

**ST. EDMUND'S PARISH
RANCHESTER, WYOMING
1950-1960**

The history of St. Edmund's Parish of Ranchester begins with the building of the Church here in Ranchester, as a mission Church of Monarch, Wyo. by the Rev. Cyril Hmelovsky. The Church was dedicated on Dec.19, 1948, by the Most Rev. Hubert M. Newell, the Coadjutor Bishop of the Diocese. With the transfer of Rev. Cyril Hmelovsky in 1949, the Rev. Herbert Kraus came as Pastor of the Monarch Parish. He remained as Pastor till 1957. It was during his time that the location of the Parish was moved from Monarch to its present location at Ranchester. This change was needed due to the decline of the coal industry, upon which the town of Monarch was wholly dependent. It was deemed necessary to move the Parish house and the location of the Parish from Monarch to Ranchester. The work of moving the house and relocating it next to the Church at Ranchester, was completed by Father Kraus in 1956. The Church at Monarch remained and Mass continued to be said in the Church till 1958, at which time it was decided that this was no longer needed. At the present time the Church there is not used. In 1957 the Rev. Herbert Kraus was transferred from the Parish to Saratoga, Wyo., and coming as Pastor to the Parish was the REV. Joseph P. Fraher. He remains as Pastor at the present time. Since 1957, the Church has been completely painted and the grounds around the Church put into lawn. The basement of the house has been finished with an extra bedroom built and tile covering on the floor. As a help to the Parish income, the Pastor of Ranchester, since 1954, has acted as the Catholic Chaplain of the V.A. Hospital at Sheridan. There are 180 Catholic patients at the hospital. The parish at Ranchester has about 67 families at the present time.

**St Edmund's Church
Ranchester, Wyoming
1960-1969**

The Parish report for St. Edmund's covering the period from 1960 to 1969 includes the cooperation of the people in forming a community that contributes to the welfare of the rest of the people around it. The cooperation of this parish with the deanery and diocesan activities is well founded.

The Pastor at the beginning of the period was Father Joseph Fraher who is a native of Rawlins, Wyoming. The trustees were and still are John Jolovich, Sr., and Tony Bocek.

Mrs. William Bull was President of the Altar and Rosary Society from 1959 to 1960. She and Father Fraher and Helen Gazur were constantly in attendance at the deanery meetings and Diocesan meetings. They went to the Sheridan deanery fall meeting held at Buffalo on Oct. 13, 1960, and also the Spring Deanery meeting held at Gillette, Wyo. on April 5th, 1960. Mrs. William Bull was chairman of the rural life Committee.

Mrs. Celo Pfister was President of the Altar Society from 1961 to 1962. The various deanery meetings were attended and represented St. Edmund's. They were held at Newcastle on March 15, 1961 and Oct. 4th 1961, in Sheridan, Wyo. Mrs. William Bull was first Vice-president during this time of the Deanery.

On May 24th, 1961, the first graduation Mass was held at the Church for all students at Tongue River High School. The 1961 class was composed of John Bocek, Elbert Belish, Robert Fiedor, Daniel Bull, Mary Ann Kukuchka, Thomas Malyurek, Dolores Verley. These were the Catholics. The rest of the class included Byron Black, Frances Bennett, Karen Fox, Rex Cole, Deanne Lindquist, Leonard Hamilton, Robert Klinkosh, Corine Mortenson, Larry Paustian, James Lomax; Cynthia Roadifer,

Judith Pfau, Joan Plott, Marvin Rasmussen, Kristina Skrettebert, Pat Velos, and George Sherin.

After Mass the ladies of the Altar and Rosary gave a Senior Breakfast to 24 students and Mrs. A.E. Brady and Robert Marsh who were the Senior class Sponsors.

On March 20, 1962, at the Spring Deanery Meeting held at Sheridan, Mrs. William Bull was appointed Library and Literature Chairman.

Helen Gazur was elected President of St. Edmund's for the year 1963-64. During this time St. Edmund's was host parish for the Fall Sheridan Deanery Meeting held at the Ranchester Community Hall. The Rev. Gerald Sullivan gave a talk on Religious Vocation and 108 persons attended this meeting.

The first parish Potluck supper at the Ranchester Hall was held on Nov. 10th, 1963. About 75 were in attendance.

On Feb. 25, 1963, the first lay volunteer workers from Extension were present at the Altar meeting. They were Joan Wagner and Chris Grincata. Also Mrs. Martin Camino who was Sheridan Deanery President gave a talk on the National Convention she attended in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The Altar and Rosary ladies began a traditional St. Patrick's Day party for their husbands and was held March 17, 1963. Most of these meetings and parties were held at Father's house or rectory since this is the only central meeting place available.

On May 1, 1963, Mrs. Walter Johnson donated her electric organ to the Church.

On Sept. 1964, the ladies of the Altar and Rosary took the project of sending cookies to the Veterans Administration Hospital in Sheridan. They did this once a month and visited the patients in their visit.

On Sept. 1964, Bill Archer painted the Church's interior. He is from the V.A. Hospital in Sheridan.

The C.Y.O. Convention held in Sheridan in Sept. 1964, was attended by 4 students from St. Edmund's. They were Joan Bocek, Randy Cole, Karen Kukuchka, Rosemary Bocek. Mary Wolney and Stella Bocek were thanked for their help at the Convention.

On Oct. 2, 1964, Father Fraher went to Denver to purchase the altar for the new rite of the Mass facing the people.

On Dec. 1964, a gift was sent to Sister Marie Dominic of Holy Name for a book for the library from St. Edmunds.

On Feb. 8, 1965, a Lenten Day was held at Dayton Hall. This consisted in a spiritual activity for the parish conducted by Father Fraher.

Pearl Kukuchka was elected the new President of the Altar and Rosary Society from 1965 to 1966.

On May 2, 1965, Father Quinn held a day of Recollection for the parish and it was well attended.

On Sept. 24, 1965, St. Edmund's was represented at the Fall Sheridan Deanery meeting at Sheridan. The Rev. Lawrence Etchingham of Torrington gave the talk on "Our Parish and our Communities."

The first Parish Rosary for the parish and world Peace was held at Pearl Kukuchka's house. This was in 1966.

On Jan. 18, 1966, another parish rosary was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. William Bull from Dayton.

On Jan. 10, 1966, Miss Marie Alicia Kalis, an exchange teacher from Mexico City gave a talk on customs and habits of the people of Mexico.

On July 4, 1966, Father Fraher left for a new Pastorate in Lander, Wyo.

On Sept. 1966, Msgr. Frederick Kimmett came to St. Edmund's as new Pastor. On Oct. 9, 1966, the installation for Msgr. was held and a dinner was given at the Ranchester Hall. However, his stay was very short in this parish. He was transferred to Corpus Christi Parish in Newcastle in Sept. 1967.

St. Edmund's Church was without a Pastor for one year. Father George Stoll, Father Robert Marko, and Father Louis McKean came from Sheridan to offer Mass. They also taught some religion classes and were also helped by a deacon from Sheridan, Ronald Stolcis. He is now ordained and serving as Assistant Pastor in Powell, Wyo. From Sept. 1967 to Sept. 1968 they provided for the needs of the parish and also held summer school taught by 2 Nuns [sic] from the Order of Sisters of Charity from Leavenworth, Kans. The same order that staffs the school in Sheridan.

Father George P. Tellez came to St. Edmund's as the newly appointed Pastor on Aug. 25th, 1968. This was his first Pastorate.

The first thing at hand was the organizing the school of religion for the coming year. Karel and Karen Dunning were the volunteer teachers for the grade school. Father taught from the 5th grade to the high school at different times for each class.

Karel and Karen Dunning, Mary Klebba and Father Tellez attended a Religious Education training institute in Billings, Montana, on Sept. 26th to 28th, 1968.

The C.Y.O. Convention was held at Casper, Wyo. on Oct. 10th to 12th and the following represented St. Edmund's: Rita Cherni, Kathy Bocek, Kay Dunning, Karen Dunning, Roxanne Kukuchka. Theresa Mock was chaperone and Father Tellez drove them to the site.

On Nov. 1968, in spite of a bad snow storm the installation of the New Pastor was held. Father George Stoll, the Dean of the Sheridan Deanery, presided. He was assisted by Msgr. Kimmett, Father Cletus Prado from Sundance, Father Eugene Sullivan from St. Joseph's Orphanage, Father Angel Ornelas, Father Michael Carr from Casper, Father Thomas Sheridan from Sheridan, and Father James Power from St. Patrick's in Casper.

The President of the Altar and Rosary was Bessie Brewer from Dayton. This was for the year 1968 to 1970. The new rule is that the President presides for a two-year term. Anne Aksamit is Vice-President and Stella Bocek is Secretary-Treasurer.

On Jan. 21st, 1969, Mrs. John Fradet and Mrs. Don Brayton gave a talk to the Altar and Rosary ladies on the National Convention at Denver on the subject of birth defects.

On March 2, 1969, Father Cyril Hmelovsky from Worland, Wyo., came to offer Mass here at St. Edmund's. He had been Pastor previously here about 20 years ago and had built the present Church structure. He used to live at Monarch at the time. Ranchester was a mission church. Father Tellez went to Worland on this pulpit exchange and gave a day of recollection there.

On March 14,15,16, 1969, a Religious Education Conference was held in Denver, Colo. Karel and Karen Dunning, the grade school CCD teachers, attended and also the organist for the Church of St. Edmund's by name of Mary Klebba. Mr. and Mrs. Joe Klebba attended with them.

On March 19, 1969, the Sheridan Spring Deanery Meeting was held at Gillette. The program was on Drug Abuse. Stella Bocek, Rose Bocek, Violet Bull, Mary Wolney, Theresa Mock, and Bessie Brewer and Father Tellez represented St. Edmund's.

From June 2 to 13, 1969, Religious Vacation School was taught by Sister Mary Faith Schmitz and Sister Alice Murphy. There were 28 in attendance from grade 1-6. Six made their first Holy Communion. The Sisters came from their Motherhouse in Leavenworth, Kansas.

On July 17 and 18th the C.Y.O. group went to Rapid City and to Spearfish to the Passion Play and a tour of the Black Hills. They stayed at the Benedictine Girls School of St. Martin's at Rapid City.

On Aug. 9th, 1969, the First Mass at Pine Island for this parish was held and also a Parish Picnic.

On Sept. 14, 15 the first parishioners made a "Search for Christian Maturity" at Story, Wyo. Those attending were Patricia Polakovic, Kay Dunning, and Mary Klebba.

On Oct. 28, 1969, the Rev. Edmund Parker from Dayton Congregational Church was the guest speaker at the Altar and Rosary meeting.

On Nov. 18, 1969, Patricia Carbone from the Mental Health Center in Sheridan gave a talk on Mental Health and the Housewife.

On Nov. 30th, 1969, Stella Bocek and Theresa Mock made the Advent Wreath.

On Dec. 21st, 1969, an Anniversary Supper at Dayton Hall was held. This was for the 20 years that the Church had been at Ranchester. There were 130 people in attendance.

This completes the activities for the Sixties at St. Edmund's Parish that also comprises the whole Tongue River area of Dayton, Ranchester, Parkman, Pass Creek, Acme, Monarch, Slater Creek, Ash Creek, and Wolf Creek.