

## The History of Sacred Heart School

Between 1942 and 1945, Fr. John Gilhooley, O.M.I., the pastor of Sacred Heart Church, dreamed of having a Catholic school and began a fund. By 1945, they had saved \$5,000. Shortly after Bishop Jordan was ordained as Bishop, he was encouraged by Fr. John Gilhooley's endeavours to have a school and approached the Sisters of St. Ann to staff a boarding school in Prince George. They willingly agreed.

The Bishop matched the funds Sacred Heart had collected and as the war had just ended he put a bid on some army barracks hoping to use them for the first classrooms as had been done in Dawson Creek after the Alaska Highway was completed, but he was unsuccessful.

After three more years passed and only a few extra dollars had been collected, the Bishop realized the parish could not build a school itself. He again approached the Sisters and asked if they would build the parish school. With \$10,000 as a down payment, they got a loan for the balance and immediately drew up the plans for a convent and school.

In 1948 the Parish bought the lots adjacent to Sacred Heart Rectory. Bishop Jordan contacted the Oblates in Eastern Canada for the Brothers who could help with the construction. Oblate Brothers Morvan, St. Jacques, and Morier were sent. Construction began on a four-classroom block complete with activity room and residential quarters. With the help of the Oblate Brothers, volunteer and paid help, the building was completed and officially opened by the Sisters of St. Ann in 1949.

School began on September 6, 1949 even though neither the convent nor the school were finished. Classroom space was found in the church. Grade 1 and 2 were in the basement and Grade 3 and 4 were in the choir loft using tables and benches until the desks arrived. There were 42 students enrolled in Grades 1-4. The classes moved into the new school building on October 28th, 1949. A year later, in September of 1950, Grades 5 and 6 were added, and a total enrolment was 105 students. In the fall of 1951, Grade 7 was added, and in the fall of 1952 Grade 8 students were accepted. In 1957 the Auditorium and classrooms for these grades was built.

During the nineteen years from 1949 to 1968, under the administration of the Sisters of St. Ann, the school grew from 47 to 290 students, and a total of 3,389 students passed through the doors of the school.

When the Sisters of St. Ann finished their time at Sacred Heart School, the school was fortunate that the Presentation Brothers from Ireland arrived. They carried on the great work of the Sisters of St. Ann and operated the school from 1968 to 1994. In 1994 was the first year



a lay principal, Mr. Terry Wilson, was administrator to Sacred Heart School. The Presentation Brothers continued to teach at Sacred Heart School until 1997.

Sacred Heart School was built on the commitment of these Religious who dedicated their lives to teaching the students who passed through its doors. There were also many Frontier Apostles who came as missionaries to teach in Sacred Heart School. They came with their youth and enthusiasm to share in the rich history of our school.

Sacred Heart School continues to provide its students with dedicated teachers and a spirit of giving among its students and families. It truly exemplifies its name as it is a school that holds many fond memories in the hearts of its alumni.