PREFACE

This work is a biography of John Walsh, who was the second bishop of London from 1867 to 1889, and who afterwards was promoted to be the fourth bishop – and second archbishop – of Toronto from 1889 to 1898. It is an expansion of my doctoral dissertation presented at the Gregorian University in Rome. In my previous work, I focused on the early life of both Walsh and the diocese of London, to give the context of the situation he inherited from his troubled predecessor, Bishop Pierre-Adolphe Pinsoneault. Pinsoneault was forced to resign so that Walsh could come in and repair what had gone wrong, and rebuild the Catholic Church in southwestern Ontario. Much of that historical background on London has been expunged so that this book can more properly present Walsh’s life and work.

A biography is usually presented chronologically. However, I am presenting Walsh’s life following a thematic development but with an overarching chronology. It reflects best, I believe, the many facets of the man who became a bishop at the time of Canada’s Confederation, and who, by the strength of his personality and talents, became a major player on the ecclesiastical and public stages of the growing Catholic Church in a developing new country. It begins with his early life and the situation in London left by his predecessor, but it quickly moves to his own episcopate in London, the truly defining years of his life.

There, as he grew into the office and role of a bishop in nineteenth-century Ontario, I present how his life was lived and how his episcopal ministry mirrored the challenges of all bishops to be the chief priest or sanctifier, the chief teacher, and the chief administrator in their dioceses. It continues with the final decade of his life, as archbishop of Toronto. This means that at times the narrative moves chronologically, at other times historically backwards and forwards as I present various themes in the tableau of his life.
A few points for clarity for the reader: First, London in Ontario will simply be “London,” whereas London in England, whenever referred to, will always include “England.” As well, all dollar figures appear as they do in the original sources. To understand the values of those figures from the last half of the nineteenth century, one can take the value given and multiply it by 21 to find an approximate value in current dollars. Values change from time and place, so this is only a rough guideline. It should be noted, as well, especially when considering gifts of money presented or monies raised for a building, that there was a relatively small number of Catholics at the time who made incredible sacrifices of the resources they had.
Stained Glass Window from St Peter’s Cathedral, London – photo by Mark Adkinson (DLA)
Bishop François-Armand-Marie le Comte de Charbonnel
(ARCAT PH992.03/01)

*Facing page, above*
Bishop Pierre-Adolphe Pinsoneault, c. 1856 (DLA)

*Facing page, below*
Bishop Pinsoneault’s Palace, Sandwich, c. 1860
(Windsor Community Museum, P5547)
Archbishop John Lynch, CM –
photo by J.H. Lemaitre & Co. (ARCAT PHO4-03)
Bishop Walsh (ARCAT PH05-07)
above
Bishop Walsh with the Clergy of London, c. 1870 (DLA)

below
The Bishop’s Palace, 1874 – photo by O’Connor & Lancaster (DLA)
Bishop Walsh – from the *Catholic Record* – photo by Edy Brothers, London (DLA)
Bishop Walsh – photo by Frank Cooper, London (ARCAT PH05-01)

Facing page, above
The original St Peter’s Cathedral with palace in background, c. 1875 (DLA)

Facing page, below
The Fathers and Theologians of the First Provincial Council of Toronto, 1875 (ARCAT PH992.04/10)
Monsignor Jean-Marie Bruyère (DLA)
New St Peter’s Cathedral 1885 – *London Free Press* photo
Coat of Arms of Archbishop Walsh – artwork by Philip Aziz (DLA)

*Per pale, dexter Argent a representation of the Immaculate Conception proper standing upon a crescent Argent issuant from clouds of the last, sinister Azure a lion rampant Or debruised by a fess per pale Argent and Azure edged Argent.*

The shield carries a representation of the Walsh family on the right, signified by the lion and the blue colour, with the bar. The diocese of London is represented on the left, with a figure of the Blessed Virgin, recalling the dedication of the diocese to the Blessed Virgin under the title of the Immaculate Conception.

The heraldic hat, with ten tassels on each side, and metropolitan cross, signify the shield is that of an archbishop. John Walsh used this coat of arms while bishop of London and archbishop of Toronto, with the variation in hat and cross signifying the difference.
Archbishop Walsh with Monsignor Merry Del Val, 1897
(ARCAT PH05-13)
The work of the Church ... is God’s work — carried out often through very inadequate human agencies. And this is for Us a ground of confidence and consolation, in accepting the responsible position which the Church assigns Us. Paul may plant, Apollo water, but it is God who gives the increase.

BISHOP JOHN WALSH
FIRST PASTORAL LETTER
11 NOVEMBER 1867