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NO TIME TO FIX A TITLE.

BIO and AUTOBIOGRAPHY of Father CLEARY 1949 1959 LANDER pastor

The Reverend Thomas Cleary became pastor of Holy Rosary Church in February 1949 when the Rev. Adolph Pate was transferred to St. Margaret's Parish in Riverton. During Fr. Cleary's term as pastor many advancements were accomplished. In the summer of 1950 the parish purchased a piece of ground at the northeast corner of the parish property on which a shed was located. The acquisition of the small piece of property gave the parish the ownership of Lots 11, 12, 13 and 14 and the westerly 35 feet of Lot 15, block 22 of the City of Lander.

The roof of the church was replaced in September 1952. This long needed renovation was accomplished at a cost of \$2,382. The following year the interior of the church was painted, the floor tiles and new pews installed at the total cost of \$3,053. The old pews were taken to the church in Hudson.

In the summer of 1954, a new steam heating plant was installed in the rectory, and in January of 1957 a gas heating unit was installed in the church at a cost of \$1,124.

In September 1959, Father Cleary was appointed pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish at Green River and was replaced in Lander by Fr. Michael Scullion. It was while he was in Green River that he celebrated the 25th anniversary of his ordination. He also served as pastor at Torrington, St. Patrick's of Casper, Greybull and Kemmerer. He retired for health reasons in June of 1981, and is now living on the old home place in Ireland.

Before he left for Ireland, his old parishioners and friends were very happy to have him return for a day at which time a reception was given in his honor. This was attended by 80 of his friends of 22 years ago,

May you have a happy and healthier retirement, Father!

HOLY NAME SOCIETY - A MEN'S GROUP

[Lander 1982, 56] Father Cleary was instrumental in starting a Holy Name Society for the men and young men of the parish. This was a spiritual group and its purpose was to encourage the men and young men to receive corporate communion one Sunday each month. But when the occasion demanded, they too pitched in and helped to fix and to repair things.

FATHER THOMAS CLEARY

February 1949 I arrived in Lander as Pastor. The weather was cold but fine and I had most of Fremont County to cover and I had no car. The automobile agents were still under quota and assistants under Bishop McGovern were not permitted to have cars. I had Hudson, Dubois, and Crooks Gap to care for along with Lander. So I went down to Cal Lee and presented my case to him. He wrote up the particulars of the situation and sent it into Detroit asking for an extra car, and sure enough they sent a car out of Detroit with my name on the steering wheel. I got my car.

It was still building time after the war and some of the veterans were still trickling back, but slowly over the years the parish built up.

I remember going on many occasion to Dubois and I would have six people at mass but the tourist business began to take hold, and today there is a nice church and congregation in the town. Hudson was a fixed settlement with a good percentage of Catholics and there was always a congregation there. A hail storm, the summer after my arrival stripped the North side of the Church and it was my first real experience of the damage hail could do.

Crooks Gap was an oil settlement with plenty of drilling at the time I was taking care of it. I said mass in the Rawlings* home usually at 7:00 a. m. on a week day, so I left Lander for the 60 odd mile trip at 5:30 a. m. to get there on time. Mrs. Rawlings and another lad took care of the CCD in the camp and a splendid job they did. After this field was drilled out, there was not any activity in the area, as there was just a maintenance crew until the uranium mill operated out of Jeffrey City.

After work began, I went out one day to find out if there were any Catholics in the camp and make arrangements, if necessary, for mass.

I stopped into the Cafe to get a cup of coffee and make inquiries and suddenly a terrific sand storm came up. When I came out my windshield was completely pitted. I got the car back into Lander with my head out the side window most of the way to see where I was going and eventually made town and straight to the garage to get a new windshield.

There were quite a few Catholics including the Superintendent, and I made arrangements for mass in the Community School for Saturday mornings and had 25 or more from the very beginning.

Lander was the home base. There was a beautiful Spanish style church and a very comfortable rectory. During the 11 years I was Pastor, the congregation ebbed and flowed but there was a gradual increase all the time. In the summer of 1950, the sisters came for the first time for vacation school and were a regular feature of the program for many years. About 1957 we had some wind and hail and lost about 50 tiles from the roof

of the church. Because the Heinze Tile Co. had been sold out these molds had been destroyed and we could not get any replacements. Over the years the extras had been used up. We had to go to a complete new roof because of this. Also around this time a complete new heating system was installed which made the church very comfortable.

They were pleasant years for me at Holy Rosary Parish. The people were with me 100%. The parish was small in numbers and we had to have many functions to get the money to keep going, but the congregation was very good. I would be remiss if I did not mention the many non-Catholic friends who were very kind and helpful.

Today the parish has grown immensely due to the iron mill at South Pass.

As they celebrate the Centenary of the Parish, I wish them all every success and pray God to bless them with His choicest blessings. I have very pleasant memories of

[Lander 1982, 57] the wonderful years I spent in the parish and may the Queen of the Most Holy Rosary shower down her mantle of protection on all its people.

Signed Fr. Thomas Cleary

Cromogue, Bun Clody

Co. Wexford, Ireland

Father Cleary - Model Priest and Dear Friend of all the Padres
by Msgr. John Meyer

I suppose it was in March of 1944. I was enroute to Boston, Mass., accompanying the Very Rev. John Henry V. G. He was going to the Leahy Clinic and remained in the "Bean City" till his demise on May 12, another cancer victim. We stopped by the Cathedral Rectory for a short visit. Msgr. Hartmann and the Vicar General were great friends. But on this early afternoon a young priest occupied Father Henry's attention; for he was "fresh from over" the County Wexford, Ireland and the Seminary there. It seemed he knew many priests who knew Father Henry and he brought their greetings. Father was pleased and Msgr. and I looked on with interest and joy. (Anything to cheer up the Orphanage Superintendent; for he was a very sick man.) And the visit ended and we were on our way to La Salle, Colo., where we boarded the "City of Denver" streamliner.

Of course the young priest was none other than our Father Thomas Cleary. After that our paths would cross so many times in almost all the Parishes where he would be assigned. In Rawlins where I would drive him out to Hanna. In Lander and Green River and

Torrington and St. Patrick's, Casper and Kemmerer, where he was always and ever the quick, effective and most cordial host. He made you feel completely at home and left you at your ease. His hospitality was not of the smothering kind, but open and undisturbed; you went at your own pace.

I would see his perfect priestly demeanor so many times in so many places. He would be with his very dear friend. Father Pate or with his Kerry County associate, one Father Golf Pro Godley. He wasn't pushy, demanding, or a center-of-stage-expert. He was smiling, gentle, affable and always charitable in speech and in action. When at home he was the perfect host, providing all creature comforts of food, drink and rest, but never "piling it on." You went, arrived and left as you pleased. ("This kind of a host doesn't run around in bunches, no sir; no way, no how.")

And now our Padre Tom has gone back to County Wexford, Ireland. God bless you Father and keep you ever in His love. Your kindness of constant kind will ever be golden in our memory.