

# Marking an anniversary in Bancroft

Pentecost weekend in Bancroft will feature celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of the construction and dedication of the church and school of Our Lady of Mercy.

Spiritual preparations for this jubilee began earlier this year with a parish mission and will culminate with a weekend of celebrations on June 9-13, 2011.

One of the highlights of the jubilee weekend will be the visit of the reliquary containing the remains of Saint Brother André Bessette (1845-1937) who was canonized as Canada's first male saint by Pope Benedict XVI in October 2010. The reliquary of Saint Brother André contains remnants of the saint's heart and is enclosed in a glass receptacle resting on pieces of stone carved from Mount Royal in Montreal where Saint André founded the world-famous Saint Joseph Oratory. It was carried during the Mass of Thanksgiving at Montreal's Olympic Stadium held in honour of the saint's canonization last October.

"We are particularly blessed to be able to be one of the first parishes in Canada to welcome the relics of Saint Brother André" said Father Patrick Dobec, pastor of Our Lady of Mercy Parish, "the tradition of honouring the relics of saints is really a gesture of love and is meant to remind us that we are all called to follow in the example of the saints in our dedication of God." The reliquary will be received at Our Lady of Mercy Church on Thursday, June 9 at 6:00 p.m.

Fr. Dobec says that, for him, a devotion to Brother Andre came early in life. "As a child I remember going to the Oratory", he said. In the late 1950s Fr. Bernard Hunt would charter a CN train that would roll through the towns of the diocese each year collecting pilgrims to visit the Oratory in Montreal. The stops included Fr. Dobec's hometown of Renfrew where the family would join the train.

The history of the current buildings in Bancroft goes back to 1955 when uranium was discovered near the quiet village. The subsequent construction boom led to a rapid growth in the congregation. Fr. Henry Maloney, who arrived in the parish in 1957, supervised an exciting period of expansion. The first part, a convent for the Sisters of St. Joseph and a new four-room school, were opened in time for the parish's silver jubilee in 1959. The celebrants at the 1960 blessing of the school included the pastor's brother, the Honourable James Maloney, Minister of Mines in the provincial government.

The project was complicated by the collapse of the uranium market in 1959, partway through the building efforts. This led to a loss of many of the new parishioners. The community weathered the storm, however, and on June 4, 1961 the church and rectory were blessed by Bishop W.J. Smith.

On Sunday, June 12, 2011, at 9:30 am, a Mass of Thanksgiving will be celebrated to mark the 50th anniversary of the dedication of Our Lady of Mercy Church, followed by a Homecoming Lawn Reception and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at 4:00 p.m.

As previously mentioned, the reception of the reliquary of Saint Brother André will take place at 6 pm on Thursday, June 9, followed by a 7:00 pm

Mass with the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. On Friday, June 10, mass will be celebrated by Bishop Mulhall at 11:00 am and the church will be open for private prayer from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm. On Saturday, June 11, a mass will be held at 9:00 am and at 7:00 pm the first vespers of Pentecost will be celebrated with an all-night

vigil... the church will remain open for the night.

On Monday, June 13, the reliquary of Saint Brother Andre will visit the mission church of St. Anthony of Padua in Haliburton, also under the care of Fr. Dobec, marking St. Anthony's feast day, with a mass being held at noon along with the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.



*In October 2010 the relics of St. Brother André were carried through the Olympic Stadium in Montreal as part of a ceremony welcoming them home to Montreal.*

## Pilgrims in Peru



*Last fall 22 pilgrims from the Diocese of Pembroke travelled to Peru as part of the Pembroke/Lima partnership. Left, Fr. Bill Kenney of Pembroke shares a moment with one of the children. Right, meeting local parishioners in a church hall. Below, a visit to El Agustino brings home the reality of life in the poor sections of Peru.*

