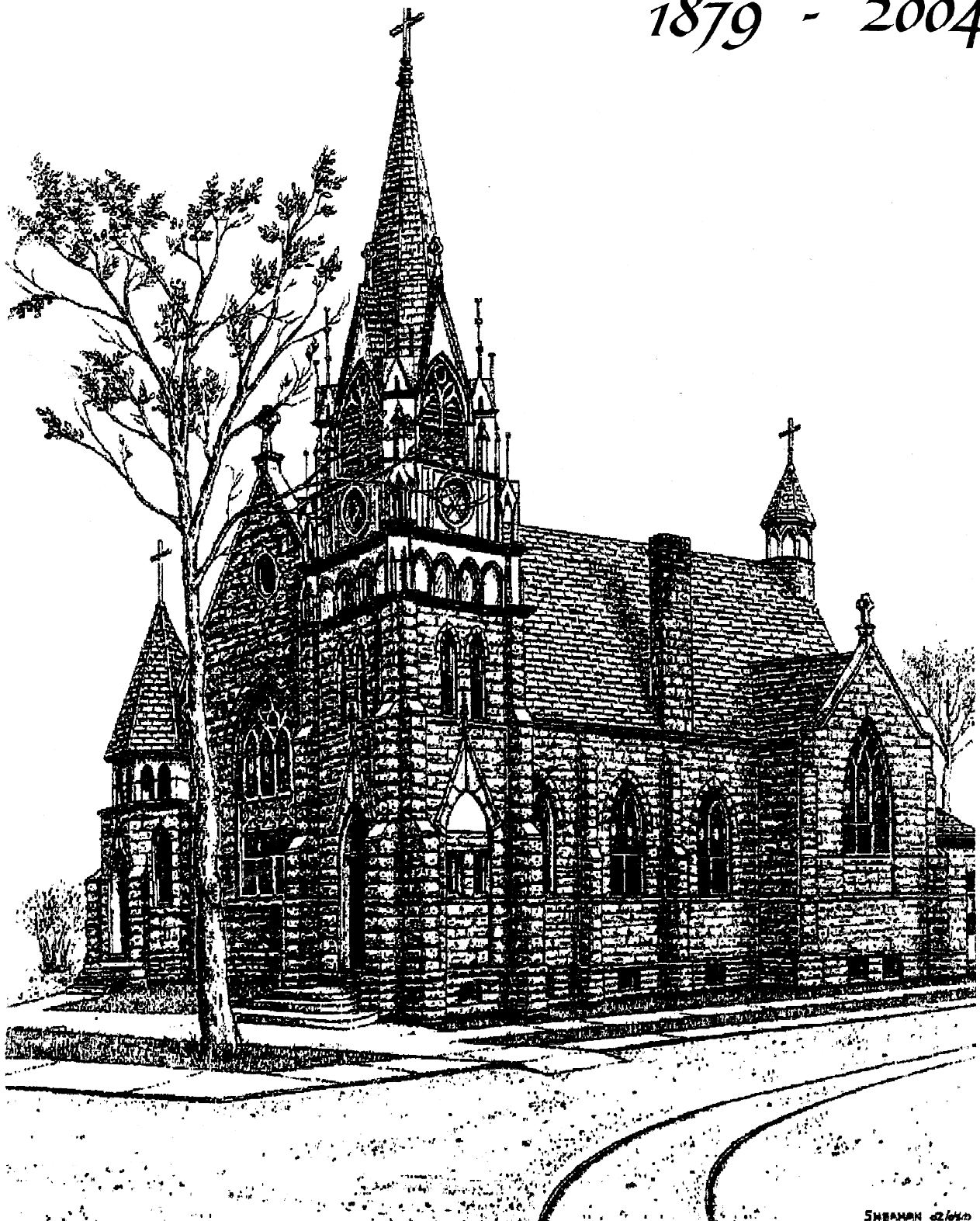
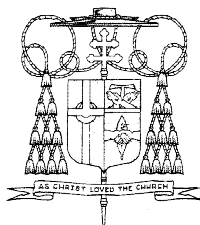


The History of
Saint Joseph Parish
1879 - 2004





Office of the Archbishop

ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER



1300 South Steele Street
Denver, CO 80210-2599
Phone: 303.715.3129
Fax: 303.715.2043

May 2004

The Parish Family of St. Joseph's Church
Fort Collins, Colorado

Dear friends,

The local parish is the place where Jesus Christ is most vividly present among His people. It's where the Church is most alive, where most of us first hear the Gospel as children, and where we share our faith with others most deeply as a worshipping community.

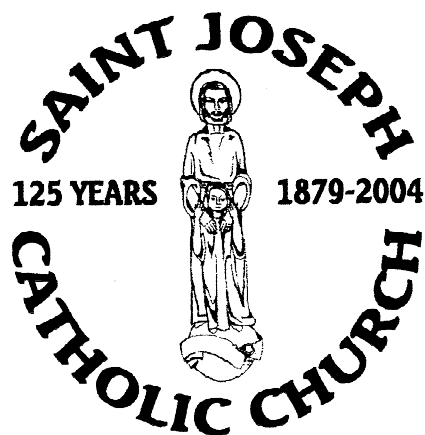
For 125 years, St. Joseph's Parish has been a witness to Christ's love alive in people's hearts. Over the past century and a quarter, thousands of families have drawn strength, encouragement, hope, joy and solace from the presence of God within its church walls.

May the Lord give you His peace, and bless each and every one of you on this great occasion. May this anniversary also be a new beginning for the outstanding Christian witness St. Joseph's Parish offers to Colorado at large.

Your brother in the Lord,

+ Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.

Most Rev. Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.
Archdiocese of Denver



My Dear St. Joseph Family,

Peace and Love!

There is, I think, a frequent question in matters of religion. All of us have asked it, at least to ourselves. As religious human beings it matters to us what God is like. In the First Letter of St. John we are given a simple but profound answer: "God is Love," (1 John 4:8) However, knowing this we face another question that is equally important. It is this: "Where is God?" Learning what God is like will count for little or nothing unless we know where to find Him.

The standard answer to that question is that God is everywhere. But that answer, as true as it is, leaves something lacking. There are times when it does not meet the deepest longings of the human heart. A little girl posed one of those questions that are so typical of children. She asked, "Mother, where does God live?" And her mother gave the standard answer, "God is everywhere." To which the little girl replied, "But I want Him to be somewhere!"

Recall the words of St. Paul, "Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Cor 3:16) When St. Paul said these great things, he was not talking about a building. In those days, there was no such thing as a church building. He was talking about the people. He was telling the people that they themselves were God's temple, that the spirit of God swelled within them. And he would say the same things about us.

As we celebrate our 125th Anniversary and recall our history in this booklet it is quite evident that God has been "somewhere". He has been actively and lovingly present in this Faith Community. From the first Mass offered in Mrs. Stratton's School House by Bishop Machebuef, to our establishment as a parish, the construction of our church and school, and most importantly, in the homes of our founding families until this present day, it is most obvious that the Spirit of God dwells in us. In our celebration and remembrance let us express our thanks to God for this presence. And let us show our gratitude by continuing to bring His loving presence to the Fort Collins community.

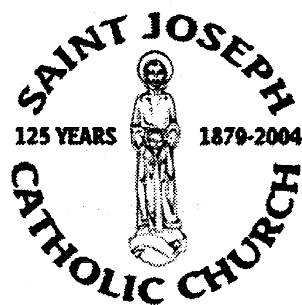
In Christ,
Fr. Dennis K. Ryan

CHURCH

300 W. Mountain Ave., P.O. Box 502, Fort Collins, CO 80522-0502
Phone: 970-482-4148 — Fax: 970-221-0635
Email: sjchurch@stjosephchurchfc.org

SCHOOL

127 North Howes Street, Fort Collins, CO 80521-2717
Phone: 970-484-1171, Fax: 970-482-5291
Email: schooloffice@stjosephchurchfc.org



HISTORY

OF

SAINT JOSEPH PARISH

Remembering the Past
Celebrating the Present
Building the Future

Acknowledgement

This accounting gives enormous credit to Father Robert Reycraft

for his thorough research in 1975 documenting

the early history of Fort Collins

and the first 100 years of St. Joseph Parish.

The parish is most grateful for his rich and personal chronicle

of the early pioneers, missionaries and priests

who shaped our area and place of worship.

Many thanks to the Archdiocese of Denver

and the Fort Collins Library

for making available the records and documents

used in researching this history.

The parish owes a debt of gratitude to

Dennis Sheahan for his beautiful and detailed

cover artwork for this history.

Lastly, we cannot forget the contributions

of the many parishioners, their stories, and encounters

that make St. Joseph Parish

the spiritual, warm, inviting and supportive community it is today.

It is not possible to list each by name lest one be forgotten.

-Mary Ann Burridge

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HANDS OF LOVE

This man, he came from Nazareth,
a plain background he was from.
He was sent here for a reason,
part of a prophecy to come.
Joseph means "increasing faith",
it was the name he wore,
Not a faith that could lie dormant
but each day it must grow more.

One feature that will show you
who this man Joseph really was,
Are his **hands** - their every facet,
every talent, every cause.
This carpenter had **hands** with strength
and hard work they well knew,
In each piece that he created,
a part of Joseph was there too.
His **hands** were rough and callused,
it was the hazard of his trade,
But each callus was a sign
of something he and God had made.

These roughened **hands** could also
be so gentle and so mild,
As he cradled Mary in his arms,
unmarried, but with child.
All the people were astounded,
they thought surely Joe would balk,
Did the scandal not affect him -
all the rumors, all the talk?
Reaching up to Him in prayer,
these **hands** new strength had won,
When God's message reassured him,
Mary's baby was His Son.

Through prayer and work and love,
Joseph's **hands** have done his will,
If you'll look at those around us,
you'll see he's with us still.
2000 years have come and gone,
since that prophecy came true.
Yet Joe's in every person
on the corner, in the pew.

St. Joseph, won't you help us
use our **hands** for love each day.
For the strongest form of prayer
is reaching out along the way.

-Kathleen Stambaugh

AREA HISTORY

St. Joseph Parish began in the midst of the pioneer days of Colorado. The settlement of Fort Collins was just beginning to emerge as a city in its own right. It would be helpful to examine the atmosphere of the time and of the city in order to see in what kind of setting the Church was established.

- FORT COLLINS

Larimer County, named for General William Larimer of Denver, was created by the first Territorial Legislature of Colorado on November 1, 1861. The county is large – larger than the State of Delaware, and more than twice as large as Rhode Island. Other than the Indians who roamed the area, the first settlers – French Canadian trappers with their Indian wives – established themselves at what is now LaPorte on the Cache la Poudre River about 1828. Aside from the trapping opportunities on the river and the other streams which came from the mountains nearby which drew these first settlers, the available water supply and irrigable land, coupled with the sub-humid climate, drew many subsequent settlers to the county. The Laramie, Grand, Cache la Poudre, and Big Thompson rivers offered a then-generous water supply with suitable reservoir sites for the impoundment and irrigation development.

The earliest occupations centered around LaPorte were trapping, hunting, and fishing, and the simple pastimes of horse and foot racing and target shooting provided recreation.

The incident which lead to the naming of the Cache la Poudre River, told in the *Fort Collins Courier* of February 8, 1883 as related by Abner Loomis, a pioneer settler, is an interesting one. Mr. Loomis stated that he learned the story from Antoine Janis, widely believed to be the first permanent settler in Larimer County, who participated in the events narrated. Mr. Janis was a Catholic, born of French parents, who came to the area from Missouri. As Mr. Loomis related the story, a group of employees of the American Fur Company, bound from St. Louis to Green River, Wyoming, were stranded in a snowstorm near to what is now the town of Bellvue in 1836. There were several wagons in the party, and Antoine Janis, then a boy of twelve, was with his father in the group. They had camped for the night near the river, and morning found them snowbound.

When the storm abated, they decided to jettison some of the freight from the wagons to lighten them enough to permit travel through the snow. They decided to bury the freight, so that they might return later and reclaim it, and among the stores thus buried was several hundred pounds of gunpowder. Hence the name "Cache la Poudre." The pit was carefully camouflaged, and some of the travelers returned in the spring to reclaim the buried goods. Over the years, other explanations for the naming of the river have been offered, but this appears to be the true one.

Fort Collins, the county seat of Larimer County, is located in southeastern Larimer County on the Cache la Poudre River, about seven miles east of the original settlement of

LaPorte, and was established as a result of a flood in the summer of 1864. LaPorte had become a station on the Overland Stage Line, protected from Indian depredation by soldiers of the First Colorado Volunteer Cavalry. When the guard proved ineffective, Lieutenant Colonel William Collins at Fort Laramie sent two companies of regular Army troopers to replace them, commanded by Captain Evans. This force established a post near LaPorte, and proved more effective in controlling the Indians. The melting snows from the severe winter of 1863-1864, coupled with a violent rainstorm in June of 1864, produced a flood which wiped out the military post and destroyed a bridge at LaPorte which was essential for the heavy migration of the period. When the report of the disaster reached Colonel Collins, he directed Captain Evans to find a new and safer location for the military encampment. High ground at the present site of Fort Collins was selected, and the encampment was named Camp Collins in honor of the Colonel. In August 1864 after inspecting the site, Colonel Collins issued an order appropriating the land for military purposes.

During the month before this inspection and order, Antoine Janis was appointed to act as guide and interpreter for Camp Collins. Camp Collins was abandoned as a military post in 1866, and the Colonel died on October 26, 1880 in Ohio. His son, Lieutenant Casper Collins, was killed by Indians in Wyoming, and is commemorated in the town of Casper, Wyoming.

In 1868 by vote of the people, the county seat was moved from LaPorte to Fort Collins, and this event seemed to infuse new life into the community. The year 1870 saw increasing interest in social, educational and religious affairs by the less than one thousand residents of Fort Collins. By then the varied backgrounds and interests of the settlers had become somewhat assimilated, and the primary frontier requirements for food, shelter and clothing had been met. The settlers constructed the first school in 1870, taxing themselves to pay for it, and in 1872 the military reservation was opened for settlement. At the same time, the establishment of an agricultural colony attracted many new settlers. 1873 saw the opening of the first bank and newspaper, and many businesses in the community began to prosper.

Setbacks were experienced in the years 1874 to 1876: the bank failed, and a plague of grasshoppers destroyed much of the crops. The disappearance of the grasshoppers in 1877 brightened prospects considerably, and the Colorado Agricultural College was established to spur the development of farming skills. Fort Collins' dream of a railroad to connect it to Denver and Cheyenne began to come true in 1877 as well. Captain Berthoud surveyed the route, and construction began, and trains began running in 1878, thus marking a new era for the community, with a renewed influx of farmers and businessmen. In 1880 the population of the community was 1356, which grew to 2034 two years later, conferring second class status on the city.

The municipal election campaign of 1883 was a most bitter one, with candidates contending for the office of mayor, eight seats on the city council, city clerk, marshal, attorney and treasurer. The principal issue was the cost of liquor licenses, one side contending for no change from the current fee of \$300 per year, the other side advocating

an increase to \$1000 per year. By a vote of 263 to 236, the increase won, and many saloonkeepers, gamblers, prostitutes and other transients took their business elsewhere. There have been several re-runs of this conflict throughout Fort Collins' history. The year after the election, the sale of liquor within the city limits was banned completely, and from 1885 to 1896 the high license fee was reinstated. This was followed by the reinstitution of total prohibition, which was finalized in 1909. Ansel Watrous, historian of Larimer County, wrote, "It was thus that the open saloon in Fort Collins passed into history, unhonored, unwept and unsung."

- AUNTY STONE

Many citizens have become prominent in the course of Fort Collins' history. Mrs. Elizabeth "Aunty" Stone, in 1864 the first white woman to become a permanent resident of Fort Collins, remained until her death. From Connecticut, she traveled to Denver with her family, where twelve lots on the present site of the Union Station were purchased, but an interest in mining caused the Stones to come to Fort Collins. Theirs was the first hotel in the city, originally built to accommodate the military garrison, but opened to the public after their departure. Sold in 1873, the hotel was moved from Jefferson Street to the corner of Mountain and Mason. In 1908 the Pioneer Women of the Cache la Poudre Valley, who again moved it down Mason to a location between Oak and Olive Streets, intending to convert it into a museum, purchased it. Aunty Stone's influential interest in community affairs continued until her death in 1895.

Aunty Stone's niece, Elizabeth Keays Stratton, arrived in Fort Collins with her ten year old son in the spring of 1866, her husband having died in 1859. Her wedding to Harris Stratton in the year of her arrival was the first solemnized wedding ceremony in Fort Collins. No clergyman being available, Magistrate Jesse Sherwood officiated. Mrs. Stratton operated a private school in the Stone Hotel for her son and a few others.

FIRST MASS

Mrs. Stratton's schoolroom was the location for the first religious service ever held in Fort Collins. As closely as can be ascertained, Father Joseph Machebeuf, later to become the first Bishop of Denver, visited Fort Collins in 1866, and celebrated Mass in Mrs. Stratton's classroom. There appears to be some possibility that Mrs. Stratton may have been a Catholic. Father Machebeuf said Mass the following day on a farm owned by Henry Forbes. Masses were also said in the Michaud home, as well as in others. Father became a bishop in 1868, his jurisdiction being Colorado and Utah, and was appointed bishop of Denver in 1887. He died July 10, 1889.



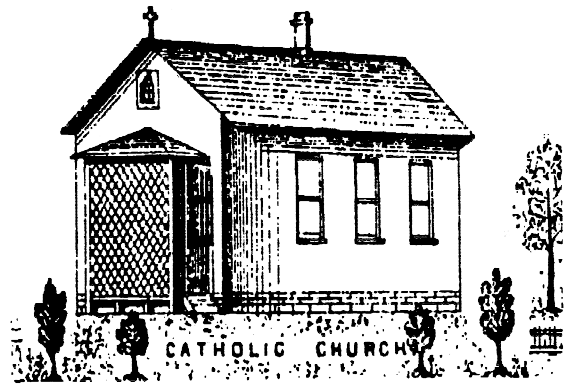
Bishop Machebeuf
1868-1889

The population of Fort Collins around 1880 was just over 1300. Bishop Machebeuf returned to the city in 1878 to say Mass in what was known as the Old Grout Building, at Linden and Jefferson Streets. This two-story structure was constructed in 1865, and contained a large hall which was used for Sunday school, theater performances, lectures, dances and church services. The architect was Harris Stratton.

- PURCHASE OF ORIGINAL CHURCH

During his visit in 1878 Bishop Machebeuf authorized Frank Michaud to purchase the first public school building in Fort Collins, built in 1870, for the purpose of converting it into a church. The location was 115 Riverside and the purchase price was \$400. The school house-church-home still stands today, though the addition of a screened-in porch trimmed with a cloverleaf design in the wood, the changed windows, and a different exterior finish made it quite unlike the original simple structure. The transfer of title was made on January 6, 1879, and the deed reads in part:

"...the following described lots or parcels of land, situate, lying, and being in the County of Larimer and State of Colorado, to-wit: Lots three (3), four (4), five (5), And six (6) in Block one hundred fifty-one (151) in the town of Fort Collins, According to a plat of said town filed in the office of the Recorder of Deeds, etc. ..."



Sketch of first church from
"Fort Collins Yesterdays"



Photo of first church taken in 2004

Mr. W.J. Prednergast along with Mr. Michaud held part of the land until approximately 1881, when all of the property was turned over to Bishop Machebeuf. The school was used as a church until 1900.

Fort Collins continued to grow during this period. John L. Routt, after whom a national forest in Colorado is named, was governor of the state at the time the schoolhouse was purchased.

Frank Michaud's name was significant in the history of Larimer County, Fort Collins

and the Church. Born October 13, 1837 in Quebec he came to Colorado in 1857 and in 1871 arrived in Larimer County and Fort Collins to stay. On August 19, 1867 he married Aurella Paradis. Their four children were Joseph and Anna Michaud, Mrs. Helen Willox, and Mrs. Mary Bogard. Eleven years as road overseer and twenty years as school director manifested his interest in the public affairs of Fort Collins. Many of his descendants live in Fort Collins today.

FIRST PRIESTS

Between 1866 and 1878 the area was serviced by several priests as a Mission parish. Those priests were Fathers Raverdy, Robinson, McGrath and Rithmeyer. They came from Denver and celebrated Mass at LaPorte and at the homes of Catholics living west and north of Fort Collins, most frequently at the home of Frank Michaud. Prior to 1868 the area was part of the Santa Fe diocese. It was established as a Vicariate Apostolic in 1868 until 1887 when the Denver Diocese was established.

After the school was purchased and converted for church use, Bishop Machebeuf assigned Father Anthony J. Abel as its first pastor, in 1878. With his departure in 1880, Fathers J. W. Cummings and Aug. Navet served the parish from Boulder. Father Cummings officiated at the wedding of the parents of John Raymond Kissock, Canadian born John Kissock and Emma Sweeney on November 9, 1881. Emma was born in Clinton N.Y. in 1862 and attended convent schools in Vermont and New York. She was active in many Fort Collins women's organizations including the Altar and Rosary Society. A Father Raber also came to Fort Collins occasionally in 1880. The resident pastorate was re-established in 1883 with the assignment of Father J. LePage. He built a small brick house near the church, and also a temporary chapel at Greeley. The years 1884 and 1885 saw Fathers Patrick Gleason and Emblem here, and Father Peter Robinet was pastor from 1886 to 1891. Father Edward Downey, who was pastor after Father Robinet until 1892, fixed up an old residence in Longmont for a chapel. Longmont, Loveland, and Greeley were all missions of Fort Collins during these years.

The years 1892 to 1898 saw Father Robinet return as pastor. It was reported in a history account of Fort Collins that he was speaking in French at one hour and in German at another. Among his friends was the Bogard family. Mrs. Bogard was a daughter of Frank Michaud. Bert Bogard, when reminiscing with Father Reycraft in 1975, remembered his mother telling him that, when Father said Mass at the family farm, he would go out to the chicken coop after Mass to get some eggs. Unfortunately, it was his habit to put the eggs in his pockets as he gathered them, where they more often than not became broken. Bert's mother lived for 93 years at the same place.

Mrs. Esther Riddell related to Father Reycraft that she remembered attending Mass in the old, one-room church as a little girl, as also did John Raymond Kissock, mentioned earlier. Father Robinet officiated at the marriage of Mrs. Riddell's parents.

Father T. Volpe replaced Father Robinet as pastor for one year beginning in 1898, and in the following year a whole new era began for St. Joseph Parish with the appointment by Bishop Matz, Bishop Machebeuf's successor, of Father Guillaume



Bishop Matz
1889-1917

Joseph LaJeunesse as pastor. His appointment initiated a most progressive and prosperous period for the parish.

FATHER LAJEUNESSE



By 1900, the population of Fort Collins had grown to 3153, of whom less than a third were Catholic. The original location of the church on Riverside was not very good so Father LaJeunesse bought land at Mountain and Howes Streets, the present location of the parish, for a new church. Some parishioners opposed his plans, feeling that a new church would be too large and expensive.

Born, July 5, 1862 in St. Paul, Minnesota, Father LaJeunesse was reared near Montreal, Canada, and studied for the priesthood in that city. Archbishop Fabre of Montreal ordained him on July 25, 1889, and for the first six years of his priesthood he was assigned as chaplain to several Orders of Sisters and Brothers. In November of 1895, he arrived in Denver, serving as assistant pastor of the cathedral for eight months, and then being assigned as the first resident pastor at Lake City for two years and four months. He next spent five

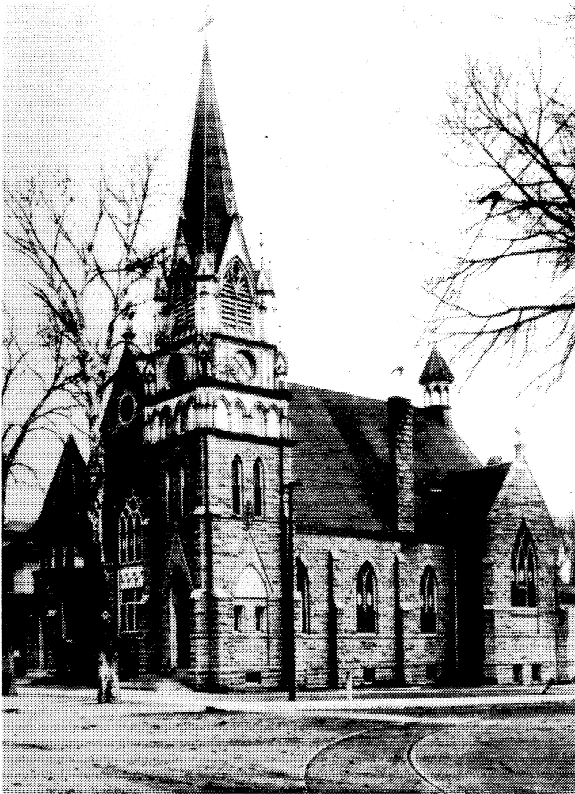
months in Gunnison, until on April 21, 1899 Bishop Matz sent him to St. Joseph. At that time the number of parishioners totaled about a thousand, and there were seventy-five children in religion classes.

- BUILDING OF NEW CHURCH

Work on the new church at Mountain and Howes began in 1900. There was a story in a local newspaper in February of 1947, as near as can be determined, recounting the history of St. Joseph that was presented to Father O'Sullivan, the current pastor at the time. It went like this:

"It was in the spring of 1899 that Father G. Joseph LaJeunesse came to St. Joseph's as pastor. A new church was his first goal. The smallness of the parish and the lack of funds failed to daunt him. He selected a site, but lacking money was forced to let the deal stand. One morning Father LaJeunesse was informed that he had until 4 o'clock that afternoon to raise the money or the land would be sold.

The priest immediately began a canvass of the parish and succeeded in obtaining part of the money. He then called on Mike Gardener and his wife, and told them of his need. He was greatly relieved when Mrs. Gardener said: 'We have the money in the trunk.' The old couple had no children, and Mrs. Gardener, being impressed with the young priest, said to him: 'I wish I had a son like you,' to which he replied, 'Well, you can adopt me.'"



Father Reycraft's 1975 historical account noted that Art Brookman, who was then a parishioner, worked as a stone mason on the renovation of the church in 1960, the original stone came from different quarries near Fort Collins. Part from the Stout quarry at the south end of Horsetooth Reservoir, another part from the Noney Frye quarry west of Dixon Canyon dam, and the rest from the Lamb quarry opposite Soldier Canyon dam on the west side of Horsetooth reservoir. Mr. Eugene Patrick Lamb, whose granddaughter is Kay (Glass) Quan and a member of the parish today, donated one hundred tons of stone to the church. The stone was transported by train and by teams of horses. It was all hard sandstone, buff and gray in color. The cornerstone of the new church was laid in 1900. It is not known at this time who painted the frescos nor who supplied the stained glass windows. Some parishioners

had opposed the idea of the new church as being too large and expensive. In the end it cost a grand total of \$12,000.

When the church was renovated in 1960, a metal container was found inside of the cornerstone, with a note reciting that Bishop Nicholas Matz of Denver laid the cornerstone on March 25, 1900. A Benedictine priest, Father Chrysostom,



delivered the principal address, and the names of Father LaJeunesse as pastor and of Frederick R. Baker as mayor of Fort Collins were also inscribed in the note. Bishop Matz also dedicated the church on August 4, 1901. Mrs. Riddell and Ray Kissock who were parishioners in 1975 both recall attending the dedication. Since the electrical installation in the church was incomplete at the time of the dedication, the light was

furnished by an oil lamp hung in each window and only about one-third of the pews had been installed. Father LaJeunesse established his residence in the sacristy at the northwest corner of the church.

A rectory adjoining the church on the west was built in 1908, and in succeeding years more property was acquired abutting on the church and rectory. Father Reycraft noted in his 1975 history that Leonard Verellen, a parishioner at the time, recalled that his wife's aunt was the housekeeper in the rectory when he came to Fort Collins in 1905.

Father LaJeunesse was a forward thinking individual with obvious charisma, business savvy and a true politician. In November of 1909 the parish held a church fair in order to raise money to reduce the parish debt. Musical programs were staged, as well as displays in booths wherein various items were sold. The city of Fort Collins has a slogan today – “Shop Fort Collins First”. In 1909 Father LaJeunesse wrote the following article for a flyer “Grand Catholic Church Fair” fundraiser to be held November 22-27 of that year entitled “Spend Your Money at Home”:

With very limited means I endeavored ten years ago to erect in Fort Collins a Church building which would be at once a joy to the Catholics and a credit to the city. It seemed impossible at first that the idea should materialize, but an appeal was made to our numerous non-Catholic friends, and their generous response, which is not yet forgotten, assured the realization of a fond hope.

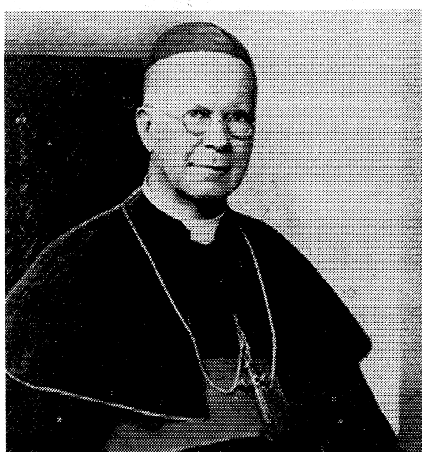
In erecting, two years ago, the present rectory, the finest in this diocese, I might have appeared extravagant, but I intended keeping apace with a growing town, and the public spirit which animated me, I trust, justifies my action in again appealing to the generosity of our friends in patronizing our Fair of 1909. In my opinion what advertises a town best is its public and business edifices. Can any stranger, for instance, be more favorably impressed with the wealth of this section of the country than by the sight of such buildings as the First National Bank or the State Mercantile? While expressing then my sincere thanks to the people of Fort Collins for past kindnesses, I feel confident that Thanksgiving week shall once more prove their appreciation of good will and entitle them to still more gratitude.”

Father LaJeunesse also built churches in Loveland and Greeley.



Mrs. May Williams told Father Reycraft in 1975 she recalled that, while driving to church one Sunday in 1917, she became involved in an accident, which damaged the front of her car considerably. She was quite worried and upset about it, but Father LaJeunesse invited her into the rectory, gave her coffee, and reassured her.

Mrs. Maryette (Sullivan) Williams was the youngest of ten children of Grace and William Sullivan. She recalled her mother, Grace, was the first convert to receive her First Communion the day St. Joseph Church had its first Service at Mountain and Howes. Maryette is an Alumni of St. Joseph Catholic School's second graduating class and remembered her brother, K.B., delivered milk from the Sullivan Dairy to St. Joseph rectory, school and convent for forty years. Her father William also helped haul rock for the facing of the basement of the church from Rist Canyon.



Bishop Tihen
1917-1931

Francis Kintzley, a parishioner today, recalls that Father LaJeunesse asked Mr. Avery, who owned the home on the west corner of the block, to donate money for a bell for the Church tower. Mr. Avery's response went something like this "...he would pay \$50.00 to not put in a bell." It is unclear when the bell in the Church tower was installed but it was a time later. Father Lajeunesse paid Francis \$1 per week to light the coal furnaces before Masses. Francis also remembers helping get coal from the railroad cars. He recalled a time when some parishioners paid pew rent. This would assure them of their place during Mass. The more affluent ones had soft padded kneelers. He remembers sitting in these pews when he thought the "renters" weren't

coming – and being asked to move when they arrived.

Another parishioner, Dorothy DeCicco, reminisced about living near the railroad tracks off North College. When her father died (she was nine years old), Father Lajeunesse was a great help to her mom and five children. Dorothy remembers they would hide in the cornfield because Father LaJeunesse would tease them and their cat. They all loved him.

- 1925 BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL

With the passage of time and the growth of the Catholic population, it became apparent that a parochial school was a necessity. Work on the school began in the spring of 1925. Some parishioners urged that it be located farther south, but the final decision was for the present location.

The school is of Spanish design, and was built under the direction of Leo Desjardins whose daughter Alvina was among the graduates from the class of 1931. The construction is wire-cut, rugged face brick, tan in color, with redstone trimming, and red

tile roof. The foundation is concrete and heavy steel. According to Art Brookman, the redstone came from Lamb's quarry, and it was cut at the church. The steps came from John Soderberg, who worked in a quarry. Redstone being too soft for the steps, a harder stone was acquired.



Bert Bogard, mentioned before, recalled that he and the rest of his family of seven helped in hauling brick from the railroad cars, and in digging a well at the southwest corner of the school. Mike Thiesen also helped with the school construction as a plumber's helper.

The cornerstone of the school was laid on August 23, 1925 by Archbishop John B. Pitaval of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Monsignor Hugh L. McMenamin, rector of the Cathedral in Denver, delivered the principal address. Built at a cost of \$66,000, the school was staffed by the Sisters of Loretto who lived in the school itself until their convent was built in 1955.



On August 27, 1926, Sisters Loretto McAuliffem, Agnita Barrett and DePazzi Rohan accompanied by Sister Aimee Hynes from Denver, were the first Sisters of Loretto to arrive in Fort Collins. They were met at the train station by Father LaJeunesse and taken to his residence for dinner. A few days later Sister Mildred Dollus, the superior, arrived.

The school opened on September 6, 1926 with an enrollment of 117. The parishioners were very pleased with the opening of the school.

At Christmas time the students entered a contest for a prize offered by St. Thomas Seminary in Denver, to the school which sold the greatest number of Christmas seals for the missions. St. Joseph School won after having sold almost 5000 seals. The prize was a statue of St. Joseph, which was placed in the Sisters' chapel.

On May 29, 1927 forty-seven of the children made their first communion.

The first graduation for the school came on June 12, 1927. Father LaJeunesse presented diplomas to eight graduates: Bernetta Sullivan, Loretto Baechler, Nora (Michaud) Hehn, Evelyn (Bishop) Kamm, Helen Mary Kintzley, Clara Michaud, Paul Deermine (and one unknown person). In the fall of 1927, the enrollment for the school was 110. Father LaJeunesse had married Nora Hehn's parents and baptized all their children. The Hehns' have always been active parishioners and have both priestly and religious vocations in their family.



A few years later, Sister Elvadine became the principal, according to Victor Gilsdorf, now deceased, who graduated from the school in 1935 with a class of about fourteen. Victor's family, which has lived in the parish

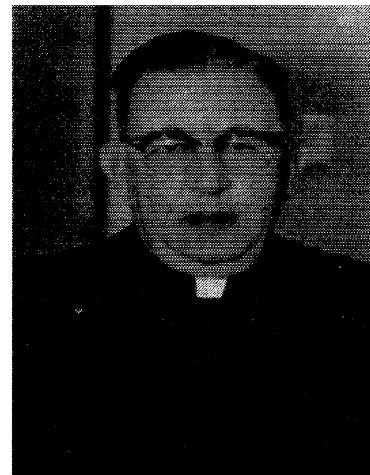
for some time, helped with the building of the school. His was the first class to graduate after attending all eight grades. In the same graduating class was Mary (Laumann) Schultz who is a parishioner today and whose daughter Linda graduated with the class of 1972.

Father LaJeunesse would later comment at a Knights of Columbus meeting in 1932 that he achieved the ambition of his life with the completion of St. Joseph School and hoped the doors would never be closed against any Catholic child because of finances.

- THE DEPRESSION

With the onset of the great depression, the parish as well as everyone else was affected. The average weekly collection for the church from July 1, 1932 up to June 30, 1933 amounted to approximately \$24 and this from a parish that included about 230 families. The Easter collection for 1932 came to \$456.65, and the Christmas collection the same year was \$513.70.

According to a parishioner, Mr. Wetzler, the Altar and Rosary Society kept the parish going with various projects throughout the depression. The Society staged card parties and other events to raise money.



Fr. John Wogan

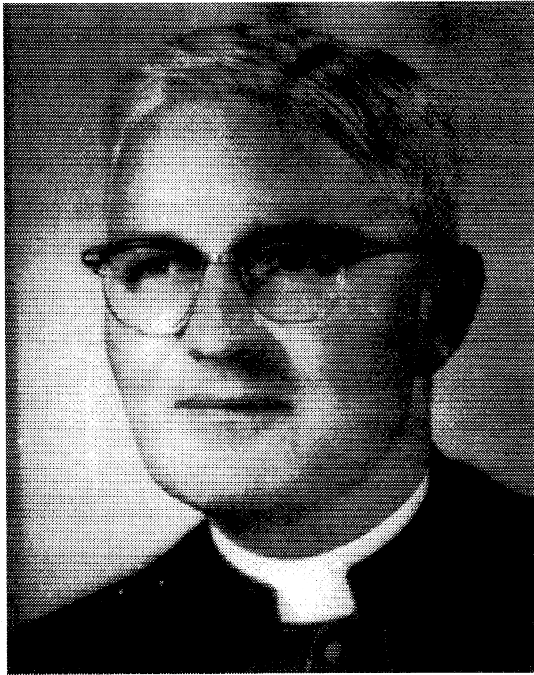
- DEATH OF FATHER LAJEUNESSE

In 1934, Father LaJeunesse marked the 35th anniversary of his pastorate at St. Joseph with a special Mass offered on the Feast of St. Joseph, March 19. About 300 parishioners gathered for the occasion, and the local newspaper, noting the occasion, commented,

“Despite his 71 years, he is in fairly good health, and at the present time is gaining in strength, after a recent operation.”

1934 also marked the appointment of Father LaJeunesse’s first assistant pastor in the person of Father John Wogan, who was appointed on January 6. He was ordained June 7, 1931, after studying at St. Thomas Seminary, Denver. Father LaJeunesse’s health began to fail in 1937, and on March 18 he was taken by ambulance to St. Joseph Hospital in Denver, where he died in May. Raymond Kissock remembered Father telling him that all he wanted for his funeral was for someone to just say three “Hail Marys” and mean them.

MONSIGNOR EUGENE O'SULLIVAN



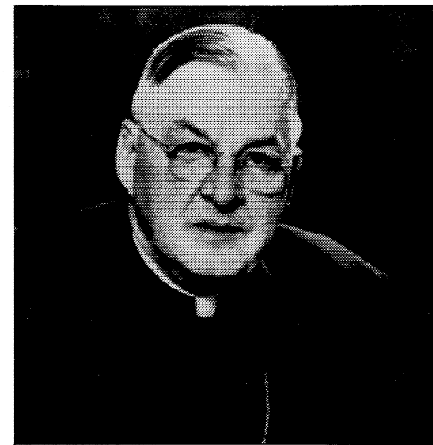
In October of 1935, Father (later Monsignor) Eugene O'Sullivan replaced Father Wogan and became the administrator of the parish. Archbishop Vehr appointed Father Leo Gales, O.S.M., as assistant. Until 1938, two Masses were offered in the church each Sunday, but because of the growing congregation, a third Sunday Mass was added that year. About 230 families comprised the parish, with a school enrollment of about 130, it having held steady since the opening of the school.

The church developed its own choir, as was noted by the local newspaper, shortly after 1938, during a Christmas season. Members of the choir included Mrs. William Thompson, Jr., Mrs. Russell Robinson, Mrs. Jane Rist Post, and Mrs. Maurice Miller,

who were all sopranos. The altos were Mrs. Randall Yates, Mrs. Preston Murphy, and Mrs. G.W. Tompkin. The tenor section was made up of Charles Post, Harry Falk, and James Robinson. Clarence Knuffke, Preston Murphy, Arthur Knuffke, and Charles Willox comprised the basses. Mrs. Fred J. Baines was the accompanist, and the Preston Murphy was the choir director.

Father John Cavanagh, who would later be pastor, addressed the 1940 graduating class of St. Joseph School, the largest class of graduates in the school's fifteen-year history – nine boys and seven girls. Father Cavanagh spoke on the education of children. After receiving their diplomas, the graduates had breakfast together. They were: John Clerkin, Walter Hammett, Paul Moyers, Bernard Robidoux, James Stadelman, Robert Olp, George Brooks, Albert Saracino, Frank Wehling, Catherine Powers, Arlene Speas, Patricia Murphy, Sadie Morris, Remola Setzer, Agnes Verellen and Bernice Orleans.

Archbishop Vehr visited Fort Collins occasionally to confirm the students in the school, as he did in 1947 when about 100 children and adults were confirmed.



Archbishop Vehr
1931-1967

Father Reycraft's historical accounting noted that Mrs. Coffin, a parishioner at the time,

recalled that the parish held a mission in the 1940's, and the priest who was conducting it had a question box for the use of the congregation. One question asked was "Do the Catholics think that they are the only ones who go to heaven?" Father replied by saying that a man died and went to heaven and St. Peter showed him around. He saw that there were many denominations there, and behind a fence was one group laughing and having a good time. St. Peter told the newcomer not to disturb them, because "they are Catholics and they think that they are the only ones here." Mrs. Coffin still finds the story quite amusing.

Arlene Ahlbrandt, a local historian, recalls her fondest memory of Father O'Sullivan is he would always play baseball with the children and how much they loved those times. She remembers that back then the boys played on the south side of the playground and the girls played on the north side.

- DEBT REDUCTION

During Monsignor O'Sullivan's pastorate, the parish debt was reduced considerably. In 1945, as a result of a fund-raising drive, \$31000 was raised and paid over a three-year period. Although it was \$3000 short of the goal, it was a tremendous effort. In 1948 Monsignor O'Sullivan directed the interior renovation of the church, enlarging the sanctuary, installing new confessionals and a new altar, improving the lighting system, and installing a wrought-iron communion rail and baptistery railing.



MONSIGNOR RICHARD DUFFY



That same year, Monsignor O'Sullivan was transferred to St. Vincent's Church in Denver as pastor, and Father Richard Duffy was assigned to replace him. He was born in Denver on August 1, 1910, and attended grade school at St. Dominic's. While in junior high school at Skinner, and senior high at North, Father Duffy held the highest elective offices in the student body. He entered St. Thomas Seminary in 1932, and was ordained in May 1940.

His initial assignment was to Holy Family Parish in Denver, and subsequently to St. Mary's Parish in Colorado Springs. In September of 1943, Father Duffy entered the Army Air Force, serving as chaplain until 1948. While in service, he was stationed at Sheppard Field, Texas, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Keesler Field, Mississippi, and in the Pacific Theater. He was discharged as a Captain, and upon returning to Denver was

assigned temporarily as chaplain at St. Joseph Hospital before being sent to St. Joseph Parish, Fort Collins. In 1958 he journeyed to Rome to witness the coronation of Pope John XXIII. On February 14, 1960 Father Duffy was given the title of Monsignor.

- 1950 DOUBLE JUBILEE CELEBRATION

The year 1950 witnessed the celebration of a double jubilee, the fiftieth anniversary of the church, and the 25th anniversary of the school. Archbishop Vehr, the late Bishop Patrick McGovern, and Bishop Newell of Cheyenne were present for the anniversary Mass. The priests present for the occasion were Monsignor Duffy, who was the principal celebrant of the Mass, Monsignor Bernard Froegel, Father Edward Leyden, Father James Mahrer, Father Thomas McMahon, who was the assistant at St. Joseph at the time, Father John Fullana, assistant at Holy Family, Fort Collins. Monsignor Bernard Cullen, was the Master of Ceremonies at the Mass along with Mr. William Coming. Monsignor O'Sullivan, former pastor, delivered the sermon, and Father William Jones narrated the Mass over radio station KCOL.

Following the Mass, a luncheon was given for the visiting clergy in the Northern Hotel, and in the afternoon the Archbishop administered Confirmation. To conclude the day's observance, a dinner was given in the school hall, attended by civic leaders of Fort Collins. The Altar and Rosary Society, the P.T.A., and the Newman Club served the dinner. The toastmaster was Dr. A. D. Peck, and Rita and Bob Hammett on the organ furnished dinner music. There was also a flute solo by Mary Trierweiler accompanied by

Chardelle Hayward.

During the dinner, Pat Griffin, president of the Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce, Mr. H. L. Dotson, vice-president of Colorado A&M College, Dr. David Costello, representative of the parish organizations, and Mr. Claude Peay, district deputy of the Knights of Columbus addressed the gathering.

- 1954 SISTERS' CONVENT

From the opening of the school in 1925 until 1955, the Sisters of Loretto lived in a portion of the school building. It was in the latter year that a new convent was built and dedicated at a cost of \$100,000. Archbishop Vehr dedicated the building on March 12, 1955. Following that ceremony, the Sisters served a dinner for the Archbishop and for the priests from the area.



The furnishings of the convent included artistic Stations of the Cross done in Philippine mahogany to match the chapel paneling, with bronze plaques portraying the Way of the Cross, and individual chapel priedieus and chairs for the Sisters, and a wooden crucifix from Einsiedeln, Germany. Monetary gifts from St. Joseph Altar and Rosary Society paid for the chapel furnishings. Mrs. Josephine Grant was then president of the society.

One modern feature of the convent was its sun deck, located on the second floor, and equipped with outdoor furniture. The second floor also included private rooms for ten sisters, and an infirmary. The ground floor had quarters for a housekeeper, a kitchen, a pantry, dining room, an office, a parlor and a large community room. The basement included music rooms, several storage rooms, a laundry, and a recreation room.

Construction of the convent required ten months, with John K. Monroe as the architect. The contractors were Frank Homolka and the Rogers Plumbing and Heating Company, both of Fort Collins. When the sisters moved into the new building, three more classrooms were made available in the school. In later years, after the Sisters left Fort Collins, the building would be used for offices known as the Parish Center.

- 1959 FUND DRIVE

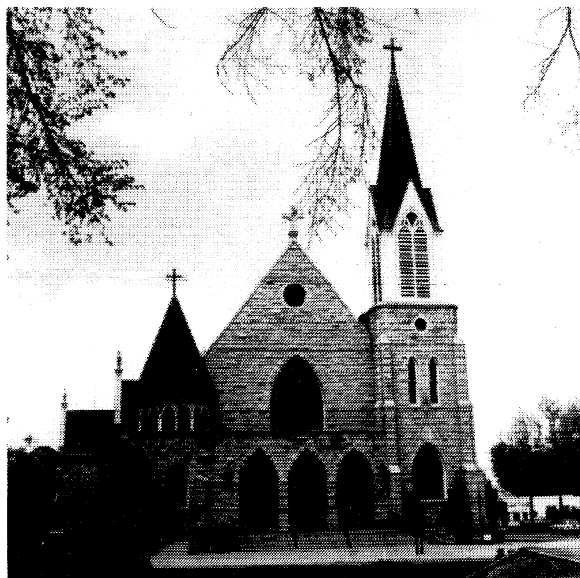
Within a very few years, it became apparent that the church simply was not large enough to accommodate the growing congregation. As a result, an extensive renovation and

expansion project was undertaken. The expansion and remodeling of St. Joseph church was made possible by a six-week fund drive begun on April 12, 1959. Monsignor Duffy announced a goal of \$125,000, and 216 men answered his appeal for volunteers. The director of the campaign was Ed Murray of Community Counsel Service of New York. By the first part of May, the drive was reported to be \$2000 short of its goal, and at the final meeting on May 18, it was announced that a total of 353 pledges for \$150,000 had been received, with \$19,000 of that in cash. A continuation committee was formed to insure success of the campaign over a two and a half-year period.

A memorial plan provided for the inscription on a bronze plaque with the names of donors. Mrs. Sterling Brechtel, president of the Altar and Rosary Society, announced that the society would pledge \$10,000 toward the building program. Monsignor David Maloney, later auxiliary bishop of Denver, did the ground breaking for the renovation on September 27, 1959. The morning Masses on September 28 were the last in the old church.

- 1960 REMODELING OF THE CHURCH

At a cost of approximately \$300,000 the church was remodeled and enlarged to double the original capacity. Archbishop Vehr dedicated the newly remodeled church on April 27, 1960. Along with Monsignor Duffy, Monsignor Eugene O'Sullivan offered Mass for the occasion. Father Thomas McMahon, former assistant and, at this time, pastor of St. Francis Parish in Castle Rock, served as the deacon, and Father John Meyer from Rawlins, Wyoming, was the subdeacon. Right Reverend Monsignor Walter Canavan, rector of the Denver cathedral, gave the homily. The Master of Ceremonies was Father Charles Brown,



assistant pastor of St. Joseph, and chaplains for the archbishop included Very Reverend George Evans, assistant chancellor, Fathers John Danagher, C.M., Francis Gaydos, C.M., and John Vidal, C.M., all of St. Thomas Seminary, Denver.

About 10,000 square feet were added to the church, and the seating capacity was raised from 300 to about 700. A basement was also excavated, providing an auditorium, rest rooms, kitchen, and furnace room. The new stone for the addition came from Masonville, across the mountain from the Stout quarries. Some was also taken from Charley Weaver's quarry, and the Don Chance quarry at the mouth of Missouri canyon. The stone could not perfectly match the old, because Horsetooth reservoir had been constructed in the meantime, drowning the old quarries. The sandblasting of the new stone by Frank Saracino made it more closely match the old stone. Art Brookman and

Lon Ingram cut the stone crosses on the gable.

The main steeple was repaired and smaller steeples were put in on the east and west sides of the new addition. One entrance was closed off, and a new center entrance and doorways were constructed. Two rear entrances were also added.



The Santa Fe Studios of Church Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico Fe, supplied new interior furnishings. The reredos, the ornamental wall behind the altar, is in colorosa pink travertine accented with a bright bronze border. The center of the reredos displays a thirteen-foot statue of St. Joseph in his role as foster-father of Jesus. He has his hands on the

shoulders of Christ. An artist from the Italian Tyrol carved the image. Two columns flank the marble to give depth to the reredos enclosure. Wood paneling is used in the sanctuary, and above the reredos hangs a large canopy of satin copper.

The main altar, which is no longer in use, is eleven feet long and three feet in depth. It is a combination of colorosa pink travertine and Botticino marble, with bronze plaques displaying symbols of the Passion of Christ on the lower front face. These were later replaced with bronze floral plaques. The tabernacle was incased in Botticino marble. It is now used when we have Masses on special occasions in the school gymnasium. The marble and copper crucifix attached to the tabernacle was six feet high and had a three-foot body of ivory and silver. The candlesticks had bronze bases and babeches. These were replaced at a later point in time with six bronze candlesticks and matching crucifix.

Two side altars, of the same style as the main altar, were installed. The hand-carved statues of the Sacred Heart and Our Lady match the statue of St. Joseph and the Christ Child on the main altar. Each also has a small copper canopy. The wrought iron communion rail was retained, but finished in light ivory, with slabs of colorosa marble placed between the posts and a tabletop of Botticino marble was installed. The communion rail has seen many changes as individual Pastors had different visions and interpretations of the changes that took place during Vatican II. At one point in the early 1980's, the railing was removed. However sections of it were replaced in the late 1990's.

The sanctuary floor and altar steps are also of Botticino marble, and the risers of the steps are in colorosa pink. The pulpit is of the same type of marble, with copper and bronze ornamentation, and a bronze Chi-Rho on the front. Thelma Phiher recalls Monsignor Duffy being most upset when a hole had to be drilled into the marble for a cord for a microphone. Botticino marble also made up the baptismal font with the four angels

carved in wood and gilded on its sides. The domed lid had three steps, with a descending dove mounted on the top. This used to be in the Baptistry room in the west vestibule of the church, but that area is now used as a confessional and a new baptismal font is located in the Sanctuary on the east side of the main altar.

The Stations of the Cross, carved in free form, are gilded. All flesh tones are in ivory, and the garments of Christ are in antique silver. Full figure medallions are featured in the stained glass windows, which portray some of the mysteries of the rosary.

Other furnishings included a marble sedilia, a set of three seats for the use of the clergy when not officiating, a bronze and marble credence table and sanctuary lamp. These furnishings used in the worship space have since been replaced by oak chairs and tables crafted by Sterling Brechtel, a long time member of the parish. The pews are of native oak, and the main floor of the church is of terrazzo, small chips of marble set in cement and polished. The six concrete columns supporting the ceiling are overlaid with marble. A complete new sound and lighting system were installed, and heating is by warm air, with ducts included for future air-conditioning, which was installed in the late 1990's. The architect for the remodeling project was William B. Robb, and the general contractor was Floyd R. Lock, both of Fort Collins. William Robb would be the architect on the construction and remodeling projects throughout many years. He and his wife Eleanor were very active in the parish and all their children attended St. Joseph School.

Bishop Hubert Newell of Cheyenne, assisted by Monsignor Duffy and Father Brown, officiated at the formal cornerstone laying, which was a re-enactment of the one performed by Bishop Nicholas Matz and Father LaJeunesse on March 25, 1900. Bishop Newell blessed the stone and poured the first scoop of cement before the stone was permanently placed in position at the front of the church. An honor guard of Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus representing Fort Collins, Boulder, and Longmont, along with a large group of parishioners, witnessed the event.

Bishop Newell congratulated the people of St. Joseph Parish for their work and the growth of the previous sixty years, and wished them further growth. Following the ceremony, the Knights of Columbus Honor Guard and the parish Boy Scouts led a procession to St. Joseph School gymnasium where Mass had been celebrated during the reconstruction. Bishop Newell then celebrated a Mass in honor of the annual men's corporate communion. After the Mass, there was a breakfast at Ladd's Covered Wagon, attended by about 350 men. The guest speaker was Bishop Newell, and other guests included local civic leaders and business and professional people from Colorado and Wyoming. Clifford E. Sherwood, past grand knight of Council 1214 in Fort Collins, was the master of ceremonies, and women of the parish helped serve the breakfast. Bishop Newell spoke on the importance of Catholic men as representatives of the church.

Thelma Phifer remembers that before the renovation and during the construction, masses were said every hour on the hour from 6:00 am until 11:00 am. The church was packed at every mass except the 6:00 and 11:00 am ones. She recalls the first mass in the newly

remodeled church was on Christmas 1959 and the eagerness of all the parishioners to see the new church. Her family was 'awed' at the sight.

The music for the Mass of dedication was composed by Gregory Bueche, who was the head of the Music Department at Colorado State University, and the year 1960 marked his twenty-fifth anniversary in that office. A special choir, with members drawn from the faculty and the university choirs was directed by Professor Edward Anderson of the university's music staff. The university string ensemble under the direction of Professor Will Schwartz provided the accompaniment. Dr Marvin Bostrom played the organ.

At the dedication dinner, Mr. and Mrs. Harley H. Hale, parishioners of St. Joseph, celebrated their sixtieth wedding anniversary, by presenting a \$1000 check to Monsignor Duffy. Mr. Hale was a past grand knight of the Knights of Columbus, and his wife was a leader in the Altar and Rosary Society. Both were active in supporting the Newman Club.

Previous to the dedication ceremony, an open house of the remodeled church was held on Sunday afternoon, April 16. Along with Monsignor Duffy and Father Brown, the Knights of Columbus served as ushers and guides. About 2,000 people attended, including six groups from other churches in town. The church furnishings were explained, as well as the purpose and function of the confessionals, sacristy, sanctuary, vestments, and vessels.

- 1965 SCHOOL ADDITION

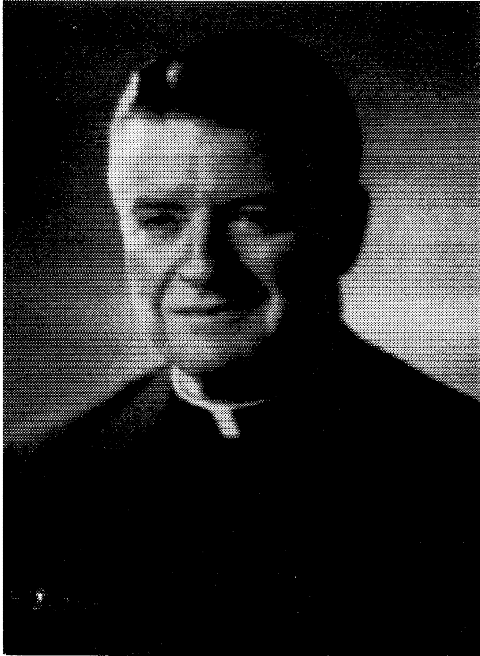
The school enrollment had grown over the last fifteen years from 181 students in 1949 being taught by six Sisters. In 1965 a decision was made to add classrooms and a new gymnasium to accommodate the current enrollment and provide for future growth. Four classrooms and a new gymnasium were added to the



south side of the building and the 1925 gymnasium was remodeled into classrooms and a cafeteria. William Robb was selected as the architect and Frank Johnson, Inc. was the contractor. This relieved the crowded situation and provided for anticipated growth. This addition was completed at a cost of approximately \$350,000.

When school opened in the fall of 1966 it had eight grades and 300 students. Over the next ten to twelve years the enrollment and number of grades taught would fluctuate. In addition, the Sisters would leave St. Joseph and lay teachers were hired for the first time. The first lay principal was hired in 1976 and school tuition had increased from \$100 in 1974 to \$250 in 1979 to \$300 in 1980. For some time prior to 1974 students paid book fees only.

MONSIGNOR JOHN CAVANAGH



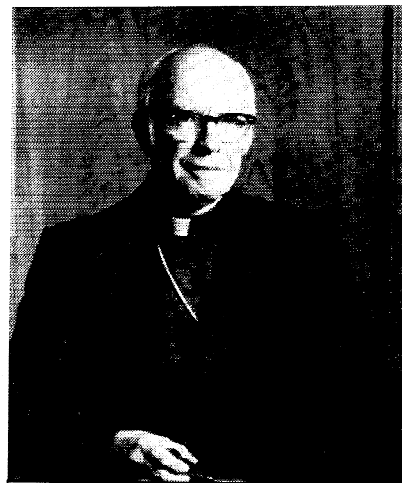
In 1967, Monsignor John Cavanagh replaced Monsignor Duffy. After ordination in June 1936, Monsignor Cavanagh was assigned to the *Denver Catholic Register*, where he played a prominent role as managing editor from the 1940's until he came to St. Joseph.

Along with those duties, Monsignor worked and lived at Holy Ghost Church in downtown Denver. He was the chaplain to the State Press Association. His duties at Holy Ghost also included working with the youth, the Working Men's Club, and with convert instructions. Monsignor Cavanagh suffered a heart attack and doctors would not allow him to return to the Register. He had never been a pastor and was very unhappy to not return to the Register.

Upon his arrival at St. Joseph, no one was at home in the rectory or convent, so Monsignor was locked out. He found an open window in the rectory and climbed in. He was only at St. Joseph a short time when he said he had found his home and his family – the parish.

He devoted much of his time to the sick and elderly of the parish, and to convert instruction. The Parish Council was organized under his guidance, and the parish debt was eliminated.

Under Monsignor Cavanagh, the parish served a mission church, Our Lady of the Lakes, at Red Feather Lakes about forty-five miles northwest of Fort Collins. The mission is open only during the summer months. Many tourists and campers attend Mass there on Saturday afternoons. This mission church continues to operate during the summer months today staffed by the priests from St. Joseph Parish and occasionally hosts a wedding. Prior to moving to Fort Collins from Red Feather, Leo and Jerri Thyfault did most of the maintenance to keep the chapel beautiful and sparkling. It was renovated in 1998. The upkeep continues to be faithfully supported by John Maloney. Charlie Hehn and Bill Volesky contributed their labor and expertise to restore the altar, install new carpet, roof and renovate the kneelers. Thanks to these three and their volunteers the mountain chapel remains a



Archbishop Casey
1967-1986

favorite place for many to worship during the summer months.

- 1979 RECTORY AND PARISH CENTER

In August of 1979, since the Sisters of Loretto had left the parish, a decision was made to convert the Convent to offices. Modifications to the Church were made to expand the choir loft and add two cry rooms in front of the vestibule of the Church. These renovations are estimated to have cost \$85,000.



In November of 1979 Monsignor initiated the building of a new rectory. The rectory built in 1908 was torn down. It is unclear exactly when the church acquired the home west of the rectory, but the Church donated this home to the city. The city then paid for the cost of moving it. It was relocated to the corner of Cherry and Wood Streets where it is occupied today. The cost for this project was approximately \$215,400. The architect was Robb and Brenner Inc. with The Neenan Company serving as the contractor for both of the 1979 renovation projects.

Kay Quan relates a story from her brother, a parishioner at the time, John Glass Sr., about this fellow riding a horse on his property. John ordered him off until he recognized it was Monsignor. Horseback riding was Monsignor's favorite pastime. John then invited him in to dinner. Monsignor said he would come back another time. And he did, but he came one evening unannounced and partook of a meager meal with John and Joyce and their seven children.

Thelma Phifer recalls Monsignor often spoke of the parish bookkeeper, Fran Miller and tax advisor Warren G. Lybarger – he could double their pay and it still would be nothing.

Monsignor's health failed and he was made "in residence" in 1981 at St. Joseph until his death on July 5 1983.

FATHER THOMAS WOERTH



Father Woerth was a native of Sioux City, Iowa and graduated from Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. He also attended and received a master's degree from the University of Colorado, Boulder and St. Thomas, Denver. He was ordained May 28, 1966 in Denver. Archbishop Casey assigned Father Woerth to St. Joseph in June of 1981. Prior to then he was the Vicar for Family Youth and Educational services for the Archdiocese of Denver. During this time he initiated the marriage prep program for the Archdiocese of Denver. It utilizes married couples to work with engaged couples and integrates the Engaged Couples Inventory that is still used today. This pre-marriage model remains in use nationally by Catholics

and non-Catholics today. He introduced this FOCCUS program at St. Joseph Parish and also introduced a Wedding Coordinator ministry. He and Belle Benzel developed this ministry at St. Joseph Parish that today has six coordinators. For ten years prior to his being named for Family Youth and Educational Services, he worked in Colorado Springs establishing seven myriad programs for high school and college age persons.

When he arrived at St. Joseph, the only office personnel were a secretary, bookkeeper and a part-time director of Religious Education. He had a vision of church that was alive and vibrant and was based on church service to parishioners and parishioner involvement and responsibility. He initiated many changes in the parish by hiring a staff consisting of a Youth Minister, Family Life Minister and an Administrative Assistant, Belle Benzel who today is the Coordinator of Services. He also hired St. Joseph's first Business Administrator, Ernie Armstrong, who later took a position with the Archdiocese of Denver.

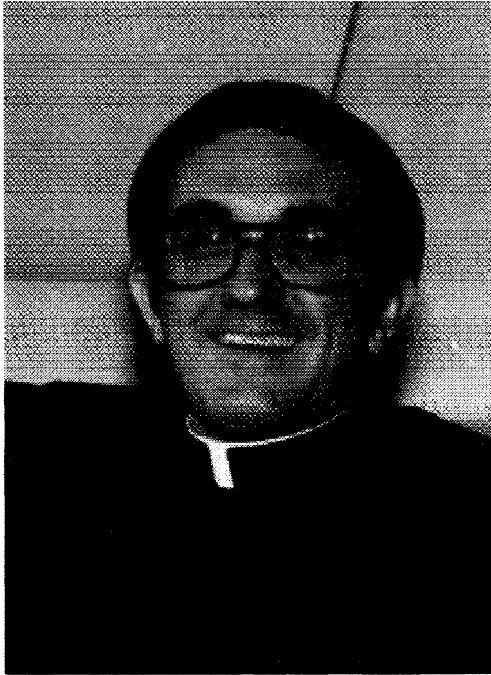
He strongly believed that the purpose of the parish was to serve the people and he set the stage for this to come about. He added a mass in the afternoon that drew large numbers of college students. He extended the parish office hours to 9:00 pm to make the Church more available to all people, including college age and working parishioners.

He initiated weekend retreats to provide all parishioners opportunities for faith sharing and community support. These weekends were referred to as Parish Renewal weekends.

It was in 1983 that people were selected to train in a national program titled Renew. This program would later be initiated for the entire parish. The format would be six-week segments of small group faith sharings followed by large group sharings.

This period was difficult for Catholic schools as more lay teachers were being hired to replace the religious who were moving into other areas of ministry in the Church. As a result the financial burden of the Church increased and under Father Woerth's pastorate a more realistic tuition process was initiated. Negotiations with parents were used as a means to attain financial responsibility.

FATHER ANTHONY BLISS



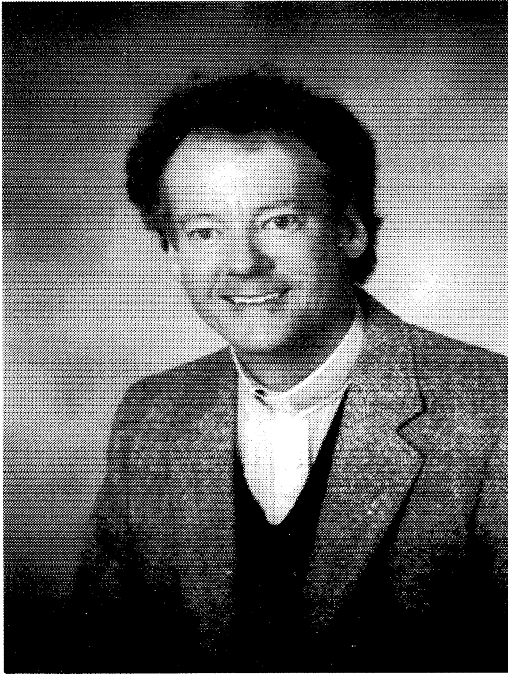
Father Bliss had a longtime connection with St. Joseph Church. He made his first communion here and had attended second grade at St. Joseph School. He attended St. Ambrose College in Davenport, Iowa. He then entered St. Thomas Seminary in Denver where he received a master's degree in Theology and was ordained in 1972. Prior to coming to St. Joseph in 1984, he was assistant pastor of St. Anthony's Church in Sterling from 1972 until 1975 when he became chaplain at Central Catholic High School in Denver. He became pastor of St. William's in 1978 in charge of missions at St. Nicholas' in Platteville, and Our Lady of Grace in Walsenburg. He was assigned to St. Joseph Parish by Archbishop Casey in 1984.

In his twelve years of service to the Denver Archdiocese, Father Bliss became well known for his work with youth. As a result of his association with Partners, he became the foster father to four sons during his six years in Fort Lupton. A quote was later printed in the January 1985 Denver Catholic Register ".... I'm not the only priest who has had a foster child. Jesus had a foster father ... I see the time I spend helping this foster child as time I'm spending serving my parish ... As a priest my calling is to be a caring person. I feel time spent with a kid is never wasted." Father Bliss died unexpectedly on December 19, 1984 at the early age of 39 of a brain aneurysm. Bishop George Evans presided at his memorial Mass at St. Joseph. The church was filled to overflowing with family, friends, parishioners, and supporters who were stunned in disbelief at the loss.

The Renew program was initiated during his pastorate and coordinated by Father Thomas Coyte (later pastor) and Gary and Jan Ross in the fall of 1984. The intent of Renew was to help people get to know and love Jesus by more clearly understanding the things he said and taught, and form small faith sharing communities. It was also intended to challenge the whole parish to new spiritual growth.

During his brief time at St. Joseph Parish, Father Bliss endeared himself in the hearts of his parishioners.

FATHER THOMAS COYTE



Archbishop Casey appointed Father Thomas Coyte pastor in January of 1985. He became pastor at a most difficult time for the parish after the untimely death of Father Bliss. His desire was to shepherd the community through their period of grief. St. Joseph Parish was Father Coyte's parish as a child. Born in Fort Collins, he was baptized in 1948, received his first communion in 1956 and was confirmed in 1958 - all at St. Joseph Church. He attended first through eighth grades at St. Joseph School and was taught by Srs. Olympia, Agnes Therese, Anna Marie and Mrs. Bertha Skitt among others.

He was influenced and encouraged by Father Charles Brown, a former assistant at St. Joseph to consider a priestly vocation. He spent one year at Notre Dame University, then returned to

Denver and entered St. Thomas Seminary where he received a master's degree in both Theology and Pastoral Theology and was ordained in 1974. He served as assistant at St. Philomena in Denver prior to entering full time deaf ministry. While still in the seminary, Father Coyte became involved with the deaf in Denver and Colorado Springs through a call from Archbishop Casey. He made regular trips to say Mass, hear confessions and minister to them. He continued that ministry during his pastorate at St. Joseph.

- HOSPITALITY KITCHEN

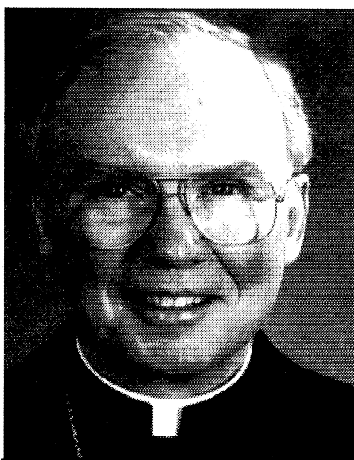
While at St. Joseph Father Coyte became acutely aware of the absence of facilities and programs to assist those in need of food and shelter. In 1983 Sister Mary Alice Murphy, O.L.V.M. while working for Catholic Charities Northern, asked Father Woerth for use of the School cafeteria to provide meals for the homeless. This meal program became known as the Soup Kitchen and was relocated later that summer to the Youth Room kitchen off the school gymnasium. During the winter of 1985, Colorado experienced a severe cold snap and Father Coyte left the Church open at night to provide a place for the homeless to seek shelter from the frigid weather. Recognizing the need for a better solution, he and Sister Mary Alice took the Soup Kitchen a step further and provided not only a hot meal but a place to sleep for the night as well. This became known as the Hospitality Kitchen with the school gymnasium providing the space for cots for sleeping. However, a long-term solution was still needed. He negotiated with Catholic Community Services/Northern to help staff the program and provided them office space on the second floor of the parish center gratis. Sister Mary Alice was a strong force in establishing "The Mission" in Fort Collins to accommodate the needs of the less fortunate in the

northern Colorado area. The Hospitality Kitchen was incorporated in the opening of The Mission in early 1989.

Father Coyte asked Sister Mary Alice for someone on staff to start a social justice committee. Jim Aldrich provided this service first as a student and later as a staff member. Father Coyte later hired Sister Mary Alice part time as Social Justice Coordinator at St. Joseph. She holds that position today and continues to passionately seek justice for all people. She has been instrumental in such affordable housing programs as Care Housing and Homelessness Prevention Program.

- 1987 ELEVATOR INSTALLED

Father Coyte was especially sensitive to the needs of the disabled, the elderly and the underprivileged. He sought funds to have an elevator installed in 1986. Architect Robb and Brenner drew the plans and Jerald Construction was selected as contractor. When completed, Archbishop Stafford dedicated it with a special Mass in January 1987. A short time later, Barbara Wree began providing transportation by bus to the nursing home and homebound residents to the Saturday afternoon mass. Through her efforts, many seniors have been able to enjoy weekend Mass, Christmas dinners and other social events. Father Coyte would later add a new sound system to the Church.



Archbishop Stafford
1986-1996

He began a grief ministry to offer support and encouragement to those who suffered the loss of a loved one. Today, that ministry is fulfilled through Stephen Ministers.

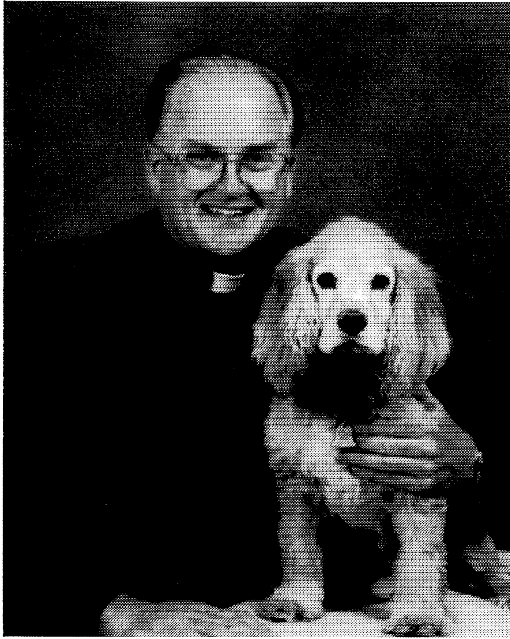
Father Coyte also initiated a Stewardship Program of Time, Talent and Treasure. This sacrificial giving program afforded the parish a means of budgeting and providing for future needs of the parish. This program continues today.

Easter of 1989 brought a new tradition to St. Joseph Parish. The church had for several years been unable to accommodate the crowds at the Christmas and Easter celebrations. Turning people away at the door seemed inhospitable. The parish hall was transformed that year to increase the number of masses on Easter Sunday. Belle Benzel and her volunteers setup an altar and decorated for Easter morning celebrations. This proved to be very successful and within two years it was moved to the school gymnasium to accommodate the ever-

increasing numbers. This is standard practice in the parish today with the gymnasium being decorated as joyfully and prayerfully as the church.

Feeling a strong desire to resume his deaf ministry full time, he requested a transfer to a Denver parish where he would be more available to the deaf community. Archbishop Stafford granted the request and in June of 1989 Father Coyte moved to Holy Cross Parish, Thornton.

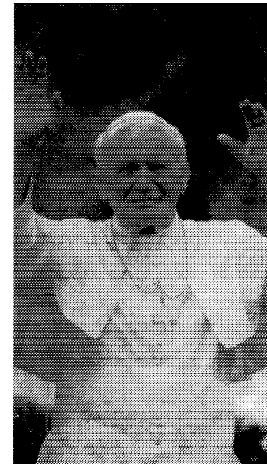
FATHER PHILIP MEREDITH



When Father Coyte returned to full time ministry to the deaf in 1989, Archbishop Stafford appointed Father Philip Meredith as his replacement. Father Meredith majored in Theology at St. Thomas Seminary in Denver. He was ordained in June of 1974 in the same class as Father Coyte. Prior to coming to St. Joseph, Father Meredith served as Assistant Pastor at Holy Family, Denver and St. Mary Parish, Englewood. He later served as Pastor at St. Anne, Grand Lake; St. Peter Kremmling and missions; St. Mary, Breckenridge; and Camp St. Malo as Executive Director. He was familiar with the parish since he had previously served as Assistant to Monsignor Cavanagh from 1979 to 1981.

- *WORLD YOUTH DAY*

In 1993 World Youth Day was held in Denver with Pope John Paul II visiting for three days. This was an exciting and energizing time for Catholics in Colorado and the US. Youth from all over the world came for the event. There were many Cardinals and Bishops present, many of whom traveled by bus with the youth from their parishes across the United States. There is an album at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Denver with pictures of the Pope's activities during that time, including a Mass with the U.S. Bishops that nearly filled the Cathedral. It was estimated there were at least 200,000 people in attendance in Denver for the three-day gathering. Various prayerful events were scheduled for the duration of the Pope's visit at Mile High Stadium, McNichols Arena and Colorado Convention Center.



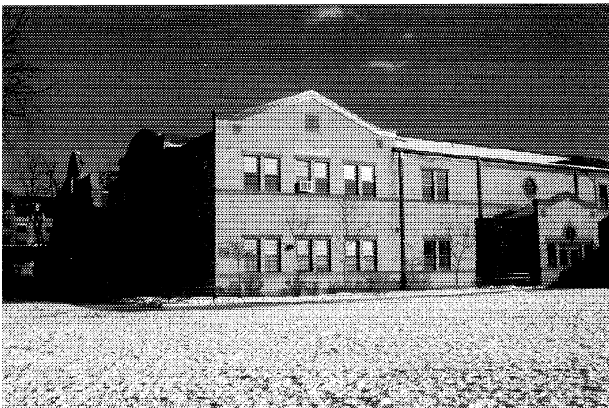
St. Joseph Parish had a very active role in the event with Belle Benzel accepting the Archdiocesan request of decorating McNichols Arena for the "Archdiocesan Welcome of the Pope" celebration. She remembers having to convince the

Secret Service she needed at least two people to help her decorate the stage for the event. She was finally given permission and together they had only thirty minutes to complete their task. It took much planning beforehand to accommodate the strict security restrictions with the Secret Service sweeping the area before and after, in addition to sweeping all items they used for decoration. Another request came from the Archdiocese three weeks prior to the Pope's arrival that she gather a team of volunteers and orchestrate the gathering of Junior High students at the Colorado Convention Center. As always, she accepted the assignment, gathered her team from St. Joseph Parish as only Belle can do, and proceeded to plan the coordination of the Liturgy provided by the Archdiocese. This was a special privilege as all other events were planned with multi-parish involvement. Belle, being the Archdiocesan Coordinator of Art and Environment, was undaunted by the task. Everyone, including the entire committee, was grateful and enriched by the powerful experience.

The closing Mass was held on Sunday at Cherry Creek Park in southwest Denver. Two large screens were utilized with speakers strategically placed so everyone could participate more fully. This Pope has had many World Youth Days during his papacy and Denver was honored to host this one. It was a day the youth, participants and people of Colorado will never forget.

- 1999 -2000 SCHOOL AND PARISH CENTER IMPROVEMENTS

Three years prior to the 1999 renovation, work began on the West entrance of the church and the back of the rectory. It was transformed into an outdoor gathering space complete with a Grotto and beautiful plantings. The space provides a patio setting for coffee and donuts during nice weather, or a grilling and picnic area for parishioners and groups to enjoy. It has become a favorite of photographers for wedding pictures also. In addition it served the much need function of providing proper drainage to that area. It was completed in May 1996.



In 1998 Father Meredith initiated a study to determine if a capital campaign would be successful to provide funds to enlarge the school and add Junior High grades seven, eight and nine. At this same time, the Archdiocese was conducting a study within the diocese to determine the need for Catholic High Schools. The response Father Meredith received from his study indicated the

parish believed strongly in Catholic education and a willingness to financially support it. The campaign was launched to raise \$2.25 million to help cover the costs of renovation and an addition to the existing building. Ric Hattman of Hattman Associates Architecture & Planning was selected as the architect and The Neenan Company was the contractor. The projected total cost was \$3.8 million. School let out one week early (and was scheduled to reconvene one week later than normal) to begin work on the significant expansion consisting of constructing a 19,350 square foot two story addition to the present school on the north side. The first floor houses the art, two fifth grades, two sixth grade classrooms, and the PE office in addition to other service areas. A new two-story entrance with a lobby and secretarial offices was added.



A fitting statue of St. Joseph the Worker donated by long time parishioners Wayne and Joann Dauguaard graces the loggia, the architecture that forms a setting for a sculpture to be placed, located on the school roof. You can view this from the Church parking lot looking north and toward the roof of the 1925 portion of the school. At this time the second floor of the parish center was also remodeled to include business offices and a conference room. This phase was complete with the extension to the parish center building connecting it with the school building.

The blessing of the new education center was held on February 6, 2000 beginning with Mass celebrated by Archbishop Daniel Kucera. A blessing ceremony was held on the west side of the new building followed by an open house and reception.

The second phase of renovation began in the spring of 2000. The second floor added in 1999 was completed to accommodate Junior High students and a modern Junior Science lab. These grades were introduced in consecutive years beginning with the seventh grade in the fall of 2000. This phase also included the major renovation and remodel of the original portion of the school, referred to as the 1925 building. The garden level of this building was raised and now accommodates two Kindergarten classrooms, enlarged cafeteria, upgraded kitchen and a state of the art teachers' lounge with computers. The employee lounge and storage facilities in the parish center were also part of this remodel.

The school has seen many changes through the years and continues to be a strong element in the parish. They offer superior education opportunities to the students and encourage parent involvement at all levels. Parents choose from areas of communications, educational enrichment, fundraisers, school support, special events and many, many more to volunteer their time. In 1983 parents volunteered as of October 14, 1983 365 ½ hours for that school year. In the present school year from August 2003 through May 2004, there will be an estimated 7,932 hours volunteered.

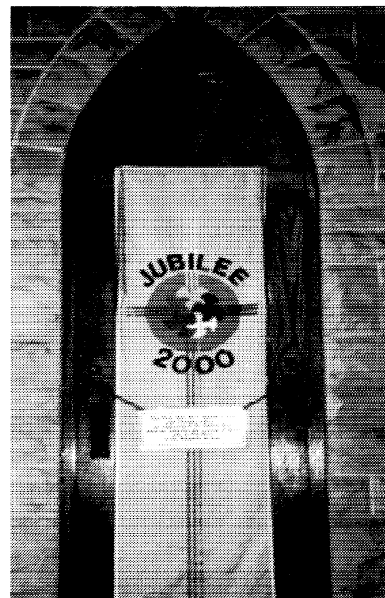
With Barbara Bullock as principal since 1984, the academic curricula at St. Joseph School conform to the International Baccalaureate program. The Iowa Test scores place it in the top 12% nationally among public and private schools combined. Second graders score on the same tests at a mid-year third grade level, but by the time students reach seventh grade they score at a mid-year twelfth grade level. The first graders on average read at a third grade level and seventh grade math is taught using eighth grade texts. For fifteen years St. Joseph students have dominated the essay competition sponsored by the Daughters of the American Revolution. St. Joseph School participates in many other regional and national academic competitions such as Odyssey of the Mind, Lego Robotics, Colorado Mathematics League, Math Bowl and Who Wants to be a College Millionaire.

The dedicated and stable faculty of certified teachers average fourteen years teaching experience and seven years at St. Joseph's alone. The students compete on fourteen teams in seven sports in the Northern Colorado Independent League comprised of nine schools and boast numerous first and second places team and individual finishes.

Diane Erickson introduced the idea of *SPIRIT*, a large fundraiser program in 2001. All the parents have to donate an item for an auction. Local businesses also donate items. The event is held in the school gymnasium with combined silent and live auctions. It is a gala affair with a sit-down dinner. It has been a one-night affair but in 2004 it was expanded to two nights in part due to its popularity. This has proven to be a most successful and entertaining endeavor that benefits the entire St. Joseph community.

- JUBILEE CELEBRATION

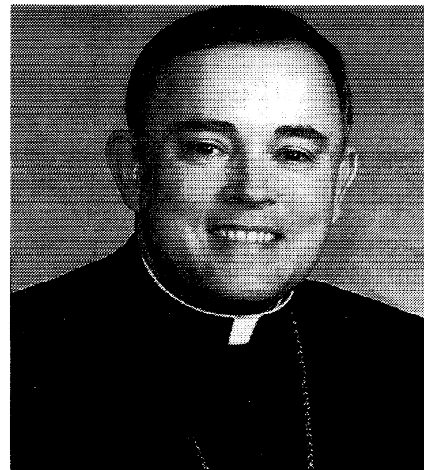
A year of Jubilee events was scheduled to celebrate the new millennium. Pope John Paul II opened the Holy Door in the Vatican Basilica of Saint Peter on Christmas Eve. This Holy Year Door had been used since the first Holy Year in 1350 to symbolize opening our hearts to Jesus Christ in a renewed way. St. Joseph Parish also designated one of their entrance doors on November 21, 1999 to be symbolically locked, blessed and reopened on Christmas Eve. Parishioners were encouraged to designate a domestic Holy Year Door in their homes to experience the Christian significance of the new millennium in the family setting. A Jubilee Door Hanger was made available to families to hang on this door as a reminder to open wide the doors to Christ. Other events included two series entitled "Catechetical School: Church History Part II" and "Catechetical School: Vatican II", a parish mission – Jubilee and Reconciliation, and the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday with a Social Justice theme.



During Father Meredith's pastorate the Benedictine Nuns relocated their Abbey of St. Walburga from Boulder to Virginia Dale, north of Fort Collins. St. Joseph Parish assisted the Sisters for a time by providing mass three days a week and the Knights of Columbus provided labor for some of the sisters' many needs during the construction of their new facility. The Abbey gives back to St. Joseph community by making retreats available at their facility and through their monastic prayer life. We are fortunate to have this serene facility so close to our parish.

Father Meredith continued to work with Sister Mary Alice Murphy who began an Emergency Assistance program for the poor that developed into a highly professional ministry of the parish. At the time Father Meredith was leaving there was the beginning of inter-church (all denominations) cooperation on emergency assistance and housing issues. He also hired Sister Joan Cain, S.C. as Director of the R.C.I.A. and adult education and Sister Vangie Spenner, O.S.F. who was the Director of Family Life and coordinated the marriage preparation program for the parish.

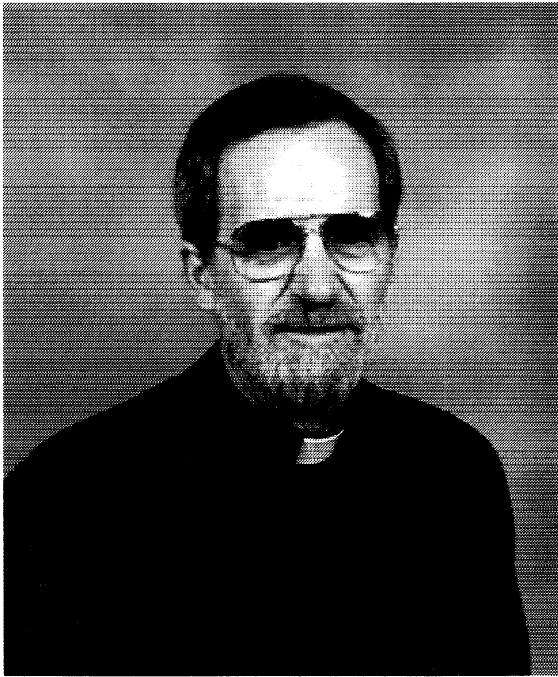
Father Meredith was most proud of the wonderful Adult Choir at St. Joseph. He supported and promoted it passionately during his pastorate. It is a rare privilege and honor to have the musical talent that the parish possesses through the leadership of Mary Lou Lybarger, longtime organist and music director for the parish, currently serving as Chairperson of the Archdiocesan Music Committee, Rick Miranda choir director, and the many cantors led by Douglas Wree. St. Joseph Parish has the distinction of having a parishioner, Joseph Clarke, who composed a mass he named Mass of the Archangels. The project took approximately eighteen months from conception to completion. He submitted it to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops for, and has received approval.



Archbishop Chaput
1996-

Father Meredith served at St. Joseph Parish for twelve years before being transferred to Denver. On leaving he was Pastor at All Souls in Englewood and in 2004 was assigned as Pastor at Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Denver.

FATHER DENNIS RYAN



Father Ryan grew up in Hutchinson, Kansas. He received his BA in Philosophy from St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota and finished his Seminary training in St. Louis, Missouri. He was ordained on March 26, 1966 in Wichita, Kansas where he served various parishes until 1979. He came to the Denver Archdiocese in 1979 and was assigned to Good Shepherd Parish until 1981. He then served St. James Parish for six months at which time he was assigned to St. Louis Parish until 1989. He was at Nativity of Our Lord in Broomfield until June of 2001 at which time he accepted the assignment here at St. Joseph Parish.

Father Ryan firmly believes in Catholic education and has enhanced religious education for children and adults at St.

Joseph Parish. He developed a Children's Liturgy at the 9:00 am Mass and teaches Religion to the eighth and ninth grades at St. Joseph School. He has an immense love of working with Junior High age children. In spite of his health challenges since coming to the parish, he has continued to teach them making for thirty-eight continuous years.

He also implemented the Stephen Ministry that is a nation-wide program developed to help with the spiritual and emotional needs of parishioners. Father Ryan feels a strong need to provide parish support to those in need.

COUNCILS PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONS

- PARISH COUNCIL

When the Second Vatican Council recommended that each parish have a parish council to assist the pastor in parish operations, St. Joseph's went to work on that project. The first meeting of the Council was held on October 23, 1968. Monsignor Cavanagh presided, and recommended that nominations for officers be submitted. Also, the following committees were established: Constitution, Youth, Education, Finance, Liturgy, Community Relations and Maintenance.

In the first election for President, Judge John Tobin and Fred Vogt tied; so they presided as co-chairmen until January 1969. At that time, the following officers were elected: President Fred Vogt, Vice-President John Tobin, Secretary Melba Powers, and Sergeant-at-Arms Lloyd Gomez. Some of the early presidents of the Parish Council were John Tobin in 1970, Howard Frisinger 1971-1972, Tim Phifer 1973-1974, and George Kress 1975. Evelyn French was the first woman president of this Council. She would tease Monsignor saying it was her vote and persuasion that got him his new rectory in 1979. Bob and Evelyn were the first to recruit, train and schedule Eucharistic Ministers and Lectors for the Liturgy Committee. They saw the ministry grow to over 200 members during their fifteen continuous years of dedicated service. Bob succeeded Jack Barrett as chairman of the Archbishop's Annual Campaign for Progress and remained in that position for thirteen years. He also served as the Archbishop's first president of the Northern Colorado AACP. Mic Moog replaced Bob French and after his term, the responsibility was taken over by the parish business office.

The council assisted Monsignor Cavanagh in many ways. The Education Committee, for example, did much good work under the chairmanship of Dr. Pat Jordan.

- FINANCE COUNCIL

Archbishop Stafford mandated that all parishes in the Archdiocese establish a Finance Council by June 30, 1989. This council was to operate separate from the Parish Council. It is comprised of people within the legal, banking, business, and accounting fields in addition to school council representatives. These individuals advise and assist the pastor in financial matters of the parish. They oversee and approve all parish programs and budgets.

- RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMS

St. Joseph's has traditionally taught religion to those who are not in the school. Sister Margaret Seton, Sister of Charity of Cincinnati, directed the CLP (Catholic Living Program) which utilized parish volunteers as teachers. Called by various names, this program included junior and senior high students. Later the RCIC (the Right of Christian Initiation for Children) was added, as was the RCIA (the Right of Christian Initiation for Adults) which developed from the old convert instruction classes. Religious Education is

also offered on Sunday mornings for school children of all ages not attending St. Joseph School.

- FAMILY LIFE

Family life encompasses parish nurses, funeral dinners, senior programs, marriage preparation and transportation to mass.

The parish nurses offer parishioners monthly blood pressure screenings, periodic cholesterol screenings, and foot care clinics. They provide programs to address end of life issues and support parishioners who have been hospitalized after their return home.

Funeral dinners are provided to anyone. This program relies on volunteers for food preparations and donations. It was coordinated by Bea Scovie for a number of years and is now the responsibility of Belle Benzel.

Senior programs include the Christmas dinner held each year. In addition, support to individuals in nursing homes and the homebound is provided by visitations and support. This program is coordinated by Barbara Wree with a group of dedicated volunteers.

The deacons meet with couples intending to marry and together they complete the marriage preparation program. Engaged couples weekends are also provided and are coordinated by Belle Benzel. In addition, Belle assists couples with their wedding planning and assigns a wedding coordinator for their wedding day.

Transportation to weekly mass is crucial for many of our nursing home and homebound parishioners. This has been coordinated faithfully by Barbara Wree since its inception in 1987 when the elevator was installed.

- HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

As Coordinator of Social Justice, Sister Mary Alice Murphy has initiated the Homelessness Prevention program at St. Joseph. Helping a family avoid homelessness is less expensive than the cost to society of assisting a family work its way out of homelessness. In 2002 the program raised \$61,000 through special offerings at 20 local churches and some small local grants that helped 229 families avoid homelessness. In 2003 the program goal was to raise \$75,000 from offerings between October and December through the collective efforts of the Fort Collins Interfaith Council and Urban Pastors Group. The Fort Collins Area United Way and VISTA-AmeriCorps donate administrative time to the program. Larimer County supplemented the funds as well. In 2003, 418 households were assisted with a total of \$96,978. There are a total of 22 Fort Collins churches working in unison on the Interfaith Council and 2004 promises to increase that number.

- *STEPHEN MINISTRY*

Stephen Ministry is one-on-one Christian care giving and was introduced at St. Joseph Parish in 2001 by Father Dennis Ryan. Stephen ministers receive over fifty hours of training that enables them to gently and lovingly guide persons faced with a great challenge in their life such as grief over loss of a loved one, a move, loss of a job or an illness. Stephen Ministers also receive support through parish supervision and continuing education in the various areas of human needs. Each minister journeys with one person in need in a confidential setting.

- *ORGANIZATIONS*

Over time, various organizations came into being to serve the needs of the congregation. The Holy Name Society for men was organized April 11, 1928. The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, whose purpose was the study of Christian teachings, was inaugurated January 1, 1936. The Columbian Squires, the young men's branch of the Knights of Columbus, were established June 16, 1938. Other groups included the Altar and Rosary Society, affiliated with the National Council of Catholic Women, the P.T.A., and the Newman Club at the college, the Catholic High School Students' Study Club, and the Catholic Welfare Bureau. Not all of these groups remain active today but made invaluable contributions to the parish community while they were active.

- *KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS*

The Knights of Columbus, an international men's fraternal organization, established Council 1214 in Fort Collins on April 6, 1924. Through the years the Knights have provided unselfish and untiring volunteer effort to the school, scouts and church, to mention a few. They have supported not only the St. Joseph community but also many other local and national organizations and charities as well. They have contributed monetarily to the formation and support of priests, Boys Town, the Red Cross, National Catholic Charities, and many others too numerous to mention.

- *LEGION OF MARY*

The Legion of Mary began its work in the parish on February 13, 1939. Mary, Help of Christians Praesidium meets in the Parish Center weekly. The good works performed by this Praesidium are helping Catholics attend Mass held in Columbine East Rest Home Facility monthly. In addition, monthly visits are made to Catholics in Poudre Valley Memorial Hospital, Catholic shut-ins and those in the area's rest homes. The Praesidium has Auxiliary members who say the daily rosary and Legion prayers. They are affiliated with the Mother of God Curia, meeting with other praesidium groups monthly at St. John the Evangelist in Loveland.

St. Joseph's Evening Legion of Mary, Our Mother of Perpetual Help, met for the first time January 14, 1986 with four members in attendance. This group came about as an outreach of RENEW. There are now ten active members who visit nursing homes, the hospital, the detention center and the homebound. They meet every Wednesday at

4:00 pm in the teacher's lounge of the school. Everyone is welcome.

The Legion of Mary members are committed to devotion to the Blessed Mother and dedicated to their various beautiful ministries.

- ROSARY GUILD

St. Dominic Rosary Guild was started in the spring of 1960. Louise Siefken and Dorothy Wombacher were charter members. The group has remained small in numbers but have made many thousands of rosaries that are sent to the missions.

- ALTAR AND ROSARY SOCIETY

In the early years of the parish and for a continuing number of years, the Altar and Rosary Society was very active at St. Joseph Parish. Many prominent women in Fort Collins were listed as members of this organization in historical news articles. Members paid monthly dues in addition to donating monies from bridge parties. These women were the early sacristans of the church being sure the church was clean, putting fresh linens on the altar, cleaning the priests' vestments and ensuring a proper supply of wine and hosts were available for upcoming Masses.

- COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC WOMEN

Many women gave their time to help maintain the church. The Council of Catholic Women assisted the parish in fund raising programs years ago, when times were difficult. The women who made it up devoted many hours to help keep the church clean.

- CHRISTMAS TREE LANE

Reggie Cram, along with several ladies in the parish, began a weekly craft workshop, in part to form a strong community, foster friendships and be a support to each other. Around 1969 this workshop progressed to an annual bazaar. The bazaar, held after Thanksgiving, was always one of the most popular in the city. Many years, there would be a preview only on Friday night. Saturday morning would bring extremely long lines of people anxious to purchase their favorite items viewed the night before. The money earned from the bazaars helped the parish pay for several items including a new front altar of marble and helped reduce the interest on the school debit. Significant contributions went toward the purchase of a pipe organ for the church, the elevator, roof maintenance on the church and remodeling of the parish hall among many others. This tradition continued for many years thanks to the many volunteers and contributors.

- MARY'S CLOSET

Mary's Closet had its beginning as the result of a promise made to the Blessed Mother by Jan Cory. Jan had asked the Blessed Mother to grant her a particular favor, and in return Jan would open a clothing bank. Jan's favor was obviously granted and Jan found herself in a position as President of the Parish Council to make good on her promise. In 1977 Jan asked Donna Beard, who in turn asked Diane Hecker, if she would be willing to pursue the endeavor. Together the two women set up a location on the second floor of the original Service Center on Mountain Avenue (the building later relocated by the city to Cherry and Wood Streets) to distribute clothes to the needy. The donations came not only from parishioners, but also from the community at large. In the beginning they also distributed some food items but this portion was soon taken over by other food distribution agencies. When the Convent on Howes was converted to parish offices, Mary's Closet moved to the basement room on the south end of the building where it remains today.

This ministry serves the homeless, the working poor - many of whom speak little or no English, and people released from jail who need something proper to wear as they search for work. Anyone who needs clothes is welcome to shop the closet at no charge. Mrs. Beard and Mrs. Hecker were both honored with the "Outstanding Volunteer" award from Catholic Charities in September of 2003, which they accepted on behalf of their countless dedicated volunteers over the years. This humble and worthwhile ministry has clothed and assisted untold numbers of people over the last 27 years. In 2003 the figures reflect 10,522 families were assisted, with 33,512 people in total receiving 65,116 clothing items and 2,310 household items.

ASSISTANTS AND PAROCHIAL VICARS

St. Joseph Parish has been blessed not only with its many pastors but with the dedicated assistants as well. The names of these assistants can be found in the timeline in this parish history. These priests not only supported their pastors but made significant contributions to the parish. It is impossible to know the extent of these contributions but it can be assumed they participated fully in the events during their time as assistants at St. Joseph Parish. It is certain they endeared themselves in the hearts of their parishioners while doing the work of God.



Fr. Doran 1941-1942



Fr. Flynn 1943-1947



Fr. Breen 1947-1948



Fr. Theobald 1948-1949



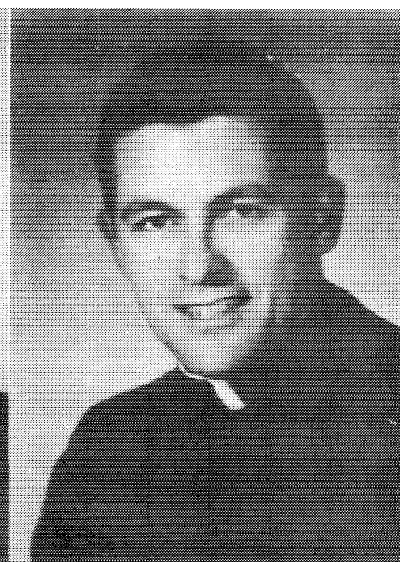
Fr. McMahon 1950-1958



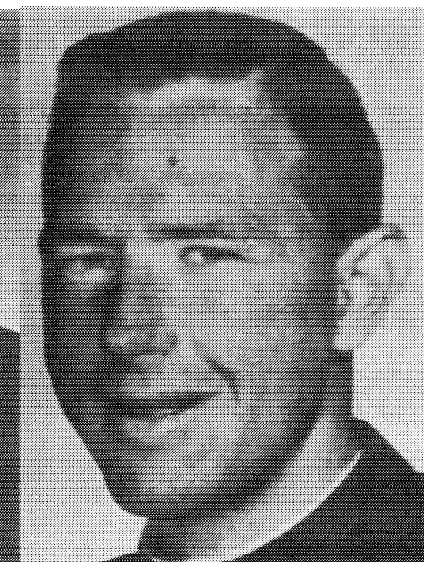
Fr. Brown 1958-1970



Fr. Pettit 1967-1968



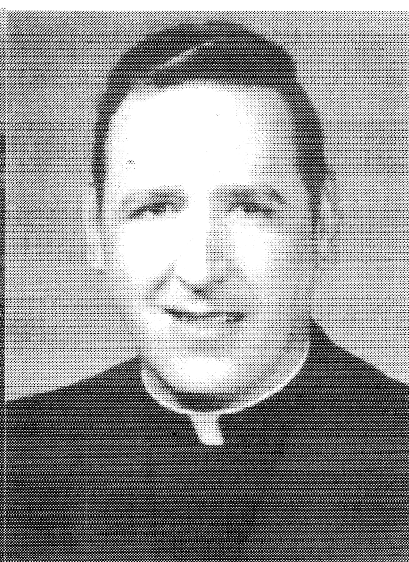
Fr. Brin 1968-1970



Fr. Delaney 1970-1971



Fr. McGrath 1970-1972



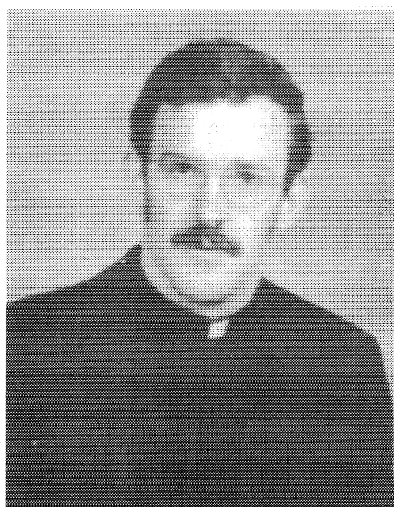
Fr. Koehler 1972-1975



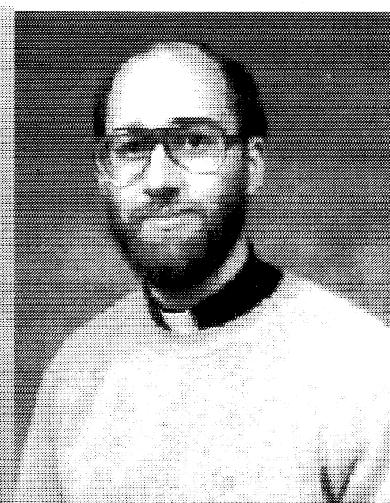
Fr. Hanna, S.J. 1974-1975



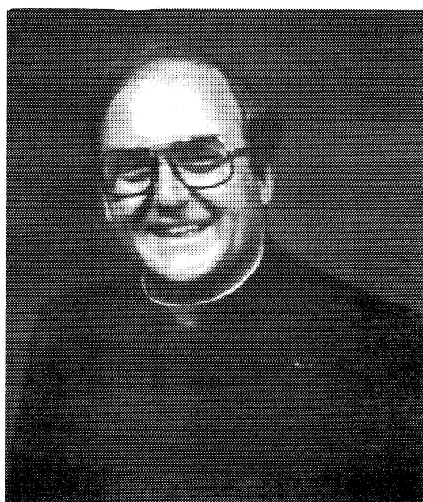
Fr. Freeman 1975-1976



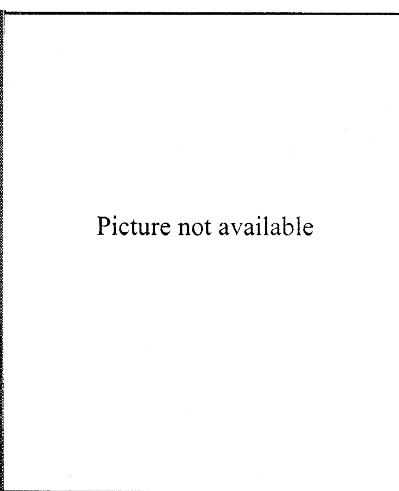
Fr. Reycraft 1975-1978



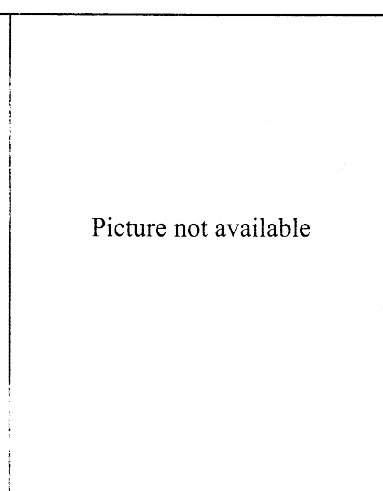
Fr. Fryar 1978



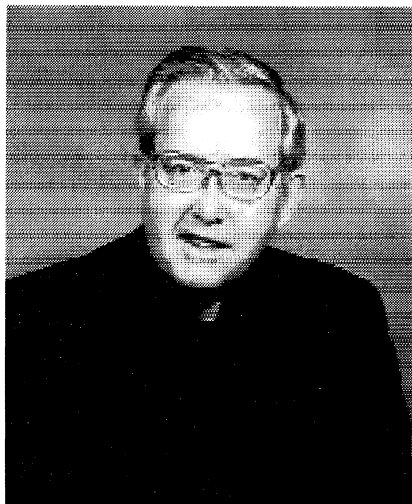
Fr. Meredith 1979



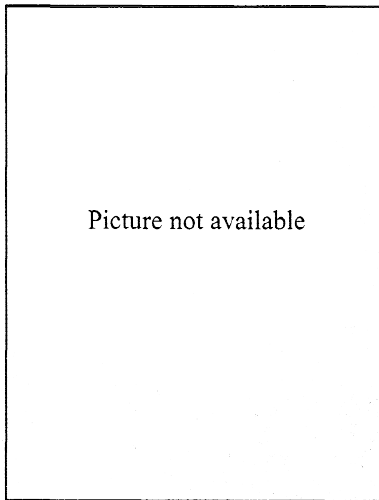
Fr. Watson 1981



Fr. Schwartz 1982



Fr. Sobiesczyk 1983



Picture not available

Fr. O'Shea 1983



Fr. Coyte 1984



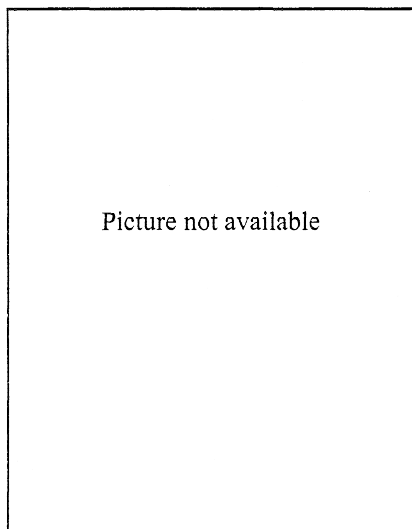
Fr. Morgan 1984



Fr. Moran 1985

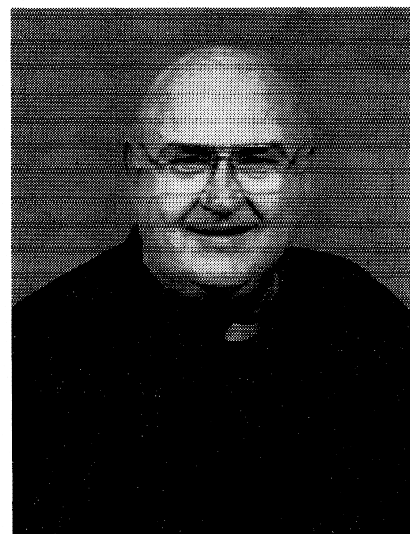


Fr. Jayachandra 1987



Picture not available

Fr. Sezney 1989



Fr. Delaney 1990

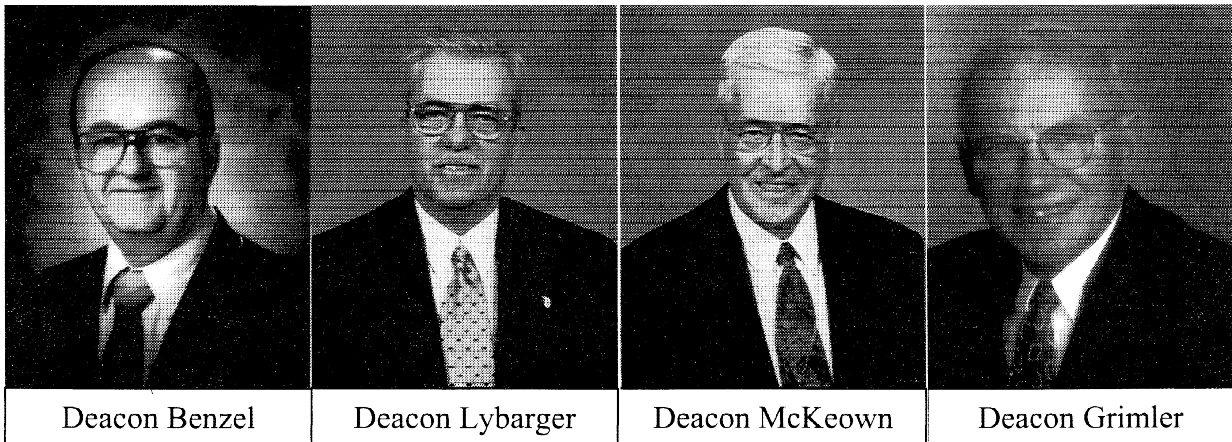
DIACONATE

As a result of Vatican II in 1963-1965, the Diaconate was restored in the Catholic Church. Pope Paul VI promulgated this in 1968 to the global Church. The Archdiocese of Denver implemented it in 1969 with the first class graduating in 1971. Diaconate responsibilities include baptisms, marriage preparation, weddings, funerals, preaching and service to the poor. They also assist the pastor by conducting Benediction, prayer and Communion services and education classes for the lay of the parish. During the Mass they assist the celebrant with the fraction rite.

In the spring of 1978, Leonard Benzel heard a deacon from Ault speak at St. Joseph Church about the Diaconate program. He was inspired by what he heard. The following fall he enrolled in the program along with Howard Frisinger, then a parishioner. At that time it was a three year program and they graduated in 1981. Deacon Benzel was assigned to St. Joseph parish where he served for many years and in 1996 was assigned to John XXIII University Parish. Deacon Frisinger was assigned to the new parish in Fort Collins, Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton where he continues to serve today. Father Meredith, who was assistant pastor at St. Joseph, was Deacon Benzel's ordaining pastor.

Warren G. Lybarger had been considering the Diaconate. Encouraged by Deacon Benzel, he entered the Diaconate program and was ordained in 1981 with Father Coyte as his ordaining pastor. He has been assigned to St. Joseph parish since that time with the exception of the three years in 1996-1999 that he spent at St. John's in Loveland. During that same three year period Deacon John McKeown, from St. John's in Loveland served St. Joseph parish. Deacon Lybarger has also been the Business Administrator in the parish since 1985.

Deacon Richard Grimler was ordained in November in 1979 in the Peoria Illinois diocese. He and his wife Judy moved to Fort Collins from Normal Illinois in July of 1999 and joined St. Joseph parish. In April of 2000 Archbishop Chaput assigned Deacon Rick to St. Joseph where he shares diaconate responsibilities with Deacon Lybarger.



NATIVE PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS

St. Joseph Parish has contributed several priests to the work of the Archdiocese of Denver and other Dioceses in the U.S. Father Neil Hewitt, Father Robert Hehn who has served in various mountain communities is currently the pastor of St. Mary's in Rifle. Father Jude Geilenkirchen is Parochial Vicar of St. Clare of Assisi in Edwards and previously served as a missionary in Colombia. Father James Guyer S.J. is currently Rector of Regis University. Father Thomas Coyte is pastor at Holy Cross, Thornton, where he has established both the deaf ministry and a Hispanic ministry making it a trilingual parish. Father Herman Defler (brother of former Teresa Brookman), M.S.F. is serving in Donna TX. Father Daniel Wetzler currently serving in Oregon was a parishioner in the late 1930's. In addition, the Ruth and Rosella Hehn sisters joined the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. These women serve their communities in Cheyenne and Denver respectively. Sister Catherine Michaud, Sister of St. Joseph in Concordia, Kansas and Sister Mary Siefken, Sister of Charity of Leavenworth serving in Denver.

The work of these individuals is a splendid tribute to the parish.

CONCLUSION

While the population of Fort Collins has grown to 130,566, St. Joseph Parish has increased to approximately 1,875 families. This growth is considerable when you take into account there are now four parishes in the city: Holy Family established in 1924, John XXIII University Parish in 1967 and most recently St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in 1981. It should be noted that Father Charles Brown, while an assistant at St. Joseph, laid the groundwork for establishment of John XXIII University Parish.

Only God knows all of the many efforts which countless people, both Catholics and the larger Fort Collins community, have expended on behalf of St. Joseph to make it a viable Christian force for good. These efforts will extend into the future, to forward the delivery of the message of Christ to the world, which is one of hope and redemption for all of us.

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of Charles and Elizabeth
Schneider – parishioners
from 1921-1985)

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Zimmerman

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Norman Kelly and Ann Zupancic

TIMELINE **1866-1891**

Longmont, Loveland, Greeley mission parishes from Ft Collins									
Pastor	Year	Fr. Abel	Fr. Navel	Fr. LePage	Fr. Gleason	Fr. Robinet	Fr. Downey	Fr. Robinet	Fr. Volpe
		1866	1882	1883	1884	1885	1891	1892	1898
Assistants		<u>1880-83</u> Fr. Cummings Fr. Raber		<u>1884-85</u> Fr. Gleason Fr. Emblem					
Church Historic events	<u>1866</u> First mass <u>1866</u> Camp Collins abandoned <u>1875</u> Ft. Collins population 500 <u>1876</u> Colorado becomes a state	<u>1878</u> Mass in Old Grout building <u>1878</u> Bishop Machebeuf authorized \$400 to purchase church building <u>1880</u> Ft. Collins population 1356 <u>1882</u> Ft. Collins population 2034 <u>1882</u> Old Grout torn down		First rectory built on Peterson St.		<u>1889</u> Bishop Machebeuf died <u>1890</u> Ft. Collins population 2011			
School and Convent									
Seminarians									
Deacons									
Organizations									

TIMELINE **1898 TO 1981**

Pastor	Fr. Lajeunesse	Msgr. O'Sullivan	Msgr. Duffy	Msgr. Cavanagh
Year	1899	1935	1948	1967
Assistants	1934 Fr. Wogan	1926 Fr. Stoffel 1935 Fr. Gales 1940 Fr. Martin Anno O.S.B. 1941 Fr. Doran 1943 Fr. Flynn 1947 Fr. Breen	1948 Fr. Theobald Fr. Theobald 1950 Fr. McMahon Fr. McMahon 1958 Fr. Brown Fr. Brown	1967 Fr. Pettit 1968 Fr. Brin 1970 Fr. Delaney, Fr. McGrath 1972 Fr. Koehler 1974 Fr. Hanna 1975 Fr. Freeman, Fr. Reycraft 1978 Fr. Fryar 1979 Fr. Meredith
Church Historic events	1000 Parishioners; 75 in Religion Classes 1900 Cornerstone laid for new Church 1900 Fl. Collins population 3153 1901 New Church dedication 1908 Rectory built west of Church on Mountain 1909 Fair held to reduce debt	1938 Masses increased from two to three; 230 families 1939 Church Choir developed 1940 Archbishop Vehr confirms 100 1945 Debt reduction campaign initiated 1947 Archbishop Vehr confirmed 100 1948 Church renovation of interior	1950 50th Anniversary celebration 1959 Ground breaking for Church addition 1960 Archbishop Vehr dedicated remodeled church	1968 Mission at Red Feather Lakes 1968 Setup Councils Dioconate restored by Vaikan II 1969 Dioconate implemented in Archdiocese Denver 1970 Little Parishes established 1975 Archbishop Casey celebrates Diamond Jubilee 1979 Church remodel & conversion of convent to Parish Center Construction started on new rectory
School and Convent	1925 Archbishop John B. Pitaval laid cornerstone for school 1926 Sisters of Loretto arrive for 117 pupils 1927 47 students make First Communions First Graduation of 8 pupils	1938 Student enrollment is 130 1940 Fr. Cavanagh addressed graduating class of 16 1941 5 Sisters, 120 pupils 1944 Kitchen updated & hot lunch program initiated 1945 Ninth grade added 1947 6 Sisters, 166 pupils	1949 6 Sisters, 181 pupils 1950 25th Anniversary of St. Joseph's School 1954 Convent construction begins 1955 Archbishop Vehr dedicated convent 1965 Addition of gym and classrooms 1966 8 grades, 300 pupils	1969 6 grades, 245 pupils 1974 Tuition \$100/yr 1976 First lay principal 1978 Sisters leave; 300 students, 16 teachers 1979 Convent Convent to Parish offices Tuition \$250/\$350/2-\$400/3+ 1980 Tuition \$300; \$400/2; \$500/3+
Seminarians				
Deacons				1981 Rev. Mr. Leonard Benzal
Organizations	1928 Holy Name Society 1924 Knights of Columbus 1938 Columbian Squires	1936 Sociality of BVM; Altar and Rosary Society; PTA; Newman club; Confraternity of Christian Doctrine 1939 Legion of Mary		1969 Christmas Tree Lane begins

TIMELINE **1981 to Present**

Pastor Year	Fr. Woerth	Fr. Bliss	Fr. Coyle	Fr. Meredith	Fr. Ryan
	1981	1984	1985	1989	2001
Assistants	1981 Fr. Watson 1982 Fr. Schwartz 1983 Fr. Sobiesczyk 1983 Fr. O'Shea 1983 Fr. Coyle	1984 Fr. Morgan	1985 Fr. Moran 1987 Fr. Jayachandra	1989 Fr. Sezney 1990 Fr. Delaney	
Church Historic events	1981 Added: Family Life, Youth Director, Business Administrator	1984 Renew begins 1984 Fr. Bliss died Dec 19	1986 Began construction on elevator for Church 1987 Elevator blessed by Archbishop Stafford 1987 Initiated Stewardship 1988 Installed new sound system 1989 1800+ families	1993 World Youth Day 1996 Ft. Collins population 104,196 1996 Added patio & grotto at west entrance 2000 Remodeled Parish Center interior	2003 Ft. Collins population 130,566 2004 1875 families
School and Convent	1981 Realistic tuition model introduced	1984 Barbara Bullock principal	1989 Enrollment 200+ pupils	1999 Two story addition 2000 Finish second floor/remodel 1925 bldg 2001 Connect School bldg/Parish Center	2001 SPIRIT program started
Seminarians			1986 Michael Pavlakovich 1988 Sean McGrath 1988 Don Romero	1992 Jerome Rohr 1999 Peter Dinh	
Deacons		1984 Rev. Mr. Warren Lybarger		1996 Rev. Mr. John McKeown 2000 Rev. Mr. Richard Grimler	
Organizations			1986 Evening Legion of Mary	1989 Care-A-Van began	2002 Stephen Ministry started