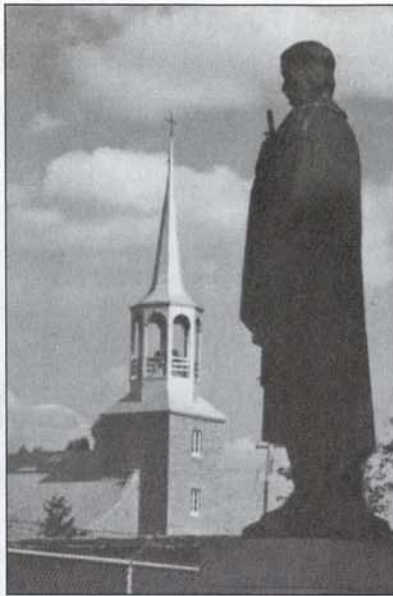


The church of St. Francis Xavier Mission celebrates its *150th Anniversary*

These anniversaries are not a rare occasion in Quebec today, but when it happens in Kahnawaké, it's special, since the Mission dates back to 1717. The first church was erected around 1717. Fr Marcoux has served as pastor from 1819 to 1855, found it too small. In 1845, he has just finished the building of the new, on the very site of the old one. The tower, the steeple and the sacristy were simply integrated to the new cruciform construction. Its first patron-saint was Saint Francis Xavier. In 1983 after the beatification of Kateri Tekakwitha, Kateri was named second patron of the church and this last one was proclaimed Kateri's Shrine.

On December 3rd, the Bishop of Longueuil was invited to preside the big anniversary celebration. But surprise, who comes in to celebrate the Eucharist but his episcopal vicar, John Walsh. (Bishop Hubert was already hit by a sickness which was to take him away at the beginning of February.) As a snowstorm was raging outside that morning, the parishioners first thought of a delay...

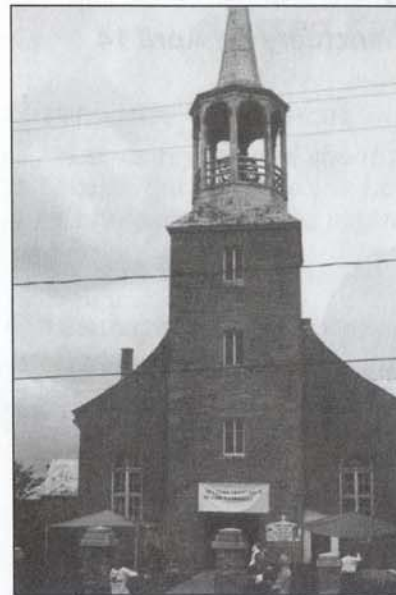
Several Knights of Columbus in full regalia took part in the entry procession along with Fr Louis Cyr, the Pastor, Fr Jean Bellefeuille, the Jesuit Provincial, and the Deacon Ron



The church of Saint Francis Xavier Mission celebrates 150 years.

Boyer. Meanwhile the mixed choir was hushing in very harmoniously the time of Advent, on the Dec. 3. A very important date for the parish this feastday of Saint Francis Xavier, since it recalls the zeal of the first Jesuits who founded the Mission in 1667, have served it to this day, except during their absence between 1783 till 1903, due to the suppression of the Jesuits.

In his homily, Fr John Walsh made an appeal to this "collective memory that we need to rely on the past, to remember our origins, our culture, our traditions on which our faith stands. The Mohawks like other Natives call this collective memory a "consensus" which allows every last



The Saint Francis-Xavier Church and Kateri's Shrine.

person in the Nation to relate and recount the same story the same way of seeing things, the same way of understanding the past of be one in the present and of looking forward together in the future. Our collective memory enables us to recall together how the modern Jesuit Missionaries, in the footsteps of their patron of the Missions, Saint Francis Xavier, were here at Kahnawaké for most of the years there has been here a Catholic com-

munity. We are indebted to the Jesuits in Lower and Upper Canada, for their continuing great services to the First Nations. Today on the canonization of Bishop Charles de Mazenod in Rome, we add to our memory the presence of the Oblates (1855-1892) who contributed to the conservation of the Mohawk language, by composing a lexicon and a grammar as well as to the liturgy by apposing vernacular language to the Church hymns.

"Finally as we share the meal at Jesus table, we will again be reminded: Do this in memory of me. We renew the part we are to play in building a new and modern "common and collective memory."

After Mass, the people present were all invited to the Kateri Hall to share another meal so well prepared by these devoted ladies so faithful and experts in culinary art.

To prepare the next visit of Bishop B. Hubert every one was asked to remain in the hall so they could ask Fr Walsh all the questions pertaining to the parish.

Thanks to all those who helped us to celebrate so beautifully. ■

J.B., s.j.

