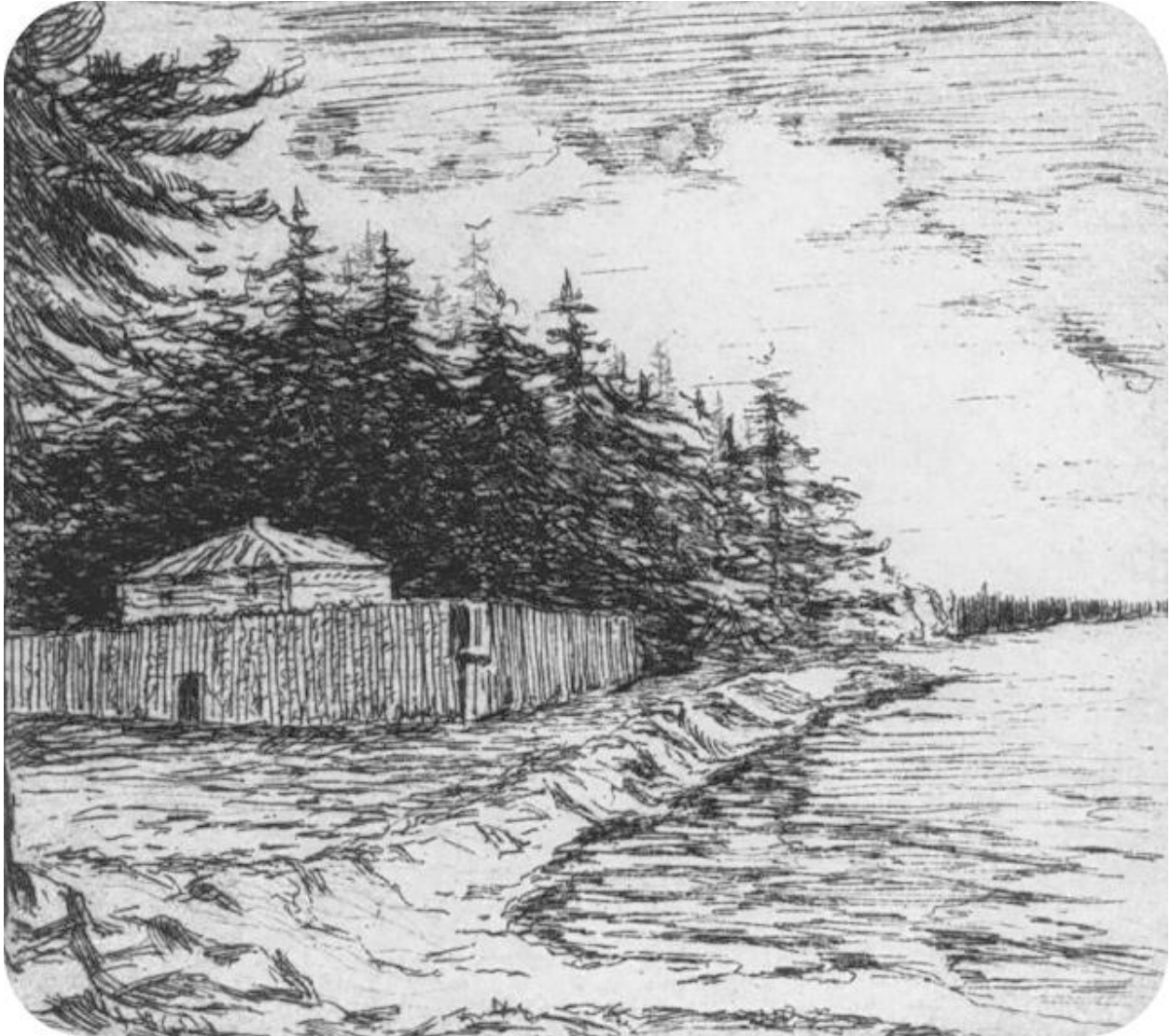


A Brief History

The period 1790 to 1840



In the 1700s, the French had set up two small and both short-lived trading posts on the Humber, [Magasin Royal](#) and later [Fort Rouille](#).

Settlement locally began by the end of the eighteenth century with the founding of York (to become the City of Toronto) in 1793 by John Graves Simcoe. He was the first lieutenant governor of Upper Canada, the forerunner of Ontario. The King's sawmill was built on the Humber and a shipyard. Surveys of the land were made and settlement of the Toronto area began.

Until 1817, Upper Canada had been in the western extremity of the Diocese of Quebec. In that year the Diocese of Kingston was created. The earliest parish formed hereabouts was St. Paul's in the Town of

York in 1822. It served not only York, but extended from Port Hope to Orillia, through Mono and Albion townships to Milton, then south to St. Catharines and Niagara.

By the 1830s, the existence of an early mission church - St. Kevin's on the Fifth Line west of Etobicoke (now part of Toronto Pearson International Airport) is recorded. As late as 1904, Mass was celebrated there on the first Sunday of each month by a priest from the House of Providence, then on Power Street in Toronto.

In 1834, York became the City of Toronto and was growing. Immigration from England, Scotland and Ireland to the city and surrounding areas was heavy and would increase moreso. Roads were being opened in all directions for settlements, mills of all kinds built and country land laboriously cleared for agriculture.

The period 1840 to 1890

From 1834 to 1843, four dioceses were created in Upper and Lower Canada. A portion of the Kingston diocese became the Diocese of Toronto in December 1841. Michael Power from Montreal was named its first bishop and he undertook the building of St. Michael's Cathedral. He visited St. Kevin's Church in 1843. In October 1847, Bishop Power succumbed to typhoid fever while ministering to his flock.

Through the 1840s, sawmills, grist mills and cloth mills were established. Many were destined for destruction by fires and floods on the Humber's banks. One mill, first built in the 1830s and destroyed by fire, rebuilt in 1847 and burned again is now known for its [ruins on the Humber](#) - namely, the Old Mill.

By the 1850s, the Etobicoke area was prospering. The first elected municipal council of the Township of Etobicoke took office in 1850. Mimico, Lambton Mills, Islington, Weston, Thistletown and Claireville were thriving villages.

With growth, churches and schools were built. The first two churches in Etobicoke were St. Philip's at the north end of Royal York Road and Christ Church near the south end of Royal York, both Anglican, and established in the late 1820s. In the early 1840s, St. George's on the Hill (Anglican), Kingsway Lambton and Islington United Churches were founded by the Methodists.

A public school was built in Lambton (Dundas west of Royal York Road). The first Catholic school in Etobicoke was on the west side of Carlingview Drive south of today's race track. It was for children of families of St. Kevin's.

But there was, as yet, no Catholic Church in the area of central Etobicoke or even nearby.



Around 1980, it was recounted by the late Geraldine O'Connor, a member of the "O'Connor Sisters" family vaudeville singers of the 1910-1930 era, that her great grandmother O'Connor had come to Etobicoke in 1851. One of her sons was John O'Connor, then 18, who became Geraldine's grandfather. Geraldine recalled:

"Grandpa O'Connor settled at Brown's Line (in Alderwood). Young people were more religious then as compared to young people now.

"My grandparents walked all the way to St. Paul's Church, Power Street, east of Yonge, every Sunday to attend Mass while the good weather lasted...they did this until the service was held in a house much closer by."

(from Etobicoke Historical Society Oral History files)

In 1856, [St. Patrick's Church on Dundas Street at Dixie Road](#) was established. Its earliest parish territory included Etobicoke.

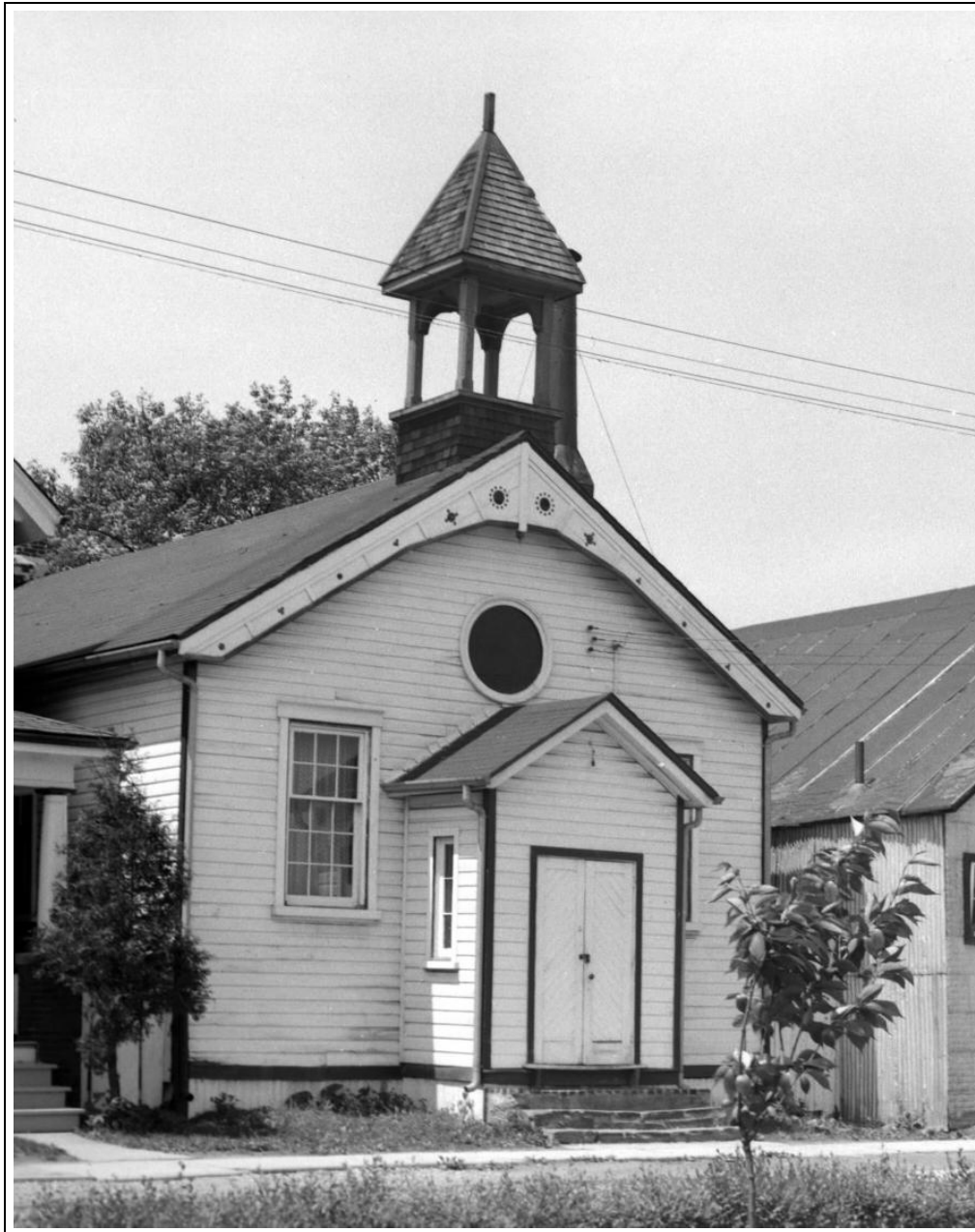
A mission church of St. Patrick's named in honour of St. Joseph occupied the first church building to serve the Catholic community within the boundaries of what is now Our Lady of Sorrows parish. Housed in what had been the early Lambton schoolhouse where Dundas and The Kingsway now meet, St. Joseph's served as a place of worship from 1881. It was destroyed by fire in the early 1900s.

This period marked the beginning of the great age of Canadian railway building. Lines of steel were laid from Toronto in all directions, including three which crossed the Township of Etobicoke. By the 1890s, the communities of Parkdale, West Toronto Junction, New Toronto and Long Branch had evolved.

St. Cecilia's in The Junction and St. John the Evangelist in Weston became parishes during this time.

The period 1890 to 1940

With the 1890s, hydro electric power was introduced. One of its outgrowths was the laying of electric radial streetcar lines. By the turn of the century, a line went from St. Clair and Keele crossing the Humber River at Lambton Mills and onwards to Guelph. Another ran from Sunnyside to Brown's Line through what had become the separate communities of Mimico, New Toronto and Long Branch. Lake steamers from Toronto came to resorts and hotels at Humber Bay, Long Branch, Lorne Park and other bustling ports around the western end of Lake Ontario.



About 1910, St. Leo's Church opened in Mimico.

From 1913, a second building for Catholic worshippers within our present parish boundaries was, like St. Joseph's earlier a mission church of St. Patrick's, Dixie. Known as St Rita's, for ten years it occupied what formerly had been an Odd Fellows Hall on Earlington Avenue which is near Dundas and Prince Edward. During this time, St. Patrick's reported that it ministered to a Catholic population of 200 souls - it also reported serving St. Rita's in Lambton Mills with 50 souls.

The first decade of the 1900s was to witness the putting to paper of and the beginning of land assembly for one of the earliest planned communities to be developed in Canada. It was initiated and directed by Robert Home Smith whose name became synonymous with lower Humber River land and residential development.

In 1912, "The Humber Valley Surveys" was released by Home Smith. It defined five subdivisions: Riverside, Bridge End, Baby Point, The Old Mill and The Glebe. The latter was renamed Kingsway Park shortly afterwards and was to encompass from Dundas south to Bloor Street and from the Humber River west to today's Royal York Road.

Some 3,000 acres in all were to be assembled. These stretched up the better part of both sides of the Humber from near Lake Ontario to the present Eglinton Avenue.

On the day World War I began in August 1914, the Old Mill Tea Room was opened beside the 1881 fire gutted old stone mill walls. While the war and the major depression of the 1930s impeded progress at times, construction and building nevertheless proceeded.

The spanning of the Humber with modern bridges - at the Old Mill in 1916, across the high levels on Bloor Street in 1924 and on Dundas Street in 1929 created direct access to the Old Mill and Kingsway Park areas for building from 1925 to 1930. With the depression, lot sizes were scaled down and smaller homes were built.

Part of the Kingsway Park plans called for the building of a radial streetcar line from Sunnyside up the Humber across Bloor Street and along The Kingsway to connect with the radial line to Guelph at Dundas Street. With the dawn of the automobile age, this line was never built. However the deep setback of the homes on the southerly and westerly sides of The Kingsway from Bloor to Dundas Streets is attributable to the fact that this would have been where the streetcars would have travelled.

The 1920s and 1930s witnessed an influx of residents into the Old Mill and Kingsway areas. The building of new homes south of Bloor Street began as did those in the Silver Birches - the lands north of Bloor and west of Royal York, prior to the beginning of World War II. House prices ranged from \$8,000. to \$10,000.

The closest shopping at this time was at Bloor and Jane or Dundas and Keele. The planned Kingsway shopping district from Prince Edward Drive to Montgomery Road now started to take form. By 1940, scattered along Bloor Street, mostly on the north side, there were two drug stores, a bank, a hardware store, a grocery and butcher shop, a fruit market, a theatre, a real estate office and gas stations. For a

number of years, final exam marks for students attending what was then Etobicoke High School were posted in the window of one of the drug stores.

The nearest Catholic parish was now St. James, its church having been built in the 1920s on Annette Street near Jane.

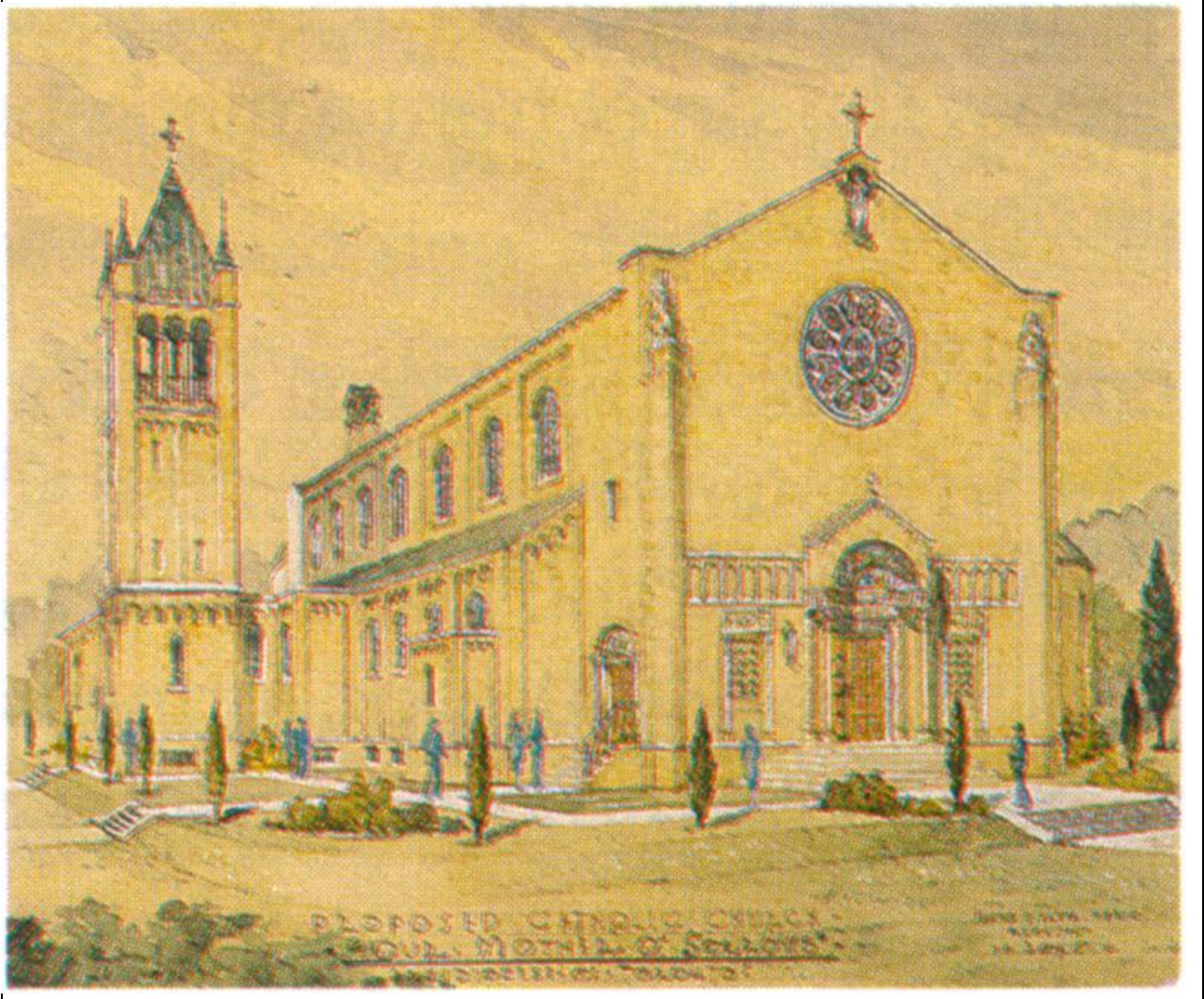
Meanwhile, the rector of St. Michael's Cathedral was the Reverend Gregory F. Kelly. Appointed in 1936 by Archbishop (later to be Cardinal) James C. McGuigan who had great faith in Father Kelly's abilities, one of his major responsibilities was to redecorate the Cathedral which had been sadly neglected for years. Father Kelly had accepted this appointment subject to his being given the opportunity to establish a new parish and build its church in the not too distant future.

Father Kelly saw the suburbs west of Toronto as potential for great growth. He met with people and investigated properties. Late in 1939, he brought the archbishop to Royal York and Bloor to see possible locations for a church.

The archbishop thought the settings were rather far out of the city to which Father Kelly replied he thought this would resolve itself with the passing of time. The archbishop noted too the sites he was shown would not allow for a school to be built beside the church; at this point Father Kelly took him a short distance up Montgomery Road to farm lands which would doubtless become available for building a school.

By 1940, the pastor of St. James formally requested consideration be given to the formation of a new parish with a resident pastor for the spiritual welfare of "a very large area" of his parish west of the Humber River.

The period 1940 to 1950



Late in 1939, several sites had been investigated on which to build a new Catholic church in Etobicoke. One location was in the Silver Birches subdivision at the northeast corner of Bloor Street and Montgomery Road across the street from a market garden where there is now an automobile dealership.

In December, the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Toronto completed negotiations to acquire five lots on the south side of Bloor Street between Cliveden Avenue and Brentwood Road South. The lots, ranging in price from \$1,500. to \$3,000. each, formed a total parcel of land in excess of one acre. Part of the corner lot at Brentwood was later severed.

On March 26, 1940, Archbishop McGuigan announced the formation of a new parish in Etobicoke. The limits of this parish were to be decided, affecting as they would the then existing boundaries of St. James,

St. Leo's in Mimico and St. Patrick's in Dixie. Reverend Gregory F. Kelly, rector of St. Michael's Cathedral, was designated pastor of the new parish in formation. There was a known nucleus of 60 families.

From the previous November, Father Kelly had been working with [James H. Haffa, K.S.G., M.R.A.I.C.](#), who prepared architectural renderings for a new church. To quote from Mr. Haffa's writings:

"To me there are only three styles of architecture - Greek or Architecture of the lintel; Romanesque or Architecture of the round arch; and Gothic, or Architecture of the Gable..."

"Romanesque falls into two great branches - Eastern and Western, or Byzantine and Lombardic..."

"We chose the Lombardy style..."

"The dimensions of the church overall are approximately 75 x 139...built of selected Credit Valley stone...all the cut stone trim is of selected Indiana limestone..."

"The main floor of the nave is slightly disked or sloped affording a better view of the sanctuary. The entire floor throughout is of terrazo..."

"The main ceiling over the nave is 36 feet above floor level..."

"The auditorium (church hall) is capable of seating approximately 900 persons (the church up to 550)."

"The adjoining rectory...has been designed in a simple manner to provide...accommodation for the pastor and an assistant curate."

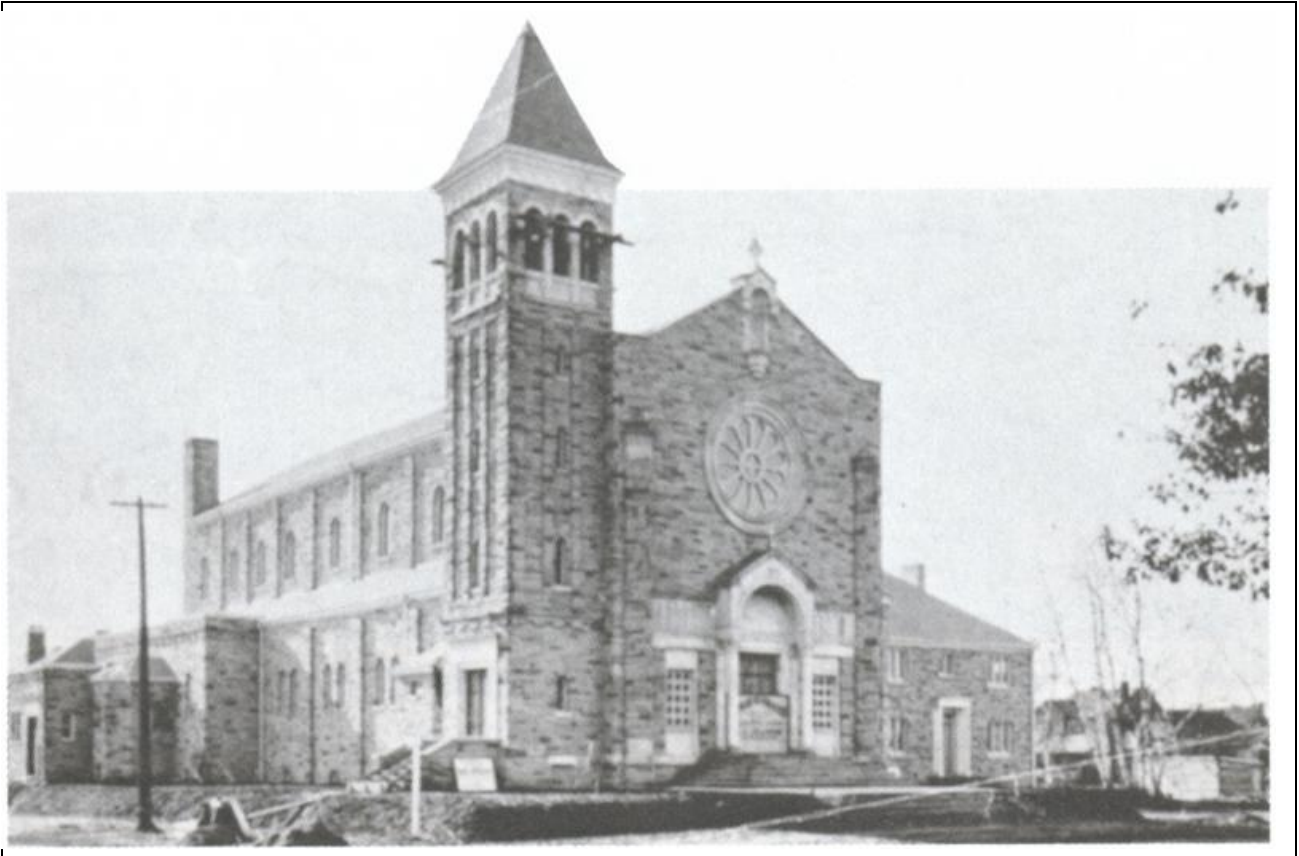


The church interior was to be simple. A blue curtain was to be raised behind the main altar; plain Stations of the Cross would be used, plaster walls were to be painted in soft cream and gold to blend with the gold upper ceiling and the pews would be oak finished.

A notable exterior feature of the church edifice was to be its blue roof.

Father Kelly had gained a reputation for being a good administrator. With the plans for "Our Mother of Sorrows" Church in hand, the limit to which the Archdiocese would commit incurring debt for construction was \$40,000. Father Kelly took responsibility for assuming the remaining obligations.

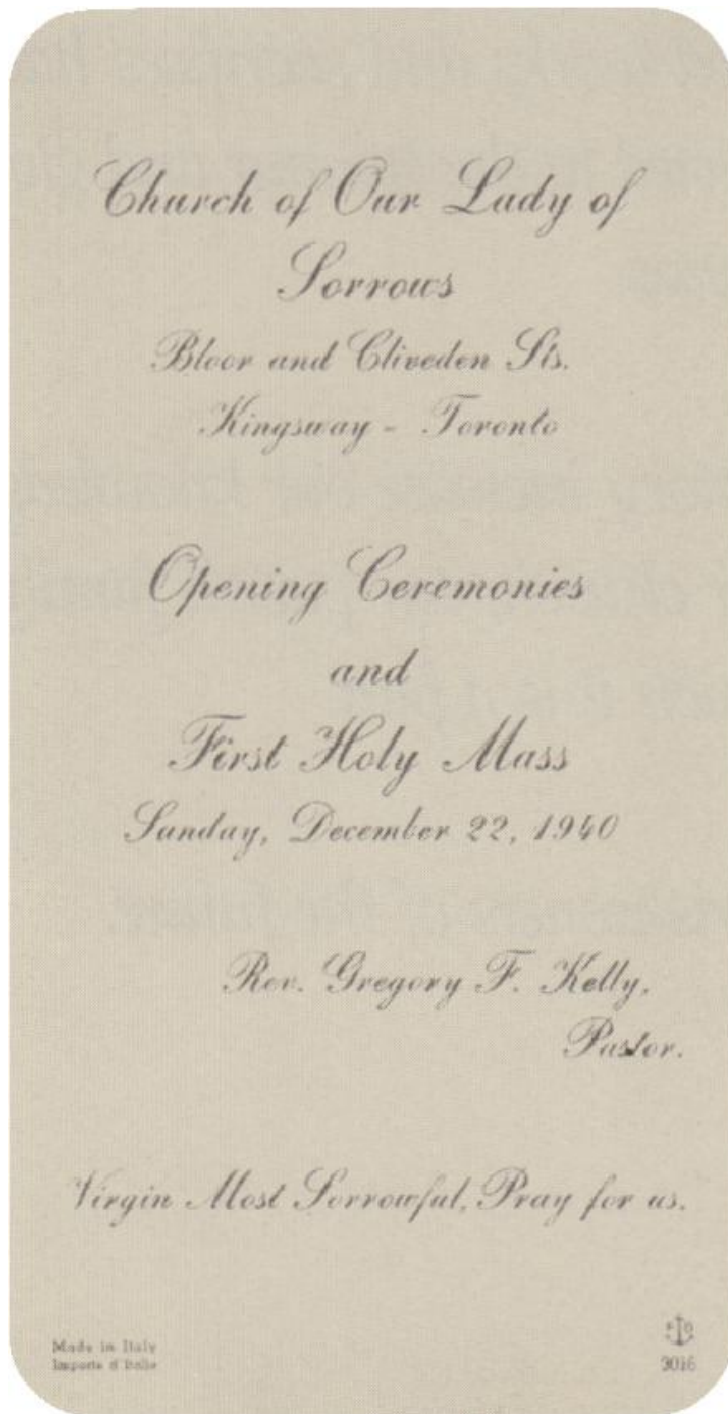
In April 1940, a permit was issued by the Ontario Department of Highways to allow the building of a Catholic Church on the appropriate properties on the south side of Bloor Street West - Highway 5 in the township of Etobicoke. The church would have an approximate value of \$100,000.



In the same month, a second permit was issued to allow for the construction of a rectory valued at \$10,000. which was to be 60 feet from the south side of the highway.

The general contractor was M. J. Callahan. It was, of course, wartime so it is of interest to note that the steel used in the church's construction was the last allocated for non-war use in the Toronto region.

As for the name of the church, both "Our Mother of Sorrows" and "Our Lady of Sorrows" had been suggested. Father Kelly canvassed his new parishioners and the latter was selected.



From a December 1940 edition of the Etobicoke Press, the following is an excerpt from an article prepared by Father Kelly:

"Our new church of Our Lady of Sorrows . . . will be solemnly blessed at eleven o'clock on Sunday, December 22 by His Grace the Archbishop, the Most Reverend James Charles McGuigan, D.D. He will be assisted by Right Reverend John Harris and Very Reverend Hugh Callahan, Chancellors, and Reverend Frank Allen, Secretary" "The music, always so inspiring a part of our worship, will be rendered by the famous St. Michael's Boys Choir from St. Michael's Cathedral under the direction of Reverend Dr. Ronan. The Heintzman Company have installed an electric organ for the opening." His Grace the Archbishop will deliver the sermon on this memorable occasion."

The famed De La Salle High School Band was in attendance for the opening.

The 1940s were the formative years.

In November 1941, Father Kelly cited the rapid growth of the parish, and the fact that there were 150 children of school age in it. He requested the co-

operation of parishioners in supporting him to get a school at the earliest possible date. For many years, he was a trustee on the Toronto and Suburban Separate School Board.

But 1942 was still war time. The original application to build was declined as were some for public school needs. By persevering, applications by the public and separate school boards for a new school: Sunnylea and a 2-room addition to Islington public school were approved as was that for a new separate school which would be Our Lady of Sorrows.



In April 1942, James H. Haffa, who had been the architect for the church, was engaged to design the school. It was to be a one-storey brick building of 4,800 square feet comprising 4 classrooms and an auditorium. It would have a blue roof. A 4½ acre property had been acquired on Montgomery Road a short distance north of Bloor Street.

Tenders were let. In May a contract was awarded to Saul McGivney for a structure to cost \$38,709. A sign of those times: in August, the separate school board requested that a telephone be installed in all existing, and future schools, if there was none. This was at the urging of local police authorities that they could contact all schools in the event of an air raid.

The school building was not completed for a September opening. Therefore, classes began in the basement of the church on September 8, 1942. Sister Mary Leona, (principal), Sister Mary Elizabeth and Rose Cassin were the first teachers with an enrollment of 84 students. In November the school was ready for occupancy.

But for the St. Joseph's nuns, the school was far out in the suburbs for travelling from their city living quarters. An old farm house situated immediately north of the school was offered by the school board to the Sisters of St. Joseph. It would be leased for one dollar a year for the duration of the war and for 5 years thereafter; the board would assume payment of taxes with the St. Joseph's community to effect and pay for alterations and repairs to the house as needed. When the Sisters would leave, the house was to revert to the board.

The nuns stayed for several years. Indeed, as new Catholic schools built in the surrounding area, some of the teaching nuns for these schools resided for short periods of time in the old farm house too.

The period 1950 to 1990

School additions were made in 1950, 1963 and 1968. Enrolment in the school continued to climb over the years. In June, 1992, Our Lady of Sorrows School celebrated its fiftieth anniversary as a school. As the occasion was being marked, plans were well underway to build a new school as a part of a joint venture with the City of Toronto which was working toward the completion of a newly designed recreation centre and a renovated swimming pool, Memorial Pool.

In September, 2002, students, families, and staff were able to enter the very impressive new building of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School. Enrolment in the school as of October, 2006 was 634 students.

In these early years, Father Kelly was increasingly being recognized and respected as a kind and approachable man by all - his parishioners and citizens of the area alike.

His sermons were often described as "fantastic" and were limited to 7 minutes in length. He was a persuasive fund raiser. While he is recalled as having said one Sunday: "Don't give me your nickels and dimes -give me your paper money on the plate", it was his basic sincerity towards people requesting they give - be it food, clothing or money for a good cause.

With strong parishioners' support and interest, early parish organizations formed included the Guild of Our Lady of Sorrows (in 1951 to join with the Catholic Women's League), the Little Flower Club, the Holy Name Society, a choir of Our Lady of Sorrows school girls under the direction of Miss Rose Cassin for many years, the Catholic Youth Organization and social and youngsters sports groups. This group attracted young people to its weekend dances from as far away as central Toronto. It also attracted local non-Catholic youths, so much so that at times it was necessary to recite the Hail Mary to enter the church hall; if this could not be done, admittance was politely refused. An annual June garden party was held for many years on the extensive grounds at the side of the rectory - always a well-attended function.

Father Kelly had great love for Our Blessed Mother to whom regular devotion was conducted weekly. Through the years, missions were held from time to time. Father Kelly was known for the extent to which he visited his parishioners, not only the sick but others as well. The parish was continually growing to the point that it was more than one priest could handle. In 1947 Father Peter Rosettis became the first curate and would stay for more than six years. In its first 50 years were 19 curates or assistants.

With the expansion of the entire Kingsway/Sunnylea/Islington area, church building proceeded on an unprecedented scale. A larger modern Kingsway Lambton United Church was built in 1936. The parish of All Saints (Anglican) Kingsway was formed and its church completed in 1951 Kingsway Baptist Church was erected in 1948 and a new Islington United Church building in 1949. Following the move in 1943 of Tomlinson United Church, founded in 1893 on Prince Edward Drive south of Bloor to Royal York Road, there evolved the present Royal York Road United Church completed in 1953. The new St. Giles Kingsway Presbyterian Church was built in 1961.

In December 1950, Father Kelly wrote Cardinal McGuigan requesting permission to do some decorating of the church:

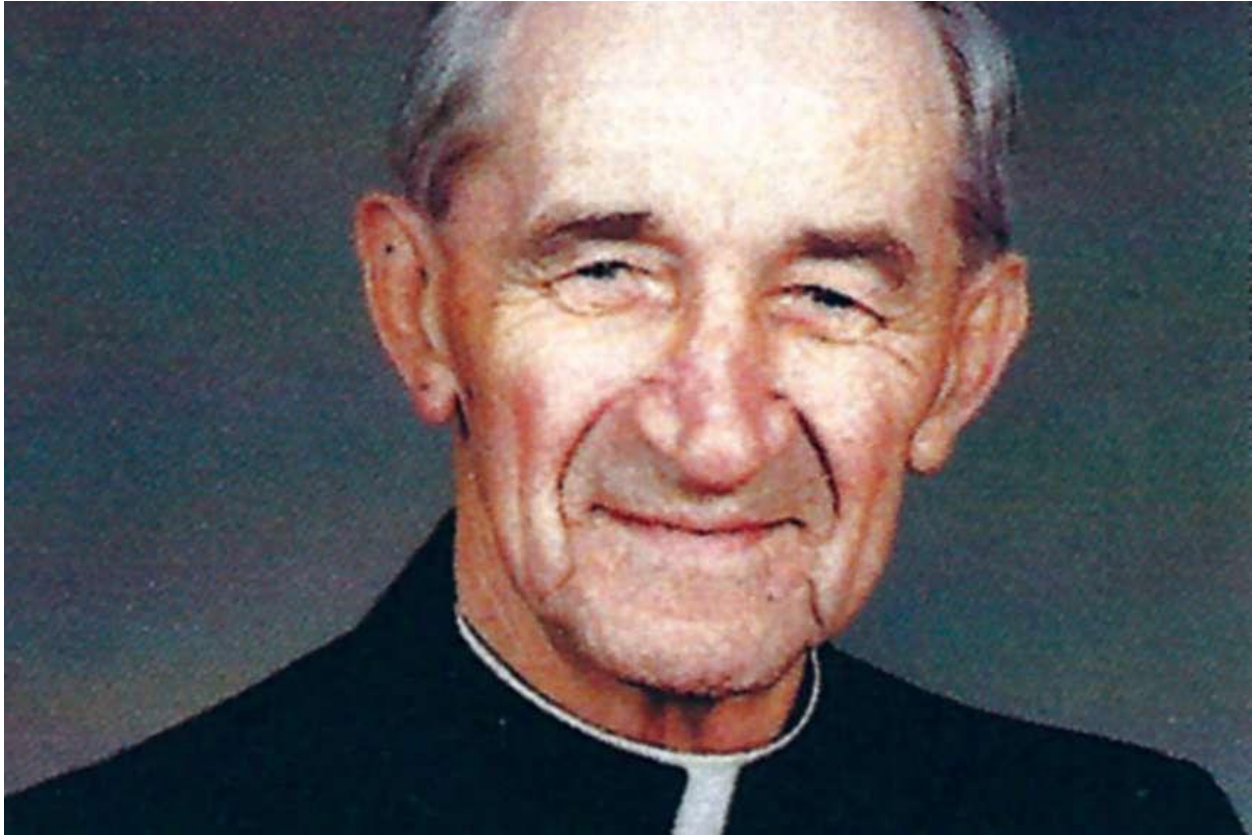
"There will be no debt when the work is finished. At the present time, the church debt is wiped out and all accounts are satisfied. Ten years ago, I hoped I would be clear of debt in twenty years but the Blessed Mother of God came to my assistance. Why she thought I was worthy of help I will never know."

"The estimated cost of decorations will be approximately \$20,000."

Permission to repair and decorate the church was granted in a week.

On March 13, 1952, Father Kelly passed away after an illness - a tragic loss to both the church and the community he served so faithfully. As Chaplain of the Kingsway Council of the Knights of Columbus, this was in part their tribute to him:

“His life, though all too short, was a very full one. He had boundless energy, the zeal and ability to accomplish great things. His was a rare personality - so genial, so full of good humour, so kind, yet steadfast in his principles, open and consistent in standing for the right. These qualities, combined with his outstanding gift of preaching the Word of God made him a pattern ever to be imitated in the great Archdiocese of Toronto”.



Father Peter Rosettis served as administrator of the parish until the appointment of a new pastor in September of 1952.

This was to be (then) Monsignor Francis V. Allen. Born in Toronto on June 25, 1909, he was ordained from St. Augustine's Seminary on June 10, 1933. He served at St. Dunstan's and Blessed Sacrament parishes prior to being transferred to the Chancery Office. There he served as secretary in the office of the Archbishop of Toronto - to both Cardinal McGuigan and later Archbishop Philip Pocock. In October 1954 he was consecrated Auxiliary Bishop of Toronto.

A quiet, dedicated man, Bishop Allen was an effective organizer. One of the early tasks in which he was involved had to do with the expansion of Catholic high school facilities in the Archdiocese of Toronto. This would include a joint effort of the archdiocese and a co-operative partnership of the then existing west end Toronto parishes.

The archdiocese owned land fronting on Dundas Street back to Bloor Street near the Six Points - some ten acres in all. St. Joseph's High School for Girls had been erected on part of it and that school had been operating since 1949. Its first principal was Sister Mary Rita.

By 1956, construction of a Catholic high school for boys was begun. The contractor was Evan S. Martin and building took nine months. The Basilian congregation was approached to operate and provide some teaching staff to the school; reluctant to do so at first, they did accept the challenge. Reverend John Mullins, C.S.B. assumed the roles of principal and superior positions he held from 1957 to 1964.

As with the naming of Our Lady of Sorrows Church, there was a multiplicity of names originally associated with this new high school. First the Basilian houses around Toronto had voted to name it "St. Francis" - he being one of the order's patrons. Cardinal McGuigan would not approve this - he suggested it be named after an early Toronto bishop. When the name "Bishop Power" was presented, the Basilians agreed. They proceeded to prepare and set out deeds, documents and laid the cornerstone - all in the name of "Bishop Power High School". Later, the Archdiocesan Office established "Michael Power High School" as the official name.

In co-ordinating the activities of the western Toronto and Metro parishes, the endeavours of Bishop Allen resulted in the raising of over \$500,000. for this new high school. Other local groups contributed funds for this cause; for example, the Gregory Kelly Council of the Knights of Columbus donated \$20,000.

Bishop Allen encouraged the creation of lay groups to support the new school. Father Mullins worked closely with all the area parishes involved. Our Lady of Sorrows and Our Lady of Peace parishes were particularly active in this project. A Mothers Club did much volunteer work for the new school and fathers worked diligently and energetically to develop athletic fields for student sports activities. A library of 40,000 volumes was set up over a period of time.

The school opened on September 15, 1957. By 1963 - seven years after work began, Michael Power High School was debt free.

During his tenure as pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows, Bishop Allen continued to perform his functions virtually daily at the archdiocesan offices downtown. This did not diminish the efforts and contributions he undertook within his parish.

He had great interest in church music. One of his early undertakings was to take steps to build and expand upon the number of adult members and the quality of the parish choir. In the mid 1960's, the original church organ was replaced by the magnificent Casavant Frères organ of today. Casavant organs from Quebec are renowned world wide. That in Our Lady of Sorrows has been used over the years by internationally famous organists, by the CBC and for commercial recordings.

Bishop Allen had great admiration for art and beauty in churches. The stained glass windows in the lower walls of the church date from his early years in the parish. Announcing from the pulpit one Sunday morning it was planned that appropriate stained glass windows be installed, persons wishing to donate one were requested to let their intention be known. The following Monday morning, there was not one to be had - all had been spoken for on the day of the announcement.

The beautification of the church interior will long remain one of Bishop Allen's great contributions. Over a span of eighteen months - three in research and design, over a year in obtaining and fabricating the materials required and four months for installation, the alterations and decorations were completed in early 1961.

Bold, vividly coloured mosaic figures and lettering mixed with soft tones and golds decorated the upper walls: 6,000 square feet of sinalti mosaic art, 5,000,000 pieces in 250 colours weighing 12 tons. There are represented 70 figures and 28 symbols. The figures above the altar are double life size and those on the upper walls 7 feet high. The mosaic band in large bronze letters are lines from the "Stabat Mater", the traditional Lenten hymn of Our Lady.

Beige marble was applied to the lower walls, sanctuary walls, columns, arches and pilasters. Stations of the Cross were mounted with mosaics providing background for the figures, all surrounded by bands of slightly darker marble. The side altars were complemented by the application of mosaics or marble.

Bishop Allen and his assistants were highly dedicated in their ministrations to the spiritual needs of the parish. And these were changing times in the life of the church, stemming from a series of Vatican Councils. For the laity, 1960 marked the formation of the St. Vincent de Paul Society followed by a Lector's Group in 1964. In March 1972, the first Parish Council was formally constituted.

For twenty years, Bishop Allen was not only the pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows - he continued to carry out duties daily as Auxiliary Bishop of Toronto. The combined responsibilities became onerous as he grew older and in 1972 he retired from his pastoral duties. He did continue to assist his parish church very frequently by celebrating Sunday Mass.

On October 7, 1977, Bishop Allen died very suddenly. The tributes paid him at his funeral at St. Michael's Cathedral were those to a mild, humble and gentle man.

On Bishop Allen's retirement as pastor in 1972, Reverend G. William O'Brien was appointed as third pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows parish. He was born and educated in Toronto, having attended St. Michael's College School, the University of Toronto and St. Augustine's Seminary. He was ordained a priest in 1946.

His parish assignments and responsibilities have been many and varied. He was at St. Mary's and Our Lady of Perpetual Help parishes in Toronto and then to St. Mary's in Barrie. After returning to Corpus Christi in Toronto, he went to St. Gregory's in Oshawa. Next, he founded the parish of the Immaculate Conception in Sutton, building its church and being its pastor. He moved back to Toronto as pastor of St. Paul's Church. From there he founded and was first pastor of St. Timothy's in Willowdale - then to Our Lady of Sorrows.

Father O'Brien's years were marked by several outreach programs. He was instrumental in Our Lady of Sorrows providing financial support to inner city parishes; he initiated the contributing of \$12,000 annually to help a poor Toronto parish. For many years, our parish assisted a parish in Peru. He operated the "Mission Co-Op" for some time, this being a coordinating link between missionary orders and societies in arranging for and scheduling of their missionaries to preach to parishes and groups in the Archdiocese of Toronto.

The building of new churches and the decorating of others in which he served were reflected in his pastorate here. The entrance to the church hall was enhanced by the addition of a new stairway at the west side of the church in 1974. He effected the sanctuary alterations to conform to the liturgical changes of Vatican II. Renovation of the sacristy and later carpeting of the sanctuary followed. Of significance is the fact the tabernacle in our church remains behind the altar table.

Father O'Brien took pride in originating the Folk Mass to complement the new liturgy. He stressed the need for and the development of a strong altar servers group. Rather than altar boys leaving at the end of their lower school years, he encouraged and persuaded many to stay as they went into their high school education years. At its peak, there were 75 altar servers for whom Father O'Brien had the utmost admiration and respect.

It was he who set up the first parish program at Our Lady of Sorrows to sponsor and support a refugee family - in this case, a family of four from Vietnam.

Two of Father O'Brien's fondest memories of his 12 years here had to do with the affection and esteem displayed him on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of his ordination (and the "almost best kept secret of a trip to New Zealand"), this followed by the farewell reception tendered him on his leaving the parish.

In 1990 – the 50th anniversary year of the parish – Monsignor O'Brien remarked:

"It was a tremendous experience to have served at Our Lady of Sorrows."

"I have the fondest memories a pastor can possibly have for people so generous and so good."

His was a dedicated pastorate.

Monsignor O'Brien was named a Domestic Prelate to Pope John Paul II in 1987. He died on June 30, 2008 in his eighty-ninth year and the sixty-second year of his priesthood.