
75TH ANNIVERSARY - 1926-2001
OUR LADY OF MERCY CATHOLIC CHURCH



Sketch by Father Norman Thibodeau, O.F.M.

A Message from Father Curtis

Luke; 12:16

« ... Be like servants who await their masters return from a wedding, ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks. »

For the past seventy-five years (1926-2001), the people of Our Lady of Mercy give thanks to God. The parish has been blessed with countless gifts. God's word passed on by our Franciscan Fathers and Brothers. The tremendous faith shared by the parishioners has contributed to the dedication and commitment to their church.

The spiritual growth of the community simply brings out its beauty of the parish. Its faith being the true witness of God's love for all of humanity. As the years pass, the richness of God's love remains to be the true valued norm of Our Lady of Mercy.

Jesus asked his disciples; « And who is my neighbour ? » As a community that brings God's love to all, « You are my neighbor, you are my brother, sister in the fellowship of Christ our Savior. »

Let us, brothers and sisters continue building up God's reign in our world, whom the Lord has entrusted to us and let us continue sharing his love as we await his return.

Seventy-five years, a service done very well!

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Master of Ceremonies - Floyd Sullivan
 Welcome - Father Curtis
 History of Our Lady of Mercy - Ruth Everett
 Recognitions - Elizabeth Hudson
 Poem: « Our Lady of Mercy 75th Anniversary » - read by Margaret Everett
 Additional Comments
 Entertainment by Kathleen McCarthy & Amos Kelly
 Refreshments will be served

History

Our Lady of Mercy is unique because of its humble beginnings and its inspired growth in such a short period of time.

The parish, founded in 1926, had previously depended on Maliseet and the availability of the Saint John River, which was crossed by canoe or over the ice. Following the arrival of the Franciscans, they took up the challenge of crossing the river instead of having the parishioners come over to Maliseet, and held Mass in area homes. Mass was held in the homes of Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Lemieux and Mr. & Mrs. Leonard Parent.

The inconvenience of crossing the river incited the Bishop of Chatham - *Bishop Patrice-Alexandre Chiasson, C.J.M. (1920-1938)* - to give support for the building of a church at Aroostook. Our Lady of Mercy was built in 1925-26 at a cost of approximately \$7000.00. Parishioners raised money by visiting lumber camps, picnics at Waugh's flat and Basket Socials in several homes.

On December 25, 1926, the parishioners of Aroostook assembled in their church for the first time, for Midnight Mass. Their priest was Father Raymond Pennafort Willey (« Father Penn »).

Father Penn came from England in 1903. He was as dynamic as the length of his name! He was director of the Franciscan Review; he preached retreats, pastored, and built churches. His twenty years in the Tobique Missions were not spent in vain. He founded Our Lady of Mercy and was the first Franciscan to pastor at St. Patrick's.

When the Bishop of Chatham came to dedicate the Aroostook church to Our Lady of Mercy for the glory of God, he also encouraged the Franciscans to persuade their order to build a monastery there. The parishioners invited the Franciscans to build a monastery on the church grounds. This would allow a more permanent and advantageous position for the parish. The parish provided \$2000.00 to assist with the building of the monastery. The span between its preparation and reality was nine years, but it happened. On October 29, 1935, the monastery was officially inaugurated, and on November 30th of that same year, the community moved from Maliseet to Aroostook.

The next year, Father Othon Musso, OfFl, wrote an account of life at the monastery, saying: « Aroostook is very much alive. It extends its rays far, while consolidating community life with a jovial spirit and devotion. May the blessing of our founder St. Francis give to each the proper spirit of the Order of Friars Minor, the joy to taste the good of brotherhood. »

The Franciscans were always an integral part of Aroostook, and by 1935 they had realized the dream of having their own home where they could live out their spirituality at a more consistent pace. Father Sylvestre Beudet became the first superior of the monastery; he was succeeded by Father Gregory Leger who remained twenty years as superior (1940-60). Father Gregory is credited with having converted the church basement into a parish hall.

For many years the monastery served as the residence for the Franciscan priests and brothers who were delegated to the different parishes. No matter where they served, the monastery remained « home » where one met with one's spiritual brothers.

The church continued to prosper and provided a spiritual community for many catholic families throughout the next several decades. Several priests served at Our Lady of Mercy becoming integrals members of both the church and local communities. Forty-one Franciscan Fathers and twenty Franciscan Brothers have resided at Our Lady of Mercy.

Father Ovide Tanguay left in 1985 and Brother Gregory Cormier in 1986, leaving the monastery empty. After the Franciscans no longer used the building, the church explored possible alternatives for the monastery. After much thought, the decision was made in the late 1980s to tear down the monastery and the smaller buildings surrounding the property.

Although Our Lady of Mercy has seen much change since her doors open in 1926, the parish continues to serve the spiritual needs of many families in our community.

Diocese of Edmundston

On December 19, 1944, His holiness Pope Pius XII, erected the Diocese of Edmundston. Below is a list of the Bishops who have served the Diocese.

Bishop	Duration
Msgr. Anthony Roy, OFM	1945-1948
Msgr. Romeo Gagnon	1948-1970
Msgr. Fernand Lacroix	1970-1983
Msgr. Gérard Dionne	1983-1994
Msgr. François Thibodeau	1994 - present

Parish Priests

Priest	Duration
Father Raymond Pennafort Willey, OFM	November 22, 1922 - September 19, 1942
Father Pie Guenette, OFM	September 4, 1942 - September 18, 1944
Father Grégoire Leger, OFM	September 18, 1944 - August 20, 1954
Father Camille Chassé, OFM	August 20, 1954 - April 21, 1955
Father Lionel Beaulieu, OFM	April 21, 1955 - July 1, 1960
Father Gregoire Leger, OFM	July 8, 1960 - August 22, 1969
Father Samuel Cote, OFM	August 22, 1969 - July 23, 1970
Father Ovide Tanguay, OFM	July 23, 1970 - 1985
Father Romeo Cormier, OFM	1985-1986
Msqr. George Travers	1986 - December 1988
Father Leo Gregoire	December 1988 - 1998
Father Curtis Sappier	1998 - present

Franciscan Fathers having been Assistant Priest

Assistant Priest	Duration
Father Sylvester Beudet	January 1936 - August 1942
Father Jean Paul Morneault	July 1941 - May 1948
Father Hubert Perron	January 1936 - October 1939
Father Dieudonne Masse	January 1936 - January 1941 May 1946 - September 1948
Father Berard Nobert	September 1942 - February 1975
Father Andre M. Godmer	May 1955 - March 1957
Father Alexis Auger	December 1948 - Aug 1951
Father Michael Seiferling	Aug 1948 - May 1957
Father Firmin Lachapelle	June 1937 - December 1957

A few among the 20 Franciscan Brothers

Brother	Duration
Brother Michel Godbout	1936-1945
Brother Patrick Sweeney	1936-1943
Brother Eusebe Bousquet	1940-1961
Brother Theophile Godbout	1950-1956
Brother Edmond Peloquin	1958-1966
Brother Bonaventure St-Laurent	1967-1972
Brother Julien Landry	1945-1947
Brother Valere Renault	1958-1961
Brother Gregory Cormier	1947-1955
	1960-1986

A few Original Families

Family	Community
Mr. & Mrs. Marshal Armstrong & family	Perth-Andover
Mr. & Mrs. Fred Bowmaster & family	Aroostook
Mr. & Mrs. John Bowmaster & family	Bairdsville
Mr. & Mrs. James Brown & family	Four Falls
Mr. & Mrs. Roy Brown & family	Four Falls
Mr. Basil Cronk	Aroostook
Mr. Albion Downing & family	Four Falls
Mr. & Mrs. Roy Farnham & family	Aroostook
Mrs. Lawrence Grant	Aroostook
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Griffin & family	Aroostook
Mr. & Mrs. John Lafferty & family	Andover
Mr. & Mrs. Tom Ledwith & family	Four Falls
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Lemieux & family	Aroostook
Mr. Jack Lynch	Andover
Mr. & Mrs. Samuel MacIntosh	Andover
Mr. & Mrs. Louis McIver & family	Aroostook
Mr. & Mrs. Jack McKinnon & family	Aroostook
Mr. & Mrs. Neil McKinnon & family	Andover
Mr. & Mrs. Bruce McLaughlin & family	Aroostook
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Mooney & family	Andover
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Murchison & family	Four Falls
Mr. & Mrs. Leonard Parent & family	Aroostook
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Rolston & family	Aroostook
Mr. & Mrs. Steve Sullivan & family	Four Falls
Mr. & Mrs. James Underwood & family	Four Falls
Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Walsh & family	Aroostook
Miss Nellie Wright	Four Falls
Mrs. Susan Wright	Four Falls

The following parishioners are children of founding families who contributed to the early success of Our Lady of Mercy. These individuals continue to be active parishioners carrying on the commitment of their families.

Marie (Farnham) Burley, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Roy Farnham
Geneva (Downing) Morrell, daughter of Mr. Albion Downing
Floyd Sullivan, son of Mr. & Mrs. Steve Sullivan
Norman Bowmaster, son of Mr. & Mrs. Fred Bowmaster
Theresa (Ledwith) O'Neal, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Tom Ledwith
Jack Brown, son of Mr. & Mrs. Roy Brown
Irene Brown, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Roy Brown

First Marriages

Parishioners	Residence	Date of Marriage
Frank Murchison	Four Falls	Unknown
Alice Beatrice Wright	Four Falls	
Louis P. McIver	Aroostook	September 22, 1925
Genevieve Armstrong	Andover	
Bustin Peter Goolsby	Fort Fairfield, ME	October 27, 1925
Mary Alma McKinnon	Andover	
John D. Bowmaster	Medford	October 6, 1926
Sylvina McQuade	Medford	
P. Wiley Cassidy	Bairdsville	October 17, 1927
Nellie Irene Wright	Kilburn	

First Funerals

Parishioner	Residence	Died	Age	Birthplace	Cemetery	Priest
	Bairdsville	Unknown	Unknown	Kilburn	River de Chute	Fr. Pennafort
Nellie (Wright) Cassidy	Andover	May 5, 1934	87 yrs	Unknown	Grand Falls	Fr. Philibert
Patrick Lynch	Bairdsville	Dec. 28, 1936	14 days	Bairdsville	Aroostook	Fr. Marcellin
Louise Bowmaster	Bairdsville	Oct. 26, 1936	2 days	Bairdsville	Aroostook	Fr. Marcellin
Mary Ann Morrissey	Aroostook	Sept. 24, 1938	74 yrs	Medford	Aroostook	Fr. Jean-Mary
Angelina (Beaulieu) MacIntosh	Andover	Dec. 4, 1938	1 day	Andover	Aroostook	Fr. Sylvestre
Joseph McQuade	Bairdsville	Jan. 20, 1940	Unknown	Clairview	Four Falls	Fr. Pennafort
James Sweeney	Four Falls	Jan. 18, 1940	11 yrs	Four Falls	Aroostook	Fr. Pennafort
James Cornelius Brown						
Leonard MacIntosh	Aroostook	Sept. 7, 1940	Unknown	Four Falls	Aroostook	Fr. Pennafort
John Francis Pelrine	Aroostook	Jan. 19, 1941	38 years	Nova Scotia	Aroostook	Fr. Pennafort
Bertha (McCluskey) Parent	Aroostook	May 10, 1941	53 yrs	Grand Falls	Aroostook	Fr. Hubert
Helene (Gallagher) Grant	Aroostook	Apr. 15, 1942	52 yrs	Maugerville	Fredericton	Fr. Donahue
Mary Ledwith						
Mary Jane Sweeney	Four Falls	Dec. 28, 1942	21 yrs	Four Falls	Aroostook	Fr. Pius
John Laferty	Bairdsville	March 2, 1942	72 yrs	Four Falls	Clairview	Fr. Pius
Julia Elizabeth Parent	Andover	March 16, 1943	72 yrs	Greenwich	Aroostook	Fr. Pius
	Carlingford	June 23, 1944	76 yrs	St. Leonard	Aroostook	Fr. Pius

First Baptisms

Name	Birth Date	Baptized	Parents	Godparents
Irene Catherine Sullivan	Aug. 4, 1919	Aug. 7, 1919	Lilian Hawkins Stephen Sullivan	Stella Sullivan Herman Toner
Clayton Vincent Sullivan	Oct. 5, 1921	Oct. 20, 1921	Lilian Hawkins Stephen Sullivan	Leonora Sullivan
Dorothy Vivian Dixon	Jan. 5, 1925	May 1, 1925	Ida Soucie Ephrem Dixon	Bertha & Leonard Parent
Isabella Kathleen Lemieux	Unknown	May 30, 1925	Mary Ann Lynch Joseph Lemieux	Mr. & Mrs. Frank Griffin
Geyneth Ruth Sullivan	Dec. 29, 1925	Jan. 17, 1926	Geyneth Everett Pius Sullivan	Gen. Armstrong Louis McIver

Verna Gertrude Sullivan	Nov. 30, 1925	Feb. 7, 1926	Lilian Hawkins Stephen Sullivan	Mamie & William Toner
Rita Evelyn Dixon	March 1, 1926	Aug. 8, 1926	Ida Soucie Ephrem Dixon	Mrs. J. Brown Joseph Lemieux
Catherine Brown	Aug. 24, 1926	Sept. 12, 1926	Nora Sullivan Roy Brown	Mr. & Mrs. James Brown
Ralph Eugene Dixon	Mar. 26, 1927	May 1m 1927	Ida Soucie Ephrem Dixon	Geyneth & Pius Sullivan
Norman Francis Bowmaster	June 4, 1927	June 12, 1927	Verna McQuade Fred. Bowmaster	Mary Ann Lynch Joseph Lemieux
M. Marjorie Dorothy Pelrine	May 8, 1927	June 19, 1927	Sadie May Fougere John Pelrine	Eva & Nicholas Jr. Walsh
John Philip Brown	Aug. 23, 1927	Sept. 4, 1927	Nora Sullivan Roy Brown	Ruth Brown Charles Russell
Patricia Alberta Lemieux	Aug. 19, 1927	Sept. 4, 1927	Mary Ann Lynch Joseph Lemieux	Bertha & Leonard Parent
Rachel Dorina Sullivan	Aug. 22, 1927	Sept. 18, 1927	Geyneth Everett Pius Sullivan	B. McLaughlin Roy Brown
Mary Irene Wright	Unknown	Oct. 16, 1927	Marjorie Fitzhebert Walter Wright	Ellen McManus
Ronald Matthew Mclver	Jan. 29, 1928	Mar. 11, 1928	G. Armstrong Louis Mclver	Alberta & James Mclver
James Cornelius Brown	Nov. 3, 1928	Nov. 25, 1928	Nora Sullivan Roy Brown	Catherine Brown Reed Russell
Arnold Thomas Mclver	Nov. 21, 1929	Dec. 8, 1929	G. Armstrong Louis Mclver	Eva & Nicholas Jr. Walsh
Mary Lorraine Nichols	Nov. 26, 1917	Sept. 15, 1929	Annie Whiticare Whitfield Nichols	Nellie Wright A. J. Demmings

Memories from Our 50th Anniversay - December 1976

A Message from Father Ovide Tanguay

« Nothing like Christmas '76 for us all, at Our Lady of Mercy parish church, Aroostook. The Bairdsville family share our deep joy and gratitude.

For the past 50 years, 1926-1976, we at Our Lady of Mercy give God the thanks - the thanks for Franciscan Fathers and Brothers, who never relent, under any conditions, in the ways of divine love and human endeavour - the thanks for parishioners, who respond to the call of duty and grace, every given moment of their lives, for their own spiritual growth, for the good of precious blood, marriage, social and civic relationships, at all times... !

May the years ahead show, again, the healthy signs of glory to God and peace to men of good will - in parish, church and Franciscan determination - along the path of years and demands upon all of us, fully aware of the continued building efforts of Christ's Kingdom, in minds, hearts and hopes, YESTERDAY, TOMORROW, unto our eternal destiny in heavenly REST. »

50th Anniversary Program

Saturday December 18, 1976

5:00pm - Supper for our Seniors

- Supper of thanksgiving for « the seniors » of the parish.
- Tribute to Brother Gregory Cormier, OFM:
50 years of solemn profession in the Franciscan Order,
30 years of service in New Brunswick,

25 years of assistance at Our Lady of Mercy.

- Supper honored by the presence of our **Bishop Lacroix** of Edmundston and Father Leblanc, Franciscan Provincial.

7:30pm - Parish Mass

- **Bishop Fernand Lacroix** and very Rev. Father Sylvere Leblanc, Franciscan Provincial.

8:30pm - Parish Gathering

- In the Parish Hall in a pleasant family atmosphere, the parishioners of Aroostook and Bairdville spend a few hours with the Bishop and the Provincial.
- Treats and refreshments served. A few Christmas Carols.

Sunday December 19, 1976

4:00pm - Con-Celebration of Solemn Mass

- Presided by **Bishop Fernand Lacroix**, Edmundston; very Reverend Father Sylvere Leblanc, Provincial of St. Joseph's Franciscan Province, Montreal; and Rev. Father Norman Thibodeau, OFM, Superior of the local Fraternity of Franciscans ministering in parishes of NB; with Franciscan fathers and priests of this diocese and others, members of religious communities, parishioners, and other guests.
- First Reading (English); Mr. Floyd Sullivan: Second Reading (French); Mrs. Fernande St. Amand.
- Homily: Robert Inman, seminarian, in a year of pastoral experience locally.
- Choir Performance: members of Grand Falls' Assumption Parish Choir with Sister Colette Duguay and members of our own parish.

5:30pm - 9:30pm - Open House in Parish Hall

- Master of Ceremonies: Mr. Wayne Roach, chairman of our Jubilee.
- Greetings by **Bishop Lacroix** and Father Leblanc, Provincial.
- Historical data of interest on posters by Brother Gregory Cormier.
- Buffet Table: courtesy of the families of the parish and mission.
- CWL members and other parishioners, look after things for one and all on the glorious occasion of « Our 50th at Our Lady of Mercy ».

Thanks to All who Contributed to our 50th!!

Our Lady of Mercy 75th Anniversary

Seventy-five years is a long time
For a little church to last
Many thousands of footsteps have trod
In the many years of the past

Our Lady of Mercy was built in 1926
Celebrating Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve
A crowd of people gathered
And gave thanks on their knees

The church was built on a piece of land
On very level ground
At the lower end of Aroostook
No better place good be found

Our Lady of Mercy, was the name
That the little church was given
It must have made our Lady happy
For she is the Queen of Heaven

The Bishop of Chatham helped with the funds
Whose Diocese we were in then
Years after we were changed
To the Diocese of Edmundston

Father Raymond Pennafort Willey was the first Priest
Just Father Penn will be fine
He was a friend to everyone
And kept us all in line

He suggested to the farmers
Of potatoes, plant an extra plot
The proceeds would go to the church
Whether they liked it or not

The new parish included
Four Fails, California, Tinker,
Aroostook, Portage, Brown Road
And much later Morrell

The people from these places
Were glad for a church so near
They could attend Mass every Sunday
Instead of just once a year

When the church was built
The parishioners were few
Griffin's, Walsh's McLaughlin's,
McIver's, Parent's, and Lemieux'

Then from the Brown Road
Came Roy, Nora, Cassie, and John
From California came Tommy Ledwith
Bringing Theresa and Tom

At Four Fails, Sullivan's, Hartt's, and Downings'
And a family of Wrights
They felt privileged to attend the new church
Proud that it was their right

The parishioners out in the country
Were made of good strong stuff
Rather than miss Mass
They'd walk through rain, snow, and slush

A monastery was added to the church
A home for brothers and priests
Everyone was welcome there
Even people off the street

Several years after the church was built
The basement was made into a hall
Bingo, card games, and suppers
Fun and games for all

After the monastery was of no use
It was torn down
It left an empty space on the grounds
And saddened the people in the town

The parish owes Brother Gregory
A debt they can never repay
He shoveled snow and mowed the grass
He toiled hard night and day

Many priests have come and gone
I could but name a few
Their pictures displayed in the hall
Some are good looking, too

Each priest was unique
During his period of time
I'll try to remember some of their names
But don't expect them to rhyme

Father Penn came from over the sea
Father Sylvestre was the first superior of the monastery
Fr. Marcelyn, Fr. Sam, Fr. Gregory, Fr. Beaulieu, Fr. Tanguay,
Fr. Romeo, Fr. Travers, Fr. Leo and our present day priest Fr. Curtis

Father Leo was one of our favorite priests
He was sent to another parish
We all hated to see him go
Our thoughts of him we'll cherish

We must not forget Father Tanguay
Who was with us quite a while
He listened patiently to our sins
And forgave them with a smile

Our present priest is Father Curtis
Hope he stays a long while
He is the only priest we ever had
Who always wears a smile

Reverend François Thibodeau is our Bishop
In the city of Edmundston he resides
He serves many, many churches
All over the countryside

Over the passing of time
The church has had repairs
Recently a rug was laid
To replace the one of 40 years

When the bell rings in the steeple
Mass is about to begin
It is almost as though
We can hear an angel sing

God bless us every one
Were the words of Tiny Tim
God is always with us And we say our prayers to him

People wonder about Heaven and Hell
And what its all about
But what we will find in the great beyond
We will have to die to find out

Some say there are surprises in heaven
People who are sure to be there
The angels look all around
And can't see them anywhere

On the other hand people who
Angels thought they would never see
Are sitting with St. Peter
As content as they can be

Generation and generation pass
The young and the old
All keep their eyes on the altar
As the word of God enfolds

The monastery is long gone
But the church a place of prayer
With God's help will last
As long as people are there

For seventy-five years
We hope the church will stay
For most of us who are here now
Will not be far away

Written by Geneva Morrell

In celebration of the 75th Anniversary of Our Lady of Mercy

November 3rd 2001

Brother Gregory

Aroostook owes you a great debt
That they can never pay
But we have all learned to love you
And have for many a day

You may have thought we took you fore granted
But you were always top on our list
You will never ever know
How badly you are missed

The grounds around the building
You mowed and trimmed with ease
Your hollyhocks were gorgeous
And bloomed until winter's breeze

When winter came you shoveled snow
Sometimes a path to the road
You worked and seemed to enjoy it
Never complaining about the heavy load

You kept the cemetery well groomed
I know if the dead could speak
They would say, « Let someone help you! »
You worked hard week after week

You decorated the church for Christmas
Cutting and tying boughs with a will

With ribbons, tinsel, and wreaths
You cut the boughs on the hill

The manger in the church was a work of art With Mary, Ioseph, and infant child
A star shining from above It caused us all to meditate awhile

The manger just outside the door
Was a joy to the entire town
It looked so very heavenly
God must have been looking down

The big garden that you planted
With every row so straight
You got no help from anymore
As you worked both long and late

Carrots, beans, potatoes, and turnip
All laid away in winter's store
All you asked was room in the freezer
Where you stored more and more

You were an avid cameraman
Taking pictures of us all
We all have pictures that you took
But none of you all

In spite of all your manual work
You took some time to write
You have a marvelous talent
Every word comes out just right

You spoiled us all so badly
That when you went away
We are still learning to do our share
Until this very day

May god bless you and keep you
As you go down your heavenly way
We will never ever forget you
Please think of us when you pray

Written by Geneva Morrell as a tribute to Brother Gregory
1990