

**THE HISTORY OF  
ST. ANTHONY CATHOLIC CHURCH  
HARTVILLE, WYOMING  
1912-1954  
With a Note on GLENDON**

Author probably Fr Charles Zengel, O.F.M. Conv.  
Friar Resident in Hartville, 1944-1954  
Edited by Mary Alice Howshar Stapleton, 2004

[Hartville History typescript sent to Bishop Newell with a note from Father Eugene Sullivan dated March 10 (1975): “This will make enjoyable reading for you: although it is serious, it has a humorous vein to it. I believe Fr Charles Zengel was the author.”]

The history of the Catholic Church in Hartville, Wyoming goes back many years, since Hartville is one of the oldest towns in this whole state. However, it was impossible to check facts before the year 1912. It seemed that, before that time, the Catholics received spotty attention from different priests who would travel through this section.

According to the older Catholic residents of this community, Father James Hermes, O.F.M.C. [sic] was their first steady priest. He built a new Church in Douglas and would come to Hartville now and then for services. In succeeding years the following priests were remembered as having ministered to the needs of the local population: Fathers George, Cornelius, Fidelis, Bruno, Ignatius, Bernard, Othmar, Martin, Brendan, Ferdinand and Father Charles Zengel, who came in October 1944.

During the many years from 1912 until 1944, services were held in a variety of places. For years services were held in Guernsey, then in the front room of the Ferris Thomas home in Hartville. It was changed to the Hartville Town Hall, then to the room above the C.F.&I. offices in

Sunrise, next to the Sunrise Community Church and finally to the newly built Church of St. Anthony in Hartville.

The time of Mass was uncertain for a number of years. In fact, for years Hartville was considered a Station and not a Mission. Mass would be said every two or three months. About the time that Father Bruno Lindenmeir had charge of this community, they began to have Sunday Mass once every month. When Father Othmar Miller assumed charge of the community, about 1939, he arranged for Sunday Mass twice a month. This latter arrangement persisted until October 1944, when Father Charles Zengel came to take up his residence here. From that time, Sunday Mass was said regularly on each and every Sunday of the year.

The present Church of St. Anthony had its conception during the early winter months of 1944. At that time a number of the men and ladies were worried about the future Catholicity of their children. The youngsters had practically no contact with their priests, who would come in twice a month, hear confessions before Mass, say the Mass, eat his breakfast and depart immediately. Many young people were associating with and marrying their non-Catholic friends, often without benefit of a priest. It was a common thing to hear of a couple driving to Gering, Nebraska, attempting marriage before a Justice of the Peace and then having the marriage revalidated, maybe. Teaching of the Catechism was a hit and miss proposition. Too many people knew very little or nothing about their Faith, since the teaching was left to the laymen who knew very little themselves.

With such conditions existing, a number of men met on Sunday afternoon in 1944 in the apartment of Dante Testolin. The purpose was to discuss measures whereby a permanent Church could be built, and the Catholic religion given a firm anchor. Among those present were Thomas Howshar, George Hytrek, Luciano Balzan, Bill Corrigan Sr., Refugio Oliver, Jim Zovi, Mike Caligiore, and Victor Birleffi. This

meeting did not run smoothly. Although the younger men were heartily in favor of taking the gamble necessary to build the Church, the older men were ultra-conservative and against the idea. The older men argued that there were not enough Catholics to support a Church in this community. They figured that it would be started, then abandoned, and everyone would be stuck with a useless debt to pay. Father Ferdinand Gruss of Wheatland, then in charge of Hartville as a Station, seemed to agree with the older men and was less than enthusiastic. However, the younger men prevailed. Dante Testolin offered to loan the money at a no-interest rate and the men promised to furnish the necessary work. No outside architect or contractor was hired. A sketch was drawn up and the men themselves worked from the sketch without benefit of blueprints.

Lots for the Church were purchased from Luciano Balzan to the north of the old Episcopal Church. At purchase time, the lots were simply a fairly steep hillside which had to be excavated in order to find level ground for the structure. The first work began on Easter Sunday of 1944 with the cutting down of the cottonwood trees, which lined the hillside.

Work began with great enthusiasm. The men of the parish and many Protestant men contributed their labor. There was much to do and very little money with which to do it. The steam-shovel was borrowed from THE COUNTY AGENTS for two weeks. It was kept for three months. Both Tom Howshar and his father, John Howshar, donated their trucks for removal of the dirt. This excavation was a tremendous job beginning from zero in the front to about twenty-three feet in the rear. Men worked on it when the day-shift at the mine was completed. They would cease work in the evening only when darkness descended on them. These men worked on the excavation whenever they could find free time from the mine, in the evenings, on holidays and on Sundays. All else was forgotten for the one supreme effort, which was finished about the middle part of July.

With the excavation finished, work began on the foundation of the Church. Concrete was poured and the entire foundation was completed about July 30, 1944. After this the walls of cinder blocks began to be laid. It might be well to note here that a professional was hired for the first time, to lay the cinder blocks. But, even he donated much to the construction. He could have made \$1.60 an hour by working at the mine. However, he worked on the Church at a rate of only \$1.00 an hour.

By the end of August 1944, the walls of the Church were completed, the rafters and girders of the roof were in place, and the rough under-flooring of the Church proper had been put in place. Things looked bright!

But a note of discord disturbed the smooth movement of the musical score. The men had been working unceasingly for months, and they were tired. Tempers became short and small differences of opinion were exaggerated to great proportions. Many quit entirely. Some said that it would better to await the end of the war and let the Veterans help with the project. About the middle of September 1944, only a skeleton crew would show up in the evenings for work. Among the faithful ones to be mentioned were Luciano Balzan and Refugio Oliver.

It was at this time that Father Andrew brought Father Charles to Hartville for a meeting, at the request of Dante Testolin, who had financed the whole idea. Father Andrew, at that time, was the Pastor of Douglas and the Missions. Technically, he was the leader of this building process. Father Ferdinand Gruss was the acting head-priest in Wheatland, and he would come to Hartville about once a week to check up on the progress of the building. Father Charles Zengel was stationed in Douglas to recuperate from a nervous breakdown. He had arrived in June and was now feeling much better.

Such was the background when the two priests met with Mr. Testolin in September. Mr. Testolin explained that the men had quit working on the

Church and the whole project was doomed to failure unless a priest would come, live here and inject new life into the operation. Father Andrew promised to consider the matter and do his best to apply a remedy.

The result of such considerations was that Father Charles was brought to Hartville on October 15, 1944, with the order to revitalize the project and have the Church finished in time for Midnight Mass on Christmas 1944.

Nothing could have been more discouraging at the time. Everything was at a standstill. No arrangements whatsoever had been made to house or feed a priest. It looked as though no one cared whether he found accommodations or was forced to pitch a tent. Finally a kind soul, Mrs. Victor Birleffi, consented to keep the priest in her Sunrise home until the Church and his back-apartment were completed.

Here it might be well to note that Father Charles was given charge of the Army Camp in Guernsey. He acted the part of Auxiliary Chaplain there until the Camp deactivated in the summer of 1945.

Progress on the Church building was quite discouraging. On October 15, 1944, the present Church was a skeleton set in a mud hole. The cinder block walls were up, rafters and girders were in place, the rough under flooring was there. Two-by-four framework showed where the priest's apartment would be eventually. Other framework showed the outline of a sanctuary and a sacristy. Some sheeting had been nailed on the roof. There were no windows, no choir loft, no sanctuary, no confessionals, no apartment, no plastering, no stairways leading outside, and no concrete walks outside. The orders were to complete it in two months with a crew of men who had worked as volunteers and had practically all quit the job.

But Father Charles did find men who consented to help. They went to work. For the next two months, the priest was in overalls much more than in a Roman Collar. But finally the men began to drift back to work in the evenings. Work would go on until nearly midnight with the help of electric lights obtained from extension chords. Let us not forget that the men had to arise the next morning about 5:15 a.m. in order to get to their work in the mine on time. The roof was completed. Concrete was poured for the outside walks and steps. Next the Choir Loft, the sanctuary, the confessionals, etc. were built. Plastering was begun. Finally about December 10th, the plastering was completed. The women and children scrubbed clean the woodwork of the Church while the men worked on heavier jobs. Then the hardwood floor was nailed down. Everyone was working against time! But by Christmas Eve 1944, the Church, including the new homemade pews, was ready for the First High Mass.

In order to have a High Mass at the First Mass, Father Charles organized a splendid choir made up of Junior and Senior High School students. None of these students were familiar with Latin or the sung parts of the Mass. Many evenings were spent learning the Latin and the harmony parts of the Mass. The accompaniment was played on a donated pump organ which the young organist had never played. As the choir sang the High Mass, many hearts were filled to overflowing with thanks. A dream had been realized and a modern miracle had been performed. Everyone worked hard, but, in the final analysis, God had built this Church. It could not be done, but it was done with the help of Almighty God. Everyone shuddered at the thought of ever being forced to do it over again.

The cost of St. Anthony's Church was hard to compute in actual dollars. The nearest estimate would be about \$13,000.00 or \$14,000.00 in actual cash, exclusive of volunteer labor. The money was spent for the lots, the materials, and three hired skilled laborers--a carpenter, a plasterer and a stone mason. To the ladies of the parish goes the chief credit for raising sufficient funds to finance the Church. They worked tirelessly on

dinners, card parties, rummage sales, etc. and were the collectors of a Community Drive for funds.

For a couple of years there existed a very peculiar financial setup in the parish. The ladies collected the funds and administered them through their treasurer. Bills were presented and paid, many times without the knowledge of the priest. It was not until the latter part of 1947 that Father Charles finally demanded that the Altar Society checks be co-signed by the priest before they became valid.

One may ask why such a financial condition be allowed to continue for so long. At that time, it seemed unthinkable! But we must remember that, when Father Charles arrived, things were in a precarious condition. One bad move could spell doom to the entire project. Many of the people in this community were foreigners and did not trust outsiders, even a priest. They preferred to administer the funds through their own natives. The choice was whether to let things run along as before or to demand a priest's rights to administer the finances. The latter course most likely would have caused a minor revolution in which the people would simply quit giving. To this day it seems that the policy followed at that time was the prudent policy.

The Extension Society helped very much to pay off the Church's financial obligations. At the request of Bishop McGovern, the Extension Society gave \$2000.00 to St. Anthony Church with the provision that the name of the Church always remain "St. Anthony". This money had been given to the Extension Society in memory of the deceased Mrs. Clara A. Paetz of Indianapolis, Indiana. A plaque in her memory was hung in the vestibule of the Church.

In December 1944, the furnishings in the Church were very sparse indeed. In fact the Church was practically bare. During 1945 many new adornments were added. The Extension Society gave Stations of the Cross, candlesticks for the Altar, many vestments and altar linens, a new

Censor and Boat, a processional Crucifix. The Statue of Our Lady was donated in honor of Arthur Birleffi, a pilot who was killed in World War II. It was given by his parents, Mr. & Mrs. Victor Birleffi. The Statue of St. Anthony was donated in memory of Tony Testolin, the father of Dante Testolin. A large crucifix above the Altar was given by the Holy Cross parish in Lansing, Michigan, where Father Charles had been Assistant Pastor for six years. Father Bruno Lindenmeir had his Third Order from Grand Rapids, Michigan donated a beautiful large crucifix, which was hung in the back of the Church. The pump organ was donated by Mr. & Mrs. Cecil Bolish. Many albs, cinctures, server cassocks were donated by friends, especially the Mercy Sisters of Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Cornelia Connelly Association of Mission Helpers donated so much. Among these latter donations were a monstrance, vestments, a ciborium and many linens. The Provincial of the Franciscan Order gave a new chalice for use in the Church.

It was in the fall of 1945 that the concrete wall was poured in the rear of the Church to hold back the clay bank, which was beginning to cave in. After the caved in dirt had been dug and trucked away, the forms were put in place, a large concrete mixer was borrowed from the Rock Quarry in Guernsey and the concrete was poured in November of 1945. It was quite a job as the wall was about twenty-four feet high and at least a foot thick.

During the fall of 1945, the Church property was surveyed by the command of Bishop McGovern. According to the surveyor's report, the Church owned part of the neighbor's property to the north and Luciano Balzan owned about six feet of the front of the Church. This brought an order from Bishop McGovern to buy Mr. Balzan's property to the south of the Church as soon as possible. However, he would not sell at this time.

In January of 1946, a new oil furnace was installed in the Church. This operated by blowing hot air through the building, and it had a cold air



return. Previous to this installation the Church had been heated by a large oil stove which proved very unsatisfactory. The price of the new oil furnace was \$673.27. It proved to be one of the best investments ever made by the Church. Mr. Ben Nicola of Guernsey donated \$100.00 toward the purchase of this furnace.

In March of 1946, St. Anthony's Church needed to become a Corporation. The expenses of the corporation were great. The Church books of March 1946 carried an item of \$29.83 for a trip to Cheyenne to consult with His Excellency. Those at this meeting included Father Andrew, Father Charles, Thomas Howshar, Dante Testolin and Luciano Balzan. Some of the men had to be paid for losing a day's shift at the mine. Another item appeared shortly afterward of \$40.00 as partial payment for Incorporation. April 1946 was when the final payment of \$46.02 was needed for this Incorporation. All in all it cost St. Anthony's Church the sum of \$115.85 to become Incorporated under the State Laws of Wyoming.

In May 1946 a shower bath was installed in the priest's apartment, and a new hot water heater was installed in the furnace room of the Church. Finally the priest could take a bath in his own apartment. Another major improvement was the purchase of an electric refrigerator for the priest's apartment. Things were beginning to take shape after two years. The refrigerator came in September 1946. In November 1946, the railings were placed along the concrete steps leading up to the front of the Church. Before that time it had been dangerous for older people and cripples to climb the steps in winter time. Thomas Howshar made these railings for the Church.

During the winter months of 1946, the Hartville school bus was rented to bring people to Sunday Mass, especially from Sunrise. This increased the Sunday attendance but had to be discontinued because only one man, Tom Howshar, was left to drive the bus. The other men found so many

excuses for quitting. Finally Tom became disgusted, so the fine project had to be discontinued.

Final payment of the Church Debt was made in 1946. The Church had been built and paid for in about two years.

During March 1947, one of the most salutary investments made by the Church was the purchase of the lots south of the Church from Luciano Balzan. The sum paid was \$251.45. This may seem like a small amount to pay, but another sum of about \$1,000.00 was necessary to make this hillside of any practical value. More excavation would be necessary in the future. The Church now owned all the property south of the Church as far as the town road next to the Episcopal Church. In fact, the Church now owned the lot to the immediate south of the Episcopal Church. They would have to consult with us before they could possibly expand in any direction.

May 1947 saw a new and striking addition to the Church. It was a neon sign installed on the front of the Church, which read "ST. ANTHONY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH". At night the background lighted up and the lettering showed up in bold relief. The cost of this sign was \$94.19. This sign might be called the result of the pride of Catholics here. They were very proud of their Church and were piqued at visitors who asked if there was a Catholic Church in the vicinity.

During October 1947, another striking improvement came to St. Anthony's Church in the form of the purchase of Carolonic Bells for the Church tower. The ringing bells were recorded on wax records and played in the priest's apartment. Then they were broadcast over loud speakers installed in the tower. Another advantage of this Carolonic Bell System is that the Church Choir had a microphone and broadcasted the singing at Sunday Mass. People, who neglected to come to Mass, might at least have some twinge of conscience.

In October 1947, the ceiling of the Church was insulated. It seemed that too much heat was being lost somewhere. This insulating material was purchased from Montgomery Ward and was spread above the entire ceiling of the Church and the living quarters. Helping Father Charles on the job were Tom Howshar, George Hytrek, John Erschabek and the two sons of Tom Howshar.

The first Mission ever to be preached in this vicinity was held the week of November 9-14, 1947. Father Raymond P. Hillinger of the Chicago Diocesan Mission Band preached the Mission. He was a very interesting and dynamic preacher and accomplished much good among our Catholics. He also paved the way for conversions among the non-Catholics.

The year of 1948 saw the first attempt to landscape this property. From the Sherman Nursery of Minneapolis were purchased evergreen trees, spirea, lilacs, and flowers. It was hard to make plants grow in this poor soil. But constant effort had met with its measure of success, and many people said that the property was beautiful.

In March of 1948, Father Charles was given charge of the Mission in Glendo, Wyoming, 45 miles away from Hartville. Formerly, it was cared for by the Douglas Fathers, 28 miles away. This arrangement continued through 1950.

In April of 1948, the new red satin drapes behind the Altar and the statues were donated by the Dante Testolin family. The Church itself purchased the new maroon drapes for the Church, for the choir loft and the passage way leading from the Church to the priest's apartment.

New storm windows were placed on all the windows of the living quarters in the fall of 1948. This was done with the hope of reducing the fuel bill. They were the type which need never be removed. The frame is permanent. Single pieces could be removed for washing and cleaning.

The year of 1949 saw more improvements in the Church. The Altar Society must be given the credit for collecting the necessary money with which to install new rubber cushions for the kneelers in the Church pews. This was no small expense, \$425.47 to be exact, but everyone was quite thrilled with the new acquisition.

A new garage was begun in early September of 1949. It began with the excavation of dirt necessary to find level ground for the garage. This garage was planned as a two-car garage to be built on the extreme south portion of the Church property, next to the town's road. It was built out of concrete blocks and had a gabled roof. The top portion of the garage was used as storage space. Since it would cost too much to have a contractor build it, it was built by some kind friends, who wished to help their priest. Working on the garage were Eddie Bandemer, Mr. Charles Zengel, Father Charles' dad, Father Charles, Tom Howshar, his two sons and John Howshar. It was a tremendous job but was finally finished about the middle part of November. thanks be to God! The cost was in the neighborhood or \$900.00.

At the command of Bishop McGovern a new steel tabernacle was bought for the Altar of the Church. This was necessary in order to protect the Blessed Sacrament from possible degradation by vandals. The steel tabernacle cost the Church \$126.17

By January 1950, it became apparent that the pews in Church were insufficient to hold the number of people coming to services, especially on the more important Feast Days. So four new pews, two on each side, were built to take care of the overflow. No one had ever regretted this expense.

Thanks went to the Altar Society, once again, for purchasing twenty-four new steel chairs for the Church, a shrine to the Infant of Prague, a beautiful Antependium for the Altar, and a new green rug for the Sanctuary. We gave many thanks to the Mission Crusade of St.

Anthony's Church in Louisville, Kentucky for donating two large marble-sized Holy Water Fonts for the back of the Church.

Last , but not least, the whole parish was grateful to Mr. Jerry Cunningham, Mr. Glen Gorman and Mr. Ben Nicola for the lovely and expensive gift of a new electric Wurlitzer Organ. It was certainly most deeply appreciated by everyone. This donation came in April 1950.

The Church received a new fresh coat of varnish during the middle part of September 1950. Mr. Charles G. Zengel varnished the woodwork of the Church plus the pews. He also enameled the altar with pure white enamel.

All in all it has been worth the effort. During the early times of 1944, it was doing well to get 20 or 25 people in Church for Sunday Mass. This average has gone up to almost 140 people per Sunday. A breakdown of statistics would run as follows:

#### BAPTISMS MARRIAGES FIRST COMMUNIONS CONFIRMATIONS

1944	7	0	0	0
1945	19	4	7	18
1946	10	5	10	0
1947	22	2	20	0
1948	26	3	8	0
1949	19	6	11	24

Improvements continued to be made in St. Anthony's Church during the year. On April 15, 1950, the Church purchased a Shrine for the Statue of the Infant of Prague. This was a gift from the ladies of the Altar Society.

In June of 1950, three Dominican Sisters from Cheyenne came to teach Summer Catechism to the youngsters of this community. The practice of having Summer School was continued without interruption. During the

early months of 1951, meetings were called to plan some improvements to the exterior of the Church property, which then looked quite ragged. With the consent of His Excellency, work was begun on the parking lot of the Church in May 1951. A red concrete block wall was constructed around the front of the parking lot facing the street. This replaced a crumbled wall of natural stone, which had been there for years. Wire fence was concreted on top of the wall in order to fence it in completely. About three feet of dirt was carried by wheel barrow from the clay bank in the back, in order to level the parking lot near the new fence. Finally, many, many truck loads of crushed gravel were spread by hand over the entire parking lot in order to cover the mud holes, which existed up to this time.

In June 1951 a drag-line was hired from Torrington to remove the huge clay bank to the rear of the parking lot. A deal was made with the school board of the Sunrise School. The drag-line filled the trucks, which had been loaned from the Sunrise Iron Mine, and the dirt was carried to the Sunrise School, where it was spread over the football field. Dirt from the clay bank of the church covered the football field to a depth of about four inches. Had such a deal not been made with the school, it would have been necessary to hire these trucks from Torrington. The hiring of these trucks would have raised the cost of construction by a great margin. As it was, the trucks were loaned free of charge.

In June and July 1951, work began on the building of a high retaining wall, which would hold back the dirt bank after the excavation. This retaining wall ran between the garage and the old retaining wall in back of the Church. The wall was made of concrete block construction and ran from 24 feet to about 15 feet in height. John Howshar of Guernsey was the contractor for the building of the wall. After the wall was completed, it was covered with white oriental stucco. About the middle of August the work was finally finished.

In September 1951 a new 30 gallon gas hot water heater was purchased from Lupe Vannelli of Hartville. This replaced the old hot water heater, which had been heated by fuel oil. Cost of the new hot water heater was \$100.70.

In November 1951, the Church purchased one outdoor statue of Our Lady of Lourdes. It was placed in the outdoor grotto, which had been built into the retaining wall during construction in July 1951.

About this time discord entered the community because of Union difficulties. The workers in the Sunrise Mine had as their bargaining agent, The United Mine, Mill and Smelters Union. This Union had been expelled from the C.I.O. Union years before because of its Communist affiliations. In the fall of 1951, some C.I.O. organizers for the United Steel Workers of America came into town to try to bring the workers into their Union. Much ill feeling developed. Father Charles Zengel let it be known that he definitely was against any organization, which had relations with the Communists. In this he used as a precedent an Episcopal editorial from the Diocesan Newspaper of Portland, Oregon. In this editorial it was plainly stated that any Catholic would be doing wrong to vote for the Communistic Mine, Mill and Smelters Union against the anti-Communitic United Steel Workers Union. Another precedent was the speech of Reverend Raymond A. McGowan, Director of Social Action National Catholic Welfare Conference, to the Second Annual Convention of the International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers--C.I.O. This was made in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in December, 4, 1950. In this speech Father McGowan clearly congratulated the delegates for having broken away from their old Communist dominated Union.

However, many members of the old Mine, Mill Union were very stubborn and refused to join the C.I.O. The climax came in December 1951, when the workers of Sunrise voted to leave the old Union and join the C.I.O. This election was carried by a majority of only two votes. But

the Mine, Mill was out and the C.I.O. was in. Then tempers flared! Some of the old die-hards even came into Father Charles' apartment after one Mass in December. They became quite insulting. Among them were Thomas Howshar, Dante Testolin, Refugio Oliver, Ollie, Ramirez, Heriberto Soto and Bill GrandPre. Father Charles allowed each of them their say, which they did loudly and vehemently. Father Charles told them that he thought that he had done the right thing and would take the same action again, if the same circumstances ever came up. With that the delegation stormed out of the apartment and Father Charles went up home to have his breakfast. Luckily, Mr. Charles Zengel was in the second room of the apartment and heard every word of the discussion.

In February 1952, Bishop Newell blessed the Grotto and Statue of Our Lady of Lourdes. The Sodality Choir sang for the ceremonies. Monsignor Hartmann of Cheyenne and many priests of the diocese attended the ceremonies, which closed with Solemn Pontifical Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament by Bishop Newell.

In July 1952, the Sodality Senior Choir was taken for a summer trip into the Black Hills of South Dakota in order to see the "Passion Play" at Spearfish. This became an annual outing in order to show appreciation for faithful work during the year.

In August 1952, a Brown Franciscan Friar from Denver gave a one-week Mission for the Catholics of this parish and their friends. It was not well attended and was somewhat of a failure.

In October 1952, Miss Florence Paetz of Indianapolis, Indiana made quite a donation for the altar of St. Anthony's Church. Her donation was comprised of the following: six High Mass candlestick, two Low Mass candlesticks, two candelabra, two flower vases and one crucifix. All were gold covered and came to about \$500.00



During the first part of January 1953, more trouble in the parish showed its head. Mr. Luciano Balzan told Father Charles privately that the Church owed him for materials, which he said he had loaned to the Church eight years before during its construction. Father Charles knew of no such deal, since the contract had most certainly not been made with him. Mr. Balzan's bill came to about \$150.00. A meeting of Church Trustees was called to discuss the matter. Mr. Victor Birleffi and Mr. Thomas Howshar met with Father. Because this was an unusual circumstance for the Trustees, other members of the Corporation were then consulted, among them Father Bernadine Singleton O.F.M. Conv. of Douglas, Wyoming and Bishop Newell of Cheyenne. The final decision was to offer Mr. Balzan half of the bill in order to avoid hard feelings.

On January 12, 1953, a meeting was held at the Victor Birleffi home in Hartville for the purpose of settling this question. Present were Father Charles, Victor Birleffi, Thomas Howshar, Luciano Balzan, and Dante Testolin. The proposal to pay for half the proffered bill was made. Mr. Balzan absolutely refused the settlement and Father Charles let him know that this was the final offer that the Church would make in this case. The situation became hot! Victor Birleffi agreed with Father. Thomas Howshar and Dante Testolin took sides with Luciano Balzan. Mr. Testolin even insinuated that the Church was crooked in its financial dealings and made the statement that the Church had been built by about six men of the parish. A suitable answer was readily given to him, and he was informed that all the Catholics had built the Church, not just six men. The offer to pay for half of Mr. Balzan's bill still remained. The meeting broke up with the Mr. Balzan team leaving in a huff. On January 13, 1953, a St. Anthony Church check was made out to Mr. Balzan for the amount of \$75.00. It was accepted and cashed. The cancelled check is still on hand.

Finally Father Charles decided to do something about it. On the last Sunday of January 1953, during the sermon after the reading of the

Financial Report, the entire matter was explained. Such an action is always a last resort. But it was necessary in this case, since the differences in opinion had become an open secret in the community. In the talk on that Sunday, it was explained that the trouble had been caused by a small minority and not by the majority of the parish. The advice was to treat it like a forest fire, just contain it, let it burn itself out, and not contaminate the rest of the parish.

The talk had a salutary effect on the parish. Many were very happy to find that the Church was being run by the Pastor and not by the Italian minority in Hartville, as had been suspected. The result was that the majority even increased their Church contributions. Sunday collections were better than ever and the Church was not harmed in the least. In fact, it was greatly strengthened.

As the months passed on, the Italians and their clique found that public opinion was against them. They decided to fall back in line. By the end of 1953, many of the malcontents were using their Sunday collection envelopes once again. Among them were Dante Testolin, Thomas Howshar, Ollie Ramirez and Luciano Balzan. And so this young parish passed through its first attempted revolution with flying colors, just as the Church had won its fight against Trusteeism back East many years ago.

In February 1953, a new loudspeaker was installed in St. Anthony's Church. Father Charles had been troubled with laryngitis for some time and the Doctor sternly advised a speaking aid. It was installed in order to help the priest with his sermons. Also, at this same time, Mr. & Mrs. John Erschabek celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with the renewal of their marriage vows with a High Mass in the Church. Mr. & Mrs. Charles G. Zengel were their attendants.

In May 1953, a telephone was finally installed in the Priest's Apartment at St. Anthony's Church after years of waiting. Also, a new

Westinghouse vacuum cleaner was bought by the Church for cleaning the Church on Saturdays.

In June 1953, a loan of \$750.00 was made to the new Church in Glendo so that it could be finished in time for the Dedication. This loan was paid back in full on March 1954.

GLENDON, WYOMING

(MISSION OF HARTVILLE)

Since March 1948, when Father Charles was given charge of the Glendon Mission, there began talk of a new Church in Glendon. A building fund was established and grew slowly. In January 1952, meetings of the parishioners were held in order to formulate concrete plans for the new Church. Practically all the meetings were held in Church after the Sunday Mass, with all parishioners invited. Gradually the plans began to take form. It was decided to ask Bishop Newell for permission to begin construction. This permission was granted and the ground was broken for the new Church on July 1952. Mr. Lloyd Lantz was given charge of construction as the contractor. He and Father Charles Zengel, O.F.M. Conv. drew up the final plans for the building.

Work on the new Church continued through 1952 and was not completed until June of 1953. On June 25, 1953, Bishop Newell dedicated the Church with Solemn Ceremonies. The Solemn High Mass was celebrated with Father Charles Zengel O.F.M. Conv. as celebrant. Father Bernadine Singleton O.F.M. Conv. was Deacon, and Father Clement Orth O.F.M. Conv. was sub-Deacon. The Sodality Choir from Hartville sang the High Mass. Monsignor Hartmann of Cheyenne was Master of Ceremonies, and twenty other priests were present. After the Mass, the ladies of the parish served a lovely banquet for Bishop, Monsignor, priests and eight-five guests.

Even after the Dedication of the Church in June, there remained much work to be done on the interior of the Old Church in order to convert it into a Parish Hall and an apartment for the priest. The rough work of renovation was done by Lloyd Lantz and Father Charles. Mrs. Rose Lantz and Miss Catherine Thomas did the finishing work on the interior of the Parish Hall, the painting, etc. Father Charles Zengel did the finishing work on the priest's apartment. Both the Parish Hall and the apartment were completed by the end of October 1953. The Parish Hall became invaluable as a place to teach Catechism to the Glendo youngsters and have Inquiry Classes for the Glendo adults. Catechism and Inquiry Classes continued to be held every week on Wednesdays.

Special thanks must go to John Weller of Guernsey. He helped so much by installing gas stoves, fixtures in the Parish Hall and the apartment. Also we must give thanks to the Knights of Columbus from Guernsey who donated so much useful labor in order to complete the entire job.

And especially were we grateful to the Extension Society of America for their donation of \$3000.00 toward finishing the new Church and for their donation of \$500.00 in order to complete the Parish Hall. Without the Extension Society the job would never have been completed.

## ST. ANTHONY'S CHURCH OF HARTVILLE

In April 1954, the Board of Trustees passed the motion to buy the home of Mr. & Mrs. Charles Zengel in Hartville for the sum of \$2500.00. It would become a Rectory for the Church. The present priest's apartment behind the Church would be converted into a Parish Hall for Church activities. Meetings, such as, Altar Society, Knights of Columbus, and Sodality were to be held here. The Hall was quite necessary and Bishop Newell approved the purchase, although the final purchase was not completed as of April 1, 1954



## **HISTORY OF ST. ANTHONY CHURCH HARTVILLE, WYOMING 1950-1960**

[1] When St. Anthony Church in Hartville, Wyoming, was built, it was a mission of Douglas, Wyoming. The Franciscan Fathers took charge of it. The first resident priest at St. Anthony Church in Hartville was Father Charles Zengel, O.F.M.Conv. He was succeeded by Father Boniface Bianco, O.F.M.Conv.

In July 1955 the Most Rev. Bishop Hubert M. Newell instituted a parish with St. Anthony church at Hartville as the parish church. The first pastor being appointed to the new parish was Father Bart Svete, then working in the Diocese of Cheyenne, who began his service to the new parish on July 6, 1955. The new parish has as its Mission Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Glendo, Wyoming. St. Anthony parish extends over half of Platte County.

The Hall acquired just before the coming of a new pastor had to be rebuilt. In August 1955 the work on the Hall began and an addition was built containing a kitchen, a store room and two rest rooms. A new heating system was installed and the Altar and Rosary Society equipped the kitchen with enough dishes to serve 150 people, stove, hot water heater, refrigerator, and other necessary items. One hundred fifty folding chairs and fifteen folding tables were purchased. Later on other improvements were made on the interior so that the parish Hall is really a valuable and attractive addition to the church. Since the completion of St. Anthony parish Hall it has been used for dinners, K of C meetings, Altar Society meetings, Catholic Youth Council meetings, wedding showers and receptions, but especially for teaching Religion Classes and Sisters' Summer School.

In the Spring of 1956 the parish Hall was completed, and three weeks later the plans began to shape for the new Rectory. Excavations were

made for a full basement and upon it a frame house was erected. The Rectory was completed in the Fall of 1956 and dedicated by the Most Rev. Bishop Newell. [2] Finally the priest was able to move from the little apartment behind the altar into the spacious new Rectory.

The apartment behind the altar being empty, plans were made for the remodeling of the church. In February 1957 the work started on the church. The partitions of the apartment were removed and a new, more spacious Sanctuary was built. This gave room for six new pews in the front. A new Altar and above it a beautiful crucifix were installed. A new Sacristy was built on the left and a cry room and rest room on the right. A new Communion rail was installed and the entire floor in the Sanctuary was covered with a beautiful carpet. The whole interior of the church was replastered and painted. Today the church is really beautiful in all its simplicity. In the Fall of 1957 the remodeling of the church was completed and the Most Rev. Bishop Newell rededicated it in an impressive ceremony.

The work at St. Anthony being finished, the building program moved to the Mission church of Our Lady of Lourdes in Glendo, Wyoming. There the old pews were replaced with new ones, storm windows were installed, new candlesticks were purchased and new furnace was installed.

There the old church was already connected to the new one and it served as a small Hall. Since the activities of the Altar Society expanded, it was necessary to tear the old building down and in its place a new, larger Hall was built equipped with kitchen, store room, two rest rooms and the priest's room. The kitchen was equipped with an electric stove, refrigerator and hot water heater. The work started in the Spring of 1958 and was completed in October of the same year. Most Rev. Bishop Newell dedicated the Hall in the presence of several priests and a large number of Catholic and non-Catholic people of Glendo.

[3] The building program was thus accomplished in three years. The Bishop's Fund Campaign and the Parish Support Appeal provided the parish with necessary funds for the work that had to be done. The parishioners also helped with their labor in order to reduce the expense.

It should be noted that the Altar and Rosary Societies of the parish and Mission helped to raise funds for the improvements. The High School Youth organized in the Catholic Youth Council is carrying on regularly its activities under the sponsorship and assistance of adult advisors.

Father Bart Svete, Pastor



## **HISTORY OF ST. ANTHONY CHURCH**

### **Guernsey, Wyoming**

### **1960-1970**

After the remodeling of St. Anthony's Hall, and after working over of the house, bought from Continental Oil Company over Lantz Creek, Wyo. 74 miles north of Hartville, brought to Hartville and prepared for a Rectory and after remodeling of the sanctuary in St. Anthony Church, it was felt that St, Anthony parish will live for a long time in peace and contentment. Not so for long.

St, Anthony Church was rather a home made church. Because of the lack of building experience the ground for the foundation was dug to deep and the underground spring began to flood the foundations of the church and started to shift and crack the walls. This process went on for nearly twenty-five years and started to show the damage to the building.

But the main reason for the unrest of the pastor and the parishioners in the Guernsey area were the changes in Sunrise, where the Colorado Fuel] and Iron Corporations mine is located. The houses in Sunrise's Camp were old and hardly fit to live in them during winter, and for that reason families began to move to other neighboring towns in search for better housing conditions. Only a very few families, belonging to St. Anthony parish remained in Sunrise and in Hartville. The company started to burn down the empty houses in Sunrise's camp. Because of this shifting of the number of population the/Catholic families in Guernsey greatly increased.

So then, St. Anthony Church in Hartville found itself away from the main number of its parishioners, living in Guernsey over five miles away. For about twelve years the church's buildings in Hartville were in use, when we finally decided to build a new church in Guernsey with full basement which would serve as a parish Hall.

As early as July 4, 1964 St. Anthony parish purchased in Guernsey almost a block of land to be used as a building site for the new church.

The land was bought from certain John Williams who built for himself a family dwelling on the eastern edge of the property, and which was later on remodeled into the priest's residence, as a Rectory. On March 1969 the contract was awarded to Reiman - Wuerth Co, from Cheyenne, a General Contractors, for \$75,000.00. The Architect Jan Wilking was chosen to make blueprints for the new church. The dimensions of the new building are NS 73'8", EW 37'4" (narrowest) 52'10" (widest). Only the upper structure was under contract, furnace in the basement and two rest rooms. All the rest of the work in the basement was completed during the Summer of 1970. The cost of the furnishing of the church amounted to \$13,720. Authorized loan was obtained from the Diocese of Cheyenne in the amount of \$20,000.00, which will be repaid in five years with 5% of interest.

The final result of the building this attractive church is much easier access to the services for the majority of parishioners many of whom have been traveling to Hartville for the last twenty-five years.

The value of the Catholic Church's property in Guernsey amounted to the following figures: ground and the house which serves now as a Rectory \$13,300.00, church's contract \$75,000.00, furnishing of the church \$13,700.00, and completing of basement which serves as a Hall \$800.00. Total \$102,800.00.

At the present time St. Anthony parish has 85 families and the Mission of Glendo, 19 families.

**Guernsey 1990-2000**  
**St. Anthony**  
**Tim Newton, Parish Council President**  
**May 15, 2000**

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

Rev. Bernard Bianco — 1988-1992

Rev. Evan Shea — 1992-1994

Rev. William Caspers — June 1994-July 1996

Rev. Robert Cousineau S.J. — July 1996 to Present

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

3. Notable accomplishments by the clergy and religious. (Give dates.)

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

The church windows have been replaced with a “modified” stained glass through individual family generosity.

New church lights and chairs obtained in the same manner.

5. Land acquisitions. (Give dates.) NONE

6. Lay Trustees and term of service for each.

Thomas “Bud” Howshar

Marian Janas

Both serve at the Priest’s request

7. Pastor’s overview of the decade.

A lack of continuity makes answering this question very difficult.

8. Significant parish events and programs. (Give dates.)

Annual ice cream social — August

Various breakfasts are held throughout the year.