

## Chronology of Important Dates in the History of St. Finnan's

- 1832 The Right Reverend Alexander Macdonell, Bishop of Upper Canada, agrees to establish a Mission church in Priest's Mills (the area that would later become Alexandria.) As a Mission church it did not have full status as a parish church and it would be supported by St. Raphael's.
- 1833 On December 25, 1833, the Catholic faithful of Priest's Mills celebrate Mass in their new church.
- 1840 St. Finnan's is raised to the status of Parish church.
- 1879 Fr. Alexander Macdonell is named the new pastor of St. Finnan's Parish. One of his first tasks is to oversee the construction of new church building given the growing population of the area.
- 1883 On September 22, 1883, the \$35,000 contract for the building of the new church is awarded to Messrs. John R. Chisholm & Sons of Lochiel. Stone was brought in from the Ottawa area by floating it down the Ottawa river on barges to Hawkesbury. From Hawkesbury it was conveyed by wagon and sleigh to Alexandria.
- 1885 The new church is dedicated to the Worship of God by Bishop James Cleary on March 15, 1885.
- 1890 In early 1890 (January 23rd), Rome announces the establishment of the Diocese of Alexandria. On October 28, 1890, Fr. Alexander Macdonell is ordained in St. Finnan's as the first bishop of this new diocese. In addition, he chooses St. Finnan's as his Cathedral.
- 1903 The statue of St. Finnan, which was purchased by the League of the Sacred Heart, is raised to its niche over the front entrance of the Cathedral.
- 1907 A new pipe organ is installed, a gift of Archie M. Chisholm, mining magnate of Duluth, Minnesota, and native of the Alexandria area.
- 1909 A Montreal firm is commissioned by the Right Reverend William Macdonell to supply a white marble altar to replace the original wooden altar. The new altar is consecrated on January 15, 1909.
- 1954 Bishop Rosario Brodeur hires Renard Panzironi to completely redecorate the interior of the church.
- 1965 Following changes effected by the Second Vatican Council, Bishop Brodeur, his clergy and the laity celebrate Mass at the Cathedral in the vernacular for the first time on January 14, 1965.
- 1983 In accordance with directives from Rome, the sanctuary of the Cathedral

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is to be renovated and updated. Changes will include removing the canopy above the bishop's chair. Parishioners vote against the proposed changes for now.

- 2012 On a beautiful Labour Day weekend, September 2, 2012, Bishop Marcel Damphousse is ordained as the 8th bishop of the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall. This is the first episcopal ordination of a bishop at St. Finnan's Cathedral in 106 years.
- 2020 On May 6, 2020, Pope Francis decrees that the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall and the Archdiocese of Ottawa are to be amalgamated. With this change St. Finnan's is returned to the status of parish church.
- 2021 On February 19, 2021 Cardinal Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, on behalf of Pope Francis signs a decree raising St. Finnan's to the status of Minor Basilica. The decree is officially read to the people of Alexandria by Archbishop Marcel Damphousse on April 11, 2021, Divine Mercy Sunday.