



Durham Catholic District School Board



# St. Joseph Catholic School (Oshawa)

**Motto: "St. Joseph, Oshawa: Let Your Spirit Soar"**



## **In the Beginning**

In 1957, construction began on St. Joseph Catholic School at 1037 Simcoe Street in Oshawa. This area was surrounded by forests and quiet streets and by the growing population in North Oshawa. The school was completed in 1958, with six classrooms on two floors. The building was officially opened and blessed on January 18, 1959, by the His Eminence James Cardinal McGuigan.

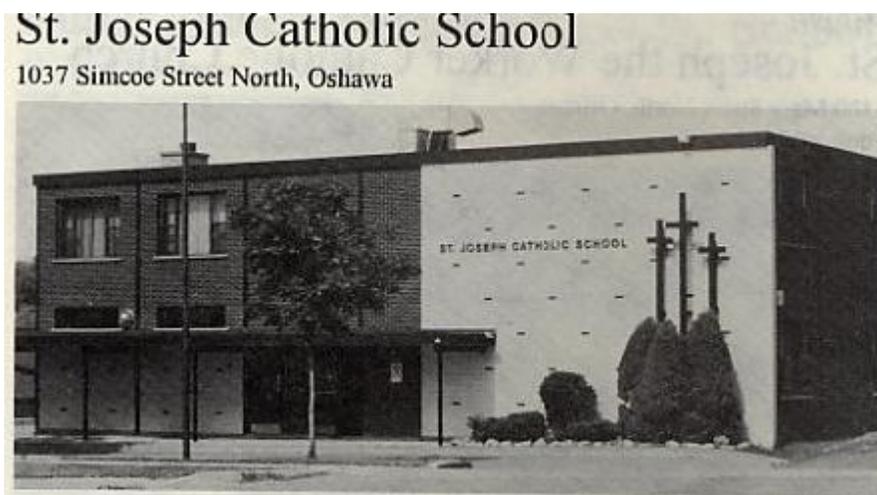
Throughout the years, this area became more developed, with apartment buildings and stores springing up. In 1962, an east wing, including a science lab and gym, was built to accommodate students at the newly formed St. Joseph Catholic High School. These secondary school students remained on site until 1964, when the new building was opened on Stevenson and Rossland Roads. The east wing was then used as a Senior School for Grade 7 and 8 students from north Oshawa.

In 1985, after St. Joseph Catholic School's parent council encouraged him to open a new church, Bishop Clune appointed Father Gignac to head this new project. On

September 1, 1985, plans to begin a new parish in North Oshawa were announced. This parish was to be named St. Joseph the Worker, in recognition of the Sisters of St. Joseph and to connect the church to the already established school. The site on Mary and Beatrice Street had already been chosen by Monsignor Paul Dwyer for future development for the building of a church and school. Its location behind St. Joseph C.S. on Simcoe Street provided immediate connections between the school and parish. Father Gignac presided at Masses at Oshawa Little Theatre for six years until the church was officially opened and blessed by His Grace Aloysius Ambrozic on September 8, 1991. The church had strong links to the school, with the priests visiting the school and classes and the whole school visiting the church on a regular basis.

In 2003, after reviewing population growth in North Oshawa, the Durham Catholic District School Board (DCDSB) began to examine the need for a newer, larger school to replace the Simcoe Street site. On May 12, 2003, plans were announced to build a new St. Joseph C.S. on the southwest side of Taunton and Harmony Roads. Construction began in the summer of 2004 and the old St. Joseph C.S. closed its doors to staff and students in the summer of 2005. In September 2005, students began being bused to St. John Bosco Catholic School, where they were housed in portables while construction on the new school was completed. Families were invited to tour the new facility in December in preparation for the opening after the Christmas holidays. The building was officially opened and blessed on May 10, 2006, with a number of dignitaries and former staff in attendance.

In April 2010, St. Joseph C.S. was chosen as one of three sites in the DCDSB to have a wind turbine installed. Construction began in the summer of 2010 and the turbine was officially turned on on October 31, 2011. Data from this turbine are being collected and shared with staff and students as part of the school's environmental initiatives.



*St. Joseph Catholic School in 1958*



*St. Joseph C.S. in 1998*



Throughout the years, the St. Joseph C.S. Choir has been a part of many Durham Region events: Oshawa Generals games, Christmas Tree Lighting ceremonies, Pickering Festival, Christmas carols at the Royal Canadian Legion, and the Terry Fox Run. The choir of 75 to 100 students, led by Mrs. Ethier, Ms. McAvoy, Mrs. Breen and volunteer Mr. McAvoy, is also an integral part of all liturgical and celebratory events at the school.

Father Gignac was the founding priest of St. Joseph the Worker Church and had a close connection to the staff and students of St. Joseph. Here is his message from 1986:

# PRIEST'S MESSAGE



Dear Staff and Students of St. Joseph School

It is with a lot of joy and appreciation that I welcome the opportunity to contribute to your yearbook.

The chance to thank you for all your hard work on behalf of Our Lord and His Little Ones teaching them truth and goodness, by word and by example, making a lasting and profound contribution to their future success in life and to their ultimate salvation, is most appreciated.

In the name of Our Lord, whom we all serve, I extend my prayerful thanks to you all.

To the Boys and Girls of St. Joseph's School, my congratulations for so many things!

- Our wonderful celebrations of Confirmation, First Communion and First Reconciliation;
- The Masses you prepared and we celebrated together each First Friday and other special occasions;
- And not to forget ... all the money you raised for our new church in honour of our Patron, the great St. Joseph.

May Jesus, Mary and Joseph bless you all, dear Mr. Barber, Teachers, Secretary and Custodians, dear Boys and Girls!

Wishing you all peace and joy.

Father Gignac



St. Joseph C.S. continues to be a friendly and welcoming school to families and staff members, many of whom have been past students of St. Joseph C.S.

### **Fond Memories of St. Joseph C.S.**

“I remember having to leave my school in Grade 6 and deciding to go to St. Joseph C.S. because that is where all my friends were going. I went there for Grades 7 and 8, then off to Paul Dwyer C.H.S.”

—*Sandy Coscarella (vice-principal at St. Joseph C.S. from September 2011 to June 2012)*

“Almost everyone had lockers; only a few rooms had cloakrooms. You could not get from one side of the school to the other unless you were on the ground floor, and there were a lot of stairs. We would have religious celebrations in the backyard on Simcoe, such as the living Rosary, accompanied by heavy metal music from surrounding homes playing loudly! Priests would come at recess and lunch and play with the kids.”

—*Pat Cargill (teacher at St. Joseph C.S., 1980–2003 who now volunteers regularly at the school)*

“I remember wearing a blue tunic as a uniform.”

—*Angie Harris (former student at St. Joseph who did her practice teaching at the school and has been a teacher there for 26 years)*

“I loved everything about my elementary school years at St. Joe’s. I was deeply touched and moved by all the teachers I had while I was there – especially Kate O’Connor (now O’Quinn): Kate did her student teacher stint in my Grade 2 class and was then hired to teach at the school; I had her again in Grade 5 and then again when she looped in Grade 7 with a group of us. She was the most wonderful human being I have ever encountered. Her love for children and passion for life left a huge impact on me growing up. So much so that I knew from Grade 5 that I wanted to be a teacher just like her. To this day, I am passionate about music, through choir, and sports, through coaching, and those were all the things she found time for on top of being extremely motivating. Two of my fondest memories stand out. The first is my Grade 8 graduation. Knowing that a group of us liked listening to music by Harry Chapin, after our graduation mass Kate sang a “All My Life’s a Circle,” which deeply touched our graduating class and moved us to tears. The second is from that same year. At St. Joe’s annual Spring Concert, we were all treated to the teachers getting on stage at the end, which none of us expected, to sing “The Lion Sings Tonight.” If you asked me if I had a bad memory of St. Joe’s, my answer would be no, it was nine years of community, love, sharing talents and certainly a school with Christ at the centre of its teaching.”

— Lesley McAvoy (*former student at St. Joseph who became a teacher and returned to the school in 2005 when staff was increased with the opening of the new building on Summerwood Heights*)

### School Crests through the Years



2000



2006



2010

### Our Patron Saint

St. Joseph was the husband of Mary and earthly foster father of Jesus. Joseph was born in Bethlehem and settled in Nazareth. He was a carpenter who taught Jesus his trade. Joseph is the patron saint of workers and the patron saint of Canada. He was declared the protector of the Catholic Church by Pope Pius IX in 1870. His feast day is March 19.

St. Joseph C.S. began the tradition of the St. Joseph the Worker award in 2009. This award is randomly awarded to students who exemplify the spirit of St. Joseph, as it

states: “St. Joseph was dedicated to helping others, especially Mary and Jesus. As the Patron Saint and Protector of the Catholic Church he is an example to all of us about how we should live as Catholics, through doing good deeds for others.”

### **Principals**

David Dineen (1958–1959)  
Sr. St. Dorothy (1959–1962)  
Sr. Beatrice (1963–1964)  
Michael Lisko (1965–1966)  
Sr. Rosalia (1966–1967)  
Sr. Eileen (was Sr. Mary Vincent) (1967–1970)  
Ted Hickey (1970–1976)  
Brian Vrebosch (1976–1980)  
Breen O’Connor (1980–1985)  
Nick Barber (1985–1990)  
Dave Hodgkinson (1990–1996)  
Mary Simpson (1996–1999)  
Suzanne Godin–Galipeaut (1999–2004)  
Gerry O’Reilly (2004–2008)  
Jill Jacobson (2008–2010)  
Julia Pellerin (2010–2011)  
Lucia Goodwin (2011–present)

### *Contributors:*

*Lucia Goodwin*  
*Sandy Coscarella*  
*Eileen Ethier*  
*Ronna Campoli*  
*Pat Cargill*  
*Therese Byrne*