

**ST. DOMINIC PARISH: A HISTORY**

**1912 - 1987**

**Roy and Diane Piovesana**

**Italian Translation**

**by**

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**St. Dominic Parish**  
130 Redwood Avenue  
Thunder Bay, Ontario  
1987

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### **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to all pastors and parishioners of St. Dominic's Parish whose hard work, dedication, and generosity made our new church possible.

Cover: Architectural drawing of St. Dominic Church courtesy of Ranta and Tett Architects.

## **PASTORS OF ST. DOMINIC PARISH**

1912 – 1987

1. Fr. Francis Crociata, 19 February 1912 – 12 May 1914.
2. Fr. Vincent Giuliano, May – October 1914.
3. Fr. Angelo Sansone, October 1914 – August 1916.
4. Fr. Domenico Tomaselli, August 1916 – 25 May 1921.
5. Fr. Ferdinando Capresi, 5 June 1921 – 16 March 1933.
6. Fr. Arthur Joseph Murray, 5 March 1933 – 9 December 1945.
7. Fr. Egidio Vallorosi, 5 January 1946 – 24 November 1946.  
15 August 1948 – 2 March 1952.
8. Fr. Rosario Venti, 8 December 1946 – 29 July 1948.
9. Fr. Daniel China, 10 March 1952 – 21 April 1985.
10. Fr. Ralph DiGiacinto, January 1979 – May 1981.
11. Fr. Joseph Crawford (Associate), 14 June 1979 – 23 July 1981.
12. Fr. Umberto Rizzi, C.S., 14 May 1981 – October 1986.
13. Fr. Daniel Lapolla, C.S. (Associate), 22 August 1981 – September 1985.
14. Fr. Albert Corradin, C.S., December 1985 – present.
15. Fr. Rino Ziliotto, C.S. (Associate), October 1986 – present.

# ST. DOMINIC PARISH: A HISTORY

1912 - 1987

## I MISSIONARY PRIESTS AMONG THE ITALIAN PEOPLE OF FORT WILLIAM

In 1912 St. Joseph's Italian Roman Catholic Church stood at the corner of McLaughlin and Connolly Streets in the East End of Fort William, Ontario. Several interpretations have been advanced as to the genesis of the church. Some suggest that the Italians of Fort William acquired a building at 534 McLaughlin Street and named it St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church. According to this interpretation, the church burned down in 1910. The Italian parishioners prevailed upon St. Peter's Parish, located at 706 McIntosh Street, to use their church with the proviso that the Italian and Slovak functions would not conflict. This sharing arrangement continued until the Italians rebuilt their church at 700 McLaughlin Street. Others suggest that both the Slovaks and Italians regularly attended St. Peter's Church. Sometime between 1907 and 1909 St. Peter's Church was destroyed by fire and rebuilt in 1911. Father Francis Crociata, Parish Priest of St. Anthony's in Port Arthur, suggested that the Italians of Fort William build their own church. Until the Italian Church was completed, the "Finn Church" situated at 520 McLaughlin Street was used for Italian services.<sup>1</sup>

Municipal and business records lend credence to the latter interpretation that St. Anthony's Parish in Port Arthur encouraged the creation of an Italian Church in the East End of Fort William. A title search for Block 37, lots 9 and 10, the land occupied by St. Joseph's Church, indicates that a 25 foot lot was sold by the Pigeon River Lumber Company to a group of trustees representing St. Joseph's Parish.<sup>2</sup> Frank M. Ross, Angelo Desceplo, Louis Belluz, Bruno Mazza, Father Francis Crociata, and the Episcopal Corporation of the Sault Ste. Marie Diocese accepted the responsibility of paying \$791.31 for the property. Whatever the interpretation, the Assessment Rolls of the City of Fort William (1913) and the Chas. E. Goad Co. Insurance Plan of Fort William, 1911 (1913) indicate the existence in 1912 of a building, constructed entirely of wood, named St. Joseph's Church at the corner of McLaughlin and Connolly Streets.

This modest wooden structure was destined to serve the spiritual needs of the Italian people of Fort William for over seventy years. During this time an Italian-born or an Italian-speaking priest led and supervised the activities of the parish. For the Italian immigrant in Fort William this was important. St. Joseph's Italian Roman Catholic Church served as a vital link between a way of life centred in a small Italian village and an uncertain and, at times, frightening way of life in a northern Canadian urban environment. Initially, St. Joseph's offered Sunday mass in Italian and conducted baptismal, marriage and funeral services when required.

Later, the services in Italian were expanded to include daily mass, religious processions, and the blessing of homes.

What type of community was St. Joseph's destined to serve? According to *The Report of a Preliminary and General Social Survey of Fort William*, directed, interestingly enough, by the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches of Canada, the Italian population of Fort William rose from 863 in 1910 to 1,390 in 1912.<sup>3</sup> What impressed those who conducted this survey was the overcrowded conditions among the people in the East End of Fort William. In the block enclosed by McTavish, McIntyre, McLaughlin, and Christie Streets 292 persons were counted of which 111 were Italian. One six room house included 17 Italians while another three room residence housed 13 Italians.<sup>4</sup> Although this report suggests that their findings might have been on the conservative side, a careful examination of the City of Fort William Assessment Rolls (used for determining property taxes) would indicate that the social survey findings were right on the mark. The assessment roll (Wards 1 and 2) for 1913 commonly showed a single dwelling owned by Italians with anywhere from 10 – 16 residents. Who were these residents? The owner and his family accounted for 5 – 7 of the occupants. It is not unreasonable to suggest that the others were predominantly male Italian immigrant boarders.

St. Joseph's was to become part of a cluster of churches situated in this ethnically dominated area of Fort William. As mentioned previously, St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church was situated at 706 McIntosh Street, a Greek Orthodox Church had recently been built at 639 McPherson Street, and a Ruthenian Church (St. Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church) was soon to be built at 500 Connolly Street. This prompted an observation in the 1913 *Social Survey* that "the greatest growth at present is among the non-Anglo-Saxon population. . . . A visit to the Catholic Churches in the Coal Dock Section on a Sunday morning reveals that these churches are bringing the men to their doors; they constitute the vast majority of the congregation."<sup>5</sup>

It was to this growing community of Italian immigrants that several dedicated priests, based in St. Anthony's Parish, turned their attention for a decade after 1912. Father Francis Crociata was the first to divide his time between St. Anthony's in Port Arthur and St. Joseph's in Fort William's East End. The stress of overseeing the spiritual needs of both parishes brought on poor health and Father Crociata left the Thunder Bay region in 1914.<sup>6</sup> An examination of the parish marriage and baptismal registers indicates that for six months Father Vincent Giuliano ministered to the Italians of the East End. Like Father Crociata, poor health caused Father Giuliano to leave the parish. The baptismal records from October 1914 to August 1916 reveal the signature of Father Angelo Sansone who adds the word "Parroco" to let everybody know that he was the Pastor of St. Joseph's. This name does not appear in the records of St. Anthony's Church.<sup>7</sup>

The most notable parish priest at St. Joseph's during this first decade was Domenico Alfonso Tomaselli. At the age of 39 Father Tomaselli became pastor of St. Anthony's on 14 May 1915. In the following year he assumed responsibility for St. Joseph's parish as well.<sup>8</sup> "For over six years the new pastor was in charge of both parishes having to offer the Holy Sacrifice each Sunday in both cities. . . . In these early days both parishes were in a deplorable condition, not only financially but in other respects as well. St. Joseph's Church, Fort William, was a mere shell, without seating accommodation for the congregation, inadequately heated, and the interior was of unfinished lumber." One parishioner recalled that the church was built on wooden pilings.<sup>9</sup> The church was heated in winter with an old stove situated in a "dugout" basement. Within five years however, the bell and bell tower were added,<sup>10</sup> pews were purchased, and the interior of the church was finished. In addition, ten stain glassed windows were installed; two were situated at the main entrance and eight in the body of the church. The purchase and installation of the stained glass windows was made possible by generous donations on the part of individual parishioners.

During these formative years the role of St. Joseph's Church within the Italian community of Fort William was restricted to providing essential religious services. From 1912 to 1921 the parish witnessed 469 Baptisms, 74 Marriages, and 86 Funerals.<sup>11</sup> Little or no evidence exists to suggest that any organizations developed within the church or that the church became involved in the secular concerns of its people.

For a church to develop a community and to broaden its role within the lives of those associated with it a full time parish priest was needed. In 1921 that pastor was Father Don Ferdinando Capresi. Born in Florence, Italy in 1863, Ferdinando Capresi was ordained in 1888. It is not known when he left Italy but we do know from the testimony of Father A.J. Murray in 1933 that Father Capresi emigrated to the United States and worked hard and successfully among the Italians of Philadelphia.<sup>12</sup> Presumably after the First World War, Father Capresi settled in Fort William. "He came to this northern land", remarked Father A.J. Murray "so very different from the sunny soil of his native Lombardy, to devote his life, his time and his talents to the Italian immigrants – that he might give them the many consolations of their religion."

Those who knew Father Capresi during the 1920s referred to him as a "good man", a "saintly man",<sup>13</sup> a man who lived in abject poverty in the East End of Fort William. Parishioners vividly recall that often during the winter months of the late 1920s and early 1930s weekday masses were not held in the church proper but in a room in the rectory kept warm by a small heater. The parish could not afford to purchase coal to fuel the main furnace of the church. Since most of the parishioners were first generation immigrants they found employment in the CPR freight sheds and the coal docks and worked "on call" for no more than forty or fifty cents an hour. Needless to say contributions from the parishioners were indeed meager. The people of the East End felt a sense of pity and respect for this parish

priest who would beg people for food not only for the poor of the parish but for himself as well.

Notwithstanding the poverty in which the parish found itself, significant advances were made in structural changes to the church and in religious services offered to the people. In 1924 a rectory was added to the church. Moreover, regular masses were held on Sundays at 8:00 and 10:30 A.M. and every morning at 7:30 A.M. All sermons were delivered in Italian. In addition, Father Capresi initiated the annual "mission". Every October or November a missionary priest would come to St. Joseph's for a week to deliver a series of sermons in Italian relating to the scriptures, ethics, and family life. So successful were these missions that they attracted capacity crowds and were continued by successive parish priests through to the late 1950s.

Father Capresi's impact on St. Joseph's Parish manifested itself not only in the physical changes made to the church or in the expanded religious services offered to the Italian people but most importantly, in the parishioners' respect and affection for him. This was clearly evident at Father Capresi's funeral held at St. Joseph's Church on 19 March 1933. A solemn pontifical mass was celebrated by His Excellency, David Joseph Scollard, Bishop of the Sault Ste. Marie Diocese. Only a few of the 1500 attending the funeral service could gain access to the church. Rev. A.J. Hogan was master of ceremonies; the organist was Joe Brunetta; and an eloquent eulogy was presented by Rev. A.J. Murray. To one of the largest audiences to occupy St. Joseph's Church, Father Murray referred to Father Capresi as "a missionary priest among the Italian people of Fort William."

It was left to Father Arthur Joseph Murray to carry on this "missionary work". Father Murray was Pastor of St. Joseph's (renamed St. Dominic on 3 April 1936) from 5 March 1933 to 9 December 1945.<sup>14</sup> The parish or Diocesan records do not reveal the place or date of Father Murray's birth and early life. We do know however, that he attended the Grand Seminary of Montreal for a time after 1921,<sup>15</sup> and that he was ordained on 11 June 1924.<sup>16</sup> Apparently he studied in Rome for several years and developed a fluency and eloquence in Italian that was truly remarkable.<sup>17</sup> After spending a brief time in Sault Ste. Marie, Father Murray came to St. Joseph's Church at the height of the economic depression in 1933.

The continued poverty caused by the economic depression of the 1930s prompted Father Murray to assist his parishioners in a variety of ways. He was able to do this because of his wide circle of friends and acquaintances in Fort William's business community and in city offices.<sup>18</sup> From time to time, Father Murray was able to find employment for his parishioners, to cut through government red tape in order to obtain necessary papers and documents like passports, and to help the unemployed obtain relief from the city. Several individuals who were in their

teens during the 1930s fondly recall Father Murray's influence in helping them to attend St. Patrick's High School without having to pay the necessary tuition fees or to pay for textbooks.<sup>19</sup> It was this type of assistance rendered to his parishioners that gained Father Murray the reputation of being a charming, well-liked populist priest who was good to the Italian people and who lived in poverty without outwardly complaining.

Despite the harsh economic circumstances of the time, the parishioners of St. Joseph's felt a pressing need to make further additions and structural changes to the church. During the mid-1930s, as economic conditions began to improve, the men of the parish worked closely with the Principe di Piemonte Society, led at the time by Mr. Frank Charry, in raising funds to paint the exterior of the church, repair the roof, construct a concrete basement under the church, insulate the interior, and install a new heating system. A portion of the cost for these renovations was borne by the Diocesan Chancellor and by fund raising activities initiated by the recently formed St. Dominic's Church Men's Club.<sup>20</sup>

Each of these renovations, in addition to incidental expenses accumulated from time to time, prompted St. Dominic's Church Men's Club to organize a fundraising campaign in 1944 to eliminate a debt of approximately \$5,000. To accomplish this the entire parish was canvassed in June of 1944. The canvas resulted in 415 contributions totalling \$3,322.80.<sup>21</sup> The contributions ranged from \$1.00 to \$200.00. Of the 415 contributions 15 were from the city at large, 3 from organizations associated with the parish (e.g. the Italian Ladies Club, Societa Principe di Piemonte, Societa Veneta), and 1 from the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Parish. Based on the last names of all other contributors (396), one might assume that they were all from St. Dominic's Parish. Not all of the 396 represented families. In the absence of an official parish census a conservative estimate might be that, in 1945, St. Dominic's parish consisted of approximately 260 families.

This fund raising venture initiated by the Men's Club met its objective. With additional proceeds from a bingo and "other receipts", the financial report included the following statement: "The committee takes this opportunity of expressing its appreciation and thanks to the parishioners and friends who helped make this year a memorable one in the history of the parish. Our church is now free of debt." Mr. Gilles Menuz, vice-president of the Men's Club, credited the hard work of the organization over the last ten years as being responsible for freeing the church of debt. He estimated that since 1935 the Men's Club raised a total of \$15,000 for improvements to the church.

To celebrate this watershed in the history of the parish a banquet and ceremony were held on April 4 1945 at the Italian Hall on McLaughlin Street with 350 people attending.<sup>22</sup> Congratulatory tributes were given by the Right Reverend Monsignor P.J. McGuire, representing the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie, Mayor Anderson of the City of Fort William, and Fort



William Alderman, Hubert Badanai. Perhaps the most meaningful sentiments were expressed by Father Murray when he thanked the “least of the Brethren as well as those in high position whether they had contributed the only dollar they had in their purse or had given a substantial sum towards the paying off of this long-standing debt.”

This was indeed a memorable year for St. Dominic’s Parish. In 1945 Father Murray ended 12 years as pastor of the Italian Church in Fort William. He returned to his native Ireland and based on the testimony of those parishioners who knew him, he passed away in Dublin in the early 1950s. Father Murray’s successors were never to experience the difficulties he did in leading and caring for a parish during an economic depression the likes of which few would experience again in decades. Future pastors of St. Dominic’s would have the luxury of better economic times in which to minister to the religious needs of the Italians of Fort William.

**Spiritual Status: St. Dominic Parish, 1912 - 1987**

	Families	Baptisms	Marriages	Deaths	First Communicants	Confirmations
1912	-	4	10	16		
1913	-	37	10	10		
1914	-	79	3	6		
1915	-	71	5	10		
1916	—	67	3	13		
1917	-	60	3	3		
1918	-	38	3	3		
1919	-	50	11	11		
1920	-	63	10	-		
1921	-	50	16	14		
1922	-	61	8	10		
1923	-	50	14	10		
1924	-	51	6	17		
1925	-	58	14	6		
1926	-	58	5	9		
1927	-	45	9	6		
1928	-	57	5	8		
1929	-	46	7	7		
1930	-	38	6	9		
1931	-	45	5	7		
1932	-	36	6	3		
1933	-	53	9	-		
1934	-	45	10	-		
1935	-	29	17	9	30	31
1936	-	34	16	2	51	0
1937	-	41	10	6	41	0
1938	-	36	14	6	-	134
1939	-	30	18	9	-	0
1940	-	35	17	7	41	0
1941	-	28	24	6	27	57
1942	-	29	8	5	-	0
1943	-	37	15	12	-	105
1944	-	19	4	4	-	0

**Spiritual Status: St. Dominic Parish, 1912 - 1987**

	Families	Baptisms	Marriages	Deaths	First Communicants	Confirmations
1945	-	35	19	-	-	0
1946	-	56	31	11	19	110
1947	262	55	18	8	-	0
1948	270	62	22	5	-	0
1949	285	57	17	13	38	75
1950	309	52	15	11	-	0
1951	-	54	19	17	25	0
1952	289	49	32	3	28	68
1953	300	62	30	9	38	0
1954	305	76	15	16	39	0
1955	305	100	23	15	47	67
1956	300	91	30	6	40	0
1957	305	95	24	19	42	103
1958	311	80	40	15	35	0
1959	307	124	33	13	46	131
1960	308	105	26	17	45	0
1961	300	137	37	15	52	96
1962	300	110	24	24	60	0
1963	315	121	29	15	62	100
1964	300	115	25	14	59	0
1965	300	101	23	22	60	0
1966	290	89	22	19	69	186
1967	300	86	33	12	72	0
1968	290	78	19	10	69	0
1969	280	72	18	10	72	143
1970	280	79	16	15	18	0
1971	270	66	16	19	130	130
1972	280	51	16	9	69	0
1973	290	53	20	18	68	0
1974	300	52	10	14	62	121
1975	290	37	10	10	57	0
1976	300	41	12	15	65	80
1977	300	41	17	11	53	0
1978	300	41	12	11	57	0
1979	300	32	13	18	57	-
1980	300	31	15	13	42	-
1981	150	23	10	19	34	-
1982	150	20	3	10	36	-
1983	150	4	1	9	5	-
1984	-	4	1	10	9	-
1985	-	5	-	1	-	-

**St. Dominic's: Northwood**

1979	-	25	4	0	123	0
1980	-	38	6	0	104	29
1981	750	43	6	3	96	62
1982	845	38	15	3	121	38
1983	915	57	31	14	96	61
1984	1100	74	23	11	132	108
1985	1209	131	41	14	86	134
1986	1345	97	51	26	112	114



**ST. ANTHONY PROCESSION IN FRONT OF ST. JOSEPH'S ITALIAN ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, 700 MCLAUGHLIN STREET, c. 1912**

This photograph shows St. Joseph's Church shortly after construction. Windows had not yet been installed and the wooden exterior was unpainted. Peter Belluz, a prominent businessman in the East End of Fort William, is standing third from the left. The two altar boys on each side of the cross are Henry and William Tiboni. (Courtesy of Vera (Belluz) Carty)



**EXTERIOR OF ST. JOSEPH'S ITALIAN ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, c. 1914**

This photograph illustrates some of the improvements made to the Church by 1914. The exterior was painted; stained glass windows had been installed; and the bell had been purchased but not yet positioned on top of the bell tower. (Courtesy of Vera (Belluz) Carty)



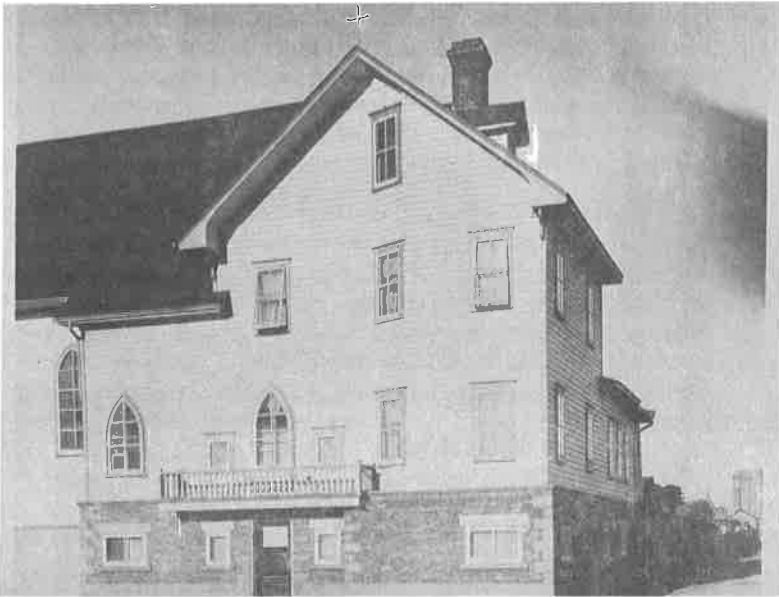
**SCHOOL CHILDREN AROUND ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH ALTAR, c. 1915**

School children in photo might have participated in a Christmas play or religious service relating to the Christmas season. If the photo is dated correctly the priest standing in the centre would be Father Angelo Sansone. (Courtesy of Vera (Belluz) Carty)

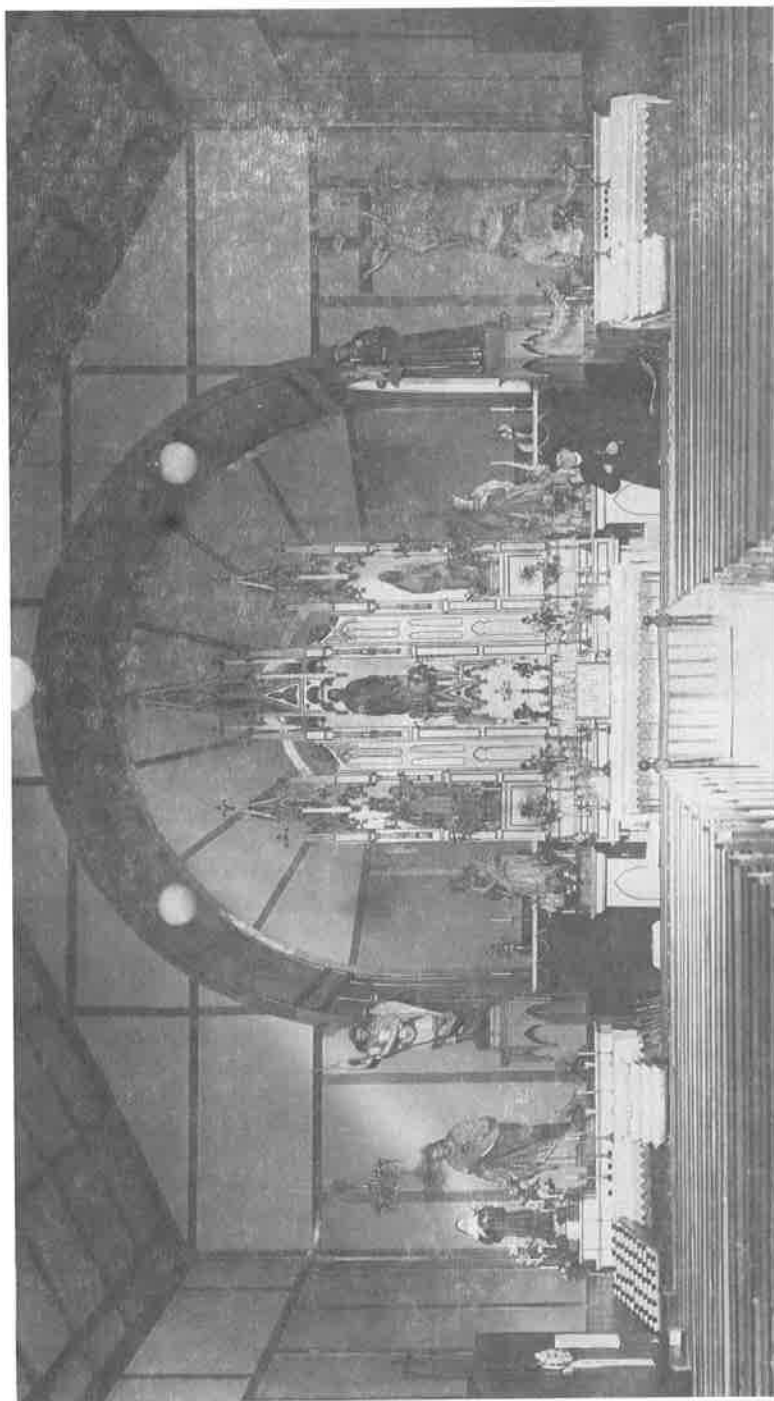


**EXTERIOR OF ST. JOSEPH'S ITALIAN ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, c. 1924**

By 1924 the Rectory had been added to the back of the church. The sign on the Rectory read: "St. Joseph's Italian Roman Catholic Church Rectory 700 McLaughlin Street." In addition, the bell had been positioned on top of the bell tower. St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church and the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church are visible in the background. (Courtesy of Richard Benedet)



**VIEW OF ST. JOSEPH'S RECTORY FROM CONNOLLY STREET, December 1924**  
(Courtesy of Richard Benedet)



**INTERIOR OF St. JOSEPH'S CHURCH, March 1922**

This photograph shows Father Capresi on the altar, inside the Communion rail. The statue of St. Joseph occupies a prominent place in the centre of the altar. (Courtesy of Richard Benedict)

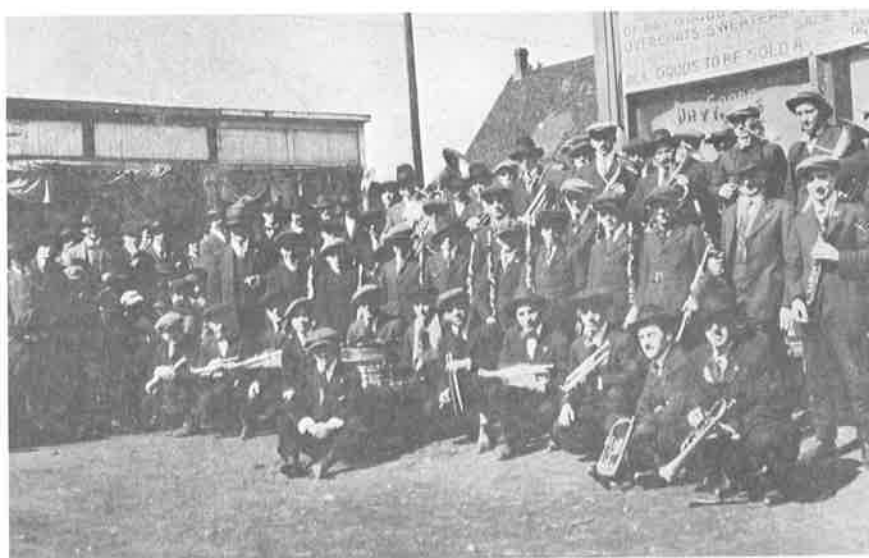


**REV. DOMENICO TOMASELLI: PASTOR OF ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH, 1916 - 1921**  
(Courtesy of the Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society)



**REV. ARTHUR JOSEPH MURRAY, PASTOR OF ST. JOSEPH'S - ST. DOMINIC PARISH, 1933 - 1945**  
(Courtesy of Vera (Belluz) Carty).





**ITALIAN BAND ASSEMBLED IN FRONT OF DRY GOODS STORE IN FORT WILLIAM'S EAST END, c. 1922**

Ralph Colosimo is seated in front of drums in centre of photograph.  
(Courtesy Vera (Belluz) Carty)



**ITALIAN BAND PERFORMING IN FRONT OF ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH, May 1926**

The Italian Band performed at important church functions such as funerals or processions. This photograph does not suggest what the particular function was. (Courtesy of Vera (Belluz) Carty)



**FATHER MURRAY WITH IDA (ROMANO) SISCO WEDDING PARTY, 28 April 1934**  
Photograph was taken on the steps of Jules Romano residence at 229 Dease Street, Fort William. (Courtesy of Vera (Belluz) Carty)

## II YEARS OF CONSOLIDATION, 1945 - 1972

Immediately after Father Murray's departure in early December of 1945, Father Daniel China, a young Italian priest who spoke fluent English, carried on the religious services at St. Dominic's for a month.<sup>23</sup> On 5 January 1946 Father Egidio Vallorosi came to St. Dominic's as "administrator" of the parish until 24 November.<sup>24</sup> Because of the absence of records for 1946, it is not clear what the role of an administrator was. Presumably he was to maintain the status quo while a more permanent appointment was made by the Bishop.

That permanent appointee was Father Rosario Venti. He came to St. Dominic's at the beginning of the busy Christmas period on 8 December 1946. Born in Boston Massachusetts on 24 December 1905 and ordained in the Passionist Order of priests on 8 February 1931<sup>25</sup> he was to remain at St. Dominic's until 29 July 1948. Perhaps Father Venti's posting at St. Dominic's was in part to modernize the physical structure of the church. In this regard, Father Venti's preference would have been to tear down the existing structure and start anew. Although this was not possible, Father Venti brought about dramatic physical changes in the space of one year. "The present St. Dominic's Parish enjoys the distinction", wrote Father Venti in 1947, "of having been rebuilt, remodelled, refurnished and maintained by its own parishioners . . . without help from bingos, bazaars or socials of any type. All this work has been accomplished in one year's time."<sup>26</sup>

Father Venti was much more than a builder. Conversations with those who knew him during the late 1940s reveal that he was perceived as a highly intelligent individual, an innovator, an eloquent and forceful speaker, and a man concerned with the youth of the parish.<sup>27</sup> According to some, Father Venti was ahead of his time in leading public opinion on moral issues. He wanted to further break down barriers that existed between the various ethnic groups living in the East End of Fort William and, in so doing, create a unity of mood among the people of this community.

To this end, Father Venti worked closely with the youth of the parish. In the fall of 1945, during Father Murray's stay at St. Dominic's, the East End Boxing Club was formed under the sponsorship of the church. The boxing club then moved to the Italian Hall in 1946 as the "Italo-Canadian Boxing Club" to be administered by the "new youth" Italo-Canadian Sports Club that was formed within the Societa Principe di Piemonte Society. In 1948 however, the boxing club moved back to St. Dominic's and was named "St. Dominic's Boxing Club." This move was made possible because Father Venti, himself a boxing enthusiast, transformed the entire basement of the church into a boxing gymnasium with all facilities necessary to train boys from 8 - 20 years of age. Young boys of any nationality were welcomed to join this club.<sup>28</sup>

Bill Cella, the organizer and trainer in the boxing club, was justifiably proud of the early accomplishments of this athletic organization spon-

sored by St. Dominic's. During the first year weekly matches were held in the basement of the church where the ring was structured around the four pillars in the basement. More formal matches were staged in the Italian Hall on McLaughlin Street. In the space of two years St. Dominic's Boxing Club could boast three district championships; the lightweight class was won by Ernie Nistico, the flyweight class by Frank Mattarazzo, and the middleweight class by B. Powers. On 10 May 1947 Ernie Nistico fought for the Canadian lightweight championship at the Port Arthur Arena. The successes of this athletic organization undoubtedly brought the youth of the East End closer to the church.

Father Venti's eloquent sermons in both Italian and English and the enthusiasm with which he approached every aspect of parish activity motivated regular and capacity attendance at church services. Parishioners vividly recall that during Father Venti's years it was difficult to get a seat at the 10:30 Italian mass. Later, as Pastor of St. Anthony's Parish in Port Arthur, his radio programme, "Ave Maria", became the "talk of the town". More than just St. Dominic's and St. Anthony's parishioners listened intently to these programmes broadcast from 7:00 – 7:15 on Tuesday evenings. Protestants too were moved to discussion and debate over Father Venti's addresses relating to the lifestyle of the people, to the morality of the times, and to his anti-communist propaganda. Father Venti left St. Dominic's to spend a brief period in the Sudbury region and then returned to the Thunder Bay area to become pastor at St. Anthony's in 1949 and remained there until 1953.

Father Venti's successor at St. Dominic's was Father Vallorosi. Born in Pisterzo (Latina) Italy on 1 February 1915, Father Vallorosi came to Canada in 1939, settling in North Bay, and completing his seminary education at St. Augustine's Seminary, Toronto.<sup>29</sup> He was ordained by Bishop R.H. Dignan, in the Pro-Cathedral Church, North Bay, on 21 December 1940. Father Vallorosi served in a variety of locations within the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie prior to returning to St. Dominic's in August of 1948 as Pastor.

Father Vallorosi later recalled that the parishioners at St. Dominic's were "very well united", "co-operative" and "a good loving people". Financial concerns were not present during this period; he had little difficulty in meeting the financial obligations of the parish. During his tenure as parish priest new siding was installed on the exterior of the church, the interior of the church was re-painted, and the statues in the church were "restored to their natural colours". These improvements were completed without incurring any debt.<sup>30</sup> As a result, Father Vallorosi was able to focus on the spiritual activities of the parish. He took a particular interest in the work of the Legion of Mary. He was the first spiritual director of this organization when it held its first meeting on 7 May 1946 while he was appointed administrator of the parish.<sup>31</sup> The emphasis of the Legion of Mary was neither social nor financial but spiritual.<sup>32</sup> "The Legion acts as the supplement of the Priestly Ministry" wrote the President

of St. Dominic's Legion of Mary, "facilitating the work of the pastors and enabling them to be in constant touch with their parishioners."<sup>33</sup> Although the numbers of this organization were not significant (23 active listed in February 1949), Father Vallorosi was delighted with their dedication; he was particularly impressed with their programme of visiting the sick of the parish in local hospitals and sanitoriums.

It is not certain whether Father Vallorosi or Father Venti initiated a weekly bulletin, *The Dominican*, published by the parish. A careful examination of these bulletins during the 1950s reveals the ebb and flow of religious services offered within the parish, the activities of such organizations as the Legion of Mary and the Ladies' Altar Society, and the formal administration of sacraments. By the end of Father Vallorosi's stay at St. Dominic's Parish, these bulletins illustrate in a dramatic way that the parish was no longer led by pastors having to divide their time between two parishes or that economic concerns clouded the spiritual affairs of the parish. By the early 1950s the Italians of Fort William were given the opportunity to partake in the full array of services that the Roman Catholic Church could offer.

Church documents do not give us a glimpse of the nature and development of the important ministry of music. What we do know of the music of these early years comes to us from the oral testimony of those associated with the choir or from newspaper reports. It has been suggested that during the years 1912 - 1919, St. Anthony's entire choir and organ was transported to St. Joseph's for Sunday mass.<sup>34</sup> Later, in 1933, on the occasion of Father Capresi's funeral, Joe Brunetta, A.T.C.M., was listed as being the organist at the funeral mass. In 1933, the family of Peter Belluz purchased an organ in Toronto and donated it to the Church. This gift would "fill a long felt want in St. Joseph's" remarked Father Murray, and "would be appreciated by the congregation for many years to come."<sup>35</sup> During the 1930s and early 1940s Joe Brunetta was the principal organist at the church.<sup>36</sup> His mother, Carrie Brunetta, was a key member of St. Dominic's choir up to the mid-1950s. Those who attended St. Dominic's fondly remember her clear, sometimes haunting melodious voice singing the Latin mass, every morning during Lent. In addition, Carrie Brunetta sang virtually every funeral mass during the 1940s and 1950s. Her dedication to church music and her consistent presence in the choir loft was an example and inspiration to other choir members.

During the late 1930s and early 1940s the name of Ralph Colosimo was associated not only with music at St. Dominic's Church but also with music in Fort William and Port Arthur generally. In 1917 an Italian band was formed in Fort William and Ralph Colosimo was a clarinetist in this band. In 1935 members of the Italian band played at Peter Belluz's funeral procession from his home to the Italian Church on McLaughlin Street.<sup>37</sup> For a five year period Ralph Colosimo conducted St. Dominic's choir with Joe Brunetta as organist. On special occasions such as Christmas and Easter a choir and orchestra under the direction of Ralph Colosimo would

accompany the mass.<sup>38</sup> In November and December of 1942 for example, Ralph Colosimo conducted a choir of 60 and an orchestra of 25 to accompany masses at St. Dominic's.<sup>39</sup> Masses such as this were broadcast over CKPR radio from St. Dominic's Church. In retrospect St. Dominic's was indeed fortunate in having talented musicians like Joe Brunetta, Ralph Colosimo and later organists such as Mary Cella, Mrs. Connolly, Vic (Sandrin) Curtola, Ida Dolcetti, Ann Todero, Lucille Johnson, and Janice (Buset) Henderson. These musicians were not only talented but dedicated to providing the best church music that added solemnity and emotion to the religious services that were held at St. Dominic's.

It was in this atmosphere that Father Daniel China officially became pastor of St. Dominic's on 10 March 1952. He was born on 15 November 1911 in the northern Italian city of Pordenone. The records do not indicate when he entered the Novitiate of the Salesians of Don Bosco in Turin or when he was ordained into that order. Prior to his arrival in Canada in 1950 Father China worked for some years in a variety of the apostolates of the Salesians and then went to India for seven years to engage in missionary work. He returned to Italy and for the next eight years resumed his apostolic activities in the areas around Rome in the Alban Hills. While Father China was visiting his brother-in-law and sister in the Thunder Bay area, His Excellency, R.H. Dignan, Bishop of the Sault Ste. Marie Diocese, persuaded him to remain in Canada to care for the Italian immigrants in Fort William.

Like his predecessors, Father China led the parishioners at St. Dominic's in a wide array of devotions that were familiar to Roman Catholics the world over. Masses were celebrated every morning at 8:00 A.M. On special occasions like "All Souls Day" (2 November) or when a "Mission" was being held at the Church (usually in English one week and Italian the next), several masses were held each morning. In addition, Benediction was held on Friday and Sunday evenings at 7:30 P.M. During Lent the Stations of the Cross were held on Wednesday and Friday evenings. The Feast of Corpus Christi in June occasioned a procession through the streets of the East End. Father China requested that houses along the procession route be appropriately decorated. The procession usually left St. Dominic's at 7:30 P.M. and proceeded to Connolly, McTavish, McIntyre, McLeod, Pacific and McIntosh Streets with Benediction being celebrated at St. Peter's School, St. Peter's Church and the Church of the Transfiguration (Ukrainian Catholic).

Regularly, Father China, in association with the teachers at St. Peter's Roman Catholic School, would prepare students to receive the sacraments of Holy Communion and Confirmation. The week prior to Communion Sunday (usually in May of every year) the children were brought into the church on a daily basis for instruction, practice, and then Confessions. To Father China this was perhaps one of the most important events in a child's life and he urged parents to take the occasion seriously. The following

message appeared in the 25 May 1952 issue of *The Dominican*: "Next Sunday we shall have First Holy Communion. Every Father and Mother of each child receiving their First Holy Communion shall be present and receive Holy Communion also. I hope there will be no 'orphans' at the Communion rail." After the children received Holy Communion for the first time, a formal portrait of the Communion class was taken on the steps of the church with a proud Father China always in the photo.

Similarly, the administration of the sacrament of Confirmation was a solemn occasion with the presence of Bishop E.Q. Jennings at St. Dominic's for the full day. Receiving both of these sacraments prior to age 13 or 14 was no doubt intended to transform the youth of the parish into devout Roman Catholics. Very often this commitment to the Roman Catholic faith manifested itself in young people wanting to attend mass every morning during Lent. Teachers at St. Peter's school regularly surveyed classes to determine the attendance of students at mass during Lent. Needless to say a minority achieved this goal but it was a challenge to Roman Catholic youths.

Several church organizations and activities developed along side the religious services during the 1950s and 1960s. The Ladies of the Altar Society was one of the most active organizations in the church with a membership of over 60 by 1956.<sup>40</sup> Although Bishop E.Q. Jennings encouraged the formation of Catholic Women's Leagues within the Diocese and inquired whether there was a possibility of forming a subdivision of this organization at St. Dominic's, there is no evidence to suggest that it ever got off the ground.<sup>41</sup> Instead, it was the Ladies of the Altar Society that organized and sponsored an annual "spring tea", the proceeds of which went "to the benefit of the church".<sup>42</sup> In the early 1950s English classes were held in the church basement for the benefit of Italian immigrants. In addition, the basement of the church was at times transformed into a "mini" movie theatre. On 16 November 1952 Father China announced in the church bulletin that "immediately following Benediction, there will be movies. A small offering will be appreciated to cover the expenses of the film. All are welcome." From time to time a bingo was held to raise funds for the purchase of a new movie projector.

Bingos, donations by parishioners, and fund-raising activities by the Ladies of the Altar Society made possible several important improvements and additions to the church. From 1952 to 1955 Father China was able to install a new electronic bell system, a new sacristy (\$5350), new pews, flooring, and carpeting for the altar area (\$10,152.00). The expenditure of these funds signalled better economic times for the parish.

Improved economic conditions also prompted the Bishop of the newly created Diocese of Thunder Bay to request that funds from each parish be directed to the Diocese.<sup>43</sup> Bishop Jennings indicated that a fund-raising campaign for the Diocese had been considered for a long time. The financial needs of the Diocese were considerable and since Fort

William and Port Arthur, along with the rest of Canada, were enjoying a measure of prosperity in 1957, there was every reason to believe that a fund-raising campaign would be a success.<sup>44</sup> What was the purpose of this campaign? Bishop E.Q. Jennings wished to embark upon an ambitious programme that would assist with improvement projects in a number of parishes in the Diocese. More importantly however, his plans included the construction of a new cathedral in Fort William and a central Catholic High School for Thunder Bay. This high school would provide separate teaching facilities and residences for boys and girls. The “college” would come under the direction of religious groups. The records of the Diocese of Thunder Bay do not indicate whether this college was meant to replace or supplement the existing St. Patrick’s High School. Presumably it was intended to replace the existing school on Franklin Street in order to serve Catholic youth of both Fort William and Port Arthur.

In response to a request by the Bishop to support St. Patrick’s High School and the creation of a new Catholic High School Father China made the following comment:<sup>45</sup>

In my parish, Your Excellency, there is a steady coming and going of families. Once a family is a little bit well off it moves to different districts of the town. In their places I get newly arrived immigrant families, who claim on account of their condition they cannot support the Church. . . . I have about fifty [out of 307] of these families that consider themselves poor.

Notwithstanding the inability of some families within the parish to contribute to the expansion of Catholic educational facilities in Thunder Bay, St. Dominic’s had pledged \$30,796 to the Bishop’s Development Fund with \$22,291 of this amount paid by the end of 1959.





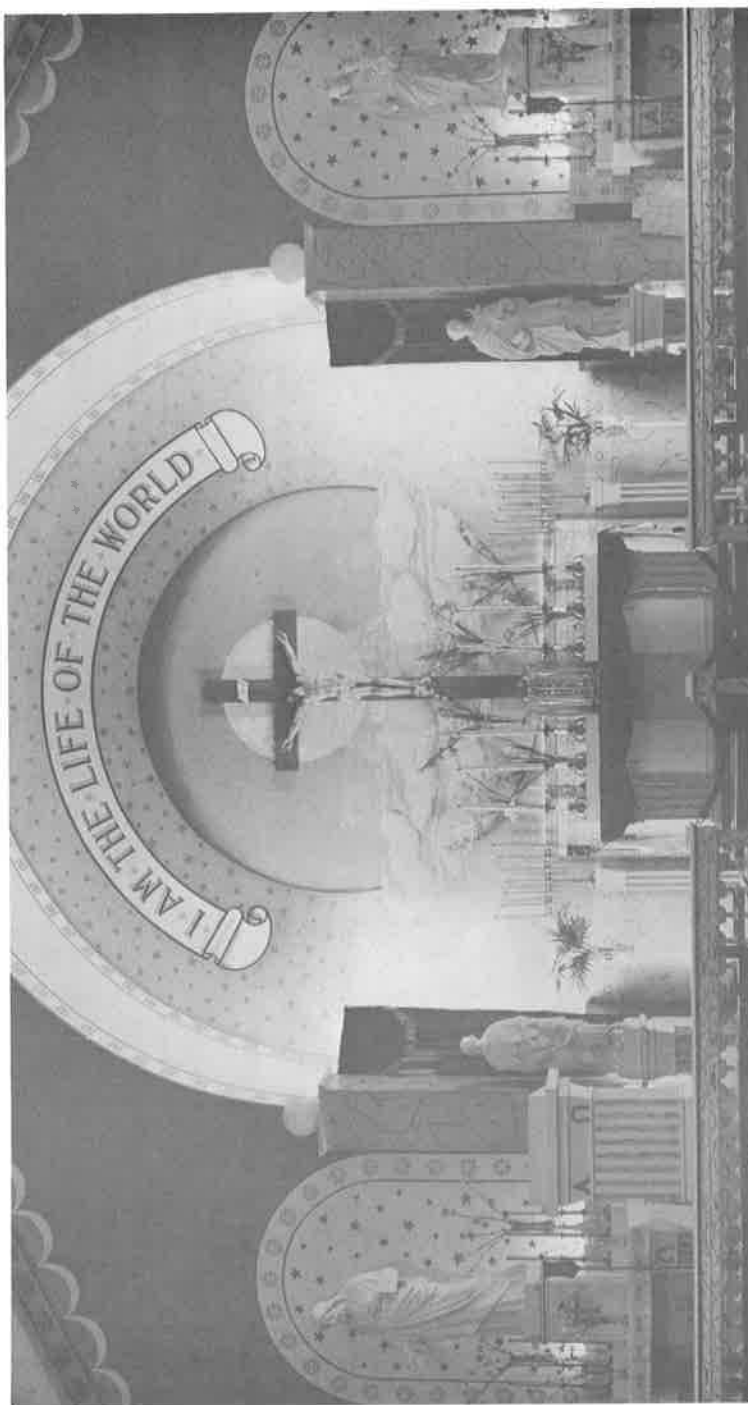
**REV. EGIDIO VALLOROSI, c. 1940**

**Father Vallorosi was pastor of St. Dominic's Parish from 1948 - 1951. He is now Monsignor Vallorosi at St. Anthony's Parish, Sudbury, Ontario. (Courtesy of Monsignor Egidio Vallorosi)**



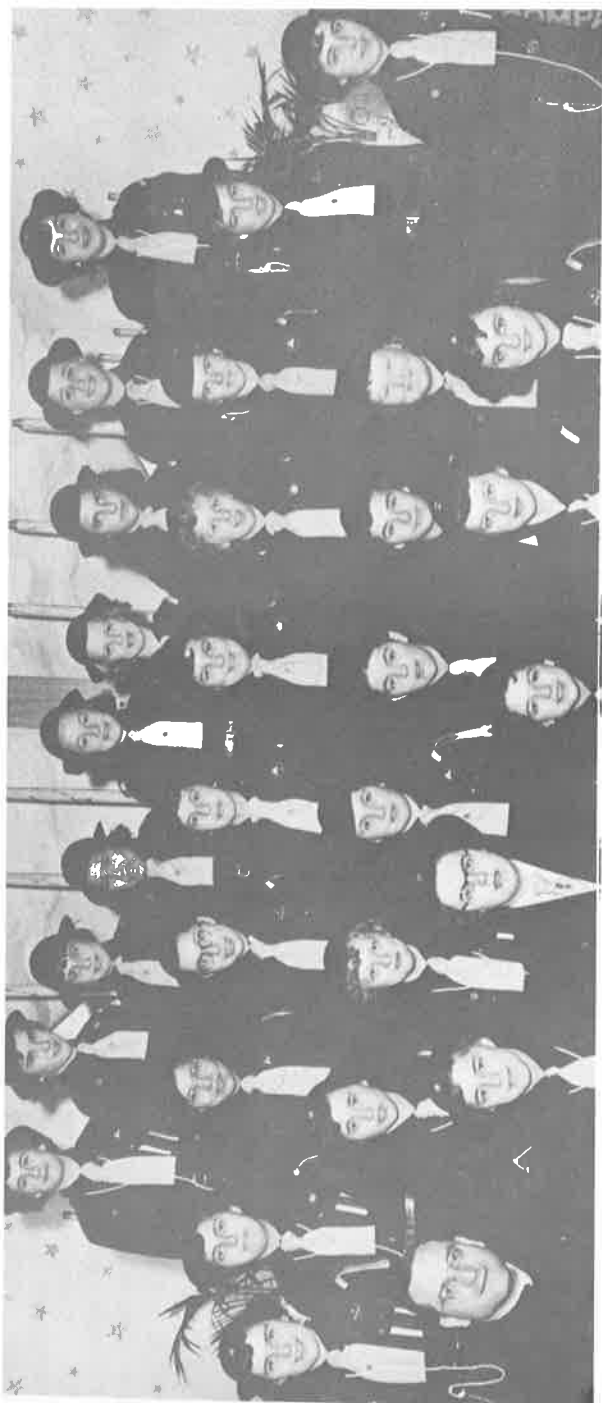
**REV. ROSARIO VENTI, c. 1952**

Father Venti was pastor of St. Dominic's Parish from 8 December 1946 to 29 July 1948. In the early fifties he was pastor of St. Anthony's Parish in Port Arthur and then moved to the Sudbury region. Father Venti died on 10 February 1986 and is buried in the Priest Plot, R.C. Cemetery, Sudbury, Ontario.



**INTERIOR OF ST. DOMINIC'S CHURCH, 700 MCLAUGHLIN STREET, c. 1948**

This photograph illustrates the renovations to the interior of the Church made by Father Venti. The newly decorated and designed altar and the white statues reflect the influence of Father Venti. The interior as illustrated in this photograph changed little over the next three decades. (St. Dominic Church Archives).



**ST. DOMINIC'S GIRL GUIDE TROOP, c. 1951**

Front Row: Father Vallorosi, Rita Bragnalo, Alice Hogan, Nancy Suddaby, "Honey" Colosimo, Adelaide Ferrari.

Second Row: Carol Adduono, Janice Buset, "Bobby" Battiston, Norma Piovesana, ---, Florence Kostinick, Una Noreus, Marlene Vesio.

Third Row: Mary Campagnan, ---, Carmel Campagnano, Carmel Manduca, Jacki Vesio, Lucille Battiston, ---, Dolores Mastrangelo.

Back Row: Annette D'Angelo, Marilyn Delorenzi, Doreen Lacko, ---, Maryann Pentick, Milly Jarabak, Florence Covino, Diane Buset, Norma Marchiori.

(Courtesy of Annette (D'Angelo) O'Brien).



**COMMUNION CLASS, 1963**



### III TOWARDS A NEW CHURCH

With the advent of improved economic conditions during the late 1950s St. Dominic's Parish, under the leadership of Father China, explored the possibilities of building a new church. As early as April 1956 the correspondence between Father China and the Bishop suggests that they were contemplating the purchase of properties around the church.<sup>46</sup> Presumably the old church would be demolished and a new structure built on the enlarged site. This procedure was followed with the construction of St. Casimir's Polish Roman Catholic Church on the corner of Robertson and McKenzie streets in 1953 and later with St. Patrick's Cathedral itself in 1963 and St. Agnes Church on Brown Street in 1982. The plan was to purchase the Pellizzari residence adjacent to the church (which was done on 3 May 1961)<sup>47</sup> and to purchase the home directly behind the church on McIntosh Street that was owned by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Vescio. Once these properties were acquired, St. Dominic's Parish could then petition the City of Fort William to close off the lane immediately behind the church to create an enlarged site on which to build a new church.

While these properties were purchased or negotiated for, a "progress" or building fund was growing. In 1953 the fund stood at \$4,981. By 1963 the building fund had grown to \$101,542.38. At this time Father China estimated that at least \$250,000 was needed to build a new church and rectory.<sup>48</sup> The building fund reached \$241,506 in 1971. By this date Father China announced in the *Parishes and Missions Annual Report of 1971* that a Parish Committee was looking to an alternate site, not far from the present one, and possibly beyond the boundaries of the East End.

In 1973 the Parish Committee submitted a proposal to Bishop Norman J. Gallagher for a "vast and exciting undertaking" that would include the selection of a land site for the new church and a design that was to be "modern", "simple", and "functional". Although the cost of the proposed church (including church, rectory, and land) would be in the vicinity of \$475,000, actual construction would not begin until 75% of the total cost "was in hand".<sup>49</sup> As of 31 December 1972, St. Dominic's Parish had \$265,000 to be placed in a building trust fund. Bishop Gallagher agreed in principle with the plan submitted by the committee.

In order to realize 75% of the total construction cost the Finance Committee suggested a plan to raise \$91,500 which included the following:<sup>50</sup> 1) special donations and contributions to be solicited from special groups and persons in Thunder Bay 2) special collections at Sunday masses with members of the Finance Committee addressing the congregation to explain the financial needs of the project and to give progress reports from time to time 3) the staging of fund-raising activities such as "sit-down" and "take-out" suppers, bingos, teas, and dances. In the long term the parish required an additional \$118,750 to cover the total cost of construction. In addition to staging special fund-raising events such as teas and bingos, the Finance Committee recommended a house to house can-

vass of current and past parishioners for pledges, weekly donations in special coloured envelopes, and the sale of the property at 700 McLaughlin Street. This was an ambitious plan. Its success, of course, depended in part on what site was selected for the new church.

In the summer of 1973 the committee recommended to the Bishop the purchase of a 1½ acre site at the corner of Redwood Avenue and Spruce Court for \$60,000. This site was found preferable to an alternate ¾ acre site on Simpson Street (at a cost of \$65,000)<sup>51</sup> because the City of Thunder Bay was expanding, and would continue to expand, in Northwood. The committee argued that the youth of the parish had moved to Northwood and hence a Northwood location would be essential for the future growth of the parish. The committee further recommended that the “elders of the parish” would be provided with transportation to attend services in the Northwood location.

Initially, Bishop Norman Gallagher had serious reservations about the Northwood site.<sup>52</sup> What percentage of St. Dominic’s parishioners were for or against the Northwood site? If a new wave of Italian immigrants came to the Thunder Bay South area would they settle in the East End of the city or in the Northwood area? Would the character of the “National Italian Parish” as it was known in 1973 disappear with a move to the Northwood location? Because of these problems the Bishop granted the committee permission to purchase the property but construction would have to wait until 75% of the funds were acquired and until “a more convincing consensus” of the parish (at least a simple majority) on the Northwood site was obtained.<sup>53</sup> In addition, the Bishop wanted some guarantee that the elderly and those without an automobile presently living in the East End and attending St. Dominic’s would be transported to the new church in Northwood.

In the winter of 1974 the Church Committee felt it was time to act and recommended to the parishioners of St. Dominic’s that construction begin immediately. Because of the inflationary pressures of the time the committee argued that further delays would dramatically raise construction costs. Although they tried desperately to achieve a consensus on the Northwood property as the site for the new church, this was a difficult, if not an impossible task at the time.<sup>54</sup> Fearing a permanent and major breach among the parishioners of St. Dominic’s, Bishop Gallagher regretfully asked the Church Committee “to delay any steps towards construction of a new church anywhere in the foreseeable future.”<sup>55</sup> Undoubtedly, this was a disappointing turn of events for St. Dominic’s Church Committee. The property for the new church was purchased in Northwood but it was destined to remain an empty lot for several more years. Meanwhile, services continued at St. Dominic’s as usual.

Some families of Italian origin living in Northwood Park during the 1970s continued to go to St. Dominic’s in the East End. Others attended St. Agnes’ Church or St. Patrick’s Cathedral and became regular parishioners

there. From 1969 to 1978 St. Patrick's Cathedral provided Sunday Mass services in St. Vincent's Roman Catholic School and then in the newly constructed St. Francis School – both in Northwood Park.<sup>56</sup> Some indication of attendance at these masses is given in the permits for the use of schools issued by the Lakehead District Catholic School Board. During this period, when masses were held in the hallways or general purpose rooms of St. Vincent's, the anticipated attendance was listed at 150-200. When the masses were moved to the gymnasium of St. Francis School in the fall of 1976 the attendance rose to 300 - 350.

Because of the large number of Roman Catholics in Northwood Park the new Bishop of Thunder Bay, the Most Reverend John A. O'Mara, decided in 1979 to divide St. Patrick's Parish and create a new parish in the Northwood area "under the patronage of St. Joseph" with Reverend Ralph DiGiacinto as pastor and Reverend Joseph Crawford as associate pastor.<sup>57</sup> "St. Joseph's Parish will become the Italian National Parish for the Fort William area" decreed Bishop O'Mara, "and the territorial parish for the Catholic people living" within the boundaries of the parish of St. Joseph.<sup>58</sup> The deteriorating condition of St. Dominic's Church in the East End and the poor health of Father China were cited as the principal reasons for the creation of the new parish in Northwood. Moreover, the people of Northwood needed a parish to serve their needs. While many of the Catholics of Northwood were of Italian origin, others came from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Therefore, religious services would be held in both English and Italian.

Bishop O'Mara made special reference to the name "St. Joseph" in his letter to the Italians of Fort William. He recalled that St. Joseph was the original patron of the Italian Parish of Fort William from 1912 – 1936. In addition, the name St. Joseph was meant to distinguish it from St. Dominic's, the Italian Church in the East End. Moreover, St. Joseph was the patron of the Universal Church, and our country Canada. Therefore, a church in honour of St. Joseph would have a distinguished place in Thunder Bay.

By the fall of 1979, the difficult but challenging task of creating a unity of mood among the people of St. Joseph's parish had begun in earnest. The ultimate aim of the parish was to build a new church on the corner of Redwood Avenue and Spruce Court. Meanwhile, masses continued to be held every Sunday in St. Francis School gymnasium (located at 600 Redwood Avenue West). Weekday services were held at St. Joseph's Rectory (purchased in April 1979) located at 486 Erindale Crescent. This residence was a duplex which served as a rectory and living quarters for the pastor and associate pastor. A Parish Advisory Council, created in the summer of 1979, publicized the masses and services held at St. Francis school by posting the times of the masses in all of the territorial schools and on a sign on the future site of the church.

Father Ralph DiGiacinto, together with the Parish Advisory Council, thought it was vital for the two parishes, St. Dominic's in the East End and



St. Joseph's in Northwood, to act in unison in the building of a new church.<sup>59</sup> This was, of course, no easy task. The differences of opinion which existed among the parishioners of St. Dominic's five years earlier over the selection of the site for the new church were still present and were soon to surface again over the question of the name of the new church. Bishop John O'Mara, Father China, and Father Ralph DiGiacinto no doubt agonized over the problem of how best to bring the opposing sides together in the creation of a new church.

Bishop O'Mara made a series of decisions in 1980 and 1981 which were presumably intended to expedite the process of building a new church. In March of 1980 he changed the name of the church in Northwood to "The Church of Saints Joseph and Dominic."<sup>60</sup> After carefully listening to the wishes of the parishioners on both sides, he felt this was a fair compromise. St. Dominic's parish felt that the new church did not adequately carry on the traditions of the Italian community. Bishop O'Mara argued that the dual name would acknowledge "the reality whereby the Church will serve two communities: The Italian Community in the whole of Fort William as well as the people living in the Northwood area."

This dual name for the new parish in Northwood was short-lived. In December of 1980 Bishop O'Mara issued a decree concerning St. Dominic's Parish. "In response to a joint petition from representatives of the two groups concerning the name of the new parish, and in order to clarify and to fully implement the above decree for the good of the Catholic community in this city and to facilitate the building of the new church and parish facilities", the Bishop decreed that the old parish of St. Dominic situated at 700 McLaughlin Street and its name would be "suppressed". Parenthetically, although the Italian parish in the East End was "suppressed" or being phased out, religious services would continue to be offered there for another five years. In addition, the church in Northwood would be placed under the patronage of St. Dominic and would become known as St. Dominic Parish. In order to implement this decree the Bishop transferred all monies collected over the years by St. Dominic's for the building of a new church to the Northwood parish. Father China of course was to keep an appropriate amount to cover the operating expenses of the old church.<sup>61</sup>

The Bishop also requested that the Scalabrini Fathers (Missionaries of St. Charles) serve the new parish in Northwood. In the spring of 1981 Father Umberto Rizzi, C.S. was appointed pastor and later, Father Daniel Lapolla, C.S. was appointed associate pastor.<sup>62</sup> In some ways it was appropriate that the Scalabrini Fathers came to St. Dominic's Parish. These missionary priests were founded in the late nineteenth century to minister to the needs of Italian migrants who had left Italy for North and South America. With the appointment of Father Rizzi and Father Lapolla, Bishop O'Mara and the Scalabrini Order ensured that an unbroken line of missionary Italian born or Italian speaking priests ministered to the needs of the Italian people of Fort William. The Scalabrini Order, however, recognized the duality of cultures that, apart from the

earliest years, was always present in St. Dominic's Parish. "I assured the Bishop", wrote Rev. A.J. Calandra, C.S., Provincial Superior of the Scalabrini Order, "that we will take care of the Canadians with equal concern and zeal. . . ."63 The appointment of the Scalabrini Fathers to St. Dominic's made their community in Thunder Bay stronger; by the summer of 1981 the Scalabrini Fathers served both Italian Roman Catholic parishes in Thunder Bay.64 Father Rizzi had extensive experience in overseeing the construction and renovation of churches. Prior to his arrival at St. Dominic's Parish, he had supervised renovations to St. Anthony's Church in Thunder Bay from 1978 - 1981. Although the construction of a new church was to be foremost in his mind, Father Rizzi viewed with equal importance the creation of a community spirit in the new parish and the encouragement of the "Italian groups and the local Northwood community to grow as a single family toward the same goals."65

The first step in this process was the launching of an ambitious fund-raising campaign. How was the parish to raise \$778,000 needed to build the church? A fund-raising committee headed by Mr. Jim Rodrigues and including Larry Grace, Sue MacDonald, Claire McKay, John Robillard, Pasquale Sacino, Carol Siciliano, Rita Speer, George Thompson, and Major Zuliani set as a short term goal the amount of \$300,000 to be raised from October 1981 to October 1982. The total cost of the new church was not to exceed \$1,200,000. The property had already been purchased in 1973. Through the fund-raising activities of St. Dominic's Parish on McLaughlin Street \$442,000 was in a building fund accumulating not an insignificant amount of interest. (During the early 1980s interest paid on this amount ranged from 16 - 19%) Parishioner pledges, special events (teas, dinner dances, etc.), donated free labour, and of course a loan (to be kept to a minimum) were the principal vehicles through which funds were to be raised.

From the spring of 1981 to the official opening of the church in 1983, the finance and building committee approached individuals, organizations and businesses for funds. Inflationary pressures had pushed the total cost of a new church from approximately \$475,000 in 1973 to well over a million a decade later. The task of fund-raising was indeed a challenge. The first fund-raising drive took place from Sunday 31 May to Friday 12 June 1981. In addition to paid parishioner pledges generated from this and subsequent campaigns, the building fund was augmented by sizeable contributions from the Principe di Piemonte Society, the Italian Mutual Benefit Society, St. Dominic's Catholic's Women's League, The Ladies Venet Society, The Knights of Columbus Council #1447, local business establishments and St. Anthony's Parish. The generosity of individuals, organizations, and businesses to St. Dominic's Church Building Fund was truly remarkable. Members of the parish were given visual evidence of the progress of the fund-raising drive with the placement of a large thermometer on the wall of St. Francis gymnasium. No doubt there was enthusiasm among parishioners when the red marker went above the \$100,000 mark;

the finance committee felt this barometer of progress would encourage parishioners to continue to support all fund-raising efforts.

As the fund-raising activities continued the Building Committee of the new church planned a ground breaking ceremony for 18 April 1982. Church and government officials were invited to attend this ceremony. A procession moved from St. Vincent Roman Catholic School to the construction site at the corner of Redwood Avenue and Spruce Court. When the first sod was turned by the Bishop of Thunder Bay, Most Rev. John O'Mara, it was the start of construction that was to continue uninterrupted for one year. This construction period did more than anyone could ever imagine to unite the parish. "Before we started building", remarked Father Rizzi, "we didn't know each other. It was each of us offering our services, our work, and our talent that made us a community."<sup>66</sup>

The notion that the ordinary construction work of building the church by volunteer labour would keep expenses down and foster a sense of community within the parish was both courageous and admirable. Building committee co-chairmen Louis Toneguzzi and Peter Buset made an appeal to the Italian community through the Italian Mutual Benefit Society and the Principe di Piemonte Society for skilled and unskilled volunteer labour.<sup>67</sup> Parishioners and non-parishioners were encouraged to come to the construction site anytime from nine in the morning to nine in the evening. In the fall of 1982, 12 - 16 students from Northwood High School's building construction class responded to the request for volunteer labour. This on-the-job training and unique experiment in co-operative education earned the students credits in their programme at Northwood High School and introduced them to the realities of the particular trade they would pursue sometime in the future.

Approximately 100 women in the parish became involved, a few with the actual construction, but most with "trailer duty". Shortly after the ground breaking ceremony an ATCO trailer, once used in a bush camp in Northwestern Ontario, was loaned to the church by Gerry Tobin and placed on the construction site. There the ladies manned the phones and prepared coffee and meals. Throughout the construction period approximately 4,600 meals were prepared for volunteer workers. A total of 10,000 manhours of volunteer labour went into the construction of St. Dominic's Church. For those who gave one hour and for those who gave a hundred hours, it was an unforgettable experience.

While construction of the new church was taking place, religious services and programmes continued as usual at St. Francis School and at the rectory on Erindale Crescent. Regular masses were held at the school on Saturday evenings (5:00 P.M.) and on Sundays (9:00 A.M., 10:30 A.M., and 12:00 Noon) and in the rectory chapel on weekdays (7:00 P.M.). Organizations such as the Parish Council, The Catholic Women's League,<sup>68</sup> the St. Vincent De Paul Society, and the Legion of Mary involved hundreds of individuals in parish work. For example, in the

spring of 1982 the St. Vincent De Paul Society assisted a number of families in the parish by providing them with household appliances and children's clothing.<sup>69</sup> Other individuals spent countless hours in preparing children from St. Vincent, St. Francis, and St. Thomas Aquinas Schools for First Communion and Confirmation. In addition, several members of the laity were giving evening instruction to children attending the public schools within the territorial boundaries of St. Dominic's Parish.<sup>70</sup> Preparation for First Communion and Confirmation involved a six to eight week commitment on the part of the lay instructors and the children. At another level, married couples in the parish were trained to offer an "Evenings for the Engaged" programme. As early as 1982 the marriage preparation team consisted of six to eight couples.<sup>71</sup>

Perhaps the most imaginative and memorable service held at St. Dominic's Church was the Midnight Mass Service held on 24 December 1982 in the yet unfinished church on Redwood Avenue. Father Rizzi and Father Lapolla wanted to re-enact the scene where Jesus was born. In order to accomplish this, permission was granted from the City of Thunder Bay to have an 8:00 P.M. (for children and families) and 12:00 midnight mass. Presumably fire and seating capacity regulations were waived for this special event. Father Dan travelled to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel parish in Melrose Park, Illinois to bring back an impressive manger scene carved in wood and Father Rizzi arranged to have live animals as part of the manger for the two masses. Three days prior to Christmas Eve all construction work ceased in order to clean up the floor area, to cover the mud floor with canvas, to provide make-shift seating arrangements, and to decorate the area with large natural evergreen wreaths, Christmas trees and lights. During the two masses on that Christmas Eve the atmosphere was charged with excitement and with expectations of soon being able to worship in the new church. To be sure, Christmas Eve 1982 at St. Dominic's Church in Northwood was a unique experience for all who attended. "It was a good spirit", concluded Father Rizzi, "I don't think we'll ever be able to recapture that special feeling."

The anxious anticipation felt by so many who attended the two masses on that special Christmas Eve came to an end with the official opening and dedication of the Church on 7 May 1983. After more than thirty years of saving and fund-raising, after 329 days of construction, and after more than 10,000 hours of volunteer labour, the parishioners of St. Dominic's were able to savor the precious moment of attending mass in their new church. The photographs which follow tell the story of that memorable day in our history.

The official opening of the new church ultimately led to the closure of St. Dominic's on McLaughlin Street. An examination of St. Dominic's spiritual status during the years 1979 - 1985 indicates that the number of baptisms, First Communions, Marriages, and Funerals held at the old church diminished rapidly. Accordingly, Bishop O'Mara met with the parishioners of the old church on 15 April 1985 and announced that the

church would be closed. Needless to say, the harsh reality that the passage of time takes its toll on old buildings was reluctantly accepted by those still attending the Italian church on McLaughlin Street. The following Sunday (21 April 1985), Bishop O'Mara celebrated the last two masses and officially closed the church.

Father Rizzi and Father Lapolla immediately extended a warm and cordial invitation to all parishioners who continued to attend St. Dominic's on McLaughlin Street from 1983 – 1985 to now attend the new church in Northwood. They also honoured a commitment made by the New Church Committee of 1973 by saying: "To help those of you who have no means of transportation, we will provide a bus each Sunday which will leave from the old church, at 9:45 and will allow you to attend the Italian mass here at 10:30." On Sunday 12 May 1985 the bus service carrying parishioners from the East End of Fort William to St. Dominic's in Northwood was initiated. Obviously, not all found this convenient and decided to join other Roman Catholic parishes in the area.

What was now to become of the property at 700 McLaughlin Street? The property consisted of a church and a rectory on a 50 ft. lot, a vacant 25 ft. lot on the north side of the church, a house owned by the church and a garage situated behind the church. On 22 May 1985 members of the Building Committee met and decided that the property should be sold on the condition that the church building be demolished.<sup>72</sup> In addition, the committee decided to donate the pews to a new church being constructed in Red Lake. Most important, the stained glass windows were carefully removed and then restored for installation in the new church. The church was demolished on Monday 13 January 1986. The vacant lot on the corner of McLaughlin and Connolly streets was sold to the City of Thunder Bay Non-Profit Housing Corporation for \$42,000.

The visual legacy of old St. Dominic's to the new church in Northwood is found in the restored stained glass window and bell. Eight stained glass windows were installed around the baptismal area of the church. The window dedicated to Mary the Mother of Jesus was installed in a prominent place in the Reconciliation Room. Through the kindness and generosity of parishioners, pledges were made, individually and in groups, towards the costs of restoration. The bell forms part of a historical monument and memorial to the original pioneers of the parish. This monument now stands in the courtyard between the church and the rectory. As St. Dominic's parishioners enter and leave the church, the restored bell and stained glass windows serve as a constant reminder that the roots of our history plunge deeply in the Italian Community of Fort William's East End.



**ST. DOMINIC'S CHURCH BUILDING COMMITTEE, 18 April 1982**

Building Committee assembled in St. Vincent School Gymnasium after official sod-turning ceremony.

Front Row: Pasquale Sacino, Jim Rodrigues, Most Rev. John O'Mara, Bishop of Thunder Bay, Rev. Umberto Rizzi, C.S., Pastor, St. Dominic Parish, Diane Piovesana, Terry Nugent, Ricardo Simeoni.

Back Row: Joe St. Amand, Joe Kane, Peter Buset, (Co-Chairman), Louis Toneguzzi (Co-Chairman), Dominic Boccalon, George Facca, Ennio Dellacecca.



**MOST REV. JOHN O'MARA, BISHOP OF THUNDER BAY DIOCESE, TURNS THE FIRST SOD, 18 April 1982.**

Rev. Umberto Rizzi, C.S. (pastor), Joe St. Amand (master of ceremonies), Rev. Angelo Calandra, Provincial Superior, Scalabrini Fathers, Walter Assef, Mayor of Thunder Bay, Mickey Hennessy, MPP (Fort William Riding), Paul MacRae, M.P. (Thunder Bay-Atikokan Riding), Dominic Boccalon, Peter Buset, Louis Toneguzzi.



**FATHER RIZZI, C.S. (PASTOR) ADDRESSING CROWD AT SOD-TURNING CEREMONY, 18 April 1982**



**LADIES OF ST. DOMINIC'S PARISH, 18 April 1982**

Front Row: Frances Vescio, Claire McKay, Rita Speer (C.W.L. President 1982-84), Emma Carniato (C.W.L. President, 1980-82), Jackie Perna.

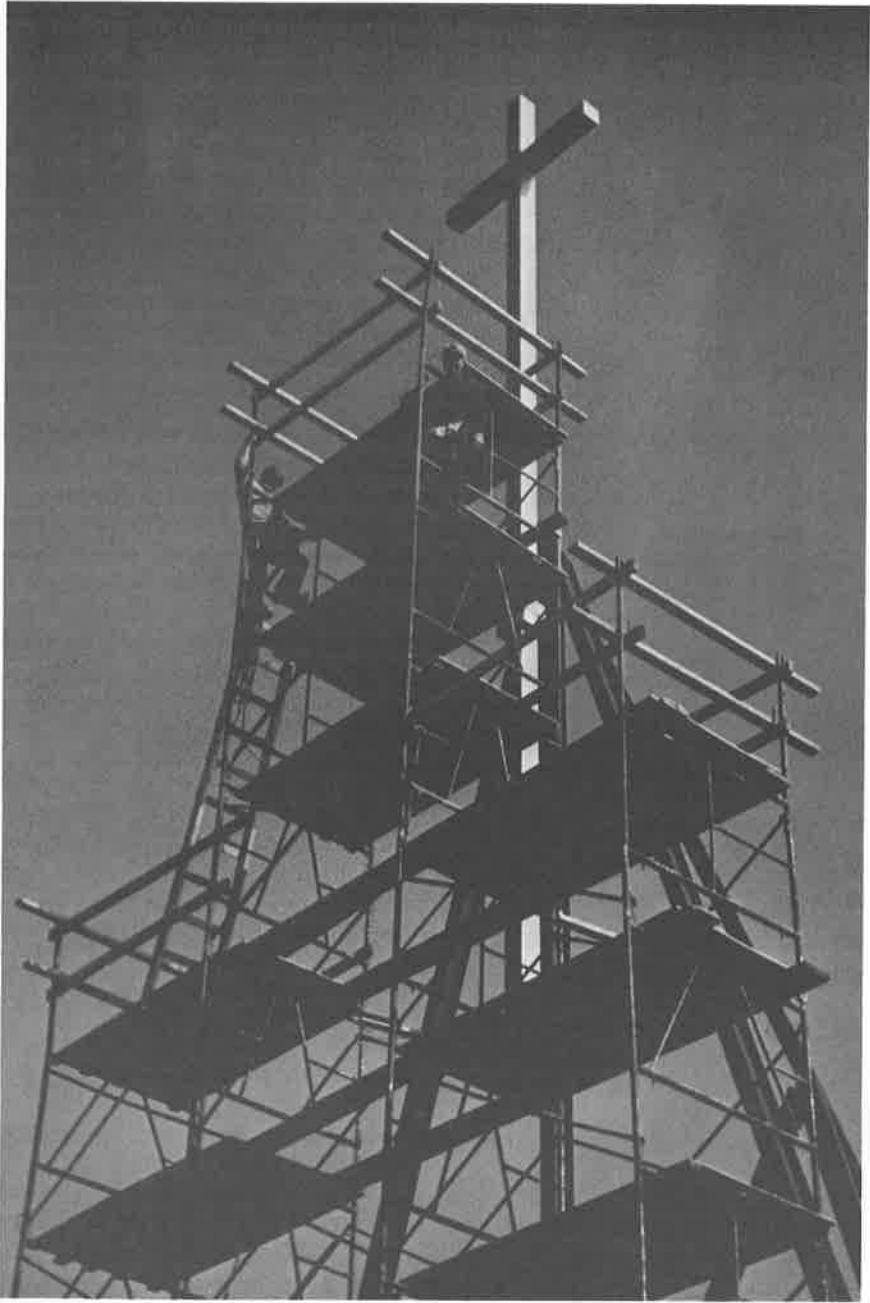
Back Row: Phoebe Pilley, Maria Rodrigues, Shirley Rouillard, Denise Dorval, Joanne Shewchuk, Charlotte Zulianello, Alma Ongaro.



**PREPARING FOUNDATION OF CHURCH, May 1982**

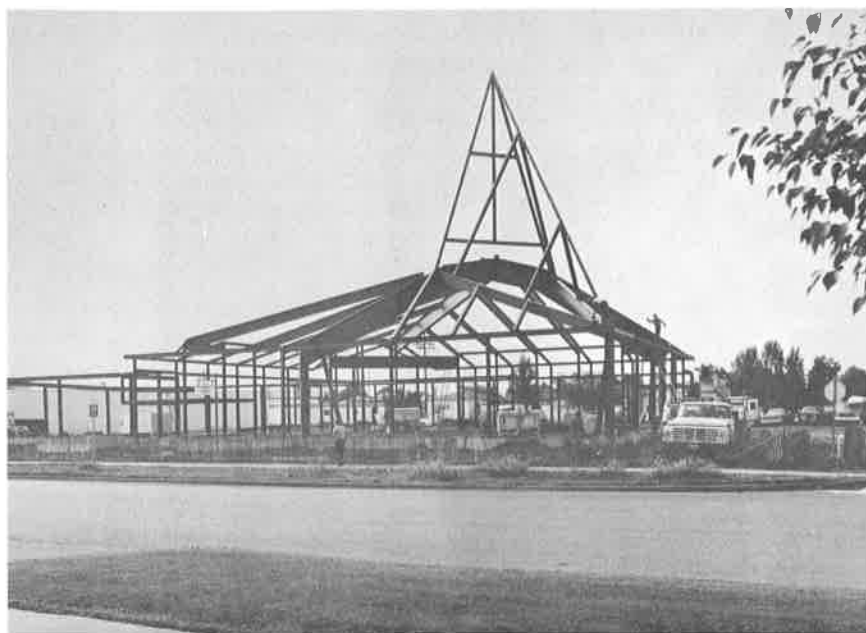
Workers: ---, Vincenzo Armenti, Ron Bragnalo and Joe Pitton (backs turned to camera).





**SCAFFOLDING POSITIONED AROUND CROSS**

Shown on the scaffolding are volunteer workers Willi Walser (left) and Danielo Barro (right). (Photo: Father Rizzi)



**STRUCTURAL STEEL ASSEMBLED TO FORM FRAME OF CHURCH, July 1982**



**REV. UMBERTO RIZZI, PASTOR OFFERS REV. DAN LAPOLLA, ASSOCIATE PASTOR, A SIGN OF PEACE AT 1982 CHRISTMAS EVE MASS IN UNFINISHED CHURCH**



**SINGERS AND MUSICIANS REJOICE AT CHRISTMAS EVE MASS, 1982.**



**SITTING ON THE HILLY CHURCH FLOOR WHICH WAS COVERED WITH CANVAS, CHILDREN AWAIT BEGINNING OF CHRISTMAS EVE MASS, 1982**



**PRIESTLY PROCESSION THROUGH KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS HONOUR GUARD AT BEGINNING OF DEDICATION CEREMONY, 7 May 1983**

Rev. Carlo Titotto, pastor St. Anthony's Parish, Very Rev. Angelo Calandra, Provincial Superior, Scalabrini Fathers, Very Rev. Sisto Caccia, Superior General, Scalabrini Fathers, Rev. Umberto Rizzi, C.S., Father Daniel China, Hubert Badanai, honorary finance chairman, Monsignor Filevich, and Rev. Kelly.



**DANIELA CLARA AND GIOVANNA ZOVATTO PLACE ALTAR CLOTH ON NEW ALTAR, 7 May 1983**



**CONCELEBRANTS OF FIRST MASS IN NEW CHURCH, 7 May 1983**

Rev. Tim Flaherty, Rev. Umberto Rizzi, C.S., Rev. Daniel China, Very Rev. Sisto Caccia, Most Rev. Bishop John O'Mara, Very Rev. Angelo Calandra

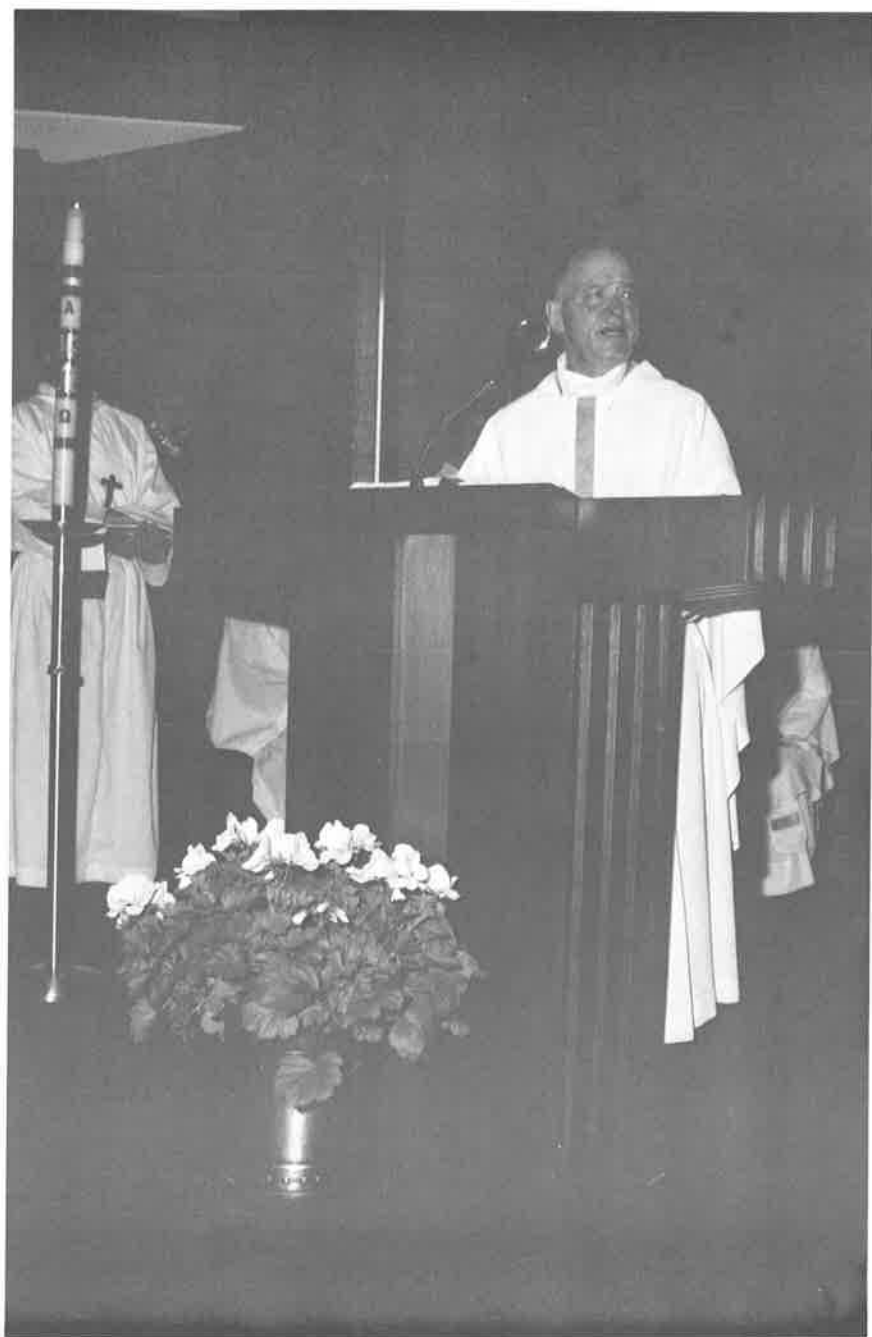


**CLAIRE MCKAY, PARISHIONER AND VOLUNTEER SECRETARY PRESENTS BINDER WITH VOLUNTEER NAMES TO MOST REV. BISHOP JOHN O'MARA, BISHOP OF THUNDER BAY, 7 May 1983**

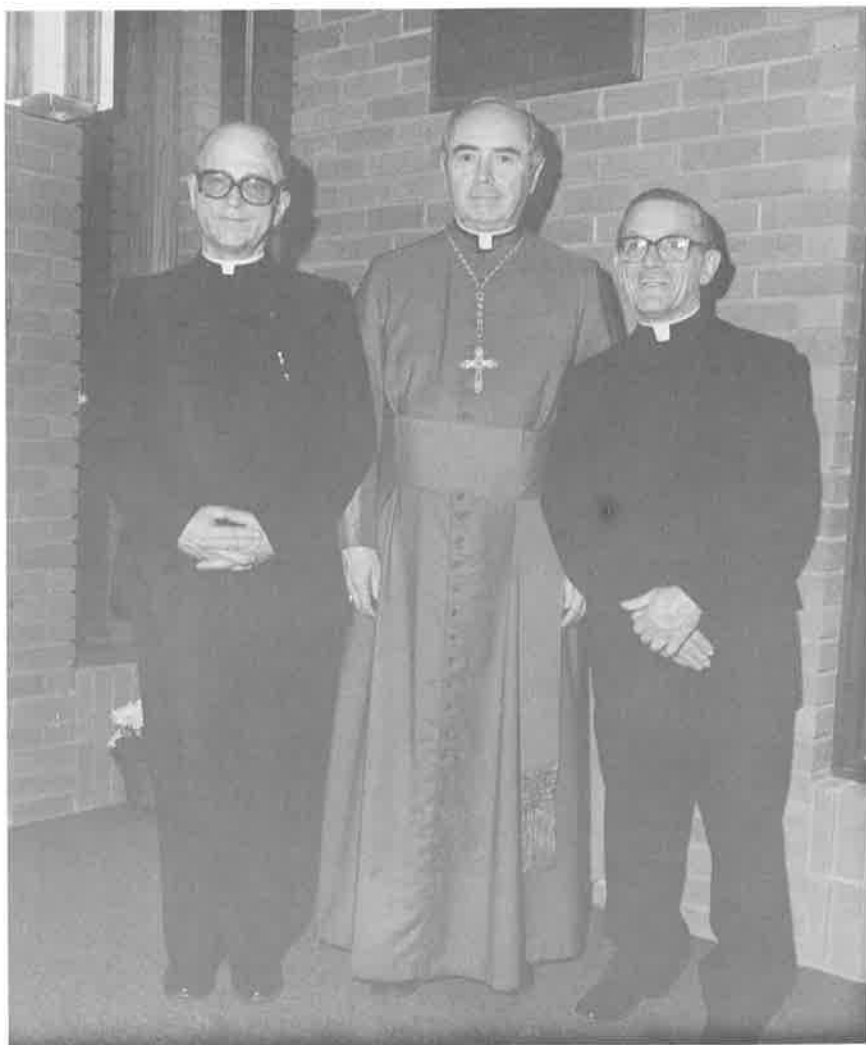
Approximately 10,000 manhours of volunteer labour went into construction of new church. Rev. Umberto Rizzi, C.S. (right) and Monsignor Basil Filevich, pastor, Ukrainian Catholic Church of Holy Cross, Rev. Carl Kelly, and Rev. Daniel Lapolla, C.S., assistant pastor at St. Dominic's, look on.



**PRESENTATION OF KEYS TO CHURCH BY JOE PITTON (CONSTRUCTION SUPERINTENDENT) AND LOUIS TONEGUZZI AND PETER Buset (BUILDING COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRMEN) TO BISHOP JOHN A. O'MARA, 7 May 1983**



**REV. DANIEL CHINA ADDRESSES CONGREGATION AT DEDICATION CEREMONY,  
7 May 1983**



**REV. FATHER DANIEL CHINA WITH MOST REV. BISHOP O'MARA AND REV. UMBERTO RIZZI, C.S. AT DEDICATION CEREMONY FOR ST. DOMINIC R.C. CHURCH, 130 REDWOOD AVENUE, 7 May 1983**

Under the leadership of Father China the parishioners of St. Dominic's in the East End raised approximately half a million dollars towards the new Italian church. For more than 30 years service to St. Dominic Parish Father China was honoured in two ways: it was announced by Most Rev. John O'Mara that Pope John Paul II conferred the "pro ecclesia pontifica" on Father China for his selfless service; a dedication plaque was erected in the narthex of the church to acknowledge with gratitude the dedicated service of Father China, pastor of St. Dominic's Parish for more than 30 years.





**REDEDICATION OF STAINED GLASS WINDOWS BY BISHOP JOHN A. O'MARA, 15 December 1985**



**REV. UMBERTO RIZZI AND REV. DAN LAPOLLA, 1983**

Father Rizzi was born on 24 August 1921 at Cloz (Trento) Italy and ordained on 25 June 1944 at Bassano del Grappa (Vincenza) Italy. Over the years he served as a high school teacher, vice rector at two different campuses of the Istituto Scalabrini in Italy. In addition he served as pastor at several places including St. Anthony's parish in Thunder Bay (February 1969 to August 1973; February 1978 to May 1981) and St. Dominic's, Thunder Bay (May 1981 to October 1986). He served as Provincial Superior of the Scalabrini Order in Chicago from February 1975 to February 1978. Father Dan Lapolla was born on 26 September 1942 at Putnam Connecticut and ordained on 1 June 1974 in Rhode Island. Since his ordination he served as Vocation Director at Toronto, at parishes in B.C. and as assistant pastor at St. Dominic's from August 1981 to September 1985. (Courtesy of Emma Carniato)



**REV. RALPH DIGIACINTO**

Father Ralph DiGiacinto was born on 21 November 1937 at Bisenti-Teramo Italy and ordained on 26 March 1966 at L'Aquila Italy. Since his ordination he served as pastor and associate pastor in Columbia, South America, Dryden, Marathon and several churches in Thunder Bay including St. Dominic's from January 1979 - May 1981.



**REV. ALBERT CORRADIN, C.S. WITH ST. VINCENT SCHOOL COMMUNION CLASS, 1987**

Father Corradin was born on 16 February 1928 at Chicago, Illinois and ordained on 4 July 1954 in Rome, Italy. Since his ordination he served as Professor and Assistant pastor at Melrose Park, Illinois, and as director of Vocations for the Province (U.S.A. and Canada). He served as pastor at Revelstoke, Melrose Park, North Vancouver, Milwaukee, and as associate pastor and pastor at St. Dominic's from December 1985 to the present.



**REV. RINO ZILLOTTO, C.S. WITH COMMUNION CLASS, 1987**

Father Ziliotto was born on 31 August 1919 at Borso-Treviso, Italy and ordained on 25 June 1944 at Bassano-Vicenza, Italy. Since his ordination he served at parishes in Chicago, Edmonton, Windsor, New Westminister, and came to Thunder Bay on 14 November 1986.

# LA STORIA DELLA PARROCCHIA DI SAN DOMENICO

## 1912 - 1987

### I SACERDOTI MISSIONARI TRA GLI ITALIANI DI FORT WILLIAM

Non ci sono notizie precise sulla data di nascita della chiesa italiana a Fort William, sappiamo con sicurezza che la chiesa italiana di S. Giuseppe, nel 1912, era situata nella zona dell'East End all'angolo delle vie McLaughlin e Connolly. Alcuni dicono che gli italiani comperarono un edificio al n.534 di via McLaughlin e lo avessero chiamato Chiesa S. Giuseppe. Questa chiesa sarebbe stata distrutta in un incendio nel 1910. Ai parrochiani italiani fu permesso di usare la chiesa slovacca di St. Peter, sita al 706 di via McIntosh, a condizione che le funzioni italiane non interferissero con quelle slovacche. Questo accordo continuo' fino a che gli italiani ricostruirono la loro chiesa al 700 di via McLaughlin. Altri suggeriscono che sia gli italiani che gli slovacchi usavano la chiesa di St. Peter. Poi, tra il 1907 e il 1909, un incendio la distrusse e che fu ricostruita nel 1911. Don Francesco Crociata, parroco della chiesa di S. Antonio a Port Arthur, suggerì agli italiani di Fort William di costruire la loro chiesa. Fino a che la chiesa italiana non fu finita, la "chiesa finlandese" al 520 di via McLaughlin venne usata per le funzioni religiose italiane.

I documenti municipali della citta' di Fort William, Ontario, danno credenza a quest'ultima interpretazione, che la parrocchia di S. Antonio abbia incoraggiato la creazione di una chiesa italiana nell'East End di Fort William. Una ricerca catastale dell'isolato n.37, lotti 9 e 10, area occupata dalla Chiesa S. Giuseppe, indica la vendita di un lotto di 25piedi da parte della Pigeon River Lumber Company ad un gruppo di amministratori rappresentanti la Parrocchia S. Giuseppe. I signori Frank M. Ross, Angelo Descepolo, Louis Belluz, Bruno Mazza, don Francesco Crociata e la Corporazione Episcopale della Diocesi di Sault S.te Marie accettarono la responsabilita' di pagare \$791,31 per questa proprieta'. Qualsiasi interpretazione si voglia usare, dai registri della Citta' di Fort William (anno 1913) e dai documenti assicurativi della Chas. E. Goad Co. Insurance Plan of Fort William, 1911 (1913), sappiamo che nel 1912 c'era una struttura in legno, chiamata Chiesa S. Giuseppe, all'angolo delle vie McLaughlin e Connolly.

Questo modesto edificio fu destinato a servire i bisogni spirituali della comunita' italiana di Fort William per oltre settant'anni. Durante questo periodo sacerdoti italiani o che parlavano la lingua italiana guidarono le attivita' parrocchiali; cio' era molto importante per gli emigranti italiani. La chiesa S. Giuseppe servi' da unione tra la vita in un piccolo centro italiano e l'insicuro, diverso modo di vita in un nordico paese straniero. All'inizio i servizi offerti dalla chiesa erano limitati alla S. Messa domenicale in italiano e l'amministrazione dei sacramenti. Piu' tardi le funzioni in

italiano inclusero S. Messe giornaliera, processioni e la benedizione delle case.

Che tipo di comunita' faceva parte della chiesa S. Giuseppe? Secondo un rapporto preparato dalle chiese Metodista e Presbiteriana, la popolazione italiana di Fort William che contava 863 anime nel 1910, arrivo' a 1390 nel 1912. Le persone incaricate di fare il censimento riportarono condizioni di superaffollamento nell'East End. Nell'isolato tra le vie McTavish, McLaughlin, McIntyre e Christie furono contate 292 persone di cui 111 italiani. Una casa di 6 locali ospitava 17 italiani, un'altra di 3 vani dava alloggio a ben 13 persone. Questo rapporto sembra dare numeri piuttosto moderati, ma una esaminazione delle liste delle tasse municipali conferma l'accuratezza di quel censimento. Dalle liste per l'anno 1913 (quartieri 1 e 2) per ogni casa di proprieta' italiana sono segnalati dai 10 ai 16 residenti. Il proprietario ed i suoi famigliari contavano per 5-7 persone, gli altri erano probabilmente pensionanti.

La Chiesa S. Giuseppe entro' a fare parte di quel nucleo di chiese che si trovavano in questo predominante quartiere etnico di Fort William. La chiesa slovacca St. Peter era al 706 di via McIntosh, una chiesa Greco-ortodossa fu costruita al 639 di via McPherson, una chiesa Rutena (cattolico-ucraina), S.te Mary, sara' costruita in via Connolly n. 500. Fu osservato, nel censimento del 1913, che "l'area di maggiore crescita tra la popolazione non inglese era nella sezione detta Coal Dock. Era sufficiente osservare le varie chiese cattoliche la domenica mattina dove si notava che la maggior parte dei fedeli era di sesso maschile."

Era a questa comunita' italiana in continuo aumento che vari sacerdoti, residenti a S. Antonio, dedicarono le loro cure per una decade dopo il 1912. Don Francesco Crociata fu il primo a servire le due comunita' italiane di Port Arthur e Fort-William. Purtroppo il lavoro era immenso e don Crociata si ammalo' e dovette lasciare il distretto di Thunder Bay nel 1914. Dai registri parrocchiali vediamo che don Giuliano prese il posto di don Crociata, ma anche lui si ammalo' e dovette lasciare il posto dopo soli sei mesi. Dal registro dei Battesimi si vede il nome di don Angelo Sansone, parroco, dal 1914 in ottobre ad agosto del 1916. Visto che questo nome non appare sui registri della parrocchia di S. Antonio, si puo' pensare che fosse parroco solo della chiesa di S. Giuseppe.

Per i prossimi anni la figura piu' importante e' quella di don Domenico Alfonso Tomaselli. Nominato parroco di S. Antonio a soli 39 anni, don Tomaselli arrivo' a Port Arthur il 14 maggio 1915 e, l'anno seguente assunse la responsabilita' di guidare anche la chiesa di S. Giuseppe. "Per oltre sei anni il nuovo Parroco si prodigo' per le due comunita' italiane celebrando le S. Messe domenicali in entrambe le citta' . . . In quei giorni tutte e due le chiese si trovavano in cattive condizioni finanziarie. La chiesa di S. Giuseppe era solo un guscio, senza banchi o sedie per i fedeli, riscaldata male e con l'interno di legno grezzo". Un parrocchiano ricorda che la chiesa era costruita su pali di legno. Durante l'inverno la chiesa era

riscaldata da una vecchia stufa in cantina. In cinque anni si costruì il campanile con la campana, si comperarono i banchi e l'interno della chiesa fu rifinito. Inoltre, grazie alla generosità di alcuni parrocchiani furono acquistate ed installate 10 finestre istoriate, due ai lati dell'ingresso e le altre otto nel corpo della chiesa.

In questo periodo, il ruolo della chiesa era limitato al dispensamento degli essenziali servizi religiosi. Dal 1912 al 1921 la chiesa fu testimone a 469 Battesimi, 74 Matrimoni e 86 Funerali. Non ci sono abbastanza documenti che facciano pensare che la chiesa fosse coinvolta con la vita secolare dei propri fedeli.

Per poter svilupparsi ed aiutare socialmente la comunità era necessario avere un sacerdote a tempo pieno. Questo si avverò nel 1921 con l'arrivo di don Ferdinando Capresi. Nato nel 1863 nell'Italia settentrionale, don Capresi fu ordinato sacerdote nel 1888. Non sappiamo quando lasciò l'Italia ma nel 1933 don A. J. Murray disse che Don Capresi era emigrato negli Stati Uniti, ed aveva lavorato sodo e con successo tra gli italiani di Filadelfia. Si pensa che don Capresi sia venuto in Canada dopo la Prima Guerra Mondiale, e che si sia stabilito a Fort William. "Venne in questa terra nordica", disse don Murray "così diversa dalla sua Lombardia piena di sole, per dedicare la sua vita, il suo tempo e il suo talento agli emigranti italiani, per poter dare loro il conforto spirituale della loro religione."

Quelli che conobbero don Capresi durante gli anni Venti, lo descrivono come un "buon uomo" e un "sant'uomo", un uomo che visse nella più assoluta povertà nell'East End. I parrocchiani ricordano che durante i mesi invernali le S. Messe giornaliere venivano celebrate in un locale della canonica riscaldato da un piccolo calorifero. La Chiesa non poteva permettersi il lusso di acquistare il carbone necessario per riscaldare ogni giorno la chiesa. La maggior parte dei parrocchiani erano emigranti che lavoravano saltuariamente per la Canadian Pacific Railway e nei cantieri del carbone per quaranta o cinquanta centesimi l'ora. Naturalmente le offerte per la chiesa erano scarse. La gente dell'East End provava pietà e rispetto per questo parroco che elemosinava per avere un po' di cibo, non solo per lui ma per i più poveri.

Nonostante la povertà, furono fatti cambiamenti strutturali alla chiesa e vennero offerte più funzioni religiose. La canonica fu costruita nel 1924. Le S. Messe erano celebrate tutti i giorni alle 7.30, e alla domenica alle 8 e alle 10,30; tutte le prediche erano in lingua italiana. Don Capresi diede inizio alle "Missioni". In ottobre o novembre un Missionario arrivava a S. Giuseppe dove per una settimana veniva offerta una serie di sermoni in italiano sulla famiglia, le Scritture, la morale. Queste Missioni ebbero un enorme successo e furono continuate da tutti i Parroci fino verso la fine degli anni Cinquanta.

L'impronta di don Capresi a S. Giuseppe si manifestò non solo nei cambiamenti della chiesa o nelle numerose funzioni religiose offerte agli

italiani ma nel rispetto ed affetto portatogli dai parrocchiani. Cio' fu messo in evidenza il 19 marzo 1933 al solenne funerale di don Ferdinando Capresi. La chiesa di S. Giuseppe era gremita e pochi dei 1500 presenti pote' entrare in chiesa. La S.Messa solenne fu celebrata da S. E. David Joseph Scollard, Vescovo della Diocesi di Sault S.te Marie, il Reverendo A. J. Hogan era maestro di cerimonie, Joe Brunetta l'organista. Un eloquente elogio fu presentato da don A.J. Murray che paragono' don Capresi ad "un sacerdote missionario tra il popolo italiano di Fort William".

Questo "lavoro missionario" venne continuato da don Murray, che fu Parroco di S. Giuseppe (piu' tardi chiamata S. Domenico) dal 5 marzo 1933 al 9 dicembre 1945. I registri parrocchiali e quelli diocesani non dicono ne il luogo ne la data di nascita di don Murray. Sappiamo pero' che dopo il 1921 frequento' il Seminario a Montreal e che fu ordinato sacerdote l'11 giugno 1924. Pare che avesse studiato per parecchi anni a Roma dove sviluppo' scorrevolezza e notevole eloquenza nell'uso della lingua italiana. Dopo essere stato per un breve periodo a Sault S.te Marie, don Murray arrivo' a S. Giuseppe nel 1933 nel pieno della depressione economica.

La continua poverta' causata dalla depressione spinse don Murray ad escogitare nuovi sistemi per aiutare i suo parrocchiani. Questo gli fu facilitato dalla sua cerchia di conoscenze tra gli uomini d'affari locali e le autorita' municipali. Di tanto in tanto poteva trovare lavoro per i parrocchiani piu' bisognosi, facilitare il disbrigo di pratiche burocratiche, ottenere documenti e passaporti, assistenza sociale ai disoccupati. Parecchie persone ricordano con affetto don Murray e il suo aiuto nel farli andare alla Scuola Media St. Patrick senza dover pagare ne la retta ne i libri di testo. Fu questo tipo di aiuto ai parrocchiani che guadagno' a don Murray la reputazione di essere "beneamato dagli italiani, un populista che viveva in poverta' senza lamentarsi".

Nonostante tutto, i parrocchiani di S. Giuseppe continuarono a migliorare la loro chiesa. Non appena le condizioni economiche incominciarono a migliorare, gli uomini della parrocchia e la Societa' Principe di Piemonte, durante la presidenza di Frank Charry, raccolsero i fondi necessari per imbiancare l'esterno della chiesa, riparare il tetto, fare uno scantinato in muratura sotto la chiesa, mettere rivestimento isolante all'interno e installare un nuovo sistema di riscaldamento. Una parte delle spese fu pagata dal Cancelliere Diocesano e dai fondi raccolti dal Club degli Uomini di S. Domenico di recente formazione.

Il costo dei lavori di rinnovo e le varie spese accumulatesi col passare degli anni (circa \$5.000) fu alla base di una grande campagna per la raccolta del denaro necessario per estinguere ogni debito promossa dal Club degli Uomini nel 1944. Si raccolsero 415 contribuzioni per un totale di \$3.322,80. Queste offerte variavano da \$1 a \$200; dei 415 una era della parrocchia Ucraino-greco-cattolica, tre dalle organizzazioni associate alla

chiesa (es. il Club Donne Italiane, la Principe di Piemonte e la Societa' Veneta), e quindici dalla citta' in generale. I 396 contributori rimasti non rappresentavano sempre un'intera famiglia. Non avendo censimenti ufficiali per la parrocchia di S. Domenico si puo' stimare che nel 1945 contava circa 260 famiglie.

Alla somma raccolta si aggiunsero i proventi di un bingo e "altre ricevute"; il rapporto finanziario includeva questa testimonianza: "Il comitato coglie questa opportunita' per esprimere gratitudine e ringraziare tutti i parrochiani e gli amici che hanno contribuito a rendere questo anno memorabile nella storia della nostra parrocchia. La nostra Chiesa e' ora libera da ogni debito." Il Vice presidente del Club degli Uomini, Gilles Menuz, elogia' il lavoro contribuito dal Club nei suoi dieci anni di vita quale fattore responsabile nel pagare il debito. Dal 1935 il Club aveva raccolto \$15.000 per la chiesa.

Per celebrare questo importante avvenimento nella vita della Parrocchia si ebbero una cerimonia e pranzo il 4 aprile 1945 nella Sala Italiana di via McLaughlin, con 350 persone presenti. Monsignor McGuire, rappresentando la Diocesi di Sault S.te Marie, il Sindaco di Fort William, Anderson, ed il Consigliere municipale Hubert Badanai presentarono i loro elogi. Ma forse, il miglior ringraziamento fu espresso da don Murray quando ringrazio' "l'ultimo dei fratelli come pure quelli di alto rango sia che abbiano dato l'unico dollaro che avevano in tasca o donato somme cospicue per saldare questo vecchio debito."

Questo fu veramente un anno memorabile per la Parrocchia di S. Domenico. Nel 1945, don Murray termino', dopo 12 anni, la sua permanenza a capo della chiesa italiana di Fort William. Ritorno' nella nativa Irlanda dove, da informazioni raccolte dai parrochiani che lo conoscevano bene, mori' a Dublino durante i primi anni Cinquanta. I suoi successori non dovettero piu' subire le difficolta' di curare e guidare una parrocchia durante una depressione economica senza pari. I futuri pastori di S. Domenico ebbero il lusso di trovare migliori condizioni economiche durante la loro reggenza.



## II GLI ANNI DEL CONSOLIDAMENTO, 1945-1972

Subito dopo la partenza di don Murray avvenuta ai primi di dicembre del 1945, arrivo' in parrocchia don Daniele China, un giovane sacerdote italiano che parlava molto bene l'inglese, il quale condusse le funzioni religiose a S. Domenico per un mese. Il 5 gennaio 1946 don Egidio Vallorosi arrivò a S. Domenico in funzione di "amministratore" e si fermò fino al 24 novembre dello stesso anno. Data la mancanza di documentazione per il 1946, non sappiamo quale fossero i suoi doveri. Si presume che fosse in grado di mantenere la parrocchia operante fino a che il Vescovo non avesse nominato un parroco permanente.

All'inizio della stagione natalizia, l'8 dicembre 1946, arrivò il nuovo parroco, don Rosario Venti. Nato a Boston (Massachusetts) il 24 dicembre 1905, era stato consacrato sacerdote nell'Ordine dei Padri Passionisti l'8 febbraio 1931, rimarrà a S. Domenico fino al 29 luglio 1948. Forse don Venti era stato inviato a S. Domenico per rimodernare la struttura fisica della chiesa. A questo riguardo, lui avrebbe preferito demolire il vecchio edificio e costruirne uno nuovo. Sebbene questo non gli fu possibile, don Venti fece molti cambiamenti nel giro di un anno, "Al presente, la Parrocchia di S. Domenico gode la distinzione", scriveva don Venti, "di essere stata costruita, riattata, ammobiliata e rifornita dai propri parrocchiani . . . senza l'aiuto di bingo, bazar e feste d'ogni tipo. Tutto questo lavoro è stato realizzato in un solo anno."

Don Venti fu tanto di più di un costruttore. Conversazioni con persone che lo ricordano bene, rivelano una persona molto intelligente, un riformatore, un valido ed eloquente oratore, un uomo preoccupato del benessere dei giovani della parrocchia. Secondo alcuni don Venti anticipava i tempi nell'indirizzare l'opinione pubblica sulle questioni morali. Desiderava spezzare le barriere esistenti tra i vari gruppi etnici dell'East End e creare unita' tra le genti di quella zona.

Per infrangere queste barriere, don Venti lavorò coi giovani della parrocchia. Nell'autunno del 1945, durante la permanenza di don Murray a S. Domenico, era stato formato un club di pugilato patrocinato dalla chiesa. Nel 1946 il club si trasferì nella sala italiana e fu chiamato "Club pugilistico italo-canadese" sotto l'amministrazione del Comitato Sportivo associato alla Principe di Piemonte. Nel 1948 il club ritornò a S. Domenico e fu chiamato "Club pugilistico S. Domenico". Questo cambiamento fu possibile perché don Venti, che era appassionato allo sport, aveva trasformato lo scantinato della chiesa in una palestra di pugilato con tutto l'occorrente per allenare i giovani dagli 8 ai 20 anni. Ragazzi di ogni nazionalità potevano associarsi a questo club.

Bill Cella, organizzatore e allenatore del club, era molto orgoglioso dei primi successi di questa associazione sportiva. Durante i primi anni gli incontri settimanali di pugilato erano tenuti nella cantina, dove il quadrato era stato costruito intorno a quattro pilastri. Gli incontri più importanti erano tenuti nella Sala italiana di via McLaughlin. Nel giro di due anni il

club pugilistico S. Domenico vinse tre titoli distrettuali: Ernie Nistico per i leggeri, Frank Matarazzo per i mosca e per i pesi medi B. Powers. Il 10 maggio 1947, Ernie Nistico si batte' nell'arena di Port Arthur per il titolo di campione canadese dei pesi leggeri. I successi di questa organizzazione servirono ad avvicinare i giovani dell'East End alla chiesa.

Grazie all'eloquenza ed entusiasmo di don Venti, la chiesa era sempre gremita a tutte le funzioni. I parrocchiani ancora ricordano quanto fosse difficile avere un posto alla Messa italiana delle 10,30. Piu' tardi, quando divenne parroco di S. Antonio a Port Arthur, il suo programma radiofonico "Ave Maria" divenne molto famoso. Questo programma, in onda il martedi' dalle 19 alle 19,15, era ascoltato da molti e non solo dai fedeli di S. Antonio e S. Domenico. Anche i Protestanti furono spinti a discutere e dibattere sui temi dei discorsi di don Venti riguardanti il modo di vivere, le questioni morali e la sua propaganda anticomunista. Don Venti lascio' S. Domenico per Sudbury, e dopo un breve periodo divenne, nel 1949, parroco di S. Antonio a Port Arthur dove rimase fino al 1953.

Il suo successore a S. Domenico fu don Vallorosi. Nato a Pisterzo nella provincia di Latina il 1 febbraio 1915, venne in Canada nel 1939 a North Bay, completo' la propria educazione presso il Seminario St. Augustine di Toronto. Fu ordinato sacerdote dal Vescovo Dignan a North Bay il 21 dicembre 1940. Servi' in diverse capacita' la Diocesi di Sault S.te Marie e fu nominato Parroco di S. Domenico in agosto del 1948.

Le condizioni economiche durante la sua permanenza furono buone, percio' le pareti esterne della chiesa furono rivestite a nuovo, l'interno fu imbiancato e le statue restaurate. Tutto cio' fu eseguito senza fare debito. Don Vallorosi diresse le attivita' spirituali della parrocchia, interessandosi nel lavoro svolto dalla Legione di Maria. Alla cui prima riunione, il 7 maggio 1945, ne era stato nominato direttore spirituale, quando era solo l'amministratore della parrocchia. La Legione di Maria non si occupava di questioni sociali o finanziarie ma religiose. Il presidente della Legione scriveva "La Legione agisce da supplemento al ministero sacerdotale, facilitando il lavoro dei parroci e consente loro di essere in costante contatto coi parrocchiani." Sebbene contasse pochi iscritti (23 in febbraio 1949), don Vallorosi era contento del loro entusiasmo ed in particolare delle visite ai parrocchiani ammalati negli ospedali e nei sanatori.

Non sappiamo con sicurezza se il bollettino parrocchiale settimanale "Il Domenicano" ebbe inizio con don Venti o don Vallorosi. Esaminando questi bollettini durante gli anni Cinquanta si nota il flusso dei servizi religiosi offerti in parrocchia, le attivita' delle organizzazioni come la Legione di Maria e la Societa' dell'Altare e la formale amministrazione dei sacramenti. Verso la fine della permanenza di don Vallorosi a S. Domenico, il bollettino mostra chiaramente che il parroco non doveva piu' dividere il proprio tempo tra due parrocchie, e che le condizioni economiche non interferissero piu' con gli affari spirituali della parrocchia. All'inizio dei Cinquanta, gli italiani di Fort William ebbero a loro disposizione ogni funzione e servizio offerto dalla Chiesa Cattolica.

installare una campana elettronica, fece fare la nuova sacristia (\$5.350), nuovi banchi, pavimento e tappeto per l'altare (\$10.152). Queste spese segnavano i buoni tempi economici della parrocchia.

Le migliorate condizioni economiche incoraggiarono il Vescovo della nuova Diocesi di Thunder Bay a chiedere che i fondi di ogni parrocchia fossero versati alla Diocesi. S.E. Jennings disse che una campagna per la raccolta di fondi era in progetto da tempo. Il bisogno finanziario della Diocesi era grande, e dal momento che nel 1957 Port Arthur, Fort William e tutto il Canada stavano attraversando un periodo di prosperità, si poteva sperare che la campagna avrebbe dato buoni risultati. Qual'era lo scopo di questa campagna? S.E. Jennings desiderava iniziare un ambizioso programma che potesse aiutare a pagare per le migliorie progettate da varie parrocchie. Il suo piano includeva anche la costruzione di una cattedrale a Fort William ed una scuola superiore cattolica per Thunder Bay. Questa scuola avrebbe dovuto avere residenze, per gli studenti, dirette da gruppi religiosi.

Rispondendo alla richiesta del Vescovo, don China scrisse:

Nella mia parrocchia c'è un costante andirivieni di famiglie. Non appena una famiglia raggiunge una certa stabilità finanziaria, trasloca in un'altra zona. Al loro posto arriva un'altra famiglia di emigranti che dice di non poter contribuire al mantenimento della Chiesa. ... ho circa cinquanta (su 307) famiglie che si considerano povere.

Nonostante la dichiarata incapacità di alcune famiglie della parrocchia di contribuire all'espansione delle attrezzature scolastiche di Thunder Bay, S. Domenico si impegnò a contribuire \$30.796 al fondo del Vescovo, di cui \$22.291 pagati entro il 1959.

### III VERSO UNA NUOVA CHIESA

Con il continuo miglioramento economico la Parrocchia di S. Domenico, sotto la guida di don China, esplorò le probabilità di costruire una chiesa nuova. Sino dall'aprile 1956 la corrispondenza tra don China e il Vescovo suggerisce che si stava considerando l'acquisto di alcune proprietà intorno alla chiesa. Presumibilmente la vecchia chiesa sarebbe stata demolita e una nuova struttura costruita su un'area ingrandita. Questa procedura fu seguita nella costruzione della chiesa cattolica polacca di St. Casimir all'angolo di Robertson e McKenzie nel 1963 e più tardi, nel 1982, per la chiesa di St. Agnes sulla via Brown. Il piano era di acquistare la casa Pellizzari vicino alla chiesa (cio' avvenne il 3 maggio 1961), di comperare la casa dietro la chiesa sulla via McIntosh, di proprietà dei signori Vescio. Dopo di che la Parrocchia S. Domenico avrebbe richiesto al Comune di Fort William di chiudere al traffico il viottolo dietro la chiesa creando così un'area più grande su cui costruire la chiesa.

Mentre queste proprietà venivano acquistate o trattate, il fondo per la costruzione aumentava. Nel 1953 consisteva di \$4.891, nel 1963 era aumentato a \$101.542,38. In quei tempi don China aveva calcolato che per costruire la chiesa e la canonica sarebbero stati necessari almeno 250.000 dollari. Il fondo arrivò a \$241.506 nel 1971. A questo punto don China annunciò nel Rapporto Parrocchiale del 1971 che il Comitato Parrocchiale stava cercando un'area non lontana dalla chiesa, forse, oltre i confini dell' East End.

Nel 1973 il Comitato Parrocchiale presentò, a S.E. Norman J. Gallagher, una proposta per "una grande ed avvincente impresa" che includeva la scelta dell'area per la nuova chiesa e un disegno che doveva essere "moderno", "semplice" e "funzionale". Il costo totale (terreno, chiesa e canonica) sarebbe stato quasi \$475.000; la costruzione stessa non sarebbe incominciata fino a che non fosse stato raccolto il 75% del costo totale. La Parrocchia S. Domenico depositò, il 31 dicembre 1972, \$265.000 in un fondo di riserva per il nuovo edificio. S. E. Gallagher fu d'accordo, in linea di massima, con il piano presentato.

Il Comitato finanziario suggerì il seguente piano per raccogliere i 91.500 dollari mancanti per raggiungere il 75% del costo: 1) sollecitare doni e contributi da gruppi e persone a Thunder Bay; 2) fare raccolte domenicali speciali dai fedeli, il Comitato finanziario avrebbe spiegato la situazione e dato resoconti di tanto in tanto; 3) patrocinare cene, spaghetate, bingo, te' e danze. La parrocchia necessitava altri \$118.750 dollari per coprire le spese. Inoltre, il Comitato finanziario suggerì di andare nelle case dei parrocchiani presenti e passati per raccogliere suffragi, l'uso di buste colorate per gli oboli settimanali pro-chiesa e la vendita della proprietà al n. 700 di via McLaughlin. Era un piano ambizioso il cui successo dipendeva, in parte, dall'area scelta per la costruzione.

Nell'estate 1973 il Comitato raccomandò al Vescovo l'acquisto di un lotto di 1 acro e 1/2 all'angolo di Redwood e Spruce Court per \$60.000.

Dai documenti parrocchiali non e' possibile seguire lo sviluppo del l'importante ministero della musica. Quanto sappiamo circa la musica nei primi anni e' dato dalle testimonianze orali dei membri del coro e dai ritagli del giornale. Si e' detto che dal 1912 al 1919 l'intero coro di S. Antonio e l'organo servissero entrambe le chiese per le Messe domenicali. Nel 1933, in occasione del funerale di don Capresi, Joe Brunetta e' menzionato quale organista. Quell'anno la famiglia di Peter Belluz aveva donato un organo, acquistato a Toronto, alla Chiesa di S. Giuseppe. Questo regalo disse don Murray "soddisfa il desiderio di S. Giuseppe e sara' apprezzato dai fedeli per lungo tempo". Tra il 1930 e il 1940 Joe Brunetta fu l'organista principale. Sua madre Carrie Brunetta, fece parte del coro di S. Domenico fino a circa il 1955. Coloro che frequentavano la chiesa di S. Domenico ricordano ancora la sua voce melodiosa nella Messa Latina celebrata ogni giorno durante la Quaresima. Si puo' dire che Carrie Brunetta abbia cantato ad ogni funerale, il suo amore per la musica sacra e la sua continua presenza nel coro erano d'esempio e ispirazione per tutti.

Duranti gli anni Trenta e i Quaranta il nome di Ralph Colosimo e' associato alla musica non solo a S. Domenico ma nel campo musicale del Lakehead. Quando si formo' una banda italiana a Fort William, Ralph Colosimo suonava il clarinetto. La Banda suono', al funerale di Peter Belluz nel 1935, dalla casa del defunto alla chiesa. Per cinque anni Ralph diresse il Coro di S. Domenico e Joe Brunetta ne fu l'organista. In occasioni speciali come Natale e Pasqua, coro e orchestra accompagnavano la S. Messa. Nel 1942 nel mese di novembre e dicembre vennero celebrate Messe a S. Domenico e Ralph Colosimo diresse 60 coristi e 25 orchestrali; queste Messe furono messe in onda dalla stazione radio CKPR. La parrocchia di S. Domenico fu davvero fortunata nel disporre del talento di musicisti come Joe Brunetta, Ralph Colosimo e piu' tardi Mary Cella, Mrs. Connolly, Vic (Sandrin) Curtola, Ida Dolcetti, Ann Todero, Lucille Johnson e Janice (Buset) Henderson. Queste persone si dedicarono a provvedere la migliore musica sacra in modo da aggiungere solennita' e sentimento alle funzioni religiose tenute a S. Domenico.

Fu in questa atmosfera che don Daniele China divenne ufficialmente nostro Parroco il 10 marzo 1952. Era nato a Pordenone, nell'Italia settentrionale, il 15 novembre 1911 ed era entrato nell'ordine dei Salesiani di don Bosco a Torino. Prima di arrivare in Canada nel 1950, don China era stato Missionario in India per sette anni. Rientrato in Italia era rimasto per otto anni sui Colli Albani, vicino a Roma. Durante una visita alla sorella nel Distretto di Thunder Bay, S.E. il Vescovo Dignan, della Diocesi di Sault Ste Marie lo persuase a restare in Canada ad occuparsi degli italiani di Fort William.

Come i suoi predecessori, anche don China guido' i parrocchiani nelle devozioni familiari a tutti i cattolici. Le Messe giornaliere erano celebrate alle 8. In speciali feste religiose come la "Commemorazione dei Defunti" il 2 novembre, o quando c'erano le Missioni (di solito una settimana in inglese ed una in italiano), parecchie Messe erano celebrate ogni mattina.

Inoltre c'era la Benedizione il venerdì e la domenica sera alle 19,30. Il mercoledì e venerdì sera durante la Quaresima c'era la Via Crucis. In giugno per la festa di Corpus Christi c'era la processione per le vie dell'East End, e le case venivano parate per questa occasione. La processione partiva, di solito alle 19,30, da S. Domenico e passava per via Connolly, McTavish, McIntyre, McLeod, Pacific e McIntosh, la Benedizione si faceva alla scuola St. Peter, e alla Chiesa della Trasfigurazione (cattolico-ucraina).

Ogni anno don China preparava, con l'aiuto degli insegnanti della scuola St. Peter, i bambini per la Prima Comunione e la Cresima. La settimana prima della Comunione i bambini erano portati in Chiesa ogni giorno per le prove, l'istruzione e poi la Confessione. Don China considerava questo evento come uno dei più importanti nella vita dei ragazzi, e urgeva i genitori a partecipare pienamente e trattare con serietà l'avvenimento. Il seguente messaggio apparve sul "Domenicano" del 25 maggio 1952: "Domenica prossima ci sarà la Prima Comunione. Ogni comunicando si presenterà all'Altare coi propri genitori ed insieme riceveranno il Sacramento. Spero che non ci saranno "orfani" alla balastra." Dopo la cerimonia, una fotografia di gruppo veniva fatta sulla scalinata della chiesa con tutti i bambini intorno ad un orgoglioso don China.

In modo simile avveniva la somministrazione della S. Cresima con il Vescovo Jennings a S. Domenico per tutta la giornata. La cerimonia avveniva in ottobre, di domenica pomeriggio, con la celebrazione della S. Messa alla sera. Questi sacramenti venivano ricevuti prima dei 13-14 anni con l'intenzione di trasformare i ragazzi in devoti cattolici. Questo impegno verso la fede cattolica si manifestava da solo nei ragazzi che andavano a Messa tutti i giorni durante la Quaresima. Gli insegnanti di St. Peter prendevano nota se gli studenti andavano o no alla Messa in quel periodo. Soltanto una minoranza riusciva a farlo per tutto il periodo, ma questa era una "prova" per i ragazzi cattolici.

Accanto ai servizi religiosi tra il 1950-1960 si svilupparono organizzazioni e attività. La Società femminile dell'Altare era una delle più attive con più di 60 socie nel 1956. Sebbene caldeggiata da S.E. Jennings, la Lega delle Donne Cattoliche non riuscì ad attecchire a S. Domenico. Invece la Società dell'Altare organizzò un "Te' primaverile" i cui proventi furono devoluti a beneficio della chiesa. Classi di lingua inglese nello scantinato della chiesa furono tenute durante i Cinquanta, per dare opportunità agli emigranti italiani di familiarizzarsi in questa lingua. Inoltre questo scantinato veniva a volte trasformato in una sala cinematografica. Il 16 novembre 1952 don China annunciò nel bollettino: "Dopo la Benedizione ci sarà un film. Una piccola offerta, per coprire le spese, sarà gradita. Tutti sono benvenuti." Ogni tanto si faceva un Bingo per avere il denaro per acquistare un proiettore.

Con il denaro dei bingo, le offerte dei parrocchiani e le attività della Società dell'Altare fu rinnovata la chiesa. Dal 1952 al 1955 don China fece

Questo lotto era preferibile a quello sulla via Simpson di soli  $\frac{3}{4}$  di acro per \$65.000, la città di Thunder Bay si stava sviluppando e avrebbe continuato a svilupparsi nella zona Northwood. Il Comitato convenì che la gioventù della parrocchia viveva ora a Northwood, perciò era preferibile costruire la nuova chiesa. Il Comitato suggerì anche che gli "anziani della parrocchia" sarebbero stati trasportati alla chiesa per le funzioni.

Fin dall'inizio S. E. Gallagher aveva seri dubbi su questa scelta. Quanti dei parrocchiani di S. Domenico erano a favore o contro questa nuova zona? Se un'altra ondata di emigranti italiani fosse arrivata a Thunder Bay si sarebbe stabilita nell'East End o nel rione di Northwood? Il carattere, della Parrocchia Nazionale Italiana, com'era conosciuta nel 1973 S. Domenico, sarebbe scomparso in questo nuovo posto? A causa di questi problemi il Vescovo permise al Comitato di acquistare il terreno, però la costruzione avrebbe dovuto aspettare fino a che si avesse avuto il 75% dei fondi ed una "convincente maggioranza" dei parrocchiani fosse stata a favore di Northwood. Inoltre il Vescovo richiese garanzie che gli anziani e coloro senza mezzi di trasporto propri abitanti nell'East End avrebbero potuto frequentare la nuova chiesa.

Nell'inverno del 1974 il Comitato decise che era ora di agire e suggerì ai parrocchiani di S. Domenico di iniziare immediatamente la costruzione. Date le pressioni inflazionistiche nel campo edile ogni ulteriore ritardo avrebbe aumentato pericolosamente il costo della costruzione. Si cercò di arrivare ad un accordo circa la proprietà a Northwood per la nuova chiesa, ciò era difficile e, in quel momento, fu impossibile. Temendo una permanente divisione tra i parrocchiani di S. Domenico, il Vescovo Gallagher chiese, sfortunatamente, "che il Comitato fermasse ogni atto verso la costruzione di una nuova chiesa in qualsiasi posto per il prossimo futuro." Senza dubbio questo fu un deludente cambiamento di direzione per il Comitato di S. Domenico. La proprietà acquistata a Northwood era destinata a restare vacante per parecchi anni. Intanto, le funzioni continuarono ad essere celebrate a S. Domenico nell' East End.

Alcune delle famiglie italiane residenti nella zona di Northwood negli anni Settanta continuarono a frequentare la vecchia chiesa, altri scelsero la chiesa di St. Agnes o la Cattedrale. Dal 1969 al 1978 la cattedrale di St. Patrick offrì Messe domenicali presso la scuola cattolica St. Vincent e poi nella nuova scuola St. Francis, entrambe nella zona di Northwood.

Dato il grande numero di cattolici nella zona di Northwood, il nuovo Vescovo di Thunder Bay, John O'Mara, decise nel 1979 di creare una Parrocchia sotto la protezione di S. Giuseppe con don Ralph Di Giacinto, parroco, e don Joseph Crawford suo assistente. "La Parrocchia di S. Giuseppe sarà la Chiesa Nazionale Italiana per Fort William" decretò il Vescovo, "e sarà anche la parrocchia territoriale per tutti i cattolici della zona". Il continuo deterioramento della chiesa di S. Domenico nell'East End e le cattive condizioni di salute di don China furono citate come i motivi principali per la creazione della nuova parrocchia a Northwood.

C'era anche la necessita' di avere una parrocchia in quella zona per servire i fedeli li' residenti. Molti cattolici erano di origine italiana, altri appartenevano a vari gruppi etnici. Percio' le funzioni religiose sarebbero state in lingua inglese e italiana.

Il Vescovo O'Mara spiego' la scelta del nome S. Giuseppe nella sua lettera agli italiani di Fort William. Spiegando che S. Giuseppe era stato il patrono originale della parrocchia italiana dal 1912 al 1936, e poi il nome serviva a distinguere le due chiese. S. Giuseppe e' il patrono della chiesa universale e del Canada. Percio' una chiesa a questo santo avrebbe avuto un posto importante a Thunder Bay.

Nell'autunno del 1979 il difficile ed impegnativo compito di creare unita' tra i fedeli di S. Giuseppe era incominciato. Lo scopo finale era di costruire una nuova chiesa sulla proprieta' da tempo acquistata. Nel frattempo, le Messe erano celebrate ogni domenica nella palestra della scuola St. Francis (sita al n. 600 di Redwood avenue West). Le funzioni giornaliere venivano celebrate in canonica (acquistata nell'aprile 1979) sita al n. 486 di Erindale Crescent. Questa doppia residenza aveva gli uffici parrocchiali e gli alloggi per i due sacerdoti. Il Consiglio Consultivo per la parrocchia, creato quell'estate, pubblicizzava le funzioni affiggendo nelle scuole bollettini con gli orari delle stesse e mettendoli anche su un cartellone sul terreno della chiesa.

Sia don Di Giacinto che il Consiglio Consultivo, ritennero necessario che le due parrocchie italiane agissero unite nella costruzione della nuova chiesa. Questo era un compito difficile. Le diversita' di opinioni esistenti cinque anni prima riguardanti l'area scelta erano tutt'ora presenti e affiorarono subito con opinioni diverse circa il nome della nuova chiesa. Il Vescovo O'Mara, don China e don Di Giacinto studiarono il modo migliore di unificare le fazioni.

Tra il 1980 e il 1981 il Vescovo prese una serie di decisioni intese ad accelerare il processo costruttivo. Nel marzo 1980 cambio' il nome della chiesa a 'Chiesa dei S.S. Giuseppe e Domenico'. Poi, dopo avere attentamente ascoltato i parrocchiani d'ambo le parti, si cerco' di arrivare ad un compromesso equo per tutti. I parrocchiani di S. Domenico avevano paura che la nuova chiesa non avrebbe mantenuto le tradizioni della comunita' italiana. Il Vescovo disse che "i due nomi erano la prova che la chiesa avrebbe servito le due comunita', gli Italiani di Fort William ed i cattolici della zona Northwood".

Questo doppio nome ebbe vita breve. In dicembre 1980 il Vescovo emise un decreto riguardante la Parrocchia di S. Domenico. "In risposta ad una petizione unica, presentata dai rappresentanti dei due gruppi, riguardante il nome della nuova parrocchia, ed in modo di chiarire ed eseguire questo decreto per il bene della Comunita' cattolica di questa citta' e facilitare la costruzione della chiesa e annessi", S.E. O'Mara decreto' che la vecchia parrocchia di S. Domenico al 700 di via McLaughlin ed il suo nome sarebbero stati "soppressi". La nuova chiesa a Northwood sarebbe



sotto la protezione di S. Domenico. Per meglio eseguire questo decreto il Vescovo rilascio' il denaro raccolto da S. Domenico per la costruzione della chiesa nuova. Don China avrebbe ritenuto il necessario per operare la vecchia chiesa.

Il Vescovo chiese ai Padri Scalabriniani (Missionari di San Carlo) di operare la nuova parrocchia. Nella primavera del 1981 don Umberto Rizzi fu nominato parroco, e piu' tardi don Daniel Lapolla arrivo' ad assisterlo. Era bene che gli Scalabriniani venissero a S. Domenico. Questo Ordine di sacerdoti missionari fu fondato nel secolo scorso per aiutare gli emigranti italiani nelle terre di emigrazione delle Americhe. Con don Rizzi e don Lapolla, il Vescovo O'Mara e l'Ordine Scalabriniano hanno assicurato che sacerdoti italiani o fluenti nella lingua serviranno i bisogni degli Italiani di Fort William nel futuro. Gli Scalabriniani riconobbero l'esistenza delle due culture che, a parte i primissimi anni, erano sempre state presenti a S. Domenico. "Ho assicurato il Vescovo", scrisse don Calandra, Superiore Provinciale degli Scalabrini "che prenderemo cura dei canadesi con equo zelo ed interesse...". La nomina dei Padri Scalabriniani a S. Domenico ha reso la loro presenza a Thunder Bay piu' forte, perche' dall'estate del 1981 questo Ordine dirige entrambe le chiese Italiane di Thunder Bay.

Don Rizzi era molto competente, avendo fatto esperienza nel costruire e rinnovare chiese. Prima di venire a S. Domenico aveva diretto i lavori di rinnovo a S. Antonio (1978-1981). Sebbene i preparativi per la costruzione fossero molto importanti e sempre presenti, Don Rizzi aveva a cuore la creazione della comunita' ed incoraggio' "gli Italiani e gli altri fedeli di Northwood di crescere insieme come una sola famiglia verso la stessa meta".

Il primo passo di questo processo fu di varare un'ambiziosa raccolta di fondi. Come poteva la parrocchia raccogliere i 778.000 dollari necessari per la costruzione? Il Comitato capeggiato da Jim Rodrigues includeva Larry Grace, Sue Macdonald, Claire McKay, John Robillard, Pasquale Sacino, Carol Siciliano, Rita Speer, George Thompson e Major Zuliani e mise \$300.000 quale obiettivo di una breve ed intensa campagna dall'ottobre 1981 a quello del 1982. Il costo totale della chiesa non avrebbe dovuto eccedere \$1.200.000. Il terreno era gia' stato acquistato nel 1973. Dalle attivita' della vecchia chiesa c'erano \$442.000 nel fondo pro-chiesa nuova, che aveva accumulato una cifra non indifferente in interessi (agli inizi degli anni Ottanta l'interesse si aggirava sul 16-19%). Pegni offerti dai parrocchiani, avvenimenti speciali (te', serate danzanti, ecc.), lavoro gratuito e, naturalmente un prestito (il minimo possibile) sarebbero state le fonti principali dei fondi.

Dalla primavera 1981 all'inaugurazione ufficiale della Chiesa nel 1983, i membri del Comitato Finanziario ed Edile parlarono a individui, organizzazioni e uomini d'affari per raccogliere fondi. L'inflazione aveva spinto il costo totale per la nuova chiesa da circa \$475.000 nel 1973 a piu' di \$1.000.000 quasi dieci anni dopo. Il compito di raccogliere il denaro fu

veramente impegnativo. Dal 31 maggio al 12 giugno 1981 ci fu la prima parte della raccolta. Suffragi pagati dai fedeli in questa e nelle seguenti campagne di raccolta, notevoli contribuzioni dalla Società Principe di Piemonte, la Società Italiana di Mutuo Soccorso, la Lega Cattolica Femminile di S. Domenico, la Società Femminile Veneta, i Cavalieri di Colombo sezione 1447, ditte locali e la Parrocchia di S. Antonio aumentarono considerevolmente il fondo. Notevole fu la generosità dimostrata da tutti verso l'erigenda chiesa. I fedeli potevano controllare il progresso della raccolta osservando il grande termometro sulla parete della palestra a St. Francis. Senza dubbio ci fu molto entusiasmo quando fu passata la cifra di \$100.000; il Comitato Finanziario era del parere che il progresso fatto, servisse da incoraggiamento ai parrocchiani così che continuassero a sopportare questa raccolta di fondi.

Mentre continuavano tutte queste attività, il Comitato per la Costruzione preparava una cerimonia per l'inizio dei lavori per il 18 aprile 1982. Autorità ecclesiastiche e civili furono invitate a questa cerimonia. La processione andò dalla scuola St. Vincent al lotto all'angolo di Redwood e Spruce Court. Quando il Vescovo O'Mara ruppe la prima zolla, fu l'inizio dei lavori che si protrassero ininterrotti per un anno. Questo periodo servì ad unire la parrocchia. "Prima di iniziare i lavori" disse don Rizzi, "non ci conoscevamo. E' stato solo offrendo i nostri servizi, il nostro lavoro ed il nostro talento individuale che siamo diventati una comunità."

L'idea che il normale lavoro di costruzione con mano d'opera gratuita abbassasse i costi e creasse un senso comunitario tra i parrocchiani era insieme coraggiosa e ammirevole. Louis Toneguzzi e Peter Buset a capo del Comitato lanciarono un appello alla comunità italiana attraverso la Società Principe di Piemonte e la Società di Mutuo Soccorso per lavoratori volontari specializzati e non. Tutti, parrocchiani o no, erano incoraggiati a dare una mano quando potevano, dalle 9 alle 21. Nell'autunno 1982 un gruppo di studenti (12-16) della Scuola Superiore Northwood presero parte ai lavori. Questo esperimento di insegnamento sul lavoro li introdusse alla realtà quotidiana della occupazione scelta e nello stesso tempo venne loro dato il meritato credito accademico.

Circa 100 donne della parrocchia presero parte ai lavori, per la maggior parte relegate ai "doveri di campo". All'inizio dei lavori Gerry Tobin prestò un rimorchio ATCO, usato in un campo di taglialegna in Ontario. Lì dentro lavoravano le donne, chi preparava il caffè, chi i pasti e chi rispondeva al telefono. Durante i lavori di costruzione furono donate più di 10.000 ore di lavoro. Fu un'esperienza indimenticabile per chi diede un'ora come per chi ne diede cento.

Durante questo periodo le funzioni continuarono come sempre alla scuola St. Francis ed in canonica. Le Messe giornaliere celebrate in canonica dal lunedì al venerdì alle 19, quelle festive il sabato alle 17 e la domenica alle 9, 10,30 e mezzogiorno. Le organizzazioni come il Consiglio Parrocchiale, la Società di S. Vincenzo, la Lega delle Donne Cattoliche e

la Legione di Maria contavano un centinaio di persone al servizio della chiesa. Ad esempio, la Società S. Vincenzo assistette parecchie famiglie bisognose dando loro articoli domestici e vestiario per i bambini. Altri volontari prepararono gli scolari delle scuole St. Vincent, St. Francis e St. Thomas Aquinas per la Prima Comunione e la Cresima. Altri ancora insegnavano il catechismo ai bambini delle scuole pubbliche nel territorio di S. Domenico. Questi preparativi consistevano in 6-8 settimane di impegno per i bambini e gli istruttori. Alcuni coniugi della parrocchia furono preparati per offrire un corso prematrimoniale. Sin dal 1982 questo gruppo comprendeva 6-8 coppie.

Tra le funzioni, la piu' memorabile, fu senza dubbio la Messa di Natale celebrata il 24 dicembre 1982 nella ancora incompiuta chiesa di Redwood Avenue. I sacerdoti, don Rizzi e don Lapolla, vollero ricreare la stalla dove nacque Gesu'. Per fare cio' fu chiesto un permesso speciale alle autorita' municipali per poter celebrare la S. Messa dei bambini alle 20 e quella di Mezzanotte per gli adulti. Pensiamo che in questa speciale occasione furono messi da parte tutti i regolamenti.

Don Daniel Lapolla ando' a Chicago, Illinois, dove la chiesa Our Lady of Mt. Carmel regalo' un enorme, bellissimo presepe e don Rizzi ebbe animali vivi a far parte della Nativita'. Tre giorni prima della Vigilia di Natale si fermarono tutti i lavori per preparare la chiesa. Il terreno fu coperto con teli, i muri decorati con corone di sempreverdi, alberi natalizi e luci. Durante le due Messe l'aria era carica di emozione e aspettativa perche' presto la chiesa sarebbe stata finita. La Vigilia di Natale del 1982 fu sicuramente un'esperienza indimenticabile per tutti i presenti. "E' stata una buona esperienza" concluse don Rizzi "non credo che potremo piu' provare questo speciale sentimento".

L'ansiosa anticipazione sentita dai fedeli presenti alle Messe di Natale fu soddisfatta il 7 maggio 1983 con la consacrazione della Chiesa. Dopo piu' di trent'anni di risparmi e raccolte di fondi, dopo 329 giornate di lavoro e piu' di 10.000 ore di lavoro gratuito, i parrocchiani di S. Domenico furono capaci di assaporare la soddisfazione di andare alla Messa nella loro chiesa nuova. Le fotografie che seguono raccontano la storia di quella memorabile giornata.

L'apertura ufficiale della nuova chiesa porto' ultimamente alla chiusura di S. Domenico nell'East End. Benche' la parrocchia fosse stata soppressa nel 1980, le funzioni religiose erano ancora celebrate da don Daniele China. Nel periodo 1979-1985 dai registri parrocchiali si nota il notevole declino dei Battesimi, Prime Comunioni, Matrimoni e Funerali. Il Vescovo O'Mara si incontro' coi parrocchiani della vecchia chiesa il 15 aprile 1985 e annuncio' che la chiesa sarebbe stata chiusa. La dura realta' che il passare degli anni aveva esatto il suo pedaggio dal vecchio edificio fu accettata a malincuore da coloro che ancora frequentavano la chiesa Italiana di via McLaughlin. La domenica seguente (21 aprile 1985) il Vescovo celebro' le ultime due messe e ufficialmente chiuse la chiesa.

Immediatamente don Rizzi e don Lapolla invitarono cordialmente tutti parrocchiani della vecchia chiesa a frequentare la chiesa a Northwood. Fu mantenuto l'impegno preso dal Comitato pro-chiesa nel 1973: "Per aiutare coloro che non possiedono mezzi di trasporto, noi provvederemo, ogni domenica, un autobus che partira' alle 9,45 dalla vecchia chiesa per permettervi di essere presenti alle Messa italiana delle 10,30". Il 12 maggio 1985 incomincio' il primo servizio d'autobus. Naturalmente non tutti trovarono conveniente questa soluzione e decisero di frequentare le altre parrocchie nella zona.

Ora si doveva decidere il futuro della proprieta' al 700 di McLaughlin. Questa proprieta' consisteva nella chiesa e canonica su un lotto di 50 piedi, un lotto vacante di 25 piedi a destra della chiesa, una casa e un'autorimessa dietro la chiesa. Il Comitato Edile si riuni' il 22 maggio 1985 e decise che la proprieta' fosse venduta con la provvisione che la chiesa fosse demolita. Si decise di donare i banchi ad una chiesa in via di costruzione a Red Lake. Ma piu' importante, le finestre istoriate furono tolte e restaurate accuratamente per essere poi installate nella nuovo chiesa. Il 13 gennaio 1986 la chiesa fu demolita, il lotto vacante all'angolo di McLaughlin e Connolly fu venduto alla Citta' di Thunder Bay Non Profit Housing Corporation per \$42.000.

L'eredita' visibile della vecchia chiesa di S. Domenico alla nuova chiesa si trova nelle belle finestre di vetro colorato e nella campana. Le otto finestre furono installate attorno al fonte battesimale, quella dedicata a Maria, madre di Gesu', fu messa nella stanza della riconciliazione. Il costo del restauro fu pagato dalla generosita' dei parrocchiani, individualmente o in gruppi. La campana fa parte di uno storico contrassegno posto nel cortile tra la chiesa e la canonica. Le finestre e la campana che si vedono entrando ed uscendo dalla chiesa servono a ricordare costantemente che le radici della nostra storia come comunita' cristiana si immergono profondamente nella comunita' Italiana dell'East End di Fort William.

## NOTES

1. Interview with Mary Fucile, 18 July 1985.
2. Title search for Block 37, lots 9 and 10, Land Registry Office, Thunder Bay, Ontario. The date of this registry was 4 December 1912.
3. *Report of a Preliminary and General Social Survey of Fort William*. March, 1913. Directed by The Department of Temperance and Moral Reform of the Methodist Church and The Board of Social Service and Evangelism of the Presbyterian Church. p. 8.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 15
5. *Ibid.*, p. 11
6. Anita Roy, *St. Anthony's Parish: A History* (Thunder Bay: St. Anthony's Parish, 1987).
7. Father Umberto Rizzi's Notes. St. Dominic Marriage Register, 23 November 1914; 25 June 1915.
8. Port Arthur *News Chronicle*, 10 June 1936, p. 1, 2, 5.
9. Interview with Joseph ("Beppy") Fogolin, 18 May 1987.
10. The inscription on the bell is: "St. Joseph Church, Fort William, Ont. Rev. Domenico Tomaselli, Pastor, 1919."
11. St. Dominic Church Archives (hereafter cited SDCA), Baptism, Marriage, and Funeral Records, 1912-1921.
12. Fort William *Daily Times Journal*. 20 March 1933.
13. Interview with Nello and Frances Buset, 19 March 1987; Interview with Joseph ("Beppy") Fogolin, 18 May 1987.
14. SDCA, Father Greg J. Humbert to Father Pat Stilla, 8 May 1986. On 3 April 1936, R. H. Dignan, Bishop of the Sault Ste. Marie Diocese officially changed the names of many parishes in the Diocese including St. Joseph's in Fort William to St. Dominic.
15. Fort William *Daily Times Journal*, 5 April 1945, p. 10.
16. St. Joseph's Parish *Bulletin*, 11 June 1933.
17. Interview with "Beppy" Fogolin, 18 May 1987; Interview with Primo Burella, 7 July 1987.
18. Public Archives of Canada. R.J. Manion Papers, MG 27 III B7, Vol. 18. R.J. Manion to James Manion, 26 August 1935. Just prior to the 1935 federal election, Father Murray paid a visit to the Hon. R.J. Manion, Member of Parliament for the Fort William Rainy River Riding and Minister of Railways and Canals in Prime Minister R.B. Bennett's cabinet. In this letter Manion makes reference to Father Murray's acquaintance with Fred O'Brien, another prominent Irish businessman in the community.
19. Interview with Primo Burella and Richard Benedet, 7 July 1987. See also A. Pucci, "A Community In The Making", p. 131.
20. Fort William *Daily Times Journal*, 5 April 1945.
21. SDCA, *St. Dominic's Church Men's Club: List of Contributors and Financial Statement, 1944*. Fort William, Ontario.
22. Fort William *Daily Times Journal*, 5 April 1945. p. 10.
23. Interview with Louis Toneguzzi, 24 May 1987.
24. SDCA, Biographical summary submitted by Monsignor Egidio Vallorosi, 22 March 1987.
25. Fort William *Daily Times Journal*, 11 February 1986.
26. SDCA, *St. Dominic's Church Spiritual and Material Status for 1947*.
27. Interview with Nello Buset, Frances Buset, Jack DiGiacomo, and Fred Bragnalo, 19 March 1987.

28. Mr. Bill Cella to author, 29 March 1987.
29. Msgr. Vallorosi to author, 15 March 1987.
30. SDCA, Financial Status of St. Dominic's Parish, January, 1953.  
Father Vallorosi's administration left St. Dominic's with a surplus of \$276.85.
31. SDCA, Legion of Mary Minutes, 7 May 1946. See also Legion of Mary Minutes, 12 August 1948.
32. *Ibid.*, Legion of Mary Minutes, 14 October 1947.
33. *Ibid.*, Elena Dolcetti and Audrey Spooner to Rev. Father J.J. Muldoon, 29 March 1948.
34. Anita Roy, *St. Anthony's Parish: A History*.
35. Fort William *Daily Times Journal*, 26 September 1934. p. 3.
36. Fort William *Daily Times Journal*, 20 March 1933.
37. Vera (Belluz) Carty to author, 31 July 1987.
38. Interview with Vincenta (Toderò) Cryderman, 3 August 1987.
39. George Campbell, *Performance*, (Thunder Bay: Link Publications, 1986), p. 26.
40. SDCA, *Annual Report, 1956*.
41. SDCA, E.Q. Jennings to Father China, 27 October 1952.
42. *Ibid.*, *The Dominican*, 11 May 1952.
43. The Diocese of Thunder Bay was officially created on 29 April 1952.
44. SDCA., E.Q. Jennings to D. China, 13 May 1957.
45. *Ibid.*, St. Dominic Annual Report, 1959.
46. *Ibid.*, E.Q. Jennings to D. China, 19 April, 1956.
47. *Ibid.*, E.Q. Jennings to D. China, 10 November 1961.
48. *Ibid.*, Annual Spiritual and Financial Report, 1963.
49. Diocese of Thunder Bay Archives. (hereafter cited DTBA) D. Clara and M. Zuliani to Bishop N.J. Gallagher, 23 February 1973. See also Finance Committee Report, 19 March 1973. Finance committee consisted of R. ("Rocky") Albertini, R. Pepe, C. Candido, E. Tesolin, M. Caccamo, E. Bottos, Mrs. N. Soldera, Mrs. F. Vescio, and C. Rocco.
50. SDCA, Finance Committee Report, 19 March 1973.
51. DTBA, Father China and D. Clara to Bishop Gallagher, 18 July 1973.
52. *Ibid.*, Bishop Gallagher to Father China, 19 July 1973. (Draft letter not mailed).
53. *Ibid.*, Bishop Gallagher to Father China, 23 July 1973.
54. *Ibid.*, St. Dominic's Church Committee to the Parishioners of St. Dominic's, 18 February 1974. See also St. Dominic Church Committee to Bishop Gallagher, 19 March 1974.
55. *Ibid.*, Bishop Gallagher to D. China, 27 March 1974. See also Bishop Gallagher to St. Dominic's Church Committee, 9 August 1974.
56. *St. Patrick's Cathedral Bulletin*, 30 January 1977. On the front page of the bulletin the following notice appeared during the month of January: "Mass is celebrated every Sunday morning at 9:00 A.M. at St. Francis School on Redwood Avenue for the convenience of parishioners living in the area." Monsignor Carroll recalls that collections from these masses were kept in a separate bank account and approximately \$20,000 was turned over to St. Joseph's when Father Ralph DiGiacinto became the first parish priest of the Northwood Parish.
57. *Ibid.*, Bishop O'Mara to Catholics People of Thunder Bay, 19 January 1979.
58. *Ibid.*, Bishop O'Mara to Italian Catholics of Fort William area, 29 June 1979.
59. SDCA, Parish Council Minutes, 27 August 1979.
60. *Ibid.*, Parish Council Minutes, 22 February 1980. Bishop O'Mara to Parishioners of Northwood, 14 March 1980.

61. *Ibid.*, Bishop O'Mara to Rev. Daniel China, 14 November 1980.
62. *Ibid.*, (Most Rev.) John A. O'Mara to Rev. Umberto Rizzi, C.S., 8 May 1981; Rev. A.J. Calandra, C.S., to Rev. Umberto Rizzi, C.S., 18 August 1981; Rev. Umberto Rizzi to author, 7 August 1987. The first Scalabrini priest to serve in Thunder Bay was Father Joseph Bellan as associate pastor at St. Anthony's in 1960. Other Scalabrinians followed him as assistant or associate pastors at St. Anthony's until Father Rizzi was appointed as the first Scalabrinian Pastor on 27 September 1969.
63. *Ibid.*, Rev. A.J. Calandra, C.S. to Rev. Umberto Rizzi, 24 April 1981.
64. *Ibid.*, Rev. A.J. Calandra to Father Rizzi, 18 August 1981.
65. *Ibid.*, Father Rizzi biographical notes.
66. Leslie Papp, "The Community of St. Dominic's" *Northwestern Ontario Catholic*, November 1983, p. 7.
67. Louis A. Toneguzzi and Peter Buset to the Italian Mutual Benefit Society, 2 October 1981.
68. The Certificate of Organization (#2838) was granted to the Saints Joseph and Dominic Council of the C.W.L. on 26 March 1980. The first president was Emma Carniato; first secretary, Claire McKay; first Spiritual Director, Rev. Ralph Di Giacinto.
69. SDCA, Parish Council Minutes, 11 May 1982; 9 June 1982.
70. *Ibid.*, Parish Council Minutes, 12 January 1983.
71. *Ibid.*, Parish Council Minutes, 14 April 1982. Dennis Bortolon co-ordinated the "Evenings for the Engaged" programme.
72. *Ibid.*, Building Committee Minutes, 22 May 1985.

