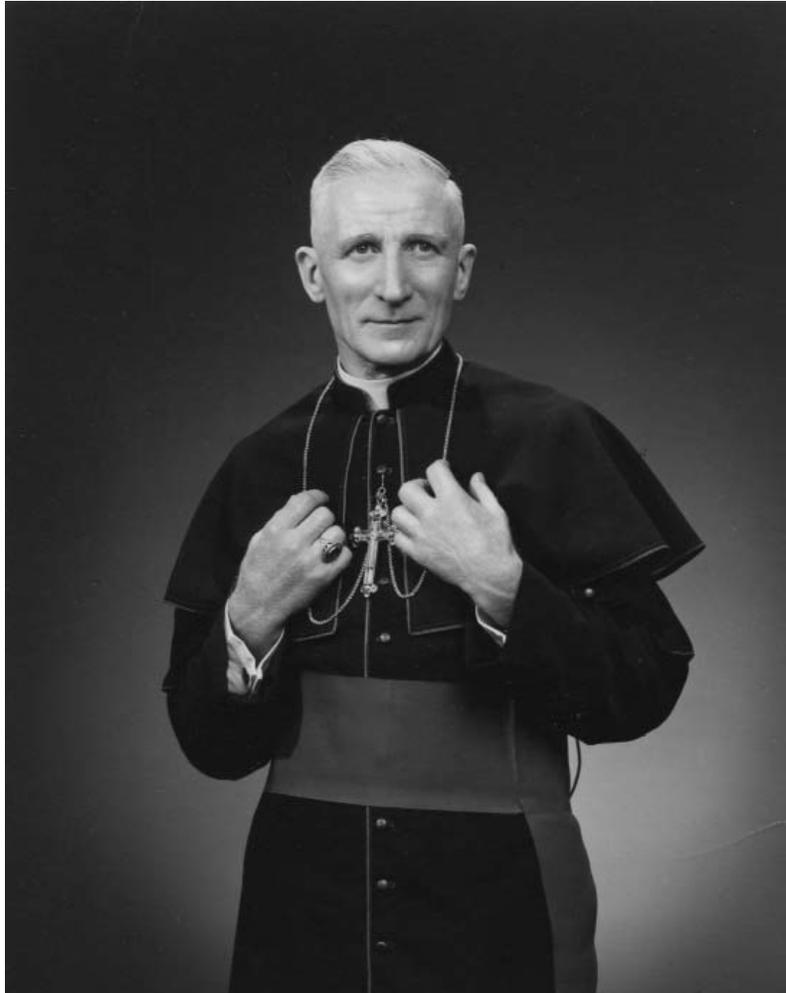




## The Most Reverend E.Q. Jennings



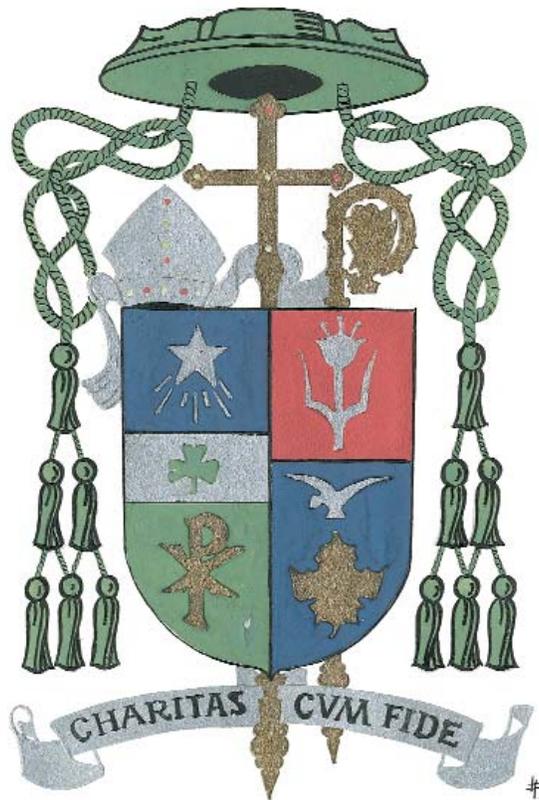
*The Most Reverend Edward Quentin Jennings, D.D.  
First Bishop of Thunder Bay, 26 August 1952 - 16 September 1969*

Edward Quentin Jennings, son of Patrick Jennings and Elizabeth Wallace, was born on 4 October 1896 in the hamlet of Little River outside of Saint John, New Brunswick. His family had sufficient means to provide him with a fine Catholic academic education in Saint John where he attended St Malachi Elementary School and then St John High School graduating in 1915. At 19 his formal education was interrupted when he joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force on 9 May 1916 and became part of the 6th Canadian Siege Battery Regiment as a gunner. He served with this regiment in England, France, Belgium, and Germany. Like thousands of Canadian soldiers who experienced the horrors of trench warfare during World War I, he was in and out of military hospitals suffering from head wounds, shell gas wounds, and the dreadful effects of mustard gas used by German forces against Allied troops. Following his discharge from the Canadian army in the fall of 1919, he enrolled at St Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1922. Three years of further study at Holy Heart Seminary, Halifax, culminated in his ordination to the priesthood on 27 December 1925 by the Most Reverend Edward Alfred LeBlanc at Saint John, N.B. for the Edmonton Diocese.

The religious career of Father Edward Jennings was to grow and flourish in Western Canada. His superiors in the Edmonton Diocese soon recognized his industriousness and inclination for pastoral work and administrative affairs. From the date of his ordination to the outbreak of World War II he held the positions of Assistant Pastor (1925-1927) and Rector of St Joseph's Cathedral in Edmonton (1937-1941). His administrative responsibilities in the Edmonton Diocese as Secretary to Archbishop Henry Joseph O'Leary (1927-1934) and as Chancellor (1934-1941) prepared him for the Episcopal appointments which were to follow. Within a decade of his appointment as Auxiliary Bishop of Vancouver in 1941, Bishop Jennings accepted the responsibility of organizing two new Canadian dioceses, namely, Kamloops, B.C. (1946) and Fort William, Ontario (1952). Both encompassed vast and sparsely populated areas, both were considered mission dioceses destined to serve significant native populations and both were created out of sections from adjoining dioceses. In the case of Fort William, the new diocese comprised that part of the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie west of 86th degree longitude and all territory in Ontario that once came under the aegis of the Archdiocese of St Boniface. It was considered bilingual with 18 parishes and 72 missions at widely dispersed points. With approximately 32,000 Roman Catholics served by 50 priests and 160 women religious, it covered a vast geographic area of 170,600 square km bound on the west by the Ontario-Manitoba border, on the north by 53 degrees latitude, on the south by the Canada-United States boundary and on the east by a line which coincided with the Pic River.

As its first Bishop, the Most Rev. E.Q. Jennings guided the clergy and laity in

establishing the spiritual and material foundations of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Thunder Bay. This process was made easier during the 1950s and 1960s by the unprecedented prosperity and population growth in Canada and northwestern Ontario. Founding new parishes and missions, organizing a diocesan council of the Catholic Women's League, launching a diocesan fund-raising campaign, attending the Second Vatican Council and beginning the implementation of its reforms, grappling with the problems of catholic secondary education in Thunder Bay, and initiating the design and construction of a new St Patrick's Cathedral were some of the tasks that engaged Bishop Jennings during his seventeen-year tenure at the helm of the Thunder Bay Diocese.



***Bishop E.Q. Jennings Coat of Arms***

*Motto: Charitas Cum Fide (Charity with Faith) Taken from the Epistle of St Paul to the Ephesians, Chapter VI, verse 23.*

Although Bishop Jennings sometimes wished that he had assumed the responsibilities as the first Bishop of Thunder Bay at a younger age, his record of accomplishments would compare favourably with those of his younger peers. In the space of seventeen years, he canonically erected ten parishes, blessed fourteen new churches and sixteen separate schools. In addition, he initiated the construction of a new cathedral for the diocese. One only has to peruse the detailed records he kept of his three hundred Confirmation visits to every parish and several of the most isolated missions of the diocese including Pekangikum and North Spirit Lake to realize that he did not view holidays as a constant in his life. In the fall of 1969, at age 73, he made a decision to retire. After Vatican II it became customary for Roman Catholic Bishops to offer their resignations to the Holy Father any time after age 70 and certainly no later than 75. Accordingly, in August 1969, he submitted his resignation to Pope Paul VI through the Apostolic Delegate to Canada, the Most Reverend Emanuele Clarizio. A month later it was accepted but he remained on as Apostolic Administrator of the diocese until such time as his successor was appointed. As was the custom at the time, Bishop Jennings was transferred as Bishop of the Titular Episcopal See of Assidona, a non-existent diocese preserved in the records of the church. Later, he was known simply as the Former Bishop of Thunder Bay. As Apostolic Administrator, he was responsible for officially changing the name of the diocese from the Diocese of Fort William (Dioecesis Arcis Gulielmi) to the Diocese of Thunder Bay (Dioecesis Sinus Tonitralis) on 17 April 1970 to coincide with the amalgamation of the former cities of Fort William and Port Arthur into the new municipality of Thunder Bay that year. Once Bishop Jennings' successor was named, he retired and remained in Thunder Bay until his death on 22 October 1980.

***Source:*** Roy Piovesana. *Hope and Charity: An Illustrated History of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Thunder Bay*. Thunder Bay: The Roman Catholic Bishop of Thunder Bay, 2002.