

Flandreau Ss Simon and Jude

Howard St. Agatha



Flandreau (Moody) SS Simon and Jude

Flandreau dated back to 1857, but by 1873 there was only a single building there. Five years later, on June 9, 1878, Father Charles Koeberl of Avoca, Minn., traveled the 80 miles to baptize a child there. In 1879 the railroad was extended from Sioux Falls to Flandreau and settlement was increased. It is believed that before 1880 Father John Brogan offered Mass in the town hall.

Beginning with 1882 Flandreau was blessed with a resident priest. At first Dell Rapids and the Fitzgerald settlement were attached to SS Simon and Jude Parish. Priests ministering before 1896 were Fathers Theodore Vandevivere, F. X. Guay, Joseph Barron, Peter J. Jeram and John C. Ahern. Father Thomas Quick served from 1896 till his death two years later. The Parish people were going to build a grand church as the quick Memorial, but for financial reasons this project could not be carried out.

Earlier, Father Thomas A. Flynn organized the Catholics into a parish and to plan for a church. On Mar. 24, 1882, the Daily Press and Dakotian announced that stone was being drawn for the foundation of a church in Flandreau. Father Flynn was assigned to Madison but he continued to oversee the Flandreau construction until it was completed later that year.

Father Michael Dermody served in Flandreau (1898-1904), then Father M. J. Martyn (1904-13) and Father Emil Bonnettero who died there in 1915. On March 23, 1915, Father George E. Kelly entered upon the pastorate of SS Simon and Jude that was to last over 40 years. His first task was to direct parishioners in erecting a beautiful brick church at a cost of \$40,000. It brought to realization the dream for a Father Quick Memorial.

Father Kelly was pastor from 1915 to 1954 and pastor emeritus until his death on Mar. 9, 1957. He was succeeded in 1954 by Father Felix McCabe. While in Flandreau Father McCabe was appointed vicar general of the diocese and in 1962 was named a domestic prelate. Monsignor McCabe retired in 1976. In 1967 he erected a catechetical center accommodating 360 students, including Catholics from Flandreau Indian High School. Presentation Sisters of Dell Rapids directed the program. (CD)



Howard (Miner County) St. Agatha

In 1878 Howard had its origin on the Milwaukee line when Matthew A. Woods, first settler in the county, filed on a homestead which became site of the town. Three years later the town was platted. In 1881 Father Thomas A. Flynn of Madison offered the first Mass for the Catholic settlers.

In 1882 the Milwaukee reached Howard, and after a spirited campaign, the town secured the county seat. In 1885 John G. Farmer deeded to Bishop Marty the site for a Catholic church. A building 50x50 feet was erected and in August of 1886 Father John G. Ahern held the first services in the new church. The priest from Diana continued to attend to the Catholics of Howard until 1888 after which Howard was a mission of Woonsocket. In 1889 Howard won the county seat through the support of citizens of Milwaukee Junction and the pro-Howard vote of the railroad workers at Carthage. The church remained unplastered and without pews until 1889.

St. Agatha's parish was a mission of Diana, then of Woonsocket and Madison. For this period the following priest's names appeared on the records: Fathers J. E. Collins, E. J. Murphy and Claude Ehmer, O.S.B. The first resident priest was Father Adolf Miller in 1891. He found the four missions attached to the parish, the rough traveling over mere trails and the little income were more than he had anticipated. He had to live in a room above a store. He soon left for another diocese.

Father Miller was succeeded by Father Thomas F. Stecher who was ordained by Bishop Marty in 1891 at Jefferson. He then received his first and only appointment, remaining at Howard for 49 years until his death. To Howard were attached the missions of Carthage, Winfred, Brisbine and Wentworth.

The zealous young priest cared not only for the 40 German and 20 Irish Catholics, but also for the 400 Protestants. In 1899 he supervised erection of a small church in Brisbine for \$737. In 1892 a parish house was erected for him next to the church in Howard.

Although the church avoided destruction when half of the town was destroyed by fire in 1892, both the church and the rectory burned down on Nov. 5, 1897. Father Stecher inspired his people to start over and at the end of June 1898, St. Agatha's Church was enclosed sufficiently for Sunday Mass. Before winter set in, both the church and rectory were completed.

In 1905 a school was built at St. Agatha's with the Sisters of St. Francis of Wisconsin staffing it. George Bangasser donated a pipe organ at the church in 1921. In 1928 Howard was threatened with losing its Catholic school when the Franciscan Sisters found it necessary to withdraw from the parish. At the urgent request of the bishop, the Yankton Benedictines staffed the school. The school closed in 1931.

On Dec. 10, 1933, the parishioners feted Father Stecher on his 81st birthday. Later, as was his custom, he decorated the church for Christmas festivities. On Dec. 30 he rang the non-day Angelus as he had done every day for 43 years. As he pulled the rope the last time, he sank to the floor and died.

Father J. P. Veesser was pastor (1934-45). In September of 1935 the Franciscan Sisters returned and the grade school was reopened with a high school curriculum added. Meanwhile, the population of the town had grown to 1,191 and the parish to 445 households. The parish furnished 75 men and 7 women to the Armed Forces in World War II. Father Henry Kolbeck succeeded Father Veesser. His first project at St. Agatha's was to install an oak altar in the church, after which he had the frame church building with a seating capacity of 600 completely insulated. In 1950 he erected a gymnasium-auditorium. Father Kilbeck was greatly interested in athletics, and in 1943 became president of the South Dakota Athletic Assoc., a position he held for 20 years. A new school had been built in 1953, a position he held for 20 years. But when the Franciscans withdrew in 1969, it was closed. (CD)

Madison St. Thomas

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CATHOLIC CHURCH

Roman Catholicism had its early beginnings in Madison about the time the town was founded in 1880. Catholic missionaries visited Madison periodically before a resident pastor was assigned, among them Father John Brogan who served one year from May 1880. He was succeeded by Father S. S. Mattingly who spent only three months here. He was succeeded by Father Thomas A. Flynn, the first resident pastor who took charge in July of 1881 and was the actual founder of St. Thomas Aquinas Church. The parish was named after Father Flynn's patron saint.

Father Flynn was one of the first priests ordained in Dakota Territory. He came to the Territory as a young seminarian from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, his home, and was given holy orders by Bishop Marty, then the Territorial bishop. After serving briefly as a missionary in Yankton, Father Flynn came to Madison in 1881 where he remained until his death in 1926. During his 45 years here, he received many honors from the Catholic Church, including the titles of Monsignor and Protontary Apostolic. He also served as Vicar General of the Sioux Falls diocese under Bishop O'Gorman.

Father Flynn built three churches in Madison, the first being a small wooden structure to accommodate the parish of a few dozen families. Shortly after his arrival he was assigned missionary duties ranging from Flandreau to the Missouri River and said masses in homes and various pioneer buildings. He built St. Ann's Catholic Church at Badus in 1882.

The small frame church here was replaced by the German gothic red brick church in 1904. Gutted by fire in 1918, the edifice was faithfully restored at a cost of about \$45,000.

Father Flynn was an avid sports fan and his keen interest in all types of athletics caused the city of Madison to name the municipal athletic park "Flynn Field" in his honor in 1927.

Following Msgr. Flynn's death in 1926, Father E. J. Egan was assigned to St. Thomas and remained the pastor until his death in 1944. Shortly after his arrival, he began laying plans for establishment of a parish parochial school, and in the fall of 1928 a modern brick school building adjacent to the church and cost about \$100,000 was dedicated. This building housed a complete school, including eight elementary grades and a four-year high school. Father Egan also provided a home for several Presentation Sisters who staffed the school.

Upon the death of Father Egan in 1944, he was succeeded by Father J. M. Reuter who was transferred to Madison from Coman and remained here as pastor for 17 years, then being transferred to St. Joseph's Cathedral in Sioux Falls, where he died in 1962. Following the scarcity years of World War II, Father Reuter did much to improve and expand the St. Thomas church property. One of his first achievements was to lift an \$80,000 debt against the school. He eventually eliminated the high school and refitted the second floor of the building into sisters living quarters, continuing the school as an eight-grade elementary institution.

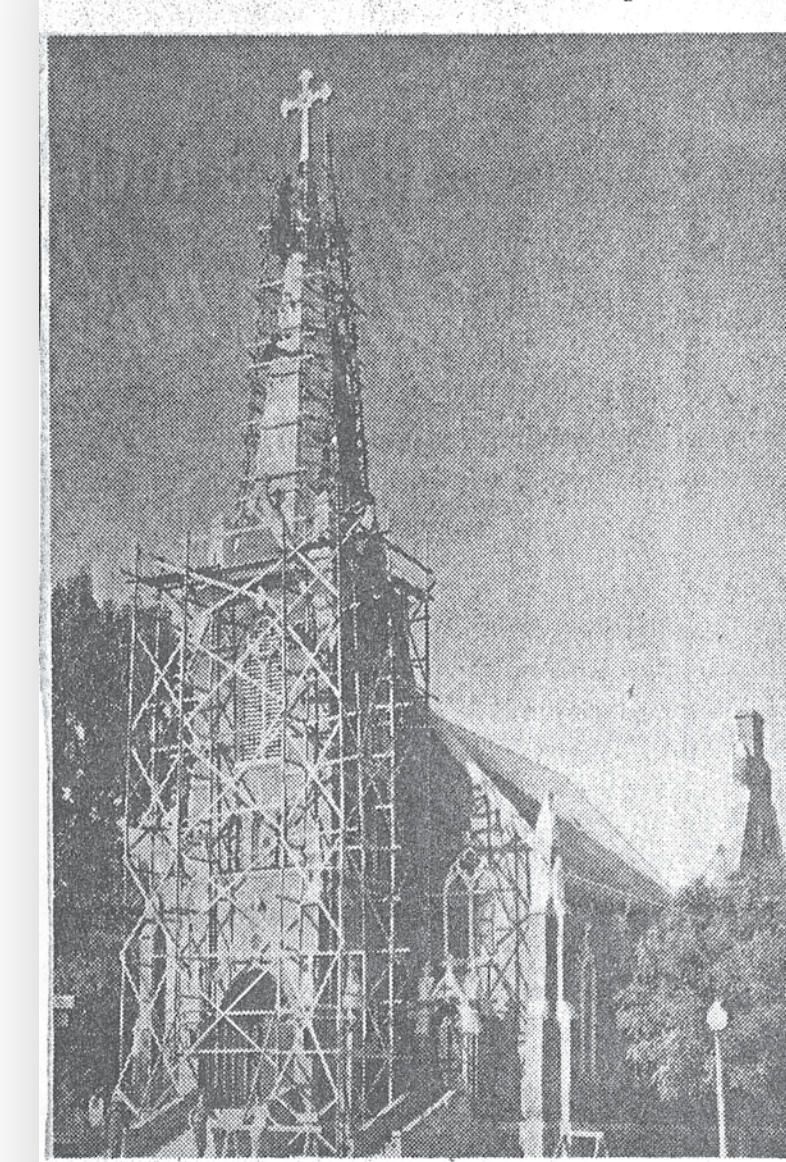
Father Reuter acquired all of the property in the block where the church and school were located, initiated construction of the Lake Herman Recreation Center for pleasure and benefit of the parishioners. He also acquired more land for expansion of St. Thomas cemetery and had plans ready for construction of a modern sisters convent and home at the time he left Madison.

Following departure of Father Reuter, Father William Schmitt was named pastor, coming here in 1960 and remaining until 1969. During his tenure he built a new parish rectory at a cost of upwards of \$100,000 and completed construction of the sisters convent at approximately the same figure. He was named Monsignor while here.

The next parish priest was Father John F. Mulkern who was assigned to St. Thomas in the late summer of 1969 and remained until December of 1971. He was followed by Father Paul Bachman who remained in charge of the parish for nearly 7 1/2 years. The sixth pastor to serve St. Thomas in its 100 year history is Father Hal Barber. In March of 1978 he began directing the activities of the parish which now number approximately 550 families.



St. Thomas Tower Repaired



Madison, S. D.—St. Thomas Catholic church, which has undergone extensive improvements both inside and outside during the summer.

Madison Catholic Church Is Renovated; Spire Is Rebuilt

Madison, S. D., Sept. 11—It took more than 1,000 feet of lumber to build a scaffolding to repair and repoint the tower on St. Thomas Catholic church in Madison. The work is now nearing completion. The church was built during the pastorate of the late Msgr. T. A. Flynn, former Dakota priest, after the former structure on the same site was destroyed by fire during World War I. The church is considered one of the most beautiful in the state. The next project will be to redecorate the interior, planned for next year by the present pastor, Father J. M. Reuter. St. Thomas parochial school has had extensive improvements during the summer, with a completely new modern kitchen installed for the benefit of women of the parish in the music in the school.