

## **HISTORY OF OUR LADY OF SORROWS PARISH ROCK SPRINGS, WYOMING From 1940 to 1950**

The Rt. Rev. Msgr. Alfred F. Giovanoni of Salt Lake City, Utah, conducted a mission for the Italian people of the parish from May 12 to 18, 1940. Vacation school for the parish children was held during the last two weeks of August, 1940, by two nuns from St. Anthony's parish of Casper, Wyoming. On September 27, 1940, Rev. James A. Power successfully directed a home talent show for the benefit of the parish. Frank Foley has been the successful scoutmaster of the parish Boy Scout Troop. Legion of Mary is still active in the parish.

The Most Rev. Bishop Patrick A. McGovern, D.D., administered the Sacrament of Confirmation on Sunday, May 11, 1941. In the Confirmation class were 94 from the parish, 58 from the mission at Superior, Wyoming, and 15 from the mission at Winton, Wyoming. A vacation school was conducted in the parish by two nuns from St. Anthony's parish of Casper, from August 18 to 24, 1941. Rev. John Leary, O.M.I., from McCook, Nebraska, conducted a mission in the parish from November 9 to 16, 1941.

Rev. James A. Power was appointed pastor of St. Thomas parish, Monarch, Wyoming, on January 26, 1942. He was succeeded as assistant in the parish by Rev. Fred Killoran, M.M. Dr. R.R. Menghini was appointed scoutmaster of the parish troop. Rev. Fred Killoran, M.M., was succeeded as assistant in the parish by Rev. George H. Bauer, M.M., on November 1, 1942. A Triduum was conducted in the parish by Rev. Robert Kreutzer of the Redemptorist Fathers of Denver, Colorado, from December 5 to 8, 1942.

The State Convention of the Knights of Columbus was held on May 30 and 31, 1943. The pastor, Rev. Sylvester A. Welsh on Wednesday, September 1, 1943, celebrated the 25th anniversary of his ordination to

the priesthood. All the years of Father Welsh's priesthood were spent in this parish. Officers of the solemn high mass were: Rev. Sylvester A. Welsh, celebrant; Rev. Henry Schellinger of Green River, deacon; Rev. Albin Gnidovec of this city, subdeacon; Rev. James A. Hartmann of Cheyenne, Wyoming, master of ceremonies. The Most Rev. Bishop Patrick A. McGovern, D.D., preached an inspiring sermon on the priesthood. Eighteen priests of the diocese were present.

Lot 4, Block 13, was purchased for \$1,000.00 on October 20, 1943.

Rev. Paul Foster becomes assistant in the parish on January 1, 1944. Rev. George H. Bauer, M.M., returned to the Maryknoll Fathers of New York. The Most Rev. Bishop Patrick A. McGovern, D.D., administered the Sacrament of Confirmation in the parish on May 28, 1944. In the Confirmation class there were 69 from this parish, 14 from the mission at Superior, Wyoming, and 16 from the mission at Winton, Wyoming. Rev. William Delaney of this parish was ordained a priest on June 3, 1944 at the cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Denver, Colorado, by the Most Rev. Archbishop Urban J. Vehr, D.D. Father Delaney celebrated his First Mass in his home parish on Sunday, June 4, 1944. The officers of the Mass were Rev. William Delaney, celebrant; Rev. Bernard Kelley of Denver, Colorado, deacon; Rev. Paul Foster, subdeacon; Rev. Sylvester A. Welsh was Archpriest. The sermon was preached by the pastor. The St. Mary's Altar Society has done faithful work throughout the years. The Sodality for the Spanish-American girls is still active. Rev. Terence McGovern became the assistant in the parish on July 1, 1944. Rev. Paul Foster was appointed pastor of the parish of Corpus Christi at Newcastle, Wyoming. Glen Stanton is appointed scoutmaster of the parish troop of Boy Scouts. In 1945, the Junior Sodality for the high school girls and the Senior Boys Club for the high school boys are very well attended. Senior Sodality quite active. Meetings of the Holy Name Society are splendidly attended. Many of the Mexican families move away. No longer have a Sodality for the Mexican girls.

A mission was conducted in the parish from November 3 to 10, 1946, by the Rev. Pacificus Kennedy, O.F.M., of St. Elizabeth parish, Denver, Colorado. It was the best attended mission in the history of the parish.

A mission was given in the parish from October 5 to 12, 1947, by Rev. Raymond P. Hillinger of the Diocesan mission Band of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Meetings of the high school boys and girls societies are very well attended. The Holy Name Society is still very active in the parish. St. Mary's Altar Society is very helpful in all parish activities.

On May 16, 1948, the Most Rev. Hubert Newell, D.D., coadjutor-Bishop of Cheyenne, administered the Sacrament of Confirmation in the parish. In the Confirmation class there were 119 from this parish, 42 from the mission at Superior, Wyoming, and 4 from the mission at Winton, Wyoming. The pastor instituted a new society for the high school boys and high school girls—The Junior Newman Club. Special instructions will be given at the meetings of the Junior Newman Club every week and a special social for the members of this society every month. Rev. Charles Bartek on July 1, 1948 became assistant in the parish. Father Bartek had been assistant at St. Joseph's parish, Rawlins, Wyoming. Rev. Terence McGovern, who has been assistant for the past four years in the parish, has been sent as assistant to St. Joseph's parish, Rawlins, Wyoming. A farewell party for Father McGovern was held at the parish hall.

A mission was conducted at Superior, Wyoming from September 11 to 18, 1949, by Rev. Pacificus Kennedy, O.F.M. The mission was most successful. A mission was conducted in our parish from October 16 to 23, 1949, by Rev. Sebastian Egan, O.F.M., of Denver, Colorado. The Sunday attendance at Mass has increased greatly, because of the success of the recent mission in the parish. Rev. Charles Bartek was appointed as assistant to St. Patrick's parish, Kemmerer, Wyoming. Rev. William Delaney, a former member of this parish, was appointed second assistant to look after the spiritual, needs of the people of the mission at Superior,

Wyoming. Father Delaney was later appointed pastor of St. Charles mission at Superior, Wyoming. Edward Hayes of The American City Bureau of Chicago, Illinois, arrived in the parish during the second week of October to prepare for a campaign to raise funds for the parish schools of both local parishes. Louis Boschetto was appointed chairman to assist in the campaign of this parish. Most Rev. Hubert M. Newell, coadjutor Bishop of this diocese, was the principal speaker on Sunday night, November 27, 1949, at the "kickoff" meeting [inauguration] of the school fund campaign. The people of this parish pledged about \$75,000.00 for the school fund campaign. The parish school is to be ready for students on September 1, 1951. All committees worked very hard during the campaign, especially the major gifts committee under the chairmanship of John Moran and the every family committee under the chairmanship of John Wompey. Louis Boschetto proved to be an able chairman of the school campaign.

[signature] By S.A. Welsh, Pastor

**History of Our Lady of Sorrows Parish  
Rock Springs  
1950-1960**

[1] Next to having the beautiful new church erected by him in 1952, Father Sylvester A. Welsh's long cherished ambition was to have a parochial school in his parish of Our Lady of Sorrows.

This project was earnestly undertaken in November 1949 with the launching of a fund raising campaign through which the very creditable sum of \$71,000.00 was pledged by the parish membership. Plans for a six classroom building of brick construction were prepared, and on August 28, 1950, the Kellogg Lumber Company was awarded the contract for construction at a cost of \$140,560.00.

Due to the lack of structural steel at the time construction work was considerably delayed, and the building could not be completed till mid-summer of 1952. The formal dedication, with His Excellency, Most Rev. Hubert M. Newell officiating, took place on Sunday afternoon, August 24th, 1952, in the presence of a large attendance of the clergy and practically the entire membership of the parish.

In November 1951 the lot and dwelling (Lot 5, Block 13) adjoining the parish property on the west were purchased at a cost of \$10,000.00. The dwelling was sold and moved elsewhere, and the lot cleared for the erection of a new sister's convent. In April 1952 the Kellogg Lumber Company was awarded a contract for the construction of a convent sufficiently adequate to accommodate six sisters, and the building was ready for occupancy by mid-August, at which time four members of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, Kansas, arrived to take charge of the new school.

The school opened for classes on September 2nd, 1952, with an enrollment of 145 pupils in grades 2 to 8. The first grade was added in

the following September, bringing the enrollment to 165, at which number it has remained rather constant to the present time.

It is worthy of mention that by the end of 1954 a total of \$67,118.00 was realized on the campaign pledges of 1949, and the school was cleared of debt late in 1955.

As a result of the Bishop's Fund Campaign inaugurated in June 1955 the sum of \$55,000.00 was realized in the following three years, and this was applied to the building of a very much needed parish rectory. In early 1956 plans were prepared for the construction of a new twelve room rectory on the site of the old one, which was sold and moved away. The new rectory was erected and furnished at a cost of \$65,000.00, and was ready for occupancy by January 1957, at which time the pastor and his assistant moved into the well deserved comfortable home.

[2] Divine Providence decreed that Father Welsh should enjoy the comforts of his new home for but the short space of two years, when at noon on February 12th, 1959, he suffered a fatal heart attack, and expired within the hour.

Funeral services were held on Tuesday morning, February 17, with His Excellency, Bishop Newell, offering the Pontifical Mass of Requiem, in the presence of the entire clergy of the diocese and a very large attendance of parishioners and friends. An eloquent tribute was paid Father Welsh's priestly zeal and sacrificing work during his forty year pastorate in the sermon by Monsignor John McDevitt, pastor of St. Laurence

O'Toole's parish, Laramie. Bishop Newell also spoke most commendably of Father's edifying and fruitful pastorate of Our Lady of Sorrows parish. His remains were sent to be interred in the Welsh family plot at South Amboy, New Jersey, his birthplace.

On March 1, 1959, Bishop Newell appointed Rev. John Marley, previously pastor of Immaculate Conception church, Green River, pastor of the parish, and dean of the district.

On April 1, 1959, the lot and two dwellings thereon, (Lot 6, Block 13) adjoining the convent on the west were purchased from Mr. & Mrs. Albert Angelovic at a cost of \$20,000.00, thus giving the parish ownership of the entire Block No. 13 in the town of Rock Springs. The very generous gift of \$5,000.00 was given by Mr. & Mrs. Gaston Erramouspe, long time members of the parish, towards the purchase of the property.

Late in 1959 a beautiful marble communion rail, matching the altar, was installed in Father Welsh's memory by his parishioners and friends at a cost of \$4,000.00. It is indicative of Father's genuine love for his people and parish that he bequeathed his entire personal estate of \$5,700.00 to the parish.

Missions for the spiritual uplift of the people have been given every second year through the past decade, the last one being the week of October 24th, 1959, by Father Pacificus Kennedy, O.F.M., Denver.

A conservative estimate of the Value of the parish property at this date would be \$400,000.00. There is a remaining debt of \$26,500.00, which should be liquidated within a very few years.

Through the success of the Parish Support Appeal in April 1959 the weekly offerings have increased from an average of \$200.00 to \$425.00 a Sunday.

Through the past decade the following priests have served as assistants in the parish: Rev. Bartholomew Svete, November 1949 to September 1952; Rev. Charles Bartek, September 1952 to October 1953; Rev. Michael Butler, October 1953 to November 1954; Rev. Cornelius O'Connor, November 1954 to July 1955; Rev. Joseph Fraher, July 1955

to July 1957; Rev. Jerome Logue, July 1957 to September 1959; and Rev. Cornelius O'Connor again serving as assistant since September 1959.

John Marley, Pastor

**HISTORY OF OUR LADY OF SORROWS PARISH  
ROCK SPRINGS  
1960-1970**

**FATHER CHARLES A. BARTEK, Pastor**

Father Sylvester A. Welsh, who had faithfully served the parish for forty-four (44) years died on February 12, 1959. Father John Marley succeeded him in the office as pastor on March 1, 1959. So a new era was beginning in the parish.

Early in 1960 a beautiful marble altar railing was installed in the church in fond memo of Father Sylvester by his parishioners and many friends that he had in the community. This improvement cost \$4,000.00.

The value of the property at the beginning of 1960 was \$400,000.00 with a debt of \$26,500.00. With the help of the Parish Support Appeal this debt would be cut down each coming year.

Father John Marley was elevated to the office of Domestic Prelate by Pope Paul VI on November 7, 1964.

Monsignor John Marley suffered a fatal heart attack and died on August 30, 1966. For the next month the parish was administered by Father Phil Colibraro until October 16, 1966 when he was transferred and became the pastor of St. Mary Magdalen Parish in Evanston, Wyoming.

On October 16th, 1966 Father Charles A. Bartek was appointed the new pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows Parish. He came from St. James Parish in Douglas, Wyoming. He had been the assistant in Our Lady of Sorrows Parish on two previous occasions and so was no stranger to the parish.

In May of 1967 new cabinets were built in the Church Sacristy in fond memory of Father S. A. Welsh and Monsignor John Marley by their friends in the parish.

In 1967 the debt of the parish was \$3,000.00 and this was paid off in short order.

In June of 1968 because of the poor condition of the Church floor a rug was installed from wall to wall. This has been a great improvement on an already beautiful church. This rug was donated from many friends of the parish.

Also in June of 1968 the one half of the playground was black-topped and this cost \$2,000.00 and was also a well received improvement on the church property.

On July 23, 1969; St. Joseph Cemetery was deeded to the town of Rock Springs to take care of it for time to come. This was a great event as it was decided that the Parishes of Rock Springs were finding it harder and harder to take care of the upkeep of this Cemetery.

On the day of January 2, 1970; when the financial report of the parish was accepted by the trustees the estimated worth of the parish property is about \$600,000.00; with no debt on this property.

Through the past ten years the following assistants have faithfully served in the parish:

Father Philip Colibraro, October 1, 1960-October 1961.

Father Cletus Prado, October 1961-July 1962.

Father John Brady was in residence from July, 1962-September 1964.

Father William Gianola from July 1962-August 1963.

Father Cletus Prado, August 1963-September 1964.

Father Phillip Colibraro, September 1964-October 1966.

Father Robert Marko August 1968-August 1969.

Father Patrick Trujillo from August 1969 until the present time.

Father Charles A. Bartek, Pastor

Complied January 14, 1970.



**The parish history for Our Lady of Sorrows Church of Rock Springs, Wyoming, for the years 1970 - 1980 follows:  
Rev. Eugene Sullivan, Pastor  
January 22, 1981**

The 1970's were years of growth and change in Our Lady of Sorrows Parish. From 1974 to 1978, the quiet town of Rock Springs experienced an unnatural growth caused by an energy boom. Thousands of people converged on the coal town seeking jobs mainly in the newly developed trona fields 30 to 40 miles northwest of the city, as well as newly discovered oil and gas fields.

With a lack of housing and lack of available land, most people purchased mobile homes and soon Rock Springs became known as "Trailer City." The population surged from 12,000 in 1970 to an estimated 25,000 in 1980. Although the economy was raised and jobs were plentiful, the impact also brought the usual increase in crime and other related problems.

Father Charles Bartek was pastor from 1966 to 1972. Trustees at the time were Dr. Paul Yedinak and Dr. Joseph Erramouspe until 1969; and Joseph Arambel and Leno Menghini from 1971 to 1974. The interior of the church was painted in 1972. Plans to build a new parish center were discussed and drawings made in 1971, but the idea was postponed indefinitely. A building fund was begun for this purpose. Assistants with Father Bartek from 1970 were Patrick Trujillo and John Flannigan, S.J.

Since 1951, each parish in Rock Springs had an eight-room school. Because of a decrease in vocations of Sisters and increase of costs, both parochial schools were combined. Grades 1, 2 and 3 were at Our Lady of Sorrows, and grades 4, 5 and 6 were at Saints Cyril and Methodius. Grades 7 and 8 were dropped. This joint venture was made by Monsignor Albin Gnidovec and Father Charles Bartek in 1971. Later a

joint venture agreement was signed by Father William Delaney of OLS and Father Michael Butler of SCM.

Since the Sisters all lived at the SCM convent, the OLS convent was rented out for a time, and was razed in 1977.

Father William Delaney became pastor in 1972. After the death of Mike Arambel in 1974, Leroy Abbott was named trustee with Leno Menghini. The sanctuary of the church was beautifully renovated by Father Delaney to the guidelines of the Vatican Council.

A joint CCD program for both parishes was agreed upon as well as joint CYO groups for the teenagers. Assistants during Father Delaney's pastorate were John Flannigan, S.J., and Gerald Sullivan.

Monsignor George Stoll became pastor in 1975 for one year. He was assisted by Father Tom Tracy.

Father Eugene Sullivan was named pastor in 1976. He came from Our Lady of the Mountains parish, Jackson. One of the first priorities he felt necessary was a facility for parish gatherings. Seeing the inadequacy of the old hall (the original church was built in 1888) for parish functions and the school lunch program, he canvassed the parish to see if they wanted a new parish center. The vote was unanimous. Plans were drawn up and approved by the Bishop and Diocesan Building Commission in 1977, at a cost of \$324,000. A Building Committee was formed, chaired by Ole Anselmi and Dr. Joseph Erramouspe. A fund raising drive was held in 1978 and approximately \$220,000 was pledged. This was chaired by John Zebre, and the \$220,000 pledged along with savings would pay for the new facility. The Parish Center was completed in the fall of 1980 and dedicated by Bishop Hart on August 25. In the summer of 1980, the old parish hall was torn down since no one wanted to move a frame building for other uses. A two-stall garage was built in its place.

On the 15th of March 1978, a transient accidentally started a fire in the church cry room. Before discovery was made, approximately \$80,000 damage was done to the interior of the church. It destroyed the cry room, one half of the choir loft including the organ, and blackened the entire church interior. A hole had to be made in the tile roof to get to the fire in the attic. There was also extensive water damage to the carpet and floor.

A renovation committee was established and took the opportunity to make needed changes in the church: new carpet, kneelers for pews, and changed the confessional with room for face to face confession, marble work included new pulpit, changed tabernacle to side altar and shortened the communion rail, repainted interior of Church, and other minor changes. An outside ramp was built later to allow handicapped parishioners to enter by the side door of the church.

The Parish Council was reorganized in 1976 with Lee Abbott, Mrs. Rudy Lansang, Mrs. Larry Hickerson, and Mrs. Robert Preston as presidents. The spiritual highlight of this decade occurred when a native son of the Parish was ordained by Bishop Joseph Hart. Edward Dolinar received the priestly ordination on May 29, 1978.

In the summer of 1980, the mission in Wamsutter happily got its own church. A doublewide mobile home was moved in and decorated for church purposes on land given to the church by Manuel Gonzales. Wamsutter is in Sweetwater County and so it technically belongs to OLS. Thus Msgr. John Meyer, who took care of their spiritual needs for many years from Rawlins, surrendered the mission to us. The new church, St. Anthony's, was built at an approximate cost of \$40,000. One half was given by the Catholic Church Extension Society and the rest is to be paid by the 30 families living in that area.

The other mission, St. Vivian's, Superior, had the church exterior covered with steel siding and the interior was repainted in 1979. Also, larger space heaters were installed in 1980 to make the church more

comfortable in the winter. The 30 families are most concerned with the upkeep of their church.

Associate pastors thus far helping Father Sullivan were Father John Hoodack, S.J., and Father Fred Wendel, the present associate. Lay trustees have been Ole Anselmi and Dr. Joseph Erramouspe.

The spiritual needs of OLS have benefited from a number of missions these past ten years, the diligence of its pastors, and the parish organizations. With the advent of the parish renewal weekends and an active prayer group, a glorious future is predicted in the next ten years.