

Monarch, St. Thomas Bishop McGovern

[137] The parish of St. Thomas is bounded on the north by Montana, on the west by the Big Horn mountains, on the south by the parishes of Sheridan and Buffalo and on the east by Campbell county (parish of Gillette). The approximate area is about 2,400 square miles. The Catholic population during the years, 1906-28 was about 650, which number included the Catholics of the new missionary district of Dutch Creek.

The total approximate value of all church properties at Monarch is \$10,000.00, and includes a stone church building, with furnishings, vestments and sacred vessels, valued at about \$7,500.00, a frame residence, furnishings and grounds, valued at about \$2,500.00. The properties of the church of St. Louis, Wyarno, are valued at about \$3,000.00 and include a frame church building with furnishings and one acre of ground.

The seating capacity of the Monarch church is about 275 and that of the Wyarno church about 200.

The Monarch church properties are free from debt. The Wyarno properties have a standing debt of \$300.00 to the diocese of Cheyenne.

[138] This entire district was first organized as a mission of the Holy Name church, Sheridan, in the year 1906, by the Rev. John Duffy, pastor. The first Mass was celebrated in the autumn of 1906, at the residence of Mr. Nicholas Scullen in Monarch. For a period of time following the first celebration, services were held in the old schoolhouse on one Sunday of every month.

In the autumn of 1907 a church site was secured, and an agreement entered into between the church and the Carney Coal Company for the erection of a church building and parochial residence in the Carneyville

mining camp, now called Kleenburn. The coal company donated the site and the directors of the company gave generous personal donations towards the erection of the buildings, and agreed to advance the money necessary for their erection and furnishing. The congregation was to repay by installments the money advanced by the company.

In September, 1907, this mission was formally created a parish with the advent from Holland of the Rev. Henry Schellinger, the first pastor.

In 1913, Fr. Schellinger was transferred to the parish of Green River.

Succeeding Fr. Schellinger was the Rev. Ludwig Grycmacher, a native of Warsaw, Poland. Fr. Grycmacher studied at the Polish seminary, Detroit, Mich., and was ordained during the summer of 1912. He [139] officiated at Superior until his transfer to Monarch. He remained in Monarch for two years and was replaced by the Rev. Casimir Tomiak, who was also born in Poland. Fr. Tomiak studied and was ordained at the Polish seminary, Detroit, Mich., about 1914. He officiated at Newcastle until his appointment in 1915 to St. Thomas' church, Carneyville. He remained in charge of the parish until 1917.

The Rev. Theodore Schultz followed Fr. Tomiak. He was born in Pennsylvania of Polish parents, and was ordained in the Sulpician seminary, Baltimore, Md. Before coming to Wyoming, Fr. Schultz labored in the dioceses of Pittsburg, Los Angeles, Salt Lake City and Denver. In the winter of 1917 he was appointed pastor of St. Thomas and remained there until July 16, 1924.

During his administration the church building was burned twice in close succession and the rectory once. The cause of the fires was unknown. In each case the insurance covered these buildings and provided for their replacement.

To succeed Fr. Schultz, who returned to his native diocese of Pittsburg, came the Rev. Peter P. Szymanski. Fr. Szymanski was born of Polish

parents in Baltimore, Md., where he was ordained on Christmas day, 1922. He was appointed to the pastorate of Kemmerer, [140] February, 1923, where he labored until his transfer to Carneyville.

During Fr. Szymanski's tenure it was thought advisable to move the parochial headquarters to Monarch from Carneyville. The newly built rectory at Carneyville was exchanged for the present Monarch rectory, and a new stone church was erected at Monarch from the insurance which covered the burned Carneyville church. Until the completion of the new church Mass was celebrated at the coal company's community church at Monarch.

The church of St. Thomas, Monarch, was formally opened with the celebration of Mass, Christmas, 1924.

Following the transfer of Fr. Szymanski to the parish of Gillette in August, 1926, the Monarch parish was attended as a mission from the Holy Name church, Sheridan, until February 1, 1928, when the Rev. John McDevitt, J.C.D., was appointed to the charge.

An outside mission church was erected and dedicated under the patronage of St. Louis, near Wyarno, June 11, 1928. The ceremony was conducted by the Most Rev. Patrick A. McGovern, D.D., bishop of Cheyenne, who on the same occasion administered confirmation. The Catholic Church Extension Society generously donated \$1,000.00 toward the erection of the church.

[141] The deceased faithful of the Monarch parish are interred in a Catholic cemetery. The plot of land for this purpose was leased in 1908 from the Carney Coal Company for ninety-nine years.

Fr. McDevitt remained in charge of the parish until 1933. His successor, the Rev. Thomas F. O'Reilly remained until 1936. He was succeeded by Rev. Frederick J. Kimmett, who was pastor for a few months only,

followed by Rev. Peter O'Grady, who in the fall of 1939 was succeeded by the present pastor, Rev. Daniel B. Carroll.

Confirmation has been administered every four years. In 1938 there were twenty baptisms and three marriages. The financial condition of the parish is fair at this writing. There is a debt of \$300.00 on St. Louis church of Wyarno. The majority of the parishioners of St. Thomas, Monarch, and St. Louis, Wyarno, are Polish. An approximate ninety per cent are coal miners.