



## Our Lady of Fatima Parish

Roman Catholic Church – Diocese of Saint John, NB  
Celebrating the Richness of the Catholic Faith

130 Crocket Street, Marysville

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### The Parish

Prior to 1962, the Catholic community in the Marysville and surrounding area belonged to Saint Anthony's Parish, which was established in 1887. Before the construction of Saint Anthony's, Catholics in the Fredericton and surrounding area belonged to Saint Dunstan's Parish.

During the Forties and Fifties there was a steady influx of Catholic families in the Marysville community and, although many were transient, it was becoming evident that there was a significant body of Saint Anthony's parishioners living in the Marysville area. A desire to establish a new parish in Marysville was beginning to



develop. The idea evolved in the late Fifties through after Mass discussions, at parish functions and around parishioners' supper tables. One of the problems of living in Marysville and attending Mass at Saint Anthony's was that of transportation. Many parishioners had to hitch a ride with those having cars because, in those days on Sundays, there was no bus service and very little taxi service in the Fredericton area. The talk was "if only we had our own church in Marysville."

The more people talked the more convinced they became that their own church could be something more than just a dream. In early 1960, the discussions culminated with an announcement at Mass that there would be meeting held in Saint Anthony's hall for Marysville parishioners to discuss the possibility of building a church in Marysville. Some of the people who attended this meeting were:

Bill McGloin	Jack Kerr	Bill Allen	Roy Allen	Jack McNeil
Fred Peterson	Bill Murphy	Charles Roherty	Moses Brennan	Joseph Cullinan
Bernie Daigle	Mark Fallon	Roy McMillan	Amos McPherson	Clem McIntyre

Willard Porter	Crum McNeil	Ella Higgins	Joe Boucher	Mildred Flinn
Clementine Lyons	Freda Byno	Mary Mahoney	Henry Pelletier	Irene McSheffery

Fern Prince

Of course everyone had an opinion and there was a lot of discussion as to where a new church should be located — the east side of Marysville or the west. In earlier years, it appeared that a church would be built on the east Side because the diocese already owned property there, however the property was sold before serious discussions began. This is the property that is located at the end of White street behind Marysville Place. In his, "A History of St. Anthony's Church," Robert McNeil explains:

"At one time in their history, the Catholics in Marysville had a piece of land given to them by Alexander (Boss) Gibson for the purpose of erecting a church. On August 10, 1894, Alexander Gibson and Sons deeded a piece of land to Bishop Sweeney in the rear of the Gibson Cotton Mill, neighboring the Baptist Congregation and near the road leading to Elias White's estate. This land was sold in the 1950's, since most Catholics lived on the West Side of the (Nashwaak) river and it was hoped that property could be purchased there at a later date."



Now the story of diocese property on the east side seems to go a bit further. Apparently a deal was struck with the Reformed Baptist Church (now the Olivet Wesleyan Church) to trade the aforementioned property for some land along the Nashwaak River (this property is across the street from Marysville Place and is now owned by the local Pentecostal Church). Older Marysville people will remember the adjacent building as being the Dawson Club, which housed a community centre and bowling

alley. It is unclear when this trade took place, however the time span between the time of the trade and that of the sale of the latter property all seems to have taken place during the Fifties.

It is assumed that the diocese sold the property next to the Dawson Club shortly thereafter, in favour of eventually building a church on the west side — but we are getting ahead of ourselves.

As we said earlier, all Catholics, in the Marysville and surrounding area, were parishioners of Saint Anthony's. When discussions started to be serious about the construction of a new church in Marysville, Father Wallace, the parish priest at Saint Anthony's, was not exactly a strong supporter. He obviously was concerned about losing a significant number of his parishioners. However, once Father Wallace saw that the Marysville parishioners were serious, he lent his support.

Getting back to the first formal meeting, discussions focused on several key issues. First, was the location issue; but just as important was construction funding and ongoing funding for operations, once the church was built. It was obvious that the construction funding would

have to come in the form of a mortgage on the church; but without the ongoing financial support of parishioners, the project was dead in the water.

Things came to a head when a building committee was struck to undertake the task of building a new church. The committee consisted of: Bill McGloin, Charles Roherty, Jack McNeil, Jack Kerr, Fred Peterson, Bill Murphy, Mark Fallon and Roy MacMillan.

The first order of business was to determine whether or not there was sufficient support from Marysville parishioners to operate the new church. The committee members visited every Catholic family in Marysville and asked for pledges to help guarantee an income for the new church. There were, at that time, about two hundred Catholic families in the Marysville and surrounding area. Everyone was very supportive and the building committee was able to draw up an operational budget proposal that would guarantee an ongoing income. The next step was to convince the Bishop of the project because the diocese would have to back the mortgage note. Bishop Leverman was invited to Saint Anthony's to discuss the project with Marysville parishioners. Once he saw their determination, he gave his endorsement for the project.

Of course, it was not as simple as going to the bank and getting the money. Additional funding had to be raised through donations and things like 50/ 50 draws. One story that comes to mind was that, after one particular 50/ 50 draw, Roy MacMillan dropped in at the home of Charles Roherty and he left the prize winnings of the latest draw. When Charlie arrived home and found that the winnings were there, he celebrated his good fortune. The only problem was that Roy neglected to mention to Charlie's wife that he dropped off the prize in order for Charlie to hang on to it for the actual winner, who was not present at the draw. You see, Charlie was the financial person on the building committee and Roy figured he was the best person to hold the prize for the winner. The remainder of this story has been lost to history.

The building committee commenced negotiations with Leonard Inch and Harry Moffit, who individually owned the land upon which Our Lady of Fatima Church now stands. As well, it was necessary to obtain a right of way from Crockett Street to the church property. This right of way was obtained from a Mr. John Neil, a housing developer in the area at that time, who owned the required piece of property. The right of way then had to be deeded over to the Town of Marysville, who became responsible for service. The purchase price of the church property was approximately \$15,000 and the cost of the right of way was \$800.00. Apparently, the original right of way cost was \$1,000.00, but the owner was persuaded to accept \$800.00 together with a receipt for an unnamed amount.

While the land issue was being settled, the committee had to begin obtaining prices for building construction. A contractor was selected which was Maritime Bricklayers, owned by Al Rioux. The construction estimates came in at around \$100,000.00, which was approved by the Bishop. Apparently, the mortgage was first established at the local branch of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce located on Cliff Street, at the end of the old Carleton Street Bridge.

This is the same bank that, in the early sixties, was held up on two different occasions by the same guy. As the story goes, the second time he robbed the bank he was heard to say, "It's me again, I'm back for more." By the way, the guy was never caught and never robbed the bank again. Now whether or not this had anything to do with moving the Church's mortgage to the Bank of Montreal, we will never know. It should though be noted that the diocese dealt with the Bank of Montreal and that was the explanation of the move, or was it?

The members of the building committee worked diligently on the project and they all put in long hours to ensure success. One story, that was making the rounds at that time, involved Jack Kerr. Apparently Jack's wife Dolly was overheard to say to him, "You're there so much, you

should move your bed over there." Jack's response remains a mystery.

When financial issues were well under way, a date was picked for the groundbreaking service that was held on July 2, 1961. An article in *The New Freeman* described the service as follows:

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*"Marysville, N.B. July 2, 1961 — On Sunday evening, in glorious weather, his Excellency, Most Reverend A.B. Leverman, Bishop of Saint John, blessed the site and turned the first sod for the new Mission Church of Our Lady of Fatima to be erected in this town."*

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The article went on to say that Bishop Leverman and Father Wallace, pastor of Saint Anthony's, expressed their deep appreciation to the Town of Marysville and to its people. Speeches were made by the Bishop as well as Mayor Neil Allan who, with Councilor Cyril Gray, represented the Town Council. The article reports that several hundred people attended this ceremony.



In his remarks, Bishop Leverman recalled that the founder of the town, Alexander "Boss" Gibson, had named the town after his beloved wife Mary and that by naming the new church "Our Lady of Fatima," another Mary was being honoured.

Following the ground breaking, construction began in earnest. On December 3, 1961, the cornerstone was laid in a ceremony that was conducted by Bishop Leverman of the Diocese of Saint John. Bishop Leverman's comments were very powerful when he spoke at the site of the new altar. He said, "This church is a gateway to Heaven and is really yours, your building, an expression of your love and faith and from it will come faith in abundance. It will be the means of saving souls for the Kingdom of God, yours, your children, your children's children down through the years bringing to you and to them all things pertaining to the Kingdom of God."

On Sunday, March 4, 1962, the first Mass was held, again officiated by Bishop Leverman. He was assisted by Father Wallace and Father Meahan (Saint Anthony's), Father McMahon and Monsigneur Boyd (Saint Dunstan's) and Father Coughlan (Loggieville). The normal procedure for the opening of a new church is to have the people wait outside until the church is blessed. This, however, was dispensed with, due to the weather, and all were permitted to go inside for the blessing. The church was filled to capacity and the Knights of Columbus provided a Guard of Honour. The choir, conducted by Mildred Flinn, sang officially for the first time.

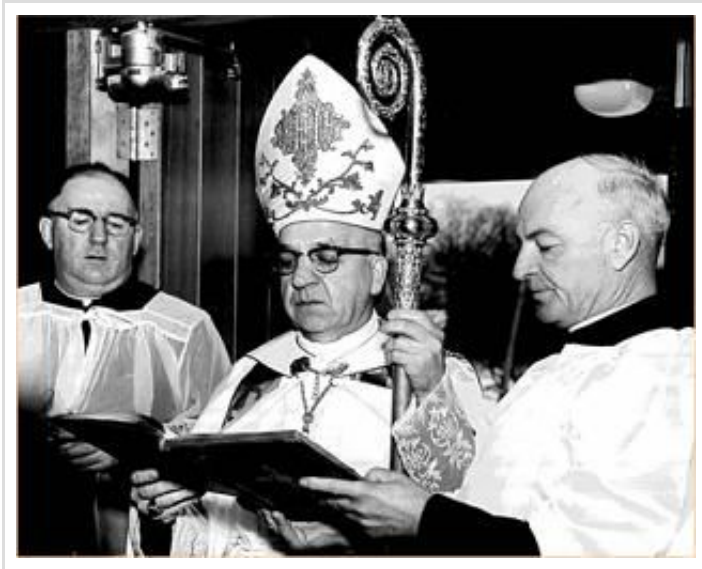
During the first mass, Bishop Leverman said he was pleased to have a church in the diocese named for Our Lady. Apparently during discussions the building committee had with him, he expressed his wish that the church would be named in honour of someone other than a male saint. It was Bill McGloin who suggested that Our Lady of Fatima be used.

At the time, there was a general interest in Our Lady of Fatima due to the release of a movie of



the story. The building committee put forward the recommendation and Bishop Leverman approved the choice.

Father Wallace spoke of the sacrifice of the catholic people of the Marysville area, who for many years had been attending Saint Anthony's. Bishop Leverman expressed the sentiments that today the great essential for the world is peace among nations and if we have peace we do not have to worry about material things. His Excellency also expressed his great joy that the long awaited church has at last been provided for the devoted people of Marysville and hoped it would be a guide, a joy in sorrow, a real living beacon in all their life.



As was said earlier, the first choir was under the direction of Mildred Flinn, who was also the organist. The organ was donated by Clementine Lyons and, prior to the opening of the church, it was kept at the home of Obeline McGloin (Benoit) where the first choir practices were held. Gerard Leblanc, the choir director from St. Anthony's, made several visits to Obeline's home to help the choir get off the ground.

In the early years, parishioners soon became very involved in parish life with several committees and groups becoming quickly established. Several members of the original building committee went on to form the Holy Name Society, in April 1963, which in turn evolved into the parish council — there will more on the formation of the Parish Council, later on.



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The first president of the Holy Name Society was Jack Kerr. Other members included Bill McGloin, Charles Roherty, Jack McNeil, Fred Peterson, Bill Murphy, Mark Fallon and Roy MacMillan. The ladies of the parish formed a Catholic Womans League that ultimately, it could be said, evolved into the Saint Marguerite Bourgeois Society. Some early CWL members included Dolly Kerr, Peggy Kehoe, Eva Peterson, Margaret McNeil, Margaret Hersey, Francis Saunders and Bernadine MacPherson.

There was a significant spin-off group formed called the Our Lady of Fatima Mens' Bowling

League followed shortly by the Our Lady of Fatima Womens' Bowling League. Early members of the mens' league included: Warren Mitchell, Mark Fallon, Roy Allen, Aurelle Richard, Jack McNeil, Bill McGloin and Fred Peterson. Early members of womens' league included: Obeline McGloin (who spearheaded the ladies' team), Marion MacMillan, Peggy Kehoe, Noreen McNeil, Theresa Breen and Dolly Kerr. This league, that consisted almost exclusively of Our Lady of Fatima parishioners, lasted for over thirty years.

In September 1962, the house located at 130 Crockett Street was acquired for a rectory. The house was purchased from Percy Watts, who was, at the time, the Town of Marysville's office clerk. Incidentally, the town office was located in a building at the lower end of Morrison Street, that up until the mid-fifties, housed a movie theater called "The Lyric." Getting back to the purchase of the rectory, Percy was paid a \$1,750.00 down payment and the parish assumed the approximately \$9,000.00 mortgage, which was with Central Mortgage and Housing.

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Up until the appointment of a full-time pastor, Father Wallace from St. Anthony's served as part-time parish priest. A permanent priest was appointed for the first time on August 2, 1962. Father Raymond Rielly assumed his duties shortly after this date. The following year seen the first mission held at Our Lady of Fatima. This mission was held by Father Patrick Mann.

About this time, Vatican II was underway in Rome and the parish soon was caught up in the introduction of Liturgical renewal. In March 1965, the altar was rearranged to its current position to reflect some of the changes. This year also saw the celebration of the first Sacrament of Confirmation in the church. On May 29, 1965, eighty-two young people were confirmed by Bishop Leverman. A men's Catholic Action Group was formed in January 1966. however though, the Holy Name Society seems to have been the central men's group and, as we said earlier, it was formed in April, 1963.