

History of St. Jerome's parish, Mohall, North Dakota



When the city of Mohall was founded in 1901, Fr C. M. Turcotte of Bottineau first celebrated mass in homes. From 1903 to 1906 mass was celebrated in the Dr. E. S. Fitzmaurice hall.

In 1906, a beautiful church was constructed and named the church of St. Jerome. It was made of hand-made concrete blocks and furnished for \$15,000. In the early years, Fr. Tourcotte was the only regular priest, but was assisted by Fr. T. J. Eageston from 1908 to 1910.

The original members of the parish are listed in our 75th anniversary booklet.

In 1910, the diocese of Fargo, which served all of ND, was divided and St. Jerome's parish

became a part of the newly formed diocese of Bismarck. The parish received a resident pastor, Fr. Jacob c. Collins, who also was assigned missions at Sherwood, Glenburn and Dearing.

On September 1, 1912, Fr. Jacob was replaced by Fr. Michael Schmitt. Masses were few at the missions until bishop Vincent Wehrle sent Fr. Joseph Heeger to assist in the fall of 1916. While Fr. Schmitt was pastor, an 1100 pound bell was installed. It was donated by Mrs. JohnSteffes, Sr., in memory of her mother. The Stations of the Cross, vestments, storm windows and cement sidewalks were purchased. In 1916 a rectory was built and furnished at the cost of \$6000.

In 1917, the congregation purchased the old Mohall school building and had it moved to the east side of the church for a parochial school. The goal was never reached and the building was later demolished. Fr. Schmitt served until 1923.

In 1923, Fr. John j. Heinz was assigned and would serve here for a little more than 27 years. He was onetime vice-president of the national catholic rural life conference. He was active in organizing the Mohall players. St. Jerome's sodality began in 1929. Money was raised to buy statues for the Mohall community cemetery. A new organ was purchased and later dedicated in memory of Irene

Connole. St. Jerome's altar society was active in raising money to pay Fr. Heinz's salary during the depression. Due to growing responsibilities, Fr. Daniel Flavin came from Boston, ma to assist from 1946 to 1947.

On September 5, 1948, Glenburn and Deering ceased to be missions of St. Jerome's parish. Fr. Heinz continued to serve Sherwood and Mohall and was elevated to the rank of monsignor in august of 1949.

Fr. John Gavin replaced Msgr. Heinz for a few months in 1951. Msgr. Heinz was transferred to beach, ND. In 1951, Fr. Francis j. Mckanna was assigned to St. Jerome's. Under his supervision the church basement was remodeled and redecorated. He served here until 1959. St. Jerome's Christian mothers was formed in 1953. A holy name society was also formed in 1956.

In October of 1956, St. Jerome's celebrated their 50th anniversary with many clergy in attendance, including bishop Lambert Hoch, Msgr. Heinz, Fr. Mckanna and Fr. Flavin Msgr. Heinz died on October 23rd, 1956. Fr. Mckanna died in September of 1992.

Fr. Raymond a. Aydt became pastor in 1959. In 1961, St. Jerome's parish center was built at the cost of \$30,000. The center is still used for CCD instruction, parish meetings, receptions and public functions. The interior of the church was redecorated while Fr. Aydt was here.

In 1967, Fr. Clarence Gavett became our pastor and was assisted by Fr. Sigmund Lica from November of 1969 to April 1970.

Fr. Thomas chambers was assigned to Mohall in 1970. During his stay the exteriors of the church and rectory were painted and the pews in the church were refinished. In 1971 and 1972, Fr. Chambers suffered two heart attacks. Fr. Joseph Adkins, Fr. A. J. Leveque of Manitoba, Canada and Msgr. S.J. Galowitsch served the parish. Fr. Hugh MCGovern replaced Fr. Chambers in July of 1974.

Fr. Eugene frank came to St. Jerome's in august of 1975. Fr. Frank was active in the search program and conducted a bible study group. He served here until 1979. He became ill with MD and died March 17th, 1999.

In 1979, Fr. Eugene Wehner came to Mohall and served here until 1986. In 1980, he was assigned the missions of Sts. Peter and Paul of Talley and still had the mission of St. James in Sherwood. St. Jerome's parish then consisted of 110 families. In 1992, Fr. Gene became a discalced Carmelite and is presently serving in Nairobi, Kenya Africa.

Fr Edward Korte was ordained in 1964 at St. Leo's church in Minot for the diocese of Bismarck. His first parish was St. Mary's in Marmouth, ND. He served

our parishes from 1986-1991. He retired in 2004 and is living at Emmaus house in Bismarck.

Fr. Jim Braaten took his priesthood studies in St. Paul seminary school of divinity of the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN. He was ordained on May 30th, 1989. He served as assistant pastor at St. Wenceslaus, Dickinson, ND. from 1989 to 1991. He came to St. Jerome's' and missions of St. Jame's, Sherwood, and Sts. Peter and Paul, Talley, in 1991 and served us until 2001. The Talley parish closed in 1994. The interiors of St. Jerome's and St. Jame's were redecorated while he was here. The new altar at St. Jerome's was blessed by bishop Zipfel May 26th, 1999. Fr. Jim is presently serving St. Wenceslaus in Dickinson.

Fr. Fred Harvey was ordained for the diocese of Bismarck on May 25th, 2000. He served as associate pastor in Williston, ND. and its mission in Trenton, ND. He came to St. Jerome's and St. Jame's, Sherwood, in 2001 and served here until 2005. During that time he was further assigned St. John's parish in Lansford. He said scheduling for three parishes around farming and school activities was truly a work of art. In July, 2005, Fr. Was named pastor of Little Flower church in Minot, ND.

Fr. Joseph Andysserril was ordained on February 21, 1988, for the diocese of Cochin-Kerala, India. He was born and raised in the city of Eramalloor, India. He came to Mohall in July of 2005 and is our present pastor.

Dennis dean of Lansford, ND. was ordained a deacon of the diocese of Bismarck in 1991 and has served the parishes of St. Jerome's, St. Jame's and St. John's since 2004.

St. Jerome's feast day is September 30th. Thank you, God, for all our wonderful priests.