

1889 In August 1889 Bishop O'Connor visited Wikwemikong the first parish in Northern Ontario. The Indians turned out to meet the Bishop and fired a salute in his honor. The village at that time had a population of 800 souls, all of whom were Catholic. There the Jesuits had an industrial school for boys with a large stone administration building and the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary had a similar school for girls, many of whom were boarders.

On Sunday the 18th eighty (80) persons were confirmed nearly all being Indians. This Sunday being in the octave of the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary a grand procession was held round the village by the Indians carrying a statue of the Blessed Virgin and stopping at two repositories on the route. The Bishop, Clergy and Sisters, the entire people and school children, with the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin all went in procession, many carrying banners and bannerettes, while the choir sang very sweetly. Everything was very solemn and edifying and showed the fervor and faith of the people. After all had returned to the church High Mass was celebrated by the venerable Father duRanquet and the Bishop preached being interpreted by Father Alphonse Baudin. At Vespers the church was again filled and the Bishop again addressed the congregation.

In the forenoon of the 19th took place the Indian ceremony of receiving or "baptizing" into the tribe the Bishop and five others, four Jesuits and Deacon Whibbs. This was a unique and interesting ceremony. The name given to the Bishop was "Sagaki" the same name as had been given previously to Bishop Jamet. It signifies "bringing forth fruit" as expressive of the Indian idea of the great good done by the bishop.

After Mass on the 20th the Bishop confirmed another 20 persons and before noon set off for Manitowaning accompanied by Father Baudin and about 70 Indians in wagons. On leaving the village a general

salute was fired as on his arrival, and most of the people assembled at the church to get the blessing of the Bishop before his departure.

At Manitowaning the Bishop and his <sup>(two)</sup> companions took the steamer to Little Current where he said Mass the next morning and confirmed two persons. While at Little Current the Bishop made arrangements for ~~her~~ building a church by appointing a committee to solicit subscriptions, provide plans and take care of other details.

From Little Current the party proceeded in Mr. Conlon's tug to Fort Laclache on the North Shore about 13 miles distant and on Thursday morning after Mass the Bishop confirmed 2 persons in the house of Mr. <sup>to his</sup> Gaudeaur. The Bishop then went in a rowboat with Father Stephen Dufresne to Sagamok an Indian settlement about 3 miles distant. and confirmed 12 Indians the same afternoon. Returning to Laclache they went the same day by canoe and portages about 8 miles to a White settlement on the Spanish River about 4 miles from Massey.

On Friday August 23rd after Mass in the schoolhouse at Spanish River, 16 persons were confirmed and as the land in the vicinity was good the Bishop advised the settlers to pay more attention to the cultivations of the land and to engage less in lumbering. After breakfast the Bishop and his party were rowed down the river to Spanish 12 miles away where he confirmed 12 persons in the store adjoining Shea's hotel.

Saturday morning the Bishop took the train and went to Misisagi 35 miles where he confirmed 21 Indians in their small chapel. After breakfast the Bishop's party went to Blind River by sailboat and there embarked on a steamer to go to Algoma Mills. There Catholics there assembled in their quasi-chapel about 5.30 pm when the Bishop addressed them and confirmed 14 candidates.

At 7 pm he took the train to Cook's Mills (Spragge) where he preached that evening in the school house to a large congregation of

Catholics and Protestants, and afterwards confirmed 26 persons, many of whom were Indians from the Reserve across the Serpent River. On the following morning Masses were said in the school house at five and five-thirty at which many were present and received Holy Communion, and immediately after the Bishop and his party took the train and went 91 miles to Sault Ste Marie where they arrived at 10 o'clock and immediately proceeded to the church where the clergy and people were assembled for High Mass. After the Mass the Bishop preached and then confirmed 33 candidates, assisted by the pastor Rev. John Sinnett SJ Fathers Baudin and Bernard Devlin with Deacon Whibbs....

On Tuesday afternoon August 27th the Bishop went by train to Thessalon about 50 miles and in the evening lectured in the small church which was crowded with Catholics and many Protestants. He afterwards confirmed ~~12~~ 12 candidates, being assisted by Fathers Baudin and Joseph Richard. At night the Catholics staged a fine display <sup>of fire work</sup> in honor of the Bishop's visit. The majority of them were fishermen who spent their summers on the south side of the Manitoulin Island fishing from bases on the Duck Islands, and returning home in the fall. From Thessalon the Bishop and his party went to Garden River and Sault Ste. Marie.....and from there to Thunder Bay and a trip up Lake Nipigon to the Indian Missions in that area...~~xxx~~ The visit of Bishop O'Connor was the second ever made by a bishop to the northern end of Lake Nipigon, the first visit having been made by Bishop Jamot 9 years before.