

ADDENDA TO HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF ST. ANTHONY

(Complete to January 1st. 1939)

Casper, Wyoming.

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From the time of Father Mullin's assuming charge of the Church of St. Anthony, the Catholic population in the Oil Fields grew steadily. The spiritual wants of these people were occasionally attended to by Father Mullin until 1923, when the Bishop assigned the responsibility of administering to the Franciscan Fathers of Douglas, who began to say Mass once a month, on an appointed Sunday, and so continued until this charge was returned to the Church of St. Anthony.

October 22, 1926, the Rev. Thos. F. O'Reilly, as newly ordained priest, was assigned to Casper as Assistant, thus making a total of three (3) diocesan priests in Casper, the Rev. John H. Mullin, Pastor, and the Rev. John F. Moreton and the Rev. Thos. F. O'Reilly, Assistants. Father Moreton was designated to look after the Oil Field Missions and immediately he began to say Mass every Sunday at Midwest, in the Recreation Building, which was placed at the Church's disposal by the courtesy of the Midwest Refining Company.

Father Moreton, under the supervision of Father Mullin, continued to serve the Oil Fields, until his transfer to Rawlins, Wyoming, April 29, 1927, and in Casper he was succeeded by the Rev. Walter Nicholson, who, until this time of transfer, was the Assistant in Rawlins. After Father Moreton's time, for periods of three months each, the Assistants of Casper alternated in attending to the Oil Field Missions.

In order to afford ample room for the parochial school that was now contemplated, Lot 5, in Block 38, together with the improvements thereon located, was purchased from Julia Mueller, for the cash consideration of Fifty-Five Hundred Dollars (\$5500.00), and the home thereon became the temporary residence of the parish clergy.

Early in the year 1927, negotiations were entered into with Leon C. Goodrich, Architect of Casper, for plans for a parochial school. With the completion of satisfactory plans, bids for the school construction were opened May 7, 1927, resulting in the contract being awarded to Carson and Schultz, local contractors, for the sum of Thirty-Five Thousand, Five Hundred Eighty Dollars (\$35,580.00).

The Plumbing contract went to the J. Donohoe Plumbing Co. for	- - - - -	7,384.00
The Painting and Decorating was by E.G. Erickson and Son at a cost of	- - - - -	1,289.95
While additions and changes in plans cost an additional	- - - - -	1,607.55

Thus the building, when finished, and completely furnished, cost in the neighborhood of \$45,00.00.

Ground for the school building was broken May 11, 1927. No special ceremony accompanied the laying of the corner stone, which was put in place by Father Mullin, but it was decided to have elaborate ceremonies at the time that the School might be dedicated.

Contrary to the belief of the entire citizenry of Casper, who could not believe that building operations could be completed in so short a time as given, the new school building was ready for occupancy in time to begin the Fall term of school.

The solemn Dedication of St. Anthony's Parochial School took place, Sept. 10, 1927, with the Rt. Rev. Patrick A. McGovern, D.D., Bishop of Cheyenne, officiating. Immediately after the ceremonies at the School, the assembled throng repaired to the church in a line of march, headed by the Casper Band. At the church, the Bishop delivered a most scholarly and erudite discourse of Christian Education, which was followed by Pontifical Benediction.

In the evening of Dedication Day, at six, a sumptuous banquet in honor of the Bishop, visiting clergy and guest, was served at the Henning Hotel, with Mr. W. L. Connelly presiding as toastmaster. After the dinner, the following spoke on subjects vitally associated with education:

The Right Reverend Bishop; the Very Rev. Aloysius Breen, S.J., President of Regis College, Denver, Colo; the Very Rev. Norbert C. Hoff, President of Mt. St. Charles College, Helena, Montana; and the Hon. Robert D. Carey, former ~~g~~governor of the State of Wyoming.

Thus was concluded a day of real parochial celebrating, that marked a new epoch in the advance of catholicity in the ~~diocesan~~ diocese of Cheyenne, and foretold choice blessings for the city of Casper.

In order that the Sisters, who were to take charge of the School, might be properly housed, it was decided to remodel the two-story dwelling situated on Lot 4, Block 38, purchased by the parish in May, 1925. Plans for remodeling and adding to this house were perfected by Leon C. Goodrich, Architect, and the bid of Colby and Rongstad, Casper Builders, amounting to \$5975.00 was accepted. In addition to the general building and remodeling contract, the plumbing and heating work was done by the J. Donohoe Plumbing Co. at a cost of \$1985.00. The Convent was completely furnished by the Chamberlin Furniture Co. Thus, when the Convent was ready for occupancy, it *had cost* ~~incurred an outlay of~~ approximately \$12,000.00.

The Convent, when completed, resulted in an ideal home for the Sisters, including all ordinary conveniences found in a Convent, not excepting a chapel. It was provided that each sister should have an individual cell, in which was built a spacious clothes-closet and each sleeping room was equipped with hot and cold running water.

It was on Monday, August 22, 1927, that the Sisters of Charity of the B.V. M. (Dubuque) began to arrive, and by the time all had come who were to labor in Casper, the following were here to begin the directing of St. Anthony's Parochial School:

Sister Mary Leander, Superior, Sister Mary Timothy, Sister Mary Aglae, Sister Mary Ethelbert, Sister Mary Demetria, Sister Mary Robert, Sister Mary Camille and Sister Mary St. Elizabeth.

On Monday, September 11, 1927, the first six grades of the school were opened with a total enrollment of 200.

The opening of the School completed the organization of the Parish of St. Anthony. From the very outset of his pastorate, Father Mullin had realized that a school was absolutely necessary for his parish, and ^{he} ~~ever did he~~ kept in mind the consummation of this project. The hearty cooperation that he received from his Bishop was the chief factor in the ^{building of the} ~~School. A~~ ~~having been built.~~

The Church of St. Anthony is a corporation, organized under the Laws of the State of Wyoming. Its directorate includes two (2) lay-members, whose term of office is for a period of two (2) years, and the election of lay-directors came due in 1927. From 1915 to 1927, Messrs. Patrick O'Connor and A. A. Schulte served as directors, making their tenure of office to cover six (6) successive terms. It was during their incumbency of office that most of the Church's temporal advance took place, and hence, when an additional building program was projected, they preferred that others should be selected to succeed them as directors. Accordingly, at a regular meeting of the ^{Board,} ~~when election was in order the ballot cast was in favor of Messrs.~~ C. A. Cullen and John H. Casey, ^{were elected} as directors of the Church of St. Anthony.

With the opening of the parochial school a renewed spirit of religious fervor and a greater interest in parochial matters were soon evidenced throughout the parish. The number of those receiving the sacraments gradually increased as did the number attending daily Mass as the children of the parochial school brought into their homes a deeper meaning and fuller appreciation of the our holy faith. Parish organizations, now numerically stronger, became intensively active as the adult members of the parish better realized the benefits of corporate action. Families hitherto unidentified as Catholic warmly acknowledged the many blessings the new school had brought, and when in the spring of 1928 the bishop of the diocese visited the parish the largest class in ~~the~~ ^{its} history ~~of the parish~~ was presented for confirmation, two hundred and five receiving the sacrament at the hands of His Excellency Patrick A. McGovern.

Deeming the time most opportune to further stimulate his flock the pastor arranged for a mission. In October 1928 Fathers Malloy and Collentine of the Congregation of the Holy Cross came to Casper for a two-week mission which proved productive of much spiritual good.

With the close of the school year in 1930, Sister Mary Leand^e~~er~~ B.V.M. completed her three years as superior of the convent. Her failing health and advanced years made her retirement from active school^{work} advisable. From the mother-house in Dubuque, Iowa, she continues to follow the progress of St. Anthony's through the years that have followed with the same kindly interest. Appointed as the new superior, Sister Mary Kyrean B.V.M. came to Casper in August, 1930, to fulfill what proved to be her last assignment.

On April 26th following, the bishop returned to administer the sacrament of confirmation to a class of one hundred-seventeen. Throughout the years of Father Mullin's pastorate he had been signally blessed with excellent health and a robust constitution. When, therefore, in April, 1932 he was suddenly stricken while en-route to Casper from Chicago, ~~and~~ little doubt was entertained that his return to duty would^{not} be long delayed. A protracted illness, however, ensued necessitating his absence from the parish during the summer of that year. Returning in September much handicapped by lameness, he nevertheless immediately resumed pastoral control.

To date the diocese of Cheyenne had no Wyoming born priests and when in July, 1933, Father Nicholson and Father O'Reilly, assistants, were assigned to pastoral charge of Pine Bluffs and Monarch, respectively, they were succeeded by Rev. Leo. Morgan, a native of Laramie, Wyoming, and Rev. Fred Kimmett, who, although ^{born} in Colorado, lived from childhood in Powell, Wyoming. Father Morgan remained but a few months in Casper exchanging places in November with Rev. A. Crann, then assistant at Lander. Father Crann continued in the parish until the following September when for health reasons it was found necessary to take an extended leave of absence. As substitute for Fr. Crann, the Rev. Nicholas Endres, retired, came to Casper to remain until June, 1936.

During the ~~w~~inter of 1935-6, a recurrence of Father Mullin's illness proved less amenable to treatment than did the original attack and in May, 1936, the better administration of parochial affairs to which he no longer found himself equal, urged him to retire from the pastorate of St. Anthony's which he had occupied ^{for more than} ~~almost~~ twenty years. A former assistant and now pastor of Monarch was appointed by His Excellency to ~~temporarily~~ take charge of the Casper parish. Assuming his new duties and greater responsibility on May 14th, 1936, Father O'Reilly immediately set about familiarizing himself with parochial matters demanding immediate attention.

With the appointment of Father Kimmett as pastor of Monarch and the departure of Father Endres who retired from the active ministry during the summer, the year 1936 saw a complete change of pastor and assistants in Casper; a new pastor and a new assistant, the latter being Rev. Francis T. Penny of Rochester New York, recently ordained for the diocese of Cheyenne.

As chaplain to the convent during his years as assistnat in Casper, Father O'Reilly had opportunity to observe the excellent religious spirit which characterizes the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It devolved upon him, too, during the years of Father Mullin's illness to frequently consult the superior in matters pertaining to school administration. It was therefore with particular poignancy ^{that} he ~~must~~ officiated at the funeral obsequies of Sister Mary Kyrean B.V.M. who succumbed to pneumonia within a week after his arrival. This first death amongst the staff of St. Anthony's school occasioned much sorrow as parents and children mourned the demise of one they had learned to love and admire during the six years of her Casper administration.

On May 30th, 1937, the bishop confirmed a class of one-hundred eighty-seven. Due largely to the Alcova Dam construction and the opening of several branch offices of Federal departments, there was a noticeable increase in the city population with a proportionate increase in the communicants of the parish. Sunday Masses were uncomfortably overcrowded until the addition of a fourth Mass. This was made possible by the appointment of a second assistant in June, 1937. Upon the transfer of Father Penney to Lander in June, 1937, the bishop assigned two members of the Congregation of the Precious Blood to Casper. These remained one year being replaced in June, 1938 by the newly ordained Fathers McCarthy and Father Leiker likewise members of the Precious Blood Congregation. In November of the same year Father Leiker was recalled, being replaced by Rev. Carl Gates.

At the close of the calendar year 1938 the parish continues as healthy active unit in the church. Four Masses are said every Sunday in the parish church while one assistant celebrates the Holy Sacrifice in Midwest for the Catholic residents of the oil-field community. During the year 1938 there were eighty-two baptisms and twenty-four marriages performed in the parish.

The number of children attending the parochial school (8 grades) 1938-39 was 333.

The net debt on all the church property when Rev. Thomas O'Reilly took charge in May, 1936 was \$101,000.00; by Jan., 1940 this had been reduced to

