

... His Hand is stretched out still. (Isaiah 9)

In 1993 our new Parish Council challenged all parishioners of St. Joseph's Church with a new vision statement for the future of our parish. The statement, "With Christ, we lovingly reach out to everyone, as a flourishing, compassionate community," is a call to action to every member of our parish. Although this Vision Statement points us in the right direction for our future, it is also a continuance of what St. Joseph's mission has always been.



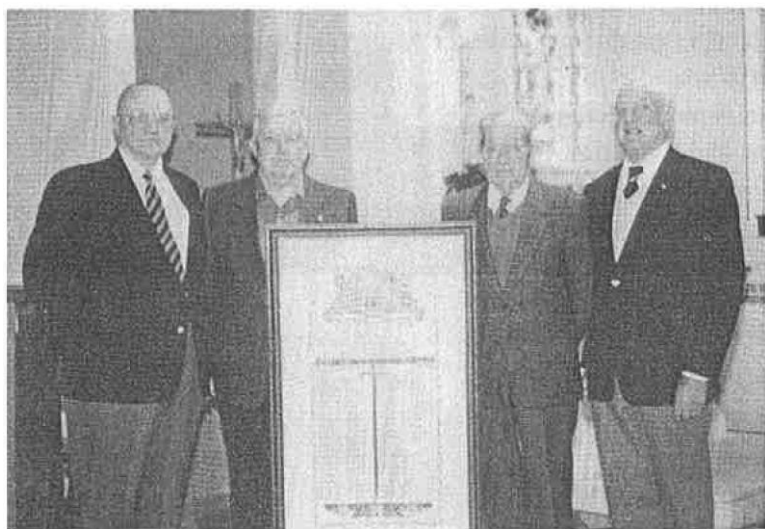
The Little Church

In all of history has anyone ever reached out with more love and compassion than did our patron the humble carpenter Joseph. He accepted, with faith and love, the challenge to protect and shelter God's only son Jesus and his Mother Mary, protect and shelter them in very trying times. We, too have accepted God's calling with faith and love and that has helped our church grow and flourish from its humble beginning as the "Little Church" on Vidal Street.

It all began August 1904, when the former Vidal Street Presbyterian Church property was dedicated to God and placed under the protection of St. Joseph and grew for the next 24 years until finally the "Little Church", as it was affectionately known, was no longer large enough. So on December 24, 1928 the growing congregation

gathered in their beautiful, new church on Stuart Street to celebrate Midnight Mass. It was a wonderful achievement and an unforgettable Mass for all who gathered to worship and give thanks.

St. Joseph's Church was built through the love, dedication and hard work of the growing number of Catholics in Sarnia. No one was more dedicated to St. Joseph's than its much-beloved first pastor Reverend T.J. McCarthy. To many parishioners of this time Father McCarthy, pastor from 1925 to 1950, was the main authority in their lives and the very heart of their church. With the outbreak of World War II, Father McCarthy was asked to organize the Roman Catholic Chaplain Service, headquartered in London, England. Father McCarthy, a World War I veteran, was reluctant to leave St.



Joseph Curry, 5th Armoured Div., Cdn. Postal Corp.; John Ward, Royal Canadian Navy; Jack Nelson, Canadian Postal Corp.; John Butler, Highland Light Infantry.



Reverend T.J. McCarthy



John Allan
Royal Canadian Artillery

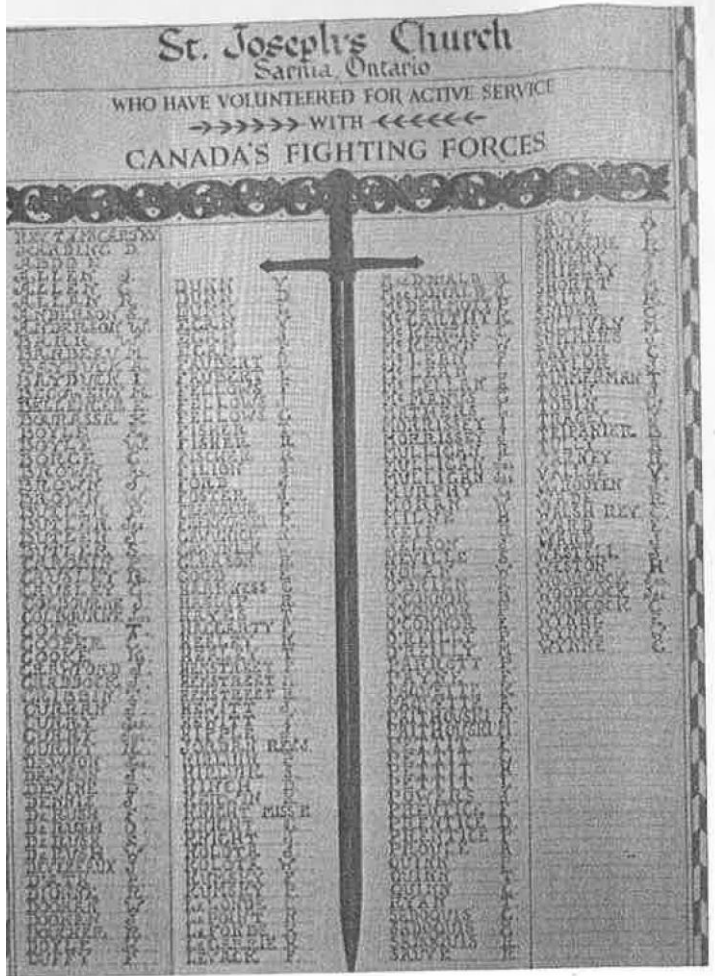
Joseph's and serve in Another war, but he answered his call and was promised by the bishop that he would return to St. Joseph's at the end of the war and stay there until his retirement.

With the outbreak of World War II, a great many of the youth of St. Joseph's Parish volunteered to serve with Canada's armed forces. This is attested to by the names on the Honour Roll hanging in the rear of the church. Many of these young men never returned home.

A challenging project for our young parishioners would be to select a name from this roll and research that person. Surely, he or she would find that this young volunteer was no different from the present youth of our parish, having the same hopes and expectations, only the times and the circumstances had put a hold on their plans.

With the cessation of hostilities, they returned to Sarnia and some eventually moved to different areas of Canada to continue their lives. A few are still active members of St. Joseph's Parish. The Bishop's promise to Father McCarthy was fulfilled when he returned to continue his work at St. Joseph's. Father McCarthy was eventually elevated to the position of Monsignor. His sudden death in 1950 while watching a hockey game at Samia Arena, caused a memorable moment in history for many Sarnians, both Catholic and non-Catholic alike. Few can forget where they were and the grief and shock, they felt upon hearing the news of his death.

Following the death of Father McCarthy, Monsignor Francis Brennan came to St. Joseph's, after a short stint in Corunna. Monsignor Brennan had been editor of the Catholic Register and a



Monsignor Francis Brennan



Father Bernard Laverty



Father Joseph O'Rourke

teacher at St. Peter's Seminary for many years before deciding to go into parish work. Although he only spent two years (1951-53) as the second pastor of St. Joe's, he is well remembered as a kind and compassionate man. Monsignor Brennan died in 1963.



Father John Devine



Father Jack Hurley



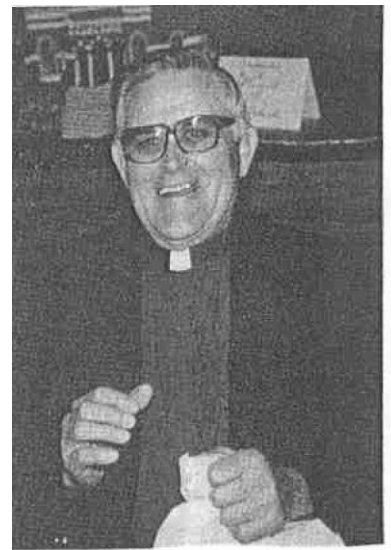
Father Mel Macisaac

Father Joseph O'Rourke, better known as "The Carpenter" was the third pastor of St. Joseph's from 1953-55. Father O'Rourke was responsible for building the much-used committee room, which is, after forty years, undergoing a much-needed facelift by our current carpenter, Len Eberle. Joking that wherever carpentry work was needed was where he would be found, Father O'Rourke left here for St. Joseph's in Stratford and continued to use his trade. He is currently retired and living in Stratford.

Father Bernard Laverty was pastor at St. Joseph's from 1955-1968. Father Laverty is best remembered as a quiet man with a dry sense of humour. It was during his 13-year stay that the Catholic church underwent many changes such as Mass being celebrated in English with the celebrant facing the congregation. The first Sunday that these changes were implemented, Father Laverty was said to be so nervous he insisted the assistant priest be the first to celebrate Mass with all the changes.

After making the rounds of all the Parishes in Sarnia, Father John Devine finally settled at St. Joseph's in 1968 and made this his home for the next twelve years. Anyone who came in contact with this man, well remembers his friendly, outgoing personality. His great sense of humour and love of people endeared him to his congregation and he is still a welcome visitor at all our special events. Father Devine is currently pastor at St. Ursula's in Chatham.

Father Earl Pare arrived at St. Joseph's in 1980 and stayed until 1992. Father Pare was a quiet, gentle man and never was this more evident than with the little children of the parish, who would line up after Mass for a hug and a kind word from their priest. Father Pare will be best remembered as "The Handy Man" always dressed in overalls with a hammer and nails doing repairs around the Rectory and Church. Father Pare is now serving at a quiet, country parish in Tilbury.



Father Earl Pare



Father Richard Boll & Tigger



C.W.L. turns 50

Through the years a number of young men from St. Joseph's Church have been called to serve God and community through the priesthood. Father Les Wemple was the first St. Joe's boy to be ordained, other including Father Carl Walsh, Father Larry McManus and Father Frank Walsh, all now deceased, soon followed his example. Father Jim Summers now retired was another St. Joseph's boy to heed his calling. At this time three former parishioners are still active priests: Father Jack Hurley is pastor of St. Joseph the Worker in Windsor, Father Tom Lever is pastor of Sacred Heart, Samia and Father Mel Macisaac is pastor of St. Joseph's, Stratford. We are proud of all from our parish who have answered the call to serve and continue to pray that others may find their true vocation in serving God.

As we look back at the history of St. Joseph's Church, we find that no group has played a more important role than the Catholic Women's League, which began in 1938 under the presidency of Margaret Burns. We are blessed to have the prayers and guidance of some of those original members. Through the years this group has grown from being thought of as the ladies in the kitchen to being known as a cornerstone of our community. The approximate 170 members of the C.W.L. not only raise money for a number of charitable organizations in our community but donate something even more valuable in this busy day and age -- their time and talents. Members are actively involved with Children's Aid Society, Women's Interval Home, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Birthrite, Inn of the Good Shepherd and all committees of the church. The baking, cooking, and handicrafts produced by this talented group raises hundreds of dollars annually for all of these and other charities. Under the guidance of their patroness "Our Lady of Good Counsel" this group should continue to grow and prosper as they lovingly reach out to God, the church and our community.

This 1993 St. Joseph's Parish directory is one response to our vision challenge to lovingly reach out to everyone. St. Joseph's parish has long been known as a united faithful community sharing each other's joy and sorrow it is our hope that this directory will aid us in our ongoing spiritual journey. As we all begin to recognize faces and connect a name with a face we are urged to reach out and make a new friend - it will certainly make the journey a lot more enjoyable.

This directory was made possible by your willingness to take the time and effort to have your picture included in the book. It is also a tribute to the time effort and hard work of the committee members. Special thanks to Ted Gil, Helen Duffield for her great organizational and telephone skills, Mary Brunton for being so accommodating and willing to help, Donna Greenwood for here great memories and newspaper clippings and Father Boll for getting the ball rolling. Thanks also to the following parishioners who made phone calls, acted as hosts/hostesses and rounded up photos: AnnaLee Brunton, Christine Gil, Babette Healy, Theresa Hemstreet, Mary Hurley, Patricia Kennedy, Pearl MacDonald, Bride Macisaac, Naomi Meades, Jane Porter, Hazel Suboni, Cynthia Thibert, Mark Thibert, Chuck Tracey and Marjorie Workman.

Mary Lou Burke