

## **The Church in Newfoundland**

by

THE REV. P. J. KENNEDY

Newfoundland, an island at the eastern extremity of Canada, is the oldest British colony. It was discovered by John Cabot in 1497. By the treaties of Utrecht, 1713, and Paris, 1763, it was acknowledged by France as a British possession. A British governor was appointed in 1728 and Responsible Government was accorded in 1855. By the Statute of Westminster 1931 Newfoundland was acknowledged as a British Dominion. Owing to economic difficulties Dominion status gave place in 1934 to a temporary Commission appointed by the King. On March 31st, 1949, Newfoundland became the tenth Province of Canada. The former independent status of Newfoundland received ecclesiastical recognition when the Apostolic Delegation established in Ottawa in 1899 was in 1910 extended to Newfoundland, the Most Rev. Representative bearing the title of Apostolic Delegate to Canada and Newfoundland.

The present article does not pretend to elaborate the details of the history of the Catholic Church in Newfoundland. It gives in summary fashion a sketch of ecclesiastical origins, territorial divisions of Church administration, the hierarchical order of succession and a somewhat more detailed account of the erection of the Catholic Cathedral of St. John's.

### *Born in Catholic Faith.*

The first contact of the Island of Newfoundland with the Catholic faith goes back to pre-historic days. Probably Irish navigators, sailing from their homeland, most western part of Europe, reached the unknown new land of the West and for the first time offered up Christian prayers of worship and thanksgiving. It is a fact of history that Irish missionaries went to Iceland about the time of St. Patrick, 500 A.D., thence possibly to Greenland and lands farther west.

In the year 1000 Leif Ericson introduced the Catholic faith from Norway into Greenland and before the year 1400 A.D. Catholic bishoprics under Norwegian Bishops were established both in Iceland and Greenland and the Bishops of Greenland had jurisdiction over all the lands situated to the West. Some historians mention the names of eighteen Bishops who occupied the See of Gardan in Greenland before the year 1400. No bishop seems to have visited Greenland after that date. The unnamed Island of Newfoundland would of course, though practically uninhabited, lie within the territorial extent of the Norwegian diocese of Greenland. Shortly after 1400, the Norse colonies in

Iceland and Greenland were abandoned.<sup>1</sup> A letter of Pope Alexander VI, dated 1492, states there had been no priests in Greenland for a hundred years, but that the inhabitants treasured the corporal, or linen cloth used to bear the Sacred Host at Mass, and that although they had no priest or Eucharistic sacrifice, every year they exposed the corporal for public veneration.

The period of more authentic contact of our Island with the Catholic faith begins with the discovery by Cabot in 1497. Cabot was of the Catholic faith. King Henry VII who gave him his commission was the last English King who submitted in unflinching obedience to the religious jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff, and the England that first annexed Newfoundland was the Catholic England that had remained in obedience to the successor of St. Peter for a thousand years, that had reared such glorious churches as York, Westminster and Canterbury for the worthy offering of the Eucharistic Sacrifice of the Mass.

After Cabot came explorers from other Catholic lands of Europe.<sup>2</sup> The Portuguese under Cortereal in 1500 and 1501 founded the settlement and a church at Placentia more than 150 years before the French foundation at the same place. Probably the priests who accompanied Cartier on his voyage to New France in 1534 and 1535 celebrated the Mass during their ten days sojourn at Catalina in the month of May 1534.

Sir George Calvert, afterwards Lord Baltimore, founded the Ferryland colony in 1621, calling the territory of his grant by the name of Avalon. Avalon was the ancient English name for Glastonbury in Somersetshire, the reputed cradle of Christianity in England. Calvert and his colonists were Catholic and three Jesuit missionaries ministered to their religious needs.

*Newfoundland a part of the diocese of Quebec.*

About 1650 the French began to settle around the shores of Placentia Bay and after a little while claimed ownership of the whole Island. In 1650 they founded a church at Placentia on the site of the one abandoned by the Portuguese.<sup>3</sup> In 1657 Bishop Laval was appointed first Vicar Apostolic of Quebec having jurisdiction over the greater portion of North America, including Newfoundland. In 1674 Quebec was erected as a diocese with Laval as its first Bishop. In 1683 he was succeeded by Bishop St. Vallier who established a Franciscan monastery in Placentia in 1689. By the Treaty of Utrecht 1713, France yielded up to undivided English dominion Nova Scotia, the Hudson Bay

---

<sup>1</sup> *Cath. Encyc.*, article, America, vol. I, p. 422.

<sup>2</sup> *Cath. Encyc.*, article, Newfoundland, M. F. Howley, vol. X, p. 782.

<sup>3</sup> Archbishop M. F. Howley, *Ecclesiastical History of Newfoundland*, pp. 141-224. Boston, Doyle and Whittle, 1888. *Cath. Encyc.*, articles, Newfoundland, — St. John's.

regions and Newfoundland. During the Seven Years' War 1756-1763, there were further clashes between English and French in North America and Newfoundland. Quebec was captured by the English under Wolfe in 1759 and in 1760 all Canada submitted to the sovereignty of the Crown. By the Treaty of Paris 1763, all French territories in North America, from Labrador and Newfoundland to the confines of Mexico were given over to English dominion. St. Pierre and the adjacent islands were left to France with the condition that they were not to be fortified and certain fishing privileges on the Newfoundland coast were also granted to French fishermen. The first hundred years of the undivided English administration of Newfoundland were unfortunately marred by religious intolerance and persecution. The penal enactments bore most heavily on the poor Irish emigrants who had been coming to the island since before the year 1700. However, in spite of such opposition or perhaps because of it – there are those who say that the Irish character finds something congenial even in adversity – the Irish increased in numbers and in time became an important group that required resident episcopal supervision to regulate and organize their religious activities. This favour was not granted them until 1784, when Father James Louis O'Donel, O.F.M., was appointed as first Prefect-Apostolic of Newfoundland.

*English Vicars-Apostolic of Newfoundland.*

There has been some divergence of opinion amongst our historians as to what non-resident prelates exercised ecclesiastical jurisdiction over Newfoundland between 1713, date of the French withdrawal and 1784 the year of the erection of the Prefecture. It has been generally maintained that even after the French had left the Island it continued to form part of the Diocese of Quebec and the writer of the article "Quebec" in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* states that even after the Treaty of Paris of 1763 "the Bishop of Quebec kept Newfoundland and what now forms the Dominion of Canada." It has been generally accepted that the Irish missionary priests who ministered in Newfoundland before the appointment of the Prefect in 1784 exercised their faculties by virtue of jurisdiction granted them in their home diocese of Waterford, Ferns or Cork in Ireland. But in very recent years official letters have been discovered in the Propaganda archives in Rome which prove that for some years previous to 1784 ecclesiastical jurisdiction over Newfoundland had been withdrawn from the Bishop of Quebec and never been granted to Bishops of Ireland but had been entrusted by the Holy See to the titular Bishops who served as Vicars-Apostolic of the London district in England.<sup>4</sup> In 1569 with the death in prison of Bishop Bonner of London the old Catholic hierarchy of England ceased to exist and for

---

<sup>4</sup> G. Constant, *The Reformation in England*, p. 389. Sheed and Ward, London, 1934.

fifty-four years, 1569 to 1623, the persecuted members of the old faith were without episcopal supervision. In 1623 Dr. William Bishop was consecrated Bishop and appointed Vicar-Apostolic with jurisdiction over all England.<sup>5</sup> In 1688 four Vicariates were established, viz., those of the London, Midland, Northern and Western districts. The Vicar-Apostolic of the London district was given jurisdiction by the Holy See over the City of London and neighbouring counties, over the Islands of Wight, Jersey and Guernsey, and what is more important from our local point of view, their jurisdiction was extended to all the British possessions in North America including Maryland, Pennsylvania and some of the West Indian Islands.

*Bishop Challoner ruled Newfoundland.*

The question as to what precise date Newfoundland became subject to the London Vicars-Apostolic is a point of history that needs careful investigation. The colony of Newfoundland was definitely acknowledged by France to be a British possession from the Treaty of Utrecht, 1713 and the London Vicars had jurisdiction over the Island some years after 1713 and continuing until 1784, date of Dr. O'Donel's appointment. Probably Bishop Petre, Vicar Apostolic of the London district from about 1720 to 1758, first received the appointment. The great Bishop Challoner, foremost figure of hidden English Catholicism during the greater part of the 18th century, who during his long episcopate of forty years, 1741-1781, saved the Church from extinction, must also have possessed jurisdiction over Newfoundland since his territory included all British possessions in North America. The Roman letters lately brought to light prove beyond the possibility of a doubt that Bishop Challoner's successor, Bishop James Talbot, Vicar-Apostolic of the London district from 1781 to 1790, possessed jurisdiction over Newfoundland up to the year of Dr. O'Donel's appointment 1784. These letters are copies of official communications from the Holy See to Bishop Talbot of London, England, relieving him from the burden of jurisdiction over the distant Island of Newfoundland and informing him officially of the appointment of Father O'Donel as Superior of the Newfoundland Mission with faculties to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation; there is also official notification to Father O'Donel that he is subject directly to Rome, that the Vicar-Apostolic of London has no further jurisdiction in Newfoundland and that the Bishop of Waterford, Ireland, never had valid jurisdiction over the Island. Proof is thus given that Catholics in England and Newfoundland were bound together as living links in the same ecclesiastical affiliation during nearly seventy years of the history of our Island. These documents cast a glimmer of

---

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Lingard, *History of England*. C. Dolman, London, 1849, vol. XIII, D. 139. footnote.

light over the somewhat obscure page of the history of the Catholic Church in Newfoundland and should be of interest to our local historians.

*Translation.*

(Archives of Propaganda – Letters of the Sacred Congregation, Vol. 248, Fol. 370.)

To His Lordship the Most Rev. James Talbot, Bishop of Bertha, Vicar-Apostolic in the Kingdom of England, London 1st July, 1786.

On the 5th day of June 1784, we have already informed Your Lordship, that the Catholics of the Island of Newfoundland in North America have been consigned to the Spiritual care of Father James Louis O'Donel of the Order of the Recollect Minors of St. Francis at the pleasure of this Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith and that he has been empowered with the necessary faculties by the Holy See. That this appointment has been a cause of rejoicing to your Lordship has been signified by a letter dated July 15th of the same year, both on account of the lifting of the burden of administration and because better provision was being made for the care of the faithful by the presence of the Pastor. Now however since some doubt has arisen on the part of the aforesaid Superior concerning direct jurisdiction over the same Catholics, in order that all possible ambiguity in a matter of such indispensable importance should be removed and taking into account your voluntary resignation of the jurisdiction, the Sacred Congregation has issued a rescript, that the aforesaid Superior is immediately subject to the Holy See, from which he has been directly provided with faculties and that he has no dependence on any other ecclesiastical power whatever. Neither has it been omitted to announce that decision to Your Lordship to whom the care of these Catholics had been formerly committed, in order that you may govern yourself accordingly, no doubt being had but that this provision of the aforesaid Sacred Congregation being very conducive to the good of religion, will afford great pleasure to your Lordship. Praying that God...

Translation.

(*Ibid.*, Fol. 373.) To the Reverend Father James Louis O'Donel of the Order of the Recollect Minors of St. Francis, Superior of the Mission of the Island of Newfoundland in America – St. John's, 1st of July, 1786.

It has been agreeable to us, from the excellent reports of Your Reverence as Father in God, to receive information about the present condition of Catholic affairs in your Island and we very much rejoice that you, having spurned the obstacles placed in the way of Priestly administrations, have omitted no

endeavour as a good and competent worker, to promote there the increase of the true religion, to labour for the elimination of abuses, to instruct the backward Catholics in the teachings and precepts of the Christian religion and to assist them with all the spiritual helps of their holy faith. But since, because of the great extent of the Island, and the multitudes of the faithful, you alone are unequal to the task of ministering to their spiritual necessities, Our Most Holy Father Pope Pius VI has empowered you to select, not only from your own religious order, but also from other regular institutes and even from the ranks of the secular clergy, Priests approved by you, and to bestow on them suitable faculties that they may exercise the office of missionaries in that Island in submission to your authority excepting the administration of Confirmation, which is reserved to you alone. Moreover as you have been constituted Superior of that mission by the Holy See, and have received faculties directly from it, you must be immediately subject to the Holy See and in no way dependent upon any other ecclesiastical authority. Lest then anyone whatsoever should claim for himself jurisdiction in that Island, letters are being sent to the Vicar. Apostolic of London, in which he is instructed no longer to arrogate there to himself any authority; for, since, the Holy See appointed you as Superior, no authority is vested in the same Vicar and much less in the Bishop of Waterford who never competently exercised this same jurisdiction over that Island. I have desired to make these communications to you as Father in God of your people for your own tranquility of mind and that you may govern your conduct in accordance with these arrangements. Meanwhile I must not fail to inform you as Father in God of your people of the gratitude and kindly good will towards you of this Sacred Congregation and desiring, that you may impart to us further information about those things which as yet you yourself must discover concerning the locations and the state of the Catholics of the Island, I pray that the God of all goodness and majesty may bless you with all happiness and I earnestly recommend myself to your prayers.

*Bishops of St. John's and Harbour Grace.*

Father O'Donel became the first resident Bishop of the Island of Newfoundland twelve years after his nomination as Prefect-Apostolic. He was made Vicar-Apostolic and consecrated as Titular Bishop of Thyatira in the Cathedral of Quebec by Bishop Hubert on the feast of St. Matthew, 21st September, 1796. Bishop O'Donel returned to Ireland in 1807 and was succeeded by the Right Rev. Patrick Lambert, O.S.F., from Wexford, Ireland. Bishop Lambert ruled until 1817 when he retired to Ireland. Right Rev. Thomas Scallan, also a Franciscan and native of Wexford succeeded him, being consecrated in Wexford in 1816, and held the See until 1829. When Bishop O'Donel was made Vicar-Apostolic, there were but six Priests in the Island; Bishop Scallan increased the number to ten. He was the first Bishop who died in the country. In 1829 the Right Rev. Michael Anthony Fleming, O.S.F., was

named coadjutor to Bishop Scallan who consecrated him as his successor (28th October, 1829), in the “Old Chapel” in St. John’s, the first time that an episcopal consecration was ever performed in Newfoundland. During Bishop Fleming’s administration of twenty-one years, the building of the great Cathedral was started, schools and convents were erected, and Sisters of the Presentation (1833) and Mercy (1842) Congregations introduced from Ireland. On the appointment of Bishop John Thomas Mullock, O.S.F., as coadjutor to Bishop Fleming in 1847, the diocese of Newfoundland was canonically erected and Bishop Fleming became the first to bear the title of Bishop of Newfoundland. On the death of Bishop Fleming in 1850, Bishop Mullock succeeded as Bishop of Newfoundland. In 1856 when the diocese of Harbour Grace was erected for the northern part of the Island and Labrador with Bishop John Dalton as first incumbent Bishop Mullock’s title was altered to that of first Bishop of St. John’s, Newfoundland, a designation that remained for all his successors until Bishop Michael Francis Howley became first Archbishop of St. John’s in 1904. Successors of Bishop Dalton in Harbour Grace were the Most Revs. Henry Carfagnini, O.F.M., 1870-1880, Roderick MacDonald 1881-1906, John March 1906-1940. The present Bishop of Harbour Grace the Most Rev. John Michael O’Neill, D.D., was consecrated on July 7th, 1940. A division of the diocese of Harbour Grace was made on July 13th, 1945 when the section of the Labrador coast forming part of Newfoundland was withdrawn by the Holy See from the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Harbour Grace and united ecclesiastically with the Canadian section of Labrador to form the Vicariate Apostolic of Labrador with the Most Rev. Lionel Scheffer, O.M.I., as first Vicar-Apostolic.

#### *Archbishops of St. John’s.*

On the death of Bishop Mullock in 1869 he was succeeded by the first non-Franciscan Prelate to rule the See of St. John’s, Bishop Thomas Joseph Power, then President of Clonliffe College, Dublin. Bishop Power was consecrated in Rome in 1870 in a joint consecration with the Most Rev. Henry Carfagnini, O.F.M., newly appointed Bishop of Harbour Grace, who up to that time had been President of St. Bonaventure’s College founded in St. John’s by Bishop Mullock in 1856. Bishop Power’s tenure of office lasted for twenty-three years until his death in 1893. It was Bishop Power who in 1876 brought to St. John’s the teaching congregation of the Christian Brothers of Ireland who have several large institutions in the city with enrolment of about three thousand boys. Bishop Power was succeeded in 1893 by Bishop Howley, then Vicar-Apostolic of St. George’s. In 1904 Bishop Howley became first Archbishop of St. John’s and metropolitan of the newly-created ecclesiastical province of Newfoundland; while on the same occasion the Vicariate of St. George’s was erected as a diocese. One of Archbishop Howley’s outstanding achievements was the compilation in his earlier years of an *Ecclesiastical History of Newfoundland*

a work of great value, recording the origins of the Church in the Island and continuing down to and including the episcopate of Bishop Fleming, who died in 1850. Arch. bishop Howley was the first Newfoundlander to be raised to the episcopal dignity, all his predecessors having been born in Ireland. In 1915 the Most Rev. Edward Patrick Roche, D.D., succeeded to the see of St. John's as second Archbishop. A man of frail health he, nevertheless, outspanned the years of all his predecessors, and for thirty-five years guided the destinies of the Church with great devotion and prudence. He practically reconstructed the Cathedral of St. John's, instituted the two new Sisters' colleges of St. Bride's and Our Lady of Mercy, and opened St. Clare's Mercy Hospital, the first Catholic hospital in Newfoundland. As coadjutor, Archbishop Roche had the Most Rev. Thomas J. Flynn, titular Archbishop of Silio from 1945 until the latter's early demise in 1949. The present Archbishop of St. John's, the Most Rev. Patrick James Skinner, C.J.M., former Rector of Holy Heart Seminary, Halifax, was consecrated as Auxiliary to Archbishop Roche of St. John's, with the title of Bishop of Zenobia, March 17th, 1950. On the death of Archbishop Roche in St. Clare's Mercy Hospital, September 23rd, 1950, Bishop Skinner became Vicar-Capitular and was appointed Archbishop of St. John's, January 23rd, 1951. His Grace Archbishop Skinner received the Sacred Pallium in Rome, May 29th, 1951, and was formally installed in St. John's, June 24th, 1951.

*Diocese of St. George's.*

Subsequent to the first division of 1856 when the diocese of Harbour Grace was taken from that of St. John's, another ecclesiastical development occurred in 1871 when the western portion of Newfoundland was made a Prefecture-Apostolic with a priest empowered to administer Confirmation as first Prefect in the person of the Right Rev. Mgr. Thomas Sears. At his death in 1885 Father Michael Howley became Prefect and the territory was created a Vicariate in 1892 with Bishop Howley as titular Bishop of Amastris and first Vicar-Apostolic. When Bishop Howley was transferred to St. John's in 1894, he was succeeded as Vicar-Apostolic of St. George's by Bishop Neil McNeil, later Archbishop of Vancouver, 1910, and Toronto, 1912-1934. Bishop McNeil became first Bishop of St. George's when the province was canonically erected in 1904. In 1911 Bishop Michael Fintan Power succeeded Archbishop McNeil but had only a brief episcopate, dying in 1920. The next Bishop of St. George's was the Most Rev. Henry T. Renouf, consecrated December 8th, 1920 administering the diocese until his death in 1941. During this episcopate the first foundation of the Redemptorist Order in Newfoundland was made at Corner Brook, St. George's diocese. The present Bishop of St. George's is the Most Rev. Michael O'Reilly, native of Ireland, for many years a priest of St. George's diocese, consecrated in St. John's, September 9th, 1941. In 1945 Bishop

O'Reilly transferred the episcopal residence from St. George's to the town of Corner Brook but the title of the diocese of St. George's is maintained.

*Great Cathedral "story" of St. John's.*

Having given this brief summary of the ecclesiastical origins, the territorial divisions and the hierarchical succession of the Island of Newfoundland it may be of greater interest to relate the facts of what is probably the greatest material achievement of members of the Church in this territory, namely the erection of the great Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, of St. John the Baptist and St. Francis of Assisi in the city of St. John's, a building which after nearly five hundred years of colonizing struggle in this Island yet remains by far the most imposing construction and the proudest achievement of its Catholic people, idea in stone of Bishop Michael Anthony Fleming.

For over a hundred years the Catholic Cathedral for all Newfoundland was a small wooden chapel located in St. John's on the site of the present Star of the Sea Hall. Bishop Fleming was consecrated there – in the first episcopal consecration in our annals – as Coadjutor to Bishop Scallan, on the 28th October, 1829. It was Bishop Fleming who decided to erect a great Cathedral that should be, as he wrote: "A temple suitable to the worship of the Most High God, a memorial of the piety of the faithful, a pledge of the permanency of our holy religion, and an object of pride to the fervent Catholic." If, he declared, in the old law, Almighty God required a magnificent Temple how much more in the new dispensation should the Blood of the Lamb be offered in a church suitable to so great a mystery!

*The difficulties.*

It cost Bishop Fleming five years of "vexation and annoyance" to procure the grant of land from the British Government. He had to make five voyages across the Atlantic in sailing vessels to win his award. At the end of October, 1838, he returned to St. John's with the grant and architectural plans. Shortly after his return the whole population turned out and fenced the eight acres of ground in twenty minutes. Again, men, women and children at his request began excavation of the foundations and in less than two days the whole vast site was excavated. The stone was taken from Kelly's Island in Conception Bay with some portions imported from Galway and facings of Dublin granite. The cutting and transportation of stone required three years before building could commence and the first stone was laid on Thursday, 20th May 1841. Delays were caused by lack of stone workers and inadequate architectural supervision. Some mistakes were made which had to be rectified and the great fire of 1846 caused interruption. At the end of 1849, Bishop Fleming was fast failing in health and his mighty task was unfinished but at the New Year he judged that the exterior

work being completed and the interior well advanced he might for the first time offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in the temple erected for the Eucharistic God. In his last public appearance and several times failing from weakness Bishop Fleming offered the first Mass within its walls on the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6, 1850.

*First sermon in Cathedral.*

Archbishop John Hughes first Archbishop of New York preached the first sermon ever delivered in the Cathedral on the occasion of its solemn consecration by Bishop Mullock, September 9th, 1855. Bishop Charbonnell of Toronto, Bishop McKinnon of Arichat (Antigonish), and Bishop Connolly of New Brunswick were present for the Consecration, the first Solemn Pontifical High Mass being celebrated by Bishop Connolly. Archbishop Hughes in his eloquent discourse expressed his admiration and wonder that such a magnificent church could have been erected in St. John's which at that time was scarcely more than a small fishing village.<sup>6</sup> He took as his text the celebrated definition of Divine Faith given in St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews. "Now faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not" (Hebrews XI. 1). Only Divine Faith that clings with granite-like conviction to the unseen realities of the supernatural world, only such faith could have enabled the Bishop, Clergy and poor fishing-folk of Newfoundland to build a structure, the greatest at that time in the whole American world. "I say," declared the Archbishop, "that considering the means by which it has been erected, this monument of Catholic Faith has not been surpassed, nor perhaps equalled by anything to be found in the annals of the Christian Church." The preacher demonstrated how the Catholic Church through its teaching hierarchy brought down the deposit of Divine Faith from Jesus Christ, the Incarnate God, through all generations of the world to our own. The Church by preaching this Faith had Christianized the world and developed from the Twelve poor Apostles into the millions of adherents today. This was the Faith which safeguarded and treasured by the Catholic Church, survived 300 years of Roman persecution, won the victory over the early heretical Sects, converted the barbarian invaders who destroyed the Roman Empire, made the whole world Catholic and Christian for 1,200 years, and then survived and overcame the later heresies, most of which found their support in State-controlled churches rebelling against the authority of Christ's Vicar upon earth, the successor of St. Peter as Bishop of Rome. This Divine Catholic Faith was the foundation of that Christian charity which by means of the Church was diffused through the world uniting men as brethren of

---

<sup>6</sup> Bishop John Thomas Mullock, O.F.M., *The Cathedral of St. John's Newfoundland*. James Duffy, Dublin, 1856.

Christ and members of His Body. The hospitals, the schools, the refuge for the orphan, the abandoned sinners, the great projects of the religious orders of the Church all were inspired, created and maintained by Charity based on Faith, organized by the holy Church of Christ.

The great Archbishop of New York in this first sermon in the Cathedral promulgated a Christian charter of living for our people when he reminded them “That the inculcation of divine faith and holy charity is the great supernatural object for which this noble Cathedral has this day been consecrated.” They should lead a truly Eucharistic life, keeping their souls ever united to the hidden God of this new tabernacle amongst men. They should remember that they themselves, long after this material temple should perish, were destined to be living stones in “The Temple not made by hands” that mystic and eternal union with God in the Beatific Vision in the glorious company of the Saints with Mary the Immaculate Virgin, Mother of God who is elevated above all other creatures. It was under her powerful patronage the great preacher concluded his sermon by invoking on them all the blessing of God for time and eternity as a reward for that faith and charity embodied and enshrined in the glorious temple now erected and consecrated to the honour of the Eternal God.

*Monument to Newfoundland fishermen.*

Both Archbishop Hughes and Bishop Mullock in his evening address on that day emphasized the fact that it was the faith of the poor fishermen of Newfoundland that had made the great Cathedral a reality. Year after year for a decade of years the hardy fishermen had braved the winds and storms of the ocean and given from every voyage a generous contribution for the great building slowly arising on the hillside. On every Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, 29th June, for ten years every fisherman gave all the proceeds to the Cathedral fund. Bishop Mullock said he had been thrilled in the morning by the eloquence of Archbishop Hughes, greatest orator of that day in America, but he had been thrilled many times to greater degree at the reading of the fishermen’s subscription lists for the work of construction. Only confidence in God and the people erected this Cathedral. His predecessor Bishop Fleming lost his life in the progress of the Cathedral and when he (Bishop Mullock) undertook the task of completion, his only treasury was the faith and charity of the hearts of the fisher-folk of Newfoundland. Poor labourers, even little boys struggling to help sick and needy parents, all giving a proportion of their meagre earnings to this work, proved indeed that nothing was impossible to faith.

After the day of Consecration, Sunday, September 9th, 1855, the first great ceremonial to take place in the Cathedral was a Pontifical Triduum, September 10th, 11th, 12th, in honour of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the great dogma of the Catholic Faith defined just nine months previously, December 8th, 1854.