

SVP100

100 years at St. Vincent de Paul Parish

July/August 2014

Issue 1



Father Gerald Kirby and the Little Flower

Rev. Father Gerald J. Kirby arrived from St. Michael's Cathedral to serve as St. Vincent de Paul's second pastor. Reporting on his farewell Mass at the Cathedral, which took place February 15, 1931, the *Toronto Globe* noted that among Fr. Kirby's achievements was the "propagation of the Little Flower Society, of which St. Michael's Cathedral is now headquarters for Canada."

Fr. Kirby carried his devotion to St. Thérèse with him to St. Vincent's. On September 26, 1932, another *Globe* article describes the church "overcrowded" for the opening of the 40 Hours Devotion which would be followed, "for the first time in the history of St. Vincent de Paul" by devotions to the Little Flower.

"On Wednesday evening the service will be of particular interest, when a beautiful statue of the Little Flower will be unveiled."

From humble beginnings

The simple beginnings of St. Vincent de Paul Parish are described in the booklet produced for the church's 50th anniversary: "On the evening of August 4, 1914, the First Meeting of Catholic men living west of the railway tracks and north of Queen Street was held in the basement of St. Helen's Church, Toronto, for the purpose of meeting Rev. Father [Lancelot] Minehan to discuss matters relative to a new parish with a church on Roncesvalles Avenue. Mr. J.J. Downey was chairman and J.J. Gallagher was secretary.

"Archbishop McNeil had accepted the offer of St. Peter's Church [where Fr. Minehan was pastor] for the use of the Paulist Fathers, who were to begin their work in Toronto, and subsequently asked Father Minehan to undertake the formation of a new parish in the West end of the city. Father Minehan hoped to begin his work by September 1st, if possible by opening a Kindergarten school in temporary quarters and also arrange to celebrate Mass on Sundays at the same place."

Most will remember August 4, 1914 as the day Britain declared war on Germany. What must those men have been thinking as they gathered to prepare a home for our Lord on Roncesvalles Avenue at the heart of their growing community? Whatever it was, they worked quickly: Within a month, 231 Roncesvalles was rented to serve as the school room and temporary church. It was soon joined by 231A Roncesvalles, so that the one-room schoolhouse could also serve as the hall, with the church separated from it by a "heavily curtained door."

Do you have a St. Vincent's Memory to share?

Do you have a treasured story about a priest, a sacrament, or any time at all? What hymns were favourites? What parish activities did you and your family participate in? What was school like? How have things changed?

The Parish History Committee is assembling displays and information for St. Vincent's 100th anniversary and we would love to hear any stories or see any photos you would like to share. Please write, call or email us.

St. Vincent de Paul Church

263 Roncesvalles Avenue, Toronto, ON M6R 2L9

416-535-7646

svpchurch@gmail.com

<http://www.oratory-toronto.org>



www.facebook.com/StVincent100

Please Join Us

2014

Saturday, September 27, Feast of St. Vincent de Paul

10 am Opening Mass for the Centenary Year, commemorating the first Mass held in a rented storefront at 231 Roncesvalles and the 100th anniversary of St. Vincent de Paul School

11 am Open house in Msgr. Kirby parish hall. A barbecue follows at St. Vincent de Paul School

2015

Saturday, August 15, the Solemnity of the Assumption

Solemn High Mass Usus Antiquior to mark the laying of the cornerstone on August 15, 1915. Reception to follow.

Saturday, October 3

His Eminence Thomas Cardinal Collins will celebrate Mass to mark the 100th Anniversary. Gala reception to follow.

Many more events are planned. Please email, write, or phone us to be added to the anniversary mailing list!

Mass Times

Sunday Masses

Saturday 5:00 pm

Sunday 8:30 am, 9:30 am (Usus Antiquior – Low Mass),
11:30 am (Sung English)

Weekday Masses

Monday to Friday 8:00 am

Saturday & Public Holidays 10:00 am



This First Holy Communion group photo, with Fr. Lancelot Minehan, was taken on the north steps of the church in the 1920s.

Founding families

The church was built and has been maintained for 100 years with the contributions of many dedicated parishioners. Through historical records, we are learning more about the men and women who supported St. Vincent's in the very beginning.

Miss Hortense White

Miss White was hired in 1914 as the first teacher of St. Vincent de Paul school, in charge of about 35 children who were too little to make the trek across the railroad tracks to St. Helen's as the older children had to do. Miss White left the school and pursued her vocation as a Loretto Sister, but returned several years later to teach as Sr. Mary Alexandrine. Later, she became Mother M. Alexandrine, head of Hamilton's Loretto Academy.

Mrs. Sophronia Crevier

The parish history records that Mrs. Sophronia Crevier volunteered in 1914 to organize the first choir, assisted by a Mr. Colgan (whose first name is still to be discovered). Mrs. Crevier was the widow of Napoleon Crevier. The couple are listed in the 1901 Census living at 118 Garden Avenue. Mr. Crevier was a saw maker and the couple had 11 children living with them. By the time the 1911 Census was taken, Mrs. Crevier was a widow, but still living with many of her children, who were now hard at work. Napoleon Jr., Eugene and George (who is remembered for his war service on the church's framed enlistment roll) were employed as glassblowers, while their sisters Lorena and Eda worked in a leather factory. Even 15 year-old Joseph was working in a factory as a time keeper.

Public marriage records show that the Creviers' daughter Rose Anna (Rosy) had one of the earliest weddings at St. Vincent's. She was married on June 28, 1916, to Robert Clarkson. Two priests are recorded: Rev. Lancelot Minehan and the newly ordained Rev. Gerald Kirby (who later would become Pastor).