



Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall

This Week in History

January 23, 2015

Canada has its newest diocese – The Diocese of Alexandria

The Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall may cover the smallest territory in Canada but its contribution to the Catholic Church in Upper Canada cannot be understated. Located in the most easterly corner of Ontario along the St. Lawrence River, the Diocese is made up of the counties of Glengarry and Stormont.

Catholics first came to the area in the late 1700s to escape the rebellions that were happening in their homeland of Scotland. It was not long before the first missions were established in St. Andrews West and St. Raphaels.

In 1801, Father Alexander Macdonell, who would become the first bishop of Upper Canada, arrived from Scotland with his flock and settled in Glengarry. He was one of only a few priests to minister to Catholics throughout Upper Canada at that time.

Fifty years following the death of Bishop Alexander Macdonell, the Ontario bishops sought to have a new Scottish Diocese established in eastern Ontario. That request was granted and the Diocese of Alexandria (Cornwall was not affixed to the name until 1976) was founded on January 23, 1890. On October 28th of that same year, local son Alexander Macdonell, who was named after the original Bishop Macdonell, was ordained the new Diocese's first bishop.



Bishop Alexander Macdonell
First Bishop of
the Diocese of Alexandria

Incorporation documents creating the Diocese as a legal entity

