

BURLINGTON'S RELIGIOUS HERITAGE
HOLY ROSARY PARISH HAD HUMBLE
BEGINNING IN TINY BURIAL CHAPEL

Standing far back among the spacious grounds of Holy Sepulchre Cemetery on West Plains Road, is a quaint, gothic style Church, Holy Sepulchre Chapel.

This Roman Catholic Church, standing between Hamilton Harbour on the east and Hendrie Park to the west, was the forerunner of Holy Rosary Church, now situated on East Plains Road.

Prior to its becoming a parish church, Holy Sepulchre Chapel was used only for burial services. A special Mass was said annually on November 2nd, All Souls Day.

Built in 1889 by Rt. Rev. T.J. Dowling, D.D. with funds from the Hamilton Diocese, this old chapel has seen many special services. Below it there is what used to be a burial vault. Here, until 1947, corpses were kept during the winter months before interment in the spring. Today, burials continue all year round. The main altar of the chapel is made of solid onyx marble and was donated by George Plunkett Magann.

It was on July 6th, 1947, that the first regular Sunday Mass was celebrated for parishioners of Aldershot. The congregation at that time consisted of 22 families.

Father Bernard W. Harrigan, a former principal of Cathedral High School in Hamilton, was named first pastor.

Some of the family names in this new congregation were Smileys, Whelans, Rankins, Granbys, Pinningtons, Lunz, and O'Briens. Mr. ^{JOHN} Patrick O'Brien was the superintendent of the Cemetery then. At the time of his death in 1951, he was succeeded by his son Robert, who still holds that position.

PLAN NEW CHURCH

Hamilton Diocese, in 1946, purchased a site for future church and school; nine acres of land, formerly the Bowen farm on the north side of #2 Highway, $\frac{1}{2}$ mile east of the main intersection of Aldershot, fronting on Plains Road East. It was in the old Bowen farmhouse that Father Harrigan lived. It was always intended to erect a permanent parish church on this site, as it was far more central to the growing Aldershot community. The parish includes sections bordering the highway from the railway tracks to the Bay and from Bridgeview Survey to Wentworth - Halton boundary.

First use of this land was the erection of Holy Rosary School. The auditorium of the school was built by the church and used, as it still is, as a parish hall. It was also used for daily and Sunday Masses. Both school and hall were officially opened on October 28th attended by some 600 people.