



MEDIA RELEASE

January 19, 2015

Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall Kicks Off Its 125th

CORNWALL, ON - On January 23, 1890, Rome created the diocese of Alexandria made up of the counties of Glengarry and Stormont. The decree, issued by Pope Leo XIII, named Father Alexander Macdonell (named after the first bishop of Upper Canada) the first bishop of this new diocese. Bishop Macdonell, who chose the parish of St Finnan as his episcopal seat, would shepherd one of the smallest dioceses in the country with just 21,550 Catholics in 10 parishes served by 12 priests.

Prior to its creation in 1890, Glengarry and Stormont were part of the diocese Kingston. A year earlier the rumours were rampant that the counties were to be added to the Archdiocese of Ottawa. To forestall this realignment, Kingston Bishop James Vincent Cleary led the Ontario bishops in their demand for a new Scottish Diocese in eastern Ontario.

Over the last 125 years, the Catholic Church, through its members, has been instrumental in establishing a number of important institutions in Glengarry and Stormont. They include the Hôtel Dieu Hospital (now the Cornwall Community Hospital), the Cornwall Classical College, St. Michael's Academy and the Agapé Centre.

"Revisiting our history provides me invaluable resources to better plan the future," said Bishop Marcel Damphousse, current bishop of Alexandria-Cornwall.

To mark the 125th anniversary, a special logo has been created which pays tribute to the founding peoples of the Diocese: the Celtic cross symbolic of the Scottish people and the fleur-de-lys symbolic of the French people.

Under the overall theme of *A Legacy of Faith*, the Diocese has organized a number of projects aimed at celebrating our Catholic heritage as well as reaffirming and sharing our faith.

"These events planned throughout the year to celebrate the Diocese's 125th anniversary is a beautiful way to appreciate God's many good deeds accomplished through the hard work of dedicated faith-filled people and pay them tribute for being witnesses of Jesus Christ," Bishop Marcel said in announcing the diocese's plans.

The projects include:

Series of Five Vignettes

The Diocese has teamed up with TVCOGECO Cornwall to produce five short vignettes that tell the history of the Diocese through the eyes of the bishops that have served Alexandria-Cornwall. The first vignette will begin to air within the next week, with new ones being rolled out throughout the year.

Treasures of the Diocese: An Exhibition of the Diocesan Archives

Beginning April 17th and running for a 2 week period in the Chapel of the Cocathédrale de la Nativité , the Diocese will showcase some of its many treasures. These artifacts will include the original crozier used by Bishop Alexander Macdonell, the first bishop of the Diocese, the episcopal ring given to Bishop Macdonell, the first bishop of Upper Canada, by King George IV and the extensive post card collection of Bishop Brodeur's trip to the Holy Land.

Mass of Thanksgiving and Reception

There will be a Mass of thanksgiving on May 21, 2015, at the Cocathédrale de la Nativité followed by a reception at the Agora Catholic Centre.

Tour of St Columban and St Finnan Cemeteries

There are many fascinating people, including NHLer Newsy Lalonde and Captain MacDonald, who are buried in St Columban's Cemetery. There will be a walking tour of some of these graves in the late spring,

There will be a similar tour (date TBD) of St Finnan Cemetery. Among others, most of the Diocese's former bishops are buried in this cemetery.

- 30 -

For more information
Kimberly Walsh, Chancellor
Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall
613-933-1138, ext. 32
613-571-4282 (cell)
kwalsh@alexandria-cornwall.ca