

HISTORY OF NEWCASTLE PARISH
FROM 1940 TO 1950
January 15, 1951

1940

Father John Mullins is the present pastor. The dean of Sheridan reports that the Church building is in very poor condition, and for that reason a building fund has been initiated for the purpose of the erection of a new church. In the course of this year some repairs have been made on the mission church at Upton in the form of a new roof on the building, and the installation of new Stations of the Cross.

1941

Some improvements were carried out on the interior of Corpus Christi rectory during this year: the kitchen was painted and a new range installed. According to the records the building fund amounted to \$2,100 at the end of this year.

1942

In the course of this year war bonds in the amount of \$3,500 were purchased in favor of the new church fund. The mission church at Four Corners had the interior renovated and the roof of the Church was painted.

1943

Some small improvements were carried out in the rectory during the year. The sum of \$6,100 is now invested in war bonds.

1944

The beloved pastor Rev. John Mullins has been failing in health for some time, and for this reason is forced to resign the pastorate on account of his ill-health. He enters a hospital in Kansas City, Mo., for medical attention. During the absence of Father Mullins the parish was administered by the Rev. James McBride, pastor of Gillette until the appointment as pastor of the Rev. Paul Foster sometime in the fall of 1944.

Father Mullins died in Kansas City, Mo., September 13, 1944, and was buried in that city.

During the short administration of Father McBride many improvements were carried out on Corpus Christi rectory.

1945

The missionary efforts of Father Foster are in full swing and many projects are undertaken. An elaborate campaign is soon in progress to increase the building fund. At the end of this year the sum of \$9,000 is in the building fund for the new Church.

The records of this year account for 8 First Communions, 3 marriages, 11 baptisms and four deaths.

1946

In. the course of this year the architect has been instructed to complete the plans for the proposed new church. Some more improvements are carried out on the Rectory: viz., the building was insulated, the rooms on the second floor were painted, and a new refrigerator was installed in the kitchen. A butane gas storage tank was purchased to provide fuel for the church and the rectory.

In the course of the year there were recorded 12 First Communions, 2 marriages, 19 baptisms and 3 deaths. The building fund has now grown to \$13,000.

1947

The plans for the new church have not as yet been completed, but activities to that goal continued. Father Foster feels the necessity of an assistant priest to administer properly to the many spiritual needs of the scattered missions. The Rev. James Ruddy was appointed assistant to Father Foster on January 2, 1947, and in a short time by his zeal and kindly spirit won the hearts of all parishioners. He remained in that position until February 24, 1949, when he was appointed assistant at St. Mary's cathedral, Cheyenne.

1948 and 1949

In the course of 1949 a Mission of one week was held in Newcastle. Missions of three days each were held in Four Corners and Upton.

Father Foster installs new bathroom facilities in Corpus Christi Rectory.

The Rev. Bartholomew Svete, a refugee priest from Yugoslavia, succeeds Father Ruddy as assistant on February 24, and continues as such until November 1949, when he is transferred to Our Lady of Sorrows parish, Rock Springs.

He was succeeded by Father McBrien who was transferred from Casper, November 3, 1949.

An event of the greatest importance came to the entire parish in 1949, when the Sisters (The Daughters of the Divine Redeemer) were engaged to administer the local county-Hospital, known as the Weston County Memorial Hospital. The good Sister's Mother House is located in Elizabeth, Pa. Through the good administrations of Father Foster, two of

the Sisters, by name, Sister Mary Margaret as Superior, and Sister Mary Perpetua, arrived in Newcastle May 1, 1949, accompanied by their Mother Provincial, Mother Mary Chrysantha. As the hospital was still under construction they lived in a Brannan apartment basement until July 16, when with two other Sisters, Sister Mary Louise and Sister Mary Theodore, they moved into the newly built hospital and took up their residence in the basement rooms.

The hospital was dedicated and subsequently blessed by Father Foster on September 12. The official opening was on October 3, 1949. The hospital was a twenty-four bed hospital. The good Sisters won the admiration and love of the entire community in a very short time; and they are now considered indispensable by the entire community.

1950

Father Foster feels the necessity of a new church in one of his missions, Sundance, Wyoming, and obtains a promise of help from the Catholic Extension Society of America, Chicago, Ill. Soon thereafter the patriotic priest feels the desire of becoming a chaplain in the United States forces; and having obtained the permission of his Superior for this purpose, Fr. Foster resigns his pastorate at Newcastle, the same to be effective on June 25, 1950. On that date he leaves Newcastle for his home in Indiana.

The Rev. Gerard Schellinger has been appointed pastor of Newcastle, and is installed as such by Bishop Newell, Sunday June 25, 1950. St Paul's Church, Sundance, is completed by him. The Catholic Church Extension has made a donation of \$3,000 to which the diocese of Cheyenne has graciously added a donation of \$7,500. The Church is dedicated by Bishop Newell on Labor Day, September 4, 1950. Corpus Christi rectory is renovated completely throughout.

On Sunday September 10, 1950, an intense money raising campaign for a new church is initiated under the direction of the American City

Bureau of Chicago. Bishop Newell opens the campaign on that night at an enthusiastic meeting of all parishioners. The campaign closed on October 24, when the results showed that approximately \$35,000 was raised, in pledges and cash toward the building of the new church.

Fr. Foster had left approximately \$32,000 in government bonds at the time of his departure.

Mr. J. K. Monroe of Denver, the diocesan architect was immediately instructed to complete the drawings of the new Corpus Christi church. Having been duly submitted and approved by His Excellency, Bishop McGovern, bids were solicited from various contractors which are to be opened on Feb. 22, 1951, at which time it is hoped the contract will be let for the immediate construction of the new church.

On October 3, 1950, the Sisters completed the first anniversary of their administration of the hospital. Records reveal that in the first year 878 patients had be' n admitted; 149 surgical cases had been taken care of and 192 babies had been born there. The Sisters feel that they will double these numbers in the second year. By reason of a lack of accommodations many patients had-been refused admission and had been sent to South Dakota. At this time the hospital is staffed by nine Sisters and two regular secular nurses. Five of the Sisters are registered nurses: one an X-ray technician; one a registered anesthetist, and one a registered laboratory technician. By this time the hospital is fully recognized on the registered lists of the A.M.A. and the American College of Surgeons. At the present time an organized effort is in progress by interested Protestants and Catholics to erect a suitable convent for the Sisters on the hospital grounds.

The Newcastle parish is rightly proud of the fact that it is the only parish in Wyoming in which a hospital is operated by Catholic Sisters. [Below handwritten and signature.] The Sister of Charity of Leavenworth, who

formerly operated one at Laramie, are now building one in Cheyenne.
Gerard Schellinger

HISTORY OF CORPUS CHRISTI PARISH 1950-1960

The year 1950 ushered in a decade of such vast expansion of Corpus Christi parish that it may well be recorded as the most fruitful and glorious in its history. Early in that year plans were formulated, by the Reverend Paul Foster, for the erection of the first Mission Church in Crook County at Sundance, to serve the spiritual needs of that community and surrounding districts. Father Gerard Schellinger, who succeeded Father Foster as pastor, completed the Church in the fall of 1950 at a cost of \$11,000, of which the Catholic Extension Society contributed \$2,500. His Excellency Most Reverend Hubert M. Newell, D.D., Bishop of Cheyenne, dedicated the Church, under the title St. Paul, on September 4, 1950.

Father Schellinger, due to prolonged illness, resigned as pastor of Corpus Christi parish early in 1951. Prior to his departure, however, he initiated and conducted a financial drive in the parish to receive funds for the erection of a new parish Church in Newcastle. Julian Construction Company received the contract at \$105,000 and excavation work commenced in April of 1951. Father Schellinger's pastorate terminated after witnessing the laying of the foundation stone of the present Corpus Christi Church.

Father Terence McGovern, then pastor of the St. Leo's Church, Lusk, succeeded Father Schellinger as pastor on May 29, 1951. Reverend Michael J. McBrien, then Assistant to Father Schellinger, replaced Father McGovern as pastor of St. Leo's, Lusk. Under Father McGovern's supervision the plans for the new Church were somewhat revised to include a full basement-hall and an imposing tower which greatly enhanced the architectural beauty of the edifice.

May 1952 saw the completion of the present parish church at a total cost of \$128,000. On May 14, 1952, His Excellency Most Reverend Hubert

M. Newell, D.D., Bishop of Cheyenne dedicated the new Corpus Christi Church in the presence of 35 members of the Diocesan Clergy and a capacity congregation of the faithful. In His dedicatory address His Excellency hailed the new church as one of the most beautiful of the diocese. On the fourth anniversary of its dedication, His Excellency Bishop Newell was present for mortgage-burning ceremonies indicating that the new and beautiful Corpus Christi Church was debt free.

To cater to the needs of the Catholics in the Upton community the present Church of St. Anthony was constructed in the Spring of 1956. Suitable property adjacent to the highway was purchased by Father McGovern as a site for the new church. With the Julian Construction Company as contractors, the construction cost was set at \$15,600. The overall cost of the church and furnishings was approximately \$17,500 of which the Catholic Extension Society contributed \$5,000. His Excellency Most Reverend Hubert M. Newell, D.D., Bishop of Cheyenne, dedicated this mission church on May 18, 1956, which was then regarded as one of the most beautiful and serviceable mission churches in the diocese. The church has a well-equipped hall attached which serves as a meeting place for parish and social activities as well as for religious instruction classes. The church still carries a small debt.

To serve the needs of the Catholics of Hulett, the old mission church at Upton was remodeled and transferred to a lot purchased there for this purpose. Prior to 1956, when Hulett claimed a church of its own, Mass had been said at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Frank Vasey.

In May of 1958, Father McGovern purchased the Brennan home in Newcastle for \$15,000 to serve as a parish rectory. After extensive repairs and remodeling it stands today as one of the most beautiful and appropriate rectories in the Diocese.

Continuation of Parish History
1960 to 1970
Newcastle
Church of Corpus Christi

At the beginning of this decade, 1960 to 1970, the pastor in charge of Corpus Christi parish was the Rev. Terence McGovern. Father McGovern was replaced as pastor by the Rev. Michael McBrien on Sept. 15, 1960. Father McBrien continued to serve as pastor until October 20, 1966 when he was succeeded by the Rev. James Doudican. Father Doudican was pastor of the parish for about one year. His successor was Monsignor F.J. Kimmett whose appointment as pastor became effective on November 9, 1967.

Priests who served in the parish as assistant pastor after 1960 were the following: Rev. James O'Neill until March 1961; Rev. Thomas O'Flannigan from March 1961 to August 1962; Rev. Gerald Sullivan from August 1962 to February 1964; Rev. George Tellez from February 1964 to August 1965; and the Rev. Thomas Sheridan from August 1965 to October 1966.

An event occurred on October 20, 1966 that effected a radical change in the parish. The towns of Hulett, Moorcroft, Sundance, and Upton were removed as missions of Corpus Christi Church and were assigned to the newly created parish of St. Paul at Sundance. The Rev. Cletus Prado became the first pastor of Sundance. With the removal of all missions from the parish it was no longer necessary for Corpus Christi to have an assistant pastor.

The Annual Report of the parish for 1960 gives the following statistics: Families, 210; Souls, 450; Baptisms, 48. The parish indebtedness in 1960 was \$30,000.00. For 1965 the Annual Report contains the following information: Families, 280; Souls, 800; Baptisms, 41. The parish indebtedness was \$7,000.00. In 1969 the Annual Report gives

this information: Families, 116; Souls, 395; Baptisms, 8. The parish was cleared of all debt in 1969.

The Extension Society Lay Volunteers, who were active in the Diocese of Cheyenne from 1962 to 1966, assigned two of their members to work in Corpus Christi parish as catechists. The parish benefited from the zealous efforts of these young people from September in 1962 until May, 1965.

The Sacrament of Confirmation was administered by Bishop Newell on three occasions during the decade. On March 21, 1962 a class of 51 was confirmed; on March 30, 1965 there were 70 persons who received Confirmation; and on April 8, 1968 the number confirmed was 45.

No major building or improvement projects were carried out in the parish during these ten years. The only change in the parish plant during this time was the sale and removal of the old rectory in 1966.

Serving as trustees during the entire period were Mr. Edward Halsey and Mr. John Ratigan.

Corpus Christi
The parish history for Corpus Christi Church of Newcastle,
Wyoming, for the years 1970 - 1980 follows:

The results of the Second Vatican council, which lasted from October, 1962, to December, 1965, have been startling, disconcerting, and, at first, accepted reluctantly by the people of Corpus Christi Church at Newcastle. Churches isolated from the mainstream of Catholic life seemed more reluctant than others, and, admittedly, Newcastle has been one of these.

To a congregation made up greatly of people whose European birth or ancestry allowed total dedication to and understanding of the Latin Mass, it was a shock to hear Mass in English. To others, it was a pleasure, which brought new understanding.

Moving the altar so the priest could face the congregation was probably more difficult for the priest than the people, but congregational singing and the people's participation in the liturgy have resulted in a feeling of being a part of the celebration rather than watchers. So, while acceptance has been slow, having accepted the idea of renewal and change, the parish is now moving rapidly toward the goals of Vatican II.

From 1979 to 1980, there were 145 baptisms, 72 marriages, 68 deaths, 143 first communions, and 122 confirmations.

In 1980, the confessional and sanctuary were updated. Old partitions of the confessional were removed, the walls papered, the floor carpeted. With new lighting and chairs, a comforting environment was created where the sacrament of penance is truly a spiritual communication between the faithful and the pastor, God's representative. A portable screen provides privacy if this is desired.

The well worn altar and side altars of the sanctuary were removed and the statues taken from the wall niches which were then plastered over.

New altar boy benches, credence tables, a president's chair, ambo, and baptismal font are of oak with spiral pillars and were made in Fort Laramie. The baptismal font, a duplicate of the old, has the same statues on the cover.

The font forms a significant part of the Holy Family prayer corner with the statues of the Holy Family mounted on a pillared oak platform above it.

Beneath the picture of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, on the wall of the nook formerly used for the font, are the vigil lights. A single kneeler provides a place for private prayer and meditation.

A matching oak altar on the right holds the Blessed Sacrament. The wall behind it is covered by a stained glass mosaic, which is illuminated by overhead lights. The unique altar is of polished rose quartz on a rough-cut rose quartz base.

For the coming year, 1981, an ambitious and much needed project is the planning, financing, and building of a general parish office and residence for the priest. The old rectory, purchased and remodeled over twenty years ago (1958), had become an energy inefficient white elephant, which, nevertheless, brought a good price. The new office and house will be connected with the church and will be an energy saving unit, conserving not only fossil fuel energy but that of the priest as well.

The office will consist of a reception room, priest's office, two counseling rooms with restroom between, and janitor's closet. The rectory, with suites for two priests will accommodate the resident and one or two visitors, although the counseling rooms may be converted to temporary bedrooms if needed. In addition there will be a living room, dining room, kitchen, and laundry. Under the residence will be a double garage and mechanical equipment room. Included in the building plans are other essential repairs to the church.

The greatest change of all came on June 1, when our dear Father Bartolomeo Svete announced that the bishop was “semi” retiring him because of his ill health. “I have been already thirty years in this business,” he said, and was delighted to be sent to a small parish in Ranchester for the summer months. There in the foothills of the beautiful Big Horn Mountains, he hoped to take advantage of the excellent fishing. He was to go to Arizona for the cold months.

His successor, Father Jim Krah, from Pennsylvania, arrived the middle of June to assume the responsibility of five parishes: Newcastle, Upton, Moorcroft, Sundance, and Hulett. With such a load, he, like the early Bishop Keane, has become “all things to all men” and is joyful in his service to the Lord and these several, widely separated parishes. An enthusiastic, sincere leader, Father Krah is implementing all resources for the instruction of everyone from the youngest to the oldest. Through him and with him, we are experiencing the spiritual goals of Vatican II, “the new spirit of Christian brotherhood and fellowship--a great religious community in the process of renewal and change.”

Newcastle 1981-1991
Corpus Christi
Rev. Charles Velasquez

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

Rev. James Krah - June 1980--May 1982

Rev. Joseph Daley - June 1982--January 1986

Rev. Richard Hitt - January 1986--April 1987

Rev. Michael Hellman - April 1987 -- June 1987

Rev. Evan P. Shea - June 1987 -- July 1987

Rev. Sam Hayes - July 1987 -- June 1991

Rev. Charles Velasquez - June 1991 –

Sister Mildred Weber 1983 -- August 1991

Sister Ruth Ellert 1987-

Brother Richard Dahmen August 1991 –

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

Carolyn Hockett - elected to the DPC Board in 1986.

Coco Soper - Diocesan Pastoral Council Secretary

- Lay Ministry Formation Program

- Director of Mayme's K.I.D.S Preschool at Corpus Christi Church

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

In 1981 Fr. James Krah implemented changes recommended by Vatican II such as turning the altar around to face the people, remodeling the sanctuary area, updating the confessionals and replacing the baptism font, lectern, etc.

He also sold the old rectory, built a new rectory which included administrative offices, classrooms and a two car garage.

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

New rectory, remodeling of the Church interior – 1981. Painting &

necessary repairs to the Church interior - April 1989. Asbestos removal in the Church hall - May 1989. New furnace system - August 1989. Sidewalk replacement - July 1990

5. Land acquisitions. (give dates)

Mayme Coates left in her will to Corpus Christi Church ranch land on the Beaver Creek

Road in 1982. This ranch was sold in 1991.

6. Lay Trustees and term of service for each.

Mr. Al Zanoni - 1982/83; Mrs. Coco Soper - 1983/84; Mrs. Karen Hedlund - 1985/1991; Mr. Ralph Lyons - 1988/1991

Pastor's overview of the decade. [Nothing reported.]; Significant parish events and programs. (give dates): November 2 - 8th, 1986: Open House/Hospitality Week/; June 16, 1990: 100 Year Celebration of Corpus Christi Parish; July 1990: Float in the Weston County Centennial parade in conjunction with the 100 year celebrations of Wyoming and Corpus Christi Church.