

## **TWO SAYINGS OF FATHER DELANEY**

**If it doesn't hurt it doesn't work.**

**Even if nothing is happening, something is happening.**

## **AUTOBIOGRAPHY and MEMOIRS of MONSIGNOR WILLIAM DELANEY**

**History Review – William Delaney**

(Msgr Delaney completed his autobiography in 2003 [20031017]).

Born December 18, 1917 in Rock Springs, Wyoming.

Grew up in Rock Springs, Wyoming until I began my seminary studies.

Education: 12 years in public schools in Rock Springs. Entered St. Thomas Seminary September 1937. Ordained a priest June 3, 1944 by Archbishop Urban J. Vehr. Bishop Patrick A. McGovern was ill at the time, so I was ordained with my Denver classmates.

Ordained priest in Immaculate Conception Cathedral by the Bishop of Denver, Urban J. Vehr on June 3, 1944.

1st Mass celebrated June 4, 1944, Our Lady of Sorrows Church, Rock Springs, Wyoming.

### **Assignments:**

Assistant pastor at St. Mary's Cathedral, Cheyenne, Wyoming 1944 to 1948.

Six months as assistant in St. Anthony's Parish, Casper, Wyoming.

Then appointed pastor of St. Charles Borromeo Church in Superior, Wyoming. The next seven years I ministered to my flock during which time I oversaw the building of St. Vivian Church (the title of the church was renamed at the behest of the Extension Society). At the end of my

tenure there I was sent to Cheyenne, Wyoming where I lived for two years while overseeing the building of Holy Trinity Church and at DePaul Chapel where I served as chaplain to the patients in the hospital and the Sisters. The church was blessed and dedicated May 14, 1957.

My greatest contribution during my stay in Superior was building St. Vivian's Church. As was the case when I was in charge of the building of Holy Trinity Church in Cheyenne.

## **Bishop McGovern's Era**

Bishop McGovern, of course, was a pre-Vatican II prelate. He was very much a laid back Bishop. He made infrequent trips to the parishes as the distances to them were so great. He was not too robust and travel was difficult for him. Parishes along the Union Pacific Railroad made for easier access because he could travel by train. Such was not the case attending to the parishes in the central and northern parts of the diocese.

Because of the great size of his diocese, he lacked hands on direction of his priests. This was in great part due to infrequent meetings with them as a presbyterate. As a young priest, for example, we would have a retreat only once every 3 years. Confirmation was administered only once every three years to the larger parishes. The priests themselves were in straits similar to the bishop. They seldom saw their brother priests together as a body only at retreat time. For many, this was a difficult and lonely life. For the gregarious Irish priests of whom there were a good many in the earlier days, it was a real hard existence.

I overheard Bishop McGovern, at a dinner party he sponsored on the occasion of the 35th year of his episcopacy, "I have lost a priest a year from causes other than death." It took a good man to survive the lonely life and the rigors of Wyoming winters.

He seldom had meetings with his priests. It was a choice both he and the priests of his diocese fostered. Someone remarked he did diocesan business by postcard; sometimes, especially along the U.P., the cards would be hand delivered by an engineer or brakeman, Catholics of course. Otherwise, by anyone available who might be traveling in that direction.

He spent the early years of his life as Cheyenne diocesan Bishop, living at St. Mary's Cathedral rectory. Sometime around 1942 he built a lovely residence at 3106 Carey Avenue, which remains to this day the home of his successors.

He acted more like a parish priest in Cheyenne. He visited the people in their homes, especially the Italians where he could speak a few words to them in their native tongue.

In his later years, one could see him every afternoon accompanying a retired Judge Mullen, I believe, who suffered from Alzheimer's. Bishop McGovern would be several yards ahead of him because he was over six feet tall and had a giant stride.

Occasionally, one would accompany him on one of his afternoon jaunts. One in particular that I recall was a visit to an Assembly of God Church under construction. The parishioners themselves were volunteering their time and labor. He stood at the entrance of the body of the church and bellowed loudly, "Isn't this awful!" What he thought, he spoke. If he didn't like something, you knew it.

He was very much opposed to having a basement used as halls in churches. Father Henry Challenger by his own labors, built a hall under the church. It so infuriated the Bishop, he sent Fr. Schellinger off somewhere to make a penitential retreat. Father Henry was adept at getting the Bishop's goat. But in spite of that aberration, there was a mutual respect for one another.

Bishop McGovern had great devotion to St. Joseph. This was evident from the inscription on his coat of arms, "Ite ad Joseph". The parish on the south side of Cheyenne was given the title St. Joseph, as was the orphanage, now called St. Joseph's Children's Home, which certainly marks this as Bishop McGovern's, one, single most important contribution. It, to this day, continues to grow and be the crowning jewel of the institutions fostered by McGovern. A new dormitory is in the process of being built that will house a good many of the children who suffer from emotional and mental problems. Both Wyoming and Nebraska send children to the home, one of the finest treatment centers around.

## **Bishop Newell's era**

This was the era and age of Vatican Council II and Bishop Newell reveled in being one of its participants. He was present from beginning to end. Many of the reforms of this great council were put into practice during the years after the council at the behest of Bishop Newell. There was no delay in responding to the dictates imposed by the Council Fathers. He was a modern Bishop and was quick to institute the reforms as laid down by the council. Many of these have served the Wyoming church in good stead and have contributed too much equanimity in the religious life of Wyoming Catholics.

Bishop Newell's quiet and easy ways were paramount in administering the church in Wyoming. He was unflappable and went about the business of ministering to his flock with ease. If Bishop McGovern's coat of arms read "Go to Joseph", Bishop Newell's bade [*sic*] was Auspice Maria, "Look to Mary". He was devoted to the Mother of God.

He died on the birthday of Mary, September 8th. The most significant event in his life, of course, had to do with his attending the Vatican II Council. He helped priests and people accustom themselves to the changes that affected the lives of each one of us.

Bishop Newell was a school man of the 1st order and made education his first priority. As head of schools for the Denver Archdiocese, he was familiar with the various aspects of schooling. Under his years of being Bishop, a number of schools were opened.

He was a careful administrator of his diocese and under his watchful care it grew and prospered.

## **Bishop Hart's era**

Bishop Hart came on the scene and much of the organizational aspects of the diocese were already in place. Bishop Hart inherited a vital and modern diocese that could compete in most areas with other dioceses in the country. The one drawback was its geographical expanse. The Bishop and his priests met a good more often and travel became a chore. It still presents a problem for all concerned. But the work and problems of running the far flung diocese manages to get done. Bishop Hart spent many hours caring for his flock and encouraging his priests. It was a rare meeting that that he missed and he delighted in meeting with priests and people. It was his example that boosted the morale of the priests. Bishop Hart treated his priests in honorable fashion. He did not meddle to any great degree in the running of the parishes. When appointed pastor, you were given a free hand and there were few failures.

Many things happened during Hart's regime. He was most proud of the spiritual events of his time as Bishop, Of course, the year of the Eucharist which culminated in a diocesan-wide tribute to the Blessed Sacrament; I believe ranks high in the Bishop's estimation.

His instituting of a yearly campaign for collecting funds enabled him to extend diocesan programs and outreach.

The purchase of a former bank building which now houses the diocesan offices was a feather in his Episcopal hat. It serves as one of the most distinctive buildings in the diocese.

I believe he was responsible for helping set up one of the most effective and efficient chancery offices in the nation.

## **Bishop Ricken's Era**

It is almost too early to make an assessment of Bishop Ricken's taking over the helm of the Cheyenne Diocese. His easy going manner bodes well for the diocese. He is approachable and is aware of the needs of the diocese and its priests.

His ordination of a young black to the priesthood was a landmark decision. It gives an international flavor to the Wyoming church.

His interest in gaining seminarians seems to be a major activity of his tenure. We have more young men studying for our diocese than we have had until now.

No work in the diocese is unimportant to him. He heads the Catholic Rural Life group for the United States Church.

He is most affable and approachable.

Delaney 20100707 2pm funeral

**Today** at 10:00 a.m., Msgr. William Delaney passed away at the Davis Hospice Center in Cheyenne. The Vigil will be at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 6. The funeral will be at 2:00 p.m., Wednesday, July 7. Both will take place at Holy Trinity. Wiederspahn Radomsky, (1900 E 19<sup>th</sup> Street, Cheyenne, WY 82001, 307-632-1900) will be making the arrangements. Please offer three Masses for Msgr. Delaney's eternal repose, Jan