

Blessing at Precious Blood Church Held This Sunday

This Sunday, Dec. 3 at 4p.m. Archbishop P.F. Pockock will bless the newly-renovated Church of the Precious Blood, Scarboro.

This year is a very special one in the history of this parish. It has been a year of total renovations as well as its 35th anniversary. The past 12 months has produced activity without precedent in the parish with the blessing of the church this Sunday winding up proceedings.

THE HISTORY of Precious Blood is quite unique and extremely interesting. The central figure in the days of its formation was the late Senator Frank P. O'Connor K.C.S.G., founder of Laura Secord Co. Wexford, as this area was known, was a small rural community with a tiny scattering of market gardeners. Senator O'Connor built a summer home close by the Don Valley and became a leading figure in the life of this small community. Later he felt a small mission church to look after the spiritual needs of the 45 to 50 Catholic families was essential.

He found a tiny former Methodist Church on Lawrence Avenue East lying dormant. With the amalgamation of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches in 1925, this small church was not needed and was closed. The Senator purchased the church and 2 ½ acres of land surrounding it and donated this to the late Archbishop Neil McNeil. He had a great and abiding devotion to the Precious Blood of Jesus and asked that the

Church be called Precious Blood. The formal blessing and opening took place June 12, 1932 with many dignitaries present, including the late Sir William Mulock, former Chief Justice of Ontario, the late Senator William McGuire, and the late Honourable Peter Heenan.

THIS CHURCH was used for Catholic worship for the next 25 years until the present church was built in 1957. Then it became a youth centre for the next ten years before it was razed in April of this year. It is interesting to note that this church stood in this Scarboro-west community for 111 years. It lost its historical significance in 1958 when Metro Toronto expropriated 20 feet of land to widen Lawrence Avenue. In so doing the bell-tower and front of the church had to be removed, thereby taking from it its venerable and age-old character.

Senator O'Connor built a school next to the church in 1934, naming it St. Theresa. Later when the new school was built in 1954 on Pharmacy Avenue by the Separate School Board, the name was changed to Precious Blood. The old school still stands and with new additions has become the Convent of the Daughters of Wisdom who teach in various grade schools in the area as well as Senator O'Connor High School. In 1937 an old farm house was purchased by the Senator to be used as a rectory. Senator O'Connor can easily be called "the father of Precious Blood Church" and continues to help his beloved parish 28 years after his death with an endowment to the church in perpetuity.

ARCHBISHOP McNEIL appointed Father John H. Ingolosby in 1932 as the first pastor of Precious of Precious Blood. He was

not a resident pastor but came out to Wexford on weekends from St. Augustine Seminary. Father Ingolsby is now Msgr. Ingolosby, Pastor of St. Joseph's in east Toronto. The combination of Father Ingolosby and Senator O'Connor is still talked about by the older parishioners, as they really started Precious Blood on the move.

Great and zealous work was accomplished by the priests who followed -- the late Father Frank Bennett, the first resident Pastor; the late Father Basil Doyle; Father Joseph Murphy, who built the present church ; Father William O'Leary , the first assistant at Precious Blood; and Father Charles Prance who spent five years as assistant. Presently at Precious Blood are Father Lawrence J. Dugo, Administrator and Father Frank I. Hannan, Assistant.

FATHER DUGO was born in St. Catharines in 1924. After studies at St Nicholas School, St. Catharine's Collegiate, and St. Augustine's Seminary, he was ordained in St. Michael's Cathedral in 1950 by Cardinal McGuigan, Father Dugo served in St. Matthew's, St. Brigid's and St. Leo's parishes before coming to Precious Blood as assistant in 1958. He became administrator almost two years ago in early 1966.

Known for his work with young people over a 12-year period, he organized St. Brigid's YPC and Precious Blood YPC which were recognized as two of the largest and finest clubs in Canada. He was producer of "Spring Melody" for 11 years and this musical production worked its way to the top with the '64 and '65 shows playing to capacity audiences at the Royal Alexandra Theatre (with guest star Jane Morgan).

Father Dugo was director of the Catholic Church Exhibit at the Canadian National Exhibition for the Archdiocese of Toronto for three years. For the past two years he has been the Catholic representative of the Toronto Theatre Chaplaincy, working with the Anglican, United and Jewish Churches under the chairmanship of Bishop Hunt, Anglican Suffragan Bishop of Toronto.

IN FEBRUARY OF 1966 Father Dugo organized the first parish council in a parish looked after by diocesan priests. The Council has been a great success, leading to many innovations in the parish. The laity of Precious Blood through the council has had a great role and voice in all parish matters. It has organized a mammoth door-to-door census which saw calls made to some 8,000 units; helped greatly in obtaining a third parish school, St. Catharine's in the Don Mills section of the parish; helped in reorganizing, the entire parish organizational structure; was all-important in the huge renovation program near completion; helped to organize the 35th Parish Anniversary Celebration recently.

The council is made up of a nine-man-and-woman board of directors and 16 members of an executive council. The latter is broken into the following committees - Spiritual and Educational, Ways and Means, Social, Youth, Secretarial, Communications, School, Counselling and Welfare and Credit Financing. Each committee has a chairman and vice-chairmen in charge. A full-time business manager has been engaged at Precious Blood for the past year.

Father Dugo gives great credit to the parish council, adding "it would have been impossible to have accomplished what has taken place without them. The council is absolutely necessary and gives the laity a real share in the running of the parish."

A HUGE RENOVATIONS program has been in progress at Precious Blood for some time. The planning stage took from March to December of 1966. Actual construction started Dec. 27 last year and is now nearing completion. Architect is Frank H. Burcher of Hamilton and Contractor, Perwin Construction Company, Willowdale. The entire church, rectory and grounds were totally renovated with the total cost of over \$300,000.

A new front has been added to the church with an enlarged narthex and baptistery, new ceiling and pews, and new Stations of the Cross forming the church windows. The church is broad loomed throughout. The sanctuary has been brought up-to-date according to the latest liturgical requirements. The priests' sacristy has been totally renovated, a new sanctuary boys sacristy has been built and a new choir area on the sanctuary. The parking lot was torn up and proper sewage and lighting installed.

The entire basement of the rectory has been turned over to parish organizations, -- a large two-sided Library and meeting room has been built, a secretarial room for the committee, a parish lounge for parishioners as well as new kitchenette and washrooms.

AFTER THE BLESSING of the church on Sunday, a dinner will be held by the parish council at the Canadiana Hotel with Archbishop Pocock as special guest. Others attending will be Hon. Thomas L. Wells, MPP, for Scarborough North and Provincial Minister without portfolio; Alderman Alice Summerville and Alderman Monte Harris of Toronto Council; Frank H. Burcher; George B. Heenan, President of Perwin Construction Company; Frank P. O'Connor grandson of the late Senator Frank P. O'Connor, Dr. Hugh Canning of the Council will act as MC at the dinner with John Deans, Chairman of the Council, reading an address of welcome to His Grace.

THE 35TH ANNIVERSARY Celebrations held recently was a great success. Confirmation was conferred by Bishop F.V. Allen; a two-day Fall Bazaar and Grand Draw was held; a concelebrated Mass with former priests of the parish participating and Msgr. Ingolsby as principal concelebrant took place. A Youth Nite with over 350 of Precious Blood youth and young people participating was held at Senator O'Connor Auditorium; a gala Reunion Ball at the Concert Hall of the Royal York Hotel with guest star Juliette; a Solemn First Holy Communion in the Spring.

The year 1967 has been a memorable year in the annals of Precious Blood - a year without precedent - one in which priests and laity, working in close harmony and rallying around the banner of the Precious Blood of Jesus, has brought honour and glory to God and distinction to the parish and its parishioners.

