

## THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. PETER-IN-CHAINS

This church has moved a long way from the log church it was in 1826 on what is now the south side of Charlotte Street, east of George where Empress Gardens sits in 2002. Later, mass was held in a log house at the south-west corner of Simcoe and Water streets. Fire destroyed the building so mass was then held in the Peterborough County Courthouse until it moved to a block of land at Brock, Chambers, George and Hunter streets in 1834. Then it moved to Reid street where part of the church was built in 1837-38 with stone from the Jackson Park quarry, the same type of stone used in St. John's Anglican Church. The cost of the church was \$12,000. The bell, cast in Spain, was the first to ring hanging from a tower in Peterborough. The church became a cathedral in 1882 serving all of Peterborough County Catholics. The first bishop, François Jamot, is buried there, as are Father John Butler who oversaw the church being built and Father Farrelly, the third pastor. (A crypt was later built by the Knights of Columbus to allow the tombstone to become more public as these three clerics were buried below the church.) The church expanded in 1884. This new addition consisted of a transverse building, 100 feet long by 35 feet wide. The building underwent major renovations again in 1923 and 1931. The present curved ceiling was once a flat one. The centre of diocesan life, the inside of the church once had balconies along its two side walls. Look closely enough and you can still see the markings of where they once were.

The church had only one main entrance until the 1940s. In two additions the stone matched the original stone. The spire and tip of the cross and tower rises to 150 feet. The church once featured maple trees around it. In the centre of the lawn was a huge fountain until 1924 when landscaping was done and the spruce trees, now on the lawn, were planted. The bishop's throne was installed in 1923. In 1931 there was a major transformation inside the church turning it into its Gothic structure. Not only was the flat ceiling removed for a curved one but the new \$15,000 organ with 200 interior pipes and 18 exterior ones, was purchased. The transformation was done to make the building more cathedral-like. In 1967, as a centennial project, the front walls of the main lobby were brought forward. Builders split the old stone and used it in such a way it is difficult to even notice there is new stone. More renovations took place, taking a year to do.

## THE MOSAIC OF THE LAST SUPPER

From antiquity to the present, smalti mosaic tesserae has been a symbol of beauty and permanence. Smalti mosaic is a form of glass now only produced in Italy by a limited number of manufacturers who have inherited the secret of making it from their ancestors. Its use for over sixty centuries demonstrates its durability to wear and resistance to climatic influences as well as its pleasing aesthetic value.

The mosaic mural of the Last Supper for St. Peter's Cathedral in Peterborough, Ontario is a rustic textured mosaic and one of the largest murals of its kind in Canada. It was completely executed from start to finish at Conn-Arts Studio, Downsview, Ontario. The design was conceived by the Art Director, Alex von Svoboda, who is well known for his art work across Canada. The actual cutting and setting of the mosaic was carried out by Conn-Arts Studio's own skilled mosaic artisans, who are trained for six years in this specialized art. They were under Mr. von Svoboda's personal direction and supervision. The mural took one half a year from initial colour, renderings, through the actual selection of the mosaic in Europe by Mr. von Svoboda, to the installation date.

The mural measures 25 feet in width and stands approximately 42 feet high. The individual mosaic pieces were glued to 3/4" x 4'0" x 8'0" plywood panels with 3M adhesive cement. There are thirty-one of these panels which make up the mural, all individually cut and formed to fit the existing arch. Calculated at six hundred pieces of mosaic per square foot, a total of 633,000 pieces of hand cut and placed mosaic tesserae were used. These were selected from 75 different shades and colours.

The last supper shows Christ with three of His Apostles. John on His right, Peter and James on His left. The composition of the mural has captured the mystic moment of the breaking of the bread, the highlight of the Last Supper. There is a mysterious glow and radiation of glory from within the mural to emphasize the importance of the moment. The impact of Christ's actions is reflected in the faces of the Apostles.

The look of daring disbelief in Peter, the puzzled reverend expression from John as he reaches out to touch Christ but fears His awesome power; James is shown as bewildered but clinging to Christ's every word. Power and majesty are also indicated at the top of the mural, by a subtle reference through colour, of Heaven opening up. The darkness in the extremities of the mural help create the feeling of infinity.

The mural visually leads one's eyes from the chalice, upward to the hands of Christ breaking bread, which is the sacred moment of the setting, to the towering position of Our Lord and finally comes to rest in the reflection of St. Peter as you experience the moment through him.

The entire work of art should not be taken as an attempt at a realistic statement but rather interpreted as a vision from the heart.