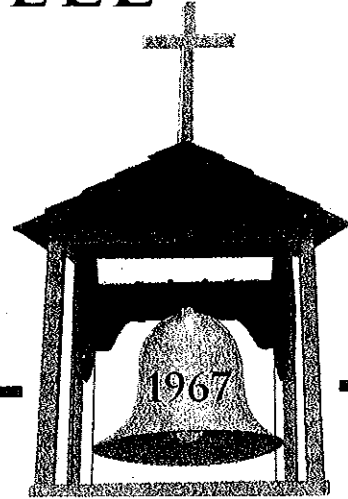


# BISHOP MACDONELL

## CORNWALL



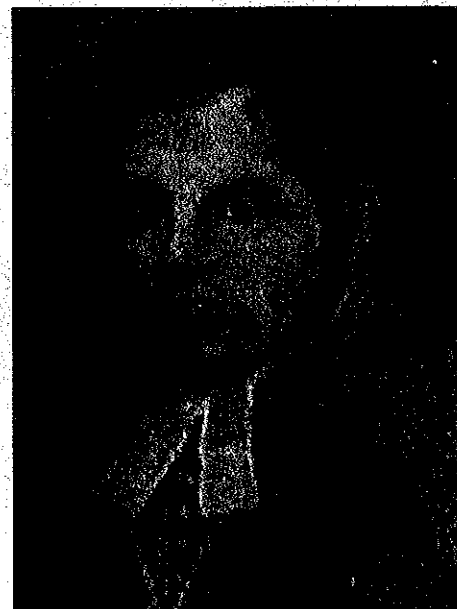
**B**ishop Macdonell Senior School has had an impact on the Catholic community as did its namesake Bishop Alexander Macdonell. The majority of English Catholic people in Cornwall either attended Bishop Macdonell Senior School or were connected to the school through their children. Over the years, many teachers have worked at Bishop Macdonell and these teachers have moved to other schools and/or into administrative positions. The times have changed and the concept of the Senior School has changed. This story will take us through the years with the eyes of those who were at the school as teachers, staff and students.

It is also important to understand that Bishop Macdonell School changed to an Elementary School. Was the Senior School a failed experiment in Education? The answer is clear when you speak to the students who are now parents and who speak highly of their years at Bishop. The two years that children spent together prepared them for high school. The yearbooks capture the spirit of the school and reflect many of the events that are now a pleasant memory. Students and teachers alike will never forget the "spring-into-spring", the winter carnivals, sports programs, the chocolate bar drives, the penny drives, the lip syncs, the

various clubs and the Student Council activities. Finally, the Grade 8 Confirmations and graduations capped two important years in the students' lives.

### **The Naming of Bishop Macdonell School**

The school was named after the first Bishop of Upper Canada, Bishop Alexander Macdonell, the Warrior Bishop, who was born at Inchlaggan in Glengarry, Scotland, on July 17, 1762.



**Bishop Alexander MacDonell, 1762 - 1840**

## Bishop Macdonell - Cornwall

To aid the Scots who lost their homes and livelihood, he formed a regiment of soldiers called the Glengarry Fencibles in 1794 - 1795. After fighting for the British in Ireland the regiment was disbanded, and Father Macdonell persuaded the government to give each man 200 acres of land in Glengarry County, Upper Canada. The soldiers and their families crossed the Atlantic in 1802 and 1803 to reach their grants of forest covered land. Fr. Macdonell arrived in 1804 and was appointed to serve his people among their new farms in St. Raphael's parish. Besides his ministry in Glengarry, he travelled throughout Upper Canada and spent \$13,000.00 of his own money building churches, chapels, presbyteries and schools. When Upper Canada was named a bishopric, in February 1826, Father MacDonell was consecrated as its first Bishop. His ability was recognized when the governor appointed him a member of the Legislative Council in 1831 though he attended few meetings.

In 1837, he celebrated in Kingston the golden jubilee of his priesthood. In 1839 he went to England and then to Scotland where he died at Dumpries, January 14, 1840. His remains were sent back to Kingston in 1861 to be buried in Cathedral Church.

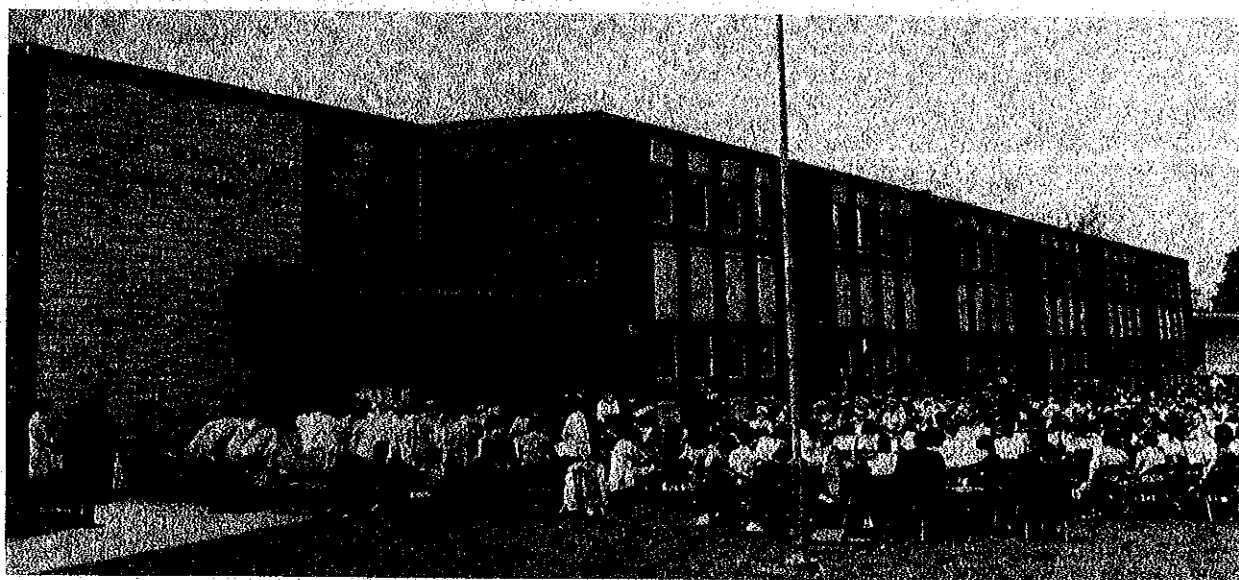
There have been several tablets and plaques erected in his honour but this school is the largest memorial to this mighty man, a great missionary, prelate and patriot - the Apostle of Ontario.

### The Opening of the School

In October 1965, the Cornwall Separate School Board decided to build its first senior elementary schools, Jean XXIII, for the bilingual students and Bishop Macdonell for the English-speaking students.

In October 1966, the first sod was turned and Entwistle Construction Company started work. When the school opened its doors on September 6, 1967, construction was incomplete as halls, stairways, and some classrooms were not finished. On October 3, 1967 the desks arrived, and the four hundred and seventy-nine students found it easier writing on them than on their laps.

On Thursday, May 30, 1968, the official opening of the school was held with Mr. C. P. O'Neil, Assistant Superintendent, Supervision Section of the Department of Education cutting, the Macdonell plaid ribbon.



Official opening of Bishop Macdonell Senior School, Thursday, May 30, 1968

Mrs. Bernard MacDonald presented a painting of Bishop Macdonell to Mrs. Gertrude Johnson, Principal of the school. The painting dated back to 1850. (In 1997, Mr. Pierre Chartrand, a teacher, repaired the painting and through the efforts of the Alternative Learning for Exceptional Pupils Program, it is in an enclosed frame in the school's front entrance.)

The building contractors presented the keys to Mrs. Johnson, who officially opened Bishop Macdonell Senior School.

Mrs. Gertrude Johnson was the Principal and Mr. Patrick Valiquette was the Vice-Principal and together, they kept the school running smoothly during that first year.

### **Bishop Macdonell Senior School**

Mrs. Johnson, our founding Principal, worked at Bishop Macdonell until 1973. Mrs. Johnson was one of the first hundred women to receive her Officers Commission, R. C. A. F. (Woman's Division) when she returned home in 1945. She married and had four children. Her daughter, Heather Boosamra, was a Special Education teacher for over thirty years.

Mrs. Johnson was succeeded by Mr. Claude Mainville who was the Principal from 1973 - 1983. He initiated the House system in 1974, to manage a school population of five hundred and ninety students. The house system divided the school into groups. The reason for this division was twofold. It made the teachers responsible for a smaller number of students. It also assisted the students as all of their subjects were taught by only four teachers.

Each house had two Grade 7 classes and two Grade 8 classes. The school had a full-time Librarian as well as a full-time Guidance Counsellor. A typical day consisted of eight periods of forty minute with a forty minute break for lunch. The school was set up on a six-day cycle, which accommodated a timetable and

allowed children to go to Industrial Arts and Family Studies for a half-day each cycle.

Two events were the highlight of the Grade 8 year - Confirmation and graduation. The Religion program, called Decisions, assisted the students in learning to make important life choices concerning themselves and their future.

One of these important decisions that faced the Grade 8 students was their decision to become adult members of the Catholic Church through their Confirmation. This decision was the focus of the year with Bishop Eugene Larocque visiting each class and later confirming the Grade 8 students at St. Columban's Church. In preparation for Confirmation, the students of each Grade 8 class spent two days on retreat at St. Raphael's, in Shalom House. There they spent the day in prayer and in group sessions to help the students understand the decision they were to make by becoming adult members of the Catholic Church. Upon returning from the retreat, the student's perception of their teacher in many cases changed. These two days added much to their Journey of Faith.

### **Industrial Arts Program and Home Economics**

Another feature of the Senior School was the Industrial Arts Program for the boys and the Home Economics program for the girls. For one afternoon a cycle, the students were given the opportunity to work in the shop with Mr. Greffe, the industrial arts teacher. He was talented in many of the Arts. The boys usually completed several projects throughout the years using different media: wood, copper, and leather. The girls spent their afternoon in the Home Economics Room. Sue Larosa and Duane McDonald-Wolochatuik, the home economics teachers, had the girls complete crafts and taught them how to sew. There was also an emphasis on nutrition. When the senior school dissolved, these two programs were discontinued.

## Indian Culture Club

The school consisted of students from all the Cornwall feeder schools as well as students from Akwesasne, Cornwall Island and Snye, Quebec. Richard David, an Indian Liaison officer, was a staff member who assisted all the students. Through the efforts of Mr. Greffe the Indian Culture Club assisted all students in learning the native customs. The painting of the migration of the Iroquois was hand-drawn by members of the Club. The pictographs were carefully burned into leather. This piece of artwork was used in all classes to explain how the Iroquois migrated to this area where they now live. In 1984, an Intermediate school was completed in St. Regis and Bishop Macdonell lost the native students to the school on Cornwall Island.



Members of the Indian Culture Club

## The School Choir

A school choir is much more than being sheltered from the cold at lunchtime or sitting in the balcony at Mass or even missing a few periods for practice. It is a lot of hard work. For students who are not into sports it is an opportunity to shine.

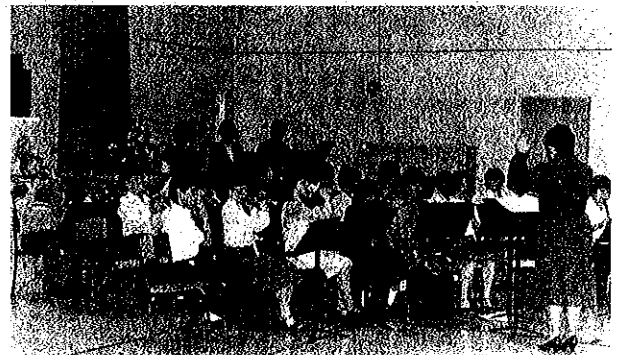


Bishop Macdonell Senior School choir

In 1977, Mr. A. J. Villeneuve, a musically talented teacher, along with eighty members of his choir cut a record for the school called BMSS Folk Group Farewell. They sold five hundred copies at \$10.00 each. One of the choir members, Annette Labelle, said the work involved was her greatest joy. She wrote, "It was the best time of my life next to getting married and having my son". Not only did these children practice for a school concert, they visited the area Seniors' Homes and sang for them as well.

## Bishop Macdonell Secondary School

In 1982 the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry County Roman Catholic Separate School Board decided the time had come to undertake the task of opening a Catholic Secondary school in our area. The following year Yvon Labossière was appointed Principal of the Secondary School where he started the job of developing the plans for the new school. The new high school was housed at Bishop Macdonell Senior School and was named Bishop Macdonell Secondary High School. For the next two years, Bishop was host to the students wishing to continue their education in a Catholic Secondary School. Mr. Labossière was able to make it succeed through his hard work, determination and the dedication of the staff at the school. The job of running a Senior School as well as a Separate High School in the same building developed a solid foundation for the school we know today as St. Joseph's Catholic Secondary School.



Bishop Macdonell Secondary School band

## Repatriation

In 1985, Patrick Valiquette was appointed Principal of the school. The next four years saw many changes in the school board, which changed Bishop Macdonell Senior School to an elementary school. The Grades 7 and 8 students were repatriated back to their feeder schools. Mr. Valiquette who served as the Vice-principal when the school opened was now responsible for setting up an elementary school. It took two years for this repatriation to be completed. In this last year of Bishop Macdonell Senior School the school had a population of five hundred and ninety-nine students.

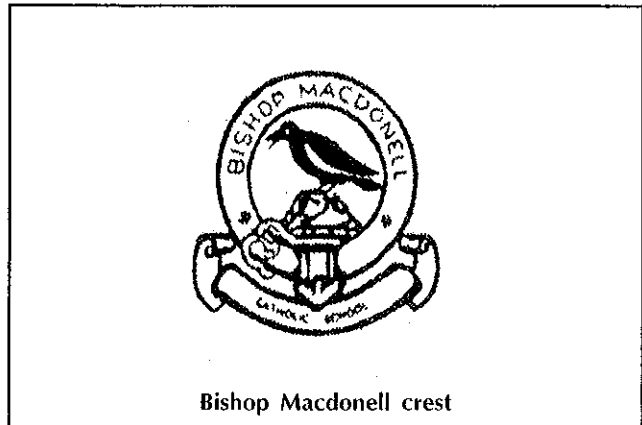
## Memories of Bishop Macdonell School

*I arrived at Bishop Macdonell on September 3, 1987 with a lot of nervousness. Bishop was a senior school for Grade 7 and 8. I was accustomed to seeing all the little ones on opening day and a few Grades 7 and 8. I think there were about 450 students in Bishop. The Principal was Mr. Pat Valiquette and he welcomed me with open arms. As the days and weeks passed by, I quickly learned that teaching in a Senior School was not so difficult after all.*

*I was impressed with the overall organization of the school under Mr. Valiquette. We were on a rotary system which was new to me but which I enjoyed tremendously. It gave me the opportunity to get to know more students on a personal basis. I soon learned that we had a great bunch of students. Being a Catholic School I was impressed with the spirituality of both the students and staff. Religious instruction was most important and clearly defined the close link in the trinity of Home, School, and Parish.*

*After two years in the Senior School it was decided that Bishop Macdonell would send all Grade 7 and 8 students back to the Parish schools and convert back to a Kindergarten to Grade 8 School. This meant a lot of the present teachers would be leaving and new teachers would be coming. I would remain. The Kindergarten to Grade 8 school was a whole new concept for Bishop. We now had students of all ages. The change also brought with it a new attitude. I was now completing my sixth year at Bishop and was right at home. The staff became my best friends and we had many occasions to celebrate our friendships. The teachers were very dedicated to the school and the students.*

**Carl Rines**



Bishop Macdonell crest

## Bishop Macdonell Senior School Sports Program Through the Years

Since Bishop Macdonell Senior School first opened its doors in 1967 to close to five hundred Grade 7 and 8 students, one of the mainstays has been an all-encompassing sports program. With the inception of the House system early on, it became apparent that a friendly competitive team spirit would prevail within an extensive intramural sports program between Houses. As well, school teams would be formed to compete with other senior schools within the area. Bishop would find itself in the winner's column for many of these. Sports included soccer, volleyball, basketball, floor hockey, softball, track and field and during some years the inclusion of ice hockey, badminton and broomball, as well as gymnastics. Although many teachers volunteered to coach these teams at different times during the school's history, one teacher stands out as being very instrumental in organizing and co-ordinating the sports program. That teacher was John Bergeron. With the demise of the senior school system and the introduction of the Bishop Macdonell Secondary School, sports teams outside of the school were mainly Midget high school teams while a strong intramural sports program continued for the Grades 7 and 8 students. When St. Joseph Secondary School came into being, Bishop Macdonell Senior School went through a period of repatriation where several teachers were lost to the High School as well as to feeder schools. It was decided that a sports program based on the old House System would

be continued, including the students in Grade 7 and 8 from the feeder schools. Teacher Duane MacDonald-Wolochatuik became the contact person between schools and the treasurer for funding such a program. Teachers Wayne Legault and David McLeod organized the various tournaments, which were held between Bishop Macdonell and St. Columban's East gyms for several years. Soccer tournaments were held at the Optimist fields. Softball tournaments were at the St. Denis Field and Track & Field tournaments were held at St. Lawrence High School and then moved to St. Joseph's Secondary School in later years. Many of the original teachers from Bishop Macdonell looked after the sports programs in the feeder schools to which they were transferred. When Wayne Legault transferred from Bishop after twenty years to St. Columban's West, Angela Martel, a new teacher at Bishop, took over the organization of sports tournaments with a committee of teachers from all feeder schools where each teacher on the committee would volunteer to organize one of the six annual tournaments. To this day, soccer, volleyball, basketball, floor hockey, three-pitch softball and track and field tournaments are held annually involving Grades 7 and 8 students, modelled after the framework originally used at Bishop Macdonell Senior School.

### **Our School Secretaries**

Bishop Macdonell has had two women who were the keepers of the gate, our school secretaries. Betty Jane Wood (nee McCracken) began two years after the school opened. She remained at the school for sixteen years and moved on to St. Joseph's Secondary School. Betty Ann Baker, who worked in the school for a total of fourteen years, replaced her. Betty Ann worked during the repatriation of the senior students. The school population was six hundred and eleven. Both these women demonstrated their dedication to Catholic education, working to have the entire school ready each September. They were also called

upon to do the attendance, to comfort those who were sick while at the same time contacting parents, answering phones, operating the public address system, making book orders, accounting to payroll for supply teaching, etc.. At Bishop Macdonell, Wednesday was "pony day" and the mail from the Board had to be delivered. The job was different then. There were no computers. The fax machine did not churn out the requests. The telephone and its ringing were a constant demand on the secretary. Coupled with the demands of the job, were the demands and requests of the teachers, parents and the principal. These women worked tirelessly and found times to laugh. For thirty years, these two women kept the school running smoothly, without a complaint. Today's secretary is now on the computer churning out more work than ever. Computers may have made some jobs easier but today there are many more demands on the secretary.

### **Bishop Macdonell Elementary School**

In 1980, Bishop Eugene Larocque wrote the following for the yearbook, "The photographs you see on this and the next two pages are of two Bishops, one ordained in Quebec City on December 30, 1820 who was 6 feet 4 inches tall and one ordained one hundred and fifty-four years later on September 3, and who is 6 feet 3 inches tall. Perhaps one hundred and fifty years from now, in 2130, another six-foot Bishop will be here to continue the work of the first Bishops, the Apostles".

In 1990, the last decade of the century, began with the appointment of Hubert McDonell as Principal of Bishop Macdonell Elementary School. Hubert truly met the criteria mentioned by Bishop Larocque as he was well over six feet tall but more importantly he continued the work of Bishop Alexander Macdonell in his words and his deeds. The new elementary school was blessed to have such a man who exemplified the Spirit of Bishop Alexander

Macdonell. In a tribute to Hubert by Donna McCosham, a teacher on staff wrote, "No man was ever honoured for what he received. Honour is the reward for what he gave. Mr. McDonell gave us the best gift of all, the gift of himself".

In 1994, Ron McAllister, our new Principal, was "Walking and Talking Proud" as this became our school motto. Mr. McAllister also realized the needs and programs for students and help develop the Alternative Learning for Exceptional Pupils Program (ALEP), as we know it today. In 2002 Mr. Richard Blanchard was appointed as Principal and he along with Vice-principal, Mr. David McLeod, worked to improve school programs with the Ministry.

In 2003, Natalie Cameron was appointed as the present Principal of Bishop Macdonell. There is hardly a week that goes by without a mention in the paper of the events at Bishop. Mrs. Cameron writes, "Bishop Macdonell Catholic School has come full circle as the Ravens "Fly Higher and Soar Faster" with every coming year. From sports, to clubs, to religious celebrations, Bishop Macdonell School continues to grow as a Catholic family. The children value the time they share as a caring community growing in Catholic faith. The Ravens hope to pass on from generation to generation a love for God, a strong belief for our Catholic faith, and a desire to help its community reach out to each other in love".

**Principals of Bishop Macdonell Catholic School**

1967 - 1973	Gertrude Johnson
1973 - 1983	Claude Mainville
1983 - 1985	Yvon Labossière
1985 - 1990	Patrick Valiquette
1990 - 1994	Hubert McDonell
1994 - 2002	Ron McAllister
2002 - 2003	Richard Blanchard
2003	Natalie Cameron

**The Future From Our Past**

*I distinctly remember the day, while supply teaching at Bishop Macdonell in a Grade 8 class, that I told my mother, a Grade 1 teacher, that I would be teaching Grade 7 or 8 at Bishop. I had not even been to Teachers' College yet, but I knew. It felt right. I needed to be back.*

*After teaching Grade 8 for one year in St. Andrew's, fate propelled me to my homeroom classroom at Bishop, where I gratefully remain. It is a time warp of sorts. The classrooms are the same, but new, on the other side of the desk. The trials and tribulations are eerily similar, but more meaningful, as it is my turn to guide and assist. The general aura remains the same: it is a busy, happy environment, where lives are nurtured, lessons are taught and memories formed. My students are developing into who they are, and I have the privilege of being part of that. My personal memories of life in junior high, lend themselves daily to my interaction with these children. Technology stands out as the most obvious difference between lives then and now: however, my students battle similar academic, family, and social issues. I remember my education, growth and development were significantly molded by the wisdom, care and encouragement of my Grade 7 and 8 teachers, and how could I offer anything less to the young men and women who sit before me every day? We continue to demand best efforts and we applaud the smallest victories.*

*Inherent in our chosen profession, is the drive and desire to be the best we can be for the students in our charge. Being able to spend my day teaching at Bishop, where so many personal memories are rooted, doing what I love to do, is not only what I wanted, it's what I was meant to do. How many people can say they have returned to where it all began for them? I am fortunate indeed.*

*My hope is that somewhere along the way, my students are experiencing life at Bishop in a way that will affect them acutely. That they'll take something from us more valuable than they may acknowledge at the time: the realization that they have a personal obligation to fulfill their potential, follow their dreams and make it all happen.*

*Nothing has changed at Bishop in that respect. We are still Ravens, and we soar higher and faster than anyone does.*

**Karen Lemieux**

## Bishop Macdonell Catholic School

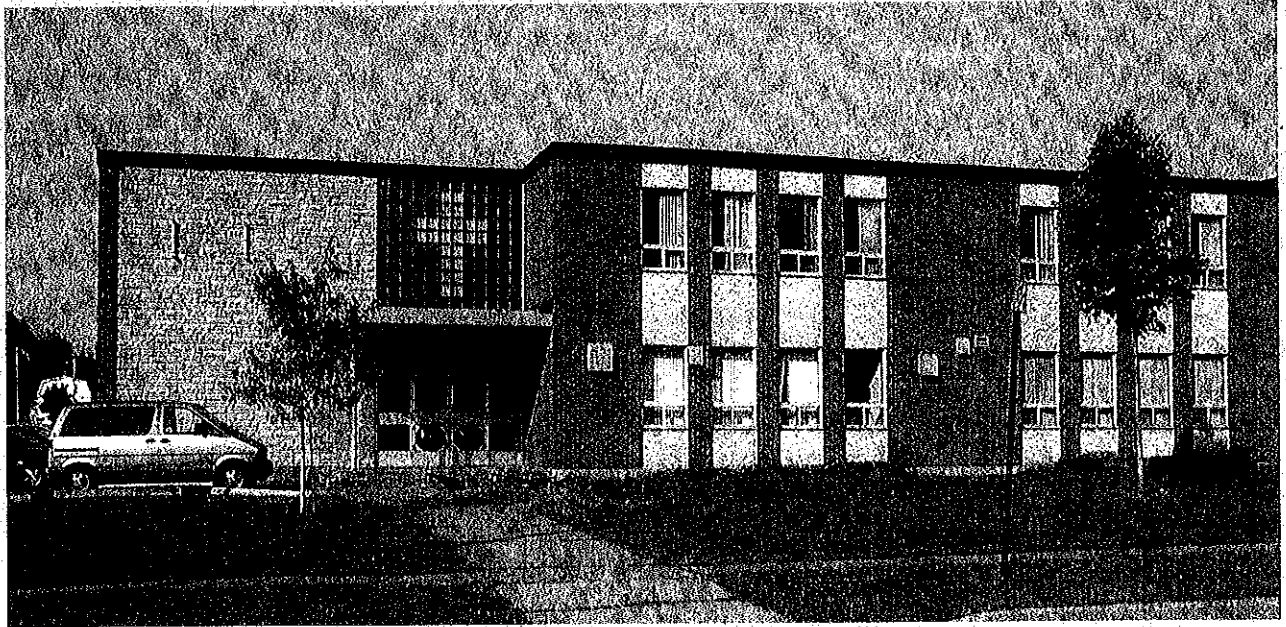
**Address:** 300 Adolphus Street  
Cornwall, ON  
K6H 3S6

**French Program:** Core Program

**Grades:** Junior Kindergarten  
to Grade 8

**Pupil Population - October 2003:** 399

**Parish Priest:** Rev. Kevin Maloney



Bishop Macdonell School, 2003