

Rev. P. P. Arsenault

The death of Rev. P. P. Arsenault, which occurred at Mont-Carmel on the 22nd of November, has filled with sorrow the hearts of his cherished parishioners and cast a certain gloom over the whole insular population.

Born in Tignish, in 1867, Father Arsenault completed his classical course in the University of St. Joseph's College, Memramcook, and followed his theological studies in Quebec Seminary, where he was ordained on November 5th, 1893. After a short period of service as a member of the Cathedral staff at Charlottetown, he was sent to his native parish as assistant to Mgr. D. MacDonald. In 1896, he was appointed pastor of Mont-Carmel at which post of duty he labored strenuously and religiously, we can say, until his last breath.

No sooner had Father Arsenault taken up his new pastoral work, than he set himself, apart from the multitudinous duties of ministering to his flock, to build grander and more suitable dwelling-places both for God and for His ambassador. His steadfast confidence in God, supplemented by his individual labors and the willing assistance of his parishioners, was practically the only capital he had to invest in this arduous enterprise; yet it was productive of marvelous and magnificent results. The present beautiful church, the stately parochial house, and the three stone arches surmounted with appropriate statues and commanding the main entrances to the grounds and cemetery, stand as lasting monuments to his cherished memory and noble endeavors.

But it was in the spiritual care of his people that we see Father Arsenault's energetic and unselfish zeal, his assiduity and intentness to duty, his burning love and ardent desire to foster God's choicest interests among men. Affectionately cherishing his parishioners and loving them in God and for God, he was ever ready to stimulate their devotion, and to facilitate the accomplishment of their religious obligations by imparting to them, together with the teachings of Christ, the priceless treasures of the Master's Sacraments. All the various duties incumbent on, and incidental to, his pastoral charge, he performed with the exactness and the wholeheartedness which are



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characteristic of the priest of God. Having Christ's fondness for little children, to them he was wont to teach the word of God and to administer the Bread of Life with all the care of a faithful steward and a genuine Apostle. His heart went out to the poor, the needy, the afflicted, and particularly the little orphans, all of whom have often benefited and have been cheered by his consoling words, his material gifts, and spiritual assistance.

Father Arsenault had a strong touch of genius, if we must accept genius as the capacity to take pains. He turned his mind and devoted his inventive talents to fostering every endeavor which made for a constant and progressive betterment in the material, economic, intellectual, and spiritual conditions not only of his own parishioners, but of every citizen as well. He promoted home industries, encouraged farming and agriculture, and was instrumental in creating various cooperative movements. His noble efforts towards educational advancement are proverbial, and many a young man or woman owes to Father Arsenault the initiative and the deciding impulse which contributed highly to his or her intellectual success. The career of this active pastor was not lacking in severe difficulties and discouraging trials, but his keen sense of organization, his indomitable zeal and supreme confidence in Divine Assistance, made him preserve his courage, and rally with him the oft-time drooping spirits of his followers.

As a friend and neighbor, Father Arsenault will long be remembered for his courtesy, geniality, willingness, magnanimity, and kindness. Cultivating affable relations with all his acquaintances—and these were legions—he became the favored and coveted companion of a host of friendly admirers. His home was ever wide open to friend, passer-by or stranger; all of whom he always received with the most cordial hospitality. Whether he entertained a superior or an inferior, the learned or the ignorant, the rich or the poor, he never ceased to show himself "grand seigneur," and by his cheerfulness and affability, his ready wit and original repartees, he made every guest feel at ease.

St. Dunstan's has neither the privilege nor the honor of claiming Father Arsenault as one of her loyal sons; but she always felt that he was her warm and devoted friend, always on the alert to encourage her modest efforts. Only