



St. Mary's Parish

A Brief History

1855-2025



SAINT MARY'S, BARRIE, 1855—1980

By the 1830's visiting priests from Toronto, Penetanguishene, and later Newmarket, were saying Mass in the private homes of the growing number of Catholics in Barrie and the surrounding townships. The great influx of Irish immigrants following the 1847 potato famine led to the building of the first Catholic Church in Barrie in 1850 and to its establishment as a parish in 1855 under its first Pastor, Rev. John Francis Jamot.

Shortly afterwards the first Catholic school was opened in Barrie. In 1857 the Sisters of St. Joseph came from Toronto to teach and engage in many other charitable activities. In 1861 Barrie became the seat of the Deanery of Simcoe and for many years its priests served other Catholic communities in central Simcoe County. In 1872 the second Catholic Church, a brick and stone edifice, was built on Mulcaster Street in downtown Barrie to replace the original heavy timber frame structure. In 1969 worship began in the present St. Mary's Church which was erected on this new location, the former site of the monastery of the Redemptoristine nuns.

The plaque was blessed and dedicated on Pentecost Sunday, May 25, 1980, the 125th anniversary of the foundation of the parish, by His Eminence, G. Emmett Cardinal Carter, Archbishop of Toronto.



Original Church Structure



In 1841, a Protestant, Mr. Charles Thompson gives the use of a building in Barrie for Catholic worship.

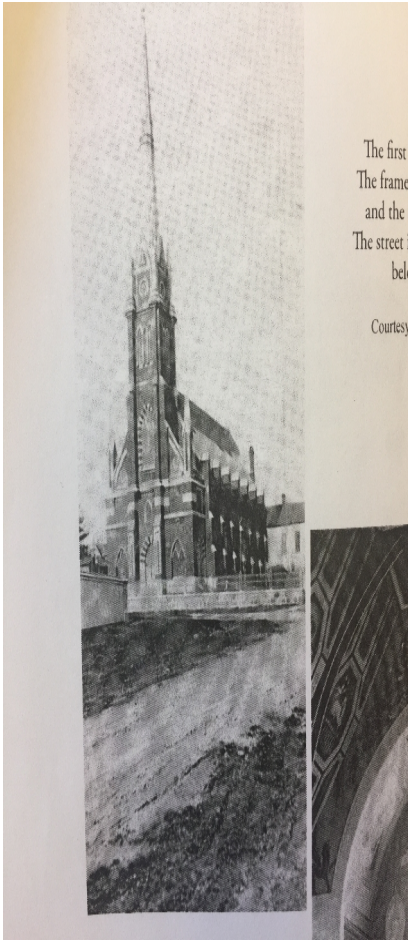
A structure was built in the late 1840's and was completed in 1850. The first church was made of Timber.

Fr. James Quinlan



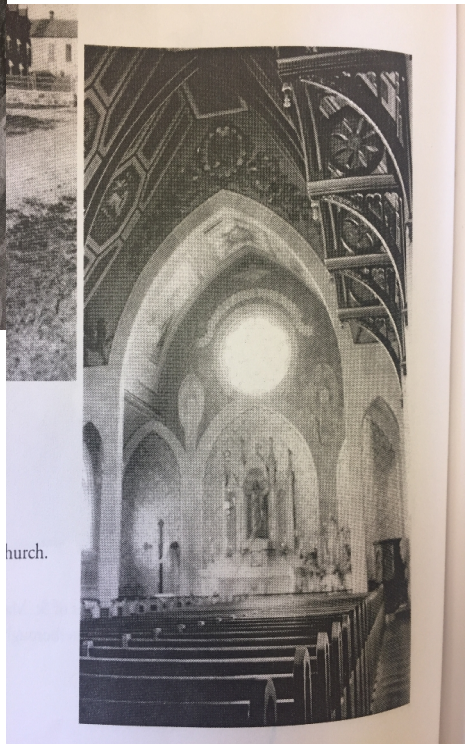
Fr. James Quinlan was the Pastor of Newmarket who served the mission of Barrie. It was under his leadership that plans for a church were begun.

The First Two St. Mary's Churches



The frame church in the background and the newly built brick church. The street in front is McDonald Street below Mulcaster Street.

Interior of the second church.





Interior of St. Mary's after the turn of the century

Interior of St. Mary's after the turn of the century.



Exterior of St. Mary's after the turn of the century

***Exterior of
St. Mary's after the
turn of the century.***

Pieta



My Lord, I offer Thee myself in turn as a sacrifice of thanksgiving. Thou has died for me, and I in turn make myself over to Thee. I am not my own. Thou hast bought me; I will by my own act and deed complete the purchase. My wish is to be separated from everything of this world; to cleanse myself simply from sin; to put away from me even what is innocent, if used for its own sake, and not for Thine. I put away reputation and honour, and influence, and power, for my praise and strength shall be in Thee. Enable me to carry on what I profess. Amen.

Saint John Henry Newman

***Translation Of The Latin Inscription
on the Bell in front of the Church***

Church of the Most Sacred Heart of Mary, Barrie.

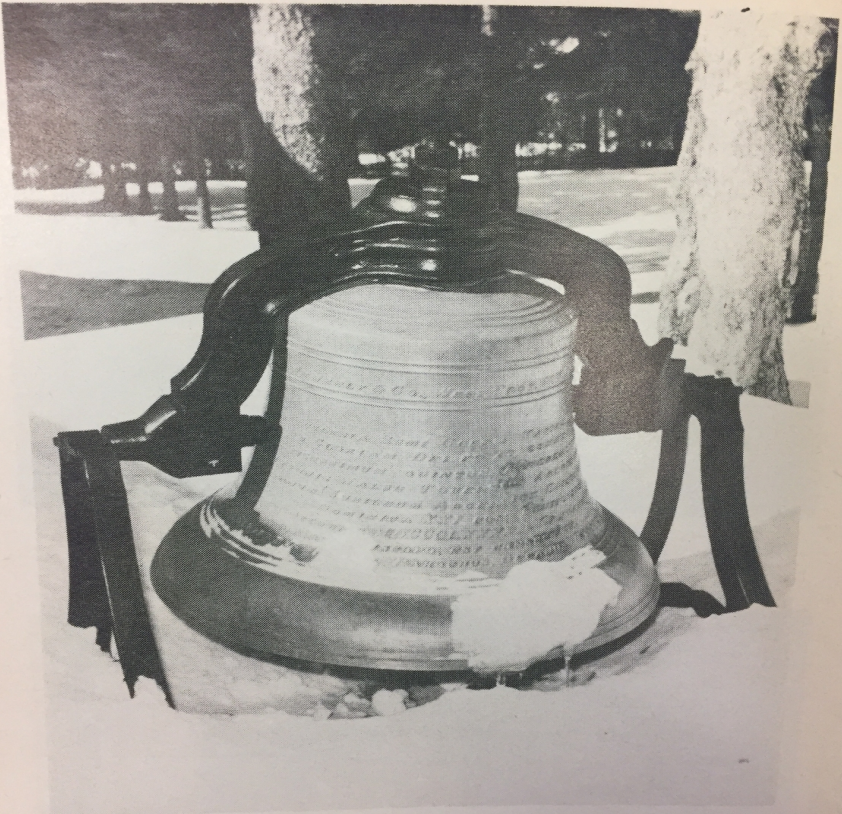
***To the Glory of God and to commemorate the
twenty-fifth and silver jubilee of
John Walsh, Archbishop of Toronto.***

The twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost

The thirtieth day of October, 1982.

This bell was consecrated by the said Archbishop.

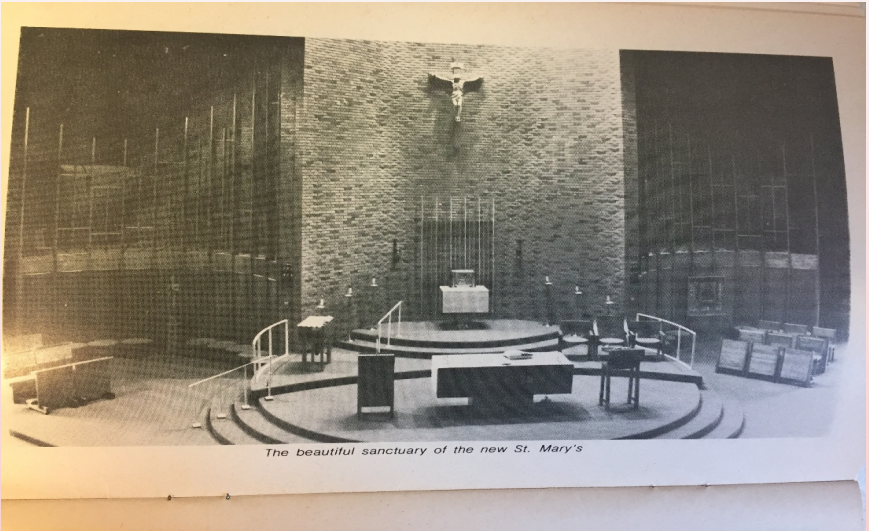
William Bergin, Pastor, Dean of Barrie



**TRANSLATION OF THE LATIN INSCRIPTION ON THE
BELL IN FRONT OF THE CHURCH**

Church of the Most Sacred Heart of Mary, Barrie.

Sanctuary of the new St. Mary's built in 1968



Refurbished sanctuary 2010-2011



Old St. Mary's School— Constructed in 1894



The old two story brick St. Mary's School near the church around 1900



New St. Mary's School



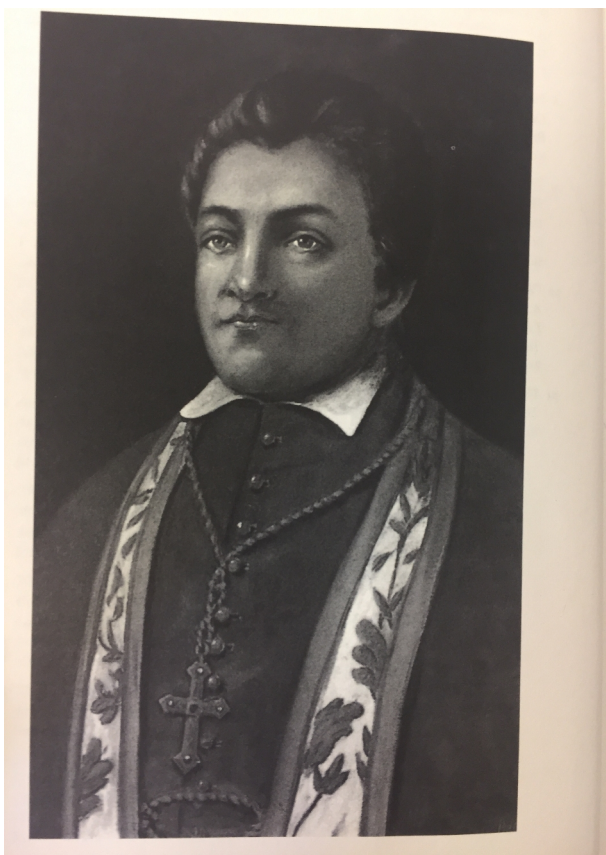
Bishop Michael Power

A native of Halifax, Michael Power was founding bishop of the Diocese of Toronto and the first English-speaking bishop born in Canada. He arrived in Toronto in 1842 and quickly went to work building Canada's newest diocese, which at the time encompassed the Niagara Peninsula, all of southwest Ontario to Windsor and north to Lakes Huron and Superior.

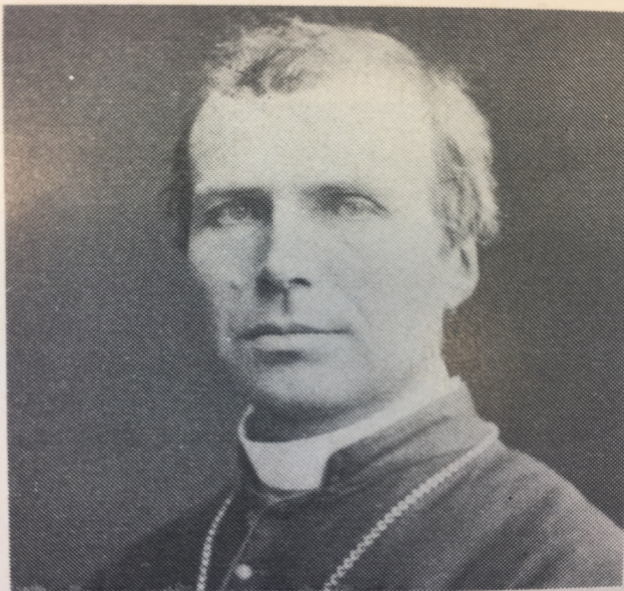
Among his achievements was founding St. Michael's Cathedral. Construction began in April 1845; however, Bishop Power did not live to see it completed. While ministering to immigrants dying of typhus, he contracted the disease and died in 1847 shortly before his 43rd birthday.

He was buried beneath his unfinished cathedral.

The Catholic Register



*Barrie's First Pastor,
Father John Francis Jamot, 1828—1886*



*Rev. John Francis Jamot
the founding Pastor of St. Mary's*

St. Mary's first and founding Pastor, Father John Francis Jamot was born, in 1828 in a small village in the Diocese of Limoges in central France. He was ordained in 1853 and taught classics in a local college for a year.

In 1855 Jamot arrived in Canada and was straightaway assigned as Pastor of the new Parish in Barrie, which he built up in a thriving Christian community.

In 1863 Father Jamot was called from Barrie to Toronto where he became Rector of St. Michael's Cathedral as well as Vicar General and Chancellor of the Diocese. While at the cathedral he erected a spire on its tower and an iron fence around the grounds, both of which can still be readily seen.

In 1882 he became the first Bishop of the newly created Diocese of Peterborough.

Sisters of Saint Joseph *Sister Jerome Susanah McBride.* (Pencil sketch by an unknown artist.)

The Sisters of St. Joseph, a teaching order, came to Barrie in 1857. The request for their coming was made by Father J.F. Jamot, the first Pastor of St. Mary's, who like the Sister of St. Joseph had his origins in France. The first religious vocation from Barrie was Sister Jerome Susanah McBride, who entered in August 1865. The Sisters of St. Joseph served the church in Barrie as educators until 1977.



The Convent of the Sisters of Saint Joseph built on Mulcaaster Street in 1865



The Convent of the Sisters of Saint Joseph since 1946 on Berczy Street

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The Convent of the Sisters of Saint Joseph since 1946. This building exists today as a private residence on Berczy Street.

*Sisters of Saint Joseph Convent
Built on Mulcaster Street in 1885*



*This building was the first
St. Joseph's High School.
The Sisters directed the High School from
1946-1971.*

Redemptoristines

The Redemptoristine (Nuns of the Order of the Most Holy Redeemer), a contemplative order, came to Barrie in 1951 and established their monastery on the site of the present St. Mary's Church on Amelia Street. In 1966, the Redemptoristine nuns leave Barrie.



The Blessing of the Convent bell by Father A. P. Caley in May, 1952. The new wing of the Redemptoristine Monastery was added to the old building in 1952.

Pastors of St. Mary's

1855—1863 V. Rev. J. F. Jamot

*1863—1870 V. Rev. G.R.
Northgraves*

*1870—1889 V. Rev. R. A.
O'Connor*

1890—1891 V. Rev. E. Cassidy

1891—1893 V. Rev. W. Bergin

1893—1909 V. Rev. J. J. Egan

1910—1915 V. Rev. M. Moyna

1915—1921 V. Rev. A. O'Malley

1921—1937 V. Rev. H. J. Sweeney

*1938—1969 Msgr. J. M. Clair **

(Builder of the new St. Mary's)

1969—1971 Rev. J. J. Hayes

1971—1976 Rev. C. F. Reeves

1976—1984 Rev. L. P. O'Malley

1984-1993 Rev. J.G. Hawkshaw

1993—1995 Rev. J. J. Vella

1995—2001 Rev. A. Sheehy

2001—2013 Rev. V. McDevitt

2013—2016 Rev. A. Werunga

*2016—2019 Rev. Msgr. Marco
Laurencic*

2019 --- Rev. Larry Léger

Saint Mary's Church Today




ST. MARY'S PARISH in the YEAR 2025







Jubilee Prayer

Father in heaven, —————  —————
may the faith you have given us
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of charity enkindled
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed hope
for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us
into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.
May those seeds transform from within both humanity
and the whole cosmos
in the sure expectation
of a new heaven and a new earth,
when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,
your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope,
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.
May that same grace spread
the joy and peace of our Redeemer
throughout the earth.
To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise for ever.
Amen.

