

St. Mary Parish, Anacortes WA

Parish Centennial

“A Century of Faith”

1910-2010

Fr. Gustav Treunet’s account on the History of St. Mary Parish, Anacortes WA.

St. Mary Parish officially became a parish in February 1910. But as a mission, it was started in the year 1890. Mrs. Davis and Mrs. Flynn petitioned Bishop O’Dea for the privilege of having a priest to come and say mass once in awhile.

The first mass was said in 1890 at the home of Mrs. Davis by Father Metz who then parish priest in La Conner. After that, mass was said in different homes.

Missionary Priests before resident Pastor: Father Metz, Father Leroux, Father Deightman, Father Van Goothem, Father Woods.

The mission of Edison was always attached to Anacortes.

The Mission of Friday Harbor was attached to Anacortes in 1910.

The Church on 7th Street was 100 feet long, and 40 feet wide. It was made of lumber and stucco. The Church itself cost \$22,000. The basement of the church cost \$10,000.

When Father Gustav Treunet became Pastor of St. Mary Parish, he rented a house on 10th Street. The rectory on 7th street was built in 1911. The rectory was made of lumber. The rectory cost \$1800, and later additions cost \$1000.

Background and Population of Anacortes

Anacortes is an industrial town. Anacortes has seen better days. There was a time when the water front was covered with canneries that were working full blast almost half of the year. Few of them either burned or were dismantled on account of the scarcity of salmon. Salmon fishing is an industry made more of downs than ups. Two mills where lumber was cut burned down. Anacortes, according to common opinion, the town of the coast that has suffered the most during the Great Depression. Today, it is better in a kind of spasmodic way. A plywood mill has been built, and at least

for a year or two. Few liberty ships and few barges are the prospect in two shipyards. But as long as there is life, there is hope.

The original Catholic population was rather Irish in majority. But those Irish people have died or have moved. Catholics of Anacortes (1942) belong to all kinds of nationality, though I should say that most conspicuous if not the most colorful are the Jugoslaves, commonly called Austrians. The total Population of Anacortes is, like many of our cities of the west, cosmopolitan. It seems nevertheless that the Suedes and the Norwegians are increasing in numbers.

There is one person that has been quite active when Anacortes became a mission. Her name was at the time Miss Adeline Davis, today Mrs. Kasch, a widow. Then came among few leaders, Mr. James Cavanaugh. Anacortes never enjoyed the privilege of counting among the catholic population any man in the liberal profession, that would be a leader.

Father Lawrence Glenn and his brother Philippe have become priests. Also Frances Dorey has become a Dominican Sister under the name of Sister Mary Jean.

There were 62 converts. There is no Catholic Hospital in the parish. Vacation Schools are held every year.

Biography of Fr. Gustav Treunet

He was born at Berck sur mer on the 16th of October 1871. Made his classics at the Petit Seminaire of Boulogne sur mer, his philosophy at the seminary of St. Thomas, his theology at the Grand Seminary of Arras, was ordained priest at Arras by Bishop Williez on the 18th of December 1896, was director of studies at the college St. Vaast of Bethune, became parish priest of Descouse (Nova Scotia) in 1901, was parish priest at Elma WA in 1909, was appointed pastor of St. Mary in Anacortes in 1910.

Two Active Groups in the parish: Holy Names Society and Altar Society.

Dedication of St. Mary Parish by Bishop of O'Dea in October 10th 1929.

The Catholics of Anacortes are pretty good people. They hope that their town will keep them happy. Anacortes is a quiet town where a priest can be very contented.

Fr. Gustav Treunet,

Anacortes, WA

December 2, 1942

History of St. Mary Parish, Anacortes WA

From 1890 to 1896, mass was said in private homes by priests from La Conner, once in awhile even by priests coming from Seattle, sometimes by different priests that happen to travel. Father Metz of La Conner was the first priest to come regularly. During Lent, the few catholic families, and they were very few, met every Wednesday and Friday in the evening at different homes to say the Rosary and the Stations of the Cross. Mrs. Kasch (then Miss Davis) had the children meet at her home for catechism. When the La Conner Church was dedicated, she had a class of 8 or 10 prepared for their first Holy Communion. She took the children over to La Conner in an old hay wagon. They left Anacortes at five o'clock in the morning. It took two hours and a half to make the trip. She took the children to a hotel where they put on their white dresses and veils, and then to the Church for 8 o'clock mass and Holy Communion. Bishop O'Dea dedicated the Church and confirmed a large class. Father Metz was the pastor.

In 1895, Miss Davis conceived the idea of having a small hall built for the purpose of having a special place where mass could be said, and catechism be taught. She told her mother, Mrs. Davis, and another Catholic lady by the name of Mrs. Flynn of her idea. Her father, a non-catholic, offered to build the hall, providing they could get about \$60.00 of lumber, and a place to build it. Mrs. Davis and Mrs. Flynn decided to visit the lumber mills for donations of lumber. The mills responded so generously with both money and lumber that they decided to lose no time. Mr. Lathrop, an old rancher, donate a lot 30x100 feet on which to build the hall. The location of the lot was not the best for the purpose. So, they approached Mr. Gus Hensler, an agent for the Great Northern railroad company, and asked him to use his influence in order to get a lot on 7th street that was owned by the Great Northern, and which they thought was more centrally located. The lot was finally donated to the ladies. They then proceeded to sell the lot that Mr. Lathrop had given. They sold it for \$150.00 and bought the lot adjoining the one secured from the Great Northern.

By that time, their enthusiasm was so great that they decided to get subscriptions in cash for building a larger hall. Mrs. Flynn started out with a little book for subscriptions, Mr. Joseph Reilly headed the list with \$50.00. They covered all the logging and lumber camps and towns in the county, including Bellingham and Seattle, walking sometimes miles a day. Mr. Davis then drew plans for a little Church instead

of a hall, and with donations of labor and lumber, thought that it could be built for \$650.00.

When Father Leroux of La Conner, came over to Anacortes to say mass, the ladies told him of their proposition. He was quite overcome, but said that they should have a full amount of money subscribed before they could start building, figuring that it would cost about \$2000.00. The Catholic ladies gave parties, feirs, dinners, and continued until the full amount was raised. The plans for the Church with a few alterations were approved by Father Leroux, a very happy man. Mr. Davis started work on the building, even making the pews and kneeling benches.

Mr. Reilly, the first subscriber, in the meanwhile died in Alaska. His body was sent home and his was the first funeral in the little church before it was completed. Father O'Brien came from Everett for the funeral.

The Church was dedicated by Bishop O'Dea in 1895. It was the Church that Father Treunet found in Anacortes when he was appointed parish priest, and which was used until 1923. Then the sacristy burned, and the new Hall was used as a church until October 1929 when the present Church was blessed by Bishop O'Dea. It has been said that "les peuples heureux n'ont pas d'histoire." The history of the parish of Anacortes has been since 1910 consisting in the salvation of quite a few souls and an increase in the Kingdom of God.

Catholic Northwest Progress

Parish, Missions Will Note Triple Jubilee

July 15, 1960

Anacortes—A remarkable triple anniversary will be celebrated at solemn services to be held Sunday, July 24, in St. Mary's Parish here.

A solemn mass of thanksgiving will mark the 50th anniversary of St. Mary's founding as a parish, the 75th of the parish's St. Mary's Mission at Edison and the 100th anniversary of its St. Francis' Mission at Friday Harbor on San Juan Island.

Celebrant of the Mass, scheduled for noon, will be St. Mary's pastor, Rev. Paul Auer, The Rev. Donald Conger, and Rev Andrew Squier, who formerly were assigned to the parish, will be deacon and subdeacon respectively.

The Rev. Damian Glenn, O.S.B., of St. Martin's Abbey, Olympia, a former member of the parish, will give the sermon.

His Excellency, the Most Reverend Thomas A. Connolly, Archbishop of Seattle, will carry the Blessed Sacrament in a procession following the jubilee Mass.

Chaplains to the Archbishop will be Rev. Eugene Healy, S.J. and Rev. James andrau.

The Rev. Lawrence Willenborg and Mr. Theodore Marmo, of St. Thomas Seminary, will be masters of ceremonies for the solemn events.

Following services, there will be a dinner for priests of the Archdiocese in St. Mary's parish hall.

The state's historic missions at Friday Harbor and in Edison have been attached to St. Mary's, Anacortes, since the latter's establishment as a parish in 1910.

The parish also serves Catholic summer residents on Orcas Island. Mass is offered in Orcas' Odd Fellows Hall each Sunday from June to September.

St. Roch Chapel at Roche Harbor is also under the care of St. Mary's Parish. Archbishop Connolly will bless the chapel Sunday, July 17. The recently renovated building once housed the community's school. Mass is offered every Sunday during the summer and twice a month during the winter at Roche Harbor.

Friday Harbor Mission

St. Francis Mission had its origin as a stopping-off point for traveling missionaries from Vancouver Island, Port Townsend, Bellingham Seattle and Vancouver, B.C.

With the conflicting boundary interests of England and America which erupted in the Pig War on San Juan Island, priests of both nations saw service with their respective garrisons on the island.

The boundary dispute was settled in 1860 and a small log cabin chapel was erected for Catholic soldiers and settlers on the island.

This log chapel burned down in 1874. But funds were raised by popular subscription and a new church built in 1875. This historic church was moved, in the fall of 1959, to a new, more convenient site in Friday Harbor. A mission rectory was erected on the new site this year. Attendance at Mass in Friday Harbor swells during the summer months, when 45 parish families are joined by a large number of summer residents. The original log cabin church was located on the east side of Friday Harbor's present St. Francis' Cemetery. The earliest Catholic burial indicated is on the grave marker for

Edward McGeary, May 28, 1872. However, a number of unmarked graves would seem to indicate that the cemetery had probably been in use for some years before that.

Edison Mission

Edison's St. Mary's Mission dates its founding as 1885, the year Father J.B. Boulet came down from Bellingham on the "Mary Queen" to offer the first mass in the town.

The Edison Hotel, which then stood near the present Henry Brothers shop, served as the first chapel.

The Church which serves the mission parish today was built in 1890 on land donated by Patrick Smith.

Father Boulet designed and completed the church with the help of 15 Catholic families.

Mrs. Elizabeth Denis was the chairman of the committee which solicited funds for its construction. Some of her descendants, William Schumaker, Marie Dahl, and Joanne Denis Steffanson, are members of the parish today.

The irregular Mass schedule of 75 years ago gave way, in 1910, to a monthly Mass and in 1942, to a regular Sunday Mass.

Farm Area

The mission parish is situated in the fertile delta of the Samish River and surrounded by specialized vegetable and fruit farms. There are 45 families in the parish. They are making plans for the erection of a parish hall to better serve catechetical and social activities in the parish.

The mother church of these two missions, though it was established as a parish only 50 years ago, had its own beginnings as a mission in 1890.

First Anacortes Mass

The first mass in Anacortes was offered that year in the home of Mrs. Adelaide Davis Kasch by Father W.J. Metz, who came from Sacred Heart Church in LaConner.

Later missionary priests who came to Anacortes to offer Mass were from Sedro Wolley and Port Townsend, as well as La Conner. They included Father Peter Leroux, Matthew J. Woods, A.M. Billiau, N.J. Power, and H. Deichmann.

Father Leroux often used a bicycle in traveling to mission churches. Father Woods used a wagon and team of horses.

Beginning about 1895, Mrs. Kasch spearhead a drive for a church building. There were about 30 families in the mission parish then. The women sponsored parties, fairs and dinners to help raise funds for the building.

Plans for the church were drawn up by Mrs. Kasch's father, Mr. Davis, who also did most of the construction. The church was built at the corner of Seventh and N Avenue. It was dedicated in 1904 by the late Bishop Edward J. O'Dea.

In late 1909, the little wooden structure was moved from Seventh and N to a location just west of the present St. Mary's rectory, at 1208 Seventh St.

The next year, 1910, St. Mary's was made a parish by Bishop O'Dea.

French-born Father Gustave Treunet, who had been serving in Elma, was appointed St. Mary's first pastor. He was to stay 38 years, until his death in 1948.

Father Treunet was the first priest to use a horseless carriage for his rounds in the parish and missions.

In 1916, a grotto to Our Lady of Lourdes was built at St. Mary's. Flowers and shrubs were planted and a rustic archway was built leading to an outdoor chapel ideal for quiet prayer and meditation.

A hall which was to serve as the basement for the parish's projected new church was completed in 1920.

Fire in Church

In 1924, a blaze set by a fire-bug destroyed the sacristy, vestments, sanctuary furnishings and some of the church statues. The loss was estimated at \$3500.

The church was not reconstructed. Mass was offered in the parish's basement-hall for five years after that until 1929, when a handsome \$40,000 church was completed. Bishop O'Dea came to Anacortes to dedicate a church for the town a second time.

The Depression years following the church dedication left their mark on Anacortes. There were times when the pastor's salary was non-existent. But the kindly, genial pastor of St. Mary's was never one to complain.

In 1946, when Father Treunet observed the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood a festive civic celebration, as well as religious observance, marked his jubilee.

After the beloved pastor's death in September, 1948, Rev Andrew Squier was appointed administrator of the parish. He served until Father Theodore Sullivan was appointed pastor in June, 1949.

The Rev. Donald Conger succeeded Father Sullivan in 1954. Father Paul Auer was appointed pastor in June 1955.

Today, there are about 250 families in the parish. Many parishioners are Puget Sound and Alaskan waters fishermen who have their home port in Anacortes.

Anacortes has become popular not only as the summer tourists' gateway to the San Juan Islands, but as the site of new industry in the form of refineries, by-products manufacturing and waterfront marinas.

Catholic Northwest Profess – April 14, 1967

Parochial CCD Center Planned for Anacortes

Anacortes-Parkhurst and Lange Co., has been awarded the contract for St. Mary's CCD Center. Anacortes, according to an announcement made at the Chancery Office. Their basic bid was \$299,900.

Other basic bids were as follows: Eiford-Sather-Harmon, \$306,600; Bustad, Inc., \$311,900; Beauchamp, \$340,192.

St. Mary's 12-Acre site will also plan for a future convent across from the CCD center.

Fr. Paul Auer is Pastor of St. Mary's Parish.

Plan for the new school includes eight classrooms of masonry structure and an area of 21,000 square feet. The exterior walls are eight-inch brick block units, insulated with vermiculite, while the interior walls are six-inch block units. All walls are of exposed masonry. The roof is of modified gables and the building includes a large kitchen. The building is designed for additions of up to eight classrooms.

Letter from Archbishop Thomas A. Connolly, Archbishop of Seattle

September 5, 1968

Parishioners of St. Mary's Parish

Anacortes, WA

Dear Beloved in Christ:

It is a pleasure to have the opportunity of extending my sincere felicitations to each and every one of you on this happy occasion. Your combined zealous and energetic efforts are responsible for the dedication of this new religious education and cultural and social center.

The erection of this new CCD Center to the honor and glory of Almighty God and for the religious education of your children is at once a tribute to the indefatigable zeal of an enterprising Pastor as it is a manifestation of the vibrant faith of a self-sacrificing people. It is a pledge and promise of a fuller and finer Christian life in all who shall avail themselves of its facilities for generations to come.

As you know, the primary and immediate end of a Christian education is to cooperate with Divine Grace in forming the true and perfect Christian, that is, to form Christ Himself in those regenerated by baptism. The objectives of Christian education, therefore, are those of character in action, of Christ like living in relation to God and the Church as well as to our fellowmen and our natural surroundings.

You and your Pastor have every reason to be happy and proud of this glorious achievement and I welcome the opportunity to rejoice with all of you on this historic occasion.

Praying every blessing upon you and with every best wish and blessing, I am

Devotedly yours in Christ

Thomas A. Connolly

Archbishop of Seattle

A Word from the Architect (Don McKee):

We have been fortunate in having a site which initially was a fine site, but which during the early design stages was supplemented further by the acquisition of a sizable uphill strip to the east, a portion of the old Deutsch property. This addition to the original site made it easier to locate and apportion areas for the various functions of this religious-educational development – the school, the Church, the Rectory, the Convent.

The School, as you now see it has been built to relate to all of the other functions and the mechanical and electrical requirements for these future units have been provided for in our service to the first element of this development – the School. We have placed the school on the east slope where it enjoys a prominent spot as one approaches the site. The building is up high enough so that it has a nice outlook over the town. Adequate space has been left around the building for the addition of two four-room classroom units should the future ever require this. There is ample space for smaller play areas at each end of the structure. The orientation of the building is such that together with the generous overhang of the roof there are no sun control problems.

The structure itself has been designed with the requirements that it be sturdy and functional. This we were to do within a fairly limited budget. The 8 inch brick block that was used throughout has provided us with the strong, long lasting walls and surfaces that a school required together with being surfaces that take much wear and are easy to maintain. The heart of the building, the multi-purpose room, the office, the kitchen, the mechanical and electrical work have been designed to be flexible enough to accommodate up to eight more classrooms should they ever be needed. The classrooms have been provided with adequate space for future storage cabinets, counters, etc. and shelves, screening and blackboards which are installed are capable of being adjusted or completely removed as the situation requires.

Along with these practical requirements we have tried to provide a school that is well organized and good looking. We used the shake roofs to break up what might have otherwise been a long, low profile and to lend interest and beauty to the whole exterior. We have used wood trim when we could and stained with warm colors to contrast with the masonry. We tried to provide the Catholic Community with a building they can use and be proud of and which will provide the theme for the continued development of this property through the years.

Don L. McKee

Letter from the Pastor, Fr. Paul Auer

In the Church, as in the State, children representing the up-coming generation and future hope are a most important consideration. For this reason, the proposal was made to the parishioners of St. Mary's Parish some ten years ago (1958) to provide the best possible facility for the Catholic education of their children – A NEW SCHOOL. His Excellency, Archbishop Connolly had already authorized the purchase of 8 acres at the Hillcrest location two years previous (1956) and at a letter date of an additional three acres (1965). Total land costs were \$21,500.

With the more immediate prospect of school construction plus the inauguration of a tithing program in the parish (250 contributors) an average of \$30,000 including interest was added to the School Fund in each of the past 10 years. Thus the complete base bid for construction, \$300,000 was on hand in advance when the ground breaking took place in April 1967. "A small parish can afford any facility the people are willing to save for" was a frequently heard phrase during these years. It is apparent our conservative parishioners felt the same and were satisfied to save in advance for this capital improvement.

A tribute to the faith and generosity of our tithing parishioners is, of course, the present structure to be dedicated today by our own Bishop Gill. But a greater tribute, by far, were the ten years of confident hope that this day would come, shared alike by present parishioners as well as by many others whose business interests took them away from Anacortes before they could see the fruition of their efforts.

On each and all of these we invoke our heavenly Father's grace and blessing. All of these generous souls have elected to place God's works in their own planning and family budget. Children, as yet unborn, will use our new school. Their prayers of innocence will intercede for our benefactors down the years.

The present generation of St. Mary's parishioners are now asked to maintain and support the new school facility and its program for the education of our children. We are all grateful for the appointment of Sister Mary Roverte, B.V.M. as the first religious assigned to the parish to coordinate its catechetical program. Additional Sisters are in prospect in the next years to further the program of religious instruction and training.

Anacortes will grow and expand in the years to come. Our own confidence in this axiom is seen in the provision made for the addition of 8 more classrooms to the present structure. This can be seen graphically in the masterplan for the future which likewise provides for a convent, a new enlarged church and a rectory. Many of us will

not be among the people of God on earth when this plan is finally completed. But our concern seen in initiating its first phase will surely contribute to our eternal glory. So while we pause momentarily to admire what has been accomplished, we do not rest on our oars to drift with the tide, but we push on to new achievements in the years ahead.

Fr. Paul Auer

The Progress, October 17, 1985

St. Mary Parish, Anacortes, to mark diamond jubilee October 19-20

This Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 19-20, St. Mary Parish, Anacortes, will mark its Diamond Jubilee. Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen will be the celebrant of the 5pm Mass on Saturday. A dinner will follow in the parish hall. Activities will continue on Sunday, Oct. 20, with Masses at 9 and 11 am, followed by tours and a reception.

Anacortes was already a growing metropolis in 1910, when St. Mary's was founded, and there had been considerable Catholic activity in the community even before then.

Itinerant missionaries had made regular visits since the town's founding in 1877, but the first record of a Mass having been said on Fidalgo Island was not until 1899.

The Benn and Rodgers families and a Ned Cook were the entire congregation. Later, Masses were offered on an irregular basis at the Benn home.

In the early 1900s, Anacortes was a mission served at different times by priests from LaConner and Sedro Woolley. But as the number of Catholics increased, there became a need for a church where services could be held on a regular basis. In 1902, a small wooden church was begun at the corner of 7th and "N" Avenue. It was agreed that the new church would be called St. Mary's. In 1904, the first St. Mary's Church was dedicated by Bishop Edward O'Dea of the then Nesqually Diocese.

Records indicate that the first Catholic children born in Anacortes were baptized in LaConner by Father N.J. Power. With the increasing number of Catholic children, there became a need for religious education classes. The first classes were conducted by Adelaide Davis Kasch in her home. She prepared the children for Holy Communion and Confirmation. On Nov 17, 1895, the first group of youngsters were taken in a hay wagon for the two-and-a-half hour trip to LaConner, where the sacraments were administered by Bishop Aegidius Junger.

Under the direction of Father W.J. Metz, who succeeded Father Power at LaConner, a Rosary Society was organized with Mrs. J.K. Knapp as the first president. Arrangements were also made to conduct religious education classes in the Anacortes Hospital Building. Whenever Father Metz visited Anacortes, he himself taught the classes.

In 1904, Father Matthew Woods became the pastor of the LaConner church and had Anacortes as a mission. Seeing the growth of the Catholic community, he believed a larger church was needed. Near the end of 1909, he ordered the little wooden church moved from the corner of 7th and N Avenue to the location on 7th, near the middle of the block between "N" and "M" Avenues. Fallen plaster, broken siding and dust greeted Father Gustave Treunet, when he first entered the Church to assume his duties as the first resident Pastor in February 1910.

Not wishing to start the construction of a new church immediately, Father Treunet had the little church repaired and replastered and enlarged.

On January 14, 1924, a fire destroyed the sacristy, and the vestments and chalice were a total loss. Services were transferred to the St. Joan of Arc Hall, which had been completed in 1920 as the basement for the new church.

Services continued in the hall until October 20, 1929, when the new church was finished and dedicated by Bishop O'Dea. The altars, designed by Father Treunet, were built in Everett. The original statues, which had been retrieved from the fire, had been refinished and again put into use.

In August 1948, Father Andrew Squier was appointed to assist Fr. Treunet, who was dying of cancer. Fr. Squier continued on as substitute pastor after Fr. Treunet's death on September 7, 1948. In June 1949, he was succeeded by Father Theodore Sullivan. In February 1954, Father Donald Conger was named pastor and a year-and-a-half later Father Paul Auer was appointed.

The following year a parish drive brought in nearly \$12,000, and eight acres of land were purchased for future parish expansion. In 1968, a school, consisting of eight classrooms, a gym and a kitchen was completed on the side. It was dedicated in May of that year.

Because of the lack of Religious to serve as teachers, the school was never used in this capacity. The building is now the parish center with the classrooms given over to catechetical instruction on Sundays and Wednesday evenings. On other evenings, parish organizations, Scripture study classes and prayer groups use the rooms.

From July 1976, until July 1977, Father Jay Shanahan served as pastor. He was succeeded by Father Kenneth Ogradowski. Under Father Ogradowski's leadership, a church and rectory were built next to the school. These buildings were dedicated by Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen on May 13, 1979.

In July 1981, Father George McLean joined Father Ogradowski as co-Pastor. New activities were added and the parish continued to grow.

The little church started 75 years ago has continued to grow slowly along with the town. Today, it is the largest church body in the community, with family memberships of 450 registered households.

The Altar Society, small in the beginning, now has seven guilds and is affiliated with the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women. All are working actively for their parish. More than 60 men are involved in the Father Treunet Council of the Knights of Columbus, which was reestablished about five years ago. Heads of all organizations, a total of 17 including those working in the Catechetical Formation Program, comprise the Coordinating Council, which under the guidance of the co-pastors direct parish activities.

Father Kenneth Ogradowski retired in August, but remains in residence in the parish house. Oblate of Mary Immaculate Father Gerry Clenaghan was appointed co-pastor on August 15.

St. Mary Parish

Mass was celebrated in Anacortes for the first time in 1890 by a missionary priest, in a private home. In 1896, Father Peter Leroux, with a Mr. Davis, built a small church on 7th Street where Mass was offered once a month until 1910. During this period, Anacortes was a mission station served alternately by Sedro Woolley and LaConner.

In 1910, St. Mary's was formally established as a parish by Bishop Edward O'Dea. Father Gustave Treunet was appointed resident pastor, a position he held until his death, forty years later.

Under the guidance of Father Treunet, the parish community grew steadily, necessitating building a new church on 7th Street in 1929.

In the 1970s, more space was needed to accommodate a growing congregation. Renovation and extension of the existing church would have cost more than a new building. Also, there was no way to increase parking. So, in 1979, the decision was

made to move to the present site on St. Mary's Drive. Under the leadership of Father Kenneth Ogrodowski, the people of St. Mary's built our new church and rectory next to the Parish Center, which had been erected ten years earlier by Father Paul Auer.

Biography Pastor Father Gerry Clenaghan, OMI

Resume: Born in Ireland, 1922. Entered Seminary of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, 1940. Ordained, June 29, 1947. Assigned to British Columbia, Canada, October 1947.

Appointed pastor in Burns Lake, B.C., in 1960 and in Prince George, B.C., in 1970. Nineteen years as Directory of "Frontier Apostolate", the lay volunteer program of the Diocese of Prince George. Involved in Marriage Encounter, Parish Renewal, Cursillo and the preaching of Parish Missions, Knights of Columbus, Rotary.

Pastoral work in Yakutat, Alaska, 1975-77; Burns Lake, B.C., 1977-80; San Fernando, CA, 1980-82, and in the Archdiocese of Seattle since 1982. Arrived in Anacortes as co-pastor, August 15, 1985. Six years appointment as pastor effective July 1, 1987.

Statue of Mary symbolizes hope for peace

September 19, 1990

By Doreen A Simon, American staff writer

Members of St. Mary's Catholic Church are hopeful that peace has a place in the world – even as war threatens to erupt in the Persian Gulf.

They commissioned a marble shrine of Mary, "the Mother of God" to remind all who seek the stark white figure that peace is a goal.

"Queen of Peace" has been used by the Catholic Church for centuries," said the Reverend Gerry Clenaghan of St. Mary's. "I believe, and we believe, that in total peace there is justice first and then peace becomes a reality."

Clenaghan said justice, as defined by Christians, is the Ten Commandments. The commandments speak of a person's relationship with God and neighbors, Clenaghan said.

"If there is a balance between reality and justice, then there is peace," he said.

The “Queen of Peace” statue is more than a symbol of peace for the congregation. Clenaghan said it also commemorates the parish’s 75th anniversary, which was celebrated five years ago.

“We had a very pleasant and happy celebration, but there was nothing permanent to mark the occasion,” he said. “We needed something to remind us physically of our past.”

“We’re overjoyed,” said parishioner Barbara Hansen. “As our name is St. Mary’s we think it’s very appropriate and welcome.”

Hansen is a member of the Pastoral Council and president of the Altar Society. She said most of the congregation was just as enthusiastic about the project as was Clenaghan.

The statue helps bring the community together by reminding us to keep a good thought for peace no matter who we pray to, Hansen said.

Clenaghan said he talked to the congregation two years ago about an idea to commission a statue. Last fall, a group from the congregation approached Clenaghan with an offer to finance the project. Ten local people, not all members of St. Mary’s, helped fund the project.

Through European connections – East Germany native Joe Richter and his Italian friend Alessio Faville, an Italian sculptor, Sirio de Ranieri, was commissioned to create the “piece of art” for the parish, Clenaghan said.

Two and a half months later, the white Carrara marble statue taken from a quarry in northeast Italy was complete.

Guemes Island resident Peter Andriesen was in charge of architectural design for placement of the statue. Clenaghan said the result is truly on-of-a-kind.

While the finished statue, located between the church and school and facing toward the main part of Anacortes, may be unique, the pose isn’t. The image of Mary with her hands clasped prayer-like under the chin is a traditional one seen in other depictions of her.

“It’s a fairly typical thing,” Clenaghan said. Mary is wearing robes that sculptor Ramieri was able to give life to. She looks as if she just stopped for a moment to rest. The folds of her gown and robes gracefully fall down her back. The stark white of the marble creates light and dark.

Clenaghan is especially pleased with the details of the “Queen of Peace.” There are three different textures – a wool-like finish to the robes, a flesh-like finish on the skin and a scaly surface on the serpent on which she is standing.

In the New Testament, the book of Revelation, chapter 12, verse one, refers to the pose of the parish’s “Queen of Peace,” Clenaghan said.

The book refers to an early church belief that Mary conquers the dragon – serpent of Satan- by becoming the mother of the savior, Clenaghan said. In giving birth to Jesus, she destroyed the rule of Satan.

The Catholic church doesn’t consider Mary an idol or goddess, Clenaghan said. Rather, it pays her respect because she was chosen by God to give birth to the Son of God, he said.

“In the church, she is the second Eve,” Clenaghan said. “Adam and Eve blew it, but Mary and Jesus fixed it.”

The project became a community one that transcended church boundaries. Dave Taggart, a landscape contractor, donated the stone base in memory of Theresa Rodger who died two years ago. Clenaghan said she had played the organ in the church for 60 years. Taggart bought his rock quarry from her father.

The high base atop which Mary stands also has rocks from Medjugorje, Yugoslavia, where there are continuing reports of apparitions of her, and from Fatima, Portugal, where she was seen in the early part of the century, Clenaghan said.

Other community help came in the form of Harold Mousel of M & M Construction, the contractor in charge, from Anacortes. Stone masons were Warren, Homer and Nolson Chambers of Sanwood.

The parish hopes that the “Queen of Peace” will bring the community together by emphasizing what they have in common with others outside the congregation, Clenaghan said.

St. Mary’s Catholic Church will dedicate “Mary: Queen of Peace” at a special ceremony at 6 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 22. A mass will start at 5 p.m. at the church. The Rev. Ted Marmo, pastor of St. John Mary Vianney of Bothell, will bless the statue, Clenaghan said.

Marmo was invited to the dedication because he is the only Catholic priest who grew up in Anacortes before attending the seminary and becoming ordained.

This year he is celebrating 25 years in the priesthood, Clenaghan said.

Friends who attend school with Marmo are invited to attend the dedications, as are any Anacortes resident, regardless of membership.

St. Mary Parish History continued...

The first permanent Catholic church in Anacortes was established in 1910 as St. Mary Catholic Church with a congregation of some 30 families and Father Gustav Treunet as its first pastor. Over the years there have been 10 Pastors and the parish has grown to nearly 500 registered families.

Our tenth pastor, Father W.R. Harris. Under his leadership, parishioners of St. Mary together renovated the Church at present. Some additions were a beautiful Tabernacle, the four Gospel pillars, a narthex or vestibule in the Church, baptismal font, beautiful stain glass windows, renovated statues, the Great Doors, Icon of St. Mary, the new Altar, Stations of the Cross, and most especially a Perpetual Adoration Chapel.

St. Merryfest and St. Nicholas Advent Festival

During Fr. Harris' pastoral care, St. Mary Parish hosted the St. Merryfest and St. Nicholas Advent Festival not only to provide entertainment for the community, but they are also parish fundraisers. These events and others are the results of the efforts of St. Merrymakers, a group of dedicated parishioners. For the past several years, the month of June is St. Merryfest time.

St. Mary library

St. Mary Parish also provides a library full of excellent resources for spiritual growth and catechesis on the Roman Catholic faith. The video library contains videos on the saints and Christian morals as well as many popular family oriented commercial videos. The library has over 3000 books and 1000 videos for parishioner usage.

All Saints Day

All Saints Day is celebrated with Mass in November followed by a Christmas Party put on by the youth of the Parish and our Faith Formation Teachers and Volunteer parents.

The Annual Ethnic Dinner

The Annual Ethnic dinner is a youth group fundraiser for our youth to attend the World Youth Day. The Annual Ethnic dinner comes with a variety of foods, and music and entertainment from different ethnicity.

Semi-Annual Rummage Sale

The semi-annual rummage sale is a significant fundraiser for St. Mary Parish liturgical needs. It is also an opportunity for the community to recycle their “treasures”, and the needy of our community are particularly assisted.

Time, Talent and Treasure

Usually in the month of October, efforts are made to encourage parishioners to play a more active role in the life of the Church. The Time and Talent weekend begins with a witness speaker at mass and different Apostolates set up tables to inform parishioners at large of the ministry at St. Mary.

Stewardship of Treasure also begins with a witness speaker at mass to encourage the parishioners at large to give the first fruits that they have received to sustain the work of God within the local parish.

Outreach

St. Mary Parish takes up a food collection on the last weekend of the month for the needy in the parish and the larger Anacortes community. In addition, the Parish gives a percentage portion received towards the St. Vincent de Paul society, our outreach program.

Music

St. Mary Parish, under the leadership of Mr. John Fahey, provides parishioners an opportunity to worship God using traditional chant music, and beautiful polyphonic music. Some of the members of the parish have come together to form a Chant Choir, St. Cecilia choir, St. Mary Bell Choir, and St. Mary Choral Cantors.

Priest and Seminarians

Fr. Mel Strazicich was one of our parishioners who answered the call to God to serve as Roman Catholic Priest in the Archdiocese of Seattle. Another Seminarian, Jason

Putnam, or Brother Herman Joseph Putnam is currently in his seminary studies. Please continue to pray and support our seminarians and religious.

St. Mary Catholic Church Celebrates Century of Faith

August 15, 2010 by Kimberly Jacobson, Anacortes American

What started as a small group of Catholics meeting at a parishioner's home has grown to a congregation 470 families strong at St. Mary Catholic Church.

The Rev. Vu Tran, who joined the parish in mid-2006 as its pastor, says the church's beautiful building as well as its wonderful parishioners draw people to the church and keep them coming back to share their faith.

"Although we are a small parish, the parishioners are quite generous with their time, talent and treasures in helping the parish to grow," Tran said. "Parishioners express a great love for God in the real presence of Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist and perpetual adoration."

The church marks its 100th anniversary this year.

It will host three weekends of religious events as part of its centennial celebration — "The Vatican International Photographic Exhibition of Eucharistic Miracles of the World" is open for public viewing 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. through Friday in the Father Auer Center, 4001 St. Mary's Drive; a Mass with Archbishop Alexander Brunett presiding is 10:30 a.m. Sunday, Aug. 15 followed by a reception banquet in the Father Auer Center; and the "Faith on Fire Catholic Youth/Family Conference" is Friday to Sunday, Aug. 20-22.

The archbishop is retiring this year, Tran said, and parishioners are planning to give him some mementos from the parish such as an icon of Our Lady of Anacortes.

A few parishioners are putting together historical artifacts and information to help the parish remember its history.

"We are planning a memorial wall to honor deceased priests that have served St. Mary parish, and certain key families that played a vital role in forming the parish," Tran said. "Also, a grotto in honor of Our Lady of Lourdes is being put together by the Knights of Columbus."

In addition to the church's services and faith formation offerings, it connects to the community through its St. Vincent de Paul Society (which helps the needy in the community), food bank, annual St. Merryfest festival and rummage sales.

The first Mass in Anacortes was held in 1890 at the home of Mrs. Adelaide Davis Kasch by the Rev. W.J. Metz, who came from Sacred Heart Church in La Conner, according to a church history.

Mrs. Kasch had the children meet at her home for catechism. When the La Conner church was dedicated, she had a class of eight or 10 prepared for their first communion. She took the children to La Conner in a hay wagon. They left Anacortes at 5 a.m. and it took two and a half hours to make the trip.

“She took the children to a hotel where they put on their white dresses and veils, and then to the church for 8 o’clock Mass and holy communion,” according to a history by the Rev. Gustav Treunet.

Beginning in about 1895, Mrs. Kasch spearhead a drive for a church building. There were about 30 families in the mission parish then. The women sponsored parties, fairs and dinners to help raise funds.

Plans for the church were drawn up by Mrs. Kasch’s father, Mr. Davis, who also did most of the construction. The church was built at the corner of Seventh Street and N Avenue. It was dedicated in 1904 by Bishop Edward J. O’Dea.

In late 1909, the little wooden structure was moved to 1208 Seventh St.

St. Mary officially became a parish in February 1910 and the French-born Treunet was appointed its first pastor. He stayed 38 years until his death in 1948.

In 1916, a grotto to Our Lady of Lourdes was built at St. Mary. Flowers and shrubs were planted and a rustic archway was built leading to an outdoor chapel ideal for quiet prayer and meditation.

A hall, which was to serve as the basement for the parish’s projected new church, was completed in 1920.

In January 1924, a fire burned out the church sacristy and destroyed all vestments, robes, statues and furnishings in January 1924, causing an estimated loss of \$3,500.

Treunet suspected the fire was a result of a “fanatic’s attempt to destroy the church.”

“We have lost a great deal. My sacristy and all its contents are gone and the body of the church is in a lamentable condition,” he said.

Anacortes Catholics attended Mass in the parish hall the Sunday after the fire. Treunet spoke about the indestructibility of the church.

“Do not worry,” he said, “our church building may be burned, but the church cannot be destroyed. Though the church was burned, we have our hall; if the hall is burned, I shall say Mass in my house; if the house is burned, we shall have Mass outdoors.”

Church records say whoever set the fire was not found but the charred mechanism of a fire-bomb the suspect supposedly used was uncovered. The church was not reconstructed. Mass was offered in the parish’s basement for five years until, in 1929, a \$40,000 church was completed.

The church’s Father Auer Center was completed in 1969 and the current church in 1978, moving Mass from the parish’s former church in downtown Anacortes. The old building is now home to the Croatian Club.

More recently, the church embarked on a \$1 million renovation beginning in 2003 under parish pastor the Rev. W. R. Harris.

The project expanded the front of the church out about 24 feet to provide for an enclosed gathering area, add space around the baptismal font, make interior improvements and add separate men’s and women’s restrooms to replace the single restroom, according to an Anacortes American story. Plans also included expansion of the vestibule and main entry to the church. About 40 percent of the project involved upgrading the building.

Tran said in the future, the church is looking at renovating the Father Auer Center so it can use the building to help with faith formation and other activities.

Visit <http://www.stmaryanacortes.com>.

Centennial celebration events

- Get a rare chance to view “The Vatican International Photographic Exhibition of Eucharistic Miracles of the World” open for public viewing 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. through Friday in the Father Auer Center, 4001 St. Mary’s Drive.

The descriptive 140-panel photographic exhibition features more than 100 fascinating church-approved Eucharistic miracles from around the world and across the ages.

Exhibit admission is free, but donations will be accepted to benefit The Real Presence Association. Visit <http://www.therealpresence.org>.

- St. Mary Catholic Church invites you to get fired up with dynamic Catholic speakers, Mass, music, new friends, food, camping and more at the “Faith on Fire Catholic Youth/Family Conference” Friday to Sunday, Aug. 20-22. The photo exhibit will also be on display those days for attendees.

Featured guests include:

- Tim Staples — “Catholic Answers Live!” radio personality/apologist, former Marine and Protestant minister, author and inspirational Catholic speaker.
- Steve Ray — Popular Catholic holy land guide (nicknamed “Jerusalem Jones”), author, speaker, father, convert and creator of “Footprints of God” video series.
- Sister Miriam James Heidland — Lively young Catholic revert and former Archbishop Murphy High School volleyball coach. Once a party girl she found peace in God.
- Angus McDonell — Youth minister, composer and famed World Youth Day performer will serve as weekend emcee and concert bandleader.
- Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Tyson — Con-celebrating Sunday’s closing Mass.

The conference will be held outdoors with Mass, adoration and the photo exhibit indoors. Free parking. Free tent spaces for singles and families, plus limited RV parking available on a first come, first served basis.