

History of St. Barbara's Church Powell Wyoming 1925 – 1939

The pastor of St. Barbara's parish from 1922 to the fall of 1936 was Rev. John Spillane. Father Spillane was succeeded by Rev. Frederick Kimmett the 15th of October 1936.

The eight year period, from 1925 to 1939, has been marked by a steady material and spiritual growth of the parish. During those eight years the number of Catholics in the parish has more than doubled. The parish census for 1925 shows that there were sixty-nine practical Catholics in Powell, and twenty-seven at Cody. The 1938 census of the parish shows that the number had increased to one hundred and sixty Catholics in Powell and ninety in the Cody parish. In 1925 the census gives the number of Catholic families residing at Powell as twenty-nine. Cody had thirteen Catholic families in the same year. In 1938 there were fifty-three Catholic families resident at Powell and forty-five at Cody. These figures do not include the one hundred or more Catholic boys that are enrolled in the C. C. C. camp in Powell, nor the large number of Mexican families that spend the summer months in the vicinity of Powell as beet field laborers.

The material progress of the parish has been on a par with its spiritual growth. In the year 1925 the congregation at Powell assembled to attend Sunday Mass in a small frame church which had a seating capacity of about eighty people. To the side of this old church there now stands a new, beautiful church which can accommodate two hundred people. This new, brick church, of French Gothic design, was built by Father Spillane in 1932. It was dedicated in September of 1932 by the Most Reverend Patrick McGovern. The total cost of the church was \$20, 336.43. The debt on the church was entirely cleared by Father Spillane in 1936. In the Fall of 1938 several major improvements were completed in the church by Father Kimmett. A new liturgical altar was installed at the cost of \$1, 469.80. A new pipe organ was also purchased and installed in the church. While deposits and bonds in favor of the Church amount to seven thousand dollars.

Many improvements have also been made in the mission church at Cody since the year 1925. In the year 1927 an addition was made to the rear of the church building to provide sleeping quarters for the pastor on his visits to Cody. At two different times it has been necessary to add new parts to the church in order to increase the seating capacity. At the present time a new forced-air heating system is being installed in the church. The improvements made in the Cody church and church property since 1925 have totaled more than three thousand dollars.

In the period of 1925 to 1939 Bishop McGovern made three visits to the parish to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation. The first of these visits was made in May of 1926. On May 15th a class of eight was confirmed at Lovell,

which at that time was a mission of Powell. On May 14th ten children were confirmed at Cody, and on the 16th the Bishop confirmed a class of twenty at Powell. The second visit of Bishop McGovern to the parish to administer Confirmation was made in May of 1932. On this visit the Bishop confirmed thirty-nine at Powell and fifteen at Cody on the 8th of May. The third visit was made in May of 1938. On this visit Bishop McGovern confirmed a class of fifty-six at Powell on the 15th of MA. Of this number ten were from the Cody parish.

In the year 1938 there were thirty-eight infants baptized in the parish. In the same year five converts were baptized. Eight marriages were performed during the year 1938.

Between 1925 and 1939 three missions have been conducted in the parish. A Dominican Father gave a mission in Powell and Cody from March 22 to 29 in 1925. In 1930 a mission was given in Powell by a Jesuit Father. In 1937 the Rev. P. G. O'Connor, C. SS.R gave a mission in Powell from October 31st to November 7th, and in Cody from November 8th to November 14th.

The Yellowstone National Park is attached to St. Barbara's parish as a mission. During the summer months Masses are said in the Park for Catholic tourists. In the 1925 Mass was said regularly at only one point in the Park, at the government chapel at Mammoth. In 1933 arrangements were made whereby a Mass was to be said each Sunday at the Canyon Lodge as well as Mammoth. In 1938 a schedule was made and followed whereby Mass was celebrated each Sunday at the four principal points in the Park. By this arrangement at least one Mass is said each Sunday at Old Faithful Lodge, at Lake Lodge, at the Canyon Lodge and at the Mammoth chapel.