



Durham Catholic District School Board

Monsignor Philip Coffey Catholic School

In the Beginning

During the spring of 1959, the Oshawa Roman Catholic Separate School Board, under the direction of its first resident Separate School Inspector, Mr. E.J. Finan, decided to build an eight-room school in the south end of Oshawa. The new school was named St. Philip by the Board of Education in recognition of Father Philip Coffey's long record of service to Oshawa's Separate School Board.

The school was designed by Geo. C.N. Tonks Architects of Toronto. The project started on July 6, 1959, and was slated to be completed in eight weeks. Opening day saw plumbers rushing to have washrooms ready for the 88 students who were registered for Grades 1 to 6. Local newspaper articles from the *Oshawa Times* listed a number of "firsts" that year, including a winter carnival, a Junior Fire Marshal Achievement Award, and a field day. During the years from 1950 to 1961, Mass was celebrated in classrooms 1 and 2, until the present-day church was completed.



By the late 1960s, the south end was heavily populated with several new subdivisions, apartments and townhouse developments. School enrolment had grown to nearly 500 students. Mr. L. Corrigan, the principal at the time, visited many recently built schools in several school boards and thereby was able to offer informed recommendations as to the design of the new school addition. School inspectors E.J. Finan and W.J. Cooper, along with the Board of Trustees, accepted the design of Wm. Saccocio and received Department of Education approval to build two open-area pods containing three classrooms each, a library and a gymnasium. School records indicate that the student population was at 590 in 1971.

During the summer of 1981, the pods were made into traditional classrooms by adding walls. The school population in 1981 was 510 students. The 1990s saw a decline in the school population; by the end of the decade, the school was under 325 students. As the demographics in south Oshawa changed, Monsignor Philip Coffey became the main school for families living south of Highway 401 as Canadian Martyrs, Holy Cross and Father Francis Mahoney schools closed in June 2008.

Our Patron

Monsignor Philip Coffey (1898–1963) resided in Oshawa for more than 24 years. For 20 of those years, he was the Separate School Representative on the Board of Education of Oshawa. He helped organize fundraising activities for the expansion of churches and schools. Monsignor Coffey was a strong advocate for national unity between Canada's different ethnic groups. In memory of his contributions to our community as a skilled organizer, excellent administrator, hard-working priest, teacher and sportsman, the school was renamed in his honour in 1977.

School Prayer

O Glorious Saint Philip,
at the Last Supper you said to Jesus,
“Lord, show us the Father and it will be enough for us.”
Help us to make this our prayer also
and to seek God in all things.
Obtain for us the grace to know the Father
and Jesus Christ whom he has sent –
for in this does eternal life consist.

Amen.

Principals

- D. Dineen (1959–1960)
- R. Oke (1960–1962)
- J. Talbot (1962–1963)
- M. Murphy (1963–1966)
- M. Lisko (1966–1967)
- L. Corrigan (1967–1974)
- J. Liptay (1974–1976)
- R. Zmarski (1976–1979)
- G. Kiernicki (1979–1984)
- J. Arbour (1984–1987)
- C. Edgecombe (1987–1990)
- R. Oke (1990–1994)
- P. Cauley (1994–1999)
- M. Thomas (1999–2002)
- N. Drynan (2002–2003)
- J. Raper (2003–2010)
- G. O'Reilly (2010–present)

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