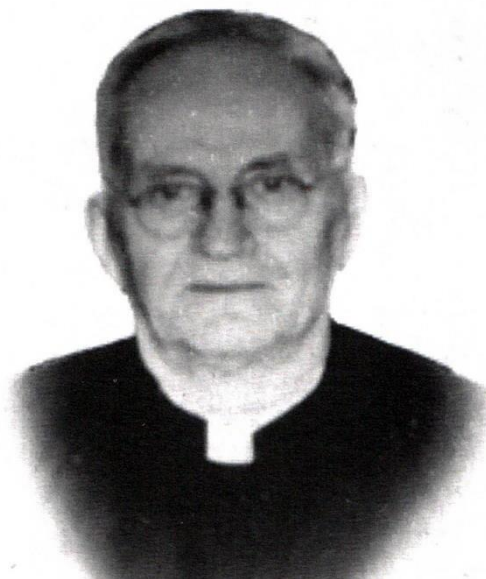


Fr. Denis Gallant with his choir, circa 1954. Photo: Tignish Arts Foundation collection.

He also had a new set of bellows made of calf skin and an electric motor to work it purchased for the organ, the first change made in it since 1882.

Father John A. MacDonald's health was deteriorating seriously by the early part of 1956 and it became clear that he would have to retire. Father Denis Gallant became substitute pastor in March of that year and remained so until the present pastor, Father Michael J. Rooney, arrived in August. "Father John", as he was known throughout the parish, did not regain his health or survive his retirement for long, but died in February 1957 and is buried in Tignish cemetery, next to Father MacDougall, with the following inscription on his tombstone:

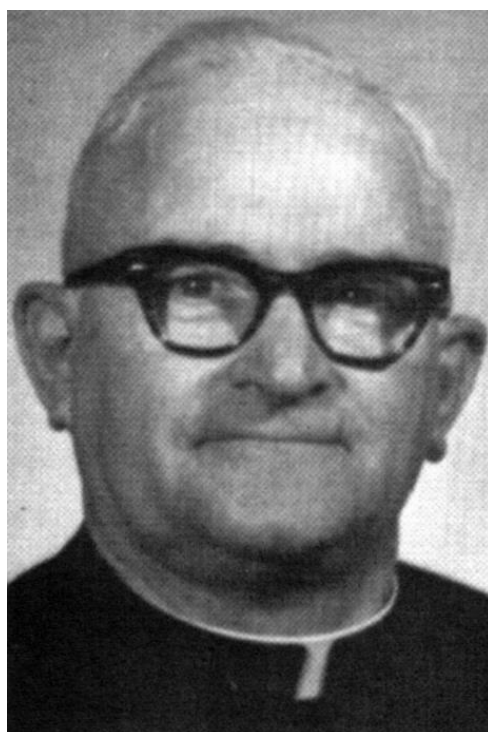
Gratefully erected by the people of Tignish parish
in memory of
Rev. J.A. MacDonald
who died February 14, 1957, aged
76 after 25 years of consecrated
service as their beloved pastor
requiescat in pace



Father John A. Macdonald, circa 1955. Photo: Tignish Arts Foundation collection.

Part IV -- 1956-1970

Since the retirement of Father John A. MacDonald and the coming of Father Michael J. Rooney, the parish of St. Simon and St. Jude has undergone more changes than at any previous time, except, perhaps, during the pastorate of Father McIntyre. Some of these changes will not be mentioned, as they were caused by the movement for renewal in the Church and, especially, by the work of Vatican II. Thus, they are common to all parishes and familiar to all Catholics. Here we shall simply mention the changes particular to this parish.



Father Michael J. Rooney, circa 1960. Photo Tignish Arts Foundation collection.

Father Rooney's first major task was to improve the financial position of the parish, which was now considerably in debt. Under his direction, Tignish played a leading part in the Diocesan Catholic Charities Fund Canvass of 1957. This canvass, which was followed up for three years, was an attempt to raise \$750,000 in the diocese and, on another level, to encourage diocesan unity and lay leadership in co-operation with the clergy. The potential contribution of Tignish parish was assessed at \$45,000 for the entire period. Not only was this entire amount pledged and eventually received, but an additional objective of \$35,000 for parish needs

was met. The parish objective was for the purposes of paying off the debt and buying new pews. During the three years, \$100,000 in all was raised in the parish.

Before describing the modernization of the church begun by Father Rooney at this time, another event of 1957 should be mentioned.



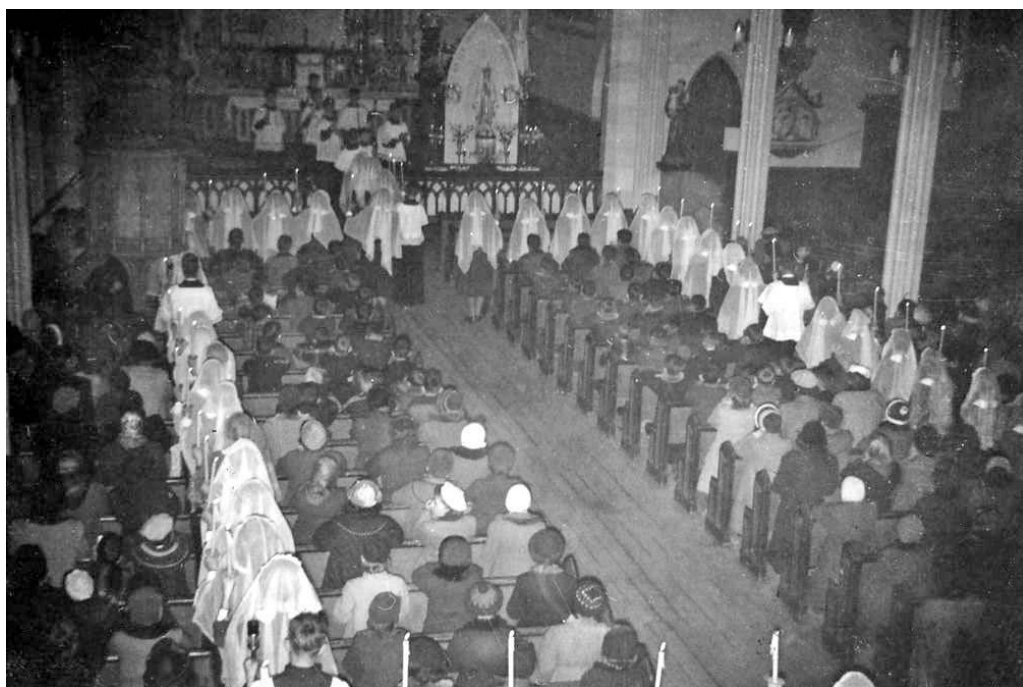
Sermon, Eucharistic Congress, 9 July 1957. Photo: Tignish Arts Foundation collection.

This was the last of a series of Eucharistic Congresses which been held in the larger parishes of the diocese for a number of years to do honour to the Blessed Sacrament. The Tignish Eucharistic Congress took place on 9 July 1957 and attracted some 6500 people. The Archbishop of Halifax, Bishop MacEachern of Charlottetown, Bishop Nelligan, who had been ordained in Tignish, and two other bishops were present, as well as numerous clergy. A special altar was erected outdoors behind the church and the boys' choir, then still flourishing, provided the music. The proceedings began with a children's Mass at 7 A.M., followed by a Solemn Pontifical Mass outdoors at 10 A.M. Monsignor McLellan, formerly pastor

of Tignish and then Vicar General of the diocese preached. In the course of his sermon, he said: “One hundred years ago your ancestors erected this temple to the honour and glory of God and the multitude present here today bears witness that you have kept the trust and you will pass on this trust, this gift of faith to the generations to come.”

At 2 P.M. the Congress continued with a children's Holy Hour, followed at 4 P.M. by Solemn Pontifical Benediction and Mass sung by the Archbishop. Then a procession escorted the Blessed Sacrament to the outdoor altar, where Pontifical Benediction was given.

In the summer of 1957, the church was given a loudspeaker system, a new pulpit and a velvet rope to close off the sanctuary at the altar rail. All these were gifts from William D. Sumner, a native and summer resident of the parish, who practised law in Texas, U.S.A. A tile floor was laid in the sanctuary and main body of the church at this same time. Within the next four years, new pews were installed, the original wainscoting was covered over and the lower part of the pillars painted to match the varnish of the new wainscoting. A large part of the churchyard was paved.



“Living Rosary” 1960. Photo: Tignish Arts Foundation collection.

In 1960, the church was one hundred years old. Celebrations on a large scale were organized for 23, 24, 25 and 26 July. A Souvenir Programme was prepared, which has permanent historical value as it contains much previously unrecorded information about the parish and village. On the first day of the celebration, a Sunday, in addition the usual Low Mass at 8 AM. and High Mass at 10 A.M., there was a Pontifical High Mass at 4 P.M., sung by Bishop MacEachern. Sermons in both languages were preached and afterwards, according to the program there was “Solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, procession and living rosary.”

The programme also tells us that there was a “Special Choir under the direction of Rev. Sister St. George, C.N.D.” More than thirty members of the clergy were present at these ceremonies, which were followed by a banquet. At 8 P.M. a play and religious pageant for the children” was performed by the Dramatic Society, under the direction of the Superior of the Convent, Sister St. Margaret de Paray. The play was greatly admired and was repeated on Monday evening. On both evenings, it “was presented very capably to moderately large audiences,” according to a note in the Parish Register. On Monday morning there was a Mass and two sermons by Father Joseph LeClair, a native of the parish, now pastor of Palmer Road, and, in the afternoon, a ball game, sports and picnic. Tuesday began with High Mass for the deceased of the parish celebrated at 9 A.M. by Father Alphonse Gaudet, O.M.I., also a native of the parish, who preached in French and English. Then there were processions to both the present and the old cemetery with service in both. In the afternoon, a parade took place. Led by a pipe band from Charlottetown, it consisted of floats, of which only one represented a parish organization, The Catholic Women’s League, followed by hundreds of cars. The last day of the celebrations was the feast of St. Anne. In the morning, Mass was offered by Father Justin Gavin, another Tignish-born priest, and “the rest of the day was devoted to the mammoth parish picnic.”

Of all the natives of the parish who have entered the priesthood only one is recorded to have celebrated a jubilee here. This was Father Alphonse Gaudet, O.M.I. in 1964. We find in the Parish Register that his twenty-fifth anniversary was marked by a Solemn High Mass of Thanksgiving, following which “an address on behalf of the parishioner was read to Father Gaudet ... a purse was presented...” and refreshments were served in the Regional High School Auditorium by members of the Catholic Women’s League.



Collapse of the old parish hall, 1964. Photo Tignish Arts Foundation collection.

After the High School was built in 1958, its auditorium had come to be used as a parish hall and the old parish hall had fallen into disuse. In 1964, it collapsed when about to be hauled to a nearby field and in 1965, the second parish house, built by Father Perrey and then in use as a farm shed, was burned at Halloween.

During the middle of this decade a temporary altar was built so that Mass could be said facing the people and fluorescent lighting was installed.

On the 4th of May 1966, the Bishop and the nine priests of the deanery which includes the parishes of West Prince County, concelebrated a special Jubilee Mass ordered by the Pope on the occasion of the closing of the Vatican Council. This is the first mention we find in the Parish Records of a concelebration. There was a

large congregation from all the parishes involved. The Bishop preached and afterwards helped to distribute communion.

The first ordination in the church for over thirty years took place on 27 May 1967, when Father Lee Gillis became the most recent of the priests born in the parish. Both his ordination Mass, followed by a banquet given by the Sisters of the Congregation de Notre-Dame, and his own first Mass the next day, were concelebrated. His first Mass was followed by a reception given by his family.

For some time, it had been evident that a large modern Parish Hall was needed. The Regional High School Auditorium was not, of course, satisfactory for every purpose. The summer of 1967 saw the building of a new Parish Centre, just to the west of the Parish House. Both the contractor, Hubert Gaudet, and all the workers skilled and unskilled were members of the parish. We read too in the Parish Register that: "The C.N.D. sisters obtained a great share of the financial needs for the building" which is understood to have cost about \$70,000. In November and December of that same year, the Centre was used for Masses for about three weeks, while the church furnace, which had broken down, was being replaced.

On 25th August 1968 came the celebration of the Convent's Centennial. Early in the afternoon the arrival of the first three sisters was re-enacted at Tignish Corner. Then a "large concourse of people in cars" followed the sisters and Father Lee Gillis who took the part of Father Dugald M. MacDonald, as they drove in old-fashioned double-seated wagons to the convent where they were welcomed by Bishops Nelligan and MacEachern, Father Michael J. Rooney and at least one hundred Sisters. Between 3 and 5:30 P.M. there was a reception and open house for the general public in the Convent, followed by concelebrated Mass, and a banquet in the Parish Centre, and a speech by Bishop Nelligan. Finally, "a splendid programme depicting the history of the Convent in 25-year cycles was presented by Convent Pupils under the direction of the Sisters." On this occasion too, a document of historic interest was prepared by the Sisters -- a souvenir album containing, among other items, a brief history of the convent itself and many photographs of documentary value.



The High Altar, summer 1964. Photo by R. Porter: Tignish Arts Foundation collection.

“On September 16, 1968,” so the Parish Register tells us, “the Altar on which Mass had been offered for about 100 years was dismantled and taken away with its brick foundation.” Wainscoting, blending with the wood of the new altar was erected in its place. At the entrance to the sanctuary, two stands or tables had been erected, one for a tabernacle and one to hold a reading-stand with an open Bible.

The main event of 1969 was the election for the first Parish Council, which took place on 11 May in the Parish Centre. Some 400 persons, fourteen years and older took part and elected three members from among the young people, three men and

three women. Subsequently, a Liturgical Committee and a Religious Education Committee were formed to deal with these aspects of parish life. It was one of these, the Liturgical Committee, which decided to undertake the first large-scale restoration project in the parish -- the complete renovation of the pipe organ which had been installed in the church in 1882 by Father Dugald M. MacDonald.

Although some work had been done on it under the auspices of Father Denis Gallant, it was in need of a general overhauling, cleaning of organ pipes, tuning and general restoration. The Committee launched an appeal in spring and early summer of 1970, which was successful to the point that work could begin on the organ in the fall. The work was under the direction of the organ builder, Ben Evers from Lewisville, New Brunswick and cost \$8000.



Organ pipes during the 1970 renovation. Photo: Tignish Arts Foundation collection.

Other projects of 1970 were the paving of the road through the cemetery, which necessitated the removal of the Calvary and its re-erection on a base at the end of the road, and the commissioning and writing of this history.

The Diocesan Year Book for 1969 gives a number of figures which it may be interesting to compare with others given in the course of this history. Tignish parish is the fourth largest on the Island with 500 families and 2500 people. In 1969, there were sixty-two baptisms, twenty-five marriages, seventeen deaths and

104 confirmations. There were 72,450 Communion. Catechism was taught to 925 children and young people. Of the organizations listed, by far the largest and most active was the Catholic Women's League. Financially, the parish appears to do its share and often more for diocesan and missionary projects. The picture to-day seems to be consistent with what we have glimpsed in tracing the parish history from its beginning. May the future be consistent also!



The church, parochial house and convent from the air. Photo by Reg Porter, 1971. Tignish Arts Foundation Collection.

Select Bibliography

Blanchard, J.-Henri, *The Acadians of Prince Edward Island 1720-1964*, Le Droit and Leclerc, Commercial Printers, Ottawa and Hull, 1964.

[Buote, Alma], *Souvenir Program of the Centennial Celebration*, The Tribune Press, Sackville, 1961.

MacMillan, Rev. John C., *The Early History of the Catholic Church in Prince Edward Island*, L'Evenement Printing Company, Quebec, 1905.

MacMillan, Rev. John C., *The History of the Catholic Church in Prince Edward Island from 1835 till 1891*, L'Evenement Printing Co., Quebec, 1913.

Pineau, Rev. J. Wilfred, *Le clergé français dans l'Ile du Prince-Edouard 1721-1821*, Les Editions Ferland, Quebec, 1967.

As well, thanks to the generosity of the Pastor, Rev. Michael Rooney, access was granted to various church records held in the parochial House.



Cover graphic for 1971 edition. Pencil drawing of the Church of Saint Simon and Saint Jude by David Chambers. 1968. The original has been lost.

