

CONCLUSIONS

Pride may have been one of the Seven Deadly Sins as prescribed by the mediaeval Church, but on the occasion of its Centennial in 2004, the people of the Diocese of are entitled to be proud. French Jesuits planted and cultivated the grain of mustard seed, which ultimately grew into a magnificent tree. The tree includes some of Northern Ontario's most photogenic buildings. It includes churches, schools, and hospitals which offer some of the highest quality service and in both of Canada's official languages. The people who tend the tree and enjoy its benefits include many of the most dedicated and talented people, clerical and lay, who live within the diocesan boundaries. As a tree can provide shade beyond the property where it is located, the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie has had an impact in Guatemala, the Bahamas, and other parts of Ontario and Canada. To those who made this possible, the present generation should be grateful.

In many ways, the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie has promoted some of the finest aspects of the Western World during the past 2000 years. The Church of Rome carried the Latin alphabet to the illiterate peoples of Northern, Central, and Western Europe. Then it developed primary and secondary schools and, eventually universities. Academic standards have been so high that people of other religious persuasions (and of none) have wanted to attend, sometimes in such numbers that principals and boards have had to limit enrolment in order to fulfil the schools' intended mission. Many of Europe's finest composers wrote some of that continent's best music so that people might worship. Within the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie, St. Mary's Academy in North Bay offered music lessons to children of any religious persuasion, and the girls of St. Joseph's College had the finest youth choir in the city. A Sudbury Christmas is not complete without the annual performance of the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra at St-Jean-de-Brébeuf, and Bishop Paul-Andre Durocher was one of the best trained and most talented male vocalists, lay or secular, Roman Catholic or otherwise, of Northeastern Ontario. (A native of Timmins, Bishop Durocher served as Auxiliary Bishop for francophones until he became Bishop of Alexandria-Cornwall in 2002.) Before governments became involved or hotels were available, the Church

erected hospitals and accommodated people in distress. The Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie has cared for the sick and for prisoners ignored or rejected by the rest of society. It has offered a haven where strangers could find a familiar environment and meet sympathetic, like-minded people. The Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie is part of this proud tradition.

The Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie is probably the most cosmopolitan, culturally diverse institution between the French River and the continental divide. It offers parishes, schools and medical care to Canada's First Nations people, to those who trace their ancestry to most countries of Europe, and to other parts of the world. While across-the-board services are available in only two official languages (English and French, one more than most dioceses offer), parishes are available for those who prefer, Croatian, Italian, Lithuanian, Ojibway, or Polish. There have been problems over the past 100 years--that is part of the human condition--but, given enough space--most people have managed to co-exist, even to co-operate reasonably harmoniously with, each other.

There have been changes. Ecumenism prevails in some areas. While traditions may disappear because of it, a society without friction and with no prejudices is surely closer to the values of the Head of the Christian Church (and a happier place for those who live there) than one divided by sectarian enmity. Northern Ireland and the former Yugoslavia confirm the obvious. Latin as a language has all but disappeared from the Diocese, and for centuries, Latin provided a means of communication for learned people who travelled from Portugal to Poland or from Canterbury to Croatia. By the time it all but disappeared from the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie after Vatican II, hardly anyone understood it very well. Almost everyone was literate, but few were literate in Latin. Yet it is ironical that the one institution of Higher Learning nowadays that still teaches Latin and enables scholars to appreciate the history and background of the Roman Catholic Church is Anglican Thorneloe College. It is no longer on the curriculum of the University of Sudbury, let alone of most Catholic Secondary Schools. The Corpus Christi Procession, a tradition of some 700 years, continues in Grenada and Chile, but it disappeared from the Diocese of Sault in the second half of the twentieth century. Whether it had become an

anachronism or whether it might have been adapted to serve some useful, widely acceptable purpose can be a topic for discussion.

There have been moments of discouragement, especially as numbers have fallen and shortages of personnel and money have become problematic. Nevertheless, one might remember what Jesus told the apostle St. Peter: The Gates of Hell would not prevail against His Church. So far they have not. There have been mistakes and setbacks; the Church in the Middle East and North Africa is not what it was before the time of Mohammed. However, the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie is only part of a much larger entity, and across the globe, the trend is onward and upward.