

Saskatchewan's Marian Shrines

by
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In a joint pastoral letter of April 7, 1933, the Archbishop, Bishops and Abbot Ordinary of the Ecclesiastical Province of Regina consecrated their flocks in the province of Saskatchewan to Mary in the following words:

Let us practice without ceasing a loving devotion to Our Blessed Lady, the Queen of the Holy Rosary, the glorious patroness of this Ecclesiastical Province of Regina. The loving protection of Mary over our dioceses under the title of the Queen of the Holy Rosary gives us supreme confidence and unending hope that, through her most powerful intercession with her Divine Son, God will bless our common efforts, save our dioceses and religious institutions and solve our pressing problems. It was with this most firm faith and serene abiding confidence that We, your Fathers in Christ, after a day of serious deliberation for your spiritual and temporal welfare, have, on the evening of April 5th, consecrated together Our dioceses and Abbey to Mary, God's holy Mother. In the chapel of the Regina Cleri Seminary, We have, after reciting the rosary and litany of Our Blessed Lady, placed Our beloved flocks and Our common concerns, spiritual, temporal and social under her maternal protection. More than that: there, on bended knees, We have made a solemn vow to propagate without ceasing the devotion of the Most Holy Rosary, throughout our jurisdictions; to keep, with special solemnity the annual feast of Our Lady of the Rosary; and to establish her confraternity in every parish and mission under Our charge. We know that your faith and piety will prompt you to help your Chief Pastors carry out this solemn pledge and We ask you even now and particularly during the month of May to fulfill the promise made in your name and in Our own.

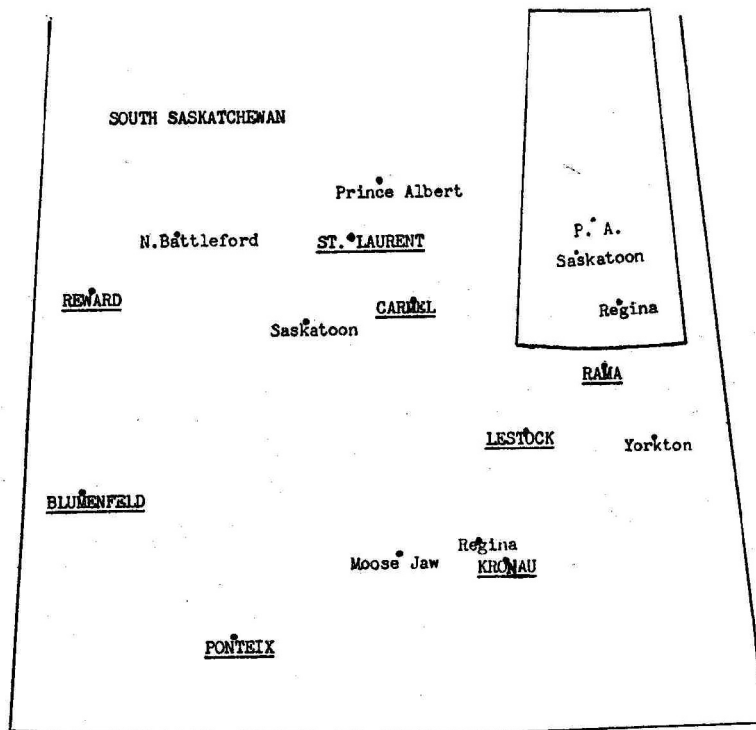
With the utmost confidence in your cooperation, made meritorious by supernatural motives, We lovingly invoke upon you the blessing of Almighty God, and again consecrate you, Our most dear children, to Mary, our Queen and Mother.¹

Subsequently the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary was established.² Devotion to Mary increased still more through the Rosary Crusade in 1948. At

¹ *Pastoral Letters and Circular Letters of James Charles McGuigan, Archbishop of Regina*, p. 185. The other members of the hierarchy at that time were: Bishop Prud'homme, Bishop Melanson, and Abbot Ordinary Severin Gertken.

² The document for the Abbacy of Muenster is dated: Rome, March 19, 1934.

the shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the hierarchy of the province together with Fr. Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., the organizer of the Crusade, and thousands of the faithful, invoked her aid for the success of the Crusade in Saskatchewan. The response made by the Catholic people of the Province to the Crusade was even beyond what the hierarchy and Fr. Peyton had hoped for.



Location of Marian Shrines is underlined
Inset shows whole of Saskatchewan

The consecration of the Catholics of the Province to Mary and the Rosary Crusade stand out as high points in the story of Marian devotion in Saskatchewan, for devotion to Mary was an integral part of the religion of the Catholics of the Province from its very beginning. Even before the Province was established in 1905, the name of Mary was very familiar, for the foremost missionaries of Saskatchewan, as well as of the rest of Western and Northern Canada, were the Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

It was through their work, too, that the first public shrine in honor of Mary was set up, and the first public pilgrimage held in the same year as the Province

was established. It was the first of the shrines in Saskatchewan where public pilgrimages in honor of Mary are held annually.

ST. LAURENT

The beginning of the shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes at St. Laurent de Grandin, on the left bank of the South Saskatchewan River, was slow and difficult, for it dates back almost to the time of the first settlements there.³

Settlers from the Red River in Manitoba, the Metis, came to this region in 1870, and Oblates of Mary Immaculate ministered to their spiritual needs. In 1879 a lay brother, Jean Pierre Marie Piquet, arrived to help at the mission. It is to him we owe the idea of establishing a shrine in honor of Mary.

Bro. Piquet was born in France, about twenty miles from Lourdes, where the Blessed Virgin Mary had appeared to Bernadette. He had known her, and knew well the place of pilgrimage. The scenery near the mission of St. Laurent – the steep cliff, the water coming from a spring, the rumbling of the River nearby – reminded him forcefully of the place of pilgrimage at Lourdes. He made known his thoughts to Fr. Fourmond, O.M.I., who was in charge of the mission. The latter was much impressed, and both of them formed the habit of going to the spot to pray. Fr. Fourmond continued this custom and induced others to follow his example, even though obedience called Bro. Piquet away in 1880.

A patch of bark was cut away from the trunk of a tree, and a picture of Mary's apparition at Lourdes was placed there and covered by a glass, but this deteriorated quickly. In 1882 a small statue was placed in the tree by Miss Dorval who arrived in that year to teach school. A flower bed was planted in front of the tree bearing the statue, and hither the people of the mission would often come to recite the Rosary.

Bro. Piquet returned to St. Laurent in the same year, and at once, in his spare time, began to improve the grounds near the spot and to build a grotto. His work and plans for the future of the grotto were again suddenly halted in the next year (1883), when the superior, Rev. Fr. Souillier, during a canonical visit, pointed out that there were other things more important than a pilgrimage in a pioneer land. Consequently nothing was done for more than a year, and then an unusual event again drew attention to Our Lady of Lourdes.

Mrs. Charles Nolin, the wife of a settler of the district, had been sick for about ten years, and physicians had been unable to cure her. After reading a book on Lourdes, her husband procured some Lourdes water. Bro. Piquet was also interested and advised the family to begin a novena and to promise a statue. The lady was cured and in gratitude Mr. Nolin procured a statue of Our Lady,

³ The main source for the story of the development of the shrine is *Saint Laurent de Grandin*, by Rev. Jules Le Chevallier, O.M.I.

but since the grotto was not yet ready, it was placed in the chapel of the mission.

Then in 1885 came the insurrection led by Louis Riel, but there was no bloodshed at St. Laurent. The trouble quickly subsided. Bro. Piquet completed the grotto, and the statue was placed there. Led by Fr. Fourmond processions came to honor Our Lady on her feast days, and other people came at various times to pray to her, and to take away water from the spring.

Another servant of Mary Immaculate, Bro. Guillet, was to continue the work begun by Bro. Piquet. Bro. Guillet had been a cripple for almost a decade as a result of a gash in his leg, which had never properly healed because complications had set in. He made a novena to Our Lady of Lourdes and a pilgrimage to her shrine at St. Laurent in 1893. So completely was he cured that he was able to resume his work at Reindeer Lake and there he remained until 1900.

In the meantime the mission of St. Laurent had fallen on hard times, and the people had gradually drifted away. Things came to such a pass that in 1894, Fr. Vachon, who was in charge, was ordered to Prince Albert, and the buildings of the mission were abandoned. Pilgrims, however, continued to come to the shrine, sometimes alone, sometimes in groups.⁴

Immediately after Bro. Guillet was stationed at Fish Creek in 1901, he resumed work at the grotto during his leisure time. He looked after the grotto and brought pilgrims to it. But he wanted to do more; he wanted an organized pilgrimage from the neighboring parishes, and directed his energies to achieve that purpose.

The result was the first public pilgrimage on Aug. 15, 1905. The parishioners of Carlton, where Fr. Krist, O.M.L., was pastor, had been accustomed to make such a pilgrimage on that day. Bro. Guillet suggested that the people from other parishes be invited to come also. His suggestion was followed, and on the appointed day about five hundred people gathered at the shrine. The weather was most unfavorable, for it rained most of the time, and Mass had to be said in a tent, and the sermon, preached by Fr. Myre, was delivered under the protection of an umbrella held by Bro. Guillet.

From that time forward the pilgrimage in honor of our Lady of Lourdes was an annual affair. At the suggestion of Fr. Ovide Charlebois, O.M.L., who was then the principal of the Indian School at Duck Lake, and later Vicar Apostolic of Keewatin, the date was changed to July 16. It was also he who encouraged Bro. Guillet in his work, and made it possible for him to spend several weeks in the summer preparing the shrine for the pilgrimage which Bishop Pascal, O.M.L., of Prince Albert, entrusted to the Fathers in charge of the school at Duck Lake, a distance of about six miles from the shrine.

Material changes and improvements at the shrine since then have occurred

⁴ Rev. J. M. Penard, O.M.I., *The Vicar Apostolic of Keewatin*, p. 108.

from time to time. In 1906 Bro. Guillet built an open oratory so that Mass would not have to be said under a tent, and Fr. Charlebois had to take down the original grotto built by Bro. Piquet because the wind and the weather had damaged it. He had an excavation made into the hillside which was then lined with stones. Fr. Delmas, O.M.I., who succeeded Fr. Charlebois, had a roof built to shelter the grotto and the new statue, a gift from a lady in the United States (1912). In 1917 a roof, supported by wooden pillars, was built. It was large enough to shelter about one thousand people. Finally enough money was gathered by Fr. Latour, O.M.I., so that a new construction could be made. The new grotto was built of solid concrete, as like to the original at Lourdes as possible, and this was ready for the pilgrimage of 1951.

Among the annual pilgrimages the one in 1912 is remembered particularly because in that year Bishop Pascal of Prince Albert came to bless the new statue and the grotto, and it was he who began the procession with the Blessed Sacrament, which became an integral part of the day of pilgrimage. Bishop Prud'homme was present in 1922. It was his first visit to the shrine and about eight thousand people came for the occasion.

The pilgrimage has followed much the same program from year to year. The following is a description of the pilgrimage in 1935:

On the afternoon of July 15, the lonely roads of the Canadian prairie began to hum with activity. First to appear were the Indians. In battered wagons which lazily rumbled over dusty surfaces, the redskins travelled from far and wide. Then came the white man in more up-to-date carriages and automobiles. People emerged from all directions, for all roads on that day led to Saint Laurent. By nightfall the encampments were set up and camp fires began to blaze. The prairie was aglow with flames to announce that July 16, the feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, was at hand. In their open-air confessionals a dozen missionaries were busy reconciling souls to God.

At the first glimmering of dawn, pilgrims began pouring in again from far and near. The confessionals were besieged anew and over three thousand received Holy Communion at the numerous Masses. Starting at seven o'clock, each nationality in turn had its own Mass. Sermons were preached in six different languages. Finally, at ten o'clock, about nine thousand pilgrims assembled on the hillsides for the Solemn Mass which concluded the morning service.

After the mid-day pause for lunch, the shrine bell rang out and the procession was organized. Banners were unfurled and the Indians, sure guides in the forest, led the way. They were followed in turn by the Slavs, the Germans, the Hungarians, the English, the Irish and the French. From the shrine in the valley the procession made its way to the tableland above. Here Benediction was given and the procession returned to the main altar of the shrine.

During this lengthy program, for close to an hour and a half, a hymn to the Blessed Virgin was chanted in six languages. As one eyewitness has so

beautifully stated: “How can one translate the charm of the Christian soul in that diversity of languages, blending in harmony in the expression of a like worship in the unity of the Church? It is a magnificent triumphal march of all tribes, of all languages and of all nations to honor the Host of the Tabernacle and His Divine Mother. In that Christian Babel, in that Pentecost of idioms, no discordant cry can be heard. There is but one heart, one soul, one voice!

It is the heart, the soul, and the voice of nine thousand pilgrims singing the praises of Mary-pilgrims who come on July 16, to give life to the village of St. Laurent, which throughout the years sleeps in a vast wilderness full of mystery and memories.”⁵

KRONAU

Another shrine in honor of Our Lady of Lourdes is at Kronau,⁶ about fifteen miles southeast of Regina. German-Russians from the region of the Black Sea, and from some of the northern states of the United States settled in this district after 1890. The parish of St. Peter at Kronau was established in 1916 and Fr. Metzger was the first resident pastor.

He had been in charge of the church of St. Peter since 1913, while it was still a mission, and already on his first visit he had pointed out that near the church was a site which would be most suitable for a grotto in honor of Our Lady of Lourdes toward whom he had a great devotion. In the summer of 1915 he organized a procession to the site which he had selected along a creek called “Many Bones.” A statue of the Blessed Virgin was placed there; the congregation sang hymns, recited the Rosary, and sang the Magnificat.

Fr. Metzger had wished to proceed at once to the building of a grotto, but waited another year, because the parish was being formed in 1916, and a parish house had to be built. In 1917, however, the actual construction was begun in the side of a small hill which had been excavated to make room for the grotto. The intention was to put the whole parish in a special way under the protection of Mary. To defray the expenses of the construction contributions were made by the parishioners. The statue of Mary, made of bronze, was obtained from a firm in Chicago, and a statue of Bernadette of cement from Montreal. A master mason was hired to supervise the construction of the grotto, and the parishioners helped as much as they could. The grotto is made of rocks. There is a niche at the base for an altar, and one, higher, and to the right of the altar, for the statue.

The blessing of the shrine and the first pilgrimage were held on Aug. 15, 1917. His Excellency, Archbishop Mathieu of Regina, officiated. There were

⁵ Hugh P. McCabe, O.M.I., “Our Lady of the Prairies,” *Marienbote* (May 1948), 40-41.

⁶ Rev. H. Metzger, *Geschichtlicher Abriss ueber die St. Peter's Pfarrei*, pp. 44-47.

about five thousand people present for the occasion.

Since that time a pilgrimage has been held annually, and the shrine is visited by small groups from time to time. On the day of the pilgrimage there is usually a low Mass in the church at eight. Later the people gather at the church. A procession is formed and goes to the grotto for the Solemn High Mass at ten. At two the pilgrims gather again at the shrine for a sermon, blessing of medals and other religious articles. This is followed by Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament. The Archbishop of Regina is usually able to be present for the afternoon services.

RAMA

A third shrine in honor of Our Lady of Lourdes is at St. Anthony's Parish,⁷ Rama, where many of the people are of Polish descent. Polish people have been dedicated to Mary in a special way already for centuries, and had been accustomed to visit the numerous shrines in her honor in their native land. This tradition of honoring her was brought along to this country.

Under the leadership of Fr. A. Sylla, O.M.I., the Catholic people of Rama decided to build a shrine in honor of Mary. During her apparitions at Lourdes she had expressed a desire that as many people as possible should come to her grotto. They could not do this, so the parishioners chose to make a replica of the Lourdes grotto to which they all could go. A small hill west of the Church was selected as the site of the shrine.

The work of building the grotto, done by Fr. Sylla and the parishioners, began in 1938, with the removal of a part of the hill. Stones were brought by the wagonload from the surrounding district to serve as the building material. On Sept. 1, 1939, the erection of the grotto began,⁸ and the main part was completed that year. In the following year, the large front wall and the two sidewings, in the form of a half circle, were completed.

The shrine was blessed on June 15, 1941, by Mgr. A. Janssen, the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Regina. On the following Aug. 14 and 15, there was the first public pilgrimage to the new shrine, and every year since then the pilgrimage has taken place on the same dates.

The services begin on the evening of Aug. 14 when the people come to the shrine for solemn vespers, a holy hour and the Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament. Then the pilgrims in procession accompany the Blessed Sacrament to the church where it is exposed for adoration.

On the morning of Aug. 15 Masses begin at six, and are said at every hour,

⁷ Rev. Fr. A. Sylla, O.M.I., the pastor of Rama, supplied the information for this section.

⁸ The same day as the German armies began the invasion of their native land.

the last Mass being a Solemn High Mass at eleven. At three the pilgrims, usually between two and three thousand, assemble at the grotto to recite the Rosary and to consecrate themselves again to Mary. This is followed by a procession around the grotto, in which the neighboring parishes display their banners. The annual pilgrimage concludes with Solemn Benediction.

More work on the original construction was done in 1944. A large cross was erected above the niche containing the statue of the Blessed Virgin, and at the foot of the cross two statues were placed, one of the Sorrowful Mother, and the other of St. John. In the same stone calvary are altars with three statues, one of Our Lord being taken down from the cross, another of Him in the sepulchre, and a third of His resurrection. Plans for the future include a Way of the Cross around the grotto, and the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary within the two stone wings of the grotto.

REWARD⁹

Among the pastors of the parishes of St. Joseph's Colony there was a long standing desire to have a place of pilgrimage for their German-Russian people. In May, 1932, through their Provincial, they made known their wish to Bishop Prud'homme of Prince Albert and Saskatoon, and he willingly granted his permission for such a pilgrimage. In a pastoral letter he wrote:

It is with a sense of great satisfaction that we write this letter to the Reverend Oblate Fathers and to the Faithful of St. Joseph's Colony, because we know that this news will bring joy and gladness to your hearts ... St. Joseph's Colony shall, at last, have a place of pilgrimage ...

Since Father Provincial endorses the plan, and since he has requested us to express ourselves, we gladly approve and grant the joint request, for undoubtedly Divine Providence has been active in this enterprise. We approve of it in the following terms: – As such is the desire of the Oblate Fathers and of the Faithful of St. Joseph's Colony, We hereby establish the Holy Rosary Church as a shrine for the entire Colony under the title, Pilgrimage of the Blessed Virgin. Each year, therefore, on the 16th day of July, the Fathers and the Faithful of the Colony shall gather in this church and join in prayer at the shrine...

Your pilgrimage to the shrine should especially increase your devotion and love to the Mother of God ...

We all wish to be children of Mary, but we are not all able to go to Lourdes or to other places of pilgrimage. That is why we are establishing such a place here to excite ourselves to a greater love for Mary and to imitate her virtues. Holy Rosary Church with its beautiful presentations of the Holy

⁹ The main source for this account are letters written by the pastor of the Holy Rosary Church, Rev. Fr. C. Groetschel, O.M.I.

Rosary mysteries, is most apt to bring this ideal nearer your hearts; even the exterior attraction of this church and its beautiful picture of the Mother of God, can inspire you with confidence in the maternal intercession of Mary.¹⁰

The church was built in 1918 by Rev. Fr. P. Bieler, O.M.I. The pictures referred to in the Pastoral Letter were painted in 1920 by B. Imhoff, at that time a well known artist of St. Walburg. Each of the mysteries of the Rosary is represented by a picture ten feet high.

About 3,000 people took part in the first pilgrimage on July 16, 1932. Mass was said at a temporary altar in the open. Here also there was Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament. The people, in procession, then accompanied the Blessed Sacrament into the Church.

The first Bishop of Saskatoon, Bishop Murray, later Archbishop of Winnipeg, was present at the pilgrimage of 1934, held a few months after his installation. He assisted from the throne during Solemn High Mass in the morning and in the afternoon carried the Blessed Sacrament in procession. In a sermon to the people he expressed his joy at this manifestation of Catholic faith and Marian devotion.¹¹

On the annual day of pilgrimage, now held on the Sunday following July 16, the parishioners from each of the neighboring parishes assemble at a stated time about half a mile from the Church. Then they go in procession to the Church where they attend a low Mass and many receive Holy Communion. For the Solemn High Mass the pilgrims, sometimes as many as five thousand, gather before an altar which has been erected near the Church, and which, since 1936, is permanent and enclosed on three sides. In the afternoon the people gather again for the procession with the Blessed Sacrament along a specially prepared way. Benediction is given from the chapel, and then the pilgrims again accompany the Blessed Sacrament in procession to the Church where it is placed in the tabernacle.

PONTEIX¹²

The pilgrimage at Ponteix is in honor of Our Lady of Sorrows. The image venerated in the church of Our Lady of Auvergne is a statue of Mary and her Divine Son after His body was taken down from the Cross.

This statue of oak, originally covered with pure gold, is more than four hundred years old and came from France. During the Revolution in that country there was a time when it was not safe to leave such religious images in churches.

¹⁰ Pastoral Letter of Bishop Prud'homme, May 29, 1932. Preserved at Holy Rosary Church, and sent to the writer by Fr. Groetschel.

¹¹ St. Peter's Bote; Aug. 16, 1934, p. 7.

¹² Mgr. L. Lussier, P.D., V.G., pastor of the church of Our Lady of Auvergne, has kindly supplied most of the information for this section.

Hence this statue, too, was removed and hidden by peasants in a haystack until it was safe to expose it again.

Later it came into the hands of a noted antiquary, Canon Teyard, of Aubière, a place near the city of Clermont-Ferrand, in a region once known as Auvergne. He gave it to his friend, Fr. Albert Royer, while the latter was on a visit to France, and had informed the Canon of his intention to start a parish in honor of Mary. The statue was entrusted to Mr. Shoefer, who was leaving to settle at Ponteix, and he took it with him. Through some mistake of the shipping company, however, it was sent back to France. After long negotiations and considerable delay, it was again shipped to Canada. On May 30, 1909, it was placed above the main altar of the first church in Ponteix of which Fr. Royer was the pastor.

Due to the increasing population of the district, a larger church became necessary, and a new one was built in 1916. Six years later it was completely destroyed by fire. The statue alone was saved, and this was due to the bravery of two young boys, who broke through the windows into the basement, and carried it from the crypt which had been built for it under the bell tower.¹³ At the present time the statue is on the Blessed Virgin altar in the large, brick, fireproof church which was completed in 1930.

Veneration of this statue began as soon as it was brought to Ponteix. It was only in 1934, however, that public pilgrimages began. Drought, depression, and dust storms had laid hold on the region. Bishop A. Melanson of Gravelbourg asked the people of his diocese to make a pilgrimage to Ponteix in honor of Mary to obtain her special help in the hard times. The people responded generously, and on July 16, 1934, several thousand pilgrims came to Mary's shrine at Ponteix. It is the diocesan pilgrimage for Gravelbourg, and its importance continues to grow year by year. There are usually between two and three thousand people for the yearly pilgrimage.

The Bishop of Gravelbourg is usually there to officiate at Pontifical Mass at ten. Sermons are given in French, English and German. At two the Rosary is begun, and then the statue is carried in procession through the streets of Ponteix. Services for the day conclude with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

BLUMENFELD¹⁴

The shrine near the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, near Blumenfeld, is also in honor of the Sorrowful Mother. In a niche in the grotto close to the church is a replica of the sculpture of the famous Michelangelo of the Blessed

¹³ Letter of Sr. Marie Andrea, Sr. de N. D., Superior of Notre Dame Convent, Ponteix, to the writer.

¹⁴ Fr. H. Keiz, O.M.I., of Macklin, but pastor of Blumenfeld during the beginning of the pilgrimage, is the informant of this account, unless otherwise noted.

Virgin holding the body of her Divine Son after His death – the Pieta.

Fr. Hilland, O.M.I., was the originator of the idea of building a special site to which the people of the Prelate district, mainly German-Russians, could go for a day of prayer. On the occasion of a meeting of German speaking Catholics, held at Blumenfeld on August 15, 1934, the twenty fifth anniversary of the parish, he asked the assembled people to resolve to make such a pilgrimage every year, and they readily agreed. The people met again at the same place the following August 5, and Bishop Melanson of Gravelbourg was among them.

The pastors of the district asked his permission to dedicate the day to the Sorrowful Mother. He granted their request on June 22, 1936, in the following words:

To the Rev. Oblate Fathers of Mary Immaculate,
St. Mary's Colony.

Dear Fathers,

1. In order to foster a greater devotion towards the Blessed Mother Mary in the hearts of the faithful;
2. On account of the distance that separates the faithful of your district from Ponteix where we hold our diocesan pilgrimage to the Blessed Virgin;
3. On account of the ethnical group of German folks of your district;
4. After having received the testimony of at least three of the pastors of your district;
5. Considering specially the sentiment expressed by Rev. P. H. Funke, O.M.I., provincial of the German speaking Fathers:

I am happy to give permission to the Fathers and the Faithful of the Colony or District of St. Mary to hold each year a pilgrimage, on or about the 5th of August, Feast of Our Lady of the Snows, which pilgrimage will be a regional celebration in honor of Our Lady of Sorrows, at Blumenfeld. I think this place is approximately the center of the district.

On this occasion I give, by this letter, the privilege of celebrating Holy Mass in open air, if necessary, and to have a solemn procession of the Blessed Sacrament outside the Church.¹⁵

On the same day Bishop Melanson transferred an authentic relic of the Blessed Virgin in the following words written on the back of the document showing its authenticity: Donated to Blumenfeld for the veneration of the faithful of the said parish and to all the faithful who will go there to pray the Blessed Virgin Mary.¹⁶

The grotto was built by Fr. H. KeIz, O.M.I., in the spring of 1936, and in the

¹⁵ These documents are preserved in the parish at Blumenfeld, and were generously sent to the writer by the present pastor, Fr. H. Wagner, O.M.I.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

next year the statue was placed in it. A pilgrimage was held for the first time on August 5, 1936. The date for the pilgrimage was changed in 1940 to July 2 by Bishop Guy of Gravelbourg at the request of the pastors and the faithful of the district.¹⁷ Between twelve and fifteen hundred people usually attend. On the morning of the day of pilgrimage, Masses are offered in the church for the people of the neighboring parishes. At eleven there is a solemn High Mass at the grotto, and in the afternoon procession with the Blessed Sacrament.

CARMEL

Anyone on the top of what is now known as Mount Carmel has a magnificent view of the surrounding district in all directions. It stood out as a landmark long before there were any permanent settlements nearby, and has had various names; among them are Spathanaw Watchi, Round Hill, Keespitanaw.¹⁸ The name "Mount Carmel" appears in a Report of the Geological Survey of Canada for 1873-1874.¹⁹ When the district was settled after 1903, the Mount became part of the homestead of Mr. John Bunko. In 1921 he gave up his title to it, so that it could be used as the place for a shrine to be dedicated to Our Lady of Mount Carmel and which was to serve as a place of pilgrimage.

The shrine is under the care of the Benedictine Fathers who had come to minister to the spiritual needs of the settlers, most of them German. Americans, of St. Peter's Colony founded in 1903. The first Benedictine to climb to the top of the Mount was Fr. Conrad Glatzmeier, of St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minn. In the autumn of 1902 he had accompanied some men who like himself were interested in starting a new settlement. Mount Carmel was designated as the meeting place of this group and of another led by Fr. Bruno Doerfler, O.S.B., both of which were examining the land of the district. Fr. Conrad reached the Mount on Sept. 22, and Fr. Bruno on the next day.

The latter became the second superior of the Benedictine Fathers, and the first Abbot of St. Peter's Abbey. He had already had the idea of dedicating the

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Spathanaw Watchi, in the Cree language, means approximately "The Mount of the far view," and Keespitanaw, or Kisipatinaw, "at the end of the hill." See *Prairie Messenger*, July 13, 1938, p. 2. Here one may find a fuller study of the early history of the Mount written by Fr. Paul Kuehne, O.S.B.

¹⁹ *Id.* There are two versions as to how it got the name of Mount Carmel. The one is that this name was given to it by missionaries who used to travel by it along a prairie trail. The other is that the name was given to it by a Mr. McKay and his wife in memory of the Mount Carmel mentioned in the Old Testament, and whose daughter died nearby and was buried there. See also the *Humboldt Journal*, July 27, 1950, p. 1, an article written by Fr. Chrysostom Hoffmann, O.S.B., the priest who obtained the Mount from Mr. Bunko in 1921.

Mount to Mary, but it was his successor, Abbot Michael Ott, O.S.B., who carried out the idea.²⁰

The dedication to Mary, under the title of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, took place on Sept. 10, 1922. On the same occasion Mary was chosen as patroness and protectress of St. Peter's Colony, and all the people present, about 3,500, dedicated themselves to her. A temporary altar had been set up on the summit of the Mount, and here, after having encircled the Mount and blessed it, Abbot Michael officiated at the Solemn Pontifical Mass. During the sermon he announced that the Sunday following the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, July 16, would be the day for the annual pilgrimage to Mount Carmel.

Various changes at different times have been made on the Mount with a view to making it an ever more fitting place to honor Mary. The temporary chapel was moved to the slope of the Mount to make room for a statue of Mary. This statue, made in Italy of white marble, is eight feet high and rests on a foundation, fourteen feet high, made of native stone. It was blessed by Abbot Severin Gertken, O.S.B., who succeeded Abbot Michael, on the annual pilgrimage, July 22, 1928.

The next big improvement was the erection of a permanent chapel. The western slope of the Mount was leveled and there the chapel was built of native stone. It was designed and built by Antonio Molaro of Saskatoon, who had done the work on the base of the statue. This chapel and the altar in it were blessed on July 17, 1938.

The stations of the cross were built around the foot of the Mount in the following year by Mr. Molaro with material similar to that used in the previous constructions. The cairns are nine feet high, and each is surmounted by a cross of cedar wood. Each of the fourteen plaques depicting the various scenes of the way of the Cross, is eighteen inches square and made of hammered bronze, and placed solidly in the cairn. These stations were canonically erected and blessed at the pilgrimage, July 16, 1939.

The first pilgrimage was held on July 23, 1923. The programme followed for the day of pilgrimage has been much the same from year to year. Holy Mass is said every hour beginning at six, the last one being usually a Pontifical at half past ten. The pilgrims, usually about five or six thousand annually, gather again in the afternoon on the Mount for hymns in honor of Mary, Stations of the Cross, and a procession with the Blessed Sacrament. Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament is given from the statue at the summit in the base of which is a niche for the monstrance.

The largest crowd ever to assemble on Mount Carmel was estimated at twelve thousand. They came for the launching of the Rosary Crusade for the province of Saskatchewan on Sept. 26, 1948. His Excellency, Archbishop

²⁰ *St. Peter's Bote* (Sept. 14, 1922), 1 and 8.

O'Neill of Regina, was the celebrant for the Solemn Pontifical Mass. Fr. Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., the director and organizer of the Crusade, preached in English during the Mass, making his appeal to all to recite the Rosary daily. Rev. Fr. Peter, O.S.B., of St. Peter's Abbey, made a similar appeal in German. The fifteen decades of the Rosary were recited in the afternoon, the joyful mysteries before the Blessed Sacrament exposed, the sorrowful mysteries during the procession with the Blessed Sacrament, and the glorious mysteries at the foot of the statue on the crest of the Mount. In the succeeding months this Crusade continued in all parts of the province, and laymen everywhere cooperated in collecting from the Catholics in the province the pledges in which they promised to say the daily Rosary.

A special devotion to Mary, then, begun by the first missionaries, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, has found expression in seven public shrines dedicated to her, four of which are still under their care, St. Laurent, Reward, Blumenfeld, and Rama. The hierarchy of the Province consecrated their people to Mary in 1933, and fifteen years later was begun the Rosary Crusade which did so much to stimulate devotion to Mary in the homes of the Catholic people of Saskatchewan.

APPENDIX
LESTOCK²¹

Since the above account of Saskatchewan's Marian Shrines was first written, another one has developed so that it may be put in the same class. This is the Shrine of Mary, Queen of Our Hearts, at Lestock. In a circular letter of April 9, 1954, Archbishop O'Neill wrote: "Within the Archdiocese there are three officially recognized shrines in honor of our Lady. These are at Rama, Kronau, and Lestock. ...The Third will honour her on the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, August 22."²²

The devotion to Mary, Queen of Our Hearts, was begun and fostered by the late Rev. J. A. Menard, the pastor of Lestock Parish, 1930.46. He received the official approval of Archbishop Monahan of Regina on June 9, 1942, at the same time as he received permission to have a Novena prayer printed. A friend in Quebec donated the statue which was blessed on June 17, 1943, by the pastor. It is made of plaster, but the trimmings and crown of real gold were added in 1951 by an artist from St. Boniface.

At first the statue was in the parish Church built by Rev. J. Poulet, O.M.I., in 1924, and named St. Gertrude after the name of the Parish from which he

²¹ Unless otherwise noted the source for the following information is from the present pastor, Rev. G. Reilly.

²² This is his circular letter No. 11, p. 4.

came in Nicolet Co., Quebec. However, when a new Church was built in 1949 it was dedicated by Archbishop O'Neill to Our Lady under the title of Shrine of Mary, Queen of Our Hearts. The statue is now in a niche to the right of the main sanctuary. Since it is in Church, it is visited the year round by people who come to honor her, and who burn vigil lights and bring flowers.

In connection with the shrine, the Confraternity of Mary, Queen of Our Hearts, has also been established. Permission for this was received from Archbishop O'Neill, April 27, 1951, in the following words: "... Being persuaded that it will be useful for fostering the devotion of the faithful towards the Virgin, the Mother of God, we erect this Confraternity in the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of our Hearts..."²³ In a document issued at Rome, Jan. 8, 1952, the Confraternity was joined to the Archconfraternity, and the members were to share in all the indulgences and spiritual favors granted to the original Archconfraternity.²⁴ Its purpose is to make Mary the Queen of Our Hearts as a means of developing the reign of Christ as King of our Hearts.

So far there has been little stress on a public pilgrimage, but the Marian year and the encouragement of Archbishop O'Neill have drawn more attention to it. An official pilgrimage will take place this year, then, on August 22, and thereafter annually on the Sunday following that date. A procession will start from the Church at 3 P.M. Four men will carry the statue of Mary in the procession, and groups from the neighboring parishes will recite the Rosary and sing hymns. The procession will go along the main street of the town until it comes to the school. There Archbishop O'Neill will offer a Solemn Pontifical Mass at 4.

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²³ The decree of Archbishop O'Neill and the document from Rome were sent to the writer by Fr. Reilly. Both are in Latin; the above quotation was translated by the writer. The document from Rome also contains a short history of the Archconfraternity which was established in Rome, 1913, by Pius X, now St. Pius. Various bishops had established the Confraternity in their dioceses, the first one being by Archbishop Duhamel of Ottawa, who established it in the Church of the Missionaries of the Society of Mary in 1899.

²⁴ *Ibid.*