

Sioux Falls St. Therese

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St. Therese Parish, known as St. John's, was founded in 1915 by Bishop O'Gorman for Catholics living on the east side of Sioux Falls, serving a dozen families. Rev. Patrick Ryan, the first pastor, said Mass in a tent until it was destroyed by fire in 1916. After that, he said Mass in a Hagger store building and in his brother's home on French Avenue.

In 1918 with the volunteer help of the parishioners, the building of the church and rectory was begun. The parish had grown to 200 families. Mass was said in the basement of what was to be the church, and parish functions were held in a large house on the corner of Sherman Avenue and Austin Street. Due to the illness of Fr. Ryan and the drought and depression in the country, the church building was never built beyond the basement. Years later, this basement was used as the parish hall after the present church was built.

Though few in number, but with a deep reverence for Holy Mass, along with a great friendliness to the newly canonized Saint Therese, the Little Flower of Jesus, the new church was built at a cost of \$18,000. Renamed the Little Flower of Jesus Church, it was dedicated on May 22, 1927. The church was then affiliated with the National Society of the Little Flower and designated a shrine of the Little Flower. A first class relic is preserved in the church.

In 1966, the church was remodeled and renamed St. Therese, the proper name for the patron saint. The old parish hall was removed to provide playground and parking.

Dedication of the new parish center and gym was on April 27, 1986. On



Tea St. Nicholas

TEA SAINT NICHOLAS

Early German Catholic families were people of strong faith and missed the well developed parish life they knew in their native Germany. They contacted Bishop Thomas O'Gorman in 1902 and presented their needs for a new parish. Masses were held occasionally in homes but there were no regular Sunday Masses. With the Bishop's permission, the new Catholic Community in Tea immediately made plans for the erection of a church building. Paul Nickels donated the land at the corner of Maple and Mary streets, and as a gesture of appreciation, the church was named St. Nicholas in his honor. The structure was begun in 1906 for an estimated \$800. While in progress, a wind storm extensively damaged the building, causing additional work. Most of inside furnishings were donated by the parish in Sioux Falls and other surrounding parishes. Church was 24 x 34 feet. Entry was added in 1926 with tower and bell.

1910-1970: St. Nicholas Parish was known as a mission church for many years, Mass being celebrated monthly by a priest from Sioux Falls, Lennox or other nearby parish. During the 1920's, parish members drove Model T Fords to Columbus College and McKennan Hospital to provide transportation to and from St. Nicholas for priests to say Mass. In 1952 the size of the building was greatly increased by an addition to the north. Addition included a new sanctuary, sacristy, and partial basement. Since 1906, the church had been heated with a wood/coal burning stove inside the church. New partial basement made possible a fuel oil heating system. Parishioners did most of the work. Parish community grew from the original 12 families in 1906 to 37 families in 1940 and 90 families by 1970.

For 60 years after its founding in 1904, city of Tea remained a tiny village. In 1960 the development of the interstate highway #29 from Sioux Falls south, with two exits at Tea, began a period of rapid growth. Many SF residents preferring a small town environment or country living on a small acreage found Tea and surrounding area suitable to their needs.

Second Vatican Council in early 1960's brought profound change into the life of the Catholic Church throughout the world. During the time of change, St. Nicholas was served by priests from the Minor Seminary. Lay men and women were introduced to roles in the liturgy that for centuries had been limited to the priests. A parish council was formed in 1973. Material improvements were made throughout the church. 50 Penitentiary inmates refurnished the pews for \$50 each. Air conditioning was installed. The ecumenical movement in the Church was implemented at St. Nicholas through joint worship services during Church Unity Week with Trinity Lutheran Church in Tea. The two churches also sponsored a children's Summer Bible School program each year in June. Spiritual renewal programs, such as Cursillo and Marriage Encounter were implemented.

