

## CONNOLLY, Joseph (1840 – 1904)

**J**oseph Connolly was responsible for the creation of outstanding examples of Gothic revival architecture throughout the province, mainly for the Roman Catholic Church. He based his principles of design on the writings of A.W.N. Pugin who advocated the Gothic style of architecture for construction of "True Christian" church buildings. Connolly designed in whole or in part more than 30 Roman Catholic churches and chapels in Ontario and had a major influence on the development of church architecture by codifying the principles of the Gothic revival into built form.

Connolly was born in Limerick, Ireland in 1840 and received his architectural training in the Dublin office of James Joseph McCarthy, a leading exponent of the Gothic revival style in Ireland. Connolly soon rose to the position of chief assistant and thereafter toured the continent to complete his architectural training. In 1871 he established his own architectural practice in Limerick, moving to Toronto shortly after. In 1873 he formed a partnership with the engineer /surveyor /architect Silas James, which lasted until April 1877. After this he practiced alone until his death in 1904.

Although he is credited with various secular buildings around the province, it is for his religious buildings, in particular those for the Roman Catholic Church, that he is remembered. Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception (1876-88) in Guelph, Ontario is considered by many to be his finest work. Located on a superb site, the church is a twin-towered basilican structure, executed in the thirteenth century gothic style, with fine detailing. St. Peter's Cathedral in London, Ontario which fol-

lowed in 1880 is similar in many respects to the Guelph church. Connolly was also responsible for the addition of a tower and a new facade to St. Mary's Cathedral in Kingston, Ontario (1889-91) and contributed to the decoration of both St. Michael's Cathedral in Toronto (1890-91) and St. Mary's Cathedral in Hamilton (1882-83). His gothic designs for St. Mary's Church, Bathurst Street at Adelaide Street, Toronto (1885-88) are adapted for the site, as he uses a single monumental tower to provide a fitting climax to the vista along Adelaide Street.

Although Connolly designed almost exclusively for the Roman Catholic Church and again almost exclusively in the Gothic Revival style, there are exceptions to both. At St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church, Power Street at Queen, Toronto (1887-89) his design is based on the Italian Renaissance model and has been likened to the 15th century Santa Maria Novella in Florence. Here his work is executed in rough Credit Valley stone and smooth Cleveland limestone, complete with a 129-foot bell tower. Its light-filled interior displays all the lucidity and sense of visual order of Renaissance designs with its barrel vaulted nave separated from the aisles by a graceful Ionic arcade. Eric Arthur called it "the most beautiful church interior in Toronto".

In Hamilton he was responsible for the designs of the James Street Baptist Church (1879-82). Connolly also completed designs for Roman Catholic churches in London, Chatham, Prescott, Kemptonville, Tweed, Kincora, Formosa, Caledon, Gananoque and Belleville.