

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 spearheaded 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.