Preamble

Although 2017 marked an important anniversary in the history of this country with the 150th Anniversary of Confederation, 2018 also marks an important moment in time. It was on April 7, 1868, after a night of debate in the House of Commons, that Thomas D'Arcy McGee, Father of Confederation, was assassinated outside his Ottawa residence on Spark Street.

Thomas D'Arcy McGee and the St. Patrick's Society of Montreal are unavoidably linked. Thomas D’Arcy McGee was expelled as a member of St. Patrick’s Society of Montreal, largely as a result of public statements that McGee had made following the infamous homicide of Felix Prior in 1866.

McGee was expelled from the Society on Jan. 27, 1868, just a few months prior to his assassination in Ottawa, and not long after his August 7, 1867 Federal electoral victory over Bernard Devlin, St. Patrick's Society President, to retain his seat in Parliament.

Members of St. Patrick's Society of Montreal voted overwhelmingly and enthusiastically, after an informative discussion and debate, to reinstate McGee as a member of the Society, posthumously, at the annual meeting of members that was held in downtown Montreal in June 19, 2012.

Gravesite

Despite his expulsion, the St. Patrick's Society has played an important role in the maintenance of the McGee crypt at Notre Dame des Neiges Cemetery. In 1942 the crypt was found to be in a dilapidated state. Subscriptions limited to one dollar per person, so as not to interfere with the war effort, were being sought for the purposes of restoring the crypt to a state fitting to a man of McGee's stature.

In the 1990s the Society again took the lead in efforts to gain recognition for the gravesite and to affect needed repairs on the crypt.

A plaque on the exterior wall of the crypt reads (in both official languages):

*Father of Confederation*

*Thomas D'Arcy McGee 1825-1868*

*A delegate to the Intercolonial Conferences of 1864 (Charlottetown and Québec) at which the basis was laid for the federal union of the British North American Provinces in a new nation.*

*This grave is marked by the Government of Canada*

*Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada*

On the door of the crypt is written:

*In Memory Of*

*Thomas D'Arcy McGee*

*The Most Eloquent Voice of*

*The Fathers of Confederation*

*Born in Carlingford, County Louth, Ireland*

*May 13th, 1825*

*Assassinated in Ottawa,*

*April 7th, 1868,*

*Consummatus In Brevi Explevit Tempora Multa*

*John Loye*

*Tribute of St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, 1948*

St. Patrick's Church (now Basilica)

Thomas D'Arcy McGee was a member of St. Patrick's Church. A regular attendee, to this day the pew he worshiped from toward the back of the church is denoted with the flag of Canada. His funeral, a giant event, was held at the Church before he was interred in the cemetery.

Reasoning

Given that Thomas D’Arcy McGee was an Irish-born Father of Canadian Confederation, given that he was a St. Patrick’s Society member, given that he advocated for the current system of government bringing with it protection against an invasion from the United States, given that he remains to this day the only federal politician to be assassinated, the Society felt it appropriate to mark the 150th anniversary in an significant and respectful manner on April 7th, 2018.

The day will be divided in four

1. An intimate gravesite service with leaders from the Irish Community, political leaders from the community, and McGee descendants, beginning at 10AM Wreaths will be laid. Brief words will be said. Media will be invited. Tiny quick reception at the cemetery following the service, leaves enough travel time to Basilica
2. Mass at St. Patrick’s Basilica beginning at 12:30
3. Lecture by a McGee expert beginning at roughly 1:30 – 1:45 also in the Basilica
4. Irish Wake at Hurley’s Irish Pub beginning at roughly 3PM – Hurley’s to be decked out in bunting and period flags to mark the occasion.

Details of the day are evolving.