

Groton St. John the Baptist



Catholic Church, Groton, S. D.



GROTON, Brown County St. John the Baptist Church

1878 The first Catholic settlers arrived in Groton from Iowa. THE DAKOTA CATHOLIC, p. 18

1882 Holy Mass was offered by Fr. Haire for the first time at Groton in the store of Mrs. Ralph Drew. Maude Drew, a baby was baptized. THE DAKOTA CATHOLIC, p. 18.

1886-1888 Groton was one, if not the greatest primary wheat markets in the world. BOOK OF GROTON by Halpin.

1890, Aug. Fire departments from five towns battled a wind-driven blaze. Almost half of the business places were destroyed. AAN, June 17, 1906.

1898 Miss Mary O'Connor came from Kentucky it was through her leadership that two church fairs were held which netted \$175 for a sinking fund for a church. Fr. Mensing took charge of the money but no church was built for another 16 years. As a result the fervent Catholics moved away, and the lax ones fell away.

1892 Settlers arrived and services were held in the home of Mrs. Ralph Drew, by Fr. Robert W. Haire. J. Burns, P. Flynn, D. Sherwood, Mrs. Holz all early settlers. These were Irish coming from Iowa, Wisconsin and Ireland.

1900-1910 A great land boom in S. D. Prices jumped from \$5 and \$10 an acre to \$75. Halpin, BOOK OF GROTON.

1907 The church was built at a cost of \$6000. Still in use in 1973. A new influx of Catholic settlers made a church possible; it was dedicated by Bishop O'Gorman in 1912.

1908 Rev. Stephen Duren came to Groton from Ipswich to live and retire. He built a house and moved the church into city limits.

1909 Father Amrault, pastor of Andover, cared for Groton as a mission.

1911 A total failure of the wheat crop.

1912, Sept. 12 The Church was dedicated by Bishop O'Gorman. ("Groton, S. Dak." a brochure)

1915, Sept. 15 Father Murphy came to Groton. ("Groton, S. Dak.")

1916 Bought 2 acres for a cemetery.

1918 The church was cleared of debt.

1921, July 10 Fr. J. P. Halpin made resident pastor. 26 families, Rectory built, cost \$12,000. Still in use in 1973.

1921 Vandals entered the Catholic church in Groton and desecrated the edifice, broke a memorial window, trampled on costly vestments, cut electric wires, and did other damage. THE DAKOTA CATHOLIC, Oct. 1921

1925 Other churches in Groton: Rev. J. P. Halpin
First Presbyterian 1882
First Methodist Episcopal 1884
Evangelical Lutheran 1882
Evangelical (Ger.) 1882

1945 Parish organization: Altar Society, Knights of Columbus, Sodality, Holy Name

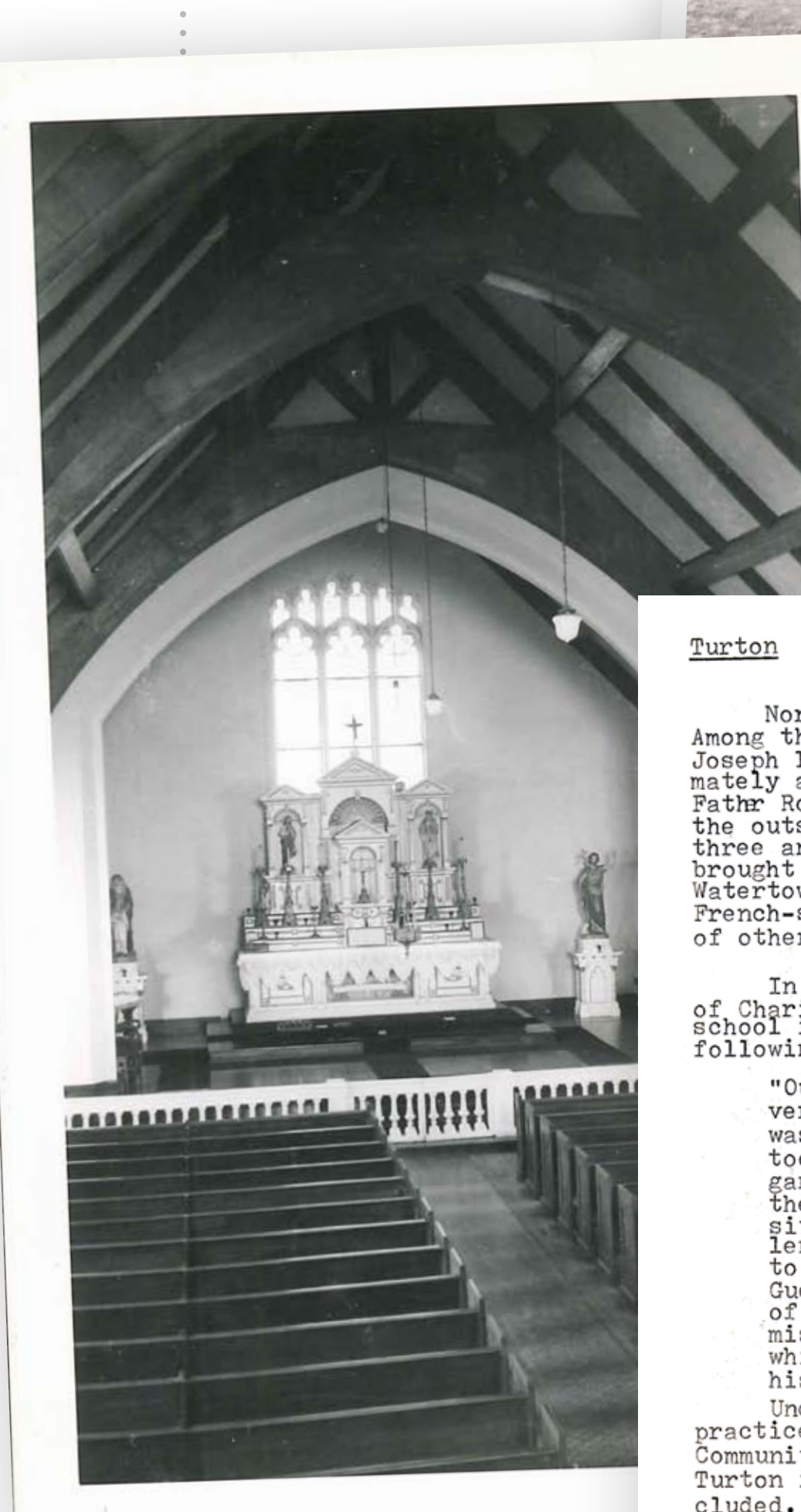
1947 Families in parish 18; fallen away Catholics, 12. In WW II 21 boys and 3 girls

1973, Apr. 13 Reported by Rev. Marvin McPhee:
100 Catholic white families
Rectory, Church
CCD Center in the basement of the church
Active: St. Teresa Study Club, Altar Society



St. Elizabeth Ann Seton - Groton, SD

Turton St. Joseph



Turton (Spink County) St. Joseph

Northeast of Redfield French Canadians founded Turton in 1881. Among the earliest pioneers were the families of Ferdinand, George and Joseph LaBrie. More French-speaking families -- estimated at approximately a hundred -- came from Kankakee, Ill. These too, depended on Father Robert W. Haire for spiritual aid. They could communicate with the outside world by means of a postoffice, St. Paul, located about three and a half miles southeast of their settlement. Also, a stage brought the mail and offered the opportunity of traveling to Redfield and Watertown. George LaBrie was one of the first stage drivers. These French-speaking people were very clannish and did not seek the company of other nationalities.

In Turton Father Domace R. Guenard successfully interested the Sisters of Charity of St. Louis for a four-room staffed school. Sister Clothilde Marie provided the following account of the arrival of the first five Sisters in Turton:

"Our Sisters found, contrary to what they had heard, a house very poor--without furniture or accessories. There, 'Lady Poverty' was installed as mistress. For the first few days the Sisters took their meals at the rectory; then the women of the parish began to bring the Sisters utensils and dishes. The Sisters slept on the floor. There was an old iron stove. They took their meals sitting on the floor without benefit of tables or chairs. A length a table arrived and some beds. The Sisters had a hard time to get money to buy what they needed for their living. Father Guenard, by divine providence, seemed to think only of the needs of his boys -- never of those of the Sisters. Father, having four missions to serve besides Turton, spent most of the Sundays away while the Sisters had no Mass, unless they followed the priest to his missions. This they did whenever possible."

Under such circumstances, the Sisters had ample opportunity to practice self-denial. At the same time, the help of the Community of the Sisters of Charity built a convent on a hill west of Turton in 1913. Classrooms and living facilities for girls were included. In this endeavor the Sisters were ably supported by the Catholic Order of Foresters which had been organized in Turton in 1910.

In 1915 Father Joseph M. Barre came to Turton. He believed that the time had come to build a better church. In 1919 the cornerstone was laid at a site on a hill south of town. The Gothic structure of red brick occupying the highest point in the town is a landmark to this day. The cost was \$60,000. The debt burdened the parish for many years. The name of the parish was changed at this time from St. Louis to St. Joseph as a compliment to the pastor. In 1924 the old church was turned into a parish hall.

The school conducted by the Sisters of St. Louis was having difficulties. A dwindling enrollment made it unprofitable. In 1920 the Sisters decided to convert their building into an orphanage to accommodate both boys and girls. Although this was considered the diocesan orphanage, it received no support other than what the Sisters obtained by means of annual collections taken up in the different parishes. It was a sight long to be remembered to see a humble little Sister of St. Louis, with an accompanying orphan, stand at the church door holding a small basket to receive the donations of the worshippers. The Little Flower Orphanage housed up to 65 orphans, and this sort of financing was not satisfactory. The Canadian sisterhood did all it could, however, to give loving care and quality education to the youngsters. Then, in 1932, the building with most of its contents was destroyed by fire. Fortunately, no lives were lost. At this time the Sisters of St. Louis withdrew from the diocese.

The Turton parish was in no position to pay even the interest on the debt incurred in 1919 when the imposing brick church was built. Since no amelioration was in sight, Bishop Brady advised the parish to go into bankruptcy. The property came into the hands of a Pennsylvania insurance company which had to pay taxes on the church. Fortunately, the creditor allowed the parish to use the building. The company accepted the bishop's solution and the church was returned to parish ownership under manageable terms.

The St. Aloysius Convent School, Turton, was valued at \$2,000. Father Guenard managed to pay \$500 to the Sisters for the year. Fifty pupils were taught in two classrooms. The building was but an old hall turned into a boarding school. The upper story had two dormitories; the lower, two classrooms. The parish had paid \$300 for the building. The Sisters lived in the little rectory while the pastor moved back into the sacristy of the church. To get food for the boarders, the Sisters went on begging expeditions in a lumber wagon driven by a woman of the parish. After two years (1899-1900) of such inadequate conditions, the Sisters felt obliged to withdraw from Turton. (CD)

Redfield St. Bernard



St. Bernard Catholic Church

There was a Catholic presence in Dakota Territory several years before Pope Leo XIII established the Diocese of Sioux Falls on November 12, 1889. St. Bernard Parish in Redfield was established in 1884 by Father J.G. Perreault of St. Ann Parish, Frankfort. The first Mass recorded in Redfield was offered by Father Robert W. Haire in 1881.

Bishop Martin Marty dedicated the wooden structure St. Bernard church in June, 1886. In its early years St. Bernard Parish was a mission parish of either St. Mary's, Zell or St. Ann's, Frankfort. Construction of the present church was begun in 1909. The Romanesque style church is constructed of Springfield, Minnesota brick and Bedford stone. Bishop Thomas O'Gorman dedicated the church October 24, 1910.

The CCD Center was constructed in 1970. The Shrine to the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary was dedicated on October 13, 1973 by John Cardinal Carberry of St. Louis, Missouri.

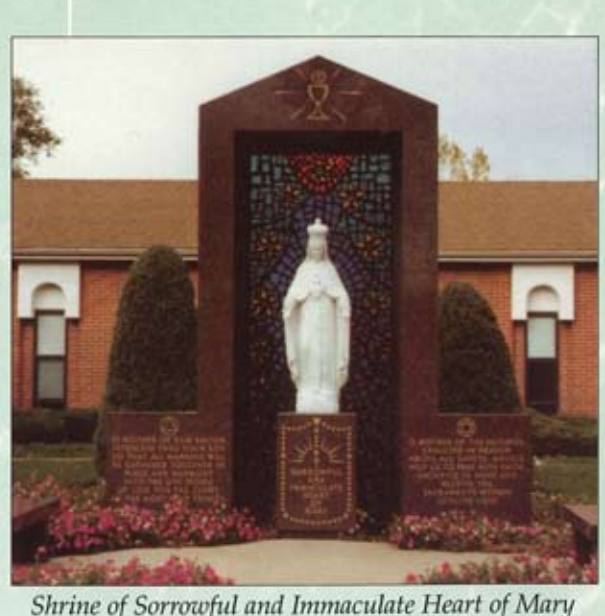
Pastors of St. Bernard Parish have included Fr. J.G. Perreault (1884-1889), Fr. Charles Robinson (1889-1894), Fr. John Hermeling (1891-1900), Fr. George MacConnachie (1900-1937), Fr. Francis A. Cronin (1937-1945), Fr. Charles Krouse (1945-1949), Fr. Paul Quinn (1949-1954), Fr. William Isenhardt (1955-1958), Fr. John Murray (1958-1959), Fr. Leonard Stanton

(1959-1965), Fr. Noel Power (1965-1972), Fr. Robert J. Fox (1972-1984), Fr. Robert Vinlauski (1984-1988), Fr. James Wolf, (1988-1995), and Fr. John M. Fischer (1995-).

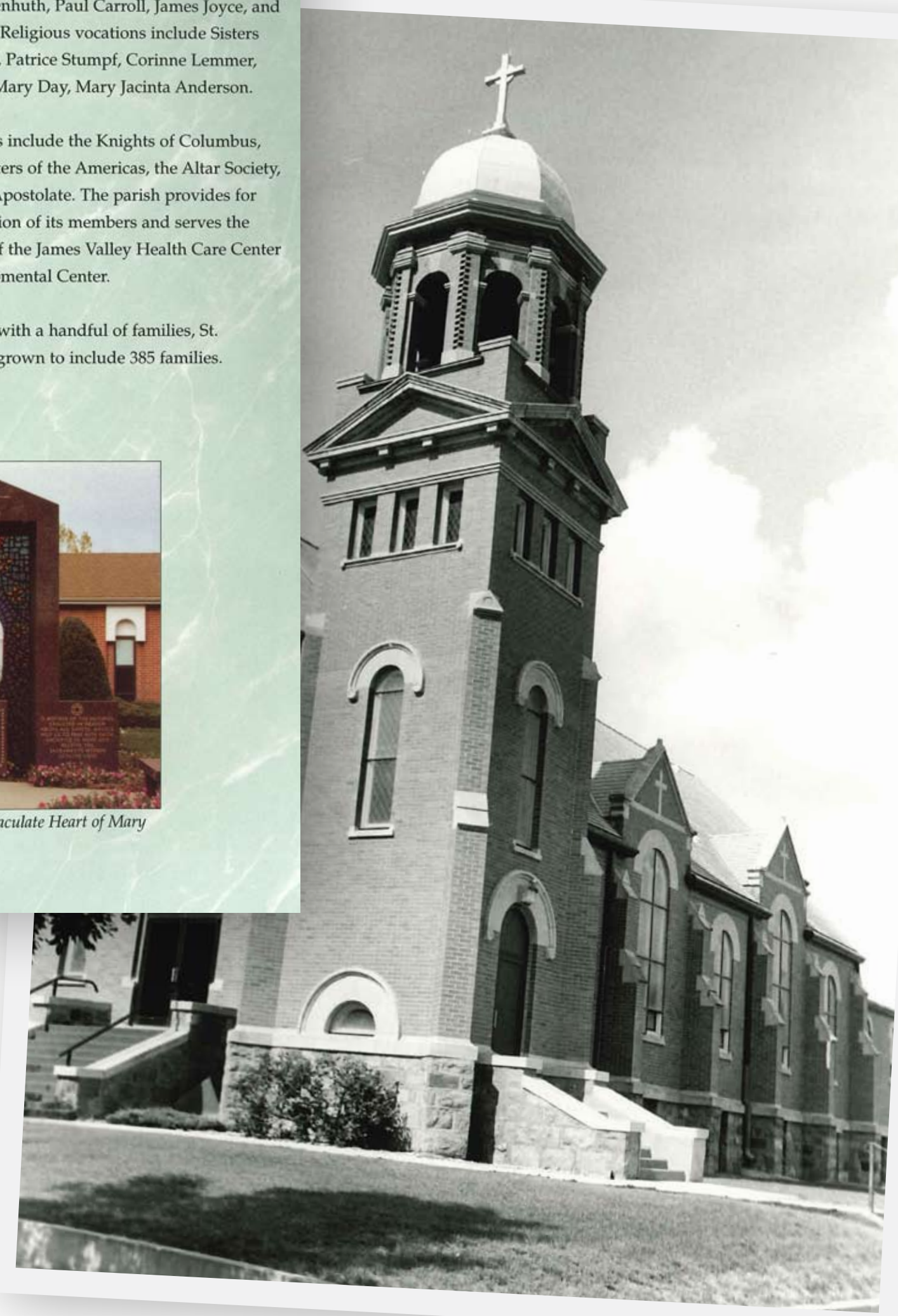
Priestly vocations from St. Bernard Parish include Fathers William Isenhardt, Paul Carroll, James Joyce, and Terrence Anderson. Religious vocations include Sisters M. Patricia Sullivan, Patrice Stumpf, Corinne Lemmer, Candyce Chrystal, Mary Day, Mary Jacinta Anderson.

Parish organizations include the Knights of Columbus, the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, the Altar Society, the Fatima Family Apostolate. The parish provides for the religious education of its members and serves the Catholic residents of the James Valley Health Care Center and the SD Developmental Center.

From its beginning with a handful of families, St. Bernard Parish has grown to include 385 families.



Shrine of Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary



Mellette All Saints



HISTORY OF OUR CHURCH

The original church, built in this area by German Catholic families that moved to Dakota Territory from Wisconsin, was called the "Braun Church" and was served by priests from Aberdeen. The small church on the prairie served the needs of the growing Catholic community and many of their loved ones were buried in the cemetery in the church yard. In 1920, after the closing of the Braun Church the graves were moved to the newly established Calvary Cemetery north of Mellette. Calvary Cemetery, which was given to the church by Frederic Fischbach before his burial in 1917, remains a special part of our parish history and has served as a burial place for Catholics from the area for over 90 years.

The Catholic population had grown from thirty members to sixty-five during the time that Mass was being offered by priests from Redfield. Mass was being said in the Cole Hall, the new Presbyterian Church, and even in parishioners homes until 1899 when the new church was built on the site of our present day church. Father D.J. Quilan, the first resident pastor, came in 1916. Celebrating the Holy Mass every Sunday was still almost impossible because the priest would travel on Saturday, usually by train, to the mission parish of St. Mary in Athol. A rectory was built in 1917 and served the resident priests until 2003.

The Altar Society was a wonderful asset to the church in those days. The ladies worked tirelessly to prepare meals for the community suppers and the fall bazaar and dinner. These ladies were responsible for defraying many of the church's expenses. Father Leonard Sullivan (1936-1939) saw to it that the parish had its own dishes. This eliminated the need for the ladies to "haul their kitchens" and made the task of serving parish dinners a little easier. A building was also purchased by the church during this time for holding fall dinners and parish activities. The Altar Society served the parish well until the 1990's when Father David James realized the burden that was placed on the Altar Society president and devised an organization system that would make couples and families responsible for those duties. In later years, this system evolved into a band system for church activities and a cleaning list for weekly cleaning of the church and hall. Outreach ministries of the Altar Society were later adopted by the pastoral council.

The parish suffered financial troubles and great personal hardships during the 1930's, but their faith kept them going and helped them endure the difficult times. The sanctuary was remodeled in 1936, and plans were being discussed for the building of a parish hall and new church in the late 50's. With a shortage of priests and the possibility of smaller parishes closing, plans were put on hold until 1960 when Father Thomas J. Ryan was assigned to our Parish. Easter Sunday 1961 concluded over 60 years of liturgies in the little white church to make way for the new church and hall.

Parishioners worked a total of 1,212 hours to tear down the little white church and complete the footings for the new church building. Fr. Ryan supervised the design and construction of the \$47,500 facility. When his travels bring him to the diocese, he occasionally stops to offer Mass in the church he helped build. On November 1st, 1961, the Most Reverend Lambert Hoch, Bishop of the Sioux Falls Diocese, dedicated the newly constructed church on the Feast of All Saints.

