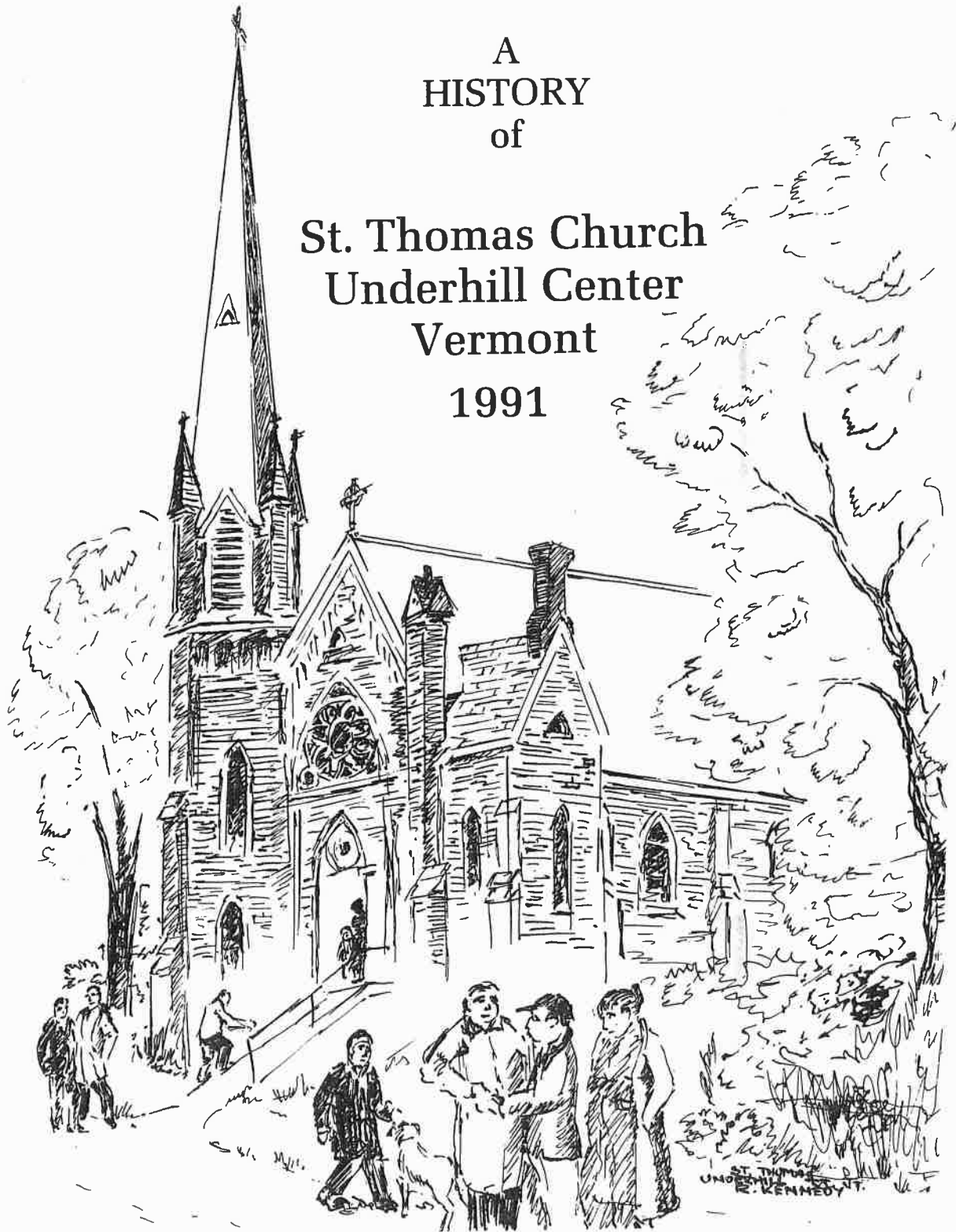


A  
HISTORY  
of

St. Thomas Church  
Underhill Center  
Vermont  
1991



On the occasion of its centennial  
1891 to 1991



BISHOP'S OFFICE  
351 NORTH AVENUE  
BURLINGTON, VERMONT 05401

Feast of the Ascension  
May 9, 1991

Reverend Jean-Paul Laplante  
St. Thomas Rectory  
P. O. box 3  
Underhill Center, VT 05490

Dear Father Laplante:

It is with great joy that I write to you and to your parishioners to congratulate you on the centenary of the laying of the cornerstone for St. Thomas Church in Underhill! At the time it was said that, "Aside from the city churches, it is certainly one of the prettiest edifices in the state". And that remains true to the present day due to the care given to the church by pastors and parishioners alike over the past one hundred years.

Attractive as the church building may be, even more beautiful and inspirational has been the spirit of faith, which has always motivated the people of St. Thomas Parish. Mass was celebrated in the town as early as 1830. It is a matter of record that an early Catholic settler traveled all the way to St. Jean, P.Q. to have his child baptized by a priest. The faith was so strong in Underhill, when the Diocese of Burlington was formed in 1853, that Bishop DeGoesbriand made a visit to the area only six days after his arrival in Vermont and within a year plans were being made to build a church, which was later destroyed by fire. The fire turned out to be a "felix culpa" (a happy fault) when, from the ashes, there arose the present St. Thomas Church in 1891.

I look forward to the centenary celebration a month from now. I pray that the festivities will be marked by a renewal of faith, an ardent love like that of St. Thomas himself ("My Lord and My God!"), and a recommitment of each person to the gospel value of self-sacrificing service to those most in need.

With cordial regard and with every prayerful best wish for yourself and the good people of St. Thomas Parish, I remain

Devotedly yours in Christ,

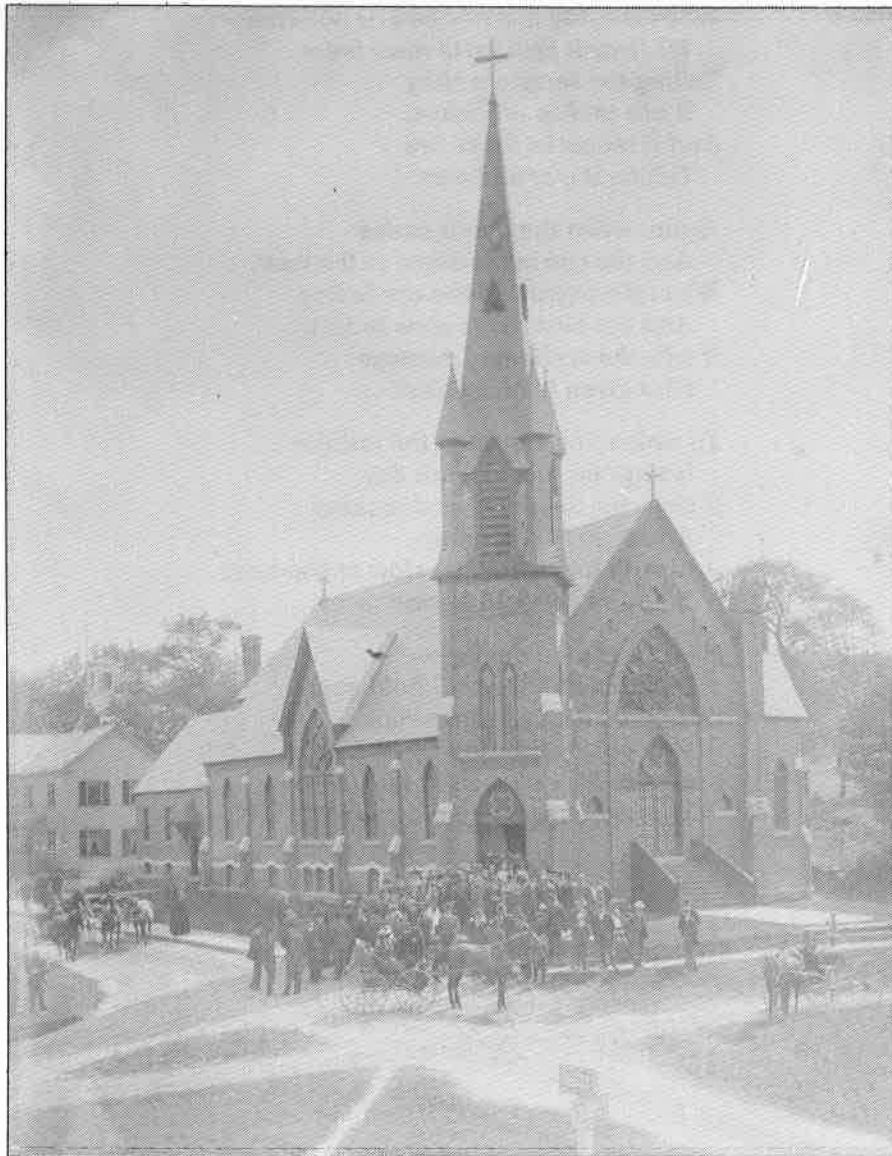
(Most Reverend) John A. Marshall  
Bishop of Burlington



HISTORY  
of  
St. Thomas Church  
Underhill Center  
Vermont

*Brethren, you are now no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are citizens with the Saints and members of God's household: you are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief corner stone. In Him the whole structure is closely fitted together and grows into a temple holy in the Lord; in Him you too are being built together into a dwelling place for God in the Spirit.*

St. Thomas Epistle.  
Eph.2,19-22



1. St. Thomas Church, Underhill Center, VT

Published by St. Thomas Parish

## THE CHURCH BELL

When the sun from the brow of the mountain  
Our valley with splendor fills,  
The silvery tone of the church bell  
Is heard o'er the distant hills,  
Blended with notes of songbirds  
And the ripple of sparkling rills.

When the day has reached its noontide  
We hear it peal forth once more,  
Telling the same old story  
It has told so oft before,  
And it seems to never tire  
Telling it o'er and o'er.

Again, when the day is ended  
And the sun sinks down in the west,  
When the evening dew is falling  
And the birds have gone to rest,  
It tells the archangel message  
First given to Mary blest.

To waken the hearts of the faithful  
It rings on the Sabbath day,  
It rings for the youth and maiden  
Attired in bridal array,  
And with tones that are slow and solemn  
Rings for the soul passed away.

Thine is a sacred mission,  
Loved bell that we all hold dear,  
Over the hills and mountains  
May your voice ring far and near,  
From the little church in the valley  
Through many a coming year.

M. Laura Leddy  
Underhill Center  
Sept 28, 1903



2. Early Sanctuary



3. Church Interior Today

## Dedication

To all the members, past and present, of the St. Thomas Parish family on the occasion of our 100th anniversary.

We are especially indebted to Mary Margaret Audette and John Audette for the months of effort, interviews, and research which have culminated in this book of invaluable history. In this narrative we have a real sense of the beginning and years of growth of our parish community; the priests, the people and the buildings that have made the St. Thomas Parish of today.

Thank you again Mary Margaret and John for a job well done, and you, folks, enjoy the fruits of their labor.

*Father Jean-Paul Laplante*

*Pastor*

*Feb. 1, 1991*

## Chapter 1

### Pioneers and Priestly People

When the Indian brave in the lead canoe of the flotilla raised his arm slowly and pointed eastward, Samuel de Champlain followed the gesture. Lifting his eyes from his first view of the broad bay below, he observed with interest the great mountain range rising in the distance. His gaze lingered for a long moment on the highest peak of the heavily-forested mountains whose greenness was accented by what he perceived to be a remnant cap of the past winter's snow.

If, indeed, Champlain had been allowed by destiny to follow the call of his explorer heart, he may well have penetrated the wilderness even to the very foothills of that beckoning mountain and thereby, perhaps, to the future site of our own beloved village church.

Within some thirty years of Champlain's 1609 voyage of discovery, Isaac Jogues and his zealous band of catechists were laboring among the Indian tribes. Tradition has it that they were captured and tortured on the island which was later to be named for Captain Pierre de St. Paul, *Seur de la Motte*, who established Fort Anne there in 1666.

It was at Fort St. Anne that what is believed to have been the first Catholic religious edifice in Vermont was built by soldiers, with their priest, the Rev. Dollier de Casson, offering what was probably the first Mass in Vermont. Before it was abandoned in 1670, the Fort was visited by the Rt. Rev. Francois De Laval de Montmorency who later became Bishop of Quebec and whose jurisdiction extended over all of North America, including the future state of Vermont.

Some indications of French Canadian activity in the early to mid 1700s were a stone chapel built by Jesuit missionaries on the Missisquoi for the Abnakis, a colony at Alburg, and one at Chimney Point. In the late 1700s, following the French and Indian wars and the return of the French to Canada, there is scant evidence of the propagation of the Faith in Vermont. It is quite probable, however, that there still were during this period pockets of French settlers in this part of Vermont—hardy souls who kept alive the traditions of their faith.

In 1789, three years after the Declaration of Independence, John Carroll, whose cousin Charles was a signer of the Declaration, was named Bishop of Baltimore and Ordinary for the small number of Catholics in Vermont. He was assisted in the care of French-Canadian Catholics in this state by Bishop de Nault of Quebec.

The Bishop of Quebec continued to take a pastoral interest in French-speaking Catholics. In 1815, when there were at least 100 families of French descent living in Burlington, 18 children were baptized by Father Francis Matignon, an emissary of Bishop Plessis. The Rev. Pierre Mignault, delegated by Plessis as missionary to Vermont, was to serve later as Vicar General for Albany, Boston and Burlington.

Bishop Benedict Joseph Fenwick of the Boston Diocese, which had now assumed jurisdiction over all Vermont Catholics, sent Fr. James Fitton, S.J. on a missionary tour of Vermont in 1829. It is likely that Fr. Fitton's report of the increasing number of arriving Irish Catholics prompted the Bishop to dispatch Fr. Jeremiah O'Callaghan to Vermont as its first full-time missionary. By this time, Underhill's 1800 population of 212 had been augmented by the influx of Irish immigrants, many of whom had settled in the Irish Settlement and Pleasant Valley areas.

People from miles around, probably some from Underhill, attended the dedication by Bishop Fenwick of St. Mary's Church on Prospect Hill in Burlington on September 9, 1832. On this occasion 25 children were baptized and 27 confirmed. Among marriages recorded in following years at the new mother church by Fr. O'Callaghan we see such familiar Underhill names as Tunny, Doon, Doran, Cale, Barrett, Morrison, Faye, Shanley, Barry and others.

Travel in those days was by private or hired team or sleigh or, most probably, by stages that ran between Underhill and Essex. Once arrived in Essex, the wedding party of the intendeds and their attendants would have arranged for another mode of conveyance to their nuptials in Burlington.



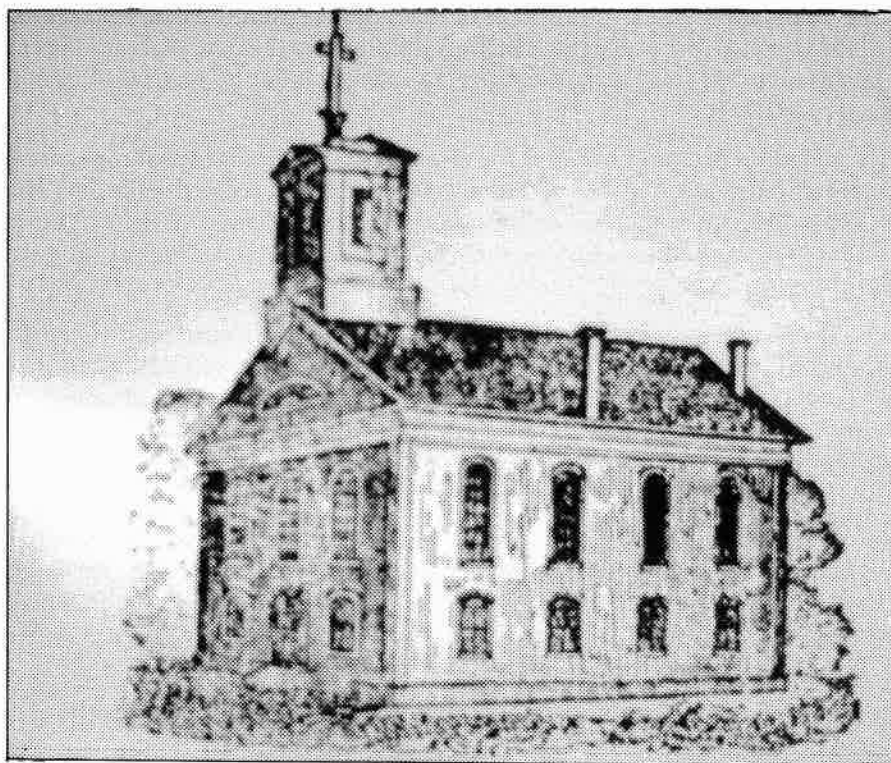
The first visit of Father O'Callaghan to this area of his parish was in 1833 when he met Michael Barrett at Cambridge and said Mass in Fletcher, where the Barretts lived before moving to Underhill. It was a warm welcome given to the new missionary by this devout Catholic who had not long before taken one of his children to St. John's, Quebec, to be baptized. At that time Fr. O'Callaghan's parish took in all of Vermont, and Catholic homes served as stations for his missionary visits. Families of a neighborhood or "settlement" would gather together to hear Mass probably four or five times a year.

In Ireland, the summers of 1845 and 1846 were cooler and wetter than normal. Potatoes, a staple in the diet of the Irish (impoverished by high taxes paid to absentee English landlords), withered in the field or rotted in storage. People were dying of starvation and malnutrition. A large part of the population emigrated to other countries to join friends and relatives who had already left Ireland to escape the oppressive conditions there.

In his early visits to Underhill, Father O'Callaghan would have visited the hillside farms of many Irish immigrant settlers. Those who were not farming were usually working in the lumbering operations, the two largest of which were at Stevensville and Hutchville (the present military range). At these two locations, settlements had sprung up - each with its school, store, boarding house and the like. Settlers in the Center and the Flats established businesses that provided services to the farmers and lumbermen.

There seems to be no photograph available of the stout-hearted missionary, but one pictures him as a burly Irishman—as big as the rugged out-of-doors where he spent so much time traveling about to his far-flung missions—a man whose expansive presence must have filled the small pioneer homes he visited. At any rate, his dimensions were truly heroic in the sense of will and spirit.

It was while Fr. O'Callaghan was on one of these journeys that St. Mary's Church in Burlington burned to the ground on May 2, 1838. Three and a half years later, on October 3, 1841, a new church, located on the site of the future Cathedral Grammar School at St. Paul and Cherry streets, was dedicated by Bishop Fenwick.



4.

St. Mary's Church, Burlington 1841

Some of the early marriages listed by Fr. O'Callaghan following the erection of the second St. Mary's included those of James Ravey to Mary Doon in 1843; John Tunny to Bridget McGowan, James Murphy to Mary Green and Daniel Harrington to Bridget Leddy in 1844; and Thomas Shanley to Alice Barrett, Michael O'Bierne to Elizabeth McMannus, and Joseph O'Bierne to Mary Waugh in 1845.

On February 18, 1849, St. Mary's Church was the scene of the wedding of John Smith and Mary McElroy. The happy occasion dispelled to some degree the tragic memories of his own family—mother, father, and younger children—who had died of ship's fever and were buried at sea on the way to join him in Underhill. John and Mary were to become the parents of twelve children, all born in the stone house he built on his farm in Pleasant Valley. (This house still stands in good repair.)

Two of the couples who traveled to Burlington in 1850 to be married by Fr. O'Callaghan at St. Mary's were Cornelius Shea with Anne Donovan and John O'Neil with Ellen Clary. Both couples listed their residence as "Stevens Village". It is likely that they were among the 76 heads of families to be noted in the Underhill census of 1850 as having been born in Ireland. By 1860 thirty families would be living in Stevensville.

Two years later, in December 1852, two more couples from Underhill were married at St. Mary's: Thomas Waugh and Prudence Haskins on December 7th and William McElroy and Clarissa Barrett on December 8th. One might suppose that they shared the expense of a hired sleigh or the warmth of a covered stage on this cold trip. Had they waited another year, as did Michael and Patrick Barrett and their brides, Elizabeth Breen and Cecelia Flannery, they might have been able to enjoy seeing Burlington stores and hotels lighted by gas for the first time—quite an improvement over the kerosene lamps used at home in Underhill.

It should be remembered that in those early days many marriages took place in the home, as did probably most of the baptisms.



5.

Bishop Fenwick

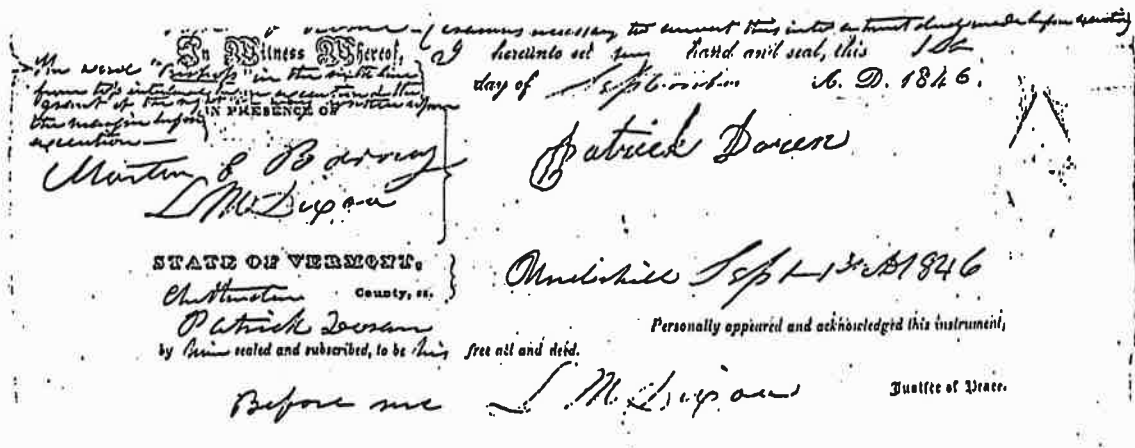
## Chapter 2 Early Cemeteries

*I will number them, and they shall be multiplied above the sand.*  
Gradual. Feast of St. Thomas, Apostle

In 1846, Patrick Doran, who had settled in Pleasant Valley, deeded an acre of his land to Bishop Fenwick in the hope that a Catholic Church and cemetery would be built there. The handwritten deed, dated Sept 1, 1846, reads in part as follows:

"This deed is upon the special trust and confidence and for no other purpose whatever, that the said Bishop and his successors and assigns shall and will from henceforth hold said land in trust for the use and benefit of the Roman Catholics in and about said Underhill, Vermont, to be consecrated and used by them forever as their burial ground and for the erection of a church thereon for the worship of God according to rites of the Roman Catholic religion and in communion with the Pope of Rome."

The deed further states that the described acre of land is conveyed "together with an open foot and carriage way from said highway to said grantee's premises over said Doran's land..."



Doran Deed

A little over four years later, on January 18, 1851, Irish Settlement Catholics purchased land for a cemetery from one of their own neighbors. The deed begins:

"Know all men by these presents that I, Patrick Cale of Underhill, county of Chittenden and State of Vermont, for the consideration of thirty dollars paid to my full satisfaction by Jeremiah A. O'Callaghan, Pastor for the time being of the Roman Catholic Congregation in Burlington, Underhill, and other places in Vermont do hereby give, grant, bargain, sell and confirm unto the said Jeremiah A. O'Callaghan the following described piece or parcel of land in Underhill..."

The deed goes on to describe the boundaries of an acre of land "to be used and kept for a Catholic Burying Ground to have and to hold the above granted premises to the said Jeremiah A. O'Callaghan, Pastor as aforesaid and his successors in said Pastoral office, his Administration, and assigns in trust and special confidence for the purpose aforesaid forever."

In Presence of  
The above grant intended  
before signing  
Michael Banitt  
H. Howell



Patrick Gale L.S.

State of Vermont Lamoille County SS  
At Cambridge this 18<sup>th</sup> day of  
January A.D. 1851 Patrick Gale  
personally appeared & acknowledged  
this instrument by <sup>deed</sup> ~~hand~~ subscription  
to be his free act & deed  
Before me H. Howell Jus. Peace

Received for Record Jan 25<sup>th</sup> 1851  
at one o'clock P.M. & duly Recorded by me }

Attest G.M. Burdett Town Clerk

#### Cale Deed

Neither of these sites was destined to serve as the location of a church, nor was either burial ground to become the future parish cemetery.

Evidence of the root-cellar hole of the old Doran farmhouse, where a vestige of lilac still blooms, can be seen from Pleasant Valley road. Farther along, on a rise of land in the background, is the cemetery where piteous tales of childhood death are inscribed on the shifting stones. Here is told the sad story of the young Doran parents, Thomas (son of Patrick) and Emily Anne Ellsworth, who died broken-hearted in their forties after burying six little children, one after another, in the family plot. The first two baby boys, Thomas and James, died in infancy. The other boy, Edward, lived only to the age of nine years and three months when he was stricken with diphtheria, as were his sisters—Susan age five and a half, Eliza age three years and three months, and Emily, named for her mother, two years and eight months. Three of the children, Edward, Susan, and Elizabeth, died within one month—between February 12 and March 11 of 1866. Other members of the Doran family, Patrick Doran and Emily Nugent Doran, are buried nearby.

Among the other young children who died of diphtheria were John McNulty, age two, Susannah McMannus, age three, and Margaret Kelley, age four. Little John Carney died in the cold month of January in 1852. Three children of Daniel and Bridget Wall—Mary, Annie, and James—succumbed to the dread disease.

Peter Duffy, age sixty-five, a prosperous farmer in the Valley, and Michael Bierne, forty-four, said to have burned to death in his house, were buried here deep in the winter of 1851. Thomas Waugh buried his thirty-five year old wife, Catherine, on these grounds as did James Gill his faithful Bridget. It was here that Patrick McGlynn laid to rest his daughter Elizabeth, soon joined by her mother, Mary, who died in childbirth at the age of twenty-six.

And in the month of June in 1865, the bloom of manhood hardly upon him, young Thomas Burns was put to everlasting rest at seventeen by his parents, Michael and Elizabeth. "Gone but not forgotten. Rest in peace. Amen."

From North Underhill to Stevensville and parts in between, early settlers carried remains of loved ones—the very young, the elderly, and some in the prime of life—to the old Irish Settlement Cemetery on the settlement road.

The early years were times of early childhood deaths. Among those who sleep here are the two small Patterson boys, seven-year old Alexander who died in 1851 and was followed in death three

years later by his baby brother. Between those years, three-year old Ann Gill and Patrick Bulger, seven, left grieving parents. Baby John Donnelly, never to see the coming of summer, died in the early spring of 1860 at age six months and ten days. James Fitzgerald, five, and his playmate brother, Michael, four, were buried here in 1862.

Peter Leddy, whose farm was in Stevensville (present location of Maple Leaf Farm), lost father and child in the same year when little seven-year old Rosann and her grandfather Michael, 85, both died in 1865. Two years previously, in 1863, he had buried his son, Bernard (Barney), age 22, who was killed in the Battle of Gettysburg while serving in the Vermont regiment.

The young found early graves here. Luke Barrett, who died in 1855 at twenty-eight years of age, is sadly missed by his friends:

*Say, death, thou relentless power,  
Why in an unknown hour  
Thy mighty arm doth ever tear  
The fairest flower of friends most dear.*

Francis Campbell, age twenty-six, who died in 1866, was advised:

*Enjoy thy rest, my dear companion,  
All thy cares and pains are o'er,  
Thou hast gone to rest in heaven,  
There we'll meet to part no more.*

Joseph Flynn died in 1877 at the age of thirteen:

*When blooming youth is snatched away  
By death's resistless hand,  
Our hearts the mournful tribute pay  
Which pity must demand.*

Katie Breen, age 13, left grieving parents in 1886:

*We loved her, yes, no tongue can tell  
How much we loved her or how well.  
God loved her, too, and thought it best  
To take her home with him to rest.*

Mothers of young children were mourned at their graves. In 1857, Katherine Barrett, wife of John Doon left her family, at age thirty-five, with these words:

*Children and friends, when around my grave you stand  
Think of a tender mother when you were at my hand,  
As I am now so you will be  
Prepare yourselves to follow me.*

Of Rose Carroll who died at forty-nine in 1867, it was said:

*O Lord we never loved so kindly.  
Had we never loved so blindly,  
Never met and never parted,  
I had n'er been broken-hearted.  
E. Farrell, her husband*

Mary Haggerty died in 1881 at age thirty-one with these words of comfort:

*Dear Mary, in peace thine ashes rest,  
With heavenly bliss your soul is blest.  
Your friends and children mourn and sigh  
While you rejoice with God on high,  
May we like thee forever sing  
The praise of God our Lord and King.*



6.

Pleasant Valley Cemetery

Ellen Reynolds, dying in 1877 at age thirty-two, was mourned by her husband:

*O death, why were you so unkind  
To take my Ellen and leave me behind,  
Our love on earth, twas so well blended  
When 'fore its mortal date 'tis surely ended.  
Erected by her husband James Shanley*



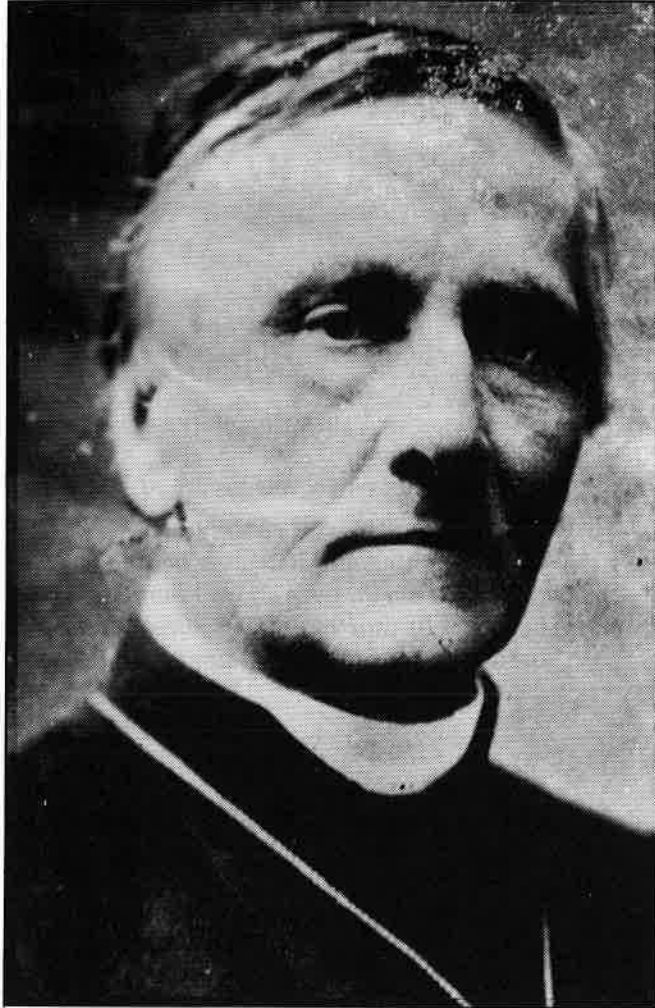
7.

Irish Settlement Cemetery

## Chapter 3

*How beautiful upon the mountains  
are the feet of him that bringeth  
good tidings and that preacheth  
peace, of him that showeth forth  
good, that preacheth salvation...*

*Isaiah 52.7*



8. Bishop Louis deGoesbriand

On Sunday, November 6, 1853, Louis Joseph Marie Theodore deGoesbriand was installed at St. Mary's as first Bishop of Burlington by Bishop Bernard Fitzpatrick of Boston.

Within ten days of his installation, Bishop deGoesbriand journeyed by carriage to Underhill. As Father Shannon put it: "Underhill claims the distinction of receiving the first official visit made by the new Bishop after his arrival in the 'Episcopal City'."



According to Fr. Shannon, the Bishop's arrival was in the Flats, where he would have observed the stirrings of what was to become a bustling business community. Finding few Catholics there, however, he made his way along the river road to what was then called Union Village where a variety of activities were underway in support of the farmers and loggers on the mountainsides. Here, at the foot of the mountain, where brooks abound, mills of various kinds were in operation. In addition, there were the shops of those whose skills supplied the necessities of life: the carpenter, cooper, wheelwright, carriage and harness maker, blacksmith, shoemaker and the like, as well as the general store and hotel.

An excerpt from the Bishop's diary reads: "I visited the Settlement on the 15th and 16th of November, 1853; found there are 63 families living close together near Union Village. They speak of building a church and need one. I heard many confessions there, gave communion to 70 or 80 persons. Heretofore they had been visited three or four times a year by Rev. Father O'Callaghan."

It is probable that the Bishop spent the night at the home of William McElroy where he offered Mass on the morning of the second day.

During the following month, Father O'Callaghan retired from missionary service in Vermont. When he died at age 82, his tombstone was inscribed with the following words: "*The duties of his laborious mission he discharged with cheerful fidelity during 50 years.*"

With the departure of Fr. O'Callaghan, the new Bishop assumed duties as pastor of St. Mary's and acting pastor of St. Joseph's. It is said that this privileged son of a marquis and graduate of a Paris seminary took upon himself the humblest tasks of a parish priest. He was assisted at this time by the first priest ordained specifically for Burlington—Father Thomas Riordan, a native of Ireland.

In view of his steadily-mounting workload, the Bishop's repeated visits to Underhill—a second in January 1854 and a third in March—give evidence of the immediacy of his concern for his flock in the mountains. It was on his March 19th visit that a Mass, the first in Underhill Center, was offered by the Bishop at the Green Mountain Academy. (This building still stands just beyond the rectory and is now a private home.)

From the Bishop's diary: "March 19, 1854. Said Mass at Union Village in the Academy, then spent three days in the Irish Settlement where there are 60 families—appointed a committee to select a lot at or about the village."



9.

Green Mountain Academy, later used as Town Hall



When the Bishop made a return visit in July, however, no lot suitable for the erection of a church had been found; nor was the academy available for the celebration of Mass. Father Shannon described the situation in this way:

"The Bishop however equal to the emergency, requested some of the men to construct a temporary altar just inside the kitchen door of Martin Flannery's house. At this improvised altar in full view of the highway, the Bishop offered the Holy Sacrifice for the first time on the spot soon to be hallowed by the presence of a church. Humbly kneeling by the roadside, protected from the rays of a July sun by the friendly shade of two spreading maples, the assembled Catholics in union with the officiating Pontiff, offered their supplication and thanksgivings to God, with as much devotion as if kneeling within the grandest cathedral ever built by man.

"This forced out-door assistance at Mass greatly strengthened their determination to have a church of their own. So earnest were they in their resolution, that they then and there subscribed \$1,250.00 towards a new church—a good round sum for those days. Martin Flannery was soon induced to sell to the Bishop for the sum of \$300.00, his house and small lot, and on August 3, 1854, the spot endeared to the Catholics of Underhill by the ceremony mentioned above, became their property for all time. The house was removed from this lot to one adjoining on the south; later it was sold and removed to its present location, just north of the first little bridge on the Cambridge highway."

From the Bishop's diary:

"July 2, 1854. On this and the two days following the Catholics of that neighborhood subscribed \$1,250 towards the erection of a church to be built about that place.

"August 3, 1854 went to Underhill Center and there bought a lot from M. Flannery for the purpose of building a church."

By 1855 the number of Catholics in Vermont had increased rapidly. In answer to the dire need for priests to assist him in the diocese, Bishop deGoesbriand made a recruiting trip to Ireland and France. Two of the priests he brought from his native Brittany were the Reverends Francis Picart and Jerome Cloarec both of whom were to assist later at St. Thomas. From Ireland came the Rev. Thomas Lynch to whom was assigned the mission of Underhill, with residence at St. Mary's in Burlington.

Father Lynch found Underhill Catholics busy at work on the construction of a church. With the help of hired and voluntary labor, work progressed from day to day until, at last, the raising of the church in June of 1855.

The Bishop commented:

"June 4, 1855. The church at Union Village is raised today. It is a good frame building 50 by 32, 16 feet between floors with gallery."

(The joy of the congregation upon the occasion of the raising of their church was dimmed when, in the following September, Luke Barret was killed in the woods while felling trees.)

On October 31 of 1855 Father Lynch said Mass at the home of Martin Flynn in the Settlement and recorded the baptisms of Elizabeth Flynn, Bernard Gray, John McNulty, Ellen O'Neil, and John Fay. In November of that year Thomas Doran and Emily Ann Ellsworth were united in marriage.

The work on the church subsequent to its raising continued throughout the summer and into the fall. December of that year was one of the coldest on record, but when weather allowed work went on, picking up in earnest the following spring and summer of 1856. In August a small piece of land was added to the church property by the purchase from Franklin Woodworth of what is now a section of the crossroad in front of the church.

On December 14, 1856, St. Thomas Church was blessed by Bishop deGoesbriand. There is no record as to how the choice of a name for the church was made. St. Thomas was well known to the Bishop, however, as the favorite patron saint of Breton sailors. Moreover, the feast of St. Thomas, Apostle, is celebrated on the twenty-first of December.

Underhill continued as a mission in those early years. Those few who were fortunate enough to own horses or oxen or were within walking distance attended services at St. Thomas. Others, who because of infirmity were unable to make the long walk or who lacked means of transportation, were visited by Father Lynch or priests from St. Mary's in Burlington.

In the year of the church blessing, twenty-five baptisms were performed by Father Lynch, one by Father Picart and one by the Bishop himself—that of Maria Anna, daughter of Abraham Marlow and Catherine Flynn, on March 12, 1856.

The following year Father Lynch reported 120 families, three marriages and 61 First Communions. Four of the thirty-five infants were baptized by the Bishop: Bridget Quinn, Catherine Gary, Mary Holan and Mary Cavanaugh. The Bishop signed himself, with characteristic humility, "+L. Ep. Burlingtoniensis" or, simply, "+Ludovicus."

1857

7

July 12<sup>th</sup> Baptizavit Elizabeth filiam Jacobi Brun & Jane Smith  
 & Michaela Hyon & Elizabeth Butler. crata fuit die  
 Junii. H. L. Lynch

July 19 Baptizavit Gulielmum filium Michaelis M. A.  
 & Mariae Jane Hyon. Memento Gulielmum Barry & Ca  
 rina Coffey. crata fuit die 19<sup>th</sup> Junii H. L. Lynch

Sept. — Da 15<sup>th</sup> Sept. lectionem supplens Brigitta filia Jacobi Quin-  
 — Bridg. Quin. Anna Lea. crata est die 22 Aug. puerumque — pater baptizavit.  
 Sponsus Thomas Heany et Maria Reynolds.  
 Eadem die bapt. conditionaliter infantem filium Nicolai  
 Catharina Gary et Maria. Eodem die primo Augusti. Sponsus  
 Gary Jacobus Wheelan et Maria Wheelan. Cui impositum est nomen  
 Catharina.  
 Eadem die baptizavit infantem filium Jacobus Holan et Margareta  
 — Mary Holan Hauman, nata die 16<sup>th</sup> Augusti, Sponsus Origan Savelle  
 et Brigitta Hauman. Cui impositum est nomen Maria.  
 Eadem die baptizavit infantem filium Patricii Cavanaugh et  
 — Mary Anna M. Pley, nata 19<sup>th</sup> die Augusti. Sponsus Jacobus  
 Cavanaugh. M. Pley et Margareta Cavanaugh Cui impositum est nomen  
 Maria.

+ L. Ep. Burlingtoniensis.

## Chapter 4

*Their sound went forth into all the earth;  
and their words to the ends of the world.  
Offertory. Feast of St. Thomas, Apostle*

During the next several years, priests from Burlington continued to attend the mission church of St. Thomas. Among the priests who traveled to Underhill were the Fathers James Quinn, Francis Picart, George Caissy, Jerome Cloarec, and Denis Ryan. Their busy Bishop, too, lent his kind assistance; on April 13th of 1862 he baptized John McElroy, Francis Doon, Eleanor Quinlan and Charles Laporte.

Home and family must have seemed very far away to the young priests from Brittany and Ireland. Compared to the birthplace of the Bretons with its centuries-old towns and ancient churches, Burlington and environs were veritable pioneer territory. Most of all, they would have missed the all-encompassing presence of the sea. And thoughts of their own native land's historic churches and monasteries and its wildly picturesque shores must have been often with the Irish priests. (Sure it was their sainted mothers they missed most of all.) They would have felt somewhat at home, however, in the Underhill area of stone-walled farms of Irish immigrants with their familiar brogue and ever-ready cup of tea. (Many of the Irish spoke Gaelic even in later years—much to the surprise of the younger Daniel Wall's bride, Mary Riley, upon meeting her new mother-in-law, Bridget, in 1883.)

Rest did not come early to the mission priests. At the end of an arduous day, long hours might be spent by oil-lamp recording in the prescribed Latin the Baptisms, First Communions, Confirmations, weddings and deaths of the parishioners—many in Underhill noted as “in Hibernia natum” a few “in Canada natum”. Among the dutifully transcribed names we see many a Maria, Bridgitta, Helena or Anna. Though Irish girls sometimes kept the Latinized version of their names, the boys—particularly Georgius and Guglielmus—did not.

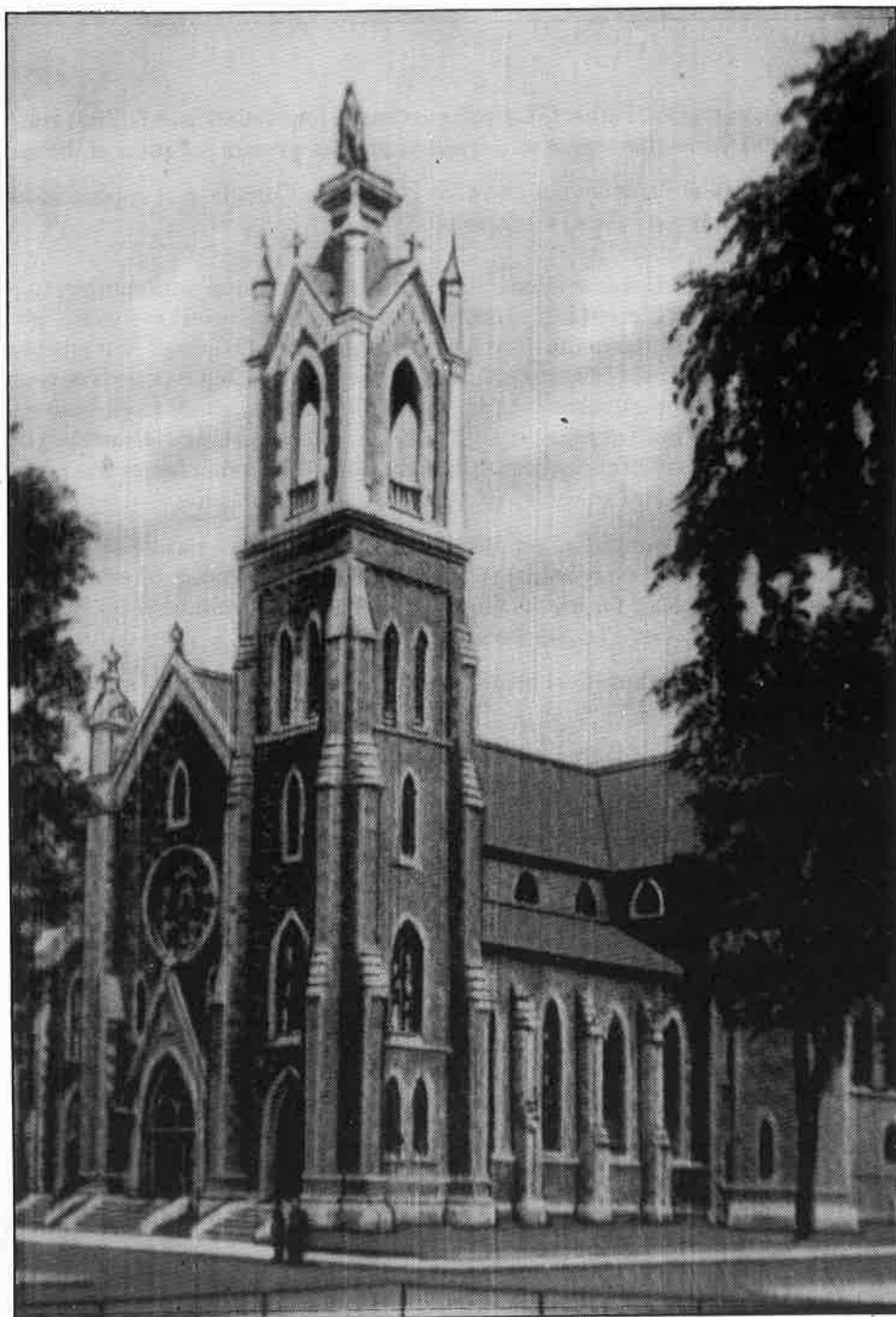
Forty-eight infants were baptized in 1863 at St. Thomas. Somewhat coincidentally, it was just about that time that Father Caissy wrote: “The church is too small for the congregation. If the Rt. Rev. Bishop allows me, I shall have some few more seats made and placed in the church.”

There may have been visitors attending the Masses, as well—guests stopping at the Mountain House, the hotel across from the church. Stages were running then from Essex to Mt. Mansfield's newly-constructed Halfway House and Summit House.

In 1865 the St. Thomas Mission was attached to Richmond with Father Patrick O'Carroll, rector, visiting twice a month. Fr. O'Carroll's purchase the following year of a small piece of land from next-door neighbor Thomas Ross added to the church property a four-foot wide strip of land running along Green—then Academy—Street and extending southward seventy-five feet to the east end of the Flannery purchase.

It might be interesting at this point to digress a bit and look at the location of the church at that time with regard to other surrounding street names: The road through the Center changed from Main to Church Street at the intersection in front of the present Jacobs' store; the Old Bolton Road was called Centre Street; and the Beartown Road was Maple Street. The site of the future St. Thomas Cemetery was on Hill Street.

Meanwhile, the energetic Father O'Carroll, in addition to his 53 Baptisms, 50 First Communions, and five marriages in the year 1866, undertook, with the aid of a special collection, the enlargement of the ten-year-old wooden church. The following year twenty-five feet were added to the length of the building and window blinds were installed.



10. Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception  
(Destroyed by fire 1870, replaced by present Cathedral 1877)

On December 8, 1867, a new mother church, the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, was dedicated by Bishop deGoesbriand. The old St. Mary's was remodelled for use as a school and staffed by Sisters of Mercy. Though destroyed by fire in 1870, the structure was rebuilt and served as a school for many years.

Fr. O'Carroll's renewed practice of collecting pew rent from his Underhill congregation of approximately one hundred families apparently kept the church debt free. His own meagre salary was \$300 a year. Small wonder he made this notation: "Added to the expenses of the church should be the cost and charge of keeping a horse and wagon in order to attend it every other Sunday."

In 1872, his last year as rector, Father O'Carroll purchased for \$490.00 from Gilbert and Julia Isham a house and barn and three-quarters of an acre of land—the present location of the rectory.

In October of 1872, Father Peter Savoie, late of St. Hyacinthe, Canada, was appointed first resident pastor of Underhill with Hyde Park as a mission.

Father Savoie, evidently of the same mind as an earlier priest who was a missionary to St. Thomas and who had remarked of a different house that it was "not fit for a priest to live in," proceeded at once to repair, renovate, and enlarge the little house bought by Fr. O'Carroll. Just one year from his arrival, the Burlington Free Press of October 20, 1873 reported: "The Rev. Savoie is now occupying a fine residence built in the Center this season." In his 1873 financial account to the Bishop, Fr. Savoie listed "one parochial house built at a cost of \$1872.76. He also bought the Nelson Cole house south of the church lot "paying on it \$50 and assuming in debt \$450." This small house was rented for \$3.00 a month.

In May of 1873, Fr. Savoie purchased for \$600 from Thomas Sears a parcel of land to the west of the Center. After being cleared (at considerable cost, according to Father Shannon) about an acre was laid out for the time being for use as a cemetery. This entire tract was to be the official St. Thomas Cemetery. It was blessed by the Bishop on July 3, 1873.

From Acta Episcopalia: "Underhill—I blest a new graveyard in Underhill Center according to the rite prescribed in the Pontifical."

Among the names of families "taking up" burial lots in the new cemetery during this period were: Gaffney, Lang, Quinlan, McAvey, Mullen, Ennis, Mattimore, McGrath, Desany, Boyle and others.

One of the early burials at St. Thomas Cemetery was that of little "Eddie", son of J. and M. A. Lessor, who died on October 30, 1874, at age 2 years, 1 month, 14 days. In the following month, young Thomas Doyle was buried at age nineteen.

Bridget Reynolds, wife of Richard Doyle, died on May 22, 1874 at age thirty-five. On her stone are these words of warning:

*Remember, man, as you pass by  
As you are now so once was I  
As I am now so you will be  
Prepare for death and follow me.*



11.

St. Thomas Cemetery

Michael Gaffney died at age forty-five in 1880 and was joined by Mary, age forty-one, in the following year. A sympathetic soul composed this touching message:

*Here lies Father and Mother  
of six orphan children. Do not  
forget them in your prayers.*

Twenty-one year old Angie Vasseur, who died in 1886, left this advice:

*The grass is green, the rose is red  
Here lies my name when I am dead.  
When you see this  
Prepare for death and follow me.*

As years went on, this touching tombstone verse, which had in early years been such a source of solace to the bereaved, fell into disuse and is rarely seen on modern memorials.

In 1873, Bishop deGoesbriand received the first native priest ordained for the Burlington Diocese: John Stephen Michaud, born in Burlington of French-Irish ancestry. Among the other Vermonters ordained were Fathers Carmody and Barron who would also figure in later St. Thomas history.

The Bishop made another trip to Brittany that year, further diminishing a patrimony being spent in generosity to his diocese, this time bringing back with him the young Breton Fathers Kerlidou, Yvinec, Brelivet and Coathuel. (At the time of the good Bishop's death in 1899 his pocket contained all the personal wealth left of his very considerable patrimony: two dollars and twelve cents.)

Father Savoie's 1874 report lists a cost of \$88 for fencing for the cemetery and receipt of \$53 from a collection taken up for that purpose. He also commented that there were four district schools where catechism was taught "not very effectively though." Parish reports of the years 1874-76 count 225 families "2/3 Irish and 1/3 French". On each of these years there were about 50 Baptisms reported. Deaths included those of many infants and children: In 1874—four infants and seven children age 4 and under; 1875—three infants, six children age 5 and under, and six age 6 to 13; 1876—four infants, six children age 3 and under, and three age 9 to 16.

Surely it was very painful for the priests of those days to witness so many young deaths and sad funerals; they must have been disheartened at such times. It is a tribute to their fortitude and strength of faith that they continued to persevere in their priestly duties, both sacred and secular.

Father Savoie's 1876 financial report included the receipt of eight dollars collected from ten-cent gallery seats, five dollars by "restitution of a dying man", and the \$104 realized from an "organ lottery". The organ, bought the previous year for \$100, had been mentioned previously in the notation: "We have one organ to dispose of and one house worth \$150."

Among expenses listed was a "Confirmatorium Registrum" which cost \$4 including freight. This register, 115 years old, is still kept in the rectory along with other parish records. There was also an order of one pound of Frankincense at \$1.40, a tabernacle veil for \$15, and "Livres de Chants" which came to \$2.50. (Mail order was more convenient now; with the advent of rail service to Underhill, mail no longer came by stage but by train.)

# Nomina Confirmatorum.

In Ecclesia St. Thomae Penderhill N.  
Die Augusti 1869

Wm. M. Nassar. Michael Doyle. Michael Luddy  
Jm. Luddy Solomon Papineau Jm. Papineau

1869 Confirmation class.

## First-Communion

Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> / 1872

James Casey  
Henry Burke  
James Green  
Mich. Barrett  
George Lusier  
G. Lewis Fitzsimmons  
Pat. Hogarty  
Willy Barrett  
Willy Laporte  
Fabris Flynn  
John Lefindan  
Henry Miron  
John Casey  
John Mayhew  
Fran. Sheehy  
John M. Elroy  
Mich. Barrett  
J. B. Girard

Martha M. Elroy  
Margaret Quinn  
Margaret Foley  
Lizzie Shanley  
Ellen Sheehy  
Marg. Green  
Ann Lufindan  
Martha Reynolds  
John M. Elroy

P. Savie. Pastor  
V. Savie. Pastor

1872 First Communion Class

## Chapter 5



*From all sin and all harm,  
from all danger and woe.  
Guard me, Mary of Ireland,  
wherever I go.  
From the Irish, 532*



*Make us, O Joseph,  
to lead a blameless life,  
and may it ever be safe  
under thy patronage.  
Gradual. Mass of St. Joseph*

Following his five-year service as pastor of St. Thomas, Father Savoie was succeeded by the Rev. Joseph Kerlidou in October of 1877. The combined Savoie-Kerlidou report of the year 1877 follows in part:

**Some receipts:**

Sold old pump \$5.00

Inscription for lot bought from Woodworth \$69.00

Collection for the lot \$16.50

Lottery for shingling the Church \$96.00

(192 tickets on one barrel of flour)

Plate collection \$38.50

Easter collection \$64.00

**Some expenses:**

Bought from Mr. Woodworth the piece of land joining the academy to be paid \$75.00 in two weeks and \$75.00 to be paid in Burlington at his office the first of May 1878.

One lantern \$1.00

Lumber for barn \$2.20

Paid toward shingling church \$75.00

To Ed Breen the happy winner of the flour \$8.50

"Bought a lot for barn and shed, the church covered with new shingles." (The old barn standing between the church and rectory was removed at this time.)

From the appended notation by Fr. Kerlidou: "to Fr. Savoie for furniture, horse and all—\$520," it would appear that the previous pastor had invested a considerable part of his own \$600 salary in the care of the church and rectory.

Fr. Kerlidou was replaced in May 1878, after a stay of only eight months, by Father Michael Carmody. His year's report read: 125 families, 16 singles, 35 Baptisms, 75 First Communions, 4 deaths. A large class was confirmed on October 16th by Bishop deGoesbriand.

It is interesting that the yearly financial report of 1878 again mentioned under debts: "Due to Fr. Savoie for horse, wagon, furniture \$520 to be paid when convenient."

Father Carmody was forced by ill health to leave St. Thomas after about two years as pastor. Among the priests stepping in to help during the interval before the assignment of a new pastor was Bishop deGoesbriand himself: Catherine Reavy and George Cullen were baptized by the Bishop on September 19, 1880. Father John Michaud also assisted until the arrival in January 1881 of Father Magloir Pigeon, a native of St. Hyacinthe, Canada, who was appointed new pastor of St. Thomas Church.



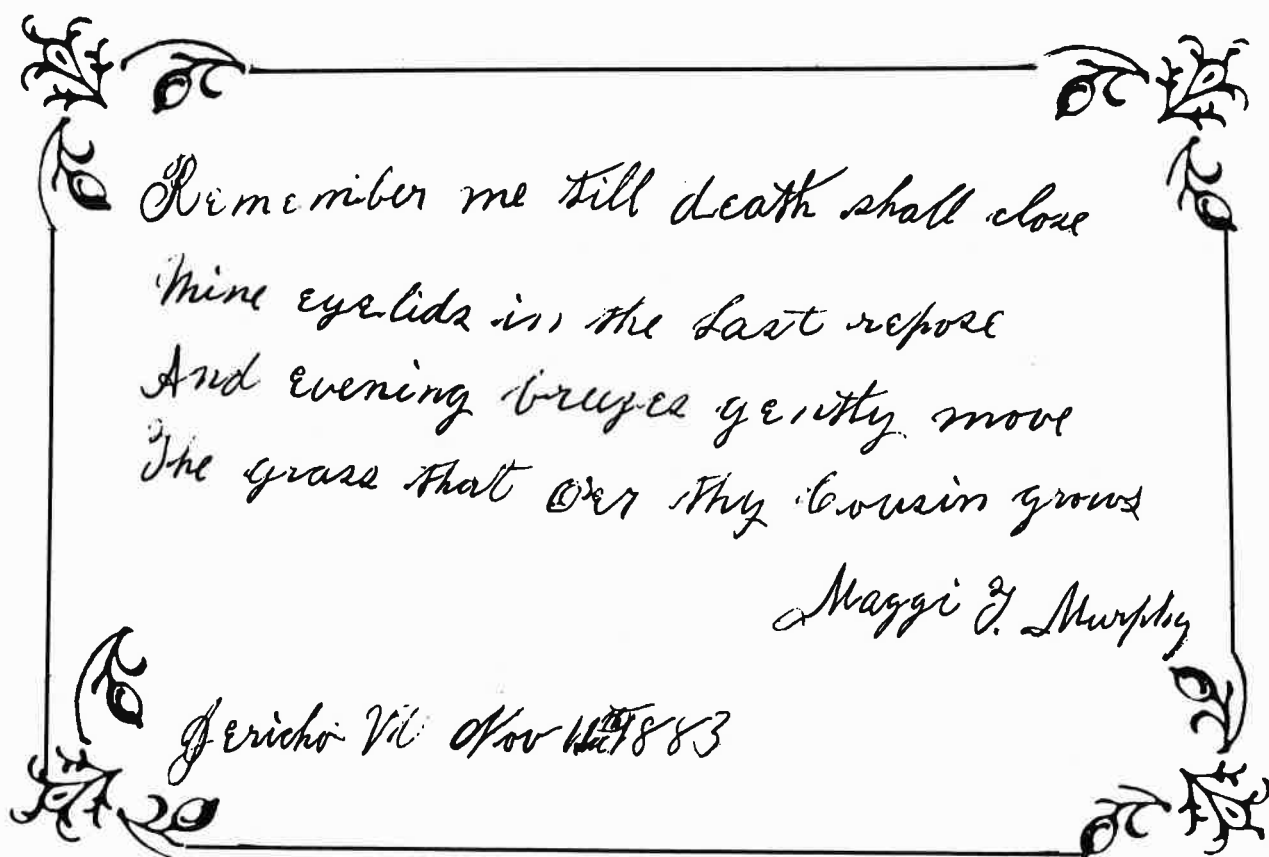
The new pastor immediately turned his attention to putting his household in order. Following is an account of some of his expenditures during the first two months of his stewardship:

Jan.		Feb.	
6 mica glass for stove	\$0.75	For work on house taking	1.00
Placing lights on glass to		away ice	0.75
church and one to house	0.50	Casters for 2 beds	1.25
One dozen silver knives	3.00	Oil for Jan & Feb	13.91
One dozen silver forks	3.00	1 ½ ton coal	
One dozen silver spoons	2.00	For house	
One dozen salt cellars	0.75	2 ½ doz glasses &	
One large tablecloth	3.00	12 napkins	2.50
		2 lamps	2.25
		2 ½ cords from Mr. Flynn	8.50
		Sawing 1 ½ cords wood	1.25
		One altar cloth	2.50
		One saw & frame	0.85

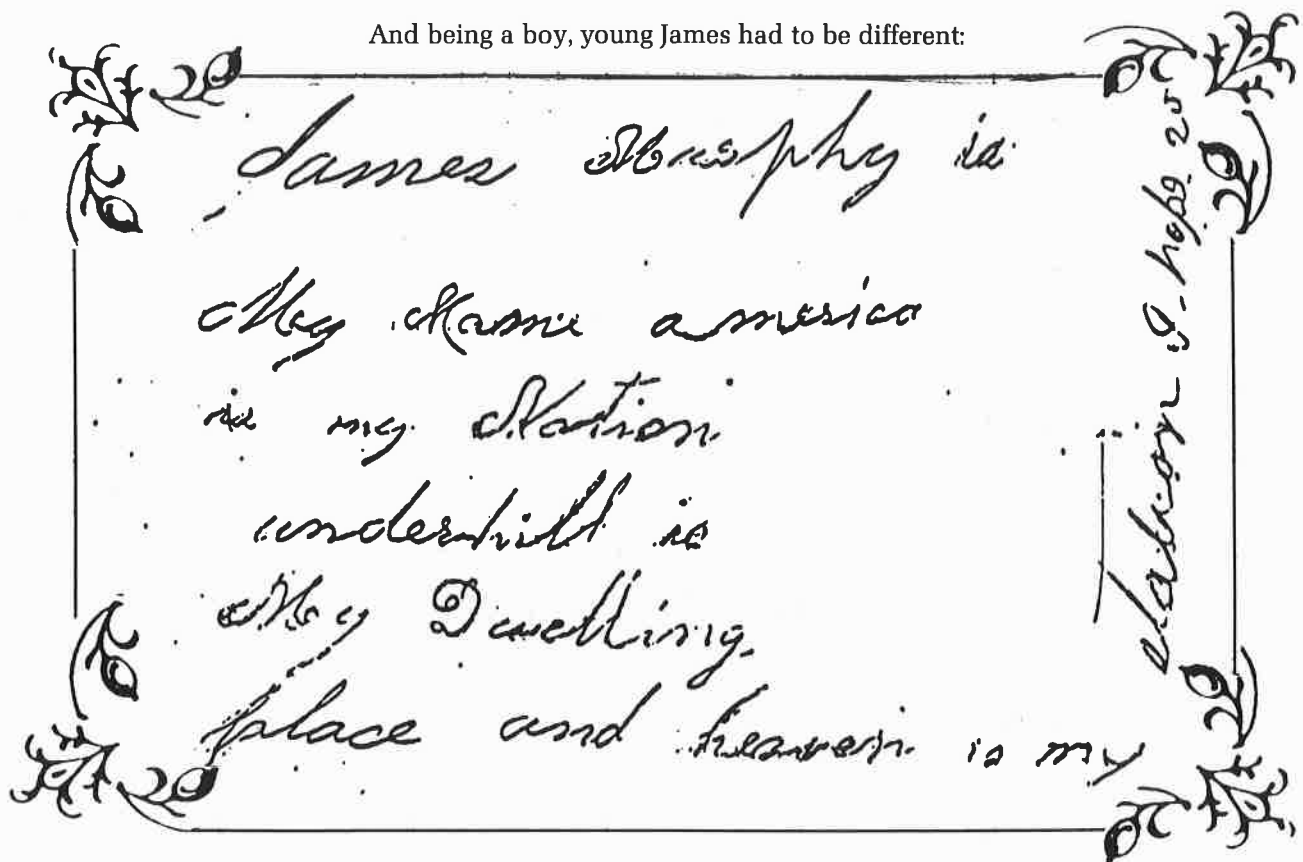
Haying was done on the property at a cost of ten dollars. "Fences were made around the land" and "blinds on the church were fixed."

During Father Pigeon's first year there were twenty-two deaths, including two infants and sixteen young people under the age of forty-three.

Death was an ever-present reality to the young of these days. In verse written by her friends in young Lizzie Lynch's autograph book one finds many references to death and the hereafter. Her cousin Maggie wrote:



And being a boy, young James had to be different:



Father Pigeon's parish report for 1881: 36 Baptisms, 9 marriages, 60 First Communions, not over 200 families (about 12 in Cambridge), pew rent \$831.50, income \$1104.85, expenses \$1115.55, debt \$985, priest salary \$600. Under debts: Fr. Savoie when convenient \$520.00

The roster of membership of the "Bona Mors Society," instituted by Father Pigeon, was a lengthy one, its members evidently hoping thereby to obtain the grace of a "good" or holy death. Not surprisingly, most—though not all—were older members of the parish. The names of sweet Rose Murphy, then in her twenties, and her sister Maggie—spinsters for the rest of their lives—were there, as were "old Miss Quinn" and "Mrs. Cale, oldest lady of all."

An optimistic undertaking by the new pastor was the earnest accounting—on what he hoped would be a more remunerative basis—of the custom of pew renting. Pew rent was \$4 or \$3 quarterly or whatever people could give on account; the offering for seats in the gallery was 10 cents. The size of the collection waxed and waned over the years. For the purpose of renting pews it was the custom to divide the seating area of the church into four parts: Epistle Side Wall; Epistle Center; Gospel Center; and Gospel Wall.

From the various parts of the parish they gathered—still the same dear old gang of Irish with a soupçon of French for spice—only now, they were divided into four parts. Seated on the Epistle Side Wall, the Barretts, Breens, Marlows, Murphys, Leddys, Quinlans, Ladeaus, McGraths, Whalens, Fitzsimmondses, Reynoldses, and all, might observe, with a side glance toward the altar on their left, their neighbors from far and near—the Flynns, Shanleys, Byrneses, Cavanaughs, McNultys, Morrisises, Corbetts, Mattimores, Eagans, Gills, McGees, Clarys, Lancors, Garlands, Doors, Donnellys, and others—as they made their genuflections and took their seats in the Epistle Center. Those looking altarward from their seats on the Gospel Side Wall—the Papineaus, McGoverns, Doons, Caseys, Duffys, Greens, McLanes, McNassars, Haggertys, Ryans, McGuires, McGlynns, Burkes and the rest—could not but take in the presence of friend and relative installed in the Gospel Center, such as the Hanleys, Flannerys, Russells, Smiths, Walls, Mullens, Bulgers, Plants, McVays, Gavins, Desanys, Carvils, Burnses, and all the rest.

*Gospel Hall*  
*No 20*

1884

Jan	Apr	June	Oct
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Underhill centre Vermont

October 1885

Names of those who have  
 a pew in Saint Thomas Catholic  
 Church.

Gospel Hall. n			
a	Abraham Doon +	4 seats	+
b	Michael Murphy	4 seats	1
1	Patrick Barret	4 seats	
2	Edward Green +	4 seats	
3	Frank Marlow +	4 seats	
4	Mike Barret ++	4 seats	
5	James Green +	4 seats	
6	Patrick Torell +	2 seats	
	Thomas Owe	2 seats	
7	Peter Reynolds (Junior)	2 seats	
8	Abous Larey	2 seats	
9	Michael Leddy +	2 seats	
10	Michael Pitymons	2 seats	

A Page from the Pew Records

It is more than likely that many a match was envisioned by the fond parents of the families so providentially arranged for the incidental viewing of one another's progeny. Certain it is that the young people made up their own minds as to the choice of the lot, but marry they did—so that many, if not most, of the old families were related somehow.

In reviewing the litany of these names while, perhaps, visualizing the location of some of the old homes, one might in the mind's eye see the dear souls rising early on a wintry Sunday morning and leaving the warmth of the woodstove they had dressed by, to hitch up the wagon or sleigh for what was a long trip over poor roads. The horses left to wait outside the church, their breath white in the frosty air, would be snorting and pawing the hard ground—impatient to return to the comparative warmth of the barn. In summer, the same horses probably waited quietly, their tails flicking flies—only an occasional whinny reminding their folks inside that they were expecting the usual draught of cool water from the brook before the hot trip home.

In the hard-working Father Pigeon's second year, the twenty-five year old church was renovated and enlarged by an addition of thirty-five feet in length and twenty-five feet in width. This improvement provided a chancel of 18 by 25 feet, a vestry 12 by 25 ft. and a front vestibule 8 by 30 ft. All of this work was accomplished for approximately \$2000. He also hired "painter Sheehey" to paint the parish house at a cost of \$40, had the entire house papered for \$25 and bought a new kitchen stove for \$33. The carting of dirt from the back of the house cost \$22.

Father Pigeon became ill during the following year. His last marriage was that of Louis Ladeau, age 23, of Jericho and Ann Gill, age 22, of Underhill on the 29th of September, 1884. He died the 26th of the following month in Montreal.

Mindful of his parish duties to the last, Father Pigeon left this rather poignant final note in the book of accounts: "Dear Father Coathuel: Please write the Underhill account on the following page."

Father Coathuel, assisted occasionally by visiting priests from the Cathedral, attended the parish for the remainder of the year. Among expenses listed in his account were:

Paid to myself 15 journeys at	
\$5.00 each	\$75.00
Railroad	11.25
Cigars	2.00
Pasturing a cow	8.00
Splitting 10 cords wood J. Breen	2.00
For building fires all winter	5.00
To G. Terrill & Son #1 brick	2.64
G.A. Curry for drawing brick	0.35

Father Jerome Cloarec, an assistant in 1885 from Burlington, purchased a cross "to put on the church" for \$12. He also bought paint from Dr. Nay's drug store for \$42.08 and had some papering done on the house at a cost of \$1.25. In May, he paid \$7.00 for "16 apple trees and some shrubs etc.".

Father Francis Yvinec of St. Joseph's who attended for some nine months in the same year listed 32 Baptisms, 6 marriages and 12 deaths in that period. Some expenses he mentioned:

Pd for a team from Burlington to	
Underhill (visit of the Bishop)	\$3.00
To G. Terrill for glass, brooms etc	1.95
William Flynn 1,200 shingles	24.00
Ed. Breen for shingling church	13.50
One ton of coal	6.87

# Bona mors Association

## Rules for the members of the Bona mors.

- I He that desires to become a member of the Bona mors, shall give His name to be recorded by the director.
  - II Let Him keep in His House an image of Jesus crucified, and say every day 3 times the Lord's Prayer and Hail Mary, to obtain the grace of a Good Death.
  - III One Saturday or Sunday of each month, every member should receive Holy communion, if possible, to obtain a good death for himself and the other associates.
  - IV On Friday some mortification should be performed.
  - V Let every associate endeavour to be present in the church at the prayers, Benediction of the Sacrament, and other exercises which take place as a preparation to die well.
  - VI Visit, if possible, the sick members of the association and be present at the funeral service of the dead associate.
  - VII When notice is given of the death of one of the Associates, each member shall apply to the departed soul, the next communion.
  - VIII At the death of a member a requiem Mass will be sung for the repose of his soul.
  - IX Once a month a mass will be said for all the members of the association.
  - X In order to defray the expenses of the Society, every member will have to pay an yearly contribution of 50 cents before ~~the~~ the 15<sup>th</sup> day of May.
- + These rules do not oblige under any sin
- One ~~Bro~~ Brother

In 1886 Father John Galligan arrived at St. Thomas for a stay of two and a half years. His yearly parish reports counted some twenty to thirty Baptisms each year, with twelve marriages and about twenty deaths during that period.

It is interesting to note that a letter to the pastor from Bishop deGoesbriand brings to an end the saga of the parish debt owed Father Savoie since the 8th of October, 1877, "to be paid when convenient":

Rev. and dear Sir,

I have today borrowed \$264.00 at the savings bank to repay Fr. Savoie in full...

*+ Louis Bp. of Burlington, Vt.*

On June 3, 1887, Pleasant Valley parishioners living below the "chin" of the mountain found themselves on the scene of an awesome and terrifying event known as the Shanley slide. The Quinn brothers, Eugene and Charles, logging on the mountainside above the old Bierne farm, then owned by Edmond Corbett, were caught in the sudden deluge that accompanied the slide but managed to escape with their lives. Situated at the base of a declivity to the north of a rib of rock, the former Flynn place, then occupied by the Shanley family, was in the direct path of the slide. Down the slope with a resounding rumble tumbled huge boulders and uprooted trees of great size—all swept along by the raging torrent. It seemed a miracle that the river of debris divided in its rush downward and spared the home and lives of the Shanleys. The ominous roar that echoed throughout the valley that day was never to be forgotten by the folks living there.

A few years later, the lives of the Papineau family living on the Mountain Road were spared when a slide occurred in that area.



12.

Shanley Slide

## Chapter 6

*We render to Thee, O Lord, the homage due Thee, earnestly entreating that by the prayers of Thy blessed apostle Thomas, on whose feast we offer these sacrifices of praise, that Thou guard Thy gifts to us.*

*Secret. Feast of St. Thomas, Apostle*

Upon Father Galligan's departure in July of 1888, St. Thomas reverted temporarily to mission status and was attended from Richmond by Father Andrew J. Barron until May 3, 1889, when Father James D. Shannon, just four months from ordination, was appointed pastor.

In May of Father Shannon's arrival, the First Communion class numbered eighty-five. The following year, there were 32 Baptisms and two marriages. Of the 15 deaths, five were elderly people who had grown old with the parish: Moses Bulger, age 83; Felix Doon, age 84; Mary Hanley Casey, age 97, Mary Doran McMannus, age 75, and James Breen, age 73.

(As all of the older Irish at the time were natives of Ireland whose birth records may have been lost or burned in church fires, it was customary to put after the age given at death the notation "circ." to indicate that the record of age was approximate.)

A tragic death recorded in the 1890 report was that of William Door Laporte, age 34, "drowned on July 1".

It is reassuring in retrospect to see in Fr. Shannon's 1890 parish report that the old church was insured in Vermont Mutual for \$2,500—to expire March 31, 1891, and that the house and barn, church and house furniture were insured with Phoenix Company of Brooklyn at \$1500—to expire May 4, 1893.

Father Shannon's report for the year included:

Some receipts:	
Pew rent	\$457.75
Plate collection	29.38
Easter collection	23.50
Bona Mors Society	23.75
Collection to buy house furniture	68.50
Collection to fence graveyard	73.00
Collection for fuel	68.50
From "Ten cent seat" rent	87.00
Subscription for house repairs	329.00
Some expenses:	
Purchase house & church furnishings	\$199.00
Fencing graveyards, building church steps	82.18
For furniture as collected at Nelson's in Burlington and Richardson and Twiss in St. Albans	68.50
Borrowed from Burlington Savings Bank for repairs on house	150.00
Priest salary	800.00
Repairs on church	29.00
Sundries for church and house	100.00
For house up-to-date	480.00
Due to J.D. Shannon for debts	735.00

Total expenses for the year	\$1215.58
Total receipts for the year	848.92
Due pastor to balance account	366.66
Pew rent not paid	40.00

In October of 1890 Father Shannon began further repairs on the rectory. By his account: "A cellar was excavated under the whole building; the house was raised, underpinned and enlarged by the addition of a west wing; the old part was thoroughly renovated; heating apparatus, sanitary plumbing, and good sewage facilities were also added."

The work of renovation and enlargement of the rectory were well on their way to completion when all very nearly came to naught; indeed, the thirty-four years of maintenance and improvements on the wooden church building itself were completely lost when, on Friday, December 19, 1890, the first St. Thomas church burned to the ground.

One can well imagine the cry of "Fire! Fire!" that went up through the village. As there was no fire department at that time (and not until 1913 when the first Underhill Volunteer Fire Department was organized), the only recourse probably would have been a hastily assembled bucket brigade from the brook. Although Fr. Shannon himself was away at the time, he gives the following account:

"There being no fire protection in the Village, the rectory only thirty feet from the church was saved with the greatest difficulty. Only a part of the church vestments, some of the cheap statuary, and some broken pews were saved from destruction. The rector being absent, the Blessed Sacrament was saved by tearing away the tabernacle from the altar."

Great was the sorrow and consternation of the parishioners as word of the fire spread through the hills. A precious part of their lives had been taken away: they thought of the infants they had carried in their arms to the church for Baptism; the children who had received their First Holy Communion at its altar rail and, later, Confirmation; of wedding vows made there on happier days and funerals on the sad days of bereavement.

And what about Christmas, less than a week away—the church already decorated and the music well rehearsed, the crib prepared and awaiting the Blessed Infant, the beauty of the Christmas Mass...? The very essence of the holy day was lost, it seemed.

Knots of anxious parishioners, many of whom had hitched up a team and made a special trip in the cold, gathered about the ruins of the old wooden building, speculating about the cause of the fire and wondering what might happen next. There was considerable coming and going at the surviving rectory by leading members of the congregation intent on conferring with Fr. Shannon concerning the future of St. Thomas parish. They need not have feared—the practical pastor had begun immediately to formulate plans for the building of a new church.

Meanwhile, the Green Mountain Academy, now unused for some ten years, was offered to the "afflicted and harborless" congregation. The thankful parishioners swept and cleaned the interior of the building, had a temporary altar installed by some of its member carpenters (probably the Breens), and managed to make the hall ready for Mass on Christmas Day. This building was used as a chapel for one year, with two Masses said on Sundays. During that year, there were twenty-eight Baptisms, six marriages, and seven deaths. Patrick Casey, age 32, was "instantly killed by a horse," William O'Neil was "killed by a run-away horse," Widow Gaffney died at the age of 95 (circ.) and Ellen O'Dowd Lynch, born at sea and nearly kidnapped from her sleeping mother's side upon arrival in Canada, died at the age of eighty.

Father Shannon's appeal for a subscription toward the building of a new church received "quite a generous response." He remarked, however that, "as usual, the poorer portion of the congregation were the more generous".



Work was begun as soon as possible on the preparation of the planned location of the new building. It was necessary to remove "several thousands of yards of earth" from a bank to the rear of the site. This job, termed "an obstinate task" by Fr. Shannon, was not completed until 1898. (It must be remembered that men had to dig out the bank by hand with pick and shovel and cart it away by wagon—no back-hoes or bulldozers in those days.)

Under the firm and able guidance of Father Shannon, plans were drawn up by one "Architect Guernsey" of Montpelier and, in April of 1891, ground was broken for the new church.

Babies who did some ground breaking of their own that month were Thomas Francis Murphy, son of James and Ellen, whose Godparents were Peter Leddy and Rose Murphy, and Mary Winifred Fitzimmons, daughter of George and Mary, whose Godparents were Michael Leddy and Mrs. George Alger.

Construction began the first of May and, aided by the collection of subscriptions and fund-raising efforts, continued throughout the spring and into the summer. By August, work had progressed to the point of readiness for the laying of the cornerstone. This important event took place on August 12, 1891.

The August 7th Burlington Free Press published an advance notice of the coming event:

"The cornerstone of the new Catholic Church at Underhill Centre will be laid on Wednesday, August 12. The Central Vermont railroad will sell round trip tickets at fare one way. There will be a carriage conveyance from the railroad station to the church and return. Dinner will be served by the ladies of the parish. A train will leave Barre via Montpelier at 6 A.M., and Burlington people who wish to attend will leave here at 7:15."

By Father Shannon's account, about one thousand people were present at the ceremony of the laying and blessing of the corner stone. The Free Press reported the event as follows:

"The ceremonies attending the laying of the corner stone of the new Catholic Church at Underhill were carried out very successfully, every detail having been carefully pre-arranged. Solemn High Mass in the presence of the Rt. Rev. Bishop DeGoesbriand was celebrated Wednesday morning at 10:30 o'clock. Father W. J. O'Sullivan of Montpelier was celebrant, Father Donahue of this city deacon, Father Paquet of Lyndonville, sub-deacon, and Father D. J. O'Sullivan of St. Albans, master of ceremonies, Fathers Cam of Swanton and Kerlidou of Alburgh assisting at the throne. After the celebration of the Mass an eloquent sermon was delivered by Rev. A.J. Barron of Richmond. The discourse was a forcefull presentation of the history and achievements of the Catholic Church since its organization. Following the sermon, the corner stone was laid by Bishop DeGoesbriand. The music of the Mass was the new production composed by Father J. Brevilet of Northfield, and it was rendered by Northfield and Waterbury choirs.

"The reverend gentlemen present were: Fathers Cam of Swanton, D. J. O'Sullivan of St. Albans, Brevilet of Northfield, W. J. O'Sullivan of Montpelier, Donahue of Burlington, Galligan of Montpelier, Mathew of Milton, Barron of Richmond, Kerlidou of Alburgh, and Paquet of Lyndonville."

Members of the parish, encouraged by this inspiring occasion, participated in a second call for subscriptions, many of which "were paid in very slowly", as Fr. Shannon put it, adding "the last of them being paid during the summer of 1898—thus either retarding the work or increasing the interest bearing debt."

Keeping in mind the lack of any real wealth at all among the parishioners of St. Thomas and the relative value of a dollar at that time, and recalling the hope expressed by Father Shannon in his 1899 historical sketch that his own inclusion of the list would "be found to possess some local interest at least for the descendents of those who, by their generous deeds and uncompromising Catholic life, aided in planting and maintaining the Old Faith in this locality," the names of those subscribers are listed herein.

# A List of Subscribers

Who Contributed Towards the Erection of

## St. Thomas' Church,

Underhill Centre, Vermont.

Building Begun May 1, 1891.

Adrien, Thomas.....	\$25 00	Daigle, Eli.....	5 00	Harvey, John.....	15 00
Alger, Henry.....	5 00	Desaney, Samuel.....	5 00	Harvey, Frank.....	5 00
Allaire, David.....	5 00	Desaney, Louis.....	20 00	Hebert, Henry.....	2 00
Andrews, Daniel.....	15 00	Desaney, John, Jr.....	15 00	Hennessey, Thomas...	11 00
Alexander, Theo.....	2 00	Dixon, Michael.....	10 00	Hurson, James.....	5 00
Barrett, Francis.....	50 00	Donnelly, John.....	35 00	Kane, Mrs. Anne.....	5 00
Barrett, William.....	50 00	Doon, John.....	10 00	Kelley, Thomas.....	5 00
Barrett, John W.....	50 00	Doon, Francis.....	20 00	Keunedy, John.....	20 00
Barrett, Patrick L....	35 00	Doon, James.....	15 00	Kilpeck, James.....	30 00
Barrett, Luke.....	5 00	Doon, Felix J.....	10 00	Kilpeck, John M.....	10 00
Barrett, Mary.....	5 00	Dorey, Louis, Jr.....	10 00	Kilpeck, Maggie.....	5 00
Breen, Edward, 1st...	40 00	Duffey, John.....	25 00	King, Ann.....	4 00
Breen, John.....	5 00	Eagan, Mrs. Dennis..	10 00	King, Nelson.....	5 00
Breen, Charles.....	5 00	Eagan, Thomas.....	10 00	Lacaille, Michael..	5 00
Breen, Rose A.....	5 00	Ennis, Edward.....	20 00	Laporte, Mathias....	\$20 00
Breen, Lizzie M.....	5 00	Ennis, John.....	10 00	Laporte, Charles....	5 00
Breen, William.....	20 00	Ennis, Thomas.....	10 00	Laramy, Alex. W.....	35 00
Breen, James.....	20 00	Farrell, Philip.....	35 00	Lancour, Antoine....	10 00
Breen's Mrs. Sarah		Fenton, James.....	1 00	Lavigne, Louis.....	10 00
family.....	40 00	Fitzgerald, Mich'l, Sr.	20 00	Leonard, Henry.....	25 00
Brewin, Maggie.....	10 00	Fitzgerald, Mich'l, Jr.	10 00	Leary, Moses, 2d....	10 00
Bulger, David.....	10 00	Fitzgerald, Patrick...	10 00	Leclair, Charles....	5 00
Burke, Felix.....	\$10 00	Fitzgerald, Richard ..	5 00	Leddy, Michael.....	50 00
Burns, Patrick.....	15 00	Fitzsimmons, Jas., Sr.	50 00	Leddy, Peter.....	10 00
Burns, Katie.....	5 00	Fitzsimmons, Jas., Jr.	20 00	Ledeau, Francis.....	10 00
Butler, Antoine.....	10 00	Fitzsimmons, Mrs. Jno.	10 00	Ledeau, Mary.....	9 00
Byrnes, Francis.....	20 00	Fitzsimmons, Michael	10 00	Ledeau, Edmond.....	15 00
Cahill, Francis.....	50 00	Fitzsimmons, George..	10 00	Lafleche, William, Sr.	5 00
Campbell, John.....	20 00	Fitzsimmons, Jas., 2d.	10 00	McCabe, William.....	10 00
Campbell, Joseph....	5 00	Fitzsimmons, Louis..	\$ 5 00	McCoy, Ellen J.....	25 00
Carr, John.....	5 00	Flannery, Martin....	25 00	McCue, Michael.....	20 00
Carroll, James.....	25 00	Flynn, Martin.....	10 00	McCue, Francis.....	5 00
Carville, James.....	20 00	Flynn, William.....	50 00	McElroy, Mrs Wm..	5 00
Casey, Matthew, 1st..	15 00	Flynn, Emma.....	10 00	McGee, John.....	15 00
Casey, James, 2nd....	5 00	Flynn, Edward.....	5 00	McGee, Mrs. H.....	5 00
Casey, John (Jericho).	30 00	Flynn, William C....	5 00	McGlynn, Patrick...	55 00
Casey, Thomas, 1st..	10 00	Flynn Peter.....	5 00	McGrath, Patrick...	10 00
Casey, Kate.....	5 00	Fortier, Joseph.....	5 00	McLane, Daniel.....	25 00
Casey, Matthew, 2nd..	10 00	Freemneau, Joseph...	5 00	McLanc, James.....	10 00
Casey, Thomas, 2nd..	5 00	Gaines, William H....	5 00	McLane, John.....	20 00
Catella, Roch.....	20 00	Garland, Patrick, Sr..	10 00	McNichols, John....	10 00
Cavanaugh, Arthur, Sr.	50 00	Garland, Patrick, Jr..	15 00	McNulty, Henry.....	5 00
Cavanaugh, Charles..	10 00	Garland, Sarah.....	5 00	McNulty, John.....	10 00
Cavanaugh, Sarah....	10 00	Gauvin, Leon.....	40 00	McVeigh, Daniel....	25 00
Cavanaugh, Katie....	\$ 5 00	Gill, Patrick.....	10 00	McVeigh, Henry.....	30 00
Cavanaugh, Maggie ..	5 00	Gray, Winnie.....	5 00	Mable, George.....	10 00
Cavanaugh, Nellie ...	5 00	Green, Mrs. Rose....	5 00	Maguire, Patrick, Sr.	25 00
Chayer, John.....	5 00	Green, Mrs. Margery..	5 00	Marlow, Francis.....	25 00
Clarey, John.....	10 00	Guilbeault, Edward..	5 00	Marlow, Fred.....	5 00
Cooper, Mrs. B.....	2 00	Guyette, Phil.....	15 00	Marlow, Edward.....	5 00
Corbett, Edmond.....	25 00	Hanley, Thomas B....	35 00	Marlow, Abram.....	25 00
Corbett, William.....	25 00	Hanley, William.....	10 00	Marlow, Ellen.....	5 00
Costello, George.....	5 00	Hanley, John.....	10 00	Mattimore, Bernard B.	50 00
Costello, John.....	30 00	Hanley, Frank.....	5 00	Mattimore, Martin V.	10 00
Costello, Ellen.....	25 00	Harmon, John.....	15 00	Monahan, John J.....	20 00
Cotey, Mrs. Mary....	5 00	Hart, George.....	5 00	Moore, Thomas.....	50 00
Cunningham, John....	15 00	Hartgrove, Mrs. Rose.	5 00	Morris, James.....	30 00
Daigle, Stephen.....	5 00	Harty, Roger.....	10 00		



Mudget, Eugene.....	\$10 00	Ryan, Michael, 1st...	10 00
Mullen Patrick.....	25 00	Ryan, Thomas.....	5 00
Mullen, Arthur, 2d...	15 00	Ryan Patrick.....	5 00
Mullen, Theresa.....	5 00	Shanley, James, Sr...	15 00
Mullen, Arthur, 1st ..	10 00	Shanley, Fred.....	5 00
Murphy, James, Jr...	5 00	Shanley, Louis.....	25 00
Noonan, Jerry D.....	20 00	Shannon, J. T.....	50 00
O'Neill, James, 1st...	10 00	Sheehey, James.....	10 00
O'Neill, John.....	5 00	Sheehey, Francis....	25 00
Papineau, Oliver....	50 00	Sisters, Felix.....	25 00
Papineau, Charles W	10 00	Sisters, Fred.....	5 00
Parisseau, Octave....	2 00	Smith, J. C., a stranger	10 00
Plant, Victor.....	20 00	Smith, John.....	5 00
Plant, P. V.....	1 00	Smith, Nicholas.....	15 00
Prendergast, John...	5 00	Smith, Katie.....	5 00
Prendergast, Nellie...	5 00	Stevens, L. C.....	5 00
Proulx, Arthur.....	5 00	Stinson, Mrs. Margaret	\$ 5 00
Quillinan, Kittie....	5 00	Spillaine, Daniel....	5 00
Quinlan, Ellen.....	5 00	Spillaine, Mrs. D....	2 00
Raynolds, Peter.....	50 00	Tierney, Matthew....	10 00
Raynolds, Patrick....	20 00	Terrill, G. A.....	25 00
Reeves, Thomas.....	50 00	Wall, Daniel.....	24 00
Russell, Walter.....	50 00	Wall, James.....	\$10 00
Ryan, Dennis.....	15 00	White, Mrs. George..	5 00
Ryan, John.....	10 00	White, H.....	5 00
Ryan, Sarah.....	5 00	Young, Peter.....	5 00
Ryan, Julia.....	5 00	The Rector.....	100 00
TOTAL.....		\$ 3,430 00	

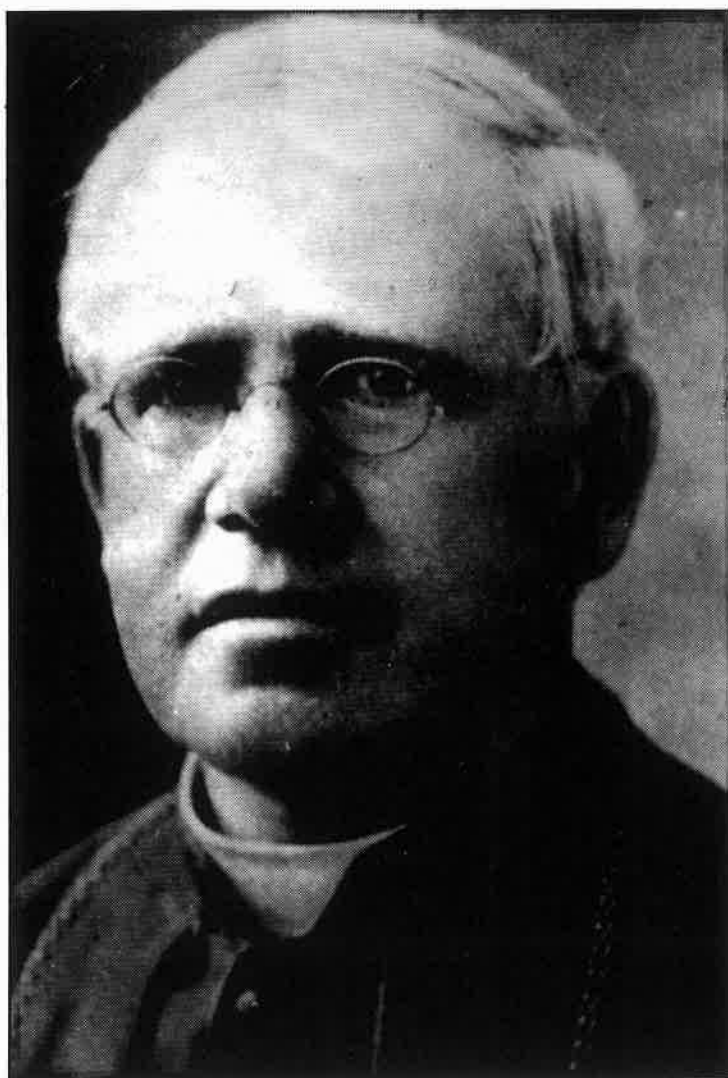
Father Shannon's description of the new church, which was built "wholly by contract, under the supervision of the architect and rector" is quite detailed: "The extreme exterior dimensions of the new church are: 124 x 41 feet, including tower front and vestry; the spire measured 100 feet from top of water-table. The building is of wood, brick veneered and trimmed with Bennington limestone. The church has a finished basement, fitted with stage, dinning hall, kitchen, with all necessary furniture, ticket office, cloak and smoking rooms. The church will seat four hundred. No attempt will be made here to give a detailed architectural description of the edifice. Suffice it to say that every part of the work was very solidly and, if we except a part of the brick work, very tastily executed. The contractors were: for stone and brick work, N. Dubuc of Montpelier; for wood work, J. T. Shannon of Fairfield; for slating, A. C. Hathorne of Burlington; for plastering, P. Ritchie of Burlington; for painting and frescoing, John Costello of Jericho, and W. H. Henry of Boston; the windows are the work of John Margan & sons of New York. The windows were all donated, the highest subscribers having the first option, then others. The uniform cost of each window was \$35.00, which was given over and above the individual subscriptions as recorded above."

Some receipts from the 1891 financial account were:

From celebration and blessing of corner stone	\$400.00
From church fair clear	1224.00
From subscription for church	1275.00
From insurance on old church burned	2487.87
Borrowed money during year	2525.00
From ladies for house furnishings	117.00
And some of the expenses:	
For furnishing house	259.24
For repairs on house	935.00
Paid up-to-date towards new church	6522.06

## Chapter 7

*O merciful God, do Thou abide with  
us, and, with the blessed apostle  
Thomas interceding for us, mercifully  
watch over Thy gifts made for our welfare.  
Postcommunion. Feast of St. Thomas, Apostle*



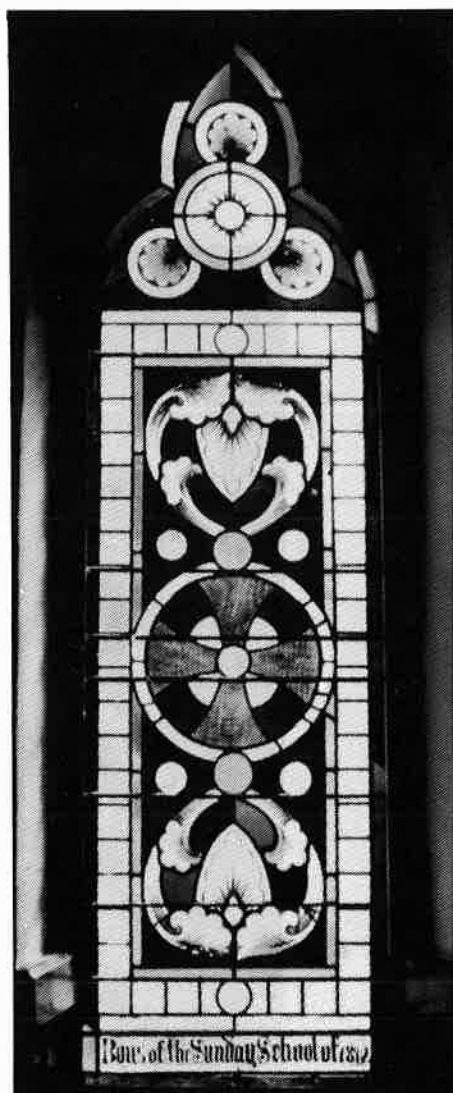
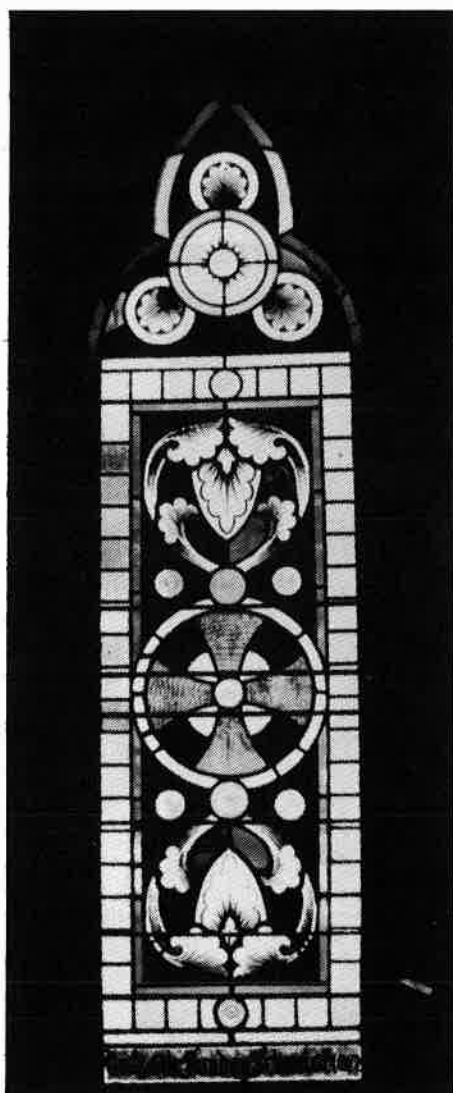
13. Bishop Michaud

Christmas of 1891 was celebrated with the first Mass in the new church basement. On New Year's Day 1892 the first child to be baptized in the church basement was Joseph Augustin Kilpeck, son of James Kilpeck and Ellen Leddy. Godparents were John Casey and Mrs. John McNulty.

This was the year of the indefatigable Bishop deGoesbriand's retirement and the naming of Burlington native John Stephen Michaud as Coadjutor Bishop—a role he would fill until Bishop deGoesbriand's death in 1899. On September 18, 1892, the new Bishop made his first visit to St. Thomas Church on the occasion of the first classes of Confirmation and First Communion held in

*History of St. Thomas Church*

the new church basement. In memory of this event, the catechism students donated the two small windows (at a cost of \$15.00 each) in the tower vestibule of the church.



14.

Windows donated by Catechism class 1892

The work of finishing and furnishing the interior of the church, carried on throughout the year, culminated in the joyful celebration of the first Mass offered in the new church proper on Christmas, 1892.

The first marriage performed in the new church proper was that of Patrick Flynn and Mary LaFlache on January 9, 1893. On the 26th of the following month, Theresa Evaline Wall daughter of Daniel Wall and Mary Riley, became the first child to be baptized in the new church. Her Godparents were John Shanley and Anna Kilpeck.

Centre St. J. D. Shannon Pastor Accts 1893 19  
Expenditures for year 1893

Priest's Salary	800.00
Deacon & other employees	40.00
Fuel	165.00
wine altar & roads	37.50
Candles, oil, incense	48.00
mending & washing altar linen	18.00
counterfeit money	1.25-
Organs, & music <sup>\$14.42</sup> old debt: <sup>\$2.50</sup> tuning organ <sup>\$1.35</sup>	28.22
Insurance	120.00
Interest on borrowed money	306.25-
Debts paid	700.00
Paper's collect. pd. \$12.10	
Indians & negroes \$7.50	
Repairs on house including range & bath room	281.53
Constructing & completing new Church	3273.16
	<u>\$5438.91</u>
Due me to bal	\$122.35-

Stations of the Cross were duly & canonically erected in St. Thomas Church Vanderhill Centre by me with written authorization of Rt. Rev. L. de Gasparis Bp of Burlington on Sunday Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> 1893

J. D. Shannon  
Pastor

# Registrum Confirmatorum.

Anno 1894 die 15<sup>a</sup> mensis Aug. in Ecclesia St. Thomae

Nomen Impositum.

Nomen et Cognomen.

Patrimus.

Georgius Patricius Lobitt	Francis Barrett
Fredricus Georgius Mable	"
Jacobus Henricus Canall	"
Joannes Patricius Canall	"
Joannes Henricus Mable	"
Martinus Eduardus Egan	"
James Francis Cunningham	"
Josephus Mastella	"
Ada Eva Wagner	Mrs. Chas. Dorr
Emma Maria Austin	"
Maria Cordelia Beckett	"
Edna Isabella Wagner	"
Rosa Anna McLabi	"
Maria Joanna Tierney	"
Anna Julia McGrath	"
Flora Elizabeth Latella	"
Maria Laura Liddy	"
Maria Agnes Shuckin	"

Note. This was the first-class confirmed in the new Church proper, which has been occupied since June 1893. A larger class made their first communion but owing to their tender age it was deemed more prudent to have them wait another year for Confirmation.

The Mission by Frs O'Kane and Gooding S.J. will begin next Sunday for one week.

J. A. Shannon  
Pastor

In February, Father Shannon received permission to install the stations of the cross in the church. From his notes:

“Stations of the cross were duly and canonically erected in St. Thomas Church, Underhill Center, by me with written authorization of the Rt. Rev. L. deGoesbriand, Bishop of Burlington, on Sunday February 12, 1893.”

Father Shannon’s report for that year enumerated his flock as follows:

Irish families	French Families
102 pewholders	12 pewholders
19 helpers	4 helpers
3 nominal	9 nominal
124 total	25 total
Grand total 149	

The next year—1894—the first Catholic hospital in Vermont was founded by Bishop Michaud. Named for Fanny Allen, it was built on what was once the property of her father, Ethan Allen. Owner and farmer Michael Kelly, a former driver for Miss Mary Fletcher, made the generous donation of the land. The new hospital was staffed by Fanny’s order—the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph. Although quite a distance away by the conveyance of the time, the new hospital’s advent must have been of considerable comfort to Underhill parishioners.

The Confirmation class of August 1894 was the first to be confirmed in the new church proper. The visiting Bishop Michaud witnessed, as well, a large class of First Communicants.

The mission preached the following week was, in Father’s words, “a complete success” with about one hundred twenty confessions being heard. The League of the Sacred Heart was organized at that time and promised “to accomplish much good in the church.” (Now we know whence came the inevitable old picture of the Sacred Heart which hung for years in living, dining, or bedroom and even, perhaps, graced the walls of our own childhood homes).

In Father Shannon’s accounting of 1894 expenses, he mentions \$115 due in pew rent and \$200 in unpaid subscriptions. Thirty-five dollars was spent on “suits” for the altar boys that year. Again he is making a personal loan—this time \$178.84. (From his beginning in 1899, it was the custom of Father Shannon to lend each year from his own funds whatever amount necessary “to balance the account.”)

In the spring of 1894, as preparation for the first Confirmations, Father himself had donated, at a cost to him of \$225, an altar to replace what one would suppose was a temporary one. His note:

“In May the pastor donated the present altar. The ladies furnished carpets and candlesticks. The chair is a present to the pastor and this church.”

Father Shannon also gave the stained glass window to the right of the Sanctuary. The window on the opposite side was the gift of the Father J. Brelivet who had composed the music of the Mass celebrating the laying of the cornerstone.

Now that the interior of the church was becoming quite well equipped, several members of the parish approached their pastor with regard to what was the fond wish of all the parishioners—a bell for St. Thomas. A special subscription proposed by them raised \$211.10. On August 25, 1895, a “fine-toned” bell weighing with mountings twenty-nine hundred pounds was installed in the



bell-tower of the church. An expense of \$50 was incurred for "repairing the bell house and mounting bell." The bell was inscribed:

A Gift from St. Thomas Congregation  
August 1895  
Christened St. James  
McShane Foundry  
Baltimore, Md.  
1895

(The inscription was confirmed by our pastor-pilot, Father Jean-Paul Laplante, in 1990 when he climbed up into the belfry at the time some repairs were being done on the church. While aloft, Father made several repairs on the bell. Bats in the belfry he did not find—but pigeons and their nests aplenty. In fact, it was impossible to reach the very top openings in the spire because of the one hundred years' accumulation of hay brought in by the birds. The lower openings were then closed, however, and the thwarted pigeons departed in search of a more hospitable nesting place.)

From Bishop Michaud's diary:

"August 13, 1895 visited Underhill and was to bless the bell—no bell.

August 25, 1895 so returned on this date for latter ceremony which I performed in A.M. and preached." On this occasion Fathers J. P. Lang and M. S. Carmody accompanied the Bishop.

At last, the beautiful St. Thomas Church, its bell resounding in joyous tones, was blessed by Bishop Michaud on September 23, 1895. Priests assisting in the ceremony were the Fathers A. J. Barron and Thomas Donahue.

On the Bishop's return visit the following year, he confirmed a large class of nearly 50 candidates. Father Shannon's comments about the occasion:

"Confirmation conferred at which some of the children received their First Holy Communion though the greater of them had already received their First Communion last year. The singing of the children under the leadership of Mary Pender was especially fine. Spoke briefly to the children. About 50 received their First Holy Communion today who are not as yet well-enough instructed to warrant their leaving catechism class which they are in the habit of doing (and by the consent of their parents despite the Pastor) as soon as they have received their Confirmation."

Among the items in the year's account were the receipt of \$36 for vestments from the combined efforts of the altar Society and League of the Sacred Heart as well as the sizeable amount of \$1001.02 raised by means of a "fair"—lively custom transported from the "auld sod" and very popular with all.

During Father Shannon's period as pastor, fairs were held regularly as a means of raising money for church expenses. Proceeds raised over the years were as little as about \$600 one year to a grand amount of \$1224 in 1891. Three of those years each netted an amount over one thousand much needed dollars for the new church. Nevertheless, old graveyard payments of \$25 were still due as was pew rent in the amount of \$450.

The parochial library, inactive for some years, was reorganized in 1897 with about four hundred "well-selected" books and with membership at a fee of fifty cents per year. Open on Sundays, it was probably visited after the Benediction which followed Mass.

Dr. Nay, with his horse and buggy, was a familiar figure in the village and environs in the years 1897 and 1898, as thirty-four deaths occurred within those two years. Father Shannon listed the cause of death of some of his "family" of nine years this way: John Murphy, age 85, died of "old age"; infant Hanley died of "the croupe" and infant McNassar of "the grippe"; Mrs. W. LaFlashe, age 40, of "measles followed by croupe"; and Joseph Flynn, age 16, of "measles and pneumonia".

Of the eighteen deaths in 1898, ten were of elderly men who were young and vigorous at the time the first—the old wooden—church was built. Their names are familiar:

John Doon, age 92  
Martin Flynn, age 87  
John Bartley, age 83  
John Farrell, age 82  
John McLane, age 78  
John Smith, age 78  
Edward Breen, age 74  
Patrick Donnelly, age 72  
William Flynn, age 72  
Solomon Papineau died at the age of 68 of heart disease.

His parish membership Father described as follows:

“About 190 families, about 160 of these are of Irish descent and the remainder of about 30 are of Canadian descent.” (One German family is listed.) “The people of the parish are mostly farmers, as such they are well to do, intelligent and well educated for their class. They are a majority in Underhill and in the other towns of Jericho, Bolton, Cambridge and Essex as well as at home they often fill the highest offices within the gift of the town.”

The tenth and final past-due debt report of the good pastor ends on a note of capitulation into which may be read a bit of humor:

Pew rent due almost worthless	\$450
Graveyard lots—sure	\$25



15. New “suits” for the altar boys

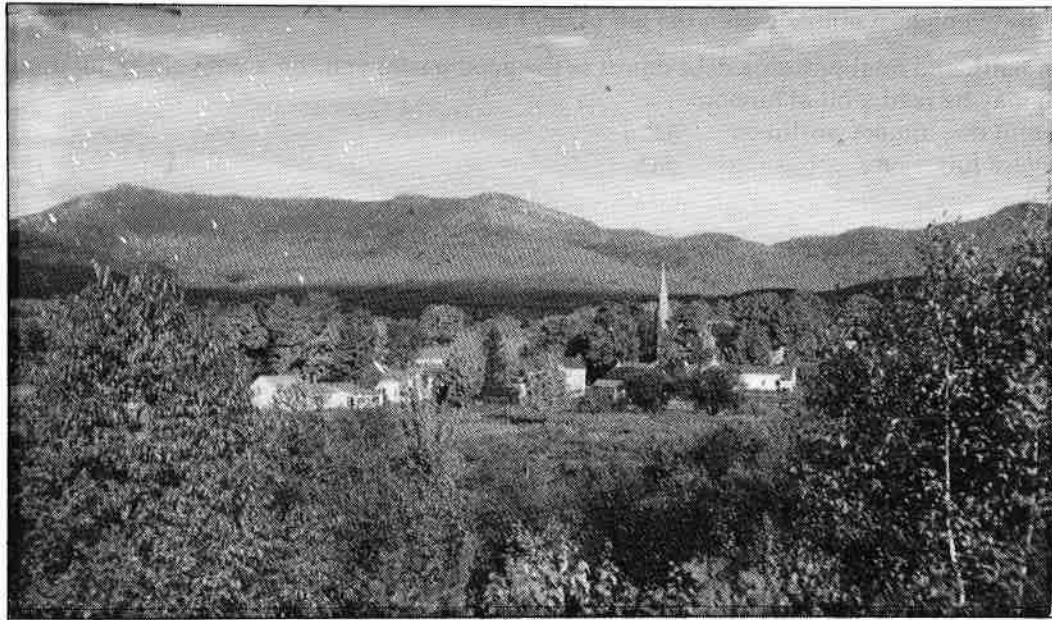
## Chapter 8

### The End of an Era

On a fine October day in the fall of 1898, St. Thomas' grounds were the scene of a patriotic and picturesque ceremony when a flag raising took place near the southwest corner of the church. The occasion was reported in the Free Press as follows:

"A Unique Ceremony in the Form of a Church Flag-Raising.

The flag-raising at St. Thomas Church, Underhill Centre, as was announced, took place on Saturday, October 22. During the week a fine staff, measuring 55 feet, had been raised on the church lawn. At 11 a.m. Old Glory was unfurled to the breeze mid strains of martial music rendered by the Underhill "old Veteran Drum Corps." This was followed by the singing of the "Star Spangled Banner". During the banquet which was served in St. Thomas' hall and at which nearly 200 sat down, the Underhill orchestra discoursed delightful music. The banquet was followed by the rendering of national songs by the choir, recitations and declamations of a patriotic character by the Sunday-school children. The speaker of the day was to have been Rev. Fr. Carmody of Richmond, but he was unavoidably absent. The pastor, Rev. J. D. Shannon made a few appropriate and eloquent remarks, then introduced in turn T. F. McGinnis of Bolton, Capt. J. J. Monahan and George Dunton. They spoke interestingly of the duties of American citizens, and of the appropriateness of a church flag-raising. Thus ended a celebration unique in Vermont and long to be remembered by the citizens of Underhill."



16.

St. Thomas Church spire, Underhill Center, VT

In another newspaper clipping we find out that the very good excuse for Fr. Carmody's absence was his—no doubt unavoidable—attendance at a funeral. Unfortunately, he missed, as well, the "excellent" dinner served in the church hall by the ladies. Not to mention the after dinner entertainment: "Yankee Dewey" sung by George Flynn and sister and the "comical" story told by J. W. McNulty—both of which offerings were "earnestly applauded".

Father Shannon, imparting a few side lines, lets us in on other particulars of the occasion—both practical and poetical:

"Subscriptions to meet expenses of the ceremony were solicited by B. B. Mattimore (at whose suggestion it was undertaken) and Francis Barrett. Their efforts resulted in a snug sum for the church treasury. The fine flag-staff planted on the south-west corner of the church lawn marks the spot where formerly grew those historic maples referred to above."

After ten eventful years as its pastor, Father J. D. Shannon was to leave St. Thomas parish to serve elsewhere in the diocese. His financial summary covers the over ten years of his service from 1889-1899.

Below will be found a summary financial statement of St. Thomas' Church since May, 1889:

Bonded debt of Church, May 1889.....	\$ 675 00
Paid for insurance since that date.....	518 50
Cost of enlarging, rebuilding, and repairing house.	1,850 00
Cost of building new Church.....	13,850 00
Cost of permanent improvements, furnishings, and repairs for Church, house and premises	1,650 00
Paid interest on church loans during past ten years.....	2,855 50

TOTAL..... \$ 21,399 00

To apply towards this the Church received :

From insurance on old Church.....	\$ 2,480 00
From subscriptions, as footed above...	3,430 00
From subscriptions towards repairs on house .....	275 00
From fairs and other entertainments..	8,614 00

TOTAL received.... \$ 14,799 00

Leaving an interest bearing debt to-day of only..... \$ 6,600 00

Itemized accounts from which above footings are made are kept for reference in parish account books; as are also the current receipts and expenditures of the parish, which are not included in the above statement.

UNDERHILL CENTRE, VT., }  
March, 1899. }

The young priest who became the father of his first parish family—his personality as strong as his convictions and his love for his flock as deep as his love for his Faith—is remembered when St. Thomas Church is remembered, even to the present day.

Harking back to the historic outdoor Mass offered in the doorway of Martin Flannery's kitchen in 1854, Father Shannon, never one to mince words, made the following remarks—a parting shot, as it were—to his parishioners of 1899:

"A strange and imposing spectacle this would be to a casual observer of to-day; yet such inconveniences and difficulties were not of infrequent occurrence in the pioneer days of Catholicity in Vermont. A few perhaps are still living who were present on that July day, upon whom the atmosphere of irreligion or lust for gold has, alas, wrought such a sad change that they have quite forgotten that day and the birthright of faith, so dearly cherished, so tenderly guarded through the storm of ages, and so faithfully transmitted to them by their fathers."

(Amen, Father Shannon, Amen!)

Father Shannon was referred to by Father Charles Marcoux, a later pastor of St. Thomas, as a "remarkable man esteemed by all as one of the greatest priests the diocese has had."

## Chapter 9

### The Turn of the Century

Father Jerome Gelot succeeded Father Shannon in late 1899. His parish report for 1900, his first full year, listed 20 First Communions, five marriages and 27 Baptisms. One of the infants baptized was Matilda Bertha, daughter of William Schillhammer and Matilda Ledoux, on the sixth of June. Her Godparents were Charles Cavanaugh and Emma Ledoux.

Accounts for the year 1900 balanced out at \$1685.75 with pew rent and "fairs and festivals" bringing in the largest amounts. Special collections were made for such purposes as the purchase of an ostensorium and other—more mundane—expenses like the painting of the rectory.

The twelve deaths of the next year included the tragic death of Louis Lavigne who was killed, as Father Gelot reported it, "by a rotten limb falling on his head while chopping near his home." The accident, which occurred on January 10th, 1901, left his wife a widow and his ten children fatherless. That same year, two Shanleys, Louis who died in Colorado and Thomas, in South Dakota, were brought home for burial. Of the twelve deaths in 1902 eight were parishioners in their eighties.

Young deaths saddened the parish: In 1902, on February fourth, Winifred Wall, age sixteen, died at 11:00 P.M. in the Fanny Allen Hospital and in the fall of that year, on November first, Frankie Doon, age fourteen, died of diphtheria and was buried on the same day. After only one and one half hours of life, baby John Fitzsimmons died on January 9, 1903. And in May, on the twelfth, Bernice Catherine Leddy, age two, was buried in the St. Thomas Cemetery. Her grieving sister wrote:

*Only a baby's grave, a foot or two at the most  
Of tear-dewed sod. But a loving God  
Knows what the little grave cost.*

(Between the years 1907-1915 there was at least one infant death each year and as many as four in two of those years.)

Father Joseph Therien counted ninety Catholic families in 1903, the year of his arrival at St. Thomas. Fr. Therien was to remain pastor until 1919—some sixteen years. They were to be eventful years, two of the most significant of the events being the unexpected death of Bishop Michaud on December 22, 1908, on his way home from Lourdes, and the subsequent installation, on April 14, 1910, of Bishop Joseph John Rice as the new Bishop of the Burlington Diocese.

During Father Therien's tenure, the Fathers of St. Edmunds founded St. Michael's college (in 1904) on land purchased from Michael Kelly. The Cathedral High School, staffed by the Sisters of Mercy, opened in 1917. Closer to home was the building, in 1914, of St. Mary's Church in Cambridge which was to continue as a mission of St. Thomas until the mid 1960's.

Two new parishioners (now in their eighties) who were baptized in Father Therien's early years were Helen Dorothea White, daughter of George White and Elizabeth Fitzsimmons, on August 4, 1904, and Lawrence Casey, son of Matthew Casey and Rose Ann Breen, on April 22, 1905.

Helen White was born in Jericho where she lived until the age of eighteen. She married George Barrett in St. Thomas Church on Sept 28, 1931, at which time she went to live on the Barrett farm on Pleasant Valley Road. George Barrett died in 1970 but Helen continued to live in the old farmhouse until recent years.

Lawrence Casey was born in Cambridge village and moved as an infant to the white house on Pleasant Valley Road opposite the entrance to the Mountain Road. He married Yvonne Potvin in St. Thomas Church on September 29, 1941, and stayed on in the old homestead until recently—making it a total of about eighty-three years. Lawrence served for many years as postmaster in Underhill Center.

One of the elderly of the parish who died during those years was Matthew Casey at 92 years of age, in 1907. Two others who died later, in 1916, were Mrs. Julia Papineau, age 85, and Abraham Marlow, at 88 years of age. In 1909, St. Thomas lost a parishioner of long standing when Martin Flannery died at seventy-four years of age. One of the new members of the parish born that year was John Kilpeck, who enjoyed (one hopes) the rather exotic distinction of being baptized by a certain Father Khatchadourian, a visitor from Romania.

The war touched the lives of St. Thomas parishioners as they did their part in aid of their men in uniform by raising funds and making items for personal wear and hospital use. Special collections "for the soldiers" were taken up at the Masses.

A wartime bride was Florence Leddy, who married her soldier sweetheart, Sgt. Emil Moore, stationed with the Cavalry at Fort Ethan Allen, on December 7, 1917. The marriage, which was performed by Fr. Therien with special dispensation from the three-time publication of bans, took place on a Saturday morning. On Sunday, Sgt. Moore left to report for service in combat overseas with the 78th Lightning Division. It is said that his mustering-out pay after the war was barely enough to buy a civilian suit and pay for the railroad ticket home to Underhill.

On August 16, 1918, a service flag was raised in the Center in honor of all Underhill servicemen. In a poem written for the occasion and read at the ceremony are the lines:

*Wave, service flag, in the name of those  
Brave soldiers, loyal and true,  
May never a star of gold replace  
One of your stars of blue.*

These lines were answered by their author, M. Laura Leddy, in a sequel which she wrote upon hearing news of the death on October 2, 1918, of Charles O'Neil—the first Underhill boy to die in the war. The service flag, she wrote...

*Waves now with the breath of the autumn  
Caressing each fluttering fold,  
And replacing one of the stars of blue  
Gleams a star of shining gold.*

Father Therien's sixteen years at St. Thomas were occupied not only with the spiritual but also the corporal works involved in keeping the body and soul of his parish together. Much of the year-round activity about the church grounds had to do with keeping "the home fires burning". One might have observed the comings and goings of wagonloads of firewood picked up at Laberge's place or perhaps Couture's or Mike Leddy's and drawn by Jack Casey or some other driver. (In July of 1918, Father bought eleven cords of wood from James Doon at \$1.75 per cord for a total cost of \$19.25.) Then there was the sawing of the wood—at different times by Papineau, Steinhour or Slater. A load of coal bought from Abbot's in July 1913 cost \$69.15 with a charge of \$10 paid to Tom Barrett "for the drawing of it." One dollar was paid to Carl Reynolds for drawing potatoes (probably the winter's supply) in November 1918.

Of course, there was the perennial maintenance on church, house, barns and grounds. Eugene Bouchard did some work on the cement walk in 1915, and Harley Ross dropped in at intervals to check on the rectory furnace and plumbing. James Casey served as sexton during some of those years, and the younger Pete Leddy, who had moved from the farm to the Center in his later years, was kept busy with carpentry of all kinds—from laying shingles to repairing the Christmas crib. (The story goes that Lizzie, his wife, would invite her former Stevensville neighbors to stop at the house for a cup of tea or coffee to break their long fast before the trip home after Mass.)

All of these jobs required almost daily trips to the local stores for supplies. Some of the purchases during those years were, for example, a ladder "for the church tower" from Gallup's at \$1.40 in 1913; hardwood bought at Terrill's in 1914 for \$4.75; paint and paper for roofing at a price of \$8.65 from Ed Henry's in 1915; and various handy items found at Dr. Nay's drugstore.

Then, too, the indispensable “Old Dobbin” had to be housed, shod, and fed. Among the items mentioned in parish accounts were an amount of \$2.80 “for feed and shoeing” in 1911, and a price of 90 cents for a halter bought in 1916—only a few of the well-deserved attentions asked by this faithful conveyor of the clergy. The buggy, too, required the careful maintenance provided by Mr. Gaines in order to work well and look its best—especially once equipped with a handsome umbrella bought from Stygles’ for \$3.50 in the summer of 1914.

According to Mary Luck, who was born in Underhill in 1911 and lived with her parents, John Leddy and Anna Marlow, on the Marlow farm, horses of church-goers were tethered in a horse barn “up beyond” the rectory. Behind the barn, she said, was an outhouse “for those who dared to go there.” Her friend, Emma Hoag Breen, who lived with her grandparents on the Harvey farm in Pleasant Valley, recalls how “the ladies would gather and visit while the men folk were getting the horses.”

Both remembered the cold trips to church by sleigh in the wintertime “when the snow was piled high.” In the summertime, however, if you had “behaved well” at Mass, you were “rewarded with an ice cream cone from Terrill’s store.”



17.

St. Thomas Church and Terrill's Store

Patrick Barrett, who lived in the Nashville area of West Bolton, drove to church in a “surrey with a fringe on top.” In winter, when the drifts were too high, he made the distance on foot.

St. Patrick’s Day celebrations were a profitable and popular means of raising funds for the church, along with fairs, field days and festivals. The St. Thomas Improvement Club assisted with expenses by holding ice cream parties, plays, and suppers—bringing in such goodly amounts as \$55.47 “clear money” in 1916. With the installation of a telephone in 1913, a new but necessary expense was incurred. The parish financial account of 1918 listed total expenses of \$2563.44 and receipts of \$2522.44 for the year.

# “The Trouble at Satterlees”

---

—Given By The Pupils of the—

UNDERHILL CENTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL

—In the Basement of—

## *St. Thomas' Hall*

### *WED. EVE, JUNE 10*



Dorothy, fun maker at Satterlee's,	Genevieve Smith
Alice, her quiet roommate,	Emma Hoag
Miss Satterlee, the principal,	Eleanor Walker
Kathleen, the Irish Maid,	Mildred Hanley
Mildred,	Girls
Bertha,	at
Marian	school
	Mary Sheehy

---

GOOD SPECIALTIES BETWEEN THE ACTS

DOORS WILL BE OPENED AT 7:45.

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ADMISSION. ADULTS 25c. CHILDREN 15c.

Play program St. Thomas' Hall



## Chapter 10

*Grant us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, to glory in the solemn festival of blessed Thomas, Thine apostle, that we may both be helped continually by his patronage and imitate his faith with befitting devotion.*  
*Prayer. Feast of St. Thomas, Apostle*

On August 31, 1919, Father Joseph Pariseau arrived in Underhill to take over as the new pastor of St. Thomas Church. He found a membership of 416—371 English speaking and 45 of French ancestry. In 1920, nine infants were baptized, twelve children made their First Communion, and thirty-one were confirmed. There were two marriages and seven deaths.

During his years at St. Thomas, considerable work was done by Fr. Pariseau in the repair and furnishing of the rectory and the repairing and re-roofing of the barns.

One of the benefit projects carried on was an Election Day dinner served by the ladies of the parish on March 2, 1920, which brought in \$30; another put on for the Dairy Men's League in August was more successful, yielding a sum of \$85.46. Fairs and festivals held in 1921 cleared \$185.85. Pew rent totaled \$700, single seats \$118.20, and plate collections \$247.94. Receipts for the year were \$2584.61 and expenses \$2085.17.

A safe ordered by Father Pariseau in 1920 at a cost of \$53.80 plus freight charge of \$7.00 still reposes—its former glory somewhat tarnished—in the sacristy of the church.

In 1924, the year after the establishment of Bishop deGoesbriand Hospital, Father Arthur Griffin was appointed pastor by Bishop Rice. Trinity College was also founded at this time—in 1925. During his rather brief stay at St. Thomas, Fr. Griffin made repairs to the church and house totalling \$1260. This involved work on the belfry roof, the painting of woodwork in the church, and repairs on the roof and chimney of the house. With the income from fairs and so forth, as well as the mission held that year, Father was able to make the year's report in the black.

During his period as pastor of St. Thomas from 1925 to 1935, Father Lawrence Mann, in addition to ministering to his flock, accomplished much work on the parish property. In the church, the stained glass windows were repaired, the ceiling painted, woodwork and pews varnished and the sacristy painted. Twenty-four cardtables were ordered for the newly-painted basement which was the scene of the on-going events that helped considerably with church expenses. The rectory received a new coat of paint on the outside and fresh wallpaper on the inside.

Janitor work during those years was shared by Claude Potvin, Frank Hanley, and John Casey. Will Breen and James Fitzsimmons, Jr. were two of the carpenters on call, with Pat Mullen tending to most of the painting on both the church and rectory. Cemetery maintenance was taken care of by Frank Lamphere, Tom Haskins, and others.

Fortunately, Underhill escaped the full brunt of the flood of 1927, but did suffer the damage and inconvenience caused by swollen streams. The bridge at the foot of Range Road went out, and mail service was interrupted because of railroad washouts. The brook alongside the rectory overflowed its banks and required work by Haskins and Steinhour repairing "flood damage to the land."

(This may sound familiar to parishioners who were on the scene when, in the summer of 1990, the same stream went on a rampage following several hours of steady downpour, causing considerable damage to bridge and banks.)

The church was wired and ready when electric service came to Underhill in 1933. The rectory celebrated with the tearing down of the old ice-house and the installation of an "electric ice box."

Father Michael Costello served at St. Thomas from 1935 to 1944. During this time—in 1938—Bishop Rice died and was succeeded by Bishop Matthew F. Brady. In 1936, his second year as pastor, the parish census counted 483 members.

While at St. Thomas, Father Costello installed new heating systems in both church and rectory. He also had slating done on the church roof as well as painting of exterior trim. The rectory parlor was painted and floors sanded and varnished. Fr. Costello accomplished considerable cemetery work, as well. His accounts of 1938 mentioned an order of one ton of acid phosphate, a bushel of grass seed and fifty fence posts. In 1940 he had a "new frontal fence" and wrought iron gates installed. A side gate was erected in memory of Mr. and Mrs. William Flynn by their children.

When a severe blizzard struck Underhill on the Sunday afternoon of January 18, 1940, Father Costello volunteered his help in the emergency caused by the storm.

Father Joseph Dussault was pastor from 1941 to 1944. Like his predecessors, he responded to the need for repairs and improvements on the parish property. In 1942, he repaired the sacristy altar and had a cement foundation and steel supports placed underneath that section of the church. Brick and stone work were pointed up and in 1943 new cement steps were installed at the main entrance.

Edward F. Ryan was installed as Bishop in 1945, the second year of Father Charles Marcoux's assignment to St. Thomas parish. Father Marcoux had repairs done on the church walk and installed a modern kitchen in the parish hall. He also saw to repairs on the steeple and the stained glass windows.

Fr. Marcoux established "The Ladies of St. Thomas" with Irene Potvin as their first president. Others succeeding her were Katherine Maloney and Emily Flynn. Among surviving charter members are Helen Barrett, Yvonne Casey, Mary Russin, Helen Burns, Leona Potvin, Gabriel Allaire, and Irene Potvin.

Father Gavin Maloney, whose parish census of 1950 reported six hundred "souls," continued the customary maintenance of the church, and parish property from 1949 to 1960, with Father Joseph Lively assisting from April to June of 1957. A men's choir was organized at this time. A side altar of the Sacred Heart was installed opposite the altar of the Blessed Virgin. It was while Fr. Maloney was at St. Thomas that the late Bishop Robert F. Joyce became bishop in 1956. Half of Jericho was attached to Pius X, Essex Center, in the late 50's.

Father Daniel Roberts, at St. Thomas from 1960 to 1965, bought an old barn across from the church for \$200 and had it torn down. The cemeteries also received his attention: he had a new four-strand fence strung around St. Thomas Cemetery and four hundred feet of new wire placed around Irish Settlement Cemetery. Hand railings were installed on the church steps in 1964.

A plaque placed on the present organ in 1962 reads that it was a gift of Teresa C. Egan, George Hardgrove, and the Ladies of St. Thomas.

The perennial church maintenance and improvement projects were carried on by Father Emil Savary during his rather short stay at St. Thomas during 1965-66. Under his direction, the hall was paneled and painted, the windows curtained, floors renewed, and all made suitable for use as classrooms and a teen center. The Ladies of St. Thomas assisted the parish with benefit suppers and bazaars. Their monthly meetings offered social as well as instructive programs.

Father Savary became ill on retreat and died on June 8, 1966, while still assigned to St. Thomas Parish.

Father Bernard Depeaux, who served as pastor from August 1966 to October 1973, is the earliest of the three living former pastors of St. Thomas. At his time there were about 190 families in the parish. The following are some comments in kind response to our announcement of the centennial and request for a summary of his accomplishments as pastor:

"During this period, necessity demanded and the improved economy provided the occasion to begin the renovation of the church. During my tenure the mechanical aspects were completely renewed: electrical, heating, plumbing (at last, thank God!). To this was added the excellent refurbishing of the sanctuary and of the parish hall. I would defer credit for this entire project to the outstanding generosity of the parishioners and the practical advice and good judgement of the Parish Council. To their efforts were joined the ever loyal and laborious Ladies of Saint Thomas

who provided both fun and funds through their regular social events, particularly the summer lawn parties.

"Not to be overlooked is that at this time, by diocesan directive, the cemetery commission was established. The work of these commissioners cannot go underestimated: all three cemeteries received sorely needed landscaping improvement and a perpetual care system was established thereby creating a very sound financial basis for ongoing care."

Upon the retirement of Bishop Joyce in 1972, our present bishop, John A. Marshall, was named Bishop of The Burlington Diocese.

Father John Guischard served as pastor of St. Thomas from 1973 to 1975. In addition to attending to the spiritual needs of a growing parish, Fr. Guischard continued the work of maintaining the church and rectory, including the installation of a well. The Ladies of St. Thomas held a "shower" to replenish household supplies for the rectory.



18.

Knights of the Altar

The Knights of the Altar, an organization of altar servers, was active at this time. Father Brian Mead assisted in the parish from October 1973 to June 1974.

As pastor from 1975 to 1981, Father Donald Bruneau made several improvements in the church proper, particularly the repairs and installation of storm windows on the stained glass windows, the replacement of the old P.A. system with a new modern solid-state system, and the removal of the old confessional to provide for a reconciliation room in the vestibule. Improvements were also made in the sacristy with new paint and a closet for vestments and in the hall downstairs with a new ceiling and lighting.

In Father Bruneau's note was the comment: "Thanks to the Casey family the 'grotto of Our Lady' was erected between the church and the rectory."

Our present pastor, Father Jean-Paul Laplante, arrived on June 24, 1981. This practical and resourceful pastor has brought about great improvement in the parish property. Upon his arrival,

the rectory received the benefit of his attention: fuel-saving insulation was installed, the garage was rebuilt with laundry and storage above, and the exterior of the building was covered in vinyl—all completed debt-free.

Exterior brickwork and roof repair have been completed and an access ramp for the handicapped installed at the side entrance.

Looking forward to the coming centennial year, 1991, Fr. Laplante, with the guidance of the Parish Council, supervised major renovations to the interior of the church. The entire interior of the building was repainted, the pews varnished, and the floors, including the balcony, received a new plywood underlayment and were newly carpeted. The floor of the sacristy, as well, was covered with donated carpeting. All was laid by donated labor.

Much to the joy of older parishioners—and newer, as well—the nearly one-hundred year old altar, having survived with forgiving grace the indignities of divesture and demotion to which it had been subjected, is now restored to its rightful place in the sanctuary.

Of the three ornate structures which originally adorned the altar, the lone remaining is the former central spire which now provides a fitting canopy over The Blessed Sacrament Tabernacle on the repository altar.

Stenciling on the side arches framing the statues of Our Lady and St. Joseph was done by the same parish artist who re-decorated the repository spire. The tastefully-designed altar hangings are the work of other parish members.

Over a period of three ten-hour-a-day fall and winter months of 1989, a tremendous amount of work was accomplished. With Father's inspiration and participation and the volunteer labor and generosity of parishioners, a beautifully renovated St. Thomas Church was ready for the celebration of Christmas.

A sale and a purchase of land have brought about changes to the boundaries of the church property. A parcel of land, site of the old horse barn and consisting of approximately an acre, was sold in 1985 to Roy Kennedy, resident owner of the building which formerly housed The Green Mountain Academy. The purchase of the Cavanaugh property in front of the church by a fortuitous bid on the part of Fr. Laplante provides much needed off-highway parking. Thanks to volunteer labor, fund-raising efforts, and generous contributions, the parking lot is now paved and in use. Landscaping about the lot's perimeter is the project of other hard-working parishioners.

In recent years, the cemetery commission has devoted many hours to the clarification of boundary lines and the establishment of fencing about the three Catholic cemeteries. In consideration of the special meaning of these burial grounds to the parishioners and in view of the present value of the land, the importance of this work cannot be over-estimated.

It seems that, over the many years of the cemeteries' existence, various ordinary events occurred which finally resulted in confusion concerning boundaries. For example, cow fences had been put up without regard for actual property lines and sections had been used for access to other property. More recently, a planned road threatened to encroach not only upon cemetery lands but even some of the old graves there. The deed to an acre of land donated in 1977 by Wally Stone (a direct descendant of early settler Felix Doon) for the enlargement of the Irish Settlement Cemetery was found to contain some inaccuracies as the original parcel had never been surveyed.

Any one of these circumstances might conceivably have resulted in loss of cemetery land or the use thereof. In order to clear up these matters surveys were done on all three cemeteries. This work, which required the signing of quit-claim deeds by neighboring land owners, was accomplished on an amicable basis, and the surveys—no longer subject to possible question—are registered in the office of the town clerk of Underhill.

## Chapter 11

*You are ever a part of our lives;  
all the good you have shared  
will live on in our heart.  
Let us be grateful for all those  
in times past who made us all  
we are today—a people of faith.*

*From Song of Thanksgiving  
Gregory Norbet, O.S.B.*

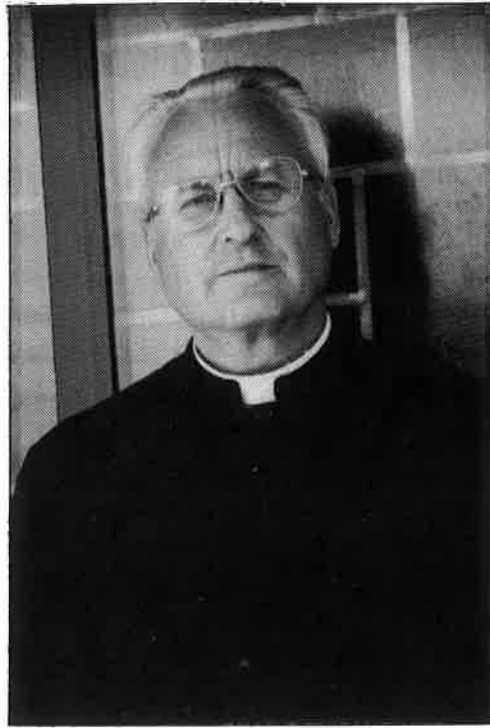
As we look back over the years, let us remember those who came before us who, through faith and sacrifice, left us the beautiful legacy of our beloved St. Thomas Church.



19.

Father Laplante with the children

And so, we have come full circle: after all these many years we are again a young parish; young, that is, in the sense that we are becoming a parish of predominantly young people. They come to St. Thomas bringing their most precious gifts: their children and their love of the Faith.



Our present Pastor  
Father Jean-Paul Laplante

*Living and Giving*

*The days of my life  
Are spent living for Jesus,  
And loving each day that I live;  
The best of my life  
Is in giving for Jesus  
And giving the most I can give.*

*In observing the words  
That are taught in the scriptures  
Each day that on earth I may live,  
I find that my cup  
Runneth over with blessings  
And I get back far more than I give!*  
B. Carr

## Acknowledgements

The St. Thomas congregation joins in prayerful thanks to those parish members who have contributed so generously of time, labor, materials, or funds during the renovation of the church and grounds. Because of the risk of omitting a name or names, only an overview of the projects is recorded herein.

With the present expression of appreciation is joined the grateful recognition of the many parishioners who contribute daily, in action and in prayer, to the work and workings of our parish.

I wish to express my gratitude to those who have aided in the compiling of this history with information or suggestions. I extend my thanks, as well, to all who have expressed interest in this work.

Mary Margaret Moore Audette

The following is a list of sources and references consulted in the preparation and writing of this centenary history.

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Town Clerk's Office, Underhill, Vt.

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## *The Tribunal Diocese of Burlington*

351 North Avenue, Burlington, Vermont 05401

Tel. 802-658-6110 Ext. 331

### HISTORY OF SAINT THOMAS PARISH - PASTORATE OF REV. BERNARD F. DEPEAUX

Prayerful congratulations to Saint Thomas Parish on the centennial celebration of its church.

My tenure as pastor of Saint Thomas Parish was from August, 1966 to October, 1973. This was a period of change impacted from two totally different sources. First, Vatican Council II had just terminated and the challenge of implementing its decrees was beginning and would continue for many years (indeed, it still goes on). The most evident effects were in the areas of liturgy and catechetics. Altars were turned, English came in, lay participation developed. Catechesis on both the child and adult level required updating according to conciliar decrees and here again lay participation became necessary and popular.

The second impact of change was the arrival of IBM which changed Underhill from an agricultural community to a bedroom town. The population increased rapidly. The rich traditions of Saint Thomas became interlaced with the contributions of the newcomers, many of whom were blessed with education and profitable employment. My contribution and my satisfaction derived from the liturgical celebrations, the catechetical programs where I myself taught regularly, and the home-visit-social activity. Perhaps I would best be remembered for the latter in that the parish was small enough that I could visit homes regularly. I was able to accept invitations for family meals and special events, something pastors normally are not able to do because of sheer numbers. I do not recall having declined a single invitation during those years.

I doubt that the idyllic and bucolic aspects of this period of my career could ever again be duplicated.

*B.F.D.*



## Our Lady of Fatima Church

Sept. 26 - 90

Thank you for informing me concerning the centennial of St. Thomas parish.

Congratulations and best wishes to all the parishoners. It was a great privilege for me to have served at St. Thomas.

I will offer mass for all present and deceased members of the parish

Sincerely in Christ  
(rev.) John D. Duischard



SAINT ANTHONY'S CHURCH

305 FLYNN AVENUE  
BURLINGTON, VERMONT 05401  
TEL. 864-0478

*September 25, 1990*

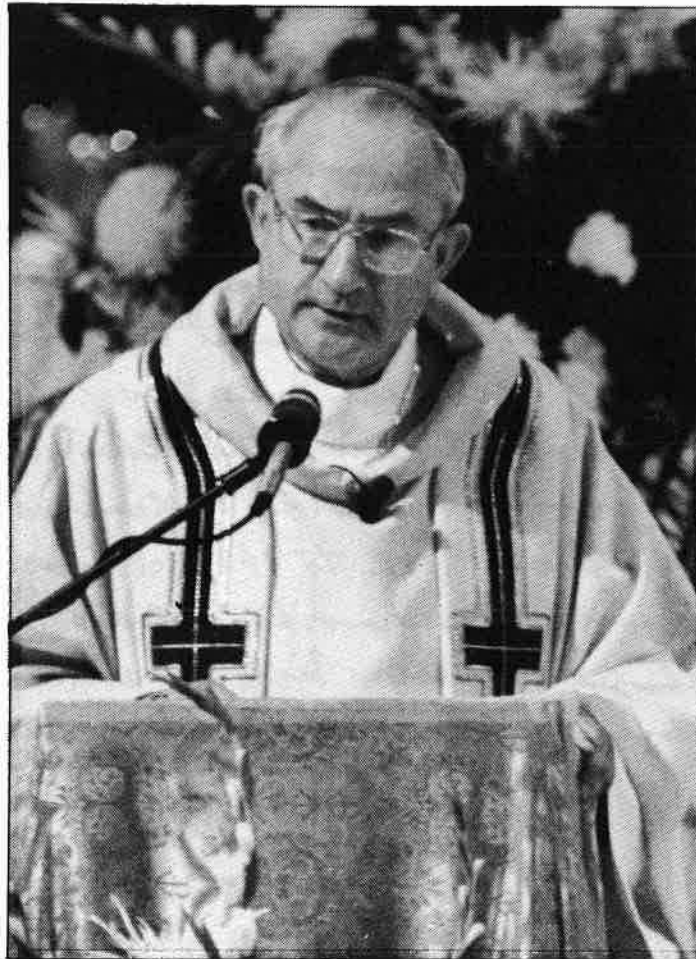
*To The Parishioners of St Thomas Parish  
Underhill Center, Vermont*

*Congratulations on your centennial celebration  
of the building of the present St Thomas Church.  
Your parish, of course, goes way back to the late  
1850's, placing it among the oldest in the diocese.  
It was a privilege for me to have served St. Thomas  
as pastor from 1975 to 1981. I was certainly  
blessed with hard working, dedicated and deeply  
spiritual parishioners. May God continue to bless  
all of you.*

*Father Don Bruneau*

BISHOPS  
of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington

Most Rev. Louis deGoesbriand	1853-1899
John S. Michaud	
Coadjutor	1892-1899
Bishop	1899-1908
Joseph J. Rice	1910-1938
Matthew F. Brady	1938-1944
Edward F. Ryan	1945-1956
Robert F. Joyce	1956-1972
John A. Marshall	1972-present

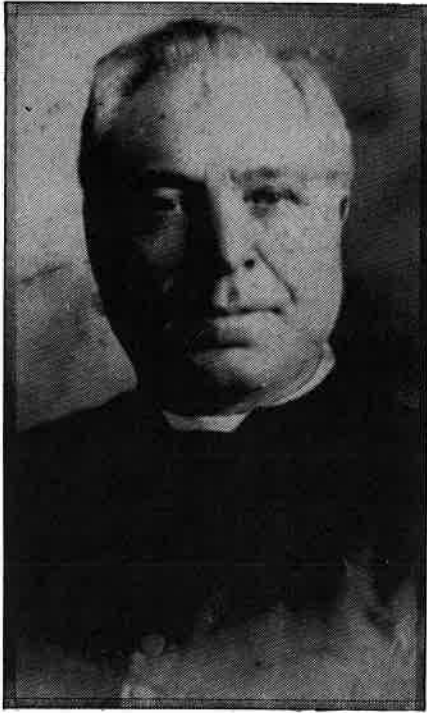


20. Bishop Marshall

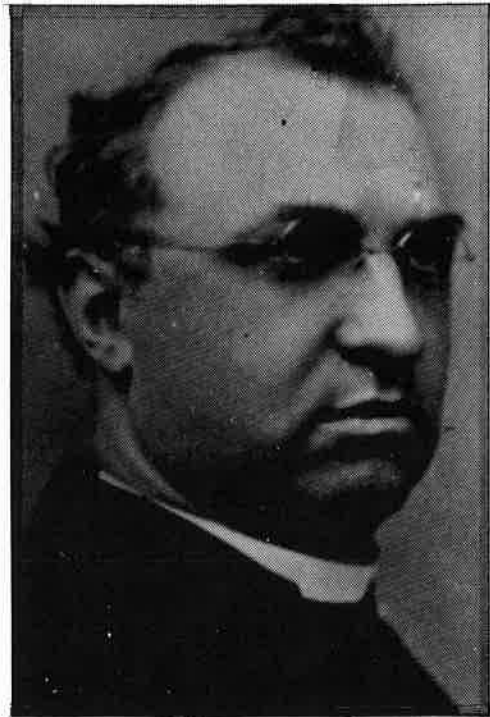
PRIESTS WHO SERVED AT ST. THOMAS CHURCH  
and the years during which they served

Rev. Jeremiah O'Callaghan	1833-1853
Thomas Lynch	1855-1858
James Quinn	1859-1861
Francis Picard	1859-1861
George Caissy	1859-1861
Joseph Duglue	1860-1862
Jerome Cloarec	1861-1862
George Caissy	1862-1864
Denis Ryan	1864-1865
Patrick O'Carroll	1865-1872
Pierre Savoie	1872-1877
Joseph Kerlidou	1877-1878
Michael Carmody	1878-1881
John Michaud	1881-1884
Magloir Pigeon	1881-1884
J. M. Coathuel	1884-1885
Francis Yvinec	1885-1886
John Galligan	1886-1888
A. J. Barron	1888-1889
James D. Shannon	1889-1899
Jerome Gelot	1899-1903
Joseph Therien	1903-1919
Joseph Pariseau	1919-1924
Arthur Griffin	1924-1925
Lawrence Mann	1925-1935
Michael Costello	1935-1941
Joseph Dussault	1941-1944
Charles Marcoux	1944-1949
Gavin Maloney	1949-1960
Daniel Roberts	1960-1965
Emil Savary	1965-1966
Bernard Depeaux	1966-1973
John Guischart	1973-1975
Donald Bruneau	1975-1981
Jean-Paul Laplante	1981-present
Parish assistants:	
Joseph Lively	1957
Brian Mead	1973-1974

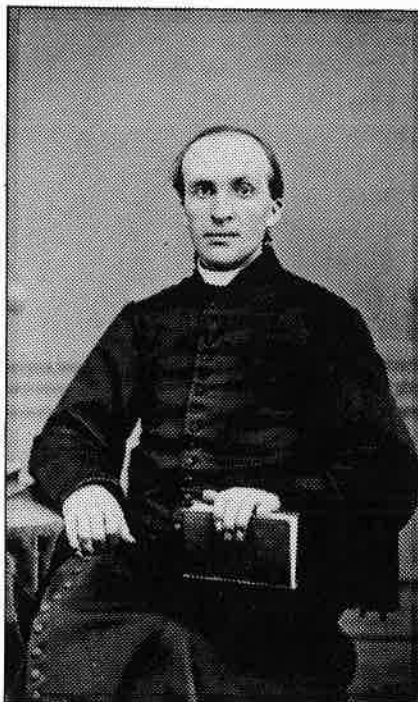
(A plaque commissioned by parish member Matthew Parisi in honor of the above priests hangs at the rear of the church proper).



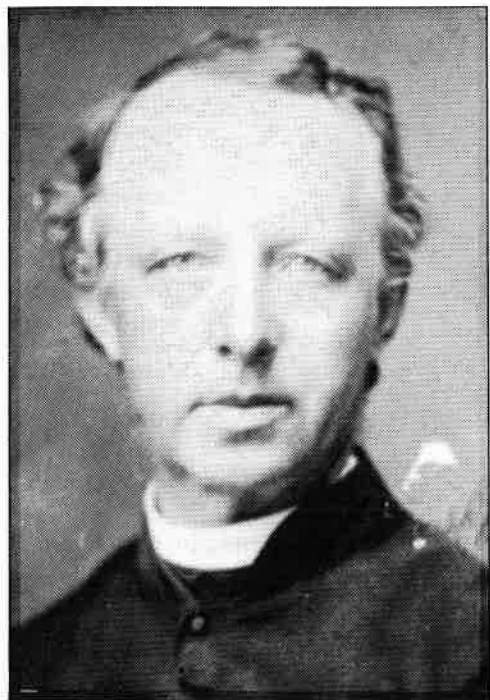
Rev. Thomas Lynch 1855-1858



Rev. George Caissey 1859-1864



Rev. Joseph Duglue 1860-1862



Rev. Jerome Cloarec 1861-1862



Rev. Patrick O'Carroll

1865-1872



Rev. Pierre Savoie

1872-1877



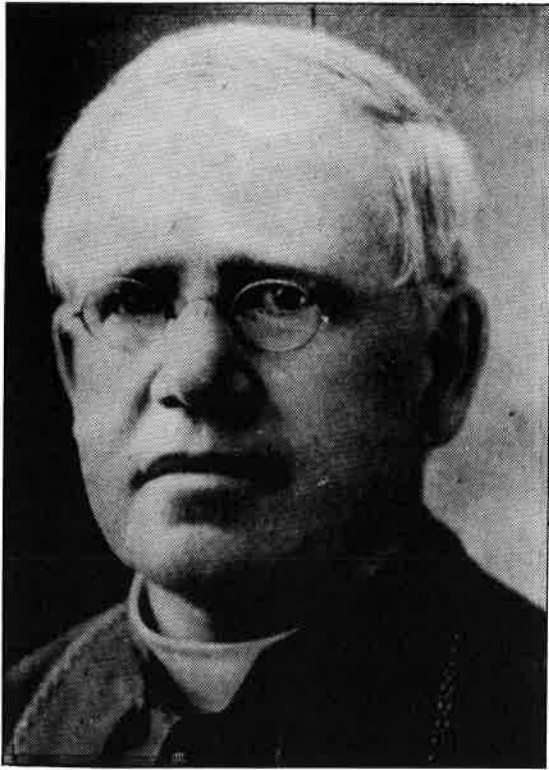
Rev. Joseph Kerlidou

1877-1878



Rev. Michael Carmondy

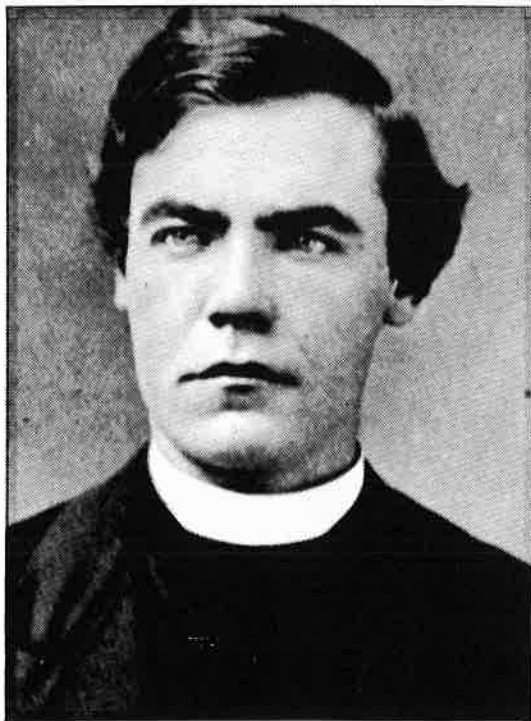
1878-1881



Rev. John Michaud 1881-1884  
Second Bishop of Burlington



Rev. Magloir Pigeon 1881-1884

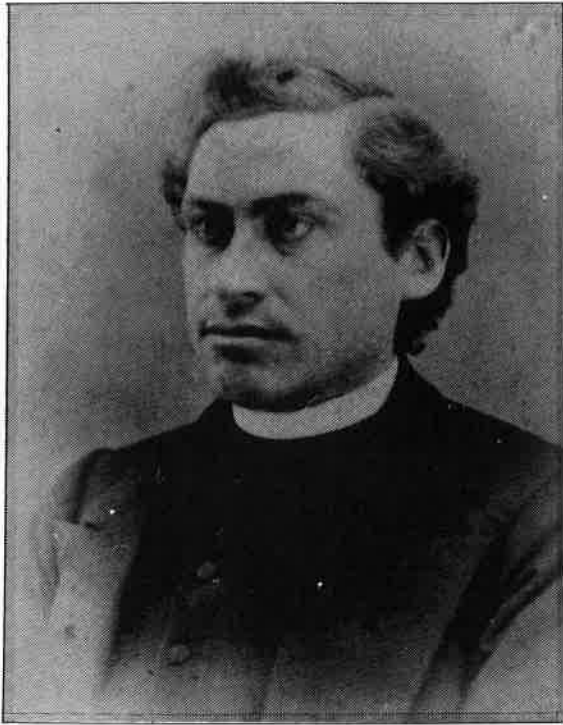


Rev. J.M. Coathuel 1884-1885



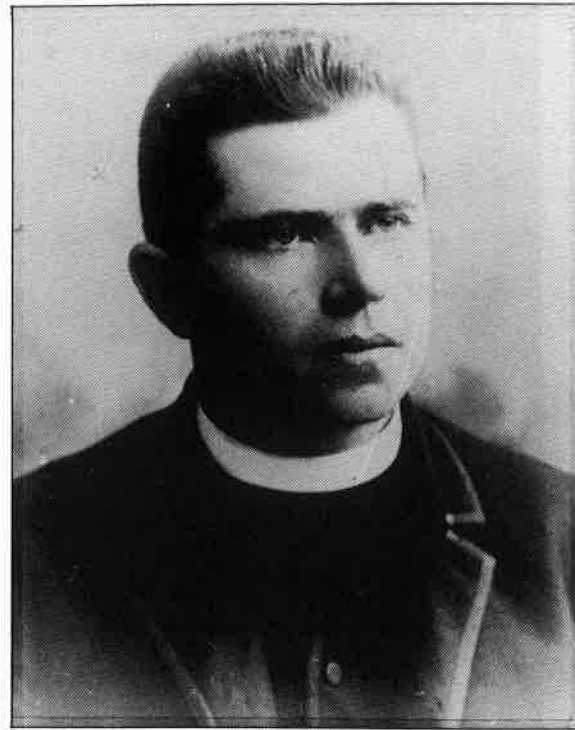
Rev. Francis Yvinec 1885-1886





Rev. John Galligan

1886-1888



Rev. A.J. Barron

1888-1889



Rev. James D. Shannon

1889-1899



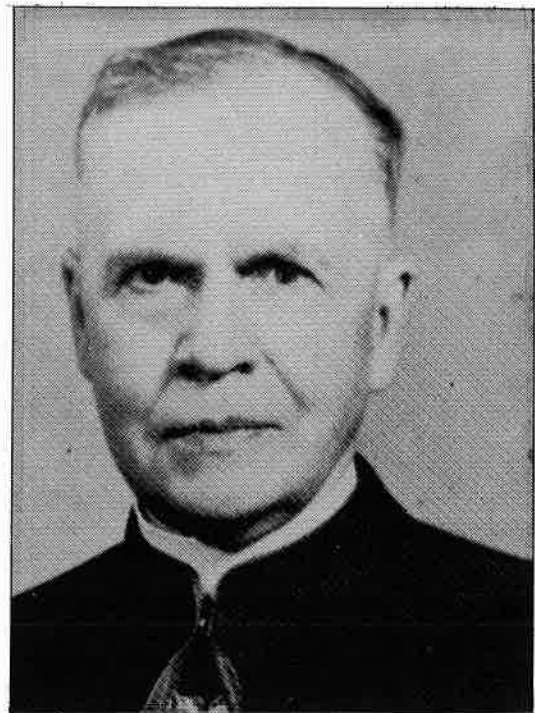
Rev. Jerome Gelot

1899-1903





Rev. Joseph Therien 1903-1919



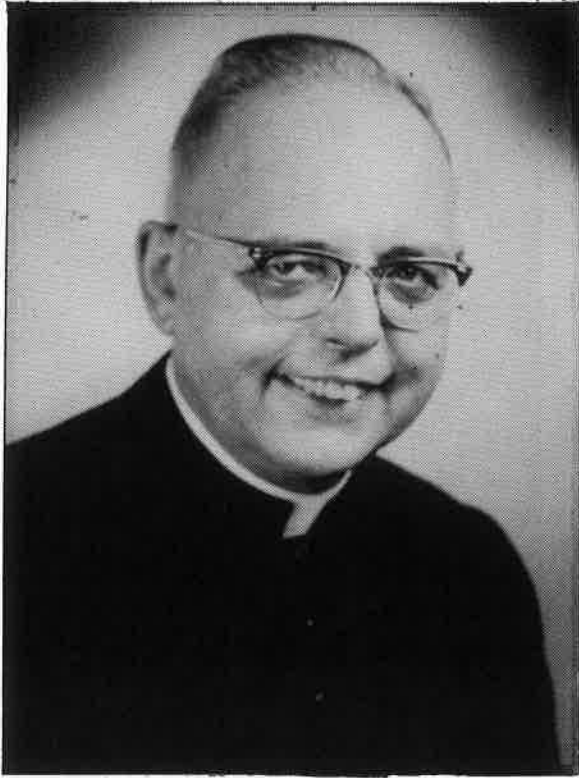
Rev. Joseph Pariseau 1919-1924



Rev. Lawrence Mann 1925-1935



Rev. Michael Costello 1935-1941



Rev. Joseph Dussault

1941-1944



Msgr. Charles Marcoux

1944-1949



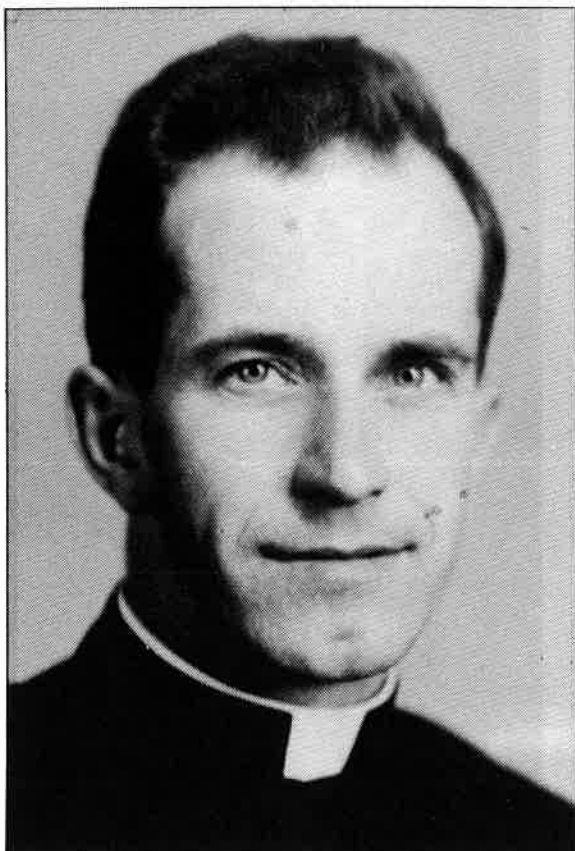
Rev. Gavin Maloney

1949-1960



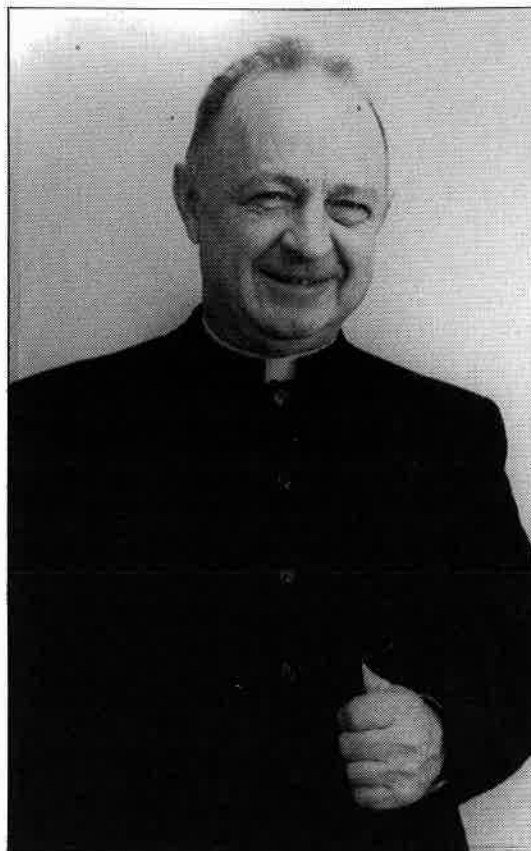
Rev. Daniel Roberts

1960-1965



Rev. Emil Savary

1965-1966



Rev. Bernard Depeaux

1966-1973



Rev. John Guischard

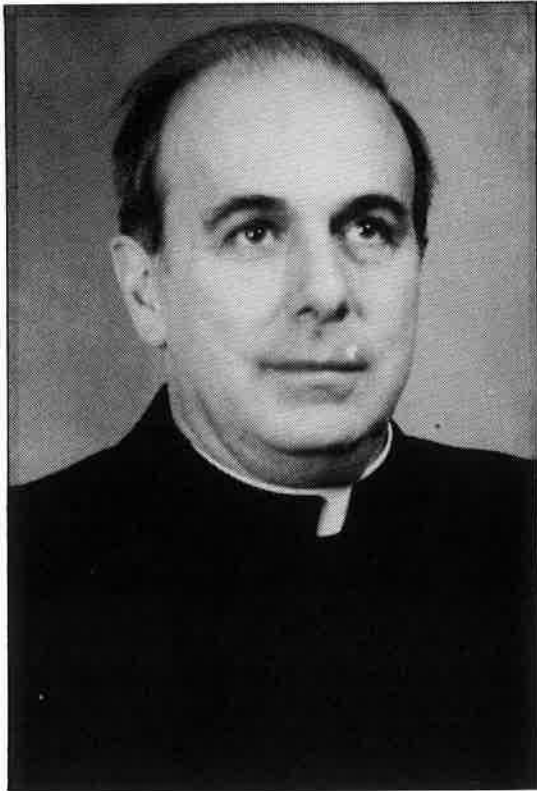
1973-1975



Rev. Donald Bruneau

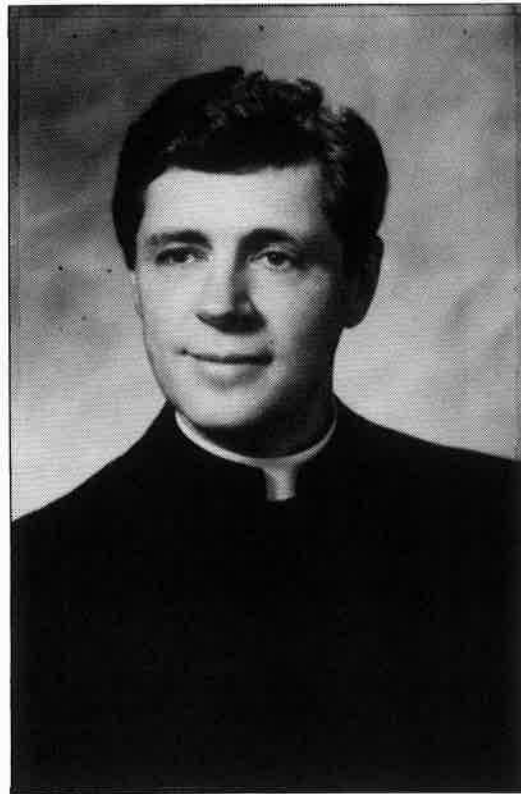
1975-1981

Parish assistants:



Rev. Joseph Lively

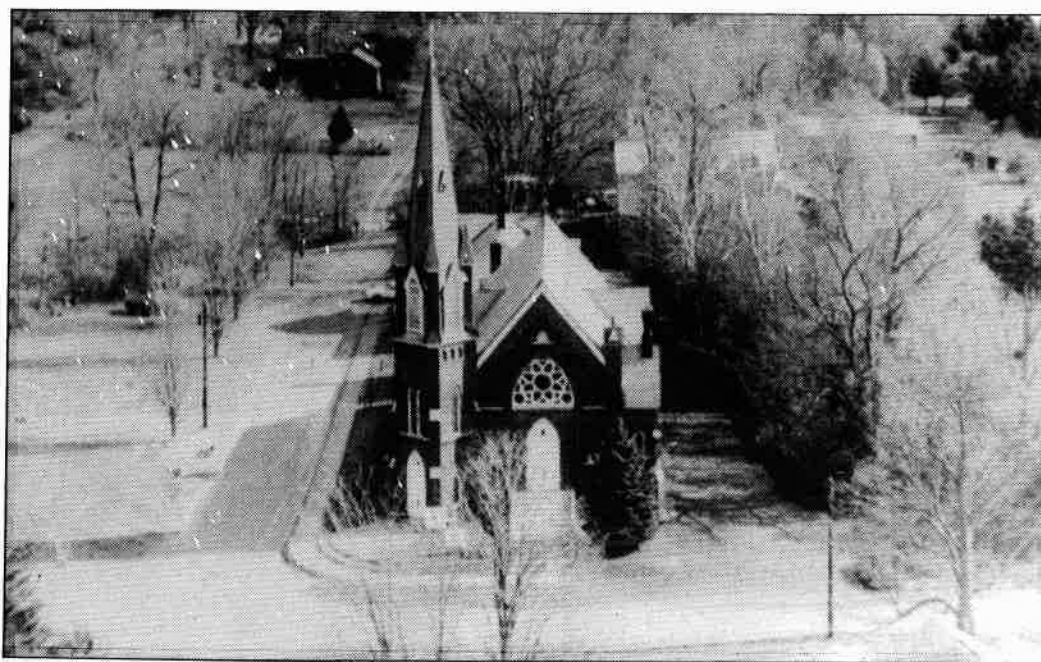
1957



Rev. Brian Mead

1973-1974

Note: Photographs of clergy are those which were available and appear by courtesy of the Archives and Chancery of the Diocese.



21.

Aerial view: St. Thomas' on a frosty fall day

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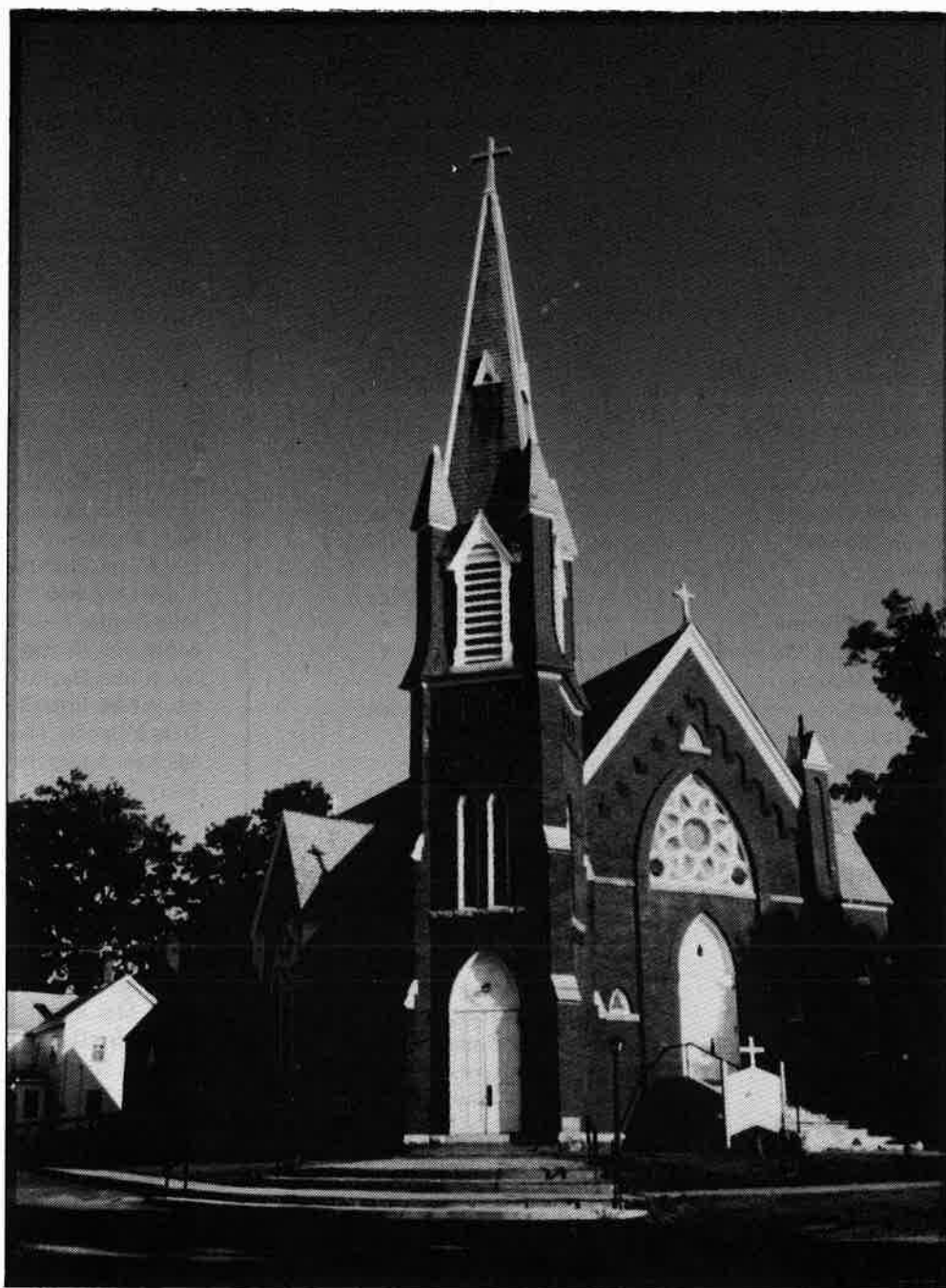
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