

History of St Patrick's Parish Casper, Wyoming Dedicated March 17, 1963

In the mid fifties it became apparent to Msgr. Thomas F. O'Reilly, pastor of St Anthony's parish in Casper, that because of the continued growth of Casper eastward that a new Church building and Parish would be almost imperative. Accordingly he acquired a three acre tract on the corner of Country Club Road and 4th Street for future expansion. Plans for a new Church and school complex were prepared by Goodrich and Wilking, a Casper architectural firm, and by 1961 everything seemed ready and propitious to finalize all the preparatory requirements for the new buildings.

Groundbreaking took place and the Northern Construction Company, whose bid seemed most acceptable, went into full operation. It was the great expectation of Msgr. O'Reilly that the dedication of the new Church should, very appropriately, take place on St. Patrick's Day, 1963. Despite many delays occasioned by strikes in 1962 and other difficulties it looked like, in the fall of that year that his hopes might be realized. Boundaries were set for the new parish and a survey made by the Catholics living in the area indicated that there would be around 350 charter families within its confines. A group of Sisters from St Louis gave evidence that they would be interested in opening the six classroom grade school but this later did not materialize.

New houses began to mushroom up all around the area of the Church and Msgr. O'Reilly purchased one of the most convenient and beautiful ones as a future residence for the priests who would minister to the new facility.

Modern Romanesque in design, St Patrick's is a cruciform structure, traditional especially in Ireland, in Church construction. A side altar dedicated to the Blessed Mother is found in the north transept, and in the south is a corresponding altar dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The work of skilled hands of several nations is apparent in the building. The marble in the altars, the Communion rail, the baptismal font, the holy water fonts and the reredos was quarried and worked in Italy. The stained glass windows were fashioned according to specifications in Cologne, Germany. The beautiful tabernacle, the Sanctuary and Baptistry gates, all wrought bronze were worked by craftsmen in Holland. Overall seating in the Church is about 1,000. The Mother's Chapel in the northwest corner is completely soundproofed and is equipped with a public address system. It affords an unobstructed view of the altar.

Over 200 cars can be accommodated in the parking lot. St Patrick's School consists of six classrooms, gymnasium with stage, kitchen, custodian's quarters, and office area. The architectural design permits easy expansion of two additional classrooms on the ground floor and eight more classrooms on a second storey which could be provided as needs dictate.

The first pastor, The Rev James Power, a native of Dungarvan [Dunraven sp?] County, Waterford, Ireland was appointed on January the 15th, 1963. Ordained in 1939, at St. John's College in Waterford he came to the Diocese of Cheyenne that year and had served as assistant in

Sheridan and Rock Springs and as pastor in Monarch, Gillette, and Buffalo in succession before taking up his new assignment. Father Power set about organizing the parish shortly after his arrival. An Altar and Rosary Society was established as well as a men's club, a CYO, CCD, and altar boy club. The first president of the Altar Society was Mrs. Tony Hartzell and the first president of the men's club was Mr. George Reitemier; Mr. Michael Waters and Mr. Michael O'Brien were of great assistance with the young group of the parish. Mrs. Tony Pojman organized the altar boys and Mr. Leo Malsom, the Choir.

Though there were many worries that the structure would not be ready for dedication on St Patrick's Day, March 17, 1963, the Patron Saint of Ireland to whom many prayers were offered, did not disappoint the Monsignor, the Pastor or the people. A violent blizzard on the 16th provided considerable misgivings but the next day dawned sunny, mild and beautiful as if it were ordained by providence. At 4:00 p.m. on March 17th, 1963, the procession was formed to begin the dedicatory ceremonies. Leading were the altar boys followed by the clergy, a guard of honor of the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus, Monsignor O'Reilly, Celebrant of the Mass with the other Monsignori, the Pastor and M.C., Father Power. Bringing up the rear were the Most Rev. Hubert M. Newell, D.D., Bishop of Cheyenne, the Most Rev. Joseph Federal, Bishop of Salt Lake City, Utah. In the ancient and colorful ceremonial of the Church the sacred edifice was officially blessed and dedicated to the service of God by Bishop Newell, assisted by the 35 members of the clergy of the Diocese. About 1,000 of the laity of Casper attended the first Mass at St Patrick's. The day ended with a banquet for 600 guests in the auditorium of the new school.

The new pastor sought Sisters to run the school everywhere but it was an inopportune time since a great transition in the Catholic School system and in the Sisterhoods was taking place all over the country. However, in 1964 Mother M. Romaine of St. Martin's Benedictine Priory in Rapid City, South Dakota, volunteered two Sisters to work with the CCD program. A beautiful new home situated conveniently was procured for the Sisters in 1968 and Sister Romaine herself with Sister Rosemary were the first occupants and to this date are still directing the CCD work in the Parish. About 500 students are registered for religious instruction in the CCD program. The parish began to grow and in 1965 it reached its 10 year peak with close to 500 families.

The first Assistant Pastor appointed in the fall of 1966 was Father William Gianola, a native of Kemmerer, Wyoming. He was followed in 1967 by Father John Cody who retired because of ill health the following year. Father Cody died in New Jersey on August 7, 1969. Father Hardy succeeded Father Cody in 1969 and worked with the CCD program and with Catholic education in the City of Casper. He was followed in 1970 by Father Gerald Sullivan, a Casper native, and was appointed pastor of Glenrock in 1972. Father Vincent Langfield succeeded him until Father Frank Mahler, from the Diocese of Richmond, Virginia, loaned to the Diocese in October 1972, came to assist Father Power in St Patrick's until this writing.

June 11, 1973
{signed} James Power
1973

St Patrick's Parish

Casper, Wyoming 82601

Year Baptisms Confirmations First Communions Marriages

1963 66 0 0 11

1964 65 65 40 6

1965 77 53 39 8

1966 65 71 56 12

1967 58 60 56 17

1968 74 40 71 33

1969 83 75 40 22

1970 77 52 50 25

1971 73 55 76 24

1972 75 46 57 23

**The parish history for St. Patrick's Catholic Church of Casper for the years
1970-1980 inclusive follows:**

Sharon Gentzler, parish secretary

In 1960, it became apparent that there was a need for a new church on the east side of Casper. Monsignor Thomas F. O'Reilly, then pastor of Saint Anthony's Church, undertook the project of constructing Saint Patrick's Church. The initial investment in the church, school and 3.2 acres of land was something in excess of a half million dollars. Bishop Hubert M. Newell dedicated the new church on Saint Patrick's Day in 1963.

Father James Power was appointed pastor of the new parish. The boundary lines of the parish at that time were from Elk Street on the west to the Converse County line on the east. His assistants were Fr. Gerald Sullivan 1969-1971; Fr. Vincent Langfield 1971-1972; Fr. John Cody and Fr. Frank Mahler.

Father Thomas Cleary followed Father Power as pastor on June 28, 1973. His assistant was Father John Flannigan. In August 1974, Father Lawrence Etchingham became the pastor. He remained pastor until September of 1976, when Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Hart became pastor, and Father Etchingham served as associate pastor. Father Joseph Moroney replaced Father Etchingham as associate pastor in May 1977. Also serving St. Patrick's at that time was Father John Robinson, O.S.B., in the capacity of assistant pastor. Father Moroney became pastor in 1978 when Bishop Hart was named Bishop of the Diocese of Cheyenne. Father Thomas Sheridan replaced Father Moroney as pastor on June 17, 1980. At this time, there is no assistant at Saint Patrick's.

On June 31, 1971, Mr. Louis T. Carubie became our first lay minister. Rev. Mr. Carubie was ordained a permanent deacon on October 14, 1974, and serves St. Patrick's now in this capacity.

One priest has been ordained from this church. He is Father Milton N. Adamson, C.S.C., and he is currently stationed in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

St. Patrick's has 25 lay ministers and two lectors.

Sisters from the Order of Saint Benedict were in residence from September 1969, until May 1978. Currently on staff is Sr. Louis-Marie Cramer, O.P. She arrived in August 1979, and conducts the Adult Education Program for the parish.

Mr. and Mrs. Ron Green came to the parish in 1979 as Diocesan Family Life Coordinators. They work from the Family Life Center in downtown Casper.

Darlene Determan joined the staff of St. Patrick's in August 1979, as Youth Minister; and in September 1980, John Schneider came to St. Patrick's as Diocesan Youth Director in residence. Lynn and Kevin Meenan accepted an appointment as Music Ministers in October of this year.

Religion Education Classes are offered at St. Patrick's for pre-school through adult. Our C.C.D. program has three part-time elementary C.C.D. coordinators, one junior-high school C.C.D. coordinator, and the senior high school program is conducted by Father Sheridan. The C.C.D. program is taught by 36 teachers.

The physical plant of St. Patrick's has undergone several changes in the past ten years. In August 1974, remodeling took place in the basement of the church to turn a large classroom into offices for Catholic Social Services. Catholic Social Services remained here until late 1977. At that time, the parish offices were moved from the rectory to the area vacated by Social Services.

The Sanctuary was remodeled in 1975, and the main part of the church was carpeted. A new organ was installed and blessed in 1976. During 1978-1979, the Patrician Room and kitchen, and St. Thomas Chapel were remodeled.

In addition to the above improvements, the parking lot was paved, the church heating system redone, and automatic sprinkler systems were installed at the church, convent, and rectory.

There are several organizations active at St. Patrick's. Among them are Council of Catholic Women, Men's Club, Catholic Daughters of America, Parish Council, C.C.D. Board, Cana Club, and the St. Vincent de Paul Society. The people of St. Patrick's also help to support the Knights of Columbus, Regal Club (senior citizens), Marriage Encounter, New Beginnings, and the Shalom Prayer Group.

Casper St Patrick 1980-1990
Charlotte Babcock

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

Pastors:

Rev. Joseph Moroney - Term: June 1, 1977, to June 1, 1980.

Rev. Thomas Sheridan - Term: June 1, 1980, to June 15, 1990.

Rev. Gary Ruzicka - Term: June 15, 1990, to present.

Assistant Pastors:

Rev. Bruce T. Heyvaert - Term: 1984 to December 1985 (left priesthood). Served during summer months at St. Patrick's before being ordained as Deacon at St. Patrick's on September 18, 1983. Ordained to Priesthood at St. Patrick's on January 25, 1984.

Rev. Charles Velasquez - Term: January 6, 1986, to June 15, 1989.

Rev. August Koeune - Term: March 1989, to June 15, 1990.

Deacons:

Rev. Mr. L. T. Carubie - Term: October 14, 1974, to present.

Sisters:

Sr. Louis-Marie Cramer, O.P. - Term: autumn, 1979, to August 1, 1986.

Sr. Helen Goettl, O.S.F. - Term: July 1981, to June 1986.

Sr. Ramona Negrett, O.S.F. - Term: June 1982, to June 30, 1988.

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

Men's Club Donations to CCW (now PEP) education program. Money earned from their weekly Bingo Games Trust Fund established and only interest from fund used. Ongoing donation 1980 - \$10,500 annually. Today, interest is approximating \$13,000 donated quarterly to the Parish.

CCW, Sandra Ball, President, published St. Patrick's own cookbook under direction of Jeanette Egan in November 1984. \$2,000 profit. CCW, Diana Humphreys, President, installed chair lift for handicapped. Dedication and ribbon cutting, December 14, 1986. Cost \$3,780.00.

Organization of St. Patrick's Knights of Columbus by Don Stewart, Al Renner, Mike Dever, and James Fuchs in October, 1988.

The published History of the founding and development of St. Patrick's Church honoring the church's 25th Anniversary in 1987 written by Charlotte M. Babcock, entitled "The St. Patrick's Story, 1963-1987."

Establishment of frame work for Perpetual Adoration by Pamela Bonse with assistance of her mother, Dee Dever, in April 1987. Adoration began on June 22, 1987. At present 85 straight hours, beginning on Monday morning at 9:30 and ending Thursday, 10:00 p.m.

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

Father Thomas Sheridan established Music Ministry, 1980. Also, the Rosary Rally (date unknown), established acolyte program for girls (no date).

Caring Ministry - visitation, communion to sick, shut-ins, and hospital - Deacon Lou.

Reduction of major parish debt, Fr. Gary Ruicks, 1990 to present.

Sabbatical study at International Vatican II Institute, Fr. Sheridan, Menlo Park, CA, from September, 1985 to December, 1985.

Father Sheridan celebrated 25 years in the Priesthood June 7, 1989. Festivities of Mass and reception were held May 24, 1989.

Clergyman of the Month Award was presented to Father Sheridan by the Casper Kiwanis Club, February 1990.

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

December 14, 1986 - Completion of installation of chair lift to facilitate access for the handicapped to the basement of church.

July 26, 1984 - Air conditioning installed in the church.

March 1989 - Music Ministry Center in south apse of the church completed and new organ installed.

September 1990 - May 1991 - Successful fund drive which culminated in re-roofing St. Patrick's School. Donations received from groups and individuals, both Catholic and non-Catholic. Amount received \$26,000. Cost of the new roof was \$32,000.

5. Land acquisitions: (give dates) None.

6. Lay Trustees and term of service for each: Present Trustees: Tosca Sullivan - Appointed October 31, 1977, to present. Finn McCarthy - Appointed October 25, 1975, to present.

7. Pastor's overview of the decade:

Over the past decade St. Patrick's parish grew with the economic "boom" that brought prosperity to the Casper area, only to find itself losing parishioners as many had to move away looking for work elsewhere. Parish life in terms of ministry to the sick, religious education, liturgical ministry, bible study and lay ministry continued to develop by enabling parishioners to come forward to share their talents and gifts within the context of parish family. During this 10-year period, both religious education to young people and youth ministry continued to grow becoming two of the strongest programs in the parish. Parishioners seemed to find a home at St. Patrick's and take ownership for the parish and its various facets of ministry. The life of the parish is most visible in the celebration of the Sunday Mass where there is both participation and life. Overall, St. Patrick's continues to be a young parish with many younger families as well as a community where education and growth in the faith remain priorities as it looks forward to the 21st century.

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

Ordinations: Rev. Bruce Heyvaert - January 25, 1984. Rev. Carl Gallinger - November 17, 1989.