

= Holy Rosary Cathedral (Vancouver) =

The Metropolitan Cathedral of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary , commonly known as Holy Rosary Cathedral , is a late 19th @-@ century French Gothic revival church that serves as the cathedral of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Vancouver . It is located in the downtown area of the city at the intersection of Richards and Dunsmuir streets .

The construction of the cathedral began in 1899 on the site of an earlier church by the same name . It opened on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 8 , 1900 , was blessed the day after , and was consecrated in 1953 . The style has been described as resembling the medieval Chartres Cathedral in France . The church was elevated to the status of cathedral in 1916 . It is listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register and is a legally protected building .

= = History = =

= = = Original structure (1887 ? 1899) = = =

The parish was established in June 1885 and Father Patrick Fay , the chaplain to Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) workers , was chosen as pastor . He officiated the first mass of the parish on the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary in the same year at an unknown location . Although masses were held in Blair ? s Hall and Keefer ? s Hall , it became apparent that a new and permanent church was necessary to cope with the growing number of parishioners , which consisted of 69 families .

In order to pick a site for the new church , legend has it that Father Fay went to the Coal Harbour waterfront , looked south towards the forested land (present @-@ day Downtown Vancouver) and chose the area that contained the tallest tree . Construction began in 1886 and the wooden church was completed and blessed in the following year . Two years later , the church was enlarged and a bell tower was added .

= = = Present @-@ day cathedral = = =

With the rapid growth of Vancouver at the time , plans were made for a greater expansion of the church . Because Fay was transferred in 1892 and died shortly after , Father Eumellin succeeded him in overseeing the plan for construction from 1893 to 1897 . Then , the new pastor of the church , Father James McGuckin , took over the project . By that time , the number of parishioners had outgrown the size of the church building . In order to fund the construction of the new church , the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) ? the religious order McGuckin belonged to ? mortgaged their headquarters in France , and before his death , Fay worked as a CPR foreman for a construction crew . Initially , parishioners and the OMI were skeptical of the project ; the parish was already heavily in debt when McGuckin became pastor , the Catholic community in Vancouver ? though " rapidly growing " ? was still " relatively small " in number , and a friend of McGuckin who was a contractor was unable to provide the funds he had initially pledged . These problems culminated in the construction project being labelled " McGuckin 's Folly " .

Despite these doubts , the cornerstone of the new church was laid on July 16 , 1899 , by Archbishop Adélard Langevin of Saint Boniface . Thomas Ennor Julian and H.J. Williams were hired to be the architects , and in just 491 days , the construction was completed . At the time it was finished , the building was praised as " the finest piece of architecture west of Toronto and north of San Francisco . " The new Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary opened on December 8 , 1900 ? the Feast of the Immaculate Conception ? and was blessed one day later by Archbishop Alexander Christie of Portland , Oregon . By the end of the decade , it became " the most financially important parish " in the archdiocese , since it was the only church that not only could break @-@ even , but could also churn out a surplus . Because of this , Archbishop Timothy Casey wanted to make the church the cathedral for the metropolitan see . The OMI were extremely reluctant to give up their church , and even attempted to give Casey money so that he could buy land elsewhere to build a

new cathedral . Nonetheless , the church was elevated to the status of cathedral in 1916 , but the Oblates were permitted to remain . The OMI ? which administered the parish since 1893 ? eventually left in 1927 after difficulties arose from the mortgage agreement that had helped pay for the construction of the cathedral . This was coupled with the " growing manpower shortage " caused by a declining number of members joining the order .

Since a Catholic church can only be consecrated once it has become free from debt , the cathedral did not have its rite of consecration held until October 3 , 1953 , fifty @-@ three years after it first opened . The ceremony ? which commenced just after daybreak ? was officiated by the Archbishop of Vancouver William M. Duke , with the subsequent solemn pontifical Mass celebrated by Michael Harrington , the Bishop of Kamloops . Approximately thirty @-@ five bishops from across Canada and the United States attended the event , which coincided with Duke 's golden and silver jubilees of his priestly ordination and consecration as a bishop , respectively .

On October 7 , 1952 , the feast day of the cathedral 's namesake , a gunman entered the church and fired a round from his rifle at the altar . No one was hurt and he was arrested shortly after . A minor tilt in the bell tower of the cathedral was detected in April 1959 , probably due to the drilling and blasting of a nearby tunnel .

Many significant events have taken place at the cathedral . In 1936 , it hosted an archdiocesan @-@ level Eucharistic Congress , the first congress ever to be celebrated in Western Canada . Forty @-@ eight years later , in 1984 , Pope John Paul II visited the church as part of his pastoral visit to Canada . In late September 2001 , the cathedral became the first place in Canada to host the relics of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux during her reliquary 's three @-@ month @-@ long tour of the country .

Over the years , several notable people had their funeral requiem mass said at the cathedral , including beloved local lifeguard and swim instructor Joe Fortes (1922) , Chief Dan George of the Tsleil @-@ Waututh Nation (1981) , and former Vancouver police commissioner William Cameron Murphy in 1961 . The funeral of Fortes in February 1922 saw the cathedral filled to capacity , with thousands of others braving the rain and cold weather to view the funeral procession on the streets of Vancouver . Requiem masses were also held at the cathedral for popes Pius XI (1939) and Saint John Paul II (2005) , while an interfaith requiem was also held for former Governor General of Canada Georges Vanier in 1967 .

= = Architecture = =

= = = Steeples and interior = = =

The cathedral , built in a French Gothic style , is cruciform in the shape of the Latin cross . The exterior walls of the church were built from sandstone originating from Gabriola Island , while its foundations were made of granite . The two bell towers ? which are asymmetric ? have been labelled as the cathedral 's " most prominent visual feature " . The taller steeple was originally designed to have flying buttresses at the bottom . The interior features columns that support the nave which are made from red Scagliola marble . The cathedra is situated at the centre of the sanctuary , surrounded by an oak altar @-@ piece and two towers of reredos . In total , the dimensions of the church building are 161 ft (49 m) long , 104 ft (32 m) wide and 62 ft (19 m) tall , with the taller steeple rising to 217 ft (66 m) .

Over the years , the cathedral has undergone a series of renovations . In late 1932 , the " tin scales " that covered spire of the taller steeple were cleaned and repaired , and the cross atop of it was repainted . The reordering of the sanctuary took place in the 1960s after the Second Vatican Council . Refurbishing also took place prior to Pope John Paul II 's visit to the cathedral in 1984 . The cathedral was completely re @-@ roofed from 1995 to 1997 , with zinc being utilized on the roof to resemble slate . In December 2002 , some of the carpeting was removed and replaced with Italian ceramic tiles , and the inside of the church was repainted from 2004 to 2006 .

== Bells ==

When the cathedral was first built , seven bells ? representing the sacraments ? were cast at the Fonderie Paccard in Annecy @-@ le @-@ Vieux , Savoy , France and were blessed on October 21 , 1900 . However , they were soon found to be out of tune and were sent back to Europe , this time to a foundry near Bristol . This time , eight bells were made in order to complete an entire octave when rung . They were reinstalled in the cathedral in 1906 and operate on change ringing . They are one of the few peal of bells hung in the English style found in North America , and one of three in British Columbia ? the others are located at Westminster Abbey in Mission and Victoria 's Christ Church Cathedral . The bells were notably rung on Dominion Day in 1911 ? the first peal ever to be rung in Canada ? and on February 12 , 2010 , in honour of the opening of the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver .

== Organ ==

The cathedral 's pipe organ was originally built and inaugurated in the autumn of 1900 . Manufactured by the Karn ? Warren Organ Company in Woodstock , Ontario , the organ is the " oldest romantic @-@ style organ " in the province " remaining in its original location " . Over the years , the instrument 's condition deteriorated due to " general wear and tear " , shoddy repairs and water damage caused by the leaking roof . As a result , the organ was dismantled in 1999 and transported to Casavant Frères in Saint @-@ Hyacinthe , Quebec . It was restored within two years and returned to the church , where it was blessed in Easter of 2000 . In that same year , an organ concert series was hosted at the cathedral for the first time , and has been held annually since .

== Stained glass windows ==

There are currently 21 stained glass windows at the cathedral . The most renowned ones are the five windows made by Canadian artist Guido Nincheri . They depict Our Lady of the Holy Rosary , the Baptism of Our Lord , Jesus Healing the Sick , Jesus with the Children and the Assumption . The window showing Our Lady of the Holy Rosary featured on Canada Post 's annual Christmas stamp in 1997 . Furthermore , the Institute for Stained Glass in Canada documented the stained glass windows at the cathedral .

== Modern day ==

The cathedral made news in 2007 , with the Vancouver Police Department having to be called in on a weekly basis ; cathedral staff claimed they were " under siege " by panhandlers who frequented the building and who were involved in at least one incident daily . These revelations came to light when a homeless man mugged an 81 @-@ year @-@ old parishioner in the cathedral on August 1 of that year and was caught on camera .

On March 23 , 2008 , First Nations protesters disrupted an Easter Sunday Mass at the cathedral by demonstrating on the outside steps . They ordered the Church to " get off native land " and demanded that they disclose the burial locations of children who died in residential schools . A similar protest occurred on October 30 , 2011 , when a splinter group from the Occupy Vancouver movement marched to the cathedral from the Vancouver Art Gallery . They attempted to enter the cathedral and occupy it but were thwarted by Vancouver police officers and Knights of Columbus .