

ST. TERESA'S PARISH – OUR ROOTS

Reflections of St Teresa's by Bettie Duff - Taken from the Church Bulletin - Fall 1998

It was the dark days of the depression, unemployment was widespread, money was scarce. Hardly a propitious time to launch a new parish. But when the announcement came that a parish would be established in Mundy Pond, it was hailed with great delight by the many who long had cherished a dream of having their own parish. The parish, extensive in area since it would encompass the Kenmount Road and Thorburn Road areas, would be known as St Teresa's and Father (Later Monsignor) Harold A. Summers was appointed its first pastor.



A great wave of enthusiasm and good will swept the new parish. The pastor took up residence in a house put at his disposal by my Aunt, Katherine Kearney, where he lived until the completion of the presbytery. The first building constructed was a school, on land donated by my uncle Michael J. Duff. At the same time, schools were built on Kenmount and Thorburn Roads to serve the children in those areas. Mass was celebrated in those schools on the first Monday and Tuesday of each month.

I remember so well that little church with its wood chairs and backless benches, but when it was decorated for special occasions with candles and benches, but when it was decorated for special occasions with candles and banks of flowers, it was the most beautiful church we had ever seen.

As I reflect back on those days I can't help but think of the faith of those early parishioners. Many of them were older people who walked long distances; not a foot of pavement existed, there was no street lighting, but those were not obstacles to stand in their way of coming to worship.

Throughout the years, we have had many lovely devotions and liturgies. I recall the Children's Lenten Retreat; the outdoor Corpus Christi procession along Mundy Pond Road in June, the Triduum in honour of our patroness in October. And of course, I shall always remember the first time Archbishop Roche came to the parish to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation. Because of the limited space indoors, an altar was erected in front of the school steps and in true Newfoundland fashion; a large green bough arch graced the schoolyard entrance.

I remember too, the war years, when one of the regiments stationed at Lester's Field attended the 10 o'clock Mass on the Sunday morning parades.

Another thing of note was the opening of the Mundy Pond Co-operative store on Pearce Avenue and the establishment of a credit union by a number of our parishioners. These flourished for several years.

As a parish we have had our sad days and our happy days, but the happy occasions far outnumbered the

sad. For the older parishioners I think the saddest day was when Monsignor Summers announced his departure from our midst. He had been appointed Vicar General. There was hardly a dry eye in the church that day. Again, just a few years later we grieved at the death of Father Randal Greene, who was Monsignor's successor.

But the red letter days are the day our new church (now our parish hall) was blessed and dedicated; the day we welcomed the Sisters of Mercy to our parish; the day we welcomed the Redemptorists; the day our present church was blessed and dedicated.

Well, we've come a long way since the days of our little school-chapel with its rough wooden floors and benches. But how did we arrive at where we are today? We are here because of all the hours of free labour cheerfully given by the men of the parish, and because of the men and women who worked tirelessly on all the parish activities throughout the years.

In short, our parish is founded on a sense of generosity, sacrifice, hard work and enthusiasm.

May it ever be so +



St. Teresa's Parish Today