

Jackson  
1950-1960

On July 8, 1955, Our Lady of the Tetons, Jackson, Wyoming, was raised to the status of a parish. Previous to that it was attended from St. Patrick's parish, Kemmerer, Wyoming. Rev. James Doudican was the first pastor.

The little church that is being used for Sundays and daily Mass was built in 1936 by a generous donation from Extension society. The first Mass ever offered in Jackson was celebrated by the late Fr. Wm. Short, then pastor of Kemmerer. This Mass was offered in one of the people's homes. The church was built during the time Fr. Gerard Schellinger was pastor of Kemmerer.

At the present time thirty families make up the entire parish. During the past five years there have been seventy baptisms, including infants and adults; sixty First Communions; twenty-seven confirmed; fourteen marriages; and seven deaths.

Pastor lives in rooms at rear of the church.

[Note. Check the Kemmerer parish history and Bishop McGovern's History of the Diocese of Cheyenne, 107-108, quoted below.]

[107] In 1937, another donation of \$1,500.00 was offered by the Catholic Church Extension Society for the erection of a chapel at Moran, which is located some thirty miles north of Jackson, in Teton county.

[108] The chapel was built entirely of logs with the same attractive rustic appearance as the Jackson church. It is located on the shore of Lake Jackson. The chapel, which, in accordance with instructions from the Catholic Church Extension Society, is known as chapel of the Sacred Heart was dedicated on the feast of the Assumption, August 15, 1937, by the Right Rev. Monsignor Duane Hunt, of Salt Lake City, who also

preached the sermon for the occasion. Hundreds of tourists visit this beautiful spot during the summer months.

## **Jackson 1960-1970**

### **Our Lady of the Tetons**

The new decade of the sixties at Our Lady of the Tetons will prove to be as interesting as her civil counterpart, the Town of Jackson.

The parish is under the direction of its founding pastor, the Reverend James Doudican and the lay corporators are Messers Ed. Schultz and Joe Tomich. In April of 1962, Mr. Schultz resigned as corporation treasurer and Mr. Frank Homar was chosen and duly elected to that office on April the 28th, 1962. It was sometime during this year that the work was begun on a new parish church in the south-west corner of the town on a large tract of land purchased by and given to the church by a Mrs. Josephine Spicer, a long time resident of the Valley. The church was finally completed in the spring of 1963 and dedicated by His Excellency, Bishop Hubert M. Newell, under the title "Our Lady of the Mountains." However, the title of the parish corporation remained the Church of "Our Lady of the Tetons," as it does to this day.

During the years that followed the construction of the new church, Father Doudican worked diligently in liquidating the debt on the new church. In the summer of 1964, it was decided to purchase a residence for the pastor, one block south of the church. During all the years that Father Doudican had been pastor he never had a house to live in, but had lived in a number of places, from the small apartment behind the old log church during the summer months, to a basement room in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jess Wort during the winter months, and finally the storage rooms behind the sanctuary in the new church. This new house would be for him his first real home in Jackson. The house was owned by Mr. and Mrs. W.W. Linville and was purchased at the cost of twenty thousand dollars on July the 15th.

After the old church had been abandoned in 1963, the parish had been trying to sell it but without much success; however in September of

1965, the property was sold and the old log church was moved from the property to a location west of the town limits where there was a large new motel, "The Virginian," under construction and the lovely old Lady of the Tetons was converted into a restaurant. The parish realized thirteen thousand dollars from this sale and these moneys seemed to bring the parish completely out of the red.

After leading the parish for eleven years as its founding pastor Father James Doudican was transferred to the Corpus Christi parish in Newcastle, and the Reverend Joseph Moroney assumed the pastoral duties of Our Lady of the Mountains on October the 21st. 1966, after he had served the parish in Lovell for four years.

In the Fall of 1967, the lay trustees who had served the parish during its formative years asked that they be excused from further service and so on October the 19th two new trustees were elected to the parish corporation at a special meeting. Mr. John J. Nelson was elected to the office of Secretary and Mr. Steve Bartek to the office of Corporation Treasurer.

The Chapel of the Sacred Heart, built in 1937 and situated on the shores of Jackson Lake in Grand Teton National Park, was in dire need of repair. With this in mind approval was sought from the National Park Service and the architectural firm of Corbett/Dehnert was engaged to prepare plans for a complete renovation of the historical chapel and to add a small addition on the south side of the building. This task was accomplished in the spring of 1969, and a contract for the addition and renovation was let to Northwestern Construction Company of Jackson on June the 3rd. The construction would cost twenty-five thousand dollars. This is an interesting point because in 1937 when the chapel was built, it was constructed at a cost of fifteen hundred dollars and paid for by the Catholic Church Extension Society. In 1969, to renovate the building, the cost was twenty-five thousand dollars. The work was completed that same summer and was rededicated to the Sacred Heart of

Jesus by His Excellency, Bishop Newell, the evening of August the 13th in the presence of a host of people from Jackson, National Park officials, summer employees in Grand Teton National Park and priests of the diocese. We must hasten to add that the Catholic Church Extension Society again came to the aid of the little chapel with a grant of ten thousand dollars, for which we shall be eternally grateful.

The decade of the sixties found the Jackson parish reach its maturity, serving many thousands of summer tourists and an increasing number of winter sports enthusiasts.

## **Jackson 1970-1980**

### **Our Lady of the Mountains**

The parish history for Our Lady of the Mountains Church of Jackson, Wyoming, for the years 1970 - 1980 inclusive follows:

In 1970, Father Joseph Moroney was pastor, having come to this parish in 1966, and the trustees were John Nelson and Steve Bartek.

After a year or more of discussion, it was decided that the rectory at 329 West Hansen should be sold and a new one built closer to the Church. In May 1971, the old rectory was sold to Mr. and Mrs. John W. Kiefling for \$24,000 net, and the new rectory, a 4 bedroom, 3 bath Boise Cascade Modular Home was constructed next to the church for \$34,840.

In August, 1972, Father Moroney was transferred to St. Laurence O'Toole church in Laramie and Father Charles Taylor, who had been at the Newman Center in Laramie, came to Jackson.

Father Taylor was responsible for repairing the stain-glass windows in the Church. But his main concern was to rejuvenate the mission church of Afton. Mass in Afton, which was actually a mission of Kemmerer, was infrequent and many of the people had been going to church in Montpelier, Idaho. Father Taylor started having Mass in the Veteran's Hall. In January 1975, \$500 was paid to Mr. Lee Ekman for an option to buy 20 acres of land on Highway 89, approximately one mile north of the town of Afton. In June 1975, the diocese of Cheyenne bought the property.

During Father Taylor's tenure as pastor, the Jackson Learning Center for Children used the hall as their school.

In June 1975, Father Taylor went to St. Barbara's Parish in Powell, and Father Eugene Sullivan came to Jackson.

While pastor of Jackson, Father Sullivan encouraged the CYO and prepared for the diocesan CYO State Convention which was held at the new Ramada Inn in October 1975. He also had many programs for our National Bicentennial Year especially honoring the pioneers of the parish.

He continued Father Taylor's interest in the mission at Afton, and in October 1975, at his request, Bishop Newell changed the boundaries of the parish and gave the mission "officially" to the parish of Jackson.

Father Sullivan was pastor less than a year, and in August 1976, Father Charles Bartek became the 5th pastor, and Father Sullivan went to Our Lady of Sorrows in Rock Springs.

In October 1977, Conrad Schwiering and John Lippold became the trustees of the parish replacing John Nelson and Steve Bartek who had been good and faithful trustees since 1967.

During Father Bartek's tenure as pastor, many building projects were undertaken and completed: the paving of the parking lot around the church, new lights and a rug were installed in the church. But his greatest achievement was the building of the Church at the mission in Afton. He and Mr. Dale Motzkus designed the Church, and Mr. Motzkus built it. The first ground was turned in October 1977, and it was dedicated in November 1978, by Father Bartek. The reason it was dedicated by Father Bartek was that on the day of dedication, there was a blizzard and the Bishop as well as many priests could not make it. It is a tribute to Father Bartek that this mission Church, which cost approximately \$100,000, was paid off already in January 1979, by means of donations from the Extension Society, the various parishes in the Diocese, private donations and the financial astuteness of Father Bartek.

When Father Bartek was transferred to Pinedale in May 1979, the parish had no debts whatever.

Father John Wright succeeded Father Bartek in May 1979, as the 6th Pastor. He had not been here long when the parish had a distinguished visitor. Archbishop Jean Jadot the Apostolic Delegate to the United States was vacationing in Wyoming. He had said Mass on Sunday in Yellowstone Park for the visitors there, then came south to Teton Park where he toured Jenny Lake, then on to Jackson for the night. The ladies of the parish had a beautiful dinner for him, Bishop Hart, Bishop Newell and 15 priests who came to meet the Archbishop. The next day Archbishop Jadot was the main celebrant of a concelebrated Mass with the other bishops and priests in our parish Church. He then went south to see the mission Church in Afton -- the mission set in the heart of Mormon country. This was July, 1979.

In Sept., 1980 the Deanery Meeting of the Rock Springs Deanery of the Wyoming Council of Catholic Women was hosted by Our Lady of the Mountains Parish.

And in October, 1980, the 25th anniversary of the incorporation of the parish was held. Bishop Hart, many priests of the diocese including all the former pastors except Father Moroney were present. Bishop Hart concelebrated the Mass of Thanksgiving and preached. Following the Mass a banquet was held honoring the former pastors and the present and former trustees as well as all the pioneers of the parish. There were 200 people present at the banquet.

**Jackson 1990-2000**  
**Our Lady of the Mountains**  
**Rev. Carl Beavers, Parochial Administrator**  
**May 13, 2005**

1. Names of clergy & religious serving during the decade and dates of service:

Father Gerald Chleborad became the eighth pastor of Our Lady of the Mountains in 1990.

In 1995 Fr. Sam Hayes was named pastor.

In October 1999, Fr. Hayes was named pastor of St. Patrick's Parish, Casper and Fr. Carl Beavers came as pastor having served seventeen years as Rector of St. Mary's Cathedral, Cheyenne.

2. Notable accomplishments by lay leaders and parishioners: (give dates)

3. Notable accomplishments by the clergy and religious during the decade: (give dates)

4. Construction - new or remodeling: (give dates)

None undertaken.

At Holy Family, Afton, a new roof was added to the church during Fr. Chleborad's pastorate in 1994 along with a new sign on the highway. The parking lot was paved in Fr. Hayes' pastorate in 1998 along with painting/carpeting the interior. See enclosed sheet [Afton].

5. Land acquisitions: (give dates)

None.

6. Lay Trustees and term of service for each:

Frank McKeon and Collene Rockford were trustees through the entire period.

7. Pastor's overview of the decade:

The decade began with a downturn in the land values. Those were

quickly reversed as land values took an upturn. At the close of the decade, land prices went even higher. This may seem a strange barometer, but land prices reflect the activity and change in this community more than anything else.

8. Significant Parish events and programs: (give dates)

[Typed from hand-written original.]