

The History of the R.C. Diocese of Vancouver Island

The diocese was created on 24 July 1846 as the Diocese of Vancouver Island, one of three dioceses in the Pacific Northwest created out of the Vicariate Apostolic of the Oregon Territory. It was elevated to an archdiocese on 19 June 1903 and renamed Archdiocese of Victoria in 1904. Then lowered to a diocese in 1908, when the metropolitan see was moved to Vancouver. The territory included Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands, New Caledonia (mainland British Columbia), the Queen Charlotte Islands and Alaska. Modeste Demers was the new diocese's first bishop. Incorporated in 1892, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Vancouver Island now comprises the whole of Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands, and islands off the west coast

The diocese operated several schools including 2 Residential Schools.

Catholic high schools

St. Andrew's Regional High School Victoria
St. Ann's Academy (Victoria, British Columbia), 1858 - 1974.
Smith Memorial High School, of Port Alberni, 1951 - 1976.

Catholic elementary schools

St. Joseph's Victoria
St. Patrick's Victoria
Queen of Angels Duncan
St. John Paul II Port Alberni 1951
St. Ann's Academy for Boys, of Duncan, 1864 - 1969.
St. Mary's School, of Ladysmith, 1909 1913.

Residential Schools

Kuper Island Indian Residential School, Kuper Island 1889 – 1975
Christie R.C. School, Meares Island 1900-1983
Upon the discovery of the remains of 215 children at Kamloops Indian Residential School, the diocese released a statement of apology and commitment.

Catholic Universities, Colleges and Seminaries

St. Joseph's School for Nursing, of Victoria, was erected in 1900 and closed in 1981.
St. John Fisher / Thomas More College 1953 and closed in 1993.

There have been several Religious orders of women serving within the diocese.

Benedictine Sisters; Franciscan Poor Clares; Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) and Sisters of St. Ann.

Of Note: the Benedictine Sisters were involved with the Bethlehem Centre in Nanaimo.

We have had 16 bishops (one, Charles-Jean Seghers, returned for a second term).

1. Continued on page _____ OR
2. (NOTE – the list of our Bishops can be found on our web site under _____)

Bishops

Modeste Demers (1846–1871)

Charles-Jean Seghers (1873–1878), appointed Coadjutor Archbishop of Oregon City, Oregon, USA; returned here in 1884

Jean-Baptiste Brondel (1879–1883)

Charles-Jean Seghers (1884–1886); personal title of Archbishop

Jean-Nicolas Lemmens (1888–1897)

Alexander Christie (1898–1899), appointed Archbishop of Oregon City, Oregon, USA

Bertram Orth (1900–1908)

Alexander MacDonald (1908–1923)

Thomas O'Donnell (1923–1929), appointed Coadjutor Archbishop of Halifax, N. S.

Gerald C. Murray, C.S.S.R. (1930–1934), appointed Bishop of Saskatoon, Sask.

John Hugh MacDonald (1934–1936), appointed Coadjutor Archbishop of Edmonton, AB.

John Christopher Cody (1936–1946), appointed Coadjutor Bishop of London, Ontario

James Michael Hill (1946–1962)

Remi Joseph De Roo (1962–1999) – Bishop Emeritus

Raymond Roussin, S.M. (1999–2004), appointed Archbishop of Vancouver, B.C.

Richard Gagnon (2004–2014), appointed Archbishop of Winnipeg

Gary Gordon (2014–present)

Of Note: Bishop Emeritus Remi De Roo, who now lives in Nanaimo, was part of the Second Vatican Council (1962 -1965) and was the longest serving bishop of the diocese.