

Our Lady of Peace Catholic School and its parish church, St. Martin de Porres, are adjacent to each other in Bells Corners. But this is one case where the school preceded the parish church, although both were the result of explosive residential growth and development, which took place in the Bells Corners area of Lynwood Village in the late 1950s.

Bells Corners, up until that time, had remained a small and relatively stable rural community, historically a stopping place along the old Richmond Road where the road swung south toward Richmond. A provincial highway, number 15, linking Ottawa with far-off Toronto, went through Bells Corners. However, the area had not seen any of the post-war housing boom of suburban Ottawa, well into the 1950s.

Developers Lloyd Francis and Don Sim accumulated land in Bells Corners and enticed a young builder, Bill Teron, later the creator of Kanata, to design and build distinctive homes on the lots of Lynwood Village. Sketches of these new homes were taped up in a sales trailer. There was a newspaper article describing the project, resulting in hordes of purchasers flooding the area, snapping up the initial 218 lots in a couple of hours. By the time Mr. Teron had completed the Lynwood Village development, nearly 2,000 homes had been built. His vision of streets and crescents with modern houses with large windows, carports and double garages, with wide paved driveways, trees and green lawns attracted young couples to this new area.

The first phase of Lynwood Village was built in 1958 with the second following in early 1959.

With this influx of young families came the need for schools and, in particular, a Catholic school, since Bells Corners Public

OUR LADY OF PEACE

CATHOLIC SCHOOL



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School, a four-classroom facility that had been serving the previously rural community, already existed.

In 1959-60, planning was under way by the small Roman Catholic Separate School Board of S.S. 4 Nepean for a new school, even as the children from Roman Catholic families in the Bells Corners area were divided into two groups: those in Grades 1 to 4 attending the little one-room St. Patrick School in Fallowfield (where Miss Mary MacDonald was the teacher) and those in Grades 5 to 8 attending the already crowded St. Leonard Catholic School in the west end of the City of Ottawa. On

September 6, 1960, the completed Catholic school, which contained four classrooms, opened as the new home for both.

On that first day, Principal and Teacher of Grades 5 to 8, Carl Dujay, called his new charges to the school by ringing his hand bell, a predecessor to the electric school bell, which would be installed later. Canon Burke of St. Patrick Parish in Fallowfield blessed the school on September 25, 1960, with staff, students and parents attending.

There was no Roman Catholic Church in Bells Corners in 1960. Catholics attended Mass at St. Patrick Church in Fallowfield, just down the Richmond Road. Canon Burke, the Pastor of St. Patrick, became the chaplain to the new school. First Communion and Confirmation ceremonies were held at St. Patrick Church. However, things changed after the death of Canon Burke in May 1961.

With the arrival of Reverend Father D.D. McDonald of Ottawa on the Bells Corners scene, the focus changed to having a church for the Lynwood Village/Bells Corners area. The local Catholic community had begun to attend Mass in the employees' cafeteria at Computing Devices of Canada, a firm located in Bells Corners.

Plans for the new church evolved at a fast pace under Father McDonald's expert guidance. On July 2, 1963, a sod-turning ceremony was held. In December of that same year, Father McDonald celebrated Midnight Mass in the new church. The name "St. Patrick" had been considered, replicating the name of the Fallowfield church; however, a new world awareness was developing in society at that time and, as a result, the name of St. Martin de Porres was chosen, honouring the humble servant of God who ministered to the poor and sick in South America in the 16th century. This

new church, which was officially dedicated by Ottawa Archbishop Marie-Joseph Lemieux in June 1964, stood on a site adjoining that of the new Catholic school. At the suggestion of Father D.D. McDonald, "Our Lady of Peace" was chosen as the name of the new school, mainly because he thought that the name reflected the commitment of the Church to peace in what was a worn-torn world at that time.

In 1964, the union of various local school boards was a topic of discussion among many parent groups, including the newly formed parent-teacher association at Our Lady of Peace Catholic School. At a meeting of ratepayers in March 1964, a motion was passed that the Roman Catholic School Section No. 4 of Nepean form a united school board with a Catholic board in the Manordale area of Nepean. This was expanded to include Goulbourn and Kanata. All of the Nepean-based Catholic school boards became part of the new Carleton Roman Catholic Separate School Board in 1969.

In September 1978, Our Lady of Peace School became a kindergarten to grade 6 school, with the grades 7 and 8 students becoming part of the new Bells Corners Senior Elementary School which would later become St. Paul Junior High School and finally St. Paul Catholic High School. Our Lady of Peace School celebrated its 25th anniversary with festivities on June 6, 1985. Many former trustees, ratepayers, teachers, principals and students gathered for the happy occasion.

Our Lady of Peace Catholic School today boasts two kindergarten classrooms, ten regular classrooms, a computer lab and library, a gymnasium and a schoolyard with play structures. The school underwent an extensive upgrading and renovation in the summer of 2005.

Present Principal

Jody Prevost (2006-present)

Principals

Carl Dujay (1960-62)
 Robert Curry (1962-72)
 Brian Bourbeau (1972-73)
 Greg Peddie (1973-78)
 Terry Murphy (1978-82)
 Russ Graham (1982-86)
 Gerry Leveque (1986-89)
 John Power (1990-95)
 Bev Murphy (1995-98)
 Vincent Iozzo (1998-2001)
 Dwight Delahunt (2001-06)

First Teaching and Support Staff

Carl Dujay, Principal and Grades 5 to 8
 Lucy Ayers, Grades 2 to 4
 Noreen Gibbs, Grade 1
 Irene Kaye, Kindergarten

Former Students

David Pratt began his schooling in Grade 1 in 1960 at Our Lady of Peace School. He went on to become a City of Nepean councillor and then an Ottawa-Carleton regional councillor before being elected as the MP for the Nepean-Carleton federal riding. He served as the Minister of Defence in the federal cabinet prior to the 2004 election in which he suffered electoral defeat. He developed an interest in Africa where he worked to alleviate the plight of the poverty-stricken people in such countries as Sierra Leone. This interest led to his joining the Canadian Red Cross following his years in politics so that he could continue working to help people in Africa.

Dr. Mark McGowan is a professor at the University of Toronto and St. Michael's College in Toronto. He has written numerous articles on the history of the Catholic Church in Canada and is a past president of the Canadian Catholic

Historical Association. He has written the overview of the history of Catholic education in the Province of Ontario, which is part of this historical publication.

School Colours

Blue and yellow

Logo

The round logo features a dove of peace emblazoned upon the cross of Christ, the Prince of Peace, surrounded by the school name.

The Blais Trophy

Don and Beverley Blais of Lynwood Village were active members of the young community, volunteering in such organizations as the Parent-Teacher Association of Our Lady of Peace Catholic School and the Catholic Women's League of St. Martin de Porres Parish. In 1967, Canada's centennial year, they planned to mark the occasion by taking their family on its first long auto trip, going to the Pan-Am Games in Winnipeg. Their four children were excited about the trip and were looking forward to returning and sharing their stories of adventure with their classmates at Our Lady of Peace School in September.

But tragedy struck on the highway, when their vehicle collided with another car as they drove west near Espanola, Ontario on July 17, 1967. Father Don, mother Beverley, 13-year-old Michael, who was going into Grade 8, 11-year-old Joanne who was in Grade 6, eight-year-old Christopher, a grade 3 student, and six-year-old Paula, going into Grade 1, all perished in the crash. Their bodies were returned to Ottawa for funeral services at St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church, beside Our Lady of Peace School where they had been beloved students.

Members of the Parent-Teacher Association of Our Lady of Peace Catholic School were unanimous in their desire to institute a trophy in memory of these four students. Annually in June, a boy and a girl in the grade 8 graduating class at the school who has excelled in academics and has exhibited all-round participation in school activities are honoured as recipients of the Blais Trophy. The Blais Trophy was presented for the final time in June 1978, the end of the last school year in which Our Lady of Peace had grade 8 graduating students. However, although no longer presented, the trophy remains at Our Lady of Peace Catholic School as a memorial to the Blais family of Lynwood Village.