"There must be no drawing back"
The Catholic Church's Efforts on Behalf of Non-English Speaking Immigrants in Toronto 1889-1939

by

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This study of Catholic episcopal policy and action towards non-English speaking Catholic immigrants in Toronto during the period 1889-1939 encompasses the administrations of five Archbishops, their personal endeavours to serve a growing Catholic population, and the Catholic institutions that served the Archdiocese of Toronto. Three initiatives served as benchmarks in the local Church's immigrant aid endeavours: Archbishop Neil McNeil's personal efforts to assist Catholic immigrants to Canada; "women's work" for the Church as reflected in the establishment of the Catholic Women's League of Canada and the founding of the Sisters of Service, a new Canadian religious order; and the establishment of Friendship House and Catholic Settlement House under the auspices of lay and religious initiatives. Inspired by religious duty, fear of proselytizing efforts, and a growing sense of Canadian nationalism and civic duty, the Church met the challenge first with cautious support, then later with energetic social action programmes.
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INTRODUCTION

This study of Catholic episcopal policy and action towards non-English speaking Catholic immigrants in Toronto during the period 1889-1939 encompasses the administrations of five Archbishops, their personal endeavours to serve a growing Catholic population, and the Catholic institutions that served the Archdiocese of Toronto. Catholic initiative towards non-English speaking immigrants was dependent on a number of factors and circumstances. Prior to 1900, the Archdiocese experienced a general stability in the ethnic composition of its Catholic population and gradually became less an Irish National Church and increasingly a Canadian one, Anglo-Celtic in background. The increase in the number of Canadian-born clergy and laity reflected a progression in which the Church served as an agent in the assimilation of an ethnic group into Canadian society. During the tenure of Archbishop Denis O’Connor, the Archdiocese of Toronto became responsible for the spiritual welfare of a small but increasing number of non-English speaking immigrants, though ill-prepared to deal with their language, ministry and social welfare. There were three initiatives that served as benchmarks in the local Church’s immigrant aid endeavours: the personal efforts of Archbishop McNeil to assist Catholic immigrants to Canada; “women’s work” for the Church as reflected in the establishment of the Catholic Women’s League of Canada as a national women’s organization and the founding of the Sisters of Service, a new Canadian religious order dedicated to serving Catholic immigrants in the home mission field; and the establishment of new social services such as Friendship House and Catholic Settlement House under the auspices of lay and religious initiatives.

The recruitment of Central and Eastern European immigrants, mostly non-Protestant, was
encouraged by the Canadian government to foster prairie settlement in western Canada and to support the nation’s rapid economic growth. A booming economy stimulated new immigration levels which also spurred the industrialization of urban centres, such as Toronto and Montreal, and the exploitation of new farming, mineral and lumber resources in northern Ontario and western Canada. In 1896 the number of immigrants entering Canada numbered 16,835; in 1907 the figures rose to 272,409 and in 1913 over 400,000 immigrants were accepted into Canada.1 The changing ethnic composition of Toronto also reflected general immigration trends. In 1881 93.3 per cent of Torontonians identified their ethnic origins as English, Irish, Scottish or British; in 1901 figures dropped slightly to 91.7 per cent; in 1921 the figures continued to decrease to 85.3 per cent and in 1941 census figures reported that 78.4 per cent of Toronto residents identified their ethnic origins as being British.2

At the turn of the century, Toronto Catholics were predominantly English-speaking with an ethnic composition reflecting English, Irish or Scottish backgrounds. In 1891 the Catholic population in Toronto was determined to be only 15.16 per cent of the total population, a decrease in numbers from the mid-nineteenth century.3 The Archbishops of Toronto responded to the flow of Catholic immigrants first with prudent support relative to the number of immigrants settling in Toronto and then followed with energetic social action programmes.


3“We are All Canadians”, Appendix A: Catholic Population of Toronto, 1891-1921, p. 482.
Outreach to immigrants was, at first, cautious due to the minority status of the Church within Ontario and an isolationist policy by the early episcopal administrations to limit dealings with non-Catholics. There also existed a defensiveness by the Church towards the Protestant community due to a fear of proselytism efforts and concern for an increase in mixed marriages between Protestants and Catholics. The relationship the Catholic Church experienced with Protestant and Jewish organizations matured over the years as the Church became more politically and socially confident with its status. During the 1930s, Catholic initiatives to European Catholic immigrants were also extended to non-Christians. A sense of justice compelled the Archdiocese to support the Toronto Jewish community in its efforts to speak out against reports of Jewish persecution in Europe. Beginning in 1908, the Church, under the leadership of Archbishop Fergus McEvay and his successors, was inspired through a true sense of religious duty, a genuine fear of losing Catholics to other faith groups, and a strong sense of nationalism and civic responsibility to assist in the spiritual, material, and social welfare of these new immigrants to Toronto.

This study examines the dynamics between the Archdiocese of Toronto and non-English speaking Catholic immigrants settling in Toronto, other faith groups, and the interaction between the Church hierarchy of clergy and laity. The first chapter explores the role of the Catholic episcopacy and, more importantly, how the Bishops' personalities affected the response of the Archdiocese to immigration concerns. The second chapter offers insight into the history of the Catholic Church's relationship with the Protestant faith groups and with the Toronto Jewish community. Both the Catholic and Jewish communities were minor players in Toronto's Protestant dominated society. Under the leadership of Archbishops McNeil and James C.
McGuigan, the Archdiocese supported the Jewish community in Toronto and expressed concern at events in Europe prior to World War II. The third and fourth chapters of this study provide insight into immigrant aid sponsored by religious orders and laypersons, and the lack of acceptance accorded the latter by elements in the Catholic community. The founding of the Sisters of Service, a religious community dedicated to the education, health and social welfare of new-Catholic immigrants to Canada, was sponsored by Archbishop McNeil in 1922. The direction of the work of the Sisters as envisioned by its founder, Catherine Donnelly, was irrevocably changed through intervention of the clergy as the order was being molded to serve a more general mandate for the Canadian Catholic Church. Chapter four offers a comparative study of Catholic settlement work as represented in the establishments of Friendship House, 1934-1936, by the Baroness Catherine de Hueck, and Catholic Settlement House (est. 1931) by the Redemptorist Fathers of St. Patrick’s Parish. Support for both institutions by archbishops and members of the Catholic community varied, mainly due to conflicts with the Baroness and opportunity to support a traditional social service structure such as Catholic Settlement House. Chapters three and four also explore the issue of gender within the Catholic Church. Immigration work was often viewed as “women’s work” but always under the direction of the Church hierarchy. Success was achieved through traditional organizational structures as was the case with settlement work. Despite receiving the financial and moral support of the episcopacy, Friendship House represented a break from traditional clerical efforts that were parish-based, directed by the clergy and supported through the work of women religious.

Taken as a whole, this study represents an examination of the Archdiocese of Toronto and its initiatives in serving European Catholic immigrants. Inspired by religious duty, fear of
proselytizing efforts, and a growing sense of Canadian nationalism and civic duty, the Church met the challenge first with cautious support, often hampered by difficulties to secure suitable ethnic or immigrant clergy, then later with energetic social action programmes that included the efforts of religious communities, lay organizations and individuals. Once Catholic initiatives were implemented, "there was no drawing back" from the challenge that lay ahead for the Archdiocese of Toronto and its immigrant congregations.

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4The Catholic Register, November 12, 1908, part of a quotation from Archbishop McEvay’s address to the Italian community following the first Mass for Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish.
CHAPTER ONE
CATHOLIC EPISCOPACY AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ETHNIC PARISHES

Catholic outreach to non-English speaking immigrants must be understood within the context of the Archdiocese of Toronto in southern Ontario and the leadership abilities of its Bishops. The Archdiocese was English-speaking with strong Irish roots in a Protestant-dominated society. Prior to 1890, the Catholic Church endeavoured to perpetuate an Irish Catholic identity by emphasizing the social and cultural role of the Church, convent, school and parish hall, in order to survive in a Protestant society. Early ethnic congregations received some recognition and support by the Church but it tended to be limited to the size of the ethnic group and its ability to support a priest. The personalities and leadership abilities of the archbishops appointed to the Archdiocese of Toronto effectively steered the course of social action by the local Catholic community. The response of episcopacy to the growing Catholic immigrant community was limited in scope due to personnel shortages and, in the case of Archbishop O’Connor, the inability to recognize the religious duty of the Archdiocese towards non-English speaking Catholic immigrants. Overall, the Church recognized its responsibility to the spiritual needs of the growing ethnic congregations in addition to a general fear of Protestant proselytism efforts and was not always sure how best to meet that responsibility.

The period 1889-1939 encompasses the administrations of five archbishops and their responses to a changing Catholic community. Most Rev. John Walsh’s administration (1889-1898) served as a “bridge between the assertive Irishness of his predecessor (John J. Lynch) and
the love of Canada espoused by his successors." Following his death in 1898, Denis O’Connor, c.s.b. (1899-1908), reluctantly accepted the position of Archbishop of Toronto in 1899 and served as Ordinary until his retirement in 1908. He initiated and followed an isolationist policy of strict adherence to Catholic doctrine in an attempt to preserve the integrity and faith of the Catholic Church. While a competent financial administrator, O’Connor tended not to initiate any new efforts to obtain clergy for the rapidly growing ethnic congregations. Catholic ethnic groups such as the Germans, Italians, Syrians, Poles, and Lithuanians were already present during O’Connor’s administration. They received some assistance but it fell to Archbishops McEvay and McNeil to respond proactively to their needs. Most Rev. Fergus McEvay, (1908-1911), served as Ordinary for three years until his death on May 10, 1911. Most Rev. Neil McNeil was appointed Archbishop in 1912 and served for 22 years until his death in 1934. His administration encouraged the establishment of new national parishes, the development of immigrant services by the Catholic laity and the creation of institutions and a new religious order to serve the welfare of new Canadians in the Archdiocese. This study also includes the early years of Archbishop James C. McGuigan’s administration (1935-1961) and reviews his commitment to the Catholic immigrant community, with particular reference to the Italian and German congregations, as they established themselves in Toronto.

The history of the Catholic community in Toronto dates back to the early nineteenth century when Roman Catholics met in private houses with Masses being celebrated by priests under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Quebec. In 1822, St. Paul’s Church was established and

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7Mark McGowan, “‘We are all Canadians’: a Social, Religious and Cultural Portrait of Toronto’s English-speaking Roman Catholics, 1890-1920, (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1988, p. 86.
its first church building was constructed in 1824. The Diocese of Kingston was canonically erected in 1826 and Rev. Alexander Macdonell was consecrated the first bishop of Upper Canada. Under Macdonell’s guidance, St. Paul’s became the focal point for missionary expeditions to Catholic settlements in townships throughout the western part of the Kingston diocese. The Archdiocese of Toronto was subsequently established in 1841 with administrative jurisdiction over the western half of Upper Canada. Toronto’s territory was first reduced in 1856 with the creation of the dioceses of Hamilton and London, later in 1958, when the diocese of St. Catharines was created by a division of the Archdiocese of Toronto and the Diocese of Hamilton.

Michael Power (1841-1847), Toronto’s first Catholic Bishop, concentrated his energies in the organization of the new diocese with the training of existing clergy and the recruitment of clergy and religious orders to the diocese. Prior to 1847, and the migration of Catholic Irish famine victims to Toronto, the city's Roman Catholic community was affiliated with St. Paul's Parish, established in the eastern part of town. The small number of Catholics in Toronto and the lack of a strong presence of male or female religious institutions posed no threat to the Protestant consensus. It was the responsibility of the bishop to establish a strong religious and educational structure on which the diocese could build its future. Franklin Walker, in discussing the first separate schools in Upper Canada, writes that Catholic bishops “supported legislative plans to further general education, but assumed that a progress common to all would mean like benefits for Catholic schools. Bishop Power’s acceptance of the chairmanship of the Board of Education for Upper Canada on July 21, 1846 demonstrates his desire to associate himself with the new
education movement." While Bishop Power expressed concern for the development of common schools in Upper Canada, he encouraged religious orders to establish themselves in the diocese to further the goals of Catholic education. In 1846 Bishop Power invited the Irish branch of the Loretto Sisters to open a Catholic school in Toronto. The mother superior accepted his invitation, and in 1847, five Sisters were sent from Dublin to Toronto. Two weeks later, on October 1, 1847, Bishop Power died from typhus while ministering to hundreds of diseased Irish famine refugees who had reached the Port of Toronto.

By 1851 over 25 per cent of the city's population was Catholic, many of whom were poverty-stricken. Of the almost 8,000 Catholics, 90 per cent were Irish unskilled labourers; the Catholic Church was quickly identified by all as an Irish ethnic church, although Ulster immigrants would often list themselves as English or Scottish on the government census in order to avoid the negative stereotype surrounding the poor, illiterate Catholic Irish peasant. Population statistics for the nineteenth century indicate that in 1860 Toronto's Catholic population peaked at 27.1 per cent. By 1900 Catholics numbered 28,994 or 13.9 per cent of the city's population. Despite the large number of European immigrants arriving into Canada since 1896, the cultural impact on Toronto was limited in scope. In 1901 English-speaking residents of

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9ARCAT, Loretto Sisters, General Correspondence, July 20, 1947; ARCAT PRC 2410, Letter from Bishop Power to Rev. T. Roothaan, superior general of the Society of Jesus in Rome.


11Ibid.
British, Irish and Scottish origins still comprised 91.7 per cent of the total population for the city of Toronto. The French constituted 1.4 per cent and Germans, not necessarily all Catholic, made up 2.9 per cent. Polish immigrants constituted 0.1 per cent and Italian immigrants were reported to be 0.5 per cent of the city’s population. Catholic initiatives to minister to European immigrants were hesitant, at best, until Archbishop McEvay’s administration in 1908.

Non-English speaking Catholics, immigrants and French Canadians, residing in Toronto have been officially recognized by the Church since the 1880s. Archbishop John J. Lynch (1860-1888), Archbishop Walsh’s predecessor, was first to attend to the spiritual needs of a small number of German and French Catholic families living in Toronto. In 1881 Lynch negotiated with the Redemptorists to accept the care of St. Patrick’s Parish and to “provide someone to look after the forty or so German families in the city.” The Redemptorists, attached to the American Baltimore Province, had been invited to work in Toronto and promote, through their missions to the laity, higher standards of Catholic devotion and morality. St. Patrick’s Parish “became a mission church where sermons could be heard by anyone in the city and ... a centre for missionaries traveling throughout Canada.” In 1884 the Redemptorists were given faculties to minister to all the Germans in the Archdiocese of Toronto. The German Catholic community would later become a focus of interest with the official establishment of the German

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congregation at St. Patrick’s Parish in 1935. In 1887, Lynch established Sacré-Coeur Parish as a national parish under the care of Rev. Philippe Lamarche, a French-Canadian priest from Montreal, to serve the “French-Canadians”\(^{15}\) of the city.

Late nineteenth century Catholic immigration to Toronto was predominantly Irish with a small influx of central European Catholics. Archbishop John Walsh’s administration from 1889-1898 tended to respond to Catholic immigration with a genuine concern for the integration of naturalized Catholics into Canada’s British Protestant based society. In 1889, the Catholic community was still a sizeable minority in Toronto but no longer represented the Irish immigrant church of the 1850s and 1860s. It was maturing into a Church community that was Anglo-Celtic\(^ {16}\) in ethnic origin but increasingly Canadian in mind and spirit. The life and the episcopal administration of Archbishop Walsh reflected this movement. He was born in Kilkenny County, Ireland, in 1830 and immigrated to Canada in April 1852. Upon completion of his theological studies at the Montreal Sulpician Seminary, he was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Toronto on November 1, 1854 by Bishop Armand de Charbonnel in St. Michael’s Cathedral. He served as a parish priest at Brock township, St. Mary’s Parish (Toronto), St. Paul’s Parish (Toronto) and St. Michael’s Cathedral before becoming Vicar General of the Archdiocese in April 1862. On June 4, 1867, Walsh was elected Bishop of London, where he remained until his appointment to the Archdiocese of Toronto in 1889.

His ministry in the Archdiocese of Toronto, first as a Toronto diocesan priest and then

\(^{15}\) ARCAT, LB05.160.

\(^{16}\) "We are All Canadians, p. 2 of abstract. The term Anglo-Celtic defines the English-speaking Roman Catholics of Toronto and how they saw themselves as both Canadians and Catholics in a Protestant British society."
later as a bishop, exemplified the emergence of a Catholic Church loyal to the crown and to its faithful. In 1861 the Catholics of Toronto represented 27 per cent of the total population and identified themselves wholeheartedly as being Irish. Michael Cottrell, in an article on the growing political leadership of Irish Catholics in Victorian Toronto, writes that being Catholic was thus virtually synonymous with being Irish in nineteenth-century Toronto, and this resulted in the development of a distinct ethno-religious community. As a significant minority within a self-consciously British and Protestant population, however they were also the largest immigrant group in the city, prompting a nativistic backlash fueled by an aversion to Catholicism and anti-Irish-Catholic stereotypes.\(^{17}\)

Walsh encouraged public expressions of loyalty to the British Empire to develop as the Toronto Catholic community became less an Irish immigrant church and more Canadian-born and Canadian-minded.\(^{18}\) In 1860 his Irish immigrant church wished “to pour their feelings of attachment and loyalty to the Queen through her son, in the same broad stream with those of all their fellow-citizens”.\(^{19}\) In a protest against the plans of Toronto Orangemen to walk in full regalia, erect an archway decorated with Orange flags and insignia in honour of the Prince of Wales’ visit in September 1860, Rev. Walsh proclaimed that “Catholics were loyal [British subjects] by principle, and not by caprice; they were loyal because their Church taught loyalty to


\(^{18}\)“We are All Canadians”, Appendix R: English-speaking Catholic Secular Clergy Archdiocese of Toronto 1890-1920, p. 508.

\(^{19}\)ARCAT, W AA01.01, Biography of Most Rev. John Walsh.
lawfully constituted authorities”.²⁰ The intention that “Catholics of this city should walk beneath their yoke, in token of their bondage and slavery”²¹ was an insult to the Catholic community. Father Walsh’s actions and the subsequent formal protest by a lay Catholic delegation apparently “quashed the plans of the Orangemen and the Prince of Wales did not walk beneath the arch and refused to recognize it at all.”²²

Archbishop Walsh’s episcopal administration, 1889-1898, represented a period of stability and growth for the Archdiocese but did not represent any change in policy towards non-English speaking Catholics. By 1889 there were 33 parishes in the Archdiocese of Toronto, nine of which had been established in the city of Toronto. St. Cecilia’s Parish, West Toronto, was erected in 1895 and St. Peter’s, formerly a mission of St. Mary’s, Toronto, was erected in 1896. Socially aware of the Church’s role in society, Archbishop Walsh established Sacred Heart Orphanage under the care of the Sisters of St. Joseph and purchased land to establish St. John’s Industrial School under the administration of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Throughout his nine year administration, he continued to emphasize the role the Church should play to support Canada’s development as a nation. In 1896 Archbishop Walsh addressed a crowd at the opening of St. Cecilia’s Church and expressed his pride and hope for Canada and its citizens.

... let us strive to build up a great country; let us strive to make this country of ours what it ought to be and what it shall be—the home of millions of prosperous, free and happy citizens. This is what should be done by Protestants and Catholics, and this is what the Protestant people of this town have done—as Christian men they

²⁰ARCAT, W AA01.01.
²¹ARCAT, W AA01.01.
²²ARCAT, W AA01.01.
have shown an example of tolerance and liberality.\textsuperscript{23}

Out of a sense of duty to his Catholic flock, support for new ethnic congregations in the Archdiocese is evident with the establishment of the Syrian Catholic Melchite Mission from St. Michael’s Cathedral in 1896. The first baptism was recorded by the Syrian priest, Rev. Macarios Nasr, on October 9, 1896 and in 1898 the mission was given the use of the chapel in the St. Vincent de Paul Hall, located at the corner of Victoria and Shuter Streets. Archbishop Walsh blessed the altar on February 13, 1898 for the Syrian mission to celebrate Mass in the Oriental Rite.\textsuperscript{24} Rev. Macarios Nasr, pastor to the Syrians in Ontario, ministered at first to only five Syrian families who followed the Melchite Catholic, Maronite Catholic or Greek Catholic faith tradition. In 1902, when Nasr penned a letter to Archbishop O’Connor, requesting permission to collect funds for a church, he took the opportunity to list supporters of the Syrian mission and provide a brief history.

Therefore you will find a complet (sic) liste (sic) of all the Syrian family with there numbers who are 140 Souls. also could be found in the Provance (sic) of Ontario a number of 300 souls more or less, and besides all there is a large number of emigrants who are coming continuly to this country from Syria with the intention of living for good in any part wher (sic) they settle, in every boat that comes from the East could be found from one hundred & fifty to two hundred souls Syrian emigrants ... when I arrived first to Toronto there was only five families & a few odds, but now could be found about 35 families...\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{23}The Catholic Record, 15 February 1896, as cited from Mark McGowan, “We are All Canadians”.

\textsuperscript{24}ARCAT, Parish Microfilm Collection; Toronto Catholic Property and Institutions, 1994.

\textsuperscript{25}ARCAT, OC20 SH01, July 4, 1902.
Archbishop O'Connor received into the Archdiocese the services of Rev. Paul Malouf in 1907 who continued the ministry to the Syrian Catholics following the death of Rev. Nasr in 1908. For seventeen years the Syrian congregation, representing Greek-Melchite and Maronite Catholic celebrated Mass at St. Vincent de Paul Hall until it was sold by the Society in 1911. In a petition addressed to Archbishop McNeil, Father Malouf outlined the need of a proper church for the Syrian congregation and describes the spirituality of his congregation and the problems between the two ethnic groups. Malouf expressed the opinion that only a church building of their making would ensure the unity of the Syrian congregation. In 1915 the Syrian mission finally obtained their church, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary which was located at 223 Jarvis Street.

Following the footsteps of Archbishop Walsh, Denis O'Connor served first as Bishop of London from 1890 until his appointment to Toronto in 1899. His experiences in the London Diocese did not prepare him for the expanding immigrant population during his tenure in Toronto. Indeed, the vulnerable minority status of English-speaking Catholics in some rural areas of the Diocese of London may have influenced his stringent policy of church discipline and clerical formation while Archbishop of Toronto. Denis T. O'Connor was born 28 March 1841 in Pickering Township, Ontario, the eldest son to Denis O'Connor and Mary O'Leary. His childhood was spent on the family farm until he was sent at the age of eleven to St. Michael's College to study philosophy and the classics. By 1859 Denis O'Connor began theological studies with the

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26 ARCAT, Clergy History Files.


Basilians and was ordained to the priesthood after taking his final vows as a Basilian on 8 December 1863. He was appointed professor at St. Michael's College (1864-1870), then later as the Basilian superior of Assumption College in Windsor (1870-1890). His years at Assumption College afforded O'Connor with the reputation as a strict disciplinarian and as an efficient administrator. As the new superior to a failing school and seminary, he eagerly faced the challenge at the age of twenty-nine to revive Assumption College and make it financially viable.

In his documentary history of Assumption College, Michael Power writes that

> By means of the incredible strength of his own will, and with the obedience and help of his confreres appointed to the College, Assumption took on a second existence. It is rare for one man to be able to shape an entire school, to give style and substance to its ethos, its corporate character, its very future as a place of higher education. Yet Father O'Connor was given such an opportunity early in his priestly career, and he succeeded in making Assumption into his own image, a creation of his own imagination and pedagogical philosophy.

His astute abilities as an administrator were noted and in 1890 Denis O'Connor was elected Bishop of the Diocese of London and occupied the see until his elevation to the Archdiocese of Toronto on 7 January 1899. The Toronto promotion was not anticipated nor relished by the prelate. In a letter to Rev. D. Cushing, superior of Assumption College in 1899, O'Connor relates that "the morning papers announce that I must leave the See of London. I regret the promotion very much but there is nothing to do but obey when there is a strong hand acting."

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29 ARCAT, O'Connor Papers, biographical notes.


31 Ibid. p. 150.
O'Connor was faced with a Catholic community in transition. Due to the increased immigration of central and southern European Catholics, Irish Catholics were moving out of the unskilled and semi-skilled jobs and into skilled trades and professions. The traditional Irish Catholic neighbourhoods became the homes for the new non-English speaking immigrants. Irish religious and cultural associations were being replaced with new North American fraternal and charitable organizations. Pope Leo XIII's 1899 encyclical, *Testem Benevolentiae* denounced 'Americanist Heresy' which praised active individualism and sought compromises between Catholicism and American society in an attempt to revive the Universal Church. O'Connor responded to this new era of Catholic restoration with a uniquely pedagogical and rigid administration for the Archdiocese of Toronto. His installation address to the clergy and laity of the diocese on May 3, 1899 speaks of his approach to Toronto diocesan administration as a discipline of church doctrine. He sent a clear message to his clergy and laity:

> The discipline of the Church...is an essential part of her teaching as well as the articles of faith; and just as a strict compliance with the teaching of Jesus Christ brings the graces of God upon those who believe, so also, my dear brethren, those who observe the discipline of the Church, her regulations in all things, obtain, too, from Almighty God those blessings which promote their interests here and hereafter.  

O'Connor responded to the needs of the immigrants with reluctance. O'Connor, an educator, appraised the faith and traditions of his laity and believed the influence of the Protestant majority in Ontario, and particularly in Toronto, had compromised the strength of the

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33 *Catholic Register, May 11, 1899*, p. 1.
Catholic faith. For nine years Denis O'Connor attempted to methodically change attitudes towards Catholic doctrine and instill church discipline as a defense against indirect Protestantism. In O'Connor's mind, tolerance and even goodwill between the faith groups seemed to be almost a betrayal of the Catholic tradition in Ontario. To O'Connor, the care of new Catholic immigrants was subordinate to the reinforcement of ecclesiastical discipline and canonical regulations across the Archdiocese. In March 1900 Archbishop O'Connor issued his circular “Regulations to Be Observed to Ensure Uniformity and Good Order” to the Toronto Archdiocese. It was a conservative programme designed with the intent to reinforce and restore Catholic doctrine through the areas of clerical discipline, liturgical uniformity, effective catechesis, and the strict application of church law on sacramental and social matters. In 1900, Archbishop O'Connor appraised the increasingly indigenous Catholic community of Toronto with disparagement:

Some Catholics seek such association because what is called good society is made up mostly of Protestants; other Catholics particularly in country places, have few Catholic neighbours, sometimes none, and by circumstances are then much with Protestants. Little by little they accept P.(rotestant) notions, go to their churches and neglect their own which are sometimes far distant, intermarry with them and the children of such marriages are usually Protestant. In the province we have many, very many, with names that were undoubtedly of Catholic origin. Very few Catholic emigrants come to this Province.

Anglo-Celtic Catholics intermarried with Protestants to such a degree that by 1896 one out of

34ARCAT, O AA03.03.


36ARCAT, O DS02.08.
every five marriages required a dispensation 'Mixtae Religionis'. The O'Connor episcopacy reflected a uniquely pedagogical and rigid administration that endeavored to combat the tepid Catholicism being practiced by Anglo-Celtic Catholics. He did not concentrate his efforts towards the growing Catholic immigrant population arriving into Toronto. Unable to complete his work, Archbishop Denis O'Connor resigned in 1908 from the See of Toronto due to ill health. His inactivity towards non-English speaking immigrants reflects his personal inability to deal with social and cultural change as it affected the Church.

Nevertheless, during O'Connor's episcopacy, Catholic immigrants were beginning to establish themselves as ethnic congregations within the Archdiocese of Toronto. In 1901, 1,025 Italian nationals lived in the city of Toronto, the majority of which were likely male migrant workers who supported a family overseas. By 1911 the demographics of the Italian community grew 180 per cent with the registered figure of 2,872. Until 1908 the Archdiocese did not have a programme set up to minister to the spiritual and material needs of these new Catholic immigrants unfamiliar with English-speaking society. Early efforts of Protestant evangelization were initiated in 1904 with the establishment of joint-committee of members from the Toronto Methodist Social Union and the Presbyterian Board of the Fred Victor Mission. They agreed to divide evangelization efforts of the city's foreign population; the Italian community became the responsibility of the Methodists. Archbishop O'Connor certainly did not foresee the expansion of the Archdiocese by means of European immigration to Toronto.

37Mark McGowan, "The Catholic 'Restoration'", p. 92.

38Luigi Pautasso, "Archbishop Fergus P. McEvay and the Betterment of Toronto's Italians", paper presented at the Fifth Annual Symposium on Italian Canadiana, Centre for Italian Canadian Studies, University of Toronto, May 12, 1988, p. 2.
The first Catholic missionary to work with the Italian community was Rev. Cyril Dodsworth, C.Ss.R. He was transferred to Toronto from the United States specifically to serve the Italian community. Father Dodsworth was still a child when his father, an Anglican minister, converted to the Catholic faith. As a result, the family left England for Italy and Father Dodsworth reaped the benefit of an Italian education in language and culture while living in Italy with his family. His ministry at St. Patrick’s Parish began in 1894. By 1900 the Italian Society of the Immaculate Conception patronized the church, Italians were hired as workers in the parish and the Redemptorists certainly felt the Italian community was beginning to consider St. Patrick’s their own parish by the turn of the century.\(^39\)

When Father Dodsworth died in 1907, the Italian community was a going concern. The Redemptorists had arranged for Rev. Lawrence Jung, C.Ss.R., to continue the work among the Italian Catholics but he was unable to travel to Toronto until September 1908. In a letter dated August 12, 1908 from Rev. Licking, C.S.s.R., Provincial of the Baltimore Province, the new Archbishop was advised that his predecessor, “had already spoken ... about taking care of the Italians and I have written to Rome for help, but our Congregation in Italy numbers so few Fathers that they can hardly do their home - work.”\(^40\)

Archbishop O’Connor resigned on 4 May 1908 and Archbishop Fergus McEvay was installed as Ordinary of Toronto on 17 June 1908. Just prior to McEvay's installation, *The Catholic Register* published an editorial concerning the need to respond to the work of the


\(^40\)ARCAT, Redemptorist Fonds, August 12, 1908.
Methodists with Catholic initiative.

...If we were properly on the alert, members of the Methodist missionary field would get no opening into the homes and territory where they seemed to have gained no unstable footing. If we had put in our 'claim' there would have been no chance for others to 'reclaim'.

The editorial closes with the comment that an Italian parish would be established in all probability someday in the Archdiocese. While in Toronto for the installation, the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Donatus Sbarretti, expressed a keen interest in the welfare of the Italian community and initiated a meeting with them on July 3, 1908 at St. Paul’s Church. His correspondence with McEvay recalled the event.

In the address which the Italians of Toronto presented to me in St. Paul’s Church, they expressed the desire that some Italian priest might be particularly appointed to look after their spiritual interests. I am sure that your Grace will do all in your power to meet the wants of these people. I would be very grateful if your Grace would kindly let me know what steps will be taken in this direction.

The Apostolic Delegate also introduced Archbishop McEvay to Rev. Professor Pietro Pisani, a junior professor of theology in the seminary at Vercelli, who spent his summers studying the religious and economic situation of Italians living abroad. Father Pisani’s visit to Toronto in August served as a catalyst in the establishment of the first Italian national parish for Toronto. As

41Luigi Pautasso, p. 8.

42ARCAT, ME DS10.04.

noted by Luigi Pautasso, Father Pisani arrived on August 10 and offered the first Italian Mass in St. John’s Chapel by an Italian national priest on August 16th. At Archbishop McEvay’s request, Pisani initiated contacts in the United States for the services of an Italian priest, and was able to obtain the services of a diocesan priest living in Buffalo, Rev. Carlo Doglio. He later assisted in sending Rev. Joseph Longo and Rev. Marco Berardo to work among the Italian Catholic community.\textsuperscript{44} McEvay solicited Pisani’s assistance due to the inability of the Redemptorist Provincial to provide an Italian priest to continue the ministry developed under Father Dodsworth’s care. The Redemptorist Provincial agreed, somewhat reluctantly, in correspondence with Archbishop McEvay to permit the establishment of an Italian congregation in the Old St. Patrick’s Church.\textsuperscript{45}

On 8 November 1908 Archbishop McEvay presided over the first Mass for the new Italian church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. \textit{The Catholic Register} reported that the Archbishop closed the Mass with some words of advice to the Italian community.

> Those who speak but the Italian tongue ... will be expected to attend this church; those who speak both tongues may make a choice of a church, but once the choice is made there must be no drawing back, as it is necessary that every priest should know his parishioners.\textsuperscript{46}

Research on the Italian community in Toronto by John Zucchi accepted the contention that “in many ways the Toronto Archdiocese had been insensitive to the immigrants’ upbringing” and

\textsuperscript{44}Luigi Pautasso, “Archbishop Fergus McEvay”, p. 14.

\textsuperscript{45}ARCAT, Redemptorist Fonds, letters dated August 12, 1908 and September 2, 1908.

\textsuperscript{46}\textit{The Catholic Register}, November 12, 1908, as noted by Luigi Pautasso, “Archbishop Fergus McEvay...”, p. 19.
that “the archbishops found it easier to appoint specialists, priests, and later, religious orders, to resolve the problems of the immigrants...” as a result the archbishop “never did become personally involved with the difficulties and problems... of immigrant Catholics from Italy.”

Yet, in four short months after his installation, McEvay had arranged for the placement of an Italian priest and rededicated Toronto’s first Italian parish. Very conscious of the local Methodist missionary efforts to convert Italian immigrants to the Protestant faith, McEvay responded quickly and effectively to the spiritual needs of a growing ethnic community.

In 1905 the first Protestant Italian Mission House, “Casa Metodisa” was officially opened on October 8th at the corner of Agnes and Terauley streets in the heart of the Ward district of Toronto. Protestant evangelization efforts included not only prayer meetings, Sunday School and Bible classes but also mothers’ meetings, sewing, kitchen, garden and domestic science classes for girls and evening English language classes for Italian men. The Methodists worked quickly to expand their mission work and two branch houses were opened, one at the corner of Clinton and Mansfield in 1906 and the second opened on Dufferin Street. The Methodists followed the settlement patterns of the Italian community in the ‘Ward’ in downtown Toronto, an area bounded by College Street, Queen Street, Yonge Street to the east and University Avenue to the western part of the city.

Enrico Carlson Cumbo persuasively argues that the social services

47John Zucchi, “Church and Clergy, and the Religious Life of Toronto’s Italian Immigrants, 1900-1940” CCHA Study Sessions 50 (1983), p. 548. His argument has since been disputed by Italian scholars such as Luigi Pautasso, Luigi Pennacchio, and Enrico Carlson Cumbo.

provided by the Methodist missionaries were accepted with gratitude by the Italians but the majority of Italians were not attracted to the spiritual elements of the Protestant church. Italians viewed their Catholic faith as an essential part of their identity as Southern Italians. As such, they continued to follow the traditions of their countrymen. Statistics reported by Cumbo indicate that out of a population estimated by the mission to be 7,000 Italians, Italian converts to Protestantism numbered only 36 in 1905-6 to 61 in 1907-8. If conversions were relatively few, the growing size of the Italian Catholic community demanded the erection of a Catholic national parish, such as Our Lady of Mount Carmel, to serve the needs of this burgeoning community.

Archbishop McEvay, who had earlier contracted a fatal blood disease, sensed that his time would be short. In three short years, he endeavoured to effectively bring the Archdiocese into the twentieth century. Archbishop from 1908 until his death on May 10, 1911, his accomplishments were numerous and very significant to the growth of the Archdiocese of Toronto in Canada. Seven new parishes were established and ten new church buildings constructed. In 1908, he was instrumental in establishing the Canadian Catholic Church Extension Society, an organization that assisted missionaries in the home mission field, primarily among the native peoples. McEvay also laid the cornerstone to the newly created St. Augustine’s Seminary at Scarborough Bluffs in the autumn of 1910. By the end of his administration in 1911, the Catholic presence in Toronto was visibly strengthened with the construction of church buildings and a strong foundation was in place for Archbishop Neil McNeil to advance Catholic aid to immigrants.

Archbishop Neil McNeil was appointed by Rome on April 10, 1912 to become the new

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49Enrico Carlson Cumbo, p. 157.
Ordinary for the Archdiocese of Toronto. On his arrival to Toronto in December 1912, a petition from the Superior General of the Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus requesting acceptance into the Archdiocese was awaiting his reply. The religious community was founded in Germany in 1891 and had established within the first twenty years “Homes for the Homeless” throughout Europe. Mother Maria Teresa of St. Joseph (Maria Taucher), foundress of the religious order traveled to Cleveland with her Sisters in 1912 only to be refused admittance into the diocese. After some effort, a convent and orphanage was established in Milwaukee; she immediately petitioned dioceses in North America to establish a House.\textsuperscript{50} Mother Maria Teresa explained in her letter that

\begin{quote}
the Sisters go out to hunt up fallen away families who have become estranged to the Church to reawaken them to a new religious life. As we have a number of Sisters who speak Italian, Hungarian, Bohemian and Polish, we could, too, in this regard serve the various nationalities.\textsuperscript{51}
\end{quote}

Archbishop McNeil responded with all possible haste and invited the Carmelite Sisters to work among the Italian and Polish immigrants in Toronto.

They arrived in March 1913 to begin missionary work challenging the ongoing proselytizing labors of the Methodist missionaries working among the Italians since 1905. The Sisters moved into a house at 312 Ossington Avenue and quickly set in motion their parish ministry. The first report to the Archbishop, in September 1913, listed the activities of their ministry: helping with food and clothes, speaking with 482 Italian and Polish immigrants,

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{50}Walking the Less Travelled Road, p. 19.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
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completing 235 visits, arranging for the transfer of children from the public school to the separate school, and accompanying persons, 64 in number, to Mass on Sundays. The establishment of kindergarten and day school classes in association with the Italian parishes and schools of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, St. Agnes and St. Clement's (renamed St. Mary of the Angels in 1935 when the church was transferred to the care of the Franciscan Fathers by Archbishop McGuigan.)

The Italian Methodist mission work with the Italian children was immediately hit with a 50 per cent reduction in enrolment following the neighboring establishment of the Carmelite kindergarten and day classes for immigrant children.52

By 1913 the Italian Catholic community had grown to such numbers that Archbishop Neil McNeil invited the Italians of Toronto to a meeting at St. Francis Church on August 14, 1913 to discuss the forming of a new Italian parish.53 Shortly thereafter, the old St. Francis’ Church, at the corner of Grace and Mansfield, was renamed St. Agnes’ Church to become Toronto’s second Italian national parish under diocesan administration. The care of the Italians at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish reverted back to the Redemptorists in 1913 who were able to provide two Italian-speaking priests. St. Agnes Church was served by diocesan clergy until 1924. The Salesians served the parish from 1924 until 1934 at which time the Franciscan Fathers accepted Archbishop McNeil’s invitation to take over the administration of St. Agnes Parish and serve the Italian community in Toronto. In 1935 Archbishop James McGuigan anticipated the need for a third Italian parish and arranged for the Franciscan Fathers to take over the old St. Clement’s

52Enrico Carlson Cumbo, “Impediments to the Harvest”, p. 163.

53ARCAT, St. Agnes Parish Files, Aug. 9, 1913.
Parish. In 1936, a new church was built for the Italians and named St. Mary of the Angels.54

The Church hierarchy constantly faced obstacles in their recruitment of qualified clergy to serve the immigrants in their mother tongue. The Polish Catholics residing in Toronto’s foreign quarter began to meet as a small congregation for prayer services at St. Patrick’s Church as early as 1905. In this first wave of European immigrants to Canada 1896-1913, many of the Poles arriving to Toronto were male migrant workers employed in factories or in the iron and steel industry. Gradually, as the number of Polish families increased, the demand for a resident priest to serve the Polish Catholic community also grew. In addition to his sole missionary efforts throughout southwestern Ontario, Rev. Paul Sobczak, C.R., a Resurrectionist from Berlin (Kitchener), Ontario was enlisted by the Archdiocese to celebrate Mass for the Polish community in Toronto. From 1906 to 1911 Father Sobczak ministered to Poles intermittently at St. Patrick’s Parish, St. Mary’s Parish and St. Michael’s Cathedral.55 In 1907, Father Sobczak lamented his inability to provide regular pastoral care to the Poles. He reported an incident to Archbishop O’Connor in which a fraudulent Polish priest charged one dollar for each confession heard. He apparently was uncovered as a fraud because he neglected to refrain from smoking cigarettes during confession.56

At the start of his administration, Archbishop McEvay quickly initiated steps to recruit a Polish priest for Toronto and achieved some success in 1909 with the appointment of Rev.

54 ARCAT, St. Mary of the Angels Parish Files.


56 ARCAT, O AB09.01.
Bartłomiej Jasiak, from the Pittsburgh Diocese. For one year he attended not only to the Polish community but also to the Ukrainians of the Latin and Byzantine Rite. The shortage of Polish clergy in North America complicated efforts to secure a replacement. Early in 1911, Rev. Joseph Hinzmann contacted the Archdiocese offering his services to the Polish community. Archbishop McEvay appointed him to St. Michael’s Cathedral promising to establish a Polish National Parish. 57 Impressed with the spiritual devotion of the Polish immigrants, Eugene O’Keefe, prominent Toronto Catholic layman, purchased a former Presbyterian church located on the corner of Denison Avenue and Wolseley Street for the Polish community. The new St. Stanislaus Kostka Church celebrated its first Mass on 3 September 1911 to a congregation of over 800 persons.

Despite the donation of a church building, financial affairs of the church constantly strained the relationship between pastor and parishioners. The history of the second Polish national parish of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Czestochowa (now St. Mary’s Polish Parish) also encountered constant financial difficulties in the upkeep of church and pastor. 58 As with the Italians, the Polish Catholic community only began to flourish with the transfer of the church administration into the care of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. In 1935, Archbishop McGuigan appointed Rev. Stanislaus Puchniak, a young Oblate priest from the Canadian prairies. The Felician Sisters arrived in October 1937 from Buffalo at the invitation of Father Puchniak to establish a community day care centre and to work among the Polish immigrants.

During Archbishop Neil McNeil’s administration, Lithuanian and Maltese Catholics


58 Ibid., p. 148.
initiated efforts to establish their own congregations. By 1920 a Lithuanian mutual aid society, St. John the Baptist Society, began fundraising activities to establish their own parish. In 1928, the society purchased a former Presbyterian church and, with the approval of the Archbishop, St. John the Baptist Parish was established. The Lithuanians struggled to maintain the parish often without the benefit of a Lithuanian priest and the congregation only began to flourish from the immigration of displaced persons following World War II. Although Maltese Catholics began immigrating to Canada by the turn of the century, it was only with the 1922 establishment of a Maltese society that the community began to explore the possibility of bringing a Maltese priest to serve in Toronto. In 1925 Rev. Alphonse Cauchi, an Augustinian, began visiting Toronto regularly. By 1928 the congregation numbered 600 and funds allowed them to purchase land, build the parish church of St. Paul the Apostle which was blessed by Archbishop Neil McNeil on September 8, 1930. The Lithuanian and Maltese Catholics in Toronto initiated the founding of their parishes through the organizing efforts of their mutual aid societies acknowledging the strong ties between culture, tradition and faith.

Archbishop Neil McNeil served as Ordinary for the Archdiocese of Toronto for twenty-two years. During this time he sought to provide the structure and resources for new Catholic immigrants to become integrated into Canadian society. Under his leadership, various social initiatives took root. Again under the Redemptorists, the German congregation benefitted with the establishment of Catholic Settlement House. The Settlement provided social services, educational, medical, recreational, to the neighbourhood communities. The Catholic Settlement

House was founded through the efforts of Rev. Paul Stroh, C.Ss.R., who arrived in 1929 from the Baltimore Province to care for the growing German congregation. Rev. George Foerst, C.Ss.R., joined him in Toronto in July 1930 to assist in the ministry.

Over 300 German Catholics attended the first inaugural Mass and German sermon on 6 October 1929 in St. Patrick’s Hall and with the approval of the Archbishop, Father Stroh established with this Mass regular Catholic services for the Toronto German congregation. He scheduled weekly times for Mass, German sermons, and Benediction, Confessions, Baptisms, as well as free English instruction and a social network for the German community. The Catholic Settlement House, established by October 1930, would soon offer a day care centre for the neighborhood families, a pre-natal maternity clinic, a well-baby clinic, credit union, cooperative store, and employment bureau for the German Community and other immigrants living in the ‘Ward’. The German congregation of St. Patrick’s Parish was finally given official recognition on September 24, 1936 in a document entitled Protokoll des Erzbischofs von Toronto an die Deutsche Katholiken in Toronto.

In 1912 Archbishop Neil McNeil recognized deficiencies with the Catholic social services available to new immigrants and the Catholic poor. In September 1913 he appointed Rev. Patrick J. Bench as superintendent of the new office of Catholic Charities to coordinate, centralize efforts and direct the work of new and existing agencies and institutions. Father Bench

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60 ARCAT, St. Patrick’s Parish Files, The Redemptorists of St. Patrick’s, 1974, p. 13.
61 ARCAT, St. Patrick’s Parish Files, General Correspondence, September 28, 1929.
62 Paul Laverdure, Redemption and Renewal, p. 157; ARCAT St. Patrick’s Parish Files.
63 ARCAT, St. Patrick’s Parish Files, September 24, 1936.
first worked with the various conferences of the St. Vincent de Paul Society to coordinate and standardize relief dispensed to the poor in the various parishes of the Archdiocese and particularly throughout the city.64 Within the first year, Father Bench acted as a probation officer on behalf of Catholic men and women appearing in Toronto courts. This work was then taken over by the Catholic Big Brothers and Big Sisters organizations in 1918 and 1919 founded originally for this purpose. Associate members of the Office of Catholic Charities included Sacred Heart Orphanage, House of Providence, Catholic Big Brother Association, Catholic Big Sisters Association, Catholic Employment Bureau (1914) and the Carmelite Nursery and Day Care Centre and St. Mary’s Infants’ Home (1914). The Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus worked independently with the Italian and Polish immigrants but performed many of the same duties of the superintendent.

Because of their ability to speak to the immigrant in their mother tongue they were able to offer them counsel with family problems and direct the needy and unemployed to community resources.65

In September 1922, the Catholic Welfare Bureau was established in place of the Office of Catholic Charities to coordinate and supervise all Catholic welfare activities and oversee social workers carrying out case work.66 Work of these Catholic agencies was not financed by the Archdiocese until the Federation of Catholic Charities for the Archdiocese was organized in 1927. During the 1931 fund-raising campaign for the Federation, Archbishop Neil McNeil

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65Ibid., p. 35. Interview with Sr. Clare, librarian for the Carmelite Sisters.

66Ibid., p. 61.
appealed to Radio CKGW listeners to the “Ontario Catholic Hour” with the following message.

Among the welfare problems of Toronto there is one which is ours in a special degree. A majority of the immigrants from Continental Europe in Toronto are Catholics. To-day the Gospel was preached in ten different languages in the Catholic churches of Toronto. Thousands of these immigrants are handicapped by a defective knowledge of English, and by the fact that they have not been in Canada long enough to become naturalized citizens, and that they arrived shortly before the depression.⁶⁷

Until 1908, episcopal policy towards Catholic non-English speaking immigrants unfolded slowly and cautiously. Archbishops McEvay and McNeil profoundly changed the direction of the Church’s work in the spiritual and social welfare of Catholic immigrants. The responsibility of the Church to minister to the spiritual needs of various ethnic congregations, German, Italian, Polish, Lithuanian, Maltese was acknowledged by the Church hierarchy and steps were taken to recruit qualified priests to serve their needs. Religious institutions such as the Redemptorists at St. Patrick’s Parish, the Salesians and Franciscan Fathers at St. Agnes and St. Mary of the Angel, the Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate at St. Stanislaus Kostka and St. Mary’s Polish, all worked effectively to provide support for the establishment of their ethnic communities.

The Catholic social work initiated by Archbishop McNeil took root in 1913 with the office of Catholic Charities and the later development of a national women’s organization, the Catholic Women’s League of Canada, in 1919. In a later chapter on “women’s work” within the Church, the Sisters of Service were influenced by Archbishop McNeil and Father Daly to provide settlement and social assistance and instill a sense of civic duty and Canadian nationalism among

⁶⁷The Catholic Register, Thursday, October 8, 1931, p. 1, 8.
the European Catholic immigrants arriving into Canada. Archbishop McGuigan acknowledged the important work carried out by his predecessors and supported financially the infrastructure of national parishes and charitable institutions. As the Archdiocese of Toronto grappled with the difficulties inherent in the care of the non-English speaking immigrant, the spiritual ministry expanded after 1908 under the leadership abilities of Archbishops McEvay and McNeil to include the establishment of social services to immigrants becoming new Canadians. Overall, fear of Protestant proselytism and a genuine concern of the Catholic hierarchy to serve the growing Catholic immigrant community was reflected in the Archdiocese’s relationship with other religious denominations in Toronto.
CHAPTER TWO
CATHOLIC RELATIONS WITH OTHER FAITH GROUPS

The Archdiocese of Toronto reacted slowly to the influx of foreign immigrants to the city of Toronto due mainly to its minority status within the city and a defensiveness towards the Protestant community that had developed since the 1850s. A concern for the growing number of mixed marriages between Roman Catholics and Protestants by the end of the nineteenth century and a general fear of Protestant proselytism efforts tended to isolate Church authorities from the other faith groups serving the city. By the turn of the century, the vast majority of Catholics living in Toronto attended church and regularly performed their devotions. Moreover, these second- and third-generation descendants of Irish Catholic immigrants enjoyed and extensive network of religious, social, and recreational voluntary associations that were affiliated with or under the direct auspices of the Catholic Church, ... unquestionably the dominant social institution in their community.  

These descendants of Irish immigrants were Canadians identifying themselves with their parish life and also with the social network of the larger English-speaking society. Around the same time, the new immigrants of French, German, Ukrainian, Polish and Italian origin were slowly changing the cultural and ethnic composition of the largely Irish-Catholic Church in Toronto and the Protestant and British social fibre of the city. The two archbishops, Denis O'Connor, c.s.b., Fergus P. McEvay, viewed the growing complexities of parish life in Canadian society differently. O'Connor staunchly believed that in a pluralistic society like Toronto, the Catholic

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doctrine and the faith of its people were slowly being assimilated into the Protestant fabric of society. His successor, Fergus McEvay, dealt realistically with the influx of non-English speaking Catholic immigrants and their vulnerability to the Protestant Home Mission work in the city. McEvay recognized and supported the Archdiocese's responsibility to protect the Church and the new immigrant Catholics arriving from Central and Southern Europe from active Protestant proselytism. Under Archbishop McEvay's administration, the first national parish for Italians was established in 1908 and a national Polish parish was established in 1911 in West Toronto. Both are examples of the Church's defence against Protestant activities among new immigrants, in the years just preceding World War II. As Catholic initiatives to aid the growing immigrant community developed, its relationship with other religious groups also matured. During the 1930s, a sense of justice and civic responsibility moved the Archdiocese to support the Jewish community and its efforts to speak out against Jewish persecution in Europe. This forward position of the Catholic Church at the start of the war years had a limited impact due to its minority status and limitations of the 1917 code of canon law placed on ecclesiastical authorities.

In nineteenth century Toronto, relations between Protestants and Roman Catholics included episodes of sectarian violence in the streets, mainly in response to public religious demonstrations or at Irish cultural events celebrating Irish nationalism. Of note were the 1875 Jubilee riots which represented one of the last major incidents in sectarian violence against Catholics in the city. John J. Lynch, Archbishop of Toronto 1860-1888, offered indulgences to Catholics celebrating the Holy Father's proclaimed Jubilee year by making pilgrimages fifteen times to four city churches. On two subsequent Sundays in the autumn of 1875, Protestant mobs
stoned the procession of men, women and children, along with the police ordered to protect them. In their defence, George Brown, staunch Presbyterian and editor of the anti-Catholic newspaper, *The Globe*, berated the mob action and upheld the right of any religious body, including Catholics, to assemble for peaceful purposes. Relations between Protestants and Catholics improved in the years to follow but fluctuated with the political perceptions and economic realities of the day. After 1875 conflict between the two religious groups was maintained to a degree through the influence of the Orange Lodge in Toronto. Initially made up of Ulster Irish immigrants, it increasingly gained credibility among the Protestant population in relation to the growth of Catholic religious, cultural, and service oriented institutions. Members of the Orange Lodge supported anti-Catholic political organizations such as the Equal Rights Association and in the 1890s, the Protestant Protective Association. Despite its perceived influence in the workplace, the Orange Lodge in Toronto was unable to inhibit the advancement of a significant number of English-speaking Catholics into occupations requiring more skill, expertise, and education. By the early 1900s, a small but growing percentage of Catholics were obtaining positions that were previously reserved for Protestants only. “In 1907, roughly 8.5 per cent of the police force was Catholic, most of whom were Canadian-born. By 1911, the number of Catholics had increased as the force expanded, constituting over 10 per cent of the officers and ranks.”

Even with the Orange presence, social tensions between the two groups lessened over the

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70 Mark McGowan, “We are all Canadian’: A Social, Religious and Cultural Portrait of Toronto’s English-speaking Roman Catholics, 1890-1920”, p. 40.
course of time due to the integration of the city's Catholics into all occupations and Catholic migration into all neighbourhoods. The increasing economic influence of Catholics in relation to the general growth of the city demonstrated the growing social stability of the Catholic community. By 1900 relations between Protestants and Catholics were operating on two distinct levels: confrontation in the political arena and veiled prejudice in the workplace; and tolerance and even goodwill "among the silent majorities who were prepared to play together, live beside, work with and even marry the supposed enemy." Archbishop Walsh granted marriage dispensations to young couples to discourage them from abandoning the Church. It was considered far better to have the marriage sanctioned by a Catholic priest than to allow Catholic youth the opportunity to convert to the Protestant faith. By 1899 the Archdiocese of Toronto was moving away from its roots as a Irish ethno-religious community to a Canadian one with its own particular traditions and culture.

Its new archbishop, Denis O'Connor, the first Ontario-born prelate to be elected to the See of Toronto, feared the impact the change in social standing of Catholics. These fears were likely realized to some degree following a visit to St. Joseph's Parish in Leslieville in 1899. (Queen St. East and Leslie Street) An address welcoming Archbishop O'Connor on his first visit

71Ibid, p. 20.


73Mark McGowan, "'We are All Canadian'...", p. 116.

to a working-class parish established east of the Don River in 1878, speaks of the Catholic community's harmonious relationship with its Protestant neighbours. The Chairman of the Parish Council for St. Joseph's Parish recounts with assurance in his letter that

it will be a source of singular pleasure to Your Grace to learn that the relations existing between our Protestant neighbours and ourselves are of the most friendly character. St. Joseph's Church is ... the result of years of hard work on the part of its devoted pastors and faithful people and who we are proud to say were generously aided, both in money and materials by our kind, liberal-minded and largehearted Protestant neighbours, on this side of the Don.  

For O'Connor, the goodwill existing between these Protestants and Catholics likely reflected the apparent success of Protestant proselytization of Catholics through indirect means.

On November 5, 1900 Archbishop O'Connor received communication from the Apostolic Delegate, Most Rev. Diomede Falconio, the Vatican liaison for the Canadian episcopal hierarchy, requesting a detailed report on Protestant proselytism in the Archdiocese of Toronto. The Apostolic Delegate was required by the Papal Secretary of State to survey the twenty-eight dioceses and apostolic vicariates and formulate an assessment of the "health" of the Catholic faith in Canada. The results of this survey, tabulated in March 1901, provided the Vatican with the most complete and comprehensive report on Protestant-Catholic relations submitted to date by Canadian bishops.  

Archbishop O'Connor appraised Protestant-Catholic relations on the Toronto homefront and noted that indirect Protestant proselytism was interwoven with Canadian culture and cited the issues of mixed marriages, public schools, public press, and Protestant

75General Archives of the Basilian Fathers, Denis O'Connor Personal Papers, Box I.

associations as cause to "produce a greater number of tepid Catholics who make no great effort to live as Catholics, but like to die as such." He writes,

This advance of evil [proselytism] is due to mixed marriages which in my judgement have been tolerated to [sic] readily; to public schools which insensibly produce indifference to religion in the minds of scholars; to the public press, which though not irreligious treats all religions in a patronizing way as something to be amenable to and guided by public opinion; to protestant associations, that is, to neighbourly intercourse with Protestants.\(^7\)

Mixed marriages and the existing school system in particular were key points in O'Connor's isolationist policy. He frowned upon the educational policy of select schools, run by religious orders, that permitted non-Catholic students to attend as interns and viewed it detrimental to the spiritual growth of the Catholic student. He writes "Girls of such schools are more inclined than others to contract mixed marriages and they who contract them are frequently indifferent Catholics; even they who do not contract such marriages associate readily with non-Catholics to the weakening of their faith and their respect for Catholic practices." O'Connor even proposed, somewhat naively, on the feasibility of Catholic families living in close-knit communities around the Parish in order to ward off Protestant influence.\(^8\)

By the mid-1890s, marriages between Catholics and Protestants in Toronto were becoming almost commonplace. Although O'Connor's predecessor, Archbishop John Walsh, certainly did not approve of such unions he provided dispensations to couples as a lesser evil in order to ensure that the marriage would take place in a Catholic church. By 1896 one out of every

\(^{7}\)ARCAT, O'Connor Papers, O DS02.08.

\(^{8}\)ARCAT, O'Connor Papers, O DS02.08.
five Catholic marriages required the dispensation, 'Mixtae Religionis' (21.05 per cent).

Archbishop O'Connor attempted during his administration to significantly reduce the availability of the marriage dispensation. The city parishes were granted dispensations but the figures varied from 5.52 per cent in 1899, 7.41 per cent in 1903, and 2.45 per cent in 1907. In his report to the Apostolic Delegate in 1900, O'Connor outlines his intent to, at least, diminish the evils of mixed marriages,

to make them ... by granting dispensations rarely and by a more uniform conduct on the part of the Bishop in insisting not only on this law of the church but on church laws generally. Up to the present the asking of a dispensation seems to have been sufficient reason for granting it.  

Following his resignation in 1908, marriage dispensations steadily increased to a level in 1920 that represented one in every three marriages was mixed. (31.09 per cent) Quite certainly, O'Connor was unable to discourage Catholic-Protestant unions.

In O'Connor's eyes, the superior public school system in Toronto was another institution supporting indirect Protestant proselytism. One defence of the Church against the public school system was to ensure a quality education for Catholic students. At the beginning of his administration Archbishop O'Connor acknowledged the perceived inadequacy of the teachers presently on staff in the Catholic schools.

Many of our teachers are taken from religious communities of women and the majority of these are not qualified in the sense that lay teachers are qualified. Hence dissatisfaction among lay teachers and their friends and among non-Catholics the conviction of the

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80ARCAT, O'Connor Papers, O DS03.08.
inferiority of our schools. It will be very difficult to remedy this unless by the united action of the Bps (Bishops) of the Province under the guidance of your Excellency.\textsuperscript{81}

In December 1901, O'Connor met with Archbishop J.T. Duhamel of Ottawa and Archbishop C.H. Gauthier of Kingston to discuss the recent recommendations from the separate school inspectors concerning uncertified teachers from religious communities teaching in Catholic schools. The separate school inspectors maintained that all teachers, without exception, should have normal school training and obtain Ontario teaching certificates. The Archbishops supported the religious orders' argument that normal school training was not compatible with the vows of Religious and the government should recognize internal certification. Following a legal precedent in 1904, a long series of negotiations took place between the Catholic hierarchy, represented by Archbishop O'Connor, and the provincial government to avoid losing teaching communities to Quebec or to American dioceses. O'Connor admitted to the Kingston Archbishop in a letter dated March 8, 1907 that he had perhaps blundered in first voicing his personal preference over the consensus of the Ontario bishops.

... I made it clear to the Government at the beginning and at each interview... I wish Religious teachers past and present to be qualified on the recommendation of the Separate School inspectors.\textsuperscript{82}

On April 20, 1907 the Seath Act, an act respecting qualification of certain teachers placed Religious teachers (nuns) on equal footing with public school teachers. Consideration was given

\textsuperscript{81} ARCAT, O'Connor Papers, O DS03.08

to the experienced Religious teachers and compromises made to normal school training that included compulsory exams and summer sessions of professional training.\textsuperscript{83} For Archbishop O'Connor, this legislation strengthened the integrity of the Catholic school system in a Protestant society.

Citing ill health, Archbishop O'Connor's third letter of resignation was finally accepted and put into effect on May 4, 1908. His administration coincided with a particular time in Canadian society. At a time when home mission work was expanding among the Protestant churches, O'Connor's policies concentrated on stabilizing Church institutional structures against "indirect" Protestant proselytism. His analysis of active proselytism by the Protestant churches in Toronto in 1900 was reported as

\begin{quote}
Certain overzealous Protestant women use beneficence towards Catholics, poor in pocket and in faith to show that the C. Church is neglectful of the Poor. The poor of this kind take charity from both Protestant and C.[atholic].\textsuperscript{84}
\end{quote}

Under the short administration of Archbishop McEvay, 1908-1911, direct Protestant proselytism of a new immigrant community of Italian Catholics was acknowledged and combated by the Church. To attract possible converts, the 'Casa Metodisa' Italian Mission provided material assistance to families and individuals: distributed coal in the winter, offered employment referrals and helped with the sick. Reports of converts to the Protestant faith were

\textsuperscript{83}Ibid., p. 220-221.

\textsuperscript{84}ARCAT, O'Connor Papers, O DS02.08.
modest: 36 in 1905-6 to 61 in 1907-8 out of an Italian population estimated to be 7,000.\textsuperscript{85} Despite the small number of converts, the mission house continued to expand its activities and opened additional houses. In 1906 a mission house was opened at the corner of Clinton Street and Mansfield Avenue, a third was opened on Dufferin street close to the Foundry works. Of particular concern to the Catholic administration was the active work of the Women's Missionary Society. In 1907 the Mission Bible Women made 1,500 visits among 130 Italian families in the St. John's Ward, Clinton St., Manning Avenue, Toronto Junction.\textsuperscript{86}

The first decade of the new century played an important part in the establishment of the Archdiocese of Toronto as a Canadian Catholic Church. Mark McGowan summarizes his study on Toronto's English-speaking Catholics with the statement that

\begin{quote}
By 1920 English-speaking Catholics had woven themselves into the economic, social, and intellectual fabric of Toronto life, and in the process they had absorbed much of the prevailing English-Canadian Protestant ethos; the myth of the self-made man, cautious anti-Americanism, the primacy of the English language outside of Quebec, loyalty to the Empire, the vision of a Christian Canada, and a love of Canada, her heritage, and her promise.\textsuperscript{87}
\end{quote}

Archbishop O'Connor did not acknowledge the increased integration of Catholics into merely responded to the changing face of the city with conservative measures reflecting his pedagogical

\textsuperscript{85}Actual Italian population figures for the early 1900s vary considerably and is likely due to transient characteristic of the Italian worker.


\textsuperscript{87}Mark McGowan, "'We are All Canadians'...", p. 2 of abstract.
preference for doctrinal integrity. The Church also related with more confidence to the Protestant majority and with other minority faith groups such as the Jewish community. The Archdiocese of Toronto’s relationship with the Jewish community during the 1930s reflected the comfort level of the Catholic Church in supporting the concerns of other faith groups.

From 1933 and into Canada’s war years, the various Church authorities in Toronto protested against Jewish persecution in Europe and increased anti-Semitism at home. These church leaders, admittedly were not very effective in changing Canada's refugee policies, but were recognizably the moral leaders of the day. The first organization to deal with anti-Semitism at the local level was the Toronto Committee on Jewish-Gentile Relationships established in 1934. The Committee issued warnings when anti-Semitic riots broke out in certain public parks and beaches and brought attention to anti-Semitic propaganda being distributed by Canadian fascists. Its most important work centred around the distribution of literature promoting an understanding of the Jewish faith. As always during this time period, the Catholic Church was absent from any form of official cooperation with other Christian denominations. Prior to World War II, the Catholics of English-speaking Canada were a minority religious group within a Protestant majority of Anglo-Saxon Canadians. First with the tenure of Archbishop Neil McNeil, 1912-1934, and then with Archbishop James C. McGuigan, 1934-1961, the archbishop or his representative spoke out against anti-Semitism alongside the more organized efforts of the Toronto religious community. The limited moral contribution by the Catholic bishops must be viewed in light of the political and social circumstances of the day as well as the canon laws.

regulating the activities of all Catholics, ecclesiastical or lay.

Toronto Catholic response to Jewish persecution, while sympathetic, was indeed reflected in the personalities of the Catholic archbishops. In 1933 Archbishop Neil McNeil was regarded by Catholics and non-Catholics as a distinguished episcopal Church leader whose 22 year administration had witnessed the doubling of the archdiocesan Catholic population and the subsequent creation of thirty new parishes. He died in 1934 at the age of 83 following a bout of pneumonia. Always seen as a peacemaker, Archbishop McNeil's obituary in *The Catholic Register* refers to his teachings against all forms of nationalism, both at the local level (English vs. French nationalism) and at the international level (German nationalism). In 1928 Archbishop McNeil to respond to allegations made by the Apostolic Delegate concerning the actions of one of his clergy while attending a Men's Club Dinner at Holy Blossom Synagogue. The Apostolic Delegate, Most Rev. Andrea Cassulo, was given to understand a speech, endorsed by the Archbishop, was made by a Toronto priest to promote the reconciliation of religious beliefs, a notion which was in direct opposition to the January 6, 1928 encyclical of Pope Pius XI "Mortalium Animos." In reality, Rev. John E. Burke's speech dealt with the role all Canadians, regardless of religious beliefs, must carry out as citizens in promoting national unity. The Jewish Men's Club sponsored the dinner on February 27, 1928 in order to encourage tolerance between religious groups in Toronto. Archbishop McNeil outlined in his correspondence the minority status of both Catholics and Jews in Toronto,

> the Catholics and the Jews taken together are fewer than one in four of the Protestant population; but in business, in industries, in public influence, and in social life, the ratio is more like one in

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The Protestantism of the North of Ireland is a large factor in Toronto in professional life, in business, in employment, etc.\textsuperscript{90}

Throughout his administration, the Archbishop wholeheartedly supported endeavours that encouraged national unity while respecting individual religious beliefs.

On April 2, 1933 Archbishop Neil McNeil addressed an assembly of perhaps 3,000-3,500 persons who gathered at Massey Hall in Toronto to protest against the anti-Semitism that intensified with Adolf Hitler’s election on January 30, 1933 as the new Chancellor of Germany. The three Toronto dailies gave front-page coverage to the gathering that was organized by the Ontario Jewish Protest Committee and welcomed various church and state representatives. Politicians from all three levels of government attended the Toronto meeting that Sunday evening. The Ontario Premier George Henry, as well as three M.P.P.s, E.F. Singer, E.J. Murphy, and Thomas Bell, participated in the assembly along with two federal politicians, Samuel Factor, M.P. and Colonel G.R. Geary, M.P. Municipal Controllers Samuel McBride, W.D. Robbins and James Simpson with Aldermen Nathan Phillips, Claude Pearce, H.W. Hunt and J.E. Corcoran were also reported to be in attendance. The local newspapers reported that Archbishop McNeil personally represented the Catholic Church at this gathering while Canon H.P. Plumptre, St. James Cathedral, represented Bishop Derwin T. Owen and the Anglican Church. The other leading Protestant denominations, although absent, expressed their approval of the meeting that endorsed a resolution to petition the German government to end all anti-Semitic activity.\textsuperscript{91}

\textit{The Toronto Telegram} reviewed the Sunday meeting in its “typical Anglo-Saxon”

\textsuperscript{90}ARCAT, MN DS30.05 and MN DS30.06a. See also \textit{The Evening Telegram}, Tuesday, February 28, 1928.

\textsuperscript{91}\textit{The Toronto Star}, Monday, April 2, 1933, p. 1.
fashion. As a populist, sensationalist press, its headline, "Jewish Protest Gains Support From Churches: Prayers For Jews in Germany Said in Many Churches; Meeting Approved" was conciliatory to the Toronto Jewish community but maintained an overall condescending attitude perhaps reflected by many Toronto Protestants. Speisman, in his study of the Toronto Jewish community, remarks that it was only after World War I that general hostility to Jews as a racial minority became evident in society. Increased immigration of central and eastern Europeans in the years prior to 1914 had resulted in changing the social fabric of Canada. British social values and quality of life were thought to be threatened by those immigrants who resisted assimilation. The Telegram concluded its article on the rally with a quote by Rev. J.E. Ward, rector of the Church of the Epiphany, who clearly regarded the Nazi persecution of Jews as a political rather than a religious issue, "... to the extent that the protest was against religious persecution he declared himself to be in sympathy with it. 'Although,' he added, 'I don't quite see what good such a protest can do.'"

The measures carried out by the Nazis against its German Jewish population were viewed by many outsiders as an internal political issue not a religious one. In 1933, the Jewish population in Germany was approximately one per cent of the total population. Yet on April 7, 1933 the first of over 400 anti-Jewish laws was issued, discharging Jews from all civil service positions, disbaring Jewish lawyers, dismissing teachers and restricting the practice of Jewish

92Stephen A. Speisman, The Jews of Toronto: A History to 1937, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979) p. 128. In his endnotes, Speisman indicates the social stand taken by the various Toronto newspapers. The Telegram was known to be openly anti-semitic in its news articles.

93Ibid., p. 318.

94The Toronto Telegram, April 3, 1933, p. 2.
doctors. On April 11, 1933 the National Socialist Party legally defined a Jew as someone having at minimum one Jewish grandparent.95 The participants at the Massey Hall assembly, representing Canada's minority concerns, felt a responsibility to speak out against the anti-Semitism that was intensifying in Europe. Those who stood on the sidelines in 1933, like the Rev. J.E. Ward, represented the general attitude found in 'Orange' Toronto, a city with approximately 70-72 per cent of its population belonging to the Protestant faith. The Jewish community represented, at best, only 7 per cent of the city's population.96

_The Toronto Star_, the local newspaper most sympathetic to immigrant concerns, headlined its news article with the title, "Race and Creed Set Aside Demand Justice for Jews", and quoted extracts of various speeches of leading church and state officials. Archbishop Neil McNeil received a standing ovation and spoke knowledgeably of the growing persecution of the Jews by the Nazis. He highlighted the efforts of the German Catholic bishops to speak out against the pagan nationalism that was unfolding in their country.97 He spoke compassionately to Toronto's Jewish community,

We are companions in this. Often the speakers of the Hitler party have associated together the Jews and Rome. If this matter goes much farther we will all have to join together in a world campaign

95Irving Abella and Harold Troper, _None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1948_, (Toronto: Lester Publishing Limited, 1983), p. 3.

96Canada's 1931 census does not indicate religious denominations for Toronto residents. It is quite plausible to rely on the 1941 census considering the restrictive immigration policy in effect at the time. The 1941 census of Toronto residents indicates Protestant Christian denominations (Anglican, United Church, Presbyterian, Baptist) totalling 72% of the city's population with Roman Catholics representing 15% and Jews representing 7% of the population. Canada Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1941.

97Ontario Jewish Archives, _The Daily Hebrew Journal_, April 3, 1933
against these atrocities, which if allowed to continue, can have only one result -- another world war.\textsuperscript{98}

The Catholic Register and its affiliation through its international Catholic news offices was one communication media that offered southern Ontario Catholics a greater understanding of Hitler's politics and the actions of the National Socialist Party as they related to religious concerns.

From 1933 to 1953, this weekly Catholic newspaper was published under the editorship of Henry Somerville, a Catholic social activist, who delivered a comprehensive newspaper that reported on local, national and international events affecting the Universal Catholic Church. Somerville believed that "the aim of everything in the Catholic paper should be apostolic, it should be to help the work of the Catholic Church."\textsuperscript{99} In reviewing the various issues during the 1930s one is bombarded with the tyranny that manifested itself through repressive political measures in Germany against Catholics as well as Jews. Headlines such as "Archbishop's Indictment of German Tyranny; Governmental Measures to Destroy Catholic Press, Catholic Charities and Catholic Organizations",\textsuperscript{100} and articles reporting on the German hierarchy's pastorals and addresses denouncing Nazi paganism and perfidy.\textsuperscript{101} In 1929 the Bishop of Mainz instructed his clergy to refuse all sacraments to Nazi party members, membership to the National Socialist Party and its racist teachings was antithetical to the doctrine of the Universal Catholic

\textsuperscript{98}The Toronto Star, April 3, 1933, p. 1, 3.

\textsuperscript{99}The Canadian Register, October 25, 1952, editorial. From 1949-1972 this Ontario Catholic newspaper was called The Canadian Register and was published for the Archdioceses of Toronto and Kingston and for the Dioceses of London and Hamilton. See also Centennial Issue of The Catholic Register, February 20, 1993.

\textsuperscript{100}The Catholic Register, Thursday, January 23, 1936.

\textsuperscript{101}The Catholic Register, Thursday, January 21, 1937 and Thursday, March 25, 1937.
Church. In 1922 Roman Catholicism represented one-third of the total German population and its educational institutions, the confessional schools and the German Catholic Youth Organization were strongly entrenched in German life. It was Hitler's intention to control German life in its totality. Opposing newspapers were banned; unions were dissolved and all opposing political parties were outlawed. A bill was passed enabling Hitler to govern without parliament. In 1934 he combined the offices of Chancellor and President following the death of President Von Hindenburg and made himself head of state as well as head of government. Hitler succeeded through the support of a well-oiled political police system and through strict control of all public communication, and effective propaganda and conversion. Opposition to the National Socialist Party was minimized through repression and intimidation.

Both Pope Pius XI and Pope Pius XII followed the traditional policy of Vatican reserve and conciliation with other nations during the 1930s and into World War II in order to protect the independent influence and standing of the Church. The Vatican concordat with the Third Reich was signed on July 20, 1933 following negotiations with the papal nuncio, Cardinal Eugene Pacelli, later Pope Pius XII (1939-1958). It was the hope that the legal agreement would safeguard and preserve Catholic religious and educational institutions. But in reality this was not the case for the Catholics nor the victimized Jewish minority. There was no official response to the organized persecution by the Nazis of its Jewish population. At best, only individual


104 Anthony Rhodes, p. 177.
church officials, apostolic delegates and papal nuncios (the Vatican representative in foreign
countries) were able to contribute to any sort of international Catholic effort against Hitler's
efforts at Jewish persecution. Michael Marrus in his analysis of the Catholic Church in *Holocaust in History*, refers to the efforts of individual churchmen like the apostolic delegate, Giuseppe Burzio in Catholic Slovakia; papal nuncio Andrea Cassula in Rumania; papal nuncio Angelo Rotta in Hungary and the apostolic delegate Angelo Roncalli in Turkey who intervened on behalf of the persecuted Jews.\(^{105}\)

The local Catholic Church in the form of the Archdiocese of Toronto was in a quandary
in attempting to deal earnestly with the political and social issues that were erupting in the 1930s.
Ecumenical relations before Vatican II were hindered by the detailed canons regulating the
activities of all Catholics, lay and ecclesiastical. Throughout the 1917 Code of Canon Law one is
struck by the inability of the Catholic Church to cooperate with other Christian denominations.
The Roman Catholic Church, by asserting the premise of being the only true Christian Church,
invalidates the existence of all others. Canon 1258 states that it is illicit for Catholics in any way
to assist actively or take part in sacred worship of non-Catholics. Formal active participation is
defined when a person, besides being physically present in the place where such worship was
being conducted, places some positive act of worship in common with the non-Catholic
worshippers (i.e. prayer). Even if the participation was carried out in the light of civility or
friendship, and not in the intention of real worship, it would be defined as material participation.
Canon 1258 also indicates that passive presence, for the sake of civil courtesy, duty or respect is

permitted in the case of funerals, weddings and other similar celebrations of non-Catholics. Any other questionable cases should have the approval of the Bishop since it is conceivable that even merely passive presence might be accompanied by an internal intention to approve, assent to, or encourage the non-Catholic worship; if that were true it would be formal co-operation in an evil act, and forbidden by the natural law.\footnote{Lincoln Bouscaren, S.J. and Adam C. Ellis, S.J., \textit{Canon Law: A Text and Commentary}, (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1957), p. 688.}

The Bishop, as head of the diocese, was responsible for the enforcement of this canon as it related to the co-operation in worship with non-Catholics. Passive presence of clergy or bishop at any inter-faith functions could only be allowed if there was no danger of either perversion or scandal.

Archbishop McNeil's presence at the 1933 protest rally could be explained in several ways. Before he accepted the invitation, some assurance of its secular nature may have been given by the organizers. Although, Archbishop McNeil was always able to interpret things broadly and may not have bothered to concern himself with this canon. Throughout his administration, a time of both economic expansion and depression for the Archdiocese and Canada, there is ample evidence of his dislike of ecclesiastical red tape.\footnote{ARCAT, MG RC29205, March 26, 1949. Archbishop McNeil, in establishing fourteen ethnic or "national" parishes for the Catholic immigrants establishing themselves in the Archdiocese of Toronto, ignored proper canonical procedures. In 1949 it was necessary for Cardinal McGuigan to apply to the Vatican for recognition after the fact.} Archbishop McNeil's participation at the Massey Hall gathering typified the differences between the Canadian English and French Catholic hierarchy.

When a similar meeting was held in Montreal on April 6, 1933 Catholic clergymen were...
conspicuously absent from this display of liberalism.\textsuperscript{108} During the 1930s, Quebec was in the midst of a period of racist nationalism and a veneration of fascism by the French and Italian population. The Catholic clergy in turn was notorious in its advocation of nationalism which in turn inspired a racist xenophobia throughout the province. Both the French-Canadian politicians and the French-language newspapers of Quebec spoke out vehemently against any form of Jewish immigration. The Liberal government of Mackenzie King expected to witness violence erupting throughout Quebec against the admission of Jewish refugees, along with the political destruction of the province's Liberal party.\textsuperscript{109}

In English Canada, the episcopal appointment of James Charles McGuigan, Archbishop of Regina, 1930-1934, to the Archdiocese of Toronto on December 22, 1934 represented a new vigor in ecclesiastical administration. He was first consecrated Archbishop of Regina on May 15, 1930 at the age of 36, one of the youngest bishops to be consecrated in Canada. As the new Archbishop of Toronto in 1935, McGuigan was respected by the Catholic hierarchy as a keen financial administrator competent to deal with a diocesan debt of well over four million dollars. While his appointment by the Holy See was necessitated by the current financial difficulties of the Archdiocese, it was also made with the realization of the diplomatic role to be played in Protestant English-speaking Canada.

Already by 1936, there is evidence of Archbishop McGuigan's discreet role in furthering ecumenical relations, both at the local and national level. Claris E. Silcox, United Church


\textsuperscript{109}Abella and Troper, p. 17-18.
Minister and director of the Canadian Conference of Christians and Jews (C.C.C.J.) from 1940 to 1946, reported on the cooperative efforts of individual Catholics and Protestants in 1936 to persuade the Canadian government to permit entrance of refugees from Nazi persecution. He explains in a memorandum for the Canadian Institute of International Affairs that,

Some prominent Catholic ecclesiastics participated in framing this manifesto, but ... only Protestant signatures were obtained. The Catholics were clearly sensitive to the dangers offered by Hitler to the Church at that time, but they may have feared that a manifesto with Catholic names appended might have jeopardized the concordat arrangement between Hitler and the Vatican, or that it might create a fresh anti-Semitic outburst in Quebec such as actually did develop in the latter part of 1938 when nearly 150,000 members of the Saint Jean Baptiste society signed a petition to Ottawa protesting against any further Jewish immigration.  

As Archbishop of Toronto, McGuigan was regarded as the leader of the principal diocese within a particular ecclesiastical province or region. In the case of the Archdiocese of Toronto, its province is Toronto and the suffragan sees are the dioceses of Hamilton and London. While no further evidence has been found concerning this 1936 endeavour, the resignation of James G. McDonald, League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany since 1933, that was published in most newspapers, secular and religious, in January 1936, may have played a role in this early refugee petition. MacDonald pronounced that the collective action of the League of Nations has failed to check Nazi Germany's intensified repressive measures which menace not only Jews but Catholics and Protestants as well.

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100United Church of Canada Archives, Claris E. Silcox Papers, PP SIL Box 7, File 14, Memorandum for the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, Public Opinion among Religious Groups in Canada 1939-1941, by Claris E. Silcox.
While the degree of involvement of Toronto church leaders has yet to be uncovered\textsuperscript{111}, there certainly is evidence dating from 1936 of the respect afforded to Archbishop McGuigan and his position in English-speaking Canada by leading Protestant and Jewish leaders. This relationship is illustrated in Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath's response to Archbishop McGuigan's 1936 message of felicitations on the occasion of the 80th anniversary celebrations of Holy Blossom synagogue. Rabbi Eisendrath, in thanking the Catholic archbishop for his congratulatory letter, expressed his desire to cooperate with Archbishop McGuigan in the many common causes the two religious groups shared. Of note is Eisendrath's recounting of the Protestant reaction to McGuigan's congratulatory letter.

I cannot tell you how deeply appreciated this message was not only by my own people but by the leaders of the Protestant Church who were with us on that occasion.

I also heard from among the many notable Christian citizens who were with us on this memorable occasion the highest terms of praise regarding your felicitations.\textsuperscript{112}

Rev. Silcox's report on Catholic cooperation to Jewish concerns and the respect given to Archbishop McGuigan by the other Christian denominations indicates a far more sympathetic stand taken by the Archdiocese of Toronto in the 1930s.

As a result of the financial burden carried by the Archdiocese of Toronto, McGuigan often acted as an administrator approving various initiatives taken by his clergy to improve social consciousness of English Canada. The Catholic Truth Society in 1938 cooperated with the

\textsuperscript{111}The Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto, the Anglican Diocese of Toronto, the Ontario Jewish Archives and the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews have been contacted without any success concerning the 1936 Jewish refugee manifesto.

\textsuperscript{112}ARCAT, MG SU27.06
Committee on Jewish-Gentile Relationships and arranged for Ontario-wide Catholic parish
distribution of a pamphlet entitled, *Why are Jews Persecuted?* written by Joseph N. Moody, Ph.D
and published originally by the Archdiocese of St. Louis. The Committee on Jewish-Gentile
Relationships, whose principal function was the distribution of literature, paid for the distribution
of over 14,000 pamphlets within a two month period in 1938.\(^\text{113}\) The Canadian Conference of
Christian and Jews (formerly known as the Committee on Jewish-Gentile Relationships 1934-
April 1940) also reprinted a March 14, 1940 address by Rev. Dr. Maurice S. Sheehy, head of the
Department of Religious Education at the Catholic University of America and originally
published by the Council Against Intolerance in America. This address outlines the declarations
made over the centuries by the early popes and concludes with a September 25, 1938 declaration
from the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office,

The Catholic Church habitually prays for the Jewish people who
were the bearers of the divine revelations up to the time of Christ.
... and just as every kind of envy and jealousy among the nations
must be disapproved of so in an especial manner must be the
hatred which is generally termed as anti-Semitism.\(^\text{114}\)

This publication underlines the willingness of the Catholic church to speak out against Jewish
persecution as long as the Vatican is able to maintain a policy of reserve and political neutrality.

Throughout the war years, Archbishop McGuigan was pressured by the Protestant
denominations to participate in common statements of prayer during the wartime crisis. Despite
the crisis, the edict from the Holy See through the representation of the Most Rev. Ildebrando
Antoniutti, Apostolic Delegate to Canada remained clear, "the Holy See is not favourable to the

\(^\text{113}\) Ontario Jewish Archives, PR 131.4.1.

\(^\text{114}\) Ontario Jewish Archives, PR 131.4.16, "The Popes Condemn Anti-Semitism.", p. 6.
publication of joint statements of the Catholic Hierarchy with the Chiefs of different religious
denominations, especially for religious purposes." One constant embarrassment faced by the
Archbishop is the confusion of some church leaders in understanding his inability to represent
the Canadian Catholic Church, an honour given to J.M. Rodrique Cardinal Villeneuve of the
Archdiocese of Quebec. McGuigan explained to Rev. Claris E. Silcox, a leading United Church
minister: "I have no official status in the Canadian Church, other than Archbishop of my own
(eclesiastical) Province." During the same time period, McGuigan's correspondence with the
Cardinal indicated a position of authority within the ecclesiastical hierarchy in recommending
that they "should answer them (primate of the Anglican Church and the moderators of other
Churches) in such a way as to show sympathy to their general idea without being associated
directly with them." At the local level, Rev. Claris E. Silcox as director of the Canadian
Conference of Christians and Jews, noted in his 1941 report to the General Council of the United
Church of Canada the organization's continued inability to secure official Catholic membership,
when its American counterpart was successful right from the beginning of its National
Conference days. Canadian Roman Catholic-Protestant collaboration may have been hindered
with the alarming attention being drawn to the independent Baptist Minister, Rev. Thomas
Todhunter Shields. He was a Toronto Baptist minister, who through his ministry at the Jarvis

115ARCAT, MG DS42.18.
116ARCAT, MG SU27.22d.
117ARCAT, SW GC01.21a.
118United Church of Canada Archives, Claris E. Silcox Paper, PP SIL; Box 7, File 13, "Second
Report of the Director to the Canadian Conference of Christians and Jews, December 29, 1941."
Street Baptist Church and his journal, *The Gospel Witness*, independently fuelled anti-Catholic sentiments during Canada's wartime years. In the 1920s and 1930s, Shields' public dispute was with Roman Catholic theology, later with the wartime crisis his anti-Catholicism was very political and anti-French.¹¹⁹ Quebec's political opposition to support conscription for overseas duty was seen by Protestant Canadians as a threat to Canada's loyalty to Great Britain. He perceived the Roman Catholic Church to be in control of Canada's political destiny and subsequently this political power threatened Protestant values of freedom of speech and religion.

On March 4, 1941 *The Gospel Witness*, edited by Dr. T.T. Shields, was the focus of debate in the House of Commons as a publication subversive of national unity in Canada.¹²⁰ T.T. Shields, as president of the Canadian Protestant League, received little support from the mainstream Protestants and regular Baptists. Along with his blatant anti-Catholic stand, there was a general disagreement with Shields' conviction that he and his followers were the only true Christians.¹²¹ In a confidential letter to Archbishop McGuigan, dated September 29, 1941, Claris E. Silcox, minister of the Sherbourne Street United Church and director of the Canadian Conference of Christians and Jews, wrote of the disapproval many Protestant church leaders have for T.T. Shields. Silcox explains that the general consensus is to support positive collaboration of


¹²¹ Moir, p. 322.
Canadian Protestant-Catholic relations rather than publicly attack Shields.¹²² This letter may have been the mainstream Protestant response to the outrage felt by the Archbishop with the latest advertisement of Shields' public lecture. The Saturday, September 27, 1941 edition of *The Globe and Mail* published the advertisement of the evening lecture entitled, "Why the Italian Apostolic Delegate to Canada, Archbishop Antoniutti, Should be Expelled From Canada for Subversive Activities" and subsequently published the letter from Archbishop McGuigan protesting Shields' advertisement.¹²³ Such public attacks from a Protestant extremist tended to isolate the Archdiocese of Toronto from the mainstream Protestant leaders despite assurances from individuals such as Rev. Silcox. This inability of the Catholic Church to work in total cooperation with other Christian denominations was exhibited in the Ottawa 'national morale' fiasco of 1941. In September 1941, the federal government's ineptitude was accentuated in its efforts to rebuild national morale through the organization of "A Week of National Reconsecration". The original plan constituted the week being launched with a Protestant-Catholic worship service, an unheard of phenomenon prior to Vatican II. Ecclesiastical outcry was made and this service was quietly replaced with an advertised Catholic Mass celebrated by the Archbishop of Ottawa and held under the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill on September 14th. Somehow in the shuffle, the separate Protestant service was not announced nor advertised although it was held on Parliament Hill later in the week. Leaders of the Protestant community, led by Dr. T.T. Shields, met on September 16 to protest against the Mass on Parliament Hill which was seen as "an insult to the conscience of the majority of Canadian citizens and

¹²²ARCAT, MG SU27.22 (g).

destructive to national unity."\textsuperscript{124} Shields', in the fervour of the next few days, developed with a committee the constitution for the new Canadian Protestant League. Its most fundamental objective was "the preservation, maintenance, and assertion of the traditional, civil, and religious liberties of British subjects. The second and third articles committed the league to the support of the doctrines of the Protestant Reformation, and to opposition to the political aims of the Roman Catholic Church."\textsuperscript{125}

T.T. Shields' anti-Catholic rhetoric was disseminated across Canada when, in June and July 1942, he toured the western provinces and spoke to 30,000 people at 46 meetings.\textsuperscript{126} The Archbishop of Winnipeg, Most Rev. Alfred A. Sinnott notified Archbishop McGuigan of T.T. Shields' meeting in Winnipeg with the lecture being advertised as "Who Rules Canada: George VI or Pope Pius XII" A copy of Archbishop Sinnott's telegram and letter to the Hon. J.T. Thorson, Minister of National War Services, was forwarded to Archbishop McGuigan. In his telegram to Thorson, the Winnipeg Archbishop Sinnott denounced Shields' lectures as promoting "... artificially manufactured discord (which was) most dangerous at this time. Projected meeting already creating very bad impression. Can nothing be done?"\textsuperscript{127} In Toronto Archbishop McGuigan faced the difficult task of not responding publicly to Shields' anti-Catholic rhetoric. In


\textsuperscript{125}Ibid., p. 184.


\textsuperscript{127}ARCAT, SW GC01.84 b. See also SW GC01.84 a&c for Sinnott's correspondence with McGuigan.
a 1941 letter McGuigan explains his position succinctly,

Dr. Shields who so dishonours his own ministry is one of Canada's greatest enemies for he continually sows hatred and discord. However, one of the sanctuary cannot argue with him for we cannot stoop to his methods and his lying propaganda. 128

The fact that T.T. Shields was not publicly confronted by any of his peers highlights the difficulties the Catholic archbishop must have faced in promoting ecumenical relations.

Canon law directives have been cited as the main hindrance to Archbishop McGuigan's activism in ecumenical relations in Ontario while being very cognizant of the Church in French Canada. In 1938 circumstances necessitated an explanation from Archbishop McGuigan to Rabbi Eisendrath regarding Catholic response to any and all ecumenical matters. He explains,

The Church has given us the general direction that while we should, as a matter of conscientious duty and fellowship, take part in all matters that affect the common good under civic auspices, in order to avoid misunderstandings and embarrassment in religious matters that have sometimes arisen in the past, we should abstain from taking part in events of another denomination or of an interdenominational character under the auspices of religion. 129

These regulations did not prohibit interaction between denominations when the occasion was of a secular or academic nature. In 1945 a Toronto Rabbi contacted Archbishop McGuigan to request permission to invite Catholic clergy to a lecture seminar, a project in the scholarly pursuit of knowledge, entitled "An Institute in Judaism". McGuigan's reply was straight forward, "I wish to say that no permission whatsoever is required from me for attendance at an academic

128 ARCAT, SW GC01.37a.
129 ARCAT, MG SU27.12
programme. Those interested were free to interact socially and intellectually with their Jewish brethren, but any civic action by the bishop himself was limited to his interpretation of various Church directives. In 1942 Archbishop McGuigan declined an invitation to attend a public meeting at Massey Hall on October 11, 1942 organized "for the purpose of expressing their sense of deep sympathy and fellow feeling with the hundreds of thousands of their brethren in Europe who are undergoing such unparalleled suffering." His message to the Jewish community was read by Rabbi Samuel Sachs and expressed the Catholic community's most profound sympathy and fellow feeling, in the treatment of thousands of Jewish people in Germany and in the subjugated countries who are undergoing not only great hardships but the most cruel persecution at this most critical hour of the world's history."

This 'fellow' feeling was voiced on behalf of one Toronto religious minority group to another, reflecting a common concern for the preservation of religious freedom in Europe as well as Canada. Archbishop McGuigan was also very much aware of the difficulties for new immigrants to be accepted as worthy applicants for Canadian citizenship. In his 1938 letter to the Holy Blossom congregation on behalf of the dedication celebrations for their new temple, McGuigan wholeheartedly supported the Toronto Jewish community as an ethnic group representative of good Canadian citizenship status.

The twin virtues of religion and patriotism have ever characterized

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130 ARCAT, MG SU27.37a-b. Correspondence between Archbishop McGuigan and Rabbi Feinberg, April 17, 1945.

131 ARCAT, SW GC01.92a.

132 ARCAT, SW GC01.92; The Hebrew Daily Journal reports that Rabbi Sachs read out McGuigan's message on behalf of the Catholic Church.
the Jewish people. It seems to me that all who profess belief in the overruling Providence of God must cling, now more than ever, to the fundamental principles of religion and morality upon which our Canadian nation was established and through which alone it can endure. Your new synagogue and all that it stands for will be a potent aid in guarding the integrity of the family which is the unit of society and in fostering and sustaining those religious influences and sacred traditions which are so closely allied to worthy citizenship.133

Archbishop McGuigan's letter of support was written at a time when the Canadian government was establishing even greater restrictions on Jewish immigration giving political voice to xenophobia, spreading first through Quebec and eventually throughout Canada. Later with the involvement of Canadian armed forces in Europe, Quebec's opposition to conscription would lead to the deteriorating relations between the federal government and the rest of the nation. While the Protestant denominations joined to speak out against anti-Semitism, they remained for the most part silent against the anti-Catholic rhetoric of Dr. T.T. Shields.

Throughout the administration of Archbishop McGuigan, one encounters the astute sensitivity of the bishop. His dealings with other Christian and Jewish leaders during the 1930s and 1940s were significantly positive considering the canons regulating the ecumenical activities of Canadian Church officials. In general, the political stature of the Catholic Church in English-speaking Canada was minimal due primarily to the lack of a national body representing the concerns of the Catholic hierarchy. The present national organization, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops was established in 1943 and was officially recognized by the Holy See in 1948. Catholic relations with other faith groups improved significantly after the turn of the century in correlation with the integration of Roman Catholics into all aspects of Canadian

133 ARCAT, MG SU27.12b
society. As a predominantly English-speaking Church community, the Archdiocese acknowledged its role to minister the spiritual, material and social welfare of European immigrants while grappling with an inherent fear of Protestant proselytism efforts. A national Catholic women’s organization was established in 1919 under the leadership of Archbishop McNeil in an attempt to present a national Catholic voice to immigration concerns. This organization, the Catholic Women’s League of Canada, would in turn support the work of the newly established female religious community, the Institute of the Sisters of Service of Canada, as they worked together to welcome and assist the Catholic immigrants to the urban and outlying areas of Canada.
CHAPTER THREE

WOMEN'S WORK: IMMIGRANTS RECEIVE CATHOLIC WELCOME

They seem excellent Catholics (Hungarians), will they remain so long without spiritual assistance and how can they be reached without spiritual assistance and how can they be reached when dispersed throughout the country as they are actually, in order to find employment. And this lamentable situation, unfortunately applies more or less to the other nationalities.¹³⁴

Abbé Phillippe Casgrain, founder and chaplain director of the Catholic Immigration Welfare Bureau of Canada and Newfoundland established in 1912, writes passionately of his concern for the spiritual well-being of the numerous Catholic immigrants arriving into Canada through the ports of Quebec, Halifax and St. John, NB. His words reflected the Church’s growing concern for the spiritual welfare of new Canadians following Canada’s open door policy towards European immigrants during the period of 1896-1914. There was a renewed interest within the Church to improve the efforts of this early national organization to assist Catholic immigrants.

Rev. George Daly, C.Ss.R., prolific author and lecturer on Catholic immigration issues, challenged the Knights of Columbus in 1919 to offer their services to the Catholic Immigration Bureau. He acknowledged the important role the Knights of Columbus Army Huts played in providing hostels, recreation rooms for the welfare of soldiers during the war and demobilization and proposed similar to be carried out on behalf of the immigrants. Protestant organizations such as the Red Triangle (YMCA) and the Red Shield (Salvation Army) had already converted

¹³⁴SOSA, RG02-02.3, Box 1, File 16, August 16, 1928. Report by Abbe Phillippe Casgrain, Chaplain Director of the Catholic Immigration Welfare Bureau of Canada and Newfoundland, pg. 4.
facilities and manpower for this “Canadianization work”. Daly reiterated his challenge to the Canadian Knights of Columbus by publishing a chapter in his book, *Catholic Problems in Western Canada*, entitled “The New Canadians: Immigration!—Are We Ready for It?.” Written as a treatise to the Catholic hierarchy and laity, Daly theorizes the possibilities for an organized Catholic forces to respond to the thousands of new immigrants expected to arrive into Canada following the end of World War I.

In a 1921 national appeal by the State Council of the Knights of Columbus for the Maritime Provinces, an earlier meeting between a committee of State Deputies and the Minister of Colonization was reported in the national circular defining the immigration work to supported financially by the Knights with the actual work being carried out by Catholic women’s organizations, as it was defined essentially as “women’s work.” Financial assistance from each council was requested “to assist in the extension of the Catholic Women’s League throughout Canada and to assist them in their immigration work.” It was only in 1928 that a national immigration plan by the Knights of Columbus was formulated and approved by the state councils. From 1928 to 1933 substantial funding was provided for the distribution of Catholic literature at the ports of entry; for the chaplains stationed in Halifax, Quebec and St. John; for the Sisters of Service working with new immigrants in Halifax, Quebec, Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg; and for the Winnipeg chaplain and the Knights of Columbus “clearing office.”

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135SOSA, RG2-02.3, Box 1, File 14, November 1919, Letter to Knights of Columbus from Father Daly, pg. 2.


137SOSA, RG2-02.3, Box 1, File 14, February 1, 1921
By 1933 aid for immigration work was discontinued due to lack of funds, although local
councils continued to make annual contributions. During the 1920s the Catholic Immigration
Bureau reorganized the immigration work that was carried out by Abbé Casgrain prior to World
War I and with the assistance of lay organizations and diocesan contacts created a network of
contacts throughout most of Canada to assist in the settlement of Catholic immigrants. While
financial support was provided by both the Knights of Columbus and the Catholic Women’s
League, the mainstay to its success was accredited to the Catholic Women’s League and, more
importantly, to the missionary work of the Sisters of Service. The development of a national
Catholic women’s organization and the canonical erection of a new Canadian female religious
order, the Institute Sisters of Service of Canada is attributed to the leadership and intervention of
Archbishop Neil McNeil of Toronto.

General public thought and government policy towards immigration following the end of
World War I had moved to a slightly more restrictive policy towards foreign immigrants.

...would-be farmers, agricultural workers, and domestic servants
were welcome, but other kinds of workers much less so; migrants
from Britain, France, and northern and north-western Europe were
far more welcome than those from elsewhere in Europe; would-be
migrants from Asia and Africa were not welcome at all.  

During a conference of the Canadian Council of Immigration of Women for Household Service
in 1919, the Minister of Immigration and Colonization expressed the official view that “the

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138SOSA, RG2-02.3, Box 1, File 14, n.d. Fr. Daly’s notes (transcribed), “Report of the
State Deputy, delivered at the State Convention of the Knights of Columbus, May 4-5, 1928,” p.
3.

139Robert Bothwell, et al, Canada, 1900-1945, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press,
future of Canada depended on the development of its resources and that the bringing in of the right class of settlers from other countries would hasten our progress. In response to the lack of representation of a national Catholic women’s organization at this conference, Archbishop McNeil moved quickly to arrange the establishment of the Catholic Women’s League for Toronto with the specific purpose to group all Canadian branches of the League and other women’s societies into a national Catholic women’s organization. Archbishop McNeil acknowledged the efforts of the C.W.L. branches in Canada but realized they remained as diocesan efforts in Catholic action. In 1912, the first Canadian branch of the Catholic Women’s League was formed in Edmonton to enlist lay women in immigration work. In a circular dated 27 November 1919 to all pastors, McNeil asks that they announce on the upcoming Sunday, that a meeting of Catholic women will be held that day to organize the Catholic League in Toronto. McNeil explained his underlying motives:

If Catholics are to hold their own in Canada they must organize. Local societies are helpful in parish and diocesan matters; but parish and diocesan matters would soon dwindle in importance if we left all matter of nation-wide importance to non-Catholic organizations. We must take our place in the National life of Canada, not merely because this is needed in self-defence, but because Catholics have civic and social duties as well as others, and in these days wide organization is an essential factor in any work of national importance. ... The need is already felt in concrete matters of importance to the Church.

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140 ARCAT, MN AS06.10. Opening remarks of the Minister of Immigration and Colonization, September 9, 1919, p. 2.


142 ARCAT, MN PC07.08, November 27, 1919, Circular to all pastors in the Archdiocese.
The first annual convention of the Catholic Women’s League of Canada was held in Toronto, June 1-6, 1921 representing twenty out of thirty-eight Canadian dioceses. Their work with new immigrants was in particular acknowledged with gratitude by the Church hierarchy. Bishop John T. McNally of Calgary felt that “it was imperative that the immigrant be directly communicated with the Catholics of this land in order that his faith might be saved.”¹⁴³ The Catholic Women’s League soon organized committees in Canadian port cities to meet and assist immigrants arriving in Canada. In September 1922, Father Daly lobbied the Catholic Women’s League at its second national convention to support the Sisters of Service who as teachers and nurses, working in the outlying rural areas of Canada, would teach to the settlers not only the Catholic faith but also promote good citizenship and patriotism. During this convention, the Catholic Women’s League of Canada passed a resolution to endorse financially the work of the Sisters of Service with new Catholic immigrants as one of their national works.¹⁴⁴ Together the women connected with the immigrants immediately following their arrival into Canada and provided information and resources through the C.W.L. hostels/residential clubs. The Sisters of Service and the Catholic Women’s League became the first Catholic contact for new immigrants arriving into Canada’s ports of entry.

Women religious orders in the 1920s, including members of active congregations such as the Sisters of St. Joseph, a teaching and nursing order, were required to live their daily lives semi-cloistered. Sisters were not permitted to visit, not even the family home, except for very

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¹⁴³ ARCAT, OC26 GE01. (Fiftieth anniversary publication).

serious reasons; nor were they allowed to eat or sleep outside the convent walls. Travelling in pairs, they were not allowed to speak to people in the streets and if one spoke to a man for any reason she had to be accompanied by another sister.¹⁴⁵ The Institute of the Sisters of Service of Canada, founded in Toronto on August 15, 1922 to work among new Canadians in the home mission field, primarily western Canada, was truly revolutionary for its time. The vision for this new religious community rests with its foundress Catherine Donnelly, a native of Alliston, Ontario. Born in 1884 on a farm outside of Alliston, she was raised with her two younger sisters in a devout Catholic family and attended the local public school. From 1902-1918, she worked as a separate school teacher and principal in rural Ontario. In 1918, Donnelly decided to travel to western Canada in search of a better teaching position and a salary that reflected more realistically her abilities and advanced training. At thirty-four years of age, the career-minded woman was still the sole financial support for her elderly widowed father.¹⁴⁶ Her life as a teacher and a devout Catholic working on the prairies exposed Donnelly to the harsh working and living conditions of new immigrant families who were receiving little or no spiritual support from the Canadian Catholic Church. She was disturbed to discover there were few Catholic churches and no missionaries working and living in the rural prairie communities. A Catholic presence was certainly evident in the cities from Winnipeg to Victoria with the establishment of Catholic hospitals and schools. Some male missionary orders such as the Oblates of the Immaculate Conception and the Jesuit Fathers concentrated their efforts among the native peoples.


¹⁴⁶Jeanne Beck, To Do and to Endure: The Life of Catherine Donnelly, Sister of Service, p. 43.
Catherine Donnelly returned to Toronto in 1920 and on the recommendation of her younger sister, now a nun with the St. Joseph community, contacted the Canadian Provincial of the Redemptorists, Rev. Arthur Coughlan, C.Ss.R., for spiritual guidance to determine how she could serve the Church in western Canada. Her thoughts moved towards becoming a teaching sister working in rural settlements outside the jurisdiction of established Catholic schools and churches. Self-supported through employment in public schools, catechism classes could be offered on Saturdays and during the summer months to the children. Teaching, in her mind, would be the most important and practical service that could be offered to the new European settlers.\textsuperscript{147} On the advice of Father Coughlan, Donnelly joined the Sisters of St. Joseph at the age of thirty-six as a postulant but was rejected by the Order before she entered its novitiate. Reasons for dismissal were never provided but likely her outspoken predisposition to work in western Canada outside of traditional community life led to her dismissal. By Christmas 1920, both she and Father Coughlan realized her ideas could only reach fruition with the establishment of a new religious community to serve the Church and the growing number of European immigrants to Canada. Father Coughlan approached Archbishop McNeil with Donnelly’s hope to establish a new religious community and approval was readily given to begin the necessary work. In January 1921, Donnelly met together with McNeil and Coughlan to confer on the philosophy and direction this new order would take. In her memoirs, she noted that the Archbishop asked that health work be included to supplement and help the prestige... A couple of small hospitals in the West could give the claim to caring for health ... other rural endeavours could be anything to help families, provide clothing, medicine, encouragement, guidance and

\textsuperscript{147}Ibid., p. 55-56.
thus come under the head of social work.\textsuperscript{148}

McNeil would later expand the social service role of the new community, to be named the Institute of the Sisters of Service of Canada, by insisting they operate a national network of women’s hostels, residences that would provide a temporary home to young single working women and to immigrant Catholic girls in search of work in the cities. The Sisters of Service, as a modern religious community, would provide many of the services Protestant groups such as the YWCA and WCTU had been providing for years. The first residence was purchased in Toronto on behalf of the Sisters of Service on April 23, 1923, just eight months after the order was founded and before any of its members had completed training. It was placed under the charge of the Catholic Women’s League until June 1924 when the Sisters were in a position to take over its operation.\textsuperscript{149}

The difficult task of finding vocations and financial support for a new religious community was delegated to Rev. George Daly in January 1922 by Father Coughlan. He became the community’s clerical supervisor and Father Coughlan remained as official confessor and spiritual advisor. Daly, acting in a public relations role, promoted the uniqueness of the order nationally in order to attract potential candidates and the interest of the western Bishops. Members of the Institute would, after six months of postulancy, one year of novitiate, and some additional time of immediate preparation (if necessary), be sent out to work in the home mission field. Wearing a grey uniform and a simple silver cross as identification, two or three Sisters

\textsuperscript{148}\textsuperscript{148}Ibid., p.70 as cited from SOSA, Catherine Donnelly, “Sisters of Service”, 15 May 1965, RG1-01, box 9, file 31.

\textsuperscript{149}\textsuperscript{149}SOSA, \textit{The Field at Home}, October 1924.
would live together, uncloistered, in rural settlements to provide religious, educational and medical assistance to neglected and lapsed Catholics. Fully qualified in their role as teacher or nurse, they would work directly under the existing ecclesiastical authority, either missionary clergy or diocesan bishop. Daly was also responsible for the creating the Holy Rule which defined the order’s distinctive dress, spiritual life of the community and each member, as well as its constitutions. This document, once translated in French and Latin, would be submitted to the Vatican for approval. Novitiate life was supervised by a novice mistress, on loan from the Sisters of St. Joseph, who trained the novices to follow traditional community life and prayer. Once assigned to their mission, the Sisters would live under an interim Rule of the Sisters of Service. Both the interim and formal version of the Rule reflected to a great extent Catherine Donnelly’s vision of service as discussed with Archbishop McNeil, Father Coughlan and Father Daly from 1920 to 1922. Working in the home mission field, the Sisters would serve as teachers, catechists, nurses and social workers among “Catholics most destitute of spiritual help, particularly among immigrants and their children.”

Archbishop McNeil’s enthusiastic support of the Sisters of Service substantiates his own view of the lagging role of the Church towards the non-English speaking immigrant. His thoughts on the matter are recorded in a letter written in 1922 to Father Daly, C.Ss.R.,

They need to be organized not only to preserve and practice their faith but also to enable them to take their place in the civil life of the nation. Our lack of success with them in the past as far as it existed, was due in part to insufficient effort to combine social and

150 Jeanne Beck, To Do and to Endure: The Life of Catherine Donnelly, Sister of Service, p. 85; see also SOSA, The Field at Home, July 1926.

151 SOSA, Rules and Constitutions of the Sisters of Service, 1934, p. 3.
civic formation with missionary zeal. ...

I regard the founding of the society known as the Sisters of Service as a very important step towards a solution of the problem of immigration. Its purpose combines the safeguarding of the faith with social and civic betterment from a Canadian point of view. It is constructive work of the best kind. Though originating in Toronto it is not in any sense for Toronto. Its appeal is to the whole Dominion. One needs but two qualities, love of God and love of Canada, to become interested in the success of the Sisters of Service.\footnote{SOSA, Letter from Archbishop Neil McNeil to Rev. George Daly, C.Ss.R., September 4, 1922.}

The home mission field work as contemplated originally by Catherine Donnelly and then adapted by Archbishop McNeil and Father Daly involved a mandate that encompassed education, health care and welfare work and fulfilled Archbishop McNeil’s vision of a Church providing a clear path to naturalize new Canadians. This path began with the establishment of the first Catholic Girl’s Residential Club for immigrant women in 1923 at 4 Wellesley Place, located next door to the Sisters of Service Motherhouse and Novitiate at 2 Wellesley Place in Toronto. Many members of the community, not interested in teaching or nursing careers, opted to work at the ports and railway stations, under the direction of the Catholic Immigration Welfare Bureau of Canada and Newfoundland, to greet Catholic immigrants and arrange for Catholic contacts across the country. This Catholic aid to immigrants was considered particularly necessary since the establishment of the Catholic Immigration Bureau, under the auspices of the Archdiocese of Quebec, was established at least three years after Presbyterian “Immigration Chaplains” were appointed to the ports of New Brunswick and Halifax. The Protestants viewed the immigration work as “applied Christianity” in that the arrival of foreign immigrants, 20 per cent of those
arriving into Canada posed a threat to Canada’s democratic way of life by arriving without a sufficient level of English literacy, “virtue and intelligence.”

Within a seven month period, January to 1 August, 1928, over 36,000 immigrants passed through the ports of Halifax, St. John and Quebec with the majority travelling to the CNR and CPR Winnipeg for agricultural employment. The rest, sponsored by friends and relatives claiming them for farm work, would not indicate final destination. After disembarking from their ship, the immigrants would undergo a final medical examination in the Immigration Building and then be questioned by officials regarding their final destination, employment, passports and other official documents before being allowed legal admittance into Canada. Those who failed the medical examination would be sent to the immigration hospital for treatment and if not cured, deported; others who failed the Inspectors’ examination were separated for further questioning to be either admitted or rejected.

In 1928, the Sisters of Service staffed the Halifax port, Abbé Phillipe Casgrain and two Sisters staffed the Quebec port and in St. John, members of the Catholic Women’s League coordinated Catholic efforts in New Brunswick. The scenario in each location remained the same: after undergoing the inspector’s examination, immigrants would be directed to the Immigration Hall to wait until processing was completed. In the time between the rush to the railway line, the Catholic missionaries would endeavour to identify the Catholics and provide a parish contact at their final destination. Those immigrants travelling across country for farm employment were urged to identify their religious affiliation and their wish to work for Catholic

farmers. Catholic literature would be distributed in exchange of any Protestant material that was already handed out. Booklets offering spiritual and temporal assistance in various languages were provided by the Knights of Columbus, old issues of the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, *Franciscan Review*, *Catholic Register*, *Catholic Record*, *Sunday Visitor*, were distributed to whose who could read English, others would receive, rosaries, medals, and prayer cards of Catholic images all of which served as a Catholic welcome and provide spiritual support to the Catholic immigrants. The Sisters of Service and the members of the Catholic Women’s League, moreover, offered comfort and acted as a contact for new arrivals to procure food provisions, replace lost railway tickets, to send telegrams, etc. The Sisters would, in particular, report the arrival of single women to the local branch of the Catholic Women’s League, if established. Otherwise the port chaplain would notify the local parish priest of Catholic immigrants settling within his parish. In 1930, over 22,000 Catholic immigrants were met personally by the Sisters and received assistance at the Port of Halifax. Across the country, the Catholic Women’s Hostels provided 31,300 beds and 98,822 meals to single immigrant women. Their work over the last seven years to coordinate Catholic efforts to assist Catholic immigrants recognized by the Federal government and “given...a standing, never...enjoyed before”.

Toronto was the home to the Motherhouse for the Sisters of Service at 2 Wellesley Place and their Novitiate at 60 Glen Road. The first Catholic Girls’ Residential Club for Immigrant Women, later referred to as the Catholic Women’s Hostel was located at 4 Wellesley Place and

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154SOSA, RG02-02.3, File 16, Box 1, August 16, 1928, report of Abbé Casgrain, Chaplain Director of the Catholic Immigration Welfare Bureau of Canada and Newfounland, p. 8-13.

155SOSA, *The Field at Home* (October 1930).
placed in the care of the Sisters in June 1924. By 1932, the Sisters had established a network of six hostels across the country in Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton, and Vancouver with financial and volunteer support from the Catholic Women’s League. The first report of the superintendent of the Toronto hostel for the months of June to September 1924, stated that 2,699 meals were served; 1,007 beds were provided; 248 girls placed (in domestic positions); 49 New Canadians accommodated direct from the Old Country; 11 transients; and a total of 966 single women were “accommodated” at the Hostel. In 1927, almost 7,000 single women were provided social assistance, warm clothing, recreational facilities, food, and temporary lodgings in the Toronto Hostel alone. The term ‘accommodation’ was defined in a later issue of The Field at Home as “girls served with meals on the ‘day off’, girls seeking advice, in quest of employment, on account of lack of education asking for letters to be written at Hostel, girls nursed when sick, etc.” In addition to providing a home-like Catholic atmosphere for the young women, the Sisters offered an employment bureau to assist the women in obtaining employment, usually in the domestic field. In a subsequent report for the months of October, November and December 1925, 143 women, new immigrants “from across the seas”, were placed in domestic positions. The employment bureau, operated by the Sisters of Service, was augmented with classes in cooking and cleaning to women unfamiliar with North American household management. Often social gatherings and parties provided women with the opportunity to act as hostesses and learn how to present themselves to strangers. The Sisters tried

156 SOSA, The Field at Home (April 1925).
157 SOSA, The Field at Home (October 1926).
158 SOSA, The Field at Home (January 1926).
to educate the domestic worker and instill a sense of pride in their work along with recognizing the required training, intelligence and efficiency in accomplishing their tasks.\textsuperscript{159}

The Sisters actively publicized the work of their order through a quarterly publication, \textit{The Field at Home}, in order to encourage financial support from their supporters. In January 1926, the Catholic Women’s Hostel was promoted as a place of welcome for hundreds of Catholic girls from across land and sea.

To the “New Canadian” the word “Hostel” spells home.... Here the girls come for an evening of real fun, to entertain and be entertained. If out of work, in sorrow, sickness or distress, their first thought is the Hostel, knowing that they will find there help and sympathy.\textsuperscript{160}

The hostels, while serving as a temporary home for single women, offered the women a Catholic environment that combined religious practice with social gatherings. In 1934, Mother’s Day was celebrated at the Montreal and Toronto hostels with a ceremony to bless the babies of “hostel girls” who had married since coming to Canada. In Toronto, Father Daly gave Benediction in the Motherhouse chapel and then blessed the babies. Each child received a religious medal on a blue ribbon to commemorate the event. Afterwards, the Sisters hosted a garden party on the hostel grounds for their guests.\textsuperscript{161} St. Anthony’s Club was established in 1937 by the women connected to the Toronto Hostel to promote religious, educational and recreational activities. Classes were offered in knitting and crocheting, dressmaking, cooking, paper craft, dramatics, physical culture, tap dancing and glee singing. A Catholic study club under the direction of a Redemptorist priest

\textsuperscript{159}SOSA, \textit{The Field at Home} (April 1938).

\textsuperscript{160}SOSA, \textit{The Field at Home} (January 1926).

\textsuperscript{161}SOSA, \textit{The Field at Home} (July 1934).
was also organized by the women. Missions by the Redemptorists were preached in the convent chapel to girls, currently or formerly attached to the hostel. In 1937, over 1,000 women attended the mission week services and gathered afterwards at the hostel to socialize. From the beginning, annual spiritual retreats were organized specifically for the hostel girls. By reviewing the statistics provided by the Sisters of Service, one is confident of the impact the order had on single immigrant women arriving into cities in search of work.

In reviewing the published reports and articles on hostel work, there were no references to language classes or translation services offered by the Sisters of Service to the ‘overseas’ immigrant women prior to 1939. The few surnames that are listed in the publication, The Field at Home, tended to be English, Scottish or of Irish background. In its early years, the immigrant work provided by the Sisters in the urban centres tended to attract English-speaking immigrant women who did not have family ties in the city. Undoubtedly a valuable service was being offered by the Sisters of Service and the Catholic Women’s League but it seems non-English speaking immigrant women quickly connected themselves with an established ethnic parish. While the work of the Sisters was respected and valued by the general Catholic community, it fell short of providing for all immigrant women. In later years, particularly after World War II, the hostels did indeed offer such needed services. Both Archbishop McNeil and Father Daly stressed the role of city hostels for Catholic single women as an important facet of the immigrant outreach strategy by the Sisters of Service. Novices who did not have the educational

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162 SOSA, The Field at Home (January 1937).

163 SOSA, The Field at Home (April 1937).

164 SOSA, The Field at Home (May 1926).
qualifications to become teachers or nurses were seen as being ideally suited for port and hostel work.\textsuperscript{165} Catherine Donnelly, in her later years, often referred to the Catholic Women's Hostels as "boarding houses."\textsuperscript{166} She fundamentally disagreed with Father Daly's policy to assign order personnel and funding into hostel work when the order should be committed to a more focused apostolate to serve the educational, social and spiritual needs of the European immigrant families in western Canada.

Of the four novices who were first received into community in 1922, only Catherine Donnelly and Catherine Wymbs were able to make their vows of poverty, chastity and obedience on August 2, 1924. It was on this occasion that Archbishop McNeil announced that the day's event should be entered in the annals of the community.

The first thing I want entered is the item that the Founders are Rev. Fathers Coughlin and Daly. I have cooperated, the Sisters of St. Joseph have cooperated but the founders are really Fathers Coughlin and Daly.\textsuperscript{167}

Despite being the catalyst for its foundation, Catherine Donnelly played a subservient role in the development and direction of the order once it was underway. She never emphasized her direct involvement in the formulation of the Rules of the Sisters of Service or the fact that her life savings were used by Father Daly as start-up funds for his fundraising efforts.\textsuperscript{168} She lived during

\textsuperscript{165}Jeanne Beck, \textit{To Do and to Endure: The Life of Catherine Donnelly, Sister of Service}, p. 148.

\textsuperscript{166}Interview with Sr. Pat Burke, S.O.S., October 1997.

\textsuperscript{167}SOSA, RG1-01, File 1, Box 1, August 2, 1924, Address to S.O.S. by McNeil on the occasion of first vows.

\textsuperscript{168}Jeanne Beck, \textit{To Do and to Endure: The Life of Catherine Donnelly, Sister of Service}, p. 120.
a time when the Church demanded the laity adhere to the authority of the episcopacy and clergy. Women, interested in joining an established order or even thinking of forming a new religious order, would seek out and follow the spiritual guidance of a clergyman. Donnelly remained focused in her single-minded vocation to serve new Canadians through education even though the order provided a more general mandate in the service to new immigrants both in the urban of eastern and central Canada and in the rural parts of western Canada. Sister Catherine Donnelly was eventually recognized for her invaluable contribution to the establishment of the order and declared the founder of the Sisters of Service by her order in 1990, seven years after her death on September 8, 1983.

Hers was the first English-speaking Roman Catholic missionary order founded by a Canadian and the first order in Canada to anticipate in its Rules and customs the new approach adopted after Vatican II by the Church’s female religious orders. 169

In 1922 the Sisters of Service were established as a modern, uncloistered religious community to serve Catholic immigrants in a variety of activities including settlement work in Toronto during the 1930s. The Catholic Women’s League of Canada supported Catholic immigrant aid through volunteer personnel and financial support of a religious community. During the 1920s and 1930s, Catholic social action among the laity, more precisely lay women, was successful when under the direction of the clergy or religious communities. Social settlement work, as discussed in the following chapter, offers a comparative study of Catholic action through lay and religious initiatives with the establishment and operation of Toronto Friendship House and Catholic Settlement House.

169 Ibid., p. 293.
CHAPTER FOUR
CATHOLIC SOCIAL ACTION AND SETTLEMENT WORK IN TORONTO

The history of social settlement work in the city of Toronto dates from 1902 with the establishment of Evangelia House by several well-educated middle class women keenly interested in improving the lives of the poor women and children in the area east of the Don River. Cathy Leigh James in her study "Gender, Class and Ethnicity in the Organization of Neighbourhood and Nation: the role of Toronto's Settlement Houses in the formation of the Canadian State, 1902 to 1914" points to the year 1907 in which the middle class perception of the poor fundamentally changed the focus of settlement work as a growing number of non-Anglo-Celtic immigrants settled in the poorer parts of the city. Toronto's middle class began to pay less attention to the poor individuals and families and more to the growing presence of small pockets of 'foreign' immigrants in the poorer parts of the city, defined as the "problem of the city".170 Between 1901 to 1911 Toronto's population increased over 34 per cent. This reflected a national trend in rapid population growth after 1900 with the introduction of a vigorous immigration recruitment by the Laurier government. In turn, the downtown core of the city (south from College to Front, east to Parliament and west to Ossington) saw its population increase two-fold between 1891-1911 with its numbers swelling from 26,632 to 53,125. By 1911 St. John's Ward, overcrowded and without adequate facilities, sanitary or otherwise, included over 10,000 persons

with the vast majority being new immigrants. The majority of the European immigrant workers who arrived into Canada during the period 1896-1914 were typically from peasant backgrounds from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Galicia, Bukovinia, Southern Italy, Slavic countries and the coastal regions of Sicily. The settlement workers, Anglo-Celtic and of middle class background, strove to assimilate foreign immigrants through citizenship training and to improve their physical, social and moral condition to acceptable British-Canadian middle class standards. Medical, educational, social and recreational services and activities were offered to crowded city neighbourhoods in need of these social services by both Christian and Jewish missions as well as non-sectarian institutions.

An organized body of settlement workers, the Federation of Toronto Settlements, was set up in 1918 to provide a forum of cooperation and planning among the various legitimate settlement houses in the city. The Federation's membership included the original settlement houses of Toronto that were established from 1910-1913: Central Neighbourhood House, non-sectarian and established in 1911; University Settlement, established in 1910 and non-sectarian although was initially supported financially by the YMCA in its first few years; Memorial Institute, a Baptist settlement established in 1913; and St. Christopher House, a Presbyterian settlement established in 1912. Both Baptist and Presbyterian settlements emphasized the civic and social development of the poor and the immigrant but within a framework of aggressive

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proselytism and evangelism.  

Prior to 1931 and the establishment of Catholic Settlement House at St. Patrick's Parish, the earliest Catholic involvement with settlement work was limited to the efforts of individuals such as Rev. Launcelot Minehan, pastor of St. Peter's Parish and a member of the Board of Directors for Central Neighbourhood House.

Central Neighbourhood House was established in April 1911 by George Bryce and Arthur Burnett, two Victoria College students who were interested in establishing a non-sectarian settlement for the promotion of Canadian citizenship and middle class values among new immigrants. In their efforts to spur a sense of community, the organizing committee and board of C.N.H. represented the ethnic and religious diversity in the various neighbourhoods within the Ward. Ecumenical in membership, the board of directors included a Methodist, a Presbyterian, a Roman Catholic, a Jew, a Plymouth Brother and was presided over by a Baptist.

In May 1911 a subcommittee was established to promote the new Central Neighbourhood House and included Rev. Minehan. The representation of Protestant, Catholic and Jewish interests re-enforced the C.N.H. anti-proselytism commitment. Well within the boundaries of St. John's Ward, a building at 84 Gerrard Street West was purchased for the use of Central Neighbourhood House. By 1912, eighteen institutions, primarily sectarian, were doing philanthropic work with Central Neighbourhood House established within the area bounded by College, Yonge, King, and Beverley. Its early success was noted when after four months there

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173 Toronto Metro Reference Library, Baldwin, "History of Canadian Settlements 1910-1965", unpublished manuscript, "'Mission' and 'Settlement' differentiated" by Dr. A.B.B. Moore, President of Victoria University, Toronto. Also Cathy Leigh James, "Gender, Class and Ethnicity ..." p. 113-136.

174 The Toronto Star, November 5, 1912, p. 15.
were already 1,120 participants in its various classes and clubs.\textsuperscript{175}

Catholic social services were coordinated by Catholic Charities, established in 1912 by Archbishop McNeil, and its agencies served the entire Catholic community. Canonically, it was the responsibility of the Archbishop to erect national or ethnic parishes and chaplaincies to serve the spiritual needs of the culturally distinct communities. Beginning with Archbishop McEvay's administration in 1908, the Church in Toronto recognized the need to provide ethnic clergy and religious orders to the non-English speaking immigrant community. Due to personnel shortages, however, the Church lagged behind Protestant outreach to Catholics. Catholic mission work, once properly established, came into some competition with the settlement house system and, of course, challenged Protestant missionary workers. Also, the emphasis by Anglo-Celtic social workers in early 1910s and 1920s on assimilating foreign immigrants to a 'superior' British-Canadian way of life, differed from the Catholic Church's consideration of the cultural and spiritual needs of a particular ethnic community.

In Wasterney's study of University Settlement, she found that by 1931 the staff responsible for contacting European immigrants were European themselves.\textsuperscript{176} The Archdiocese and the work of national parishes followed a similar approach in its dealings with new immigrants. By 1931, the Archdiocese established Catholic Settlement House and employed the Baroness Catherine de Hueck, a Russian aristocratic refugee who settled in Toronto in the 1920s, to carry out social work among the immigrants. Archbishop McNeil fundamentally advanced the

\textsuperscript{175}Cathy Leigh James, "Gender, Class and Ethnicity in the Organization of Neighbourhood and Nation", p. 113.

\textsuperscript{176}Wasterneys, p. 127-128.
direction of the Archdiocese in terms of Catholic social action to improve the personal welfare of new European immigrants through the promotion of Catholic social thought and action.

Archbishop Neil McNeil, arrived in Toronto on December 21, 1912 to take charge of the largest English-speaking Diocese in Canada, and quickly noted an ignorance among the clergy and laity on Catholic social thought as it redefined the role of the Christian Churches in society. The development of Catholic action necessitated study of Catholic social thought as advocated by the Catholic Church at large. Traditionally the clergy and laity looked to the hierarchy and religious communities to provide the social and educational services necessary to support the Catholic community. As Jeanne Beck notes in her dissertation on Henry Somerville and the development of Catholic social thought in Canada,

> Throughout the nineteenth century the Roman Catholic Church in Ontario was concerned principally with its growth as an institution in a rather hostile social environment. Hence its leaders sought to develop the parochial structure and to promote the extension of the Separate School system.¹⁷⁷

Catholic social action progressed slowly in the Archdiocese of Toronto following the 1891 papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum* on capital and labour. The encyclical “outlined the role of the Church in social affairs and the place of the state in achieving the right ordering of society.”¹⁷⁸ McNeil was intensely interested in the European Catholic Social Movement which began with the Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* and subsequently with *Quadragesimo Anno* in 1931. Both


encyclicals "presented a critique of contemporary society and a set of moral precepts designed to promote social harmony and justice without committing the Church to the endorsement of either liberal or socialist principles."\(^{179}\)

Over the years, McNeil attempted in his various positions of authority to exemplify the role of Catholic social action. While rector of St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, he crusaded for social justice for the maritime fishermen and in 1910 as Archbishop of Vancouver, he was an outspoken critic of employers who exploited unorganized workers and persecuted union members.\(^{180}\) McNeil was the first among the English-speaking bishops of Canada to promote an educational programme of social action within his diocese. Through contacts with the Catholic Social Guild in England, the twenty-six year old Henry Somerville was employed by the Archdiocese in 1915 to serve as Chair of Sociology at St. Augustine’s Seminary to lecture, write and promote social studies in the interest of the working class. In 1916, Somerville began writing a "Life and Labour" column in The Catholic Register to educate and discuss contemporary social problems. The news column sparked interest among various parishes to establish study clubs for the laity. In 1919 Henry Somerville returned to England for personal reasons only to return once again to Toronto in September 1933 to serve as editor of The Catholic Register until his retirement in 1953. Through The Register, he popularized social reform by providing his readers


with an extraordinary amount of well-researched social policy discussion during the 1930s.\textsuperscript{181} Somerville was respected as an advisor on social and economic policy to most of the influential English-speaking bishops in Canada. As a result of his efforts, the stigma given to the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (now N.D.P.) by the Quebec hierarchy’s condemnation of its socialist philosophy and supposedly anti-religious secularism, was effectively removed by the Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1943. A statement was issued declaring Catholics free to any political party upholding basic Christian traditions. An admirer and supporter of Henry Somerville in the 1930s, the Baroness Catherine de Hueck incorporated the ideals of Catholic social action and the Catholic Church’s opposition to Communism on religious grounds. She pursued her personal agenda to serve her Church and to fight the spread of Communism in Toronto. In 1934 she established Friendship House as a meeting place for Catholic social study and as a community centre providing social, educational and recreational services.

Friendship House was established at 122 Portland Street, in a neighbourhood said to be sympathetic to the Communists. Here she hoped “to bring in a friendly simple fashion a challenge to the ever spreading doctrines of Atheism” through the establishment of a Catholic Reading Room, its holdings representing Christian views to political, economic, sociological and moral questions; a study room for small gatherings.\textsuperscript{182} By November 1934 the House offered educational and recreational services with a strong religious approach, similar to the work of other settlement houses. It was supported financially by the Archdiocese, donations, and proceeds from de Hueck’s speaking engagements. By May 1936 de Hueck oversaw the work of six study

\textsuperscript{181}Ibid., p. 225.

\textsuperscript{182}ARCAT, MN AP02.23, “Houses of Friendship Plan”, n.d.
clubs, five in Toronto and one in Hamilton established specifically for the unemployed, and Catholic leaders who were unaware of the growing social problem.\textsuperscript{183} Toronto Friendship House was closed on December 28, 1936 by the Archdiocese following the recommendations of a committee of five priests appointed by Archbishop McGuigan to investigate its work among immigrants. Friendship House was established on the strength of de Hueck's personality and her vision to fight Communism, "God's enemies", yet its demise has often been interpreted in light of her strong personality and the conflicts that arose between her and the clergy.\textsuperscript{184}

Born 1896 into Russian aristocracy, Catherine Kolyschkine profited from a privileged childhood. A daughter of Russian nobility whose business interests allowed the family to travel throughout the world, in childhood she became fluent in French, German, English in addition to her native Russian; by adulthood she had reading knowledge of Italian, Polish, Ukrainian, Finnish and Serbian.\textsuperscript{185} Catherine's spirituality was influenced greatly by the Roman Catholicism of her father and the Orthodox faith of her mother, particularly with the Eastern tradition in pre-revolutionary Russia to revere the spirituality of individuals living simple and chaste lives equally with that of the Russian Orthodox clergy.\textsuperscript{186} At fifteen, she married her first cousin, Baron Boris de Hueck, an architect. Following his enlistment into the military, Catherine worked


\textsuperscript{184}ARCAT, MN AP02.169(b), n.d., letter to Archbishop McNeil from Catherine de Hueck stating her reasons to address Catholic gatherings on the evil of Communism.


\textsuperscript{186}Jeanne Beck, "Contrasting Approaches" p. 220.
as a nurse with the Red Cross during World War I. The Russian revolution forced her and her husband to flee to England. In 1921 they traveled to Toronto where Boris worked as a landscape architect for Sheridan nurseries before he succumbed to ill health. Her son, George, was born in Toronto and baptized in St. Clare's Parish. Catherine worked for the T. Eaton Company in sales, moved alone to New York for a time in search of better employment but returned to Toronto and her husband and son in 1924. While working a salesclerk for Eaton's, she was 'discovered' and began working for the Chautauqua of Canada lecture circuit. It was a touring company that offered cultural events, lecturers, and entertainment to small towns in rural Canada.\textsuperscript{187} Dressed in Russian costume, she enthralled her listeners with the tales of her experiences fleeing the Russian revolution.\textsuperscript{188} Her individuality, charismatic personality and skills at self promotion brought her many friends, Protestant and Catholic, who would support her passion of assisting European immigrants. She served as a local contact for Russian refugees in Toronto, helping them find shelter, food, clothing, employment, and even a place of worship. An intensely spiritual woman, de Hueck was disturbed that an Orthodox church did not exist in Toronto. On her own initiative and with the financial backing of her Protestant friends, she purchased a 14-room residence at the corner of Clarence Square and Spadina Avenue to serve as a church proper, residence for the priest and his family and as a hostel for new refugees. St. Theodore's, Toronto's first Russian Orthodox Church since the Russian Revolution, was dedicated March 7, 1924 by Archbishop

\textsuperscript{187}Lorene Hanley Duquin, \textit{They Called Her the Baroness}, (New York: Alba House, 1995), p. 84.

\textsuperscript{188}Elizabeth Louise Sharum, "A Strange Fire Burning: A History of the Friendship House Movement", p. 29.
Theophile of Chicago. Although it is difficult to determine when she became known to Archbishop McNeil, he supported her efforts with new immigrants in the latter part of the 1920s and acted on a number of occasions as her mentor and advisor.

Well acquainted with her public speaking skills and her work among Eastern European immigrants during the mid-1920s, Archbishop McNeil arranged for Catherine to lecture on behalf of the Near East Welfare Association, an organization which provided relief assistance to the needy in Russia, Greece, Balkans and Asia Minor. She lectured with much success throughout the United States to Catholic colleges and convents on behalf of the Association but suffered a nervous breakdown from overwork. She recuperated while staying with the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement at Graymoor, Garrison, NY. De Hueck then joined the Tertiaries of St. Francis, on Jan 1, 1927 and professed one year later. It was this connection with the Franciscan Friars that would later influence her to establish Friendship House as a work of the Guild of the Atonement, a lay community affiliation with the Tertiaries of St. Francis.

By 1931, de Hueck was resolved to work for the Church. She considered joining the Sisters of Service but was discouraged by Father George Daly, C.Ss.R., due to her marital separation from her husband and the responsibility of raising a young son. Soon afterwards, de

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189Ibid., p. 29-30.

190ARCAT, MN AP02.165, April 8, 1931, “Many times in my life I have come to you in my difficulties and always as a true Father you have helped me in many ways.”


192ARCAT, MN AP02.164, July 23, 1931, a letter to McNeil from Catherine de Hueck, p. 2.
Hueck had found a way to serve the Catholic Church: to fight the spread of Communism and work as a Catholic social activist among the poor.

Now I know that I can do many things better than selling. In our difficult times, with the Bolshevik doctrine spreading, with unemployment rife, it seems to me that my public speaking abilities and the knowledge I possess of so many languages (11) eleven -- could be put to a good use with benefit to both sides.\(^{193}\)

Her offer of service to the Catholic Church came at a time of economic despair throughout Canada with many of the urban centres bearing the brunt of the unemployment crisis during the Depression. Unemployment, lasting months or perhaps years, was the most obvious result of the Depression. The winter of 1933 was considered the worst period of the Depression with contemporary statistics estimating the unemployment rate to be somewhere between 27 per cent to 32 per cent. During 1934, the unemployment rate improved slightly with a national average of 20 percent unemployment. The Depression years caused personal and family distress for those already living near the poverty line, forcing many to rely on public relief assistance. In April 1933, it was estimated 15 per cent of the total Canadian population was on public relief. One outcome to the economic crisis was the general feeling of degradation and dejection by those individuals and families forced to rely on public assistance.\(^{194}\)

The 1930s was also a time when the Canadian government investigated the activities of the Communist Party of Canada (CPC) and various local Communist associations, all of which

\(^{193}\)ARCAT, MN AP02.165, April 8, 1931, a letter to Archbishop McNeil from Catherine de Hueck, p. 1.

were viewed as a threat to national security. Several years of investigations by the R.C.M.P., led to large-scale police raids on Communist headquarters in Toronto and elsewhere on August 11, 1931. Public perception of the growing influence of Communist leaders was strengthened with a meeting of the CPC in December 1934 at the Toronto Maple Leaf Gardens to welcome the party leader, Tim Buck, following his release from the Kingston Penitentiary. A crowd of 17,000 reportedly filled the Gardens to capacity to hear speeches. In October 1934 the RCMP noted a re-invigorated Communist youth movement with the First National Conference of Revolutionary Work among Children being held in Toronto. There was a general strengthening of CPC activities in cities such as Toronto and Montreal due to the high unemployment rate found in these urban centres and a general malaise that existed among unemployed workers.

Catherine de Hueck, coming from a background of intense spiritualism and personal crisis due to the Communist revolution in Russia, interpreted the economic and political upheavals of the day as a personal exercise in Catholic social action. Her intense interest in Toronto Communist activities, soon encouraged widespread rumours by her detractors of being a Communist herself.

Archbishop McNeil accepted de Hueck’s offer of assistance to the Church and by April 1933 she was employed by the Archdiocese to work among new European immigrants and to survey Communist activity in Toronto. Monthly reports beginning in April 1933 and submitted


to Archbishop McNeil described her efforts to organize self-help projects among immigrant artisans, act as an employment bureau offering domestic, office, factory and temporary work, serve as a social worker among Eastern European immigrants and organize recreational activities for young people. De Hueck’s work was supported with the $60.00 monthly salary she received from the Archdiocese along with any money earned lecturing to various church groups, associations, societies. Her confidential reports to the Archbishop on Communist activities in Toronto focussed on the “spiritual leakage from the church; (its) demoralizing influences on our youth; (and the) spreading of atheism” De Hueck felt that the establishment of Catholic reading rooms throughout the city would help inhibit the effects of Communist reading rooms that had already been set up to entice the unemployed poor. In January 1934, she worked with Father Stroh, C.Ss.R., director of Catholic Settlement House to set up a Catholic reading room in the settlement with the future possibility of establishing a study club and lecture forum, all of which was considered invaluable in fighting the Communists. Her hope to develop the concept of Catholic reading rooms throughout the city was fulfilled with the establishment of Friendship House.

In 1933 de Hueck started a study club in her home for other like-minded women interested in the study of Catholic social thought. By May 1934, the Guild of Our Lady of

197 ARCAT, MN AP02.11; MN AP02.12; MN AP02.16; MN AP02.174a; MN AP02.176a; MN AP02.178a., are reports on activities dated April 1, 1933 to May 1, 1934.


199 ARCAT, MN AP02.09, January 11, 1934, statement from Rev. Stroh to Catherine de Hueck re. Library Account; MN AP02. 11, Report of Activities from 1st November to 1st January 1934.
Atonement was formed by this group to promote Catholic Action under the direction of the parish clergy. Her plans to advance the work of the Guild with the purchase of a Portland Street building to accommodate Friendship House were viewed suspiciously since the purchase occurred shortly after McNeil’s death on May 25, 1934. Despite receiving only verbal permission from McNeil, de Hueck carried on and Friendship House officially opened in September 1934. De Hueck moved very quickly to advance the work of Friendship House over the next two years and its initial success was without question in Toronto, particularly with the establishment of a Friendship House in Ottawa by August 1936. In June 1934 de Hueck rented the lower level of 122 Portland Street and soon afterwards rented the upper level and named the first Friendship House after St. Francis of Assisi. By November 1934 it was necessary to find larger quarters for the children’s club and thus the adjoining house was rented by de Hueck and named St. Theresa of Avila. Success with the children’s program prompted the staff of Friendship House to expand to 117 Portland Street, to house its burgeoning boys’ club named after St. John Bosco. In September 1936, St. John Bosco’s Boys’ Club moved to 217 Niagara Street, a large 14-room house, in order to accommodate the 375 boys who were registered in the various recreational and social programs of Friendship House.

From the beginning, the staff offered a soup kitchen program and provided daily a noon meal to 50-75 men; clothing was also distributed to needy families. Funds for Catholic literature were raised through the sale of The Catholic Worker, an American publication by Dorothy Day.

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200 ARCAT, MN AP02. 07, n.d. “Guild of Our Lady of Atonement”.

201 ARCAT, MN AP02.39, Sept. 12, 1934, letter to de Hueck from Rev. Francis P. Carroll.

202 ARCAT, MN AP02.106, August 5, 1936.
and Peter Maurin of New York City. This initiative was suggested to de Hueck by Archbishop McNeil and each issue included an insert listing Friendship House activities. The rather humble origins of Friendship House were initially dependent on the volunteer work of four women and one man who desired to work and live in the “slums” of Toronto at Friendship House.

The rapid development and growth of Friendship House led Catherine de Hueck and her workers to explore possible affiliation with a religious community. Her personal connection with the Franciscan Friars and Sisters of the Atonement of Graymoor, Garrison, NY, and her membership with the Tertiaries of St. Francis of Assisi led the way for the community in Toronto to be considered for affiliation with the Graymoor Friars. This proposal was approved verbally by Archbishop James C. McGuigan in December 1935 for a six-month probation period expiring on June 24, 1936. Shortly after this date, every member of the Friendship House community was received as Tertiaries of St. Francis of Assisi of the Society of Atonement. With rules of the order clearly defined, the “members of the Order will offer their whole life, work and prayers in Atonement for the Evil and blasphemies perpetuated by Atheism.”203

Dissension within the Toronto Catholic community, particularly among the neighbouring ethnic parishes, increased in conjunction with de Hueck’s expansion of Friendship House activities. The social services, after-school clubs, children’s recreational activities, clothing distribution, adult programs were similar or identical to those being offered by the neighbouring national parishes, but without the monthly financial support from the Archdiocese. Her proposal to Father Stan Puchniak to affiliate the work of Friendship House with his parish, St. Stanislaus,

203 ARCAT, MN AP02.94, History of Friendship House, p. 35; ARCAT, MN AP02.105, July 20, 1936, letter to Rev. Stanley Puchniak, O.M.I. from Catherine de Hueck regarding the canonical standing of the lay community of Franciscan Tertiaries residing with Friendship House.
created even greater tension among the clergy. Puchniak, originally sympathetic to de Hueck’s work, soon felt threatened by her aggressive manner particularly when he was already in negotiations with the Polish Felician Sisters of Buffalo, NY to open a house in Toronto to serve his Polish congregation. 204

Archbishop McGuigan responded to the growing concerns expressed to him regarding Friendship House and Catherine de Hueck and struck a committee consisting of five priests: Rev. S. Puchniak, pastor of St. Stanislaus; Rev. George Daly, C.Ss.R., co-founder of the Sisters of Service; Rev. C.W. James, pastor of St. Mary’s Parish; Rev. Hugh Gallagher, director of the Federation of Catholic Charities; and Rev. J.M. Clair, chancellor, to review its operation and the canonical standing of this new lay organization. On September 23, 1936, the committee recommended the closure of Friendship House following an examination of its activities. The committee concluded the existing structure of national parishes was sufficient to provide the social services necessary to the growing Catholic community. Her investigations into the spread of Communism as well as the aim of her lay community to combat atheism was not mentioned in their report to the Archbishop. 205 Shane Carmody identifies the underlining reason for its closure as a “reluctance of the church hierarchy to adopt new structures within the existing order. Immigrant groups had been served by national parishes usually in the inner city and led by priests of the appropriate nationality. Friendship House served an area with five national parishes: Our Lady of Mount Carmel, est. 1908 for the Italians; St. Stanislaus, est. 1911 for the Polish; Catholic


205 ARCAT, MN AP02. 119, (1936), Confidential Report of the Committee Appointed by His Grace the Archbishop to Investigate Friendship House.
Settlement House, est. 1931 for the Germans; St. Elizabeth of Hungary, est. 1928 for the Hungarians, and Sts. Cyril and Methodius, est. 1934 for the Slovak Catholic community. The definition of Church hierarchy was more applicable to the parish priests of the diocese than the bishops. Catherine de Hueck, with the approval and support of both Archbishop Neil McNeil and Archbishop James McGuigan, represented a new lay movement within the Archdiocese to promote Catholic social action. Unfortunately, this early movement of lay-directed social action, Friendship House, was viewed by the clergy as opposing competition to the success of the existing parishes, territorial and national, and their supporting organizations. De Hueck and Catherine Donnelly, both pioneering lay women within a male-dominated Church hierarchy, were unable to successfully see their personal vocation to the Church materialize.

The 1931 establishment of Catholic Settlement House in the Archdiocese of Toronto represented a more conservative move on the part of the Church to assist new immigrants, Catholic and non-Catholic, in adjusting to Canadian society through a Catholic-sponsored social service agency. With the growth of Catholic Settlement and the establishment of Friendship House in 1934, the Archdiocese was soon forced to support the traditional work of religious orders, overseen by clergy, over lay efforts as exemplified by the work of Friendship House. Catholic Settlement House was founded through the persevering efforts of Rev. Paul Stroh, C.Ss.R., a German-speaking priest from the Baltimore Province of the Redemptorist Fathers. He arrived in Toronto on 28 August 1929 to establish and take charge of the Toronto German

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congregation. The Toronto Redemptorist Fathers, acting on the urgent request of Archbishop McNeil and unable to locate a German-speaking priest among their Canadian brethren, contacted the Baltimore Redemptorist Province for assistance. Working out of St. Patrick’s Parish on McCaul Street, Father Stroh moved quickly to visit and make contact with the many German Catholic immigrants in the Ward district. Contemporary statistics on the number of German Catholics living in the city of Toronto in the early 1930s varied from over 2,000 to well over 6,000 with the vast majority being recent immigrants to Canada. His mission work reached over three hundred German Catholics who attended his inaugural Mass and German sermon on October 6, 1929 in St. Patrick’s Hall. With the approval of the Archbishop, Father Stroh established with this Mass, regular Catholic services for the fledgling German congregation; the order of exercises were as follows:

I Saturdays. Confessions: 4-6 pm; 8-10 pm
II Sundays. Confessions 9-10 am. Mass, German Sermon and Benediction 10 am. Baptism 2 pm. “Get together Club” 3-6 pm.
III Monday, Wednesday and Friday (October 7, 1929 to March 28, 1930) Free English Instruction 8-9 pm.

By February 1930 a library of 3,000 volumes was available for the congregation’s use and by

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210 ARCAT, St. Patrick’s German Parish Files, General Correspondence, September 28, 1929.
October a German community centre was established at 131 McCaul Street in a duplex building loaned for this use by the Redemptorist community. With renovations, the centre provided two large rooms for class work and for meetings, a library room, and “eight rooms for men who have no place to go”. On 31 July 1930 Rev. George Foerst, C.Ss.R., another German-speaking priest from the Baltimore Province, arrived to assist Father Stroh with the spiritual care of the German congregation. With the additional manpower, Father Stroh began in earnest to solicit financial and moral support for his vision of a Catholic Settlement House to be used by all the immigrants living in the area surrounding St. Patrick’s Church.

The Archdiocese, with limited resources, realized it had an additional responsibility to assist in the social and civic development of new Canadians while ministering to their spiritual welfare. Social settlement work, under the auspices of the Redemptorist Fathers, was encouraged by Archbishop McNeil, first as a defence against the inroads of Protestant proselytizing efforts in Toronto, and secondly, as a bridge to assist new immigrants to become new Canadians. Concerns for immigrant Catholics, as voiced in a letter to the Archbishop, were becoming very real to a Church just beginning to serve the spiritual and material needs of these people.

The leakage to the Church in this district [the Ward] is appalling. I am afraid that the intense activities of proselitizers in this section are not too well known to Catholics. There are at least four active Protestant agencies within a very short distance of our Settlement House. They have many trained and salaried workers and are drawing our people — native and immigrant — away from the

211 ARCAT, Federation of Catholic Charities, OC06. FA06, letter from Rev. Paul Stroh, June 6, 1931.

212 ARCAT, St. Patrick’s German Parish Files, General Correspondence, March 20, 1930, p. 2-3.
Faith of their Fathers, not by tens but by hundreds.\textsuperscript{213}

The clergy and the male and female religious of the Archdiocese of Toronto were predominantly English-speaking and ill-equipped to handle the arrival and settlement of the thousands of European Catholic immigrants to Toronto. The staff and particularly the first director of Catholic Settlement House were very conscious of their efforts to distinguish between Catholic mission work, a purely evangelistic endeavour, and Catholic settlement work. Catholic Settlement House joined by invitation with the Federation of Toronto Settlements in 1931 with its director, Rev. Paul Stroh, C.Ss.R., declaring his firm dedication to settlement objectives. Father Stroh is quoted in Federation minutes as saying,

Settlements should get back to their original purpose, rather than become strictly recreational agencies, helping to adjust, studying conditions in the District, housing, playgrounds, etc., keeping at things till they are righted.\textsuperscript{214}

The Toronto Federation of Settlements recognized the Catholic Settlement House work in providing translation and employment services and offered the Catholic group membership with the other settlement houses in the city. The work of Catholic Settlement House from 1931-1945 represented the dedication of its first two directors, Rev. Paul Stroh, C.Ss.R. (1931-1934) and Rev. Daniel Ehman, C.Ss.R. (1934-1945) along with the efforts of two female religious communities, the Sisters of Service (1931-1933) and the Felician Sisters (1938-1988). In


addition, the successful operation of Catholic Settlement was dependent on personnel, support from the hierarchy, and the implementation of settlement theory and practice by the two different administrations.

The resolve to establish a Catholic Settlement House likely grew out of Father Stroh’s mission work among the German immigrants living in crowded and unsanitary housing conditions so prevalent throughout the Ward and from the blatant competition from Protestant missions for new souls. He writes to Archbishop McNeil about his fears:

> New immigrants are arriving every day. Most of them have no friends and do not know where they can lay their head. Yesterday a German told me he walked the streets until midnight not knowing where to go. At 12:30 am he met a Baptist who gave him $10.00 and tried to induce him to go to his church.

> I hardly think that our Catholics realize the gravity of the situation. I am doing my best, but without funds, we can do little.215

Father Stroh also recognized and acknowledged the successful efforts of the older settlement houses established in Toronto, particularly the work of University Settlement, located just two blocks from the parish at John Street and Grange Street in providing new immigrants with medical, educational, and recreational services. His mission work among the German people was clearly defined within a spiritual context by the Archdiocese. In 1931 Stroh, with the support of his confreres and the Archbishop, obtained sufficient financial backing from the Federation of Catholic Charities to hire a trained social worker to work with the parish volunteers at newly established Catholic Settlement House connected to St. Patrick’s Church. In his petition to the Federation of Catholic Charities he explains that:

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215 ARCAT, St. Patrick’s German Parish Files, General Correspondence, March 20, 1930, p. 4-5.
Catholic Settlement work has been the cherished hope of many in Toronto for a number of years. His Excellency, the Archbishop, often expressed the wish that it be undertaken ... Our actual Settlement work must start in September. Now we are organizing and making up our program. While it will be chiefly for the people entrusted in my care, it will not be solely for them, nor can it be in the very nature of the work. If, for instance, we start a Child Health Centre (There are twenty-four in the city; not one under Catholic auspices) everyone will make use of it.\(^{216}\)

Father Stroh supported an active settlement work program requiring resident workers to reach out to the people in the neighbourhood and assist with family and community problems, to provide wholesome leisure activities and teach a sense of citizenship to new immigrants as they adjust to Canadian life.\(^{217}\) The German Catholic community attached themselves readily to St. Patrick’s Parish and became themselves agents of assimilation to Canadian society. A successful example to the other ethnic groups that soon became affiliated with the programs of Catholic Settlement.

Monthly funding for the settlement work was provided by the Federation of Catholic Charities ($125.00), the Catholic Women’s League ($50.00) and the clients of the Settlement House ($25.00). Father Stroh also received from Archbishop McNeil an annual donation of approximately $300.00 which was taken from the proceeds of the St. Patrick’s Day tag-day.\(^{218}\) His persistent fundraising efforts, likely in competition with the Baroness de Hueck, still managed to obtain the finances that would provide, just barely, the solid footing for this new settlement house. On September 1, 1931 the doors of the Catholic Settlement House officially

\(^{216}\)ARCAT, Federation of Catholic Charities, OC06 FA06, Minutes of Meetings, letter from Rev. Paul Stroh, June 6, 1931.

\(^{217}\)History of Canadian Settlements 1910-1965, unpublished manuscript.

\(^{218}\)ARCAT, St. Patrick’s German Parish Files, General Correspondence, March 12, 1935.
opened with the additional service of an after-school Kindergarten for the neighbourhood children. For the Archdiocese, the Kindergarten work was a significant accomplishment for the neighbourhood when “previous to the opening of the Settlement many of our Catholic children had become associated with Settlements of other denominations ... three-quarters of the children in attendance at the Kindergarten of the University Settlement are Catholics.”

In the early years of Catholic Settlement, Father Stroh suffered serious staff difficulties, a result of several factors: the general dependence of the greater Catholic community on the charitable works of religious communities; and some unfamiliarity with the principles behind social settlement work. In a January 1932 report to the Federation of Catholic Charities, Father Stroh outlined, in detail, his difficulties in staffing the Settlement and describes his elation in receiving the support of the Sisters of Service, a Canadian religious community founded in 1922 to work in the home missions among new Catholic immigrants. The religious community initially agreed to provide two Sisters to work on a temporary basis from September to December 1931. Later, Father Stroh convinced them to associate themselves more permanently with the settlement work. Father Stroh writes,

They realized that here they were doing real missionary work and decided to accede to our request not to forsake us but to remain with us and even to live in the house as soon as it could be made habitable for them.

The 1934 Rules and Constitutions of the Sisters of Service included “settlement work,

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particularly for foreign-born children” as part of the welfare work of the Institute.\textsuperscript{221}

In an early brochure introducing the settlement work to the larger Catholic community, the Sisters of Service are described as resident workers providing various forms of assistance to the immigrant community in the mornings, attending to the children with after-school activities and in the evening conducting adult English classes and coordinating recreational events.\textsuperscript{222}

While it is unclear as to the date in which the two Sisters appointed to the Settlement began living at the house as resident workers, a small chapel was set up for the Sisters and was likely blessed on November 21, 1932.\textsuperscript{223} Among the Sisters themselves, there appeared to be a shortage of women able to take on the task of settlement work. Of the four sisters who had worked at the Settlement House, only Sister Kathleen Schenck, superintendent from September 1, 1931 to June 30, 1932 had previously worked at the Residential Club for Immigrant Women. The other three Sisters (Sister Esther Johnson, September 1931-February 1932; Sister Pauline Coates, March 1932 - July 1933; Sister Domitilla Morrison, September 1, 1932 - July 1933) were just recently professed into the community.\textsuperscript{224}

The administrative structure and working relationship of the lay and religious staff at Catholic Settlement is outlined in the minutes of their first staff meeting in November 1932. All policies and programs adopted at the staff meetings required the approval of the Archbishop, the Redemptorist Fathers and the Sisters of Service. At the first staff meeting, the director of the

\textsuperscript{221}SOSA, “Rules and Constitutions of the Sisters of Service”, p. 9.

\textsuperscript{222}ARCAT, St. Patrick’s German Parish Files, Publications [1931].

\textsuperscript{223}SOSA, \textit{The Field at Home} (January 1933), p. 8.

\textsuperscript{224}SOSA, interview with Sr. Catherine Schmelcher, December 22, 1994.
Settlement House, always a Redemptorist Priest, was officially appointed to serve as treasurer. The Sisters were given direct supervision of all children's activities and any other activities approved by the staff, the volunteer teachers as well as the sewing circle and the distribution of clothing. While the salaried social worker was made fully responsible for her work with a "special group", it was also made clear that notification of any unusual occurrences must be made to the sister in charge.225 As a member of the Federation of Catholic Charities, the staff of the Settlement House were obligated to conduct formal monthly meetings in order to discuss and record the policy and programs of the Catholic Settlement House during its operation from September to June of each year. The administrative framework for Catholic Settlement: Redemptorist priest as Director and Treasurer; female religious as staff; volunteers under the direction of the Sisters.

In reviewing the minutes for the November 1932 and January 1933 meetings, one begins to find indications of staffing difficulties. Along with the operating Kindergarten, a nursery school was scheduled to open on November 21, 1932 from 9 am to 3 pm and would admit children over three years of age, regardless of nationality. Yet by January 5, 1933 it was announced that the nursery school, which was in operation for less than two months, was closed and would not reopen until the next September.226 It would seem that the Sisters and the settlement workers could, at best, only handle the supervision of the after-school activities of the

225SOSA, Catholic Settlement House Minutes of Meetings, November 10, 1932.

226SOSA, Catholic Settlement House, Minutes of Meetings, November 17, 1932.
more than 125 children attending the Catholic Settlement daily.\textsuperscript{227}

The January 12, 1933 minutes state that the English classes would be discontinued for the remainder of the year (June 30, 1933) and the children would continue to attend both Settlement and German classes.\textsuperscript{228} Although not recorded, one of the major obstacles for the Canadian-born Sisters in communicating with the large German congregation seemed to be the lack of proficiency in the German language and culture.\textsuperscript{229} Following the return of Sisters Pauline Coates and Domitilla Morrison from a five-day Settlement Convention held in Detroit in June of 1933, the Sisters of Service relinquished responsibility for Catholic Settlement House on July 17, 1933 after closing it for the summer.\textsuperscript{230} Shortly afterwards, both Sisters Coates and Morrison were sent to work in the missions in western Canada. The decision by the Order to discontinue its association with Catholic Settlement likely involved a more urgent need of the Sisters in western Canada. Despite the loss of the Sisters of Service, Father Stroh continued to carry on the settlement work with the assistance of the one paid social worker and the volunteer teachers and students from the parish. His work ended abruptly when on June 9, 1934 he was recalled back to the United States with his assistant, Father Foerst, when a replacement was found from the Toronto Redemptorist Province.

On June 7, 1934 Rev. Daniel Ehman, C.Ss.R., was entrusted with the spiritual care of the German congregation and the directorship of the Catholic Settlement House. Fluent in German,

\textsuperscript{227}The Catholic Register, May 19, 1932, p. 8.

\textsuperscript{228}SOSA, Catholic Settlement House, Minutes of Meetings, January 12, 1934.

\textsuperscript{229}SOSA, Interview with Sr. Catherine Schmelcher, December 22, 1994.

\textsuperscript{230}SOSA, The Field at Home (July 1933), p. 8.
this Canadian-born priest brought a slightly different direction to the work of the Settlement House. Father Stroh's dedication to the ideals of settlement work and its civic responsibility to the new Canadians was augmented by a renewed and concentrated effort by Father Ehman to minister to the German Catholic immigrants and reclaim lost souls using the resources of the Catholic Settlement House. Father Ehman, always in desperate need of volunteers to work at the Catholic Settlement, managed successfully to maintain and then rapidly expand the settlement services to its clients. Originally the German Community Centre, the Settlement House building was always used by the German congregation as a parish hall. The parishioners met "in social gatherings reminiscent of the Old Country, as well as in club groups for spiritual and social purposes." In a 1937 letter to Rome, Father Ehman sought permission to borrow $10,000 to expand the existing Settlement House building for the benefit of the German congregation and the ever increasing field of activities offered by the Catholic Settlement House. In his petition, Ehman concentrates on the need for the Church to foster a social and recreational environment in order for the German congregation to grow in size and in faith. While the average Sunday Mass attendance had increased to between 400-500 persons, he warned that the vast majority of German Catholics were not interested in attending church services. The fierce competition for their souls was divided among the dozen Protestant agencies working to proselytize new immigrants, the increased Communist influence in a district considered by the late 1930s to be 49 per cent Communist, and the growing number of German clubs in the city. He explains,

They are being absorbed by German Clubs of which there is one

231 ARCAT, MG SO17.02 (a), letter to Archbishop McGuigan from Rev. Ehman dated November 5, 1936.
that is out and out Communist, one that is Nazi, one that is just a German 'Kultur' Club that has openly declared its antipathy to the Church, one that is simply big business, catering to the well known German love of organization into clubs according to the German proverb, "Where there are two Germans, three clubs will be formed."232

Father Ehman felt assured that, with larger facilities, the attraction of social and recreational activities for the German congregation would be a strong deterrent against the effects of both Communism and German nationalism.

On September 5, 1937 the new Catholic Settlement buildings were officially opened and blessed by the Archbishop of Toronto, James C. McGuigan. That afternoon, the German Catholics celebrated "Katholikentag", their third annual public demonstration of faith. The details concerning the planning of the demonstration confirm, without a doubt, Father Ehman's active ministry among the German Catholics and his determination to present a strong Catholic front against any Protestant, Communist or ultra-nationalist threat. He informs the Archbishop that,

We plan ... to celebrate a Solemn High Mass ... followed by public exposition and adoration of the Most Holy until the afternoon procession. At three o'clock pm., we plan to have an open air procession of the Blessed Sacrament north on McCaul Street to the first intersection East, Elm Street then East to St. Patrick Street, South to Mount Carmel Church to a prepared altar on the lawn beside the church. Here Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament would be given. The procession would then continue to Dundas Street, go west to McCaul Street and back to St. Patrick's Church on the lawn of which a second altar would be prepared and Benediction given. Then we would enter the Church, give a final

Solemn Benediction and repose the Blessed Sacrament.  

Not only did Father Ehman orchestrate a strong Catholic presence in the Ward district, he also procured Archbishop McGuigan's special interest in the work carried out at Catholic Settlement House. He publicized the Archbishop's support by planning official visits to the Settlement House, to German congregational celebrations and publishing souvenir booklets with messages from his Excellency. As a result of his efforts, he was assured financial and volunteer support from the general public.  

As its director, Father Ehman worked unceasingly to provide, under a Catholic theological umbrella, a full range of clinical, recreational and family services to the clients of the Catholic Settlement. On February 3, 1936 a Maternity Clinic, sponsored by Dr. N. D'Arcy Frawley, Chief of Obstetrics at St. Michael's Hospital, was officially opened with a blessing and placed under the patronage of St. Gerard Majella, C.Ss.R, the patron saint of expectant mothers. The Catholic Register reported Father Ehman and a Dr. S.J. Lesco explained the purpose of the clinic to more than fifty women in both the German and Hungarian languages. According to Father Ehman, the goals of the health centre, established with the assistance of the St. Elizabeth's Visiting Nurses Association, were to provide immigrant mothers with pre-natal and post-natal medical care and to combat the "strong evidence pointing to an active birth control propaganda,

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233 ARCAT, MG SO17.08, letter to Archbishop McGuigan from Rev. Ehman dated August 17, 1937.

234 ARCAT, MG SO17.08, letter to Archbishop McGuigan from Rev. Ehman dated August 14, 1936. See also letter dated September 17, 1935 in MG SO17.08 grouping.

235 The Catholic Register, February 20, 1936, p. 8.
and determined efforts for securing sterilization of the foreign-language women". In May 1936 Father Ehman also received permission to establish a pious organization "The League of St. Gerard" to combat the growing proliferation of information on birth control and sterilization by disseminating information on the life of St. Gerard Majella, patron saint of mothers. Devotion to St. Gerard would serve in the Catholic fight against the forces of anti-life. Father Ehman's League was likely a Catholic reaction to society's new openness regarding birth control information. University Settlement House, as a secular institution, responded to the demands of their clientele with the establishment of a Birth Control Clinic in October 1938. The clinic was one of the first in Toronto to be set up outside a hospital and one of the first to be openly sponsored by a social service agency. It allowed married women to obtain birth control information without first being referred to a hospital clinic by her doctor. The St. Gerard's Health Centre officially opened in 1937 a "well baby" clinic to administer toxoid, vaccinations, and complete examinations to young infants and children. In the months to follow, a tonsillectomy clinic was added for the children. Staffed by volunteer doctors, the Health Centre operated the pre- and post-natal clinic every Wednesday, the Well Baby Clinic every Thursday and every Saturday the tonsillectomy clinic was opened for poor and immigrant

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236 ARCAT, MG SO17.08, January 23, 1936 letter to Archbishop McGuigan from Rev. Ehman, C.Ss.R.

237 ARCAT, MG SO17.06, (1938), Brochure on The League of Saint Gerard.


239 The Catholic Register, March 18, 1937, p. 8 and August 21, 1941, p. 8.
community regardless of nationality or creed. The St. Gerard's Health Centre was also the second health centre, outside of city hospitals, approved by the Advisory Committee on Maternal Care as a registration centre for Toronto maternal welfare patients and welfare recipients.

As with Father Stroh's administration, the children always remained the focus of the settlement work led by Father Ehman. He announced in August 1936 that a day care nursery, a "creche", would open on September 2 for the working mothers in the area. After one year of successful operation, the Settlement House reported that 6,239 pre-school children were provided meals, rest, supervised recreation and instruction while their mothers worked. Two young women were responsible for the regular programme of activities, a cook prepared the children's meals and the menu was supervised by a graduate nurse affiliated with the St. Elizabeth's Visiting Nurses Association who arrived daily to inspect the health of the children at the creche. This branch of settlement work was deemed essential in the eyes of the Church to prepare pre-school children for entry into the separate school system. Catholic children attending public day nurseries would inevitably enter the public school system with Protestant or little religious training. Volunteer workers ran the day nursery from its inception in 1936 as well as the after-school kindergarten for children ages 6-12 that numbered a daily registration of over 100 students.

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240 Felician Sisters Archives, Interview with Sr. Mary Andrea Mazur, November 26, 1994. Information compiled from house annals.

241 The Catholic Register, March 18, 1937, p. 8.

242 The Catholic Register, September 2, 1937, p. 8. The newspaper reported three weeks later (September 24, 1937) that 4,800 children attended the creche.
In March 1938 a Polish religious community was contracted by Father Ehman to take over the nursery and kindergarten at the Settlement House. The Felician Sisters arrived to Toronto in October 1937 from their Buffalo Province at the invitation of Rev. Stanislaus Puchniak to assist at the Polish parish of St. Stanislaus Koskta and to work among the Polish immigrants. Their ministry in Toronto focused on social work among the Polish, catechetical instruction, parish work, and the operation of a day care centre that would be financially independent from the parish. Following their arrival the Sisters operated a day care nursery, first at 544 Richmond Street and then after a move in 1938 at 25 Augusta Avenue. Their apostolate required the Sisters working in the daycare to be certified nursery teachers and be able to update regularly their teaching qualifications in child training.243

By February 1938 Father Ehman learned of the work of the Sisters and proceeded to negotiate for their services for the Catholic Settlement House. While the volunteer workers performed admirably, Ehman felt that the confidence of the parents in the settlement creche would be heightened with experienced Catholic Sisters operating the day nursery and providing religious training to the children.244 On March 19, 1938 the Felician Sisters were entrusted with not only the day nursery and the supervision of the kindergarten after school hours, but were also required to assist in the St. Gerard Health Centre and perform any office work connected with social services to the immigrant community. The workload for the Our Lady of Perpetual Help


244ARCAT, MG SO17.03 (a), letter to Archbishop McGuigan from Rev. Ehman dated March 19, 1938.
Employment Bureau, for example, was shared between the Felician Sisters (female job openings) and the Redemptorist priests (male job openings). The first appointments to the Catholic Settlement House named Sisters Mary Malvina Lisiak and Mary Alvernia to the nursery. Sister Mary Joanna to the clinic and Sister Mary Bonaventure Kalinowski to the office. The Sisters continued to work at Settlement House until July 14, 1936 when a lay woman, Mrs. Alice Ko, was appointed the new supervisor of the nursery under the administration of the pastor of the Chinese Catholic community of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish. The Felician Sisters were ideally suited, by training and by European background, to run the programmes of Catholic Settlement House under the directorship of Father Ehman.

Two very different approaches to Catholic settlement work were begun in 1931 with contrasting developments and outcomes. The personal commitment of the Baroness Catherine de Hueck to Catholic social action motivated others to follow her example. Episcopal and lay support for her work among new immigrants led to the establishment and operation of Friendship House from 1934-1936 and the short-lived formation of a new lay apostolate in the Archdiocese. Jeanne Beck attributes the failure of Friendship House to the inability of most Catholics to accept in the 1930s the competence of the laity, particularly lay women, to direct and succeed in social welfare initiatives.

... too few Catholics found her personality and vision compatible with their own commitment to Catholic social action. In the 1930s, her idea of achieving social change by personal sacrifice and example was considered by many to be utopian and impractical.


246 Sister Mary Seraphine Zimmerman, A Tree in Bloom, p. 29.
Her internationalism desensitized her to the strong national feelings of the Toronto immigrant community, many of whom found the exercise of authority by a Russian laywoman difficult to accept.247

The voluminous correspondence from de Hueck to the Archdiocese testifies to her ready acceptance of episcopal authority and her humility to accept, without opposition, the archdiocesan decision to close Toronto Friendship House in 1936. Her work with new immigrants was both similar and yet different to the work being carried out at Catholic Settlement. Her anxiety over Communism and the perceived influence of its atheist clubs dominated the direction of her social work with new immigrants and through Friendship House offered services similar to the programme offered at Catholic Settlement. The duplication of services and overall feeling that parish affiliated organizations were superior to the work of the laity led to the demise of Friendship House.

Catholic Settlement House was successful due to the traditional administrative structure, clergy directors and female religious activism. Father Paul Stroh managed within three years to put Settlement House not only on solid financial footing but also to receive recognition for the Catholic settlement work by the Toronto Federation of Settlements and the Federation of Catholic Charities. For over two years, Father Stroh had the assistance of the Sisters of Service to carry out and develop programme activities for the Settlement House. Their departure did not cause the downfall of the settlement work, instead it encouraged a re-examination of the programme’s clientele by the new director in 1934. Shortly after Father Ehman’s arrival to Toronto, he was struck by the social and political influences that were in his view compromising

a large number of German Catholic immigrants. The inroads of Communism and a growing
German nationalism in the city were perceived as dangerous as Protestant proselytism. Father
Ehman strengthened the German parish community by offering it the services of the Catholic
Settlement House and in turn the services provided by Catholic Settlement House were hailed as
an asset by the immigrant community and particularly German Catholic community. The success
of Catholic settlement work reflects the universality of the Catholic faith and the availability of
ethnic clergy and religious to assist in the social and civic development of new Canadians.
CONCLUSION

During the years 1889-1939, Catholic episcopal policy reflected traditional Church doctrine as well as the individual leadership qualities of the elected archbishops. The administrations of Archbishops John Walsh (1889-1898) and Denis O’Connor, C.S.B. (1899-1908) exemplify the struggles of the Catholic Church in Ontario to move away from the Irish Catholic Church of nineteenth-century Ontario and develop into a more representative Church body, English-speaking Catholics and Canadian in mind and spirit. Archbishop O’Connor promoted an ‘isolationist policy’ among the clergy and laity that was based on a fear of Protestant proselytism and enforcement of Church doctrine as a means to strengthen the Faith. His reluctance to acknowledge the growing numbers of Catholic immigrants settling in Toronto served only to stifle the inevitable expansion of the Archdiocese in terms of population and social services. During three short years, Archbishop Fergus McEvay provided the main impetus to bring the Catholic Church into the twentieth century. Ethnic parishes for the Italian and Polish communities were established, ten church buildings and a diocesan seminary for English-speaking Canada were built by the Archdiocese of Toronto to serve the growing Catholic community. The Archdiocese of Toronto, still a minority in a Protestant-dominated society, was becoming more visible to its own community and to other faith groups.

Archbishop Neil McNeil’s administration (1912-1934) advanced the work begun by Archbishop McEvay with an astute understanding of the need for Catholic social services. Shortly after his arrival to Toronto, McNeil appointed a priest to coordinate Catholic social services in the Archdiocese. The promotion of Catholic social thought and action, as envisioned through contemporary papal encyclicals, was encouraged by the Archbishop with the
employment of Henry Somerville in 1915 as chair of sociology at St. Augustine’s Seminary and then later in 1933 as editor of The Catholic Register. Ethnic national parishes were quickly erected throughout the Archdiocese to serve the needs of new Canadians and frustrate any new Protestant missionary efforts at proselytism. Sympathetic to the trials of other minority faith groups, such as the Jewish community, McNeil led the way for cordial and supportive ecumenical relations. McNeil’s sponsorship of a national Catholic women’s organization, the Catholic Women’s League of Canada, and his personal involvement with the establishment of the Institute of the Sisters of Service of Canada speaks highly of his recognition and support of Catholic women serving the Church in various capacities. He offered moral and financial support to the Baroness Catherine de Hueck as she attempted to serve the Church and Catholic immigrants settling in Toronto. Her slavic charisma and spirituality led to the independent establishment of a new lay apostolate, the Guild of the Atonement and its affiliation with the Tertiaries of St. Francis, to serve the Catholic immigrant community through Friendship House, an institution offering to Catholic immigrants and the unemployed a type of settlement work initiated with religious fervour and Catholic social action. Friendship House received the support of Archbishop McGuigan but due to its rather unconventional setup and independent establishment outside the confines of a parish community, was forced to close after two years of operation.

As noted earlier, the appointment of Archbishop James McGuigan, a respected financial manager, to the Archdiocese in December 1934 was due to the difficult financial situation facing the Church in Toronto. While dealing efficiently with a debt load of over four million dollars, McGuigan continued to present a pastoral focus for the work of the Archdiocese. Support for the
Toronto Jewish community in face of a growing concern for anti-Semitic activity in Europe was offered by the Archbishop at a time when the Catholic Church was being attacked by individuals such as the Baptist minister, Rev. T.T. Shields. McGuigan continued to initiate the establishment of ethnic parishes for the growing Catholic immigrant community and recruit ethnic clergy to serve the national parishes.

The case study of Catholic Settlement House provides an excellent example of the work of the Church during the 1930s. Directed by the Redemptorists Fathers of St. Patrick's Parish, Catholic Settlement House was a respected member of the Federation of Toronto Settlements in 1931. The settlement work under the direction of Fathers Stroh and Ehman was supported over the years by two female religious communities, the Sisters of Service and the Polish Felician Sisters, along with parish volunteers. In general, the social services provided by Catholic Settlement House followed the same approach of all other settlement houses with a distinctive Catholic character, clergy and female religious in charge of all activities. Assistance to new immigrants, both Catholic and non-Catholic, was provided by established religious communities, male and female, and supported the role of the Church to assist in the assimilation of immigrants to Canadian society. Catholic-sponsored social services were recognized both within the Church and throughout Toronto as an organization able to assist in the general responsibility of society to encourage a healthy sense of nationalism among new immigrants. Problems within the Church over the role of the laity, in particular lay women, versus the role of the religious community also developed during the 1930s. In general, social action initiatives by both groups were received equally well during a period of intense economic crisis in Toronto. The closure of the Toronto Friendship House may be seen as a protective measure by the Church to reinforce the traditional
works of charity but in reality may have undercut the Church's own aims for the evangelization of new Catholic immigrants to Toronto. Despite this concern, the Archdiocese of Toronto succeeded to the best of its ability, in the latter part of the 1930s to provide for the European immigrant a renewed sense of Catholic faith, civic development and a means to adjust to Canadian society.
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