

## ALL SOULS CHURCH SOLD TO A CATHOLIC PARISH

Historic Universalist Edifice Passes Into the Hands of Father Bedford's Church  
PURCHASE PRICE IS \$47,500  
Contract Which Will Effect the Transfer of the Property to be Signed Next Week

All the preliminaries for the sale of the valuable property of All Souls Universalist Church to the congregation of Sts. Peter and Paul's Roman Catholic Church were arranged this morning in the office of Taylor & Fox, in the Eastern District.

Father Belford appeared for his church and Benjamin W. Wilson, president of the Board of Trustees, and Clinton S. Harris for All Souls Church. The contract is now being drawn up by Mr. Harris. He and Mr. Wilson were the committee to conclude the negotiations. This contract will be signed some time next week, as it must be ratified by the authorities of the Catholic Church in the Brooklyn Diocese.

This sale has a far reaching significance in the religious life of that section of the borough in the fact that a Protestant church, with a long history, becomes the property of a neighboring Catholic church, made historic by the late Father Sylvester Malone. The purchase price was \$47,500.

The negotiations for the purchase of All Souls Universalist Church began last year. Father Belford first offered \$30,000 for the property, but the trustees wanted \$60,000, finally falling to \$50,000, and Father Belford raised his bid to \$40,000, increasing the offer by exactly the amount the trustees fell in price. A meeting of the trustees was held shortly afterward and a vote was taken which resulted in a determination not to sell the property for less than \$47,500.

Last April All Souls people resolved not to sell at all, believing that if they did dispose of their property the serious problem would have to be faced of finding a location somewhere else. This problem is now before the society.

All Souls Church, like many of the Protestant churches of the Eastern District, has been going steadily down, owing to the changing conditions of the district in which it is situated. More than one-half of the membership and more than one-half of the board of trustees live outside of the district, so that the members of the society have realized for some time that a change must be made.

Just what will come about is not at this time by any means certain. Some of the members of All Souls have favored, and are of the opinion still, that a smaller church should be erected in about the same locality. Quite a number of the members of All Souls favor moving, transferring the church, with its traditions, its name and its memorial windows, to Flatbush, but it is doubtful if this will or can be done in face of the fact that the newly organized Church of the Divine Love, of which the Rev. Dr. Luther F. McKinney is pastor, has secured lots and is about to build a handsome edifice, money sufficient for the purpose being already in hand. Ground will be broken early in the new year, plans now indicating that the new edifice will be ready for occupancy in June or July next.

About two years ago All Souls Church put in a dozen or more beautiful art memorial windows in honor of prominent members. These will be retained and replaced in a new church when it shall have been built. While the Protestant churches of the Eastern District have been steadily running down, the Catholic Church of Sts. Peter and Paul has been increasing to such an extent that Father Belford was confronted with the great need of a new and more commodious church than the one in which his congregation worshipped. Two years ago he bought two lots adjoining All Souls Church, 75 feet front by 100 feet deep, with a three story brick house, formerly the home of B. H. Howells. On this, it is understood a chapel will be built and All Souls' Church will be altered to suit the needs of the parish. It is considered that with the increased price of labor and of materials, and owing to the new building law restrictions, it

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will be much cheaper to retain the present [All Souls] building with some necessary changes, than to build a new one.

All Souls Church is a large, commodious building, handsomely appointed, on South Ninth street, near Bedford avenue, with a fine chapel on South Tenth street, the two buildings connecting. The property cost more than \$80,000. It has been kept in fine condition. While there are other churches in Eastern District which Father Belford could undoubtedly have purchased, All Souls was the only one in his parish, and this was a large consideration in its purchase.

This transaction means a great deal for the Catholics of the Diocese of Brooklyn. All Souls Church is one of the best known in the Universalist denomination. It was organized over sixty years ago by people who had lived in New York City, and has been identified closely with the church of which the renowned Dr. [Thomas J.] Sawyer was pastor. All Souls has had few pastors, but all of them were successful and long held their places with the people. Those who have served the church and made their own names and the name of the church known far and wide are the late Bernard F. Peters, owner and editor of the Brooklyn Daily Times for many years; the Rev. Dr. A. [Andrew] J. Canfield, twice pastor of the Church of Our Father, and for some years pastor of a large and influential church in Chicago, now in New England; the Rev. Dr. Almon Gunnison, president of St. Lawrence University, Canton, N.Y., who had a pastorate of twenty years, the longest in the church's history, and during which time the present edifice was erected; the Rev. Dr. John Coleman Adams, who is regarded as one of the best preachers of the denomination, and who is now pastor of the First Universalist Church of Hartford, Conn., and the Rev. L. Ward Brigham, who was called here three years ago from the West, and who has been markedly successful in his work.

The church is entirely free from debt. It has been for many years one of the strongest congregations in the Eastern District, and has numbered among its members many men prominent in the social, religious and political life of Brooklyn. It has also been noted for the close fraternal relations always existing with the churches and pastors of all the other denominations.

Sts. Peter and Paul's Church will take possession on January 1. All Souls congregation will use the chapel until July 1. It is probable that a meeting of the officers and members of the latter will soon be held to determine the serious question whether they will build another house of worship in the Eastern District or go to some other section. The fear is expressed if the society rebuilds in the district its historical prominence will be obliterated, while this could be retained if they found a good site in a prominent section of the borough. All this is to be determined later, of course.

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Transcribed on 22 Feb 2011 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY