

Canadian Communities

St. Michael School, Montreal, Canada

The Marist Brothers arrived at St. Michael School in Montreal, Canada, in September 1907. At the request of Father John P. Kiernan, founder and Pastor of St. Michael Parish, Rev. Brother Stratonique, A.G. negotiated the establishment of a Marist community of three brothers for the first year.

Brother Paul Mary, the first director, organized classes from the 165 boys of Irish ancestry who reported to the school on September 4, 1907. The early success the brothers achieved in developing an excellent scholastic, spiritual and athletic program soon attracted many students to the school. The faculty was increased to meet the expanded enrollment. In 1920 twelve brothers were assigned here.

The jurisdiction of the brothers teaching at St. Michael's passed from the Province of Canada and the United States to that of the Province of the United States when the latter was created in 1911. Ten years later the St. Michael faculty was the only one assigned to Canada from the Poughkeepsie Provincial House. This fact along with the difficulties that arose to prepare teachers for this school, the changing nature of the parish soon caused the American superiors to consider a withdrawal of the brothers from this school. This came about in June 1925. With the recall of this faculty not one American faculty was sent out of the United States until a mission territory was opened in the Philippine Islands in 1948.

St. Boniface College, St. Boniface, Manitoba, Canada

The Marist Brothers were invited to St. Boniface College by His Excellency Archbishop Langevin, O.M.I., in 1910. He wished them to assist the Jesuit Fathers who conducted the College, by teaching the preparatory and commercial courses.(115.) In September of that year, Brother Ptolemeus, Provincial, assigned Brother Namase as director of the community of three brothers to initiate the Marist apostolate in the Manitoba region.

This was the first time that brothers were sent to this distant part of Canada. Manitoba is the eastern-most of the prairie provinces of Canada, The capital, Winnipeg, is situated across the Red River from St. Boniface, which is about seventy miles from the borders of Minnesota and North Dakota in the United States.(116.)

In 1911, when the United States Province was created this school was assigned to it and seven brothers from this Province were appointed to continue the work there. This community became a center for other Marist communities that were established in that region in 1912 and 1913. However, because of the lack of promise in the latter establishments, and the loss of personnel in the Province during the First World War, the brothers were withdrawn from all the schools and the College (1917) by 1921 in the Manitoba region.(117.)

St. Norbert School, St. Norbert, Manitoba

St. Norbert School was the first of the Manitoba country schools staffed by the Marist Brothers. The community assigned to this school in 1912 was thus fifteen miles west of St. Boniface across the Red River.

During the three short years the brothers taught at St. Norbert, they realized fine results with the students, but met with serious difficulties from the village school commissioners. By 1915 the problems seemed beyond solution so the brothers were withdrawn from this school.

St. Anne Des Chenes School, St. Anne Des Chenes, Manitoba

Three Marist Brothers were assigned in 1913 to staff another small school in the Manitoba region of St. Anne Des Chenes. They resided twentyfive miles from St. Boniface, east of the Red River. In this school the brothers

succeeded unusually well. As a special feature they offered agricultural and art courses in addition to religious instruction and French classes after school hours.(118.)

But again after two years the Marist community had to be withdrawn because of lack of personnel. The Marist superiors had intended to resume service there once normal conditions were restored after World War I. But in 1920 Brother Heribert, Provincial, had to inform the pastor of St. Anne Des Chenes that the American Province could not send brothers to the school.(119.)

St. Pierre Jolys School

St. Pierre Jolys, Manitoba, Canada

St. Pierre Jolys School was one of the most successful Marist schools in the Manitoba district. Three brothers were assigned to it in 1913. They were the most distant Marist community from St. Boniface, thirty-five miles south.

The dedication of the brothers and the good results of the students pleased both pastor and people. So it was not long before several students from this school asked to be admitted to the Marist Institute.

Here, as well as in the other Marist schools nearby, the School Commission insisted on Manitoba teaching certificates rather than Quebec diplomas. No attempt to solve this problem was made because of the uncertainty of maintaining the Marist faculty there during the war years. In fact, in 1921 Brother Heribert, Provincial, notified the authorities that the brothers would be withdrawn at the end of the scholastic year. But he did try to interest the Canadian Provincial of the possibility for that Province of developing the area and of staffing St. Pierre Jolys School. The Canadian Provincial, Brother Gabriel Mary, studied the situation. His report was published in later years:

Rev. Brother Gabriel Marie, appointed to visit the establishment and interview the authorities, found its maintenance unwise on account of the great distance, the small number of brothers in the region, the insistence of the authorities on immediate diplomas, the unfavorable disposition of the Manitoba school authorities and the meager retributions for the work of the brothers.(120.)

Thus ended the work of the brothers in the Manitoba region of Canada.