

Fr. Edmund Gaborit, SCJ

1873-1940

Although Fr. Gaborit died as a member of the U.S. Province, most of his work is tied to the development of the SCJ presence in Canada.

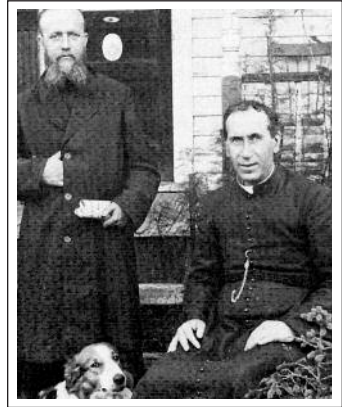
In 1907, Bishop Emile Legal of Edmonton, Canada, traveled to France to recruit help for his young diocese. In Soissons, the bishop met with Fr. Dehon. Anxious to help the bishop, Fr. Dehon sent one of his own priests back with him: Fr. Gaborit.

The son of a French peasant, Fr. Gaborit had often talked about becoming a missionary. Fr. Dehon felt that the dry weather of Canada would suit Fr. Gaborit well, since he was afflicted with chronic bronchitis.

His first assignment in Canada was to care for the remote missions of Wainwright and Wetaskewin. Several months later, Fr. Gaborit was asked to develop a parish for the heavily Catholic suburbs of Calder and Elm Park, just west of Edmonton.

The French-Canadians gave Fr. Gaborit a warm reception. A store owner donated the use of a bedroom and office adjoining his store, and on Sundays, allowed Fr. Gaborit to celebrate Mass in the store. The rest of the residents were equally generous a week later when Father announced that construction of the church, rectory and parish hall should begin immediately. Fr. Gaborit designed the church himself, but all labor and materials were donated by the parishoners.

When Fr. Gaborit announced that the church was ready to be consecrated a year later, Bishop Legal said, "You mean you want me to bless it, the debt must be paid before it can be consecrated." The bishop was pleasantly shocked to learn that Fr. Gaborit had built the church without debt, depending on the generous assistance of his parishoners. In that rectory, Fr. Gaborit soon opened an SCJ novitiate that was later transferred with Fr. Gaborit to Beaumont, a small town near Edmonton. Fr. Gaborit actively worked in parish ministry and vocations until his death in 1940.



Fr. Edmund Gaborit, SCJ (r)

March 27, 1940