

HISTORY OF ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH,

RIVERTON, WYOMING.

1906 - 1928.

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The Riverton Catholic Church started in the year 1906, about the same time as the town began. As the catholic population was small it could not support a resident priest; consequently it was attached to St. Stephen's Mission, and the Jesuit priests from there attended to the spiritual needs. Father John B. Sifton, S.J., was the first priest to attend it, and as there was no church, services were held in John Malone's black shack in the south-east part of the town. Here Mass was celebrated twice a month until 1911, when with the generous aid of the people, Father Sifton built a church which still stands on the first street East of Main.

In 1912, owing to the increased need of Indian Missionary workers caused by the progress of St. Stephen's, Father Sifton's services had to be withdrawn from Riverton, and Father William Keavey of Lander, attended to its needs during part of 1912 and 1913. As the latter had many other places claiming his attention, Mass was said only twice a month during his charge. Owing to the long distance between Lander and Riverton, and the ill health of Father Keavey, it was considered necessary to have Riverton attended to from St. Stephen's Mission again, and this was continued till 1923.

Father Aloysius Keel, S.J., Superior of St. Stephen's Mission, and one of the most illustrious of Indian Missionaries, attended Riverton during part of 1913 and 1914. Father E.S. McNamara, S.J., served from 1914 to 1919. He was succeeded by Father J.V. O'Connor, S.J., who served till 1921. Then came Father M.J. Hofferer, S.J., who served till 1923. During his charge the catholic population increased very much and Mass was celebrated every Sunday.

The time was fast approaching when a resident pastor would be required, and Father William J. Short was appointed first resident priest in 1923. He was a man endowed with unusual gifts of organization, and during his time the Riverton parish, though small, became one of the most active in the State. He continued as pastor until the middle of 1924, when he was transferred to Kemmerer.

Now the prospects of prosperity began to grow dull; many of the people moved away necessitating the/

the withdrawal of a resident pastor. It was then decided that Riverton be attended by a priest living at Lander, as this seemed to be the most expedient arrangement, and Father Cassidy began to attend it from there in the September of 1924.

In October, 1925, Father Cassidy was promoted, and transferred to Torrington, where he has charge of a parish which has a very bright future. He was succeeded by Father Martin Kennedy, who lives at Lander, and holds services at Riverton every Sunday and Holyday of obligation. He is a young man of exceptional ability, and no doubt the spiritual interests of the parish will benefit very much during his charge.

St. Margaret's Church was dedicated in 1911, during Father Sifton's administration. It was also incorporated the same year. The members of the Corporation at present (1928) are:-

Rt. Rev. Patrick A. McGovern, D.D.,
Bishop of Cheyenne, President.
Very Rev. John T. Nicholson, V.G.,
Laramie, Vice-President.
Rev. John J. Mullins, Lander.
Mr A. C. Allen, Secretary.
Mr Joseph Vinvent, Treasurer.

The members of St. Margaret's parish, like all the other Riverton people, are optimistic about the future of Riverton and the Riverton valley, and no doubt their courage and perseverance will be rewarded in the near future by an era of prosperity, when once again they shall have the services of a resident pastor, a blessing which they richly deserve.