

## **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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 10<sup>th</sup> Street. The rectory on 7<sup>th</sup> 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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

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 7<sup>th</sup> 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.