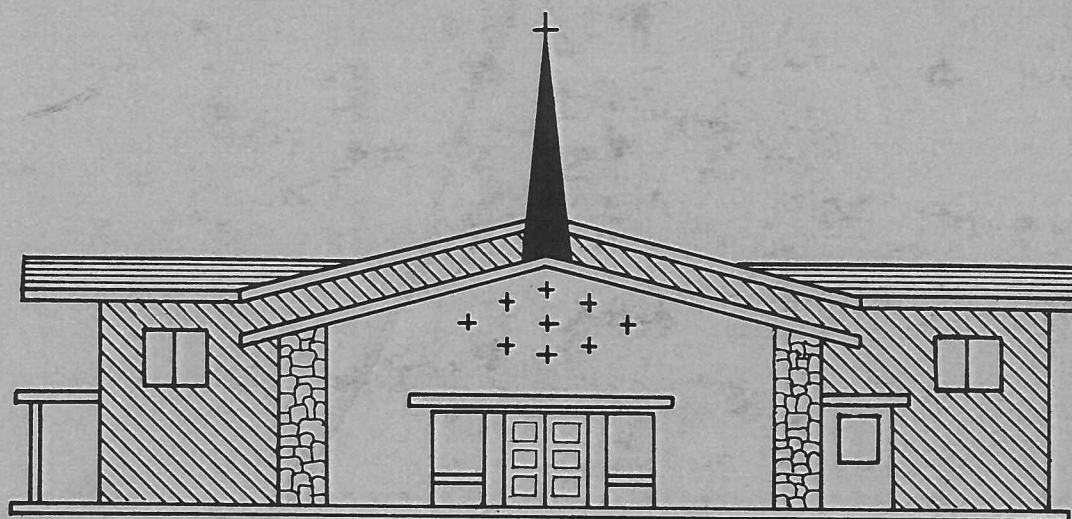


DEDICATION AND BLESSING OF



OUR LADY OF THE FOOTHILLS

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH EXPANSION

Hinton, Alberta

MOST REVEREND JOSEPH N. MacNEIL OFFICIATING

Sept. 13, 1992

Dedication

This book is dedicated to all past and present Parishioners who have made today's Celebration possible.

DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN . . .

Fr. Malone liked to play cards at the Hinton Hotel?

Morning Mass was in the Rectory basement on Sherwood Drive where the stairs were so steep that you almost fell into the Chapel?

Fr. Malone had Latin High Mass every morning at 7:00 am during Lent?

Fr. Malone would give the children rides down the hill in his car and let them steer?

Sunday Mass was held at Montimurro's Theatre on the hill with its slanting floor, cozy chairs and Tony Sanders sweeping up the popcorn and trash early in the morning so that people wouldn't have their knees stick to the floor when they knelt downhill?

Ascension Mass was held outside behind the Hill Rectory in a beautiful meadow, the site of the old church which burned down?

Mass was held in the Ballroom of the Athabasca Hotel?

Claude Eccles donated lumber for the Church and Marcel Franche and his brother Joe made several trips to the mill in Obed to pick it up?

The big marble altar came from Italy and Barney Bertolin and Marcel Franche set it up?

Marcel Franche made the wooden cross and set up the Crucifix?

Big Joe Drapeau campaigned at his camp on payday to collect money for the Church pews? — very successfully —

Dan Flegel, manager of the Athabasca Hotel bought the Church organ and had choir practice for the first Midnight Mass in his hotel suite?

The wedding of John Hickey and Marilyn Speers was the first to be held in the new Church?

Marge Bohning had to be carried over the mud into the Church to her husband-to-be, Arthur Boutin — the second wedding to be held in the new church?

The young people thought that the Ordination of Fr. Raymond Guimond in the new Church was TOTALLY AWESOME?

Fr. Redmond carried a guitar, saxophone, violin and small chord organ along with his golf clubs in his Volkswagon?

Fr. Lemieux found a note in the choir loft that said, "Thank you for not locking the church. I didn't freeze last night."?

The movie screen fell down and just missed Ken Brady while he was doing the reading?



Former Pastors

Fr. James Lynch, O.M.I.
1956-1958

Fr. B.W. Malone, C.Ss.R.
1958-1964

Fr. J.G. Redmond, C.Ss.R.
1964-1970 and 1980-1982

Fr. Claude Lemieux, C.Ss.R.
1970-1974

Fr. Leonard Fitzgerald, C.Ss.R.
1974-1975

Fr. Kennedy Stephens, C.Ss.R.
1975-1980

Fr. Joseph Boyle, C.Ss.R.
1982-1983

Fr. James Murphy
1983-1984

Fr. Clement Gauthier
1984-1987

Fr. Albert Laisnez
1987-1990

Current Pastor Fr. Tom Morley 1990

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN HINTON 1953

Doreen Cribb from the excerpt written by Louise Theobald

We, Lloyd and Doreen Cribb, were employed to teach in the two-room school in Hinton. Our family, consisting of our two children and accompanied by my mother, Mrs. Louise Theobald, arrived in Hinton on November 2nd, 1953. For the first year, due to the unavailability of suitable accommodation, our home was in Bliss, about 4 1/2 miles east of the townsite.

As we were Catholics, we inquired about the church and priest. Our friends informed us that there was a building south of town, and off the road to Jasper, which was used as the Roman Catholic Church, and that a priest came to say Mass on the last Sunday of each month.

I will never forget the first Mass we attended in Hinton. By now, Lloyd and I were the proud owners of a brand new car, so on the last Sunday of November we set off early for Mass. Imagine our surprise and dismay to see an old wooden shack about 20 by 35 feet which was used as the Church. Lloyd parked the car as near as possible, but there was quite a distance to walk to the building. The children, Frances and Christopher, ran ahead to break trail in the deep snow. My mother, with the help of Lloyd and myself, trudged along in their footprints. When we arrived we saw, much to our horror, that there were no steps to the platform, nearly 3 feet off the ground, which led to the entrance! Mother had to be heaved up in a most undignified manner - Lloyd pushing and I pulling - slipping in the heavy snow. Finally, we got Mother up and made it through the door which was unlocked.

Our astonishment could only be imagined to see that there were no benches or kneelers. In front of us were two rows of individual logs, each about 18 to 20 inches high, cut from the trunks of large trees. There was no heat even though we could see an old stove through the doorway by the altar. We were glad of our warm winter woolies and overshoes!

At the front of the room was a small, wooden altar. On it was a crucifix, old and in need of repair. On either side of the crucifix were two candlesticks, green with a lack of cleaning, but evidently made of brass. Behind the altar was a wooden partition which separated a small room. This was furnished with a rickety table, chair, sleeping platform and a make-shift cupboard.

Shortly after us, Delphine Taylor and her sons came in and she started a fire in the stove. Mrs. Taylor, who lived the closest to the church, was the custodian. Father Gamache arrived on time. He had travelled all the way from Winterburn, an Indian Reserve, not too far from Edmonton. When Mass was over the five of us "new Parishioners" introduced ourselves to Father Gamache and to Colonel and Madame Hanington and to Albert Ceal and his daughter. Father Gamache did not have much time to chat, he was in a hurry to set off on the next leg of his journey to Entrance, Brule and Grande Cache - a very arduous one on horseback and snowshoes. He promised to drop by and visit Mother in Bliss on his way back in two days.

Father Gamache was a true missionary. His courage and dedication impressed us greatly and won our deep respect. His knowledge of the Cree language was the main reason for serving the faithful in these remote areas and under the most difficult conditions. When we got to know him we found out that his meals consisted of pork and beans and bread. He told us that when he was on the trail, especially in winter, he could thaw out a can of pork and beans over a campfire in a relatively short length of time. He would eat his meal right from the can. Needless to say he did not need many cooking utensils or supplies when he travelled.

Mother, with her usual forthright manner, asked the men to build a set of steps for the front of the Church to facilitate the ladies, especially the older ones, to get to the entrance. By the last Sunday of December, the men had put together a set of wooden steps which was a very welcome Christmas gift and much appreciated by all.

We were not satisfied with having just one Mass, so we began making inquiries about a town close to Hinton with a church and a resident Priest. Jasper was our choice as it was more suitable than Edson and the road was paved for part of the way. Every Sunday we set off to attend Mass. Father M. Volk of Jasper was our first friend among the Clergy in Canada. He was very kind and glad to help our Hinton chapel with supplies from what he could spare from his church.

Shortly after this the St. Regis Company decided to build the North West Pulp and Power Mill in Hinton. This would mean a good increase of the number of Catholics coming to the town.

In 1954, a meeting was organized on behalf of all the parishioners and my mother, Mrs. Louise Theobald, volunteered to write a letter to His Grace Archbishop MacDonald requesting the necessity of a Mass at least once a fortnight.

His Grace, with his zeal and concern for his needy flock, decided to come himself to give us the privilege of having a second Mass during each month. Unfortunately, he fell ill with a stroke and was admitted to hospital, much to the disappointment and grief of all concerned.

My mother saw an opportunity for the use of her organizational skills and was prepared to use these for getting the Church started. She instituted a Catechism class for the children and at the next meeting she was (appointed) nominated to be the honorary Secretary of the Catholic Association of Hinton.

All members contributed towards the needs of the Church and since there was an increased attendance, a stipend of \$15.00 was allotted to the priest who came twice a month to say Mass. Seats and kneelers were made with the money raised by having bake sales, bingo and the showing of films. An organ was donated by the Archbishop. At this time a letter from Mrs. Theobald to Francis, Cardinal Spellman of New York brought a donation of \$100.00 U.S. This formed the nucleus for the Church Building Fund. Before measures were taken to raise funds, we were as poor as the proverbial church mouse, without a penny to our credit.

In 1955 the Catholic congregation began to grow in number and a permanent priest became a pressing need. Negotiations were put in motion with the Archbishop. Father Lynch, O.M.I. was appointed as Parish Priest and served in this capacity from 1956 to 1958. In the summer, the Sisters of Service from Edson came to prepare the children for their First Holy Communion. The Sisters stayed at the Cribb home for that period while the family were away in Edmonton.

In 1956 the St. Regis North West Pulp and Power Mill was completed. This industry brought an influx of mill workers from Cornerbrook Newfoundland, Quebec, and other provinces across Canada. The town had grown overnight with residential areas, shops, banks and service stations springing up like mushrooms. The number of Catholics had increased considerably and Mass was now held in the Legion Hall. Father Lynch used the old church building as a rectory. Unfortunately, the building was destroyed by fire, everything was lost and the Priest was left homeless.

At a meeting, it was decided to put up a structure which would be used as a rectory with the basement being used as the Chapel. This arrangement continued until overcrowding once again necessitated asking Dan Flegel, who was the Manager of the new Athabasca Hotel, for the use of his banquet rooms.

The Catholic Association felt the need of having a permanent church. Funds had to be raised. Father Malone, C.Ss.R., who took over from Father Lynch, became our new Parish Priest. Mrs. Theobald handed over the money in the building fund to Father Malone. She was still very active in the organization and very interested in the building of the church. Father Malone invited Father Campbell to meet with the parishioners to give guidance and organize the fund raising. With pledges from each family, enough money was raised after many difficulties and frustrations. The Archbishop gave his permission to purchase four plots of land on which the new church was to be built.

In 1959, through the tireless efforts and zeal of Father Malone, plans were drawn up by a Viennese Architect and the contractor was Bird Construction of Edmonton. By the end of the year a magnificent and unique building was near completion. The parishioners requested that the new church have Our Lady of the Foothills as Patroness. The Archbishop approved and on January 31, 1960, the new edifice was blessed and consecrated by Coadjutor Archbishop Jordan, O.M.I.

This account is taken from the excerpt written by Mrs. Louise Theobald. My mother was very proud of the fact that she had the privilege of being placed in this world for a particular purpose. She had come from a distant country to help build the Catholic Church in Hinton. She practiced the motto "Stand for God and His Glory".

A Brief History of the Catholic Church in Hinton by M. Wright

During the early years (1909 - 1959) the railway and coal hamlets of Bliss and Drinnan (now Hinton) and Entrance were visited on a rotating basis by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

Fathers Lyze, Beaudry, Cunningham, Wheeler, Camine, Landrigan, Wall, Gamache and Rheume travelled extensively in the foothills area to meet the spiritual needs of the Catholic Native and White populations. Their visits and kind actions are still remembered fondly by any of the long-time residents of this area.

By 1953, the steadily growing community of 25 families erected a chapel and Mass was celebrated once a month by Father Gamache. The mission at that time was called Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Catechesis of the Hinton children was taught by local teachers and by the Sisters of Service from Edson.

During 1955 and 1956, the population of Hinton increased dramatically. Northwestern Pulp and Power (now Weldwood) was established and new residents, especially from Quebec, were arriving steadily. Hintonites definitely now needed a resident priest to serve their community.

In the Fall of 1956, Our Lady of Mount Carmel parish officially installed their first Parish Priest, Father James Lynch, O.M.I. The original chapel was destroyed by fire so Mass was said in various locations including the rectory basement until 1959 when pledges were requested in order to build a permanent Church.

The Catholic community now numbered over 200 families and a larger facility was urgently required. Land was purchased in the new Hinton Valley district and a lovely 250 seat Church was proudly erected. In January of 1960, Archbishop Anthony Jordan, O.M.I. officially blessed and dedicated the new church "Our Lady of the Foothills". A rectory next to the church was completed in 1972.

By 1981, a steering committee was formed by concerned parishioners interested in establishing a Catholic School. The district received its official status from the Government in 1982 and welcomed its first students at the Gerard Redmond Community Catholic School in September 1983. The school was named in honor of a former parish priest who had worked tirelessly to establish a Catholic education centre in Hinton.

Our Catholic Community has, since those early mission years, continued to thrive, prosper and grow. We owe its vitality in part to the dedication and earnest faith of those early Oblate missionaries, in part to the hard-working Redemptorist and Diocesan Fathers and most of all to the many people of our community.

RECOLLECTIONS FROM 1955

By Margaret (Scotty) Clarke

Jim and I arrived in Hinton by train from Kamloops on the July 1st weekend with Dorothy who was two and a half years old. Des Crossley met us because he had hired Jim to be his assistant in the Forestry Department. We three were the reason why the CN stopped in Hinton that day. The Official stop en route between Edson and Jasper was Entrance.

The station itself hasn't changed much since then, but it now has a coat of paint. Skogg's Store was across the gravel road and next to it was the Hinton Hotel with its three front gables on the second storey. Those are now covered, more or less. Hinton Motors was the final establishment just east of the hotel, and that was Hinton as seen from Highway 16,

We had arrived with just luggage for the summer because the homes were supposed to be finished by the autumn. Des drove us to the valley where North Western Pulp and Power had taken over the Doran Cabins near Mah's Cafe. The Crossley family lived in the central house which used to be the office and home for the cabin manager. We were given one under an enormous group of trees. It had two rooms; a black camp stove with chimney in the first one and a toilet and shower room cut out of the back bedroom.

The site for the future pulp mill was just a gravel flat beside the river and the valley townsite was still a hay field where the Doran Riding Stables of Jasper used to winter their horses. Canada Catering was setting up bunkhouses for the construction crew of 1,500 men who would build the mill. Although now moved, some of the bunkhouses can still be seen today over by the Tree Nursery.

In the middle of that first week a man arrived at our cabin one hot afternoon and introduced himself as Lloyd Cribb, teacher in the local school and representative of Father Rheume, O.M.I., our Hinton Mission priest. Father Rheume also served the Grande Cache mission village of native Indians, weather and roads permitting.

The following Sunday the Cribb family arrived to take us to church because we didn't have a car. We drove the gravel road beside the mill site, up a winding hillside where Woodlands Garage now stands, across the railroad tracks and west past Skogg's store. There we wound uphill towards the two-room school where Lloyd and Doreen Cribb taught grades 1 to 12. The school ground is now behind the Big Horn Motel, later built by the Tomusiaks.

The little log church had to be reached by walking from the school ground towards the bluff that overlooked the highway. We had noticed an old army jeep and an Alberta Forest Service half-ton parked beside the trail down to the little church. The Cribbs had their son and daughter, Christopher and Frances with them and we had Dorothy. Lloyd explained that the jeep belonged to Col. and Mme. Hanington from Entrance. The truck belonged to Earl Kellerman who worked for the Forestry Service. Earl had recently married Mabel Moberly, one of the famous guiding families of this area.

Once inside the church we seated ourselves in one of the eight pews, four on a side, and Lloyd went behind the small altar to serve Mass for Father. Our first mass in our new home. It was still the old Latin Mass, so we felt that something was familiar. Father Reheume baptized our son Doran James Clarke the following year. He was the first baby to be baptized into the parish of Hinton.

We met the Hanington's, the Kellerman's, and Delphine Taylor and some of her children after Mass. Father was in such a rush to get on his way to Grande Cache so our conversation was brief. That was our introduction to our new parish in this wilderness in 1955!