

## THE CONSECRATION OF ST. DOMINIC'S

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An impressive ceremony took place in Washington, D. C., on Friday, October 10th, when the beautiful Gothic Church of St. Dominic's was consecrated. The solemn rites of consecration were performed by the Right Rev. John T. McNicholas, O. P., Bishop of Duluth. On Sunday, October 12th, in commemoration of the event, a Solemn High Mass was celebrated by the Right Rev. Thomas J. Shahan, S. T. D., rector of the Catholic University of America. His Eminence Cardinal Gibbons presided. The sermon on the occasion was delivered by the Very Rev. Raymond Meagher, O. P., S. T. Lr., Provincial of the Dominicans.

Saint Dominic's Church presents us with an interesting bit of history. In compliance with the request of Archbishop Fenwick, a parish was accepted at the National Capital in 1852 by the Dominicans, while Father M. A. O'Brien was Provincial. In obedience to his superior, Rev. George A. J. Wilson accepted charge of the parish and immediately set out for this field of Dominican activity. Ground was broken for the church July 1st, 1853. In the meantime, through the generosity of George Mattingly, a temporary church was opened in his home, which also provided an abode for the Fathers. The new church, which was dedicated to St. Dominic, the founder of the Order of Preachers, was opened and blessed on Sunday, March 19th, 1854. It was the first Dominican house east of the Alleghany Mountains, thus marking the beginning of their steady growth in the Eastern States of the Union.

As time passed a crowded church and school gave evidence that more room was required, and accordingly on April 10th, 1865, the Fathers decided to build a new and more commodious edifice. The congregation responded generously to the appeal made to them and plans were soon drawn up for a gray granite church 200 feet in length and 95 feet wide, Gothic in style, which was to replace the smaller temple of God. For this new edifice the first sod was turned on November 8th, 1865. On the 19th of the same month Fr. N. D. Young blessed and laid the cornerstone in the presence of an immense gathering made up of all classes, irrespective of race or creed. In its construction, all showed their zeal. Like the medieval builders, they came united as one body to complete their church. The congregation, considered a large one for those days, numbered less than four thousand souls, none of whom were wealthy. All their efforts came from the heart

and according to their means. Those who could give little in money, gave their time and strength, some even lending their teams after their own day's work was over.

Due to hard times following the Civil War, work on the new church was temporarily halted. But this condition of affairs did not last long. The people in their zeal for the "House of God" stinted themselves to further the work, and soon, under the direction of Fr. Moses B. Fortune, the sacred edifice was completed. It was dedicated on Sunday, June 30th, 1875. The crowds pleted. It was dedicated on Sunday, June 30th, 1875.

With the completion of the church, a movement was begun for the construction of a new home for the Fathers. This was finished in 1879, shortly after the appointment of Fr. John A. Rochford.

On March 12th, 1884, shortly after the appointment of Fr. Donnelly, the church was destroyed by fire. Here, again, the zeal of the people was manifested in their efforts to remove the Stations of the Cross and other sacred furnishings. Fr. Vincent Flood, an Irish Dominican, who was visiting St. Dominic's at the time, removed the Blessed Sacrament. Rebuilding was immediately begun and on Rosary Sunday, October 4th, 1884, a new and more beautiful church was dedicated.

The Vicariate of St. Dominic's was raised to the dignity of a Priory in October, 1885. Successive priors have held fairs to pay off the debt of the church. Through their efforts, and the continued zeal of the present prior, Fr. George I. Conlon, St. Dominic's was recently freed from debt, and thus merited the privilege of being consecrated.

This, in brief, is the history of St. Dominic's Church. Within its sacred walls many thousands have been received into the Church in Baptism; many a troubled soul calmed in the tribunal of Penance; many nourished in Holy Communion, strengthened in Confirmation; and united in the bonds of Matrimony. From the parish a large number of souls have gone forth to devote themselves to the service of God in religion. Finally, many have been brought back to the church, to receive from her the final blessing of the funeral rites. The sacrifices, labors and zeal of the early missionaries and people have been crowned by this great blessing of consecration. What has been done in the past and what is being done now give every indication that St. Dominic's in the future will reap a glorious harvest of souls for the glory of God and the welfare of Holy Mother Church.

—Bro. Athanasius Burke, O. P.