

## **The *Bout de l'Île* Church**

The west end tip of the island is currently referred to as *Bout de l'Île*. Its expansion took place mid 19th century, due to the arrival of summer residents, coming from Quebec City thanks to the implantation of a ferryboat service made accessible close by. The Quebec *bourgeoisie*, mostly Anglophones, seduced by the rustic charm and the unique perspective of the site, settled many cottages and gardens on its heights and along its coves.

After the nearby construction of an Anglican chapel in 1867, some forty five Francophone families, all permanent residents, soon acquired their own place of worship. Up until then, those without a horse and carriage had to walk eight kilometers to attend mass, often barefoot in order to spare their shoes, and on an empty stomach for those wishing to receive communion, in accordance with the Catholic principles of those days.

### **A New Parish**

The body of the parish settlement mainly took place on the hillside, at some distance from the existing houses forming the village on the island's extremity. Designed by architect Joseph-Ferdinand Peachy who had already realized some hundred buildings in Quebec City, the new temple welcomed its first worshippers in the fall of 1871. Nevertheless, parishioners had to wait two years before the church tower was erected and sixteen more until the interior covered with sober wood paneling could be completed. A landmark for navigators, standing high on its rocky headland, the new church overlooked the village officially established in 1874 in the old fief of *Beaulieu*, name under which it will be designated until 1980.

Now detached from the parish of Saint-Pierre (St. Peter) situated a few kilometers further east on the island, the new parish was devoted to St. Petronille, traditionally considered to be the daughter of St. Peter, head of the apostles. Nearly one hundred years after the construction of their temple, parishioners could at last revere a statue of the saint by sculptor Tobias Mack, curiously represented holding a broom.

### **A Place of Pilgrimage**

Around 1880, the parish priest Charles-Henri Pâquet, remembering his visit to St. Philomena's tomb in Mugnano (Italy), orders a wax recumbent statue of the miracle-worker to be placed in his church. For about ten years, due to his enthusiastic preaching, he literally drives popular fervor to a high, which in the summertime will attract more than a thousand pilgrims at Sainte-Pétronille's landing stage wharf. This devotion will

naturally decline after his death, while the liturgical reforms put forward by the Second Vatican Council will take care of ending St. Petronille's Statue reign.

### **Surroundings Fit for Music**

This church distinguishes itself for its remarkable acoustic quality, making it a perfect choice for holding concerts. These last decades, this church has rendered the “*Bout de l'Île*” a summer destination for music-lovers, welcoming the *Société des concerts de l'Île d'Orléans* (a concert society of the Island) and the *Musique de chambre à Sainte-Pétronille* (a chamber music association). Since its creation in 1983, this last organization made performances possible by artists of international caliber, performances often broadcasted on radio.