

## **A Critical Period in St. Patrick's Parish, Montreal – 1866-74**

BY

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The 25th of November, 1866, the Catholic congregation in St. Patrick's Church, Montreal, heard a pastoral letter read to them from the pulpit by the Reverend Patrick Dowd. With that letter Bishop Ignace Bourget also decreed as follows:

“We erect canonically the territory hereinafter designated, as a separate parish under the title of St. Patrick for spiritual matters alone. This parish will be limited by the middle of Sherbrooke Street, Bleary, Craig, St. Antoine and Mountain Streets, and will continue to remain a part of the civil parish of Notre Dame, and we decree that the Church of St. Patrick's already erected on the territory above mentioned, will be the parish Church of the said canonical parish of St. Patrick's which Church will remain in civil matters as a succursale of Notre Dame.” Thus was touched off for the approximately 30,000 English Catholics residing within the limits of Montreal a period of disturbances and controversy and some bitterness. The Church which had been erected by the Fabrique of Notre Dame, and to which they had contributed over \$40,000 within a few years previous to 1866, that Church was to become a parish Church and serve for the needs of all people residing within the very restricted territory mentioned above.

Before we examine the events that followed this first decree of November 1866, we should review the back-ground of the whole problem. The census figures of 1871 show that in the territory known as Montreal proper, and which was all a part of Notre Dame parish, there were 85,480 Catholics, and of these 28,440 were English-speaking. The total population of this district was 118,065. In what was described as the suburbs and comprising St. Henry, Mile End, Notre Dame de Grace and Hochelaga, there was an additional population of 23,341, of whom 19,778 were Catholic.<sup>1</sup>

To our modern minds it seems incredible that nearly 30,000 people were served by St. Patrick's Church. There was also one Mass at which an English sermon was preached at the Jesu Church on Bleury St. and St. Ann's Church, but one has to advert to the fact that the Seminary and the gentlemen of St. Sulpice had served the population of Montreal since 1657, had owned the whole Island and been its seigneurs for most of the French regime and also one must

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<sup>1</sup> S. PAGNUELO, *Liberté Religieuse En Canada*, page 375.

remember that they had devised this system of the succursale or branch Church in which all the functions of an ordinary parish Church were carried out, including the keeping of Registers. Bishop Bourget, on becoming Bishop of Montreal in 1840, was more than aware that a large part of the population of his diocese was being cared for on this basis. Twenty-five years later, on the request of the Bishop, the Congregation de Propaganda Fide examined the situation and at the end of 1865 the Apostolic Decree approved by Pope Pius IX was sent to Montreal authorizing the Bishop to proceed to the divisions of the parish of Notre Dame when the spiritual necessities of the faithful would require it.

Certain conditions were to be fulfilled, as stated in Canon Law. The old parish was to retain a certain portion of its population and was given the dignity of “Mother” Church and in setting up the new parishes the Bishop was to utilize the succursale Churches already attached to Notre Dame. There had been considerable controversy between the gentlemen of St. Sulpice and the Bishop before the congregation in Rome, and accompanying the decree was a letter from the Prefect of the congregation, Cardinal Barnabo, exhorting both sides “to put aside any feelings of discord and diffidence, if such should now remain,” and that they should seek to proceed with harmonious minds to the execution of the decree “keeping before their minds exclusively the good of religion and abstaining specifically from any appearance of controversy in regard to the temporal possessions of the seminary or the parish.”<sup>2</sup>

This decision of Rome had been awaited for some time by the Bishop and accordingly after some correspondence with the Superior of the Sulpicians he proceeded to carry out the Decree. He began by the succursale Church of St. Jacques on St. Denis Street and in September issued his Decree making that a parish Church. The Sulpicians protested and so did the parishioners but their protests were over-ruled. In December, St. Patrick’s turn came in the Decree which we have cited at the beginning of this paper. It should be noted that the Seminary of St. Sulpice and its parish Fabrique of Notre Dame being the only civilly incorporated bodies were responsible for the debt and at the time the Bishop began proceedings, this debt amounted to \$360,000.00. They no doubt had the title of the seigneuries and the properties were vested in them and these had been continued in the English regime and sanctioned by a law in 1840, but there were still some doubts and the example of the Jesuits and the Recollets, whose possessions had been seized by the English Government after 1763, was before their minds.

Perhaps one should not limit one’s self to the objective factors and skip over the other important element of the personalities of those involved in this controversy. On the one hand you have Bishop Bourget, a man of acknowledged piety but also of tremendous determination to make his diocese walk along the path laid out by the Universal Canon Law of the Church. That he was stern and

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<sup>2</sup> Letter of December 22, 1865 in Archives of Seminary of St. Sulpice.

unbending would seem to be a fair enough statement. The other main party to the controversy was the superior of St. Sulpice, Rev. Jos. Baile. Of him it has been said "that certainly on occasions he was not amiable. Perhaps, indeed, he could have added to the expression of his benevolence more readiness and more cordiality. To him it is also granted that he had the energy and tenacity of an unbending will whenever he conceived that a matter of conscience was involved. Everybody recognized that his intentions were upright, his zeal was pure, and there was a complete forgetfulness of himself in all these dealings."<sup>3</sup> He felt as superior of the seminary that he had its interests to defend, and defend them he did.

A third personality cannot be omitted from any mention of St. Patrick's. Of course, Father Dowd at this time had been nearly 20 years in Montreal. His congregation was solidly behind any lead that he offered them. He was, in addition a Sulpician, and as such he was very much of the mind of his superior, and when the events of this controversy took place he fought for the interests of his congregation and also for the interests of St. Sulpice. He had a trenchant pen and his observations were delivered with a vigor and a clearness that left no doubt in the minds of his hearers as to what he meant and what he wanted.

Perhaps we had better return to this end of the year 1866. Actually before the Decree had been issued in late November there had been a meeting required by Canon Law at which the priests and the congregation had been invited to give their views on the advantages or otherwise of the proposed new parish. Both Father Dowd, in his own and in the *name* of his seven assistants, and the laity presented their views. The views of the laity were signed by 6,000 of its adult members. They were opposed to the new project because they feared they might lose the Church erected for their own use, because the majority of the original contributors would be excluded by the narrow limits now proposed. They were opposed because the parish had not been asked for by any one residing within the limits assigned or elsewhere; that it would be a direct departure from the original understanding under which the Church was erected. It would bring injury and suffering to the institutions of charity that had grown up about the Church. Such protests, on the part of the laity, were reinforced by a strongly worded brief presented by Father Dowd in which he examines most carefully the merits of the proposal. He accurately foresaw what could take place and his protest was printed and apparently carried to Rome, because in all this controversy, it is his observations and his claim that the thousands of Irish Catholics resident within the civil limits of Notre Dame should be allowed to remain as one congregation in a national parish instead of being divided into three parishes where they would be exposed to the system of mixed languages in a double language church. That claim is the only point on which Rome made any major exception or deviation from the original Decree, as we shall see later.

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<sup>3</sup> Fr. Yelle, S.S., in *Annuaire du Grand Seminaire 1931-32*, p. 100.

Father Dowd examined the system of the mixed populations elsewhere. He cites the example of Toledo. He comes closer to home and points out the experience of the Archbishop of Quebec who had lately separated his English-speaking Catholics and put them all under one jurisdiction of St. Patrick's Church in that city. He cites Ottawa where you have a mixed system in the Cathedral and yet in several places in the city you have separate parishes, a separate system being set up. The disadvantages of such a two-language parish are brought out by the example of the Jesuits close to home. He cites the position of English-speaking Catholics in that Church and, disclaiming any blame on the Jesuit fathers, he merely points out the facts of the situation and says they are inevitable where you have two congregations. The English people being the minority must naturally take second place in the pre-occupations of the fathers and all that can be offered them at present is a short instruction at a low mass on Sunday morning and a sermon in the evening at an hour so late that it is neither safe nor suitable for ladies, who are unaccompanied, to go through the streets to their homes afterwards. "I say this expressly not to blame or to give pain, all that is far from my intention, but I say it first because the dangers to which I make reference have already presented themselves and under the most revolting form. I say it secondly because it shows the inconvenience of the mixed system under the most favourable circumstances."

He then goes on to argue that societies which meet at St. Patrick's on Sunday nights will have to share the limited premises they already have, with other societies proper to the French people who would be coming into the parish under the new limits proposed. He says further that under these conditions religion has to battle to save its life but it can never flourish because it lacks suitable husbanding. There can be no peace or union of hearts and minds. Here is Father Dowd declaring that within the limited territory offered to him more than half of its space is occupied almost exclusively by protestants. "In the rest of it there are also many protestants, so that I think I am not far from the truth in affirming that the whole Catholic population of the proposed parish, men, women and children, including those who speak English and those who speak French all gathered together would not fill St. Patrick's Church as it is filled now on Sunday morning at the 8 o'clock Mass alone." In discussing what in effect is going to take place Father Dowd lists his reasons in short vigorous sentences.

"I have another objection to make against the erection of the proposed parish and that is that the undivided immense majority of Catholics of the English language who form the actual congregation of St. Patrick's Church have a grave injustice done them. They have a strict right to use St. Patrick's Church: *First* because the Fabrique which owns the Church built it for their use. *Second* because after declaring such intention and the purpose of this Church, the Fabrique of Notre Dame asked for subscriptions from St. Patrick's congregation for help in building it and did receive such subscriptions. *Third* because the seminary with the same intention has furnished for its construction the sum of \$40,000, and has not indicated its intention of

changing the destiny of this Church.

*Fourth* because the congregation of St. Patrick's in these later years has spent more than \$30,000. to finish and decorate the Church which sum must be added to the subscriptions paid for its erection.

*Fifth* because with the blessing of the Bishop, this Church was blessed and dedicated to worship for the Catholics of the English language of this city.

*Sixth* because with the consent of his Lordship, that of the Fabrique and that of the Seminary and of all those who are concerned, the said Catholics have enjoyed peaceful possession of St. Patrick's Church without interruption from the day of its opening until the present day – a period of 20 years.<sup>4</sup>

So far we have touched upon the events leading up to November twenty-fifth when the congregation heard the pastoral letter of four days previous read at the mass in St. Patrick's. It is from the decree accompanying this letter that we chose our opening quotation. Let us consider these two documents for a moment. The storm of protest had already assumed some fair proportions by this time and Bishop Bourget set himself the task of trying to allay the feelings of the congregation. In the decree itself he inserted a clause (No. 8) whereby sacred worship and the sermons would be continued as before, with the instructions to be given in the English language. It was further provided that the priests engaged in the ministry of the new parish would be authorized to administer the sacraments to all the faithful of the English language wherever they resided within the limits of the former Parish of Notre Dame. To this extent, the Bishop was making the new Parish a double-duty one, that is, a territorial one and also a national parish for those residing outside of the new limits but within the old. Undoubtedly in Canon Law he was justified in his action, but it is curious to see his right to so derogate from the law challenged and questioned.

We venture the opinion that Bishop Bourget might have succeeded in his action, if he was dealing with St. Patrick's alone and not with the whole problem of suitably dividing Notre Dame at the same time; but, in order to win the people over to his plan, he added to the Pastoral Decree a Pastoral Letter of the same date. Herein he proceeded to recall his affection for the congregation and to enumerate the instances in which he had some part where the Irish emigrants of 1847 and subsequent years had received the help of their French-speaking brethren. Notice the key word "unfortunate" in the paragraph I now quote from this Pastoral:

"Count if you are able, all the works undertaken for the Irish people of which we have been the life and the promoter. When the ravages of the typhus left the children of your unfortunate countrymen by hundreds, orphans on our shores, did we not make an appeal to all our Diocese, to obtain for them other fathers and mothers, who as you know, reared them and cherished them as their own?"

"But this was not enough. What then did charity oblige us to do more for these children, the sight of whose sufferings affected our paternal heart! Did we not interest in their behalf the Seminaries, Colleges, Convents and charitable institutions? Was it not under our care that St. Jerome Emilian's Hospital was

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<sup>4</sup> Protest of Father Dowd-Authentic translation into French (The original in English not available): Archives of Seminary of St. Sulpice 1866.

opened, which gave these poor children shelter until they could be properly provided for elsewhere? Is it not also to our pastoral solicitude that you owe the establishment of St. Patrick's Hospital, when the Priests by whom you were attended, complained of your sufferings at the Protestant General Hospital of this city and of the difficulty of administering to you there the consolations of religion? When the need of a journal to defend your interests was keenly felt, was it not to us that your principal fellow countryman, with the Rev. Mr. Connolly, then chaplain of St. Patrick's at their head, addressed themselves for the object, and that journal was founded which has since so nobly fulfilled its task."

This Pastoral Letter drew from a Committee of English-speaking Catholics who had been appointed at a large meeting held in the grounds of the Orphanage on December 2nd such a reply as would be considered unique in such controversy. Disclaiming their right to touch upon the matters of law, they limit themselves to certain facts alleged in the Bishop's letter. Only a deeply hurt national pride could have elicited this paragraph:<sup>5</sup>

"Your Lordship, referring to the sad events of 1847, is pleased to call us an "unfortunate" people; we admit it, we were "unfortunate" – in 1847 through the inscrutable ways of God, who, however, often chastises in love. In 1866 we are still "unfortunate", – for your Lordship will not allow us to forget our sad destinies. The memory of all past afflictions must be kept fresh; and all the charities of which we have been the sad recipients, must be turned into an argument to force us to surrender, in silence, all the advantages of our present altered condition, and which we owe to our own efforts, under the blessing of God, and the generous sympathy of our immediate Pastors. Certainly we are a peculiar "unfortunate" people.

"Thousands of our fellow countrymen left their native land in 1847 in order to seek a home in Canada. They did not come here to live on charity. They were for the most part in the prime of life. Their intention was to repay the hospitality promised them in this new country by the riches of their labor, of their enterprise and of their virtue. God willed it otherwise. . . Your Lordship was our benefactor; we always knew it and never failed to acknowledge our obligations. And we now cheerfully again declare our conviction that all that a zealous and charitable Bishop could do, was done by your Lordship on that occasion. Our gratitude has not been confined to mere passing words."

There follows a reference to the response received by the Bishop himself when he conducted a personal canvas to gather donations for the erection of his projected Cathedral and the annual collections approved by the Bishop for the religious congregations of the city.

Clearly the efforts of the good Bishop had gone for nought and had even

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<sup>5</sup> Pp. 12 et seq. of the Pamphlet called *The Case of St. Patrick's Congregation*, printed by John Lovell 1866.

roused the spirits of the people to a higher pitch. In the meantime this Committee had been charged to bring the matter to appeal and a letter was drawn up and addressed to the Archbishop of Quebec; this latter wisely sensed that he could not intervene at this point and forwarded the communication to Rome and the Congregation of the Propaganda. Bishop Bourget refused to receive the letter addressed to him containing the above. cited paragraph and stated in a letter through his secretary, Canon J. A. Paré, that he would conduct himself in these circumstances along the same lines as certain Bishops of the United States had adopted a few years previously when some Catholics engaged in censuring the Pastoral Letters and Mandates of such Bishops. “Furthermore,” the letter continues, “I am instructed to inform you that his Lordship does not recognize that your Committee has any reason for its existence and denies to it any right to judge his actions.”

Nothing daunted, Bishop Bourget addressed a second Pastoral Letter on Christmas Day to what must have seemed to him his rebellious children and the tone of this letter indicated the piety of the man. He answers rather calmly and point by point the resolutions adopted at the Congregation’s meeting and insists that he is carrying out the decree of the Holy See allowing him to subdivide Notre Dame Parish. One rather telling paragraph comes in answer to the allegation that the Bishop had not sufficiently weighed the objections that had been made to his project:

“However it is a fact that nobody can deny that, by order of the Sovereign Pontiff, there exists between the Bishop and the Seminary (of St. Sulpice) an arrangement by virtue of which and in the terms of one of its articles, the Parish of Notre Dame may be divided at the discretion of the Bishop and that this arrangement has received the Pontifical Sanction. Now it is easy to see by the terms of the above-mentioned protests that these have been directed rather more against the proposed division than against the mode of the division, and it must also be remarked that the objections presented at Rome against the publication of the Apostolic Decree which bears as its title this act of arrangement have been reproduced here in the said protests in order to impede the execution of the decree. These objections, after being weighed carefully during a whole year have been found insufficient by the highest Ecclesiastical tribunal of the world. How then can one pretend that they should have more weight before the tribunal of the Bishop?”<sup>6</sup>

By the time this Pastoral was written, the Bishop was faced with two appeals to Rome: that of the congregation mentioned above and a new one taken by the Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpice, Father Jos. Baile. In a private letter addressed to the Superior on receiving notification of the appeal, Bishop Bourget takes the stand that he kept to throughout the difficulties:

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<sup>6</sup> Letters of Bishop Bourget – 1866 (Manuscript copy of the Letter in the Archives of Seminary of St. Sulpice for 1866.)

“If,” he says, “and this cannot be doubted, I have conformed to the letter of the said Apostolic Decree (that of Dec. 22, 1865) in erecting canonically St. Jacques’ and St. Patrick’s, you cannot appeal to Rome against these divisions without appealing against the Decree itself, that is to say, without appealing from the Pope badly informed to the Pope better informed. . . I stand therefore by the Apostolic Decree of Dec. 22, 1865; because I consider it as a definite judgment and without appeal – ‘Roma locuta est causa finita est’.”<sup>7</sup>

From this point onward, the matter of dealing with the Roman Congregation was handled by the Seminary and very little appears in the records of the attitude or the actions of the laity of St. Patrick’s congregation, with the exception of the protest carried to Rome itself at their own expense by the Hon. Thomas D’Arcy McGee and the Hon. Thomas Ryan, both of whom were publicly thanked by Father Dowd (Mr. McGee posthumously) at the time of his golden jubilee in the holy Priesthood, May 19th, 1887.<sup>8</sup>

It was not until the year 1873, and, appropriately enough, on the 17th of March, that the intervention of Rome fixed the new limits of St. Patrick’s and made them to coincide with the old limits of Notre Dame. Before citing such Decree however, we should state what was happening in the meantime in the new canonical Parish.

The Sulpician Fathers and specifically the Fabrique of Notre Dame were legally responsible for the debts they had contracted for the erection of these various succursale churches now being set up into proper canonical parishes by the Bishop. They had the only civil incorporation. Being unable to foresee that the new parishes would be able to assume the debt immediately, the Bishop left them as succursales of Notre Dame Parish in the civil sphere. (For the benefit of those readers who know only the American system of corporation sole wherein all the Church properties in a diocese are vested in the Bishop and his is the only civil corporation, it should be stated here that in Quebec law, each Parish is a separate corporation and the Bishop exercises certain controls over each of them.) As has been already stated, these debts formed the large amount of \$360,000. The ground of battle at home shifted partly to the civil law and as Rome had forbidden law suits on these temporal matters, it was a battle of legal briefs that went on. The Sulpicians had as their lawyers, Sir Geo. Etienne Cartier and his associates and also Judge Beaudry, the author of a Code des Curés, which supported the views favorable to the Seminary. The Bishop used the services of Messrs. Jetté and Cherrier and their associates. There is in the Archives of the Archdiocese of Montreal one consultation by Mr. A. C. Papineau dated August 27th, 1867, which was printed in pamphlet form and which states that “the dowry or rather the dowries of the Seminary are ecclesiastical and therefore that they have been given to the present owners for the spread of the

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<sup>7</sup> Letters of Bishop Bourget, Dec. 5th, 1866 – Archives of Archd. of Montreal.

<sup>8</sup> P. 63 in the Book of the Golden Jubilees of Rev. Fathers Dowd and Toupin.

lights of the Gospel, the exercise of the priestly ministry in favor of the Indians and the French on the island of Montreal, and more specially at the time of the law of 1840 for the service (religious) of the Parish of Montreal as it then existed.” It seems safe to presume that this printed opinion was sent to Rome for the views quoted above were followed later in the decrees of Rome to order the Sulpicians to divest themselves of the ownership of various Church properties or rather to allow to the Bishop the use of such for the purposes of public worship. A proviso was added that if there should at any time arise a circumstance wherein the buildings were no longer used for these purposes they are to revert to the Seminary. With regard to St. Patrick’s, the same Decree provides that the Parish will at a suitable time assume the debt incurred for the construction of the Church. The time was just previous to Fr. Dowd’s Jubilee, for he refers to it in his address at that time, as amounting to \$124,000. This provision was made because St. Patrick’s had been erected on a very large scale and was at the time the second largest Church in the City, second only to Notre Dame itself.<sup>9</sup>

One other item was most important in law and that was the civil registers. The Sulpicians’ lawyers thought it would be illegal to have a canonical Parish which would at the same time be civilly a succursale of Notre Dame. Perhaps we should more correctly say that the Bishop having made these canonical parishes, it was the opinion of these lawyers that civil status should be granted them without delay. Failing this, no subdivision at all should take place. In any case the opinion followed by the Seminary was that these succursales like St. Patrick’s had been keeping registers of marriages, baptisms and funerals insofar as the Priest in charge was acting as a delegate of the Pastor of Notre Dame. Sir Geo. E. Cartier gave it as his opinion that “The Curé of Notre Dame may be constrained by a judgment to perform baptisms, marriages and burials throughout the length and breadth of his parish and so any parishioner of the parish of Notre Dame of Montreal, residing in the territory included in the canonical parish, has grounds for an action against the curé of the parish of Notre Dame of Montreal, if this latter refuses his ministrations.”<sup>10</sup>

Clear indication that the Seminary was using this legal opinion to further its objections to the division of Notre Dame is supplied in the correspondence between Fr. Dowd and Bishop Bourget in December, 1866. In October of that year Sir Geo. Etienne Cartier in a legal consultation for the Fabrique of Notre Dame stated: “Church wardens are obliged to superintend (“veiller à la tenue”) the keeping of the registers of civil status and to see that the entries of baptisms, marriages and burials that are made therein

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<sup>9</sup> Decree of S.C. de Propaganda, July 4, 1874 – Archives of the Seminary of St. Sulpice.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted from Opinions of Sir E. Cartier in Archives of Seminaire of St. Sulpice. *Liberté Religieuse*, by S. Pagnuelo p. 347.

conform to the dispositions of the law.”<sup>11</sup>

On December 12th Fr. Dowd writes to the Bishop that his wardens challenge the legality of his entries in the registers and the Bishop replies that it is for “curés and not the Church wardens to perform marriages, etc., and to answer for the authenticity of the acts they draw up in the registers.”<sup>12</sup>

Nine days later Fr. Dowd returns to tell the Bishop by letter that he has information purporting to be that the civil authorities will refuse him new registers for the year 1867 when he applies for these. Bishop Bourget’s answer on Dec. 22nd is that “the decree which makes of St. Patrick’s a parish-succursale of Notre Dame does not deprive it (St. Patrick’s) of any of the civil rights to keep registers. This is the thought of men of the law who have a well-deserved reputation in our Bar.”<sup>13</sup>

Here the battle of legal consultations is out in the open. As a matter of fact, the new registers for 1867 were refused and from December, 1866, until November, 1872, no registers were kept at St. Patrick's and all entries are to be found in the registers of Notre Dame.

The restoration of registers to St. Patrick's in 1872 came as the result of a second intervention of Rome, for a decree of July 30th ordered the Sulpicians to recognize the parishes erected by the Bishop since December, 1865, as proper “succursales” with defined territorial limits and proper Rectors. With, a slight treatment of this and the two subsequent decrees we bring this paper to its end. It is perhaps not unimportant, however, to point out that all of the senior Sulpicians, except Father Dowd, had received their theological training in France, during the first half of the 19th Century, when Gallicanism was still very much alive. Now one of the tenets of Gallicanism was “that the papal primacy was limited by the canons and customs of particular churches, which the Pope was bound to take into account when he exercised his authority.” There was also a parliamentary form of Gallicanism “which tended to augment the rights of the State more and more, to the prejudice of those of the Church, on the grounds of what they called ‘The Liberties of the Gallican Church.’” Now Gallicanism, it is true, was on the wane in the XIX Century, but the condemnation of Proposition 24 of the Syllabus by Pius IX and various encyclical letters of Leo XIII show that it still had left traces in the Church. It was the Vatican Council which struck the death blow to this doctrine as a free opinion from that date it could only survive as a heresy.<sup>14</sup>

The Vatican Council took place in 1870. The decree to which we have alluded as the second intervention of Rome came in 1872 and certainly the

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<sup>11</sup> S. Pagnuelo, op. cit., p. 369.

<sup>12</sup> Letters of Bishop Bourget, Dec. 13, 1866: Archives of Archbishopric of Montreal.

<sup>13</sup> Letters of Bishop Bourget – Dec. 22, 1866.

<sup>14</sup> *Cath. Ency.* “Gallicanism,” Vol. VI, pp. 354 & 355.

Roman congregation was very clear in its direction as to the properties owned by the Fabrique of Notre Dame, and clearly marked out a method of administering such property and other assets as the succursale Churches might acquire. It must have been somewhat of a shock to the Seminary when it was declared in article 6 of this decree that the fathers of the Company of St. Sulpice are “to be strenuously exhorted in the name of the Holy See that when they are unable to assume the care of souls in the new parishes, they are to hand over the property of such Churches, with all their furnishings and the presbyteries, for the use of such parishes. If in the future there are to be more succursales established, and if an agreement of suitable compensation for the Churches and presbyteries cannot be made, recourse is to be had to the Apostolic See in each case.” Even supposing that there were no slightest trace of Gallican feeling among the fathers of the seminary, it may very well have been a bitter thing for them to accept such an order. This first intervention, after the permissive decree of December, 1865, dealt expressly with the English-speaking Catholics of St. Patrick’s and St. Ann’s as then established by the Bishop.

It was decreed in the 3rd article that the Church of St. Patrick’s and that of St. Ann’s were to be used exclusively for the parochial services to the “Angli” or the “Hibernienses” and similarly that the Canadians or the faithful of the French language included within the limits of these two parishes were to belong to the other succursales or parishes exclusively. This was a first denial of the arrangements made by Bishop Bourget, and it came as a result of a form of compromise arrived at by Archbishop, later Cardinal Taschereau of Quebec, who had been appointed by the Holy See in April, 1871 to come to Montreal and attempt to find some form of settlement between the two parties. One sees in the decree that there is in article 8 an order to the Archbishop of Quebec to transmit to the Bishop of Montreal, and to the Superior of the Seminary, a copy of this decree and also the order to watch over its execution. Two other decrees were to follow. Both of them were transmitted through the same channel to Montreal and in each case a letter accompanied the decree and some times explained it. The first of these two was issued on a most appropriate date, the 17th of March, 1873, and it is there provided that each and every parish of which there was question in dividing Notre Dame is to be considered as a true and proper parish and will cease to be described by the name of “succursale.” The Bishop is ordered to issue new decrees and set the parishes up along the lines prescribed by the present Roman decision.

Now that seems one step forward, but in the letter that accompanied this decree, a letter dated March 29th, 1873, Cardinal Bernabo makes it clear to the Archbishop of Quebec that in so far as the parishes of Notre Dame and St. Patrick’s are concerned, the Bishop must, in the new decree, clearly explain that they cover one and the same territory in such a way that the French-speaking or Canadian Catholics, living in the territory of these two parishes, are subject to the parish priest of the “Mother” Church Notre Dame. The “Angli” or “Hibernenses” living in this same territory are subject to the pastor of St.

Patrick's. Exactly the same regime was applied to the St. Joseph and St. Ann parishes so that another step forward is contained in this decree in that the limits of St. Patrick's as newly set up by the Bishop in 1865, are now extended to include the whole territory of Notre Dame and not just the part assigned in 1866, which caused so much discussion. Perhaps it should be pointed out here that his dealings with the English-speaking Catholics and the system that was proposed – the mixed system in many congregations – are the only major point on which Rome disagreed with the proposals of Bishop Bourget. Suffice it has been said to show that the gentlemen of St. Sulpice were listened to with respect but nevertheless were refused repeatedly the request that they made to keep Montreal in *statu quo*.

The final decree came as a result of further difficulties between the parties. Its date is July 4th, 1874. The terms of the decree would indicate that the civil law was being called upon as a further stumbling block in the matter of these parishes. This last decree takes seven paragraphs and all even paragraphs deal with the establishment of a Fabrique in the various parishes erected canonically – which would be considered a final severing of their ties with Notre Dame – and with other temporal matters of that kind. The only item of considerable interest to us comes in paragraph 3, where it is stated that the Fabrique of St. Patrick's if and when such is erected, will assume the debt that was contracted for the erection of the said St. Patrick's Church, or such part of it as still remains. With this decree the threat to the very life of St. Patrick's parish is finally removed and the system of separate Churches for the English-speaking people solidly established by the choice of the Roman congregation with the approval of Pope Pius IX. Since those days growth in French Catholic Montreal has been nothing short of phenomenal.

In the territory that counted in 1871 a total of 105,000 Catholics there are now over 700,000. The 30,000 English-speaking Catholics of that day have now become approximately 70,000 but the 75,000 French Catholics of 1871 are now considerably more than 500,000 Catholics. Obviously the division of these Catholics had to come and it might be considered providential that there was to be found in Bishop Bourget, and the priests of the seminary, men of vigorous views who yet proved their obedience to the Apostolic See in no uncertain way. It was a doughty battle and it left some scars on the participants, but all are agreed today that strenuous and bitter and prolonged as it was, there was little other way of settling so involved, so large and so far-reaching a dispute. "*Roma locuta est*": "*causa finite est*"; peace has settled down these many years for all those who live in the parish of Montreal. It is a well earned peace.