

Aberdeen St. Thomas Aquinas



- AQUINAS STUDENT CENTER - ABERDEEN
- 1948 BB, February. The Newman Club of Northern State Teachers College conducted its fifth annual initiation according to the ritual of the Newman Club Federation on December 11, 1947. There were 34 candidates. The Rev. Wm. J. Cracknell, OSV, chaplain of St. Luke's Hospital is the moderator of the club.
 - 1963 BB, April. Need for student center at Northern. 400 Catholic students. The Newman Club has no centrally located meeting place so utilize Sacred Heart Parish Youth Center. The distance keeps students from attending. The chaplain is borrowed also from this parish.
 - 1963 BB, June. Rev. John Garvey, assistant at Sacred Heart Church, Aberdeen, is the moderator of the Newman Club at Northern State Teachers College.
 - 1963 BB, November. The Newman Club of Northern was host to Region II Leadership Clinic of Minnesota Province of the Newman Club, October 25 and 26, 1963.
 - 1965 BB, September. Rev. Philip Brady, O.P., chaplain of the Newman Club at Northern, Aberdeen, attends about 500 Catholic students. They attend Mass at Sacred Heart Parish.
 - 1966 BB, May. At Aberdeen, a priest is already working with the 600 Catholics at Northern as their full-time chaplain. There are 3000 Catholics in the South Dakota secular campuses.
 - 1966 BB, May. The Newman Center trains lay leaders of the future.
 - 1966 BB, June. Mary Jane Marion, sophomore of Northern, was elected Minnkota Chairwoman, April 23-24 at Mankato, Minnesota. The Minnkota Province includes Newman Clubs from Minnesota, North and South Dakota.
 - 1967 The Dominicans will serve the Newman Center at Northern State College.
 - 1967 BB, April. Northern State College Newman Center is to open in 1968. Plans for a building are ready for approval. The Center will include a chapel accommodating 400, conference rooms, library, lounge, cafeteria-auditorium, classrooms and living quarters for custodian and for the chaplain. The site is adjacent to the college campus.
 - 1968 BB, April. A Catholic Center for students at Northern was contracted in March. Almost 700 Catholics are enrolled in the college. Rev. Milton J. Egerling, chaplain, resides at Roscelli High School where he is also a faculty member.
 - 1969 BB, August. The Aquinas Student Center in Aberdeen is now open. A 5:00P.M. Mass on Sunday, September 7, for the convenience of registering students. Rev. Milton J. Egerling, chaplain.
 - 1969 BB, November. The dedication Mass was celebrated November 2 by Rev. Leonard Stanton, Diocesan Director of Religious Education, to officially open the Aquinas Student Parish Center at Northern State College.
 - 1972 BB, May. Fr. John Garvey explained the birth control controversy in which the Center found itself.

Aberdeen St. Mary



The Pioneer immigrants who founded St. Mary's Parish were descendants of German colonists who settled the Black Sea District of Russia near Odessa. Invited by Catherine II and Czar Alexander I, they remained in Russia for a century until the revoking of favorable laws for colonists in Russia caused them to emigrate to America. They began to arrive in the Aberdeen area around 1884.

As the Catholic German immigrants arrived in Aberdeen they became part of the already established Sacred Heart Parish. However, the lack of familiarity with the English language and their desire to have their own parish and German-speaking pastor led to the establishment of a new parish to meet their needs. The cornerstone of "St. Marien Kirche" was laid October 3, 1903, a frame structure on the corner of Arch and Second Avenue Northeast. Father Nicholas J. Dohmann became the first Pastor. Articles of incorporation for St. Mary's Church were filed on May 16, 1905, under Bishop Thomas McGorman of the Sioux Falls Diocese.

From this simple beginning in 1903 to serve the spiritual needs of the immigrant people, the St. Mary's Parish Community has continued to grow and change in the past seventy-five years. St. Mary's School opened in 1911 and enlarged in 1910, and the Benedictine Sisters from Yankton Community moved into the convent in 1920. Father Joseph Schell replaced Father Dohmann in 1912 and served the parish faithfully for the next twenty-six years.

The old wood frame church was replaced in 1940 with the present parish church and rectory under the direction of Mgr. Henry Hoerner, Pastor of St. Mary's from 1938 to 1970.

St. Mary's School became part of the Aberdeen Catholic School System in the 1960's when Roscelli High School, operated by both Catholic parishes, was established, together with Roscelli Jr. High for the 7th and 8th grade students. The Aberdeen Catholic Community now provides a complete twelve-year Catholic education program for Catholic children in Aberdeen.

In July of 1967 the Bishop of the Diocese of Sioux Falls made St. Mary's a territorial parish serving the spiritual needs of those Catholics living north of the Milwaukee Railroad tracks.

From its small beginning in 1903 with 187 adult contributors, St. Mary's Parish has grown to a large city parish of 1310 registered envelope holders, a one to twelve grade Catholic school system, and numerous other spiritual and educational programs to meet the needs of the present-day Catholic community.



Aberdeen Sacred Heart

During the first years of Monsignor Dermody's pastorate he was planning on building a new church. These plans became increasingly important with the condemnation of the red brick church in 1925 and its demolition in 1928.

The ensuing of church services in the school auditorium and the basement chapel bring many stories of problems. Older people had difficulty getting either up or down the flights of stairs. Funerals were a special problem under the circumstances. The school auditorium was used for many various functions besides mass, and it had to be adjusted each time with chairs, kneeling benches, altar, etc., put in place. Kneeling benches were unsteady and a number of people tipped them over just at a crucial time.

Marriages and daily masses were held in the chapel in the basement of the school. There was constant adjustment necessary for any services. Almost all agreed that the period of time, when no church was available, was very disturbing to the entire parish. No one seems to remember, when asked, just how long the school was used for church purposes, but all indicated it seemed like a long time. The funeral services for John Griffin, father of Helen Griffin, were held in the basement chapel on March 8, 1925. It is evident that the church was therefore not in use at that date.

Father dreamed, he said of a structure so spacious as to accommodate his large congregation and as beautiful as any of those in other lands.

The long delay in building was primarily caused by finances. The debt on the school had to be paid on Father wanted to have the money for construction, or sufficient pledges mad, prior to any actual building. The beginning of a business recession and some bad crop years added to the financial worries also.

In 1932 Monsignor was designated as a representative to the International Eucharistic Congress in Dublin, Ireland. He took this opportunity to travel to other parts of Europe, study architecture of churches, and get ideas on church construction. He also contacted many experts on church construction in the United States. When he returned from this trip he said he was ready to begin the building.

There were other factors besides having the plans ready and sufficient funds, either on hand or in pledges, to begin the building of the new church. The whole country was in the throes of the worst depression in history. Their terrible drought with the accompanying dust storms and invasion of grasshoppers had brought the agricultural economy of the area to a standstill. This, of course, affected all employment. Railroads lay off hundreds of men, banks failed, business of all kinds went bankrupt, and the unemployment was the greatest in history. Good shares of the people were on relief of some kind. Work was being provided on WPA projects. Under these circumstances, the building of a new church at this time would provide an opportunity for work and it also made it possible, with the prevailing low wages, to get a lot of building for the money available. Ordinary laborers received \$1.50 for a ten-hour day, a man and team worked for \$3.00 a day, expert carpenters worked for \$35 an hour, and concrete finishers received \$5.00 an hour. Stonecutters and stonemasons brought from Minnesota quarries were glad to get \$10.00 a day plus room and board.



Wesport Sacred Heart

SACRED HEART - WESTPORT PARISH HISTORY

Sacred Heart parish in Westport, SD began when the early immigrants came to build their homes and establish businesses. They came from different ethnic backgrounds and religions.

The village of Westport was first started on the 28th of June, 1880. The event which assured the town of success was the grading of the railroad in that same year. The railroad was finished in the fall of 1881 and the town site was plotted, bringing a rush of people. Stores and hotels were built.

As Catholics arrived in the community, services were held in various homes, and often in the home of Patrick Callaghan, which was nine miles Northwest of Westport and is no longer in existence. Services were also often held in the home of Jake Siemann. His son, Lawrence, tells of a small permanent altar in the dining area that was used when a priest was able to make it to the territory. This house is still in use today.

When the railroad was completed to Ellendale, ND and points North, a chapel car with missin priests helped bring the faith to the people. Many people tell of seeing pictures of this chapel car, but they seem to be lost now.

In June of 1880, Fr. Robert Haire was given a large territory to establish as a Catholic parish. The area took in Columbia, Westport, Frederick, and reached as far as Leola.

It was decided to build a church in 1913. Some of the earliest contributing members were Patrick Callaghan, Jack Siemann, Hill Siemann, Frank Siemann, Will Gerson, Robert Gerson, William Glanagan and the McGovern families. The church was completed in 1914 and is still the parish church at this time.

The many years until the building of the church were hard ones for the farmers and the merchants alike. Summer drought, hail storms and winter blizzards all took their toll.

As times began to improve contributions were sought. Harry Joyce gave the first ten dollars. Everyone in the parish gave time and money.

The women of the parish worked as the church's need grew. Much mention was made of the making of aprons and quilts. The aprons sold for 25¢ and 50¢. Quilting was done for sixty cents a quilt. A finished quilt sold for the whole sum of \$2.50! Ice cream socials were popular events. Homemade ice cream and cake were always served.

A play was given by the Callaghan and Siemann girls with the help of Maggie Vaughan. The money raised was used for a round stained window of St. Cecilia which was put in the front of the church. Later this was broken by boys throwing rocks and had to be replaced.

A large white altar, two angels, a statue of Jesus and Mary and a white marble communion rail completed the altar.

The first couple to be married in the new church was Marlene Gerson and Fred McGovern in 1915. The second marriage did not take place until almost ten years later when Gay Siemann and Albert Huettl were married.