

Introduction

This manuscript was prepared for the centennial of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie in 2004. At the turn of the century, clergy approached and asked me to write it. I suggested that with my Protestant background, I was not the right person, but they insisted that in the aftermath of Vatican II they wanted a professional historian, not necessarily one of their own. The fact that I could handle sources written in English, French, and Spanish was a plus. The Diocese offered full co-operation, with interviews, access to archives, and even arrangements for a visit to its mission field in Guatemala. Writing was a pleasurable experience.

However, once the manuscript was not only completed but, thanks to John and Françoise Arbuckle, translated into French, Bishop Jean-Louis Plouffe decided that he could not endorse it after all. Signe, which had signed a contract with the author and the Diocese, had agreed to publish only what the bishop approved. Signe, based in Strasbourg, France, had exclusive rights to the manuscript for ten years, which have now expired.

That explains why the manuscript, completed in July 2003 but released to the public only in 2013, stops in 2003. In 2003, John Paul II was still pope. Benedict XVI and Francis had not yet succeeded him. Controversies over the rights of homosexuals had not yet surfaced. There has been no attempt to update the manuscript.

Yet, the story should be told. Laurentian University's student employment fund financed wages for my research assistant, Jay Hawrelluk, and it deserves some return on its investment. Some of the people mentioned in these pages were truly heroic, and they deserve some commemoration. This e-manuscript will not reach as many readers as

Signe's hard copy with coloured pictures would have, but it is part of the history of Northeastern Ontario. Perhaps it may inspire someone to write an updated account.

Graeme S. Mount
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