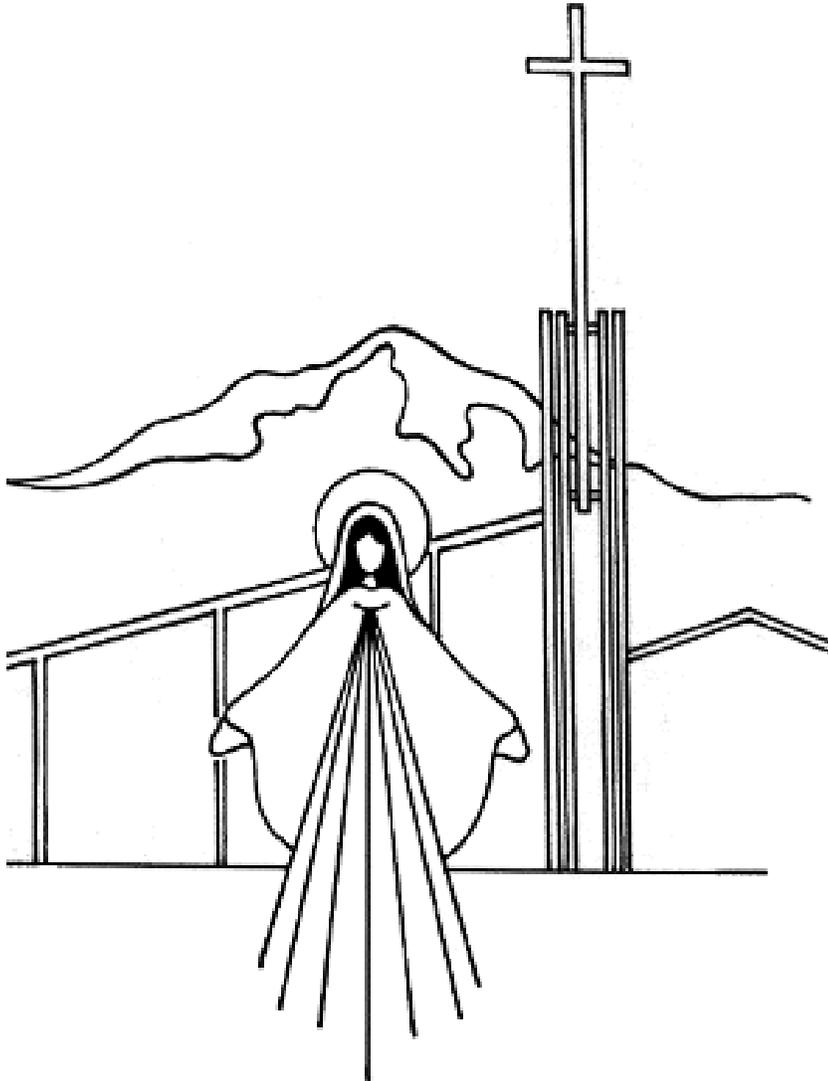


ASHLAND OREGON

1890 – 2015

The logo for Our Lady of the Mountain Catholic Church was designed by Joy Ziehl, winner of a logo design contest in the early 1990s. Joy was a convert who entered the church through RCIA in the late 1980s.



PREFACE

No worthwhile endeavor can be accomplished entirely by one person alone. In April 2012 Frank Hayes, member of the Parish Council, asked me to write a parish history. I agreed, intending to write something brief, perhaps four or five pages. Starting with the Parish Archives, I soon learned that others had compiled histories before me:

Mrs. Gordon MacCracken (first name unknown) mostly copied extensively from history books and the few newspaper articles accessible at the time, in 1941.

Nancy Lynch took a new approach by asking parishioners to write their memories in 1989. Including Nancy's, eleven stories were compiled into a book titled PRECIOUS MEMORIES: A history of Our Lady of the Mountain Catholic Church.

Gladdie Higgins based her history on the same sources used by Mrs. MacCracken, with additional information from more recent newspaper articles and from the Catholic Sentinel. It was written in 1985 and updated in 1987. Doug Legg added information in 1996.

Now, in 2016, I offer my own version of church history. It is based mostly on three resources: Catholic Church records of the Pacific Northwest ... Jacksonville 1854-1885, mentions of church activities in the Ashland Tidings 1876-2015, and the Catholic Sentinel 1889-1992. Brief bits of information came from about a dozen other sources.

Special thanks are due for help from our parish office staff: Shirley Perry, Carolina Senestraro, and Stephanie Hoffman. Every one of them could put their hands on information when I did not know what to ask for, finding resources tucked away here and there, and offering ideas I never thought of.

Deacon Ricardo Cervantes, whose computer skills far surpassed my own, and whose patience carried me over many a mountain of frustration.

Joe and Elaine Delsman donated pictures of the new church, from the estate of James Delsman.

Sally Steele provided information on the logo design.

Paul Steele, who took what I wrote, and made both a short and a longer version for our web site. He also created the slide show of the Dedication photos.

Joseph A. Schiwiek, Archives Records Manager for the Archdiocese of Portland photocopied and sent to me the entire Ashland portion of the Bishop Leipzig files – all 187 pages – which provided a wealth of information not otherwise available to me.

There are likely as many others who helped, but my memory fails me, and so I offer both an apology and many thanks.

Carita M. Culmer, May, 2016.

Catholics in Ashland

By Carita M. Culmer

History of the Catholic Church in southern Oregon begins in Jacksonville which, in September of 1853, was a gold-mining boom town, and therefore the population center of the area. At that time, it was visited by Rev. James Croke, a missionary of the Archdiocese of Oregon, who celebrated the first Mass in the home of Charles Casey. Fr. Croke remained in Jacksonville five years. He collected, over time, \$856.00 among the miners of southern Oregon and northern California, for construction of a church in Jacksonville. The church was dedicated November 1, 1858, by Archbishop Francis Norbert Blanchet; then Fr. Croke left Jacksonville for another assignment. This Church of St. Joseph became the center of Catholic development in southern Oregon. It was the mother church for sixteen missions, many of which later became independent parishes.

Ashland comes into the record with the baptism of an Ashland child – an infant girl born 28 December, 1861 who was baptized April 20, 1862, by G. F. Fierens, parish priest.¹ “Parish priest” at that time meant the one priest for all the missions in the area. Baptisms, marriages, and the occasional funeral throughout the large mission territory were all duly recorded in St. Joseph’s parish records. Of special interest is the following:

“November 27, 1869, we the undersigned parish priest have baptized at Ashland, Jackson Co., Mary Ann, born the 30th of August last, a daughter of John and Anna Devlin of Ashland. Godfather, John Murphy, godmother, Miss Rose Reilly. (Signed) F. X. Blanchet, Pastor.² This was the first recorded instance of the sacrament administered *in Ashland*. In another entry, dated April 8, 1871, Father Blanchet certifies that a lay woman privately baptized, in Ashland, a five month old boy who was dying.³ Evidently, Catholics in the frontier area were well versed in their faith practices.

Newspaper accounts of weddings were typically brief, as evidenced by this reported marriage of an Ashland couple: MARRIED: Van Vorst – Hall – In Jacksonville, November 30th by Rev. F. X. Blanchet. Benjamin Van Vorst and Mrs. Clara Hall.⁴

Marriages of Ashland couples continued to take place in Jacksonville, but Ashland children were usually baptized in Ashland, exact location not specified.

¹ Catholic Church records of the Pacific Northwest: Jacksonville Register (1854-1885). Compiled by Harriet Duncan Munnick. Binford & Mort Publishing: Portland, Oregon, 1984, p8-9-10.

² Ibid. p58-59.

³ Ibid p65-66-67.

⁴ Ashland Tidings December 9, 1876.

The first confirmation of an Ashland resident, and the first such sacrament administered in Ashland, is recorded thusly: May 14, 1880, we the undersigned Rector certify that His Grace, Archbishop Seghers, has confirmed Daniel Conway in Houk's Hall, Ashland.⁵ (Signed) F. X. Blanchet, Rector. Houk's Hall was a dance hall and gathering place for all sorts of public activities. Two days later, the Archbishop confirmed a long list of people in St. Joseph's Church, Jacksonville.

The Ashland Tidings reported on May 6, 1881 that "Rev. Blanchet gave a lecture on the Catholic Church at Houk's Hall in Ashland, which was well received. He said there are about 40 Catholics in the area, including children, and he hopes to build a church in Ashland soon."

After nearly 25 years at Jacksonville, serving all of southwest Oregon, Rev. F. X. Blanchet was transferred to a parish in Marion County.⁶

Building a church would have to wait a few years. On March 29th, 1889, Rev. F. S. Noel advertised for bids to build Catholic churches in Medford and Ashland. Ashland people had already contributed a considerable sum toward that end, and Fr. Noel had secured lots in the Railroad Addition. Ayers, Barbour & Elviage won the bid, and construction of the new church began early April, making it the sixth church building in Ashland. Located on 6th Street, it would be 26 X 40 feet, ground measure, plus an adjoining 10 X 20 feet vestry, and would cost about \$2,200. By mid-July, the building was nearly completed and waiting for the pews. Material for the pews arrived early August, and the contractors figured another week to finish construction and paint the building.⁷

And finally: "There will be services in the new Catholic Church in Ashland next Sunday at 10 a.m., Rev. Father Noel officiating."⁸ That was the Friday newspaper, so the first Mass in the new church would have been Sunday, August 25, 1889.

So, Ashland Catholics finally had a church of their own, but not yet a parish priest or regularly scheduled Masses. The weekly edition of the Ashland tidings, published every Friday, would include a notice whenever a Mass was scheduled for the following Sunday. Those announcements came at infrequent intervals – October 25th and December 8th 1889, then nothing until April 11th, 1890. The following month, on May 9th, a Sunday service was announced, adding that "Rev. F. S. Noel, of Jacksonville, has been transferred to the charge of the church at Roseburg, and Rev. Father Clark, of Roseburg, has come to Jacksonville to take the former's place as pastor of the churches in Jackson County." Somewhere along the way,

⁵ Catholic Church records ... p. 132-133. Some articles spell the name Houk, others spell it Houck.

⁶ Ashland Tidings September 2, 1887.

⁷ Ashland Tidings April 18, 1889; April 19, 1889; July 19, 1889; August 9, 1889.

⁸ Ashland Tidings August 23, 1889.

the missionary priest of all southwestern Oregon became pastor of a much smaller, more manageable geographic area. Services were held in June and again in August. The first full year of Ashland's new Catholic Church saw a total of seven Masses. Father Clark had other mission parishes to attend, and other duties round and about the county.

The church was formally dedicated the 17th of September, 1890, by Archbishop Gross.⁹ Originally called St. Mary's Church, its formal name became Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary. The name might have been influenced by a stain which appeared on the plaster inside the church after a severe winter storm, according to an article in the Ashland Tidings.¹⁰ Some people thought the stain looked like a woman, and might represent the Virgin Mary.

Over the next few years, the church itself saw very little activity, possibly because it was still a mission, infrequently visited by a priest. On August 18, 1894, Father Faber officiated at a home wedding in Ashland. Then, over the next several months, three marriages of Ashland couples in Jacksonville, then another home wedding in Ashland March 7, 1895. This was not too unusual for the time. Many couples were married by a Justice of the Peace, or at the County Courthouse, while religious marriages, Catholic or Protestant, usually took place in the bride's home.

In 1897, it was announced the Rev. Father Newell will come from Portland for a five-day mission May 26-30, when he will "... deliver a series of sermons in the Catholic Church of Ashland. Everybody will be welcome to attend. Father Newell is known to be an excellent preacher in the Dominican Order of California."¹¹

Later that year, what was possibly the first newspaper mention of the name Church of the Holy Rosary, and also possibly the first wedding at the church, this item appeared in the Ashland Tidings: "A very pretty wedding took place at 8 o'clock on Monday evening at the Church of the Holy Rosary.,¹² the contracting parties being Mr. G. J. Schira and Miss Sadie E. Conley. The church was beautifully decorated for the occasion and the ceremony, which was performed by the Rev. L. P. Desmarais, of Jacksonville, took place before the altar under a beautiful floral marriage bell."¹³

Archbishop William H. Gross, who had dedicated Holy Rosary Church in 1890, died November 14, 1898. Executor for his estate was Rev. Francis Xavier Blanchet, who for twenty-

⁹ Catholic Sentinel Oct. 9, 1890, page 5, col. 3.

¹⁰ Latter-day histories report the stain appearing in 1912, but the Ashland Tidings printed an article about it, titled "Is it a miracle?" on the same page as the "Dedication" article Sept, 26, 1890, page 3, col. 1. Ann Billeter, of the Jackson County Historical Society, discovered it and called it to my attention.

¹¹ Ashland Tidings 24 May 1897.

¹² Catholic Sentinel shows "Church of the Most Holy Rosary."

¹³ Ashland Tidings 26 August 1897.

five years was pastor of Jacksonville and all the missions in southwestern Oregon, including Ashland. According to the Archbishop's will, he held Holy Rosary Church *property* (only the land, not the building) in trust. Upon his death, ownership of this property was transferred to the Archdiocese of Portland.¹⁴

On a more somber note, priests are people, too, and they can suffer. On 22 May 1899, it was reported that Father Desmarais was "very sick at his home with a relapse of the grippe (influenza). A week later, Father Desmarais was strong enough to consult with the governor over the telephone, pleading for the life of a convicted killer. When the governor rejected his plea, the priest went to the jail to console the condemned prisoner, and help him prepare to die the next morning. But later that night, the governor commuted the sentence to life imprisonment."¹⁵

For the first ten years of its existence, the church was a mission of Jacksonville. That is, Ashland had no priest of its own. Holy Mass was offered whenever the very busy priest in Jacksonville could work it into his schedule. Then a momentous change took place. The Catholic Sentinel of July 13, 1899 reported that "The Catholic parish in Southern Oregon has been divided. Hereafter the priest located at Jacksonville will have charge of the work there and as far north as Grants Pass. The priest located at Ashland will have charge of the missions there and in Klamath and Lake counties."

A mission is a church without a priest of its own. It is served by a visiting or traveling priest. When a priest is assigned to take up residence in the town, then that church becomes a parish. The very next issue of the Catholic Sentinel, August 10th, stated "Reverend Father Peter Beutgen ... has been appointed ... to the Ashland Parish." A house had been built next to the church, and Fr. Beutgen became the first resident priest. Without fanfare, the Catholic Church in Ashland had graduated from mission to parish.

Tuberculosis was a common cause of death in those early days when, in March of 1909, Father Levesque conducted what was probably the first funeral service at Holy Rosary Church "... for Miss Elizabeth Eifert, who died of tuberculosis at age 35."¹⁶

It would be another two years before the church reached another important milestone. The Ashland Tidings of June 26, 1911 reported "LARGE CLASS CONFIRMED – The Right Reverend Alex. Christie, Archbishop of Oregon, accompanied by Rev. Father DeLorimer of Portland and Rev. Father VanClarenbeck of Medford, came to Ashland Sunday and confirmed a large class at

¹⁴ Probate records, Jackson County, Oregon, Book 3/3 Tracing 4/128. Credit for this interesting item goes to Chuck Eccleston, volunteer for Jackson County Genealogical Society.

¹⁵ Ashland Tidings 29 May 1899.

¹⁶ Ashland Tidings 4 March 1909.

the local Catholic Church. The class had been prepared by Father Charles Mackin, S. J. Those confirmed were: William Bachman, Adrian Wolf, Karl Beemer, Margaret Perozzi, Edith Moody, George Evans, John Finneran, Ira Neville, Elmer Neville, Gertrude Meikle, Helen McDougal, Rosa Banks, Meriam Banks, Cecelia Provost, Ella Evans, Mamie Finneran, Lizzie Finneran.” This was the first confirmation class in the Ashland parish.

The 1911 Polk’s Jackson County Directory lists Church of the Holy Rosary, Rev. Charles Mackin, S. J., pastor at 6th and C Streets. The 1912 directory has much more detail, listing Sunday Low Mass at 8 A.M.; High Mass and sermon, 10:30 A.M., Sunday School 2:30 P.M.; Benediction 7:30 P.M. Weekdays, Mass 8 A.M. Listed under Religious Societies were the following: Altar Society of the Church of the Holy Rosary meets 2d Thursday of each month at 2:30 P.M. at 120 6th. Mrs. Joe Ziegler, Pres.: Mrs. Bassett, Sec.; Mrs. Mary Griffin, Treas. Young Ladies’ Sodality of the Church of the Holy Rosary – Mary Sander – Prefect; Mary Finneran – Treas. Young Men’s Sodality of the Church of the Holy Rosary – Meets 2d and 4th Tuesdays at 120 6th. Leo Sander, Prefect; George Bassett, Asst. Prefect; Don Bassett, Sec.; Henry Sander, Treas. This would indicate a very active, participating congregation.

When the 1914 Jackson County Directory came out, it listed the same services, with Rev. Leo P. Szybowicz as pastor.¹⁷ Mrs. Joe Ziegler continued as President of the Altar Society, new officers Emily A. Kaiser, Secretary, and Mrs. J. P. Wolf, Treasurer. Young Ladies Sodality listed Mary Delsman as Prefect, Elizabeth Finneran as Secretary (a new office), and Rosa Banks, Treasurer. Young Men’s St. Aloysins Society shows Leo Sander as President, Charles H. Delsman, Secretary, and Rev. Leo P. Szybowicz, Director.

Probably about 1915, the name of the church was changed from Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, often called simply Holy Rosary Church, to Our Lady of the Mountain. When Mrs. Pierre Provost died January 1916, it was announced that funeral services would be held from the Church of Our Lady of the Mountain, Father Dolphin to officiate.¹⁸ This is the first newspaper item naming Our Lady of the Mountain. Hard to know for sure when the name changed, as the newspaper often simply refers to the “Catholic Church.”

The Ashland congregation must have been very pleased when one of their own became a priest. Louis A. Sander, who grew up in Ashland, was ordained to the priesthood Saturday, May 18, 1918. The following month, on Sunday, June 23rd, he celebrated High Mass in his home parish. He was the first from Ashland to be ordained.¹⁹

¹⁷ Catholic Sentinel spells it Cyzbowicz. In an era when priests were never referred to by their first names, he was called “Father Leo.”

¹⁸ Ashland Tidings 27 January 1916.

¹⁹ Catholic Sentinel May 16 and June 27, 1918. Rev. Sander’s transition from deacon to priest was very brief. He was ordained a deacon Friday morning and a priest Saturday morning. This might be some kind of record.

How long a priest serves in a given parish depends upon a number of factors, so parishioners become accustomed to orderly rotations. But sometimes the unexpected happens. Father Conaty had served as pastor for about seven years, when he died June 6, 1923 at the rectory. He had never quite recovered after being struck down by a runaway horse a year earlier. Dr. Swedenburg was in attendance at the time, and pronounced the death due to "paralysis of the heart." His obituary stated that Father Conaty had practiced law in North Dakota before becoming a priest.²⁰

A church is more than four walls and a roof. It needs some basic furnishings, such as altar, tabernacle and pews, and probably a crucifix. Stations of the Cross were donated in memory of Clara Delsman, who died October 4, 1925. She had provided a sum of money for that purpose. The Stations were installed in the old church on 6th and C Streets, went with the congregation when we moved to the new church in 1959, and remain with us to the present day. The bell from the old church was also moved to the new location.

The church was built in 1889, was a mission for ten years, then became a parish in 1899. But it reverted to mission status when Fr. Beutgen was reassigned, with no replacement for Ashland. For many years, it went back and forth from mission to parish to mission again, as priest assignments fluctuated. Finally, in 1946, the Reverend Pius Beatus Baur was named Pastor of the Ashland church, which was then restored to the status of parish,²¹ and parish it has remained to the present day.²²

Having a priest in residence makes a big difference for parishioners. When the church was a mission, Father Meagher, Chaplain at Providence Hospital in Medford, came to Ashland every Sunday to conduct one Mass, then quickly returned to the hospital, his primary responsibility. Father Baur, as resident pastor, was able to offer two Sunday Masses at first, then added weekday Masses.²³ Soon, Saturday Catechism was offered, with the Baltimore Catechism as textbook. Children in this class received their First Holy Communion June 29, 1947.

September of 1958 brought the beginning of another big change. Father William S. Walsh, formerly a U.S. Army chaplain, became our pastor. Very soon, he stated the obvious, that we had outgrown our little church, and we needed to raise money to build a bigger one. Every Sunday, he made the appeal for a building fund, and we all kept on giving. He had found a good location, and his parents even helped out with a large contribution to help purchase the

²⁰ Catholic Sentinel June 6 and June 14, 1923.

²¹ Catholic Sentinel June 27, 1946 and August 1, 1946. Ashland Tidings June 13, 1946 shows Rev. Pius B. Baur.

²² Bishop Leipzig remarks on cover sheet for the Ashland file.

²³ Ashland Daily Tidings June 22, July 5, July 13, 1946.

property. Construction of the church began March 1959.²⁴ The construction company did most of the work, but parishioners helped as they could. Even the children of the parish helped, clearing away rocks from the building site while their parents painted, set in plants and shrubs, and installed plumbing. The new church included some treasures from the old one, namely the church bell and Stations of the Cross. In September, just one year after his arrival, Father Walsh and OLM parishioners enjoyed Holy Mass in their new home.

Years later, parishioner Charles Delsman recalled the Baptism of his oldest daughter, Frances. "The parish was going to be moved from its old location (in 1959). Father Walsh thought it would be a shame to baptize Frances in the old church one week, then for her to be a parishioner of the new church the next week. He solved the problem by performing half the baptism in the old church, then the other half in the new church. So Frances was the last person to receive the sacrament of Baptism in the old church and the first person to be baptized in the new church."²⁵ Archbishop Howard came in June 1960, to dedicate the new church.²⁶

In 1963, the old church on sixth and C Streets was purchased by the Pentecostal Church of God. Continuing with its original purpose, it remained a house of prayer, but was remodeled in keeping with a Protestant style of worship. Changes were only on the inside. The exterior had to remain as originally built, because of its historic status. In 1975, the old rectory house was demolished to make room for a parking lot.²⁷

Not content to rest on his laurels, Fr. Walsh once again launched an important project, this time to establish a Newman Center. His parents purchased a house near the college, and donated it to the parish. It was remodeled into a religious center. In addition to hosting Newman Club meetings and Holy Mass, it became a residence for three Sisters of the Holy Name, who served both the parish and the Newman Apostolate. The Newman Center was dedicated by Archbishop Dwyer Sunday, December 15th, 1968.²⁸ Sadly, Father Walsh was unable to take part in that ceremony. He had retired for reasons of health, and was no longer in Ashland.²⁹

A trio of Dominicans came to the parish September 11, 1977, forming a religious community to handle the multitude of tasks that used to be done by a single priest. Father Denis Riley was named pastor, succeeding Father Elwin Schwab. Father Cassian Lewinski to be associate pastor and campus minister at Southern Oregon State [Newman Center], and Brother

²⁴ Catholic Sentinel Sept. 4, 1958, p4; Feb. 12, 1959, p4.

²⁵ Catholic Sentinel Oct. 7, 1988.

²⁶ Catholic Sentinel June 23, 1960, p1.

²⁷ Ashland Daily Tidings July 18, 1975, p1, 6.

²⁸ Catholic Sentinel June 2, 1967, p17; Dec. 13, 1968, p1.

²⁹ Catholic Sentinel Jan. 5, 1968, p1, p22.

Daniel Thomas to assist at both the parish and Newman Center, according to the Very Rev. Paul Scanlon, OP, provincial for the Western Dominican Province at Oakland. “This is a five year commitment,” he added, “and we hope to add to the staffing in the next few years. We are hoping to add someone who could work with the Spanish-speaking and someone who could do retreat work.”³⁰ Soon, a Spanish Mass was being offered Sundays at 7:15 a.m., with Rev. Roberto A. de Otero officiating.

Some parishioners began forming a Dominican Third Order chapter in 1987, under the direction of Fr. David Farrugia. Third Order members seek a deeper spiritual life, while remaining in the world. They began formation by studying the Dominican way of life and the pillars that define the Order. The Chapter was committed to community life, prayer, reflection, and entering more fully into the life and activity of the parish. Service included Eucharistic visits to the homebound, transport to Mass, respite for a caregiver, a friendly phone call, other forms of “mission work,” various parish activities and services, in addition to a structured, monastic prayer life.³¹

In 1988, Fr. David Farrugia was interviewed for an article in the Catholic Sentinel. Having been at OLM for just one year, he was impressed by the organizations and individuals who serve the parish community and help as many people as possible to be actively involved. He specifically named Pastoral Council, Administrative Council, and Liturgy Committee, which assist with the day to day running of the parish. Fr. David himself quickly became involved in ministry to the elderly, sick and shut-ins. He noted long-standing service groups including St. Anne’s Altar Society and St. Vincent de Paul Society. A Dominican Third Order was formed, with about 20 people who followed the way of the Dominican order. He was especially enthused about religious education, with teaching of the younger children for First Holy Communion, overseen by Sister Mary Grace Schonlau. Jim Geyer came on board to help with organizing junior high and high school students, and supervise the Confirmation program. Sister Grace was also a resource person for adult education. The Newman Center, physically separated but very connected to the church, had its own ministry in the form of an Open House and Welcoming Party each fall, a monthly open house for faculty and staff of SOSOC, plus classes, discussions and Holy Day Masses. “People are getting more involved in the running of the parish,” he said. The era when a pastor could run the parish by himself is gone; nowadays it is impossible to run a parish unless you have the involvement and encouragement of the people.”

Fr. David also mentioned that OLM does outreach to the community at large, such as hosting a three-hour ecumenical service beginning at noon on Good Friday with Ashland’s mainstream Protestant churches.

³⁰ Catholic Sentinel Sept. 2, 1977, p14.

³¹ Historical summary by Connie Hendrycks OPL.

Near the end of 1988, Fr. David was looking forward to being involved in celebrating the 100th anniversary of Our Lady of the Mountain parish [in 1990]. Plans were already underway, and the parish hall was in the final stages of remodeling. Enthusiasm was high, as the whole parish became involved in preparations for the big event.³²

Our Lady of the Mountain parish celebrated its centennial on Sunday, Oct. 2nd, 1990. Holy Mass was offered by Archbishop William Levada, concelebrated with Dominican Fathers David Farrugia (pastor) and Raymond Finerty. The occasion marked 100 years since dedication of the original church on September 17, 1890. That church, still standing on the corner of sixth and C Streets, was the spiritual home of about 97 men, women and children. One hundred years later, the parish had about 545 families, including retirees, younger families, and many children.³³

After completion of their twenty-five-year commitment, the three Dominican priests left Ashland July, 2002. They were replaced by one diocesan priest, Father Joseph Betschart. One priest to take over the job of three; a newly ordained priest on his first parish assignment. Before entering religious studies, he had served five years as an officer in the Navy, so he was well prepared for leadership. He was also passionate about everyone's potential for sainthood. He frequently and joyfully urged us to become the saints we were born to be, reminding us that we were all saints in training. Some parishioners recalled a time during Mass, just as he was approaching the ambo, when a cell phone went off. Its ring tone was "When the Saints Go Marching In!"

Fr. Joseph was very supportive of Dominican Laity, including acting as their advisor. In 2003, he asked the Dominican Laity to lead a Communion Service one day each week, which consisted of recitation of the Rosary, Liturgy of the Hours, and Holy Communion. He also actively engaged with young adults, as Director of the Newman Center at the college.

The church was in need of infrastructure upgrades and remodeling. At his request, Milo Shubat drew up some preliminary plans.³⁴ Fr. Joseph's great desire was to have an adoration chapel, and that was included in the plans, but it was not to happen under his watch. In 2007, Pope Benedict requested his presence in Rome, where he was appointed Academic Dean at the Pontifical North American College in Rome.

His replacement, Fr. Sean Weeks, came to us from Our Lady of the Lake parish in Lake Oswego. Fr. Sean was very much into physical activity, and his homilies were both verbally and physically dynamic. He especially reached out to high school students by providing religious instruction, going to ball games and cheering himself hoarse, and in other ways demonstrating

³² Catholic Sentinel Friday Oct. 7, 1988.

³³ Catholic Sentinel Oct. 12, 1990.

³⁴ Email from Milo Shubat August 28, 2015.

to them that a life of faith is anything but dull. The son of a deputy sheriff, he also did community outreach by doing ride-alongs with the Ashland Police one night a week.

Meanwhile, after the Dominicans left, interest in Dominican Laity dropped off. Over time, the Third Order collectively aged, died or moved away. Younger people were not attracted to the discipline of the Order. Eventually, the Chapter could not be sustained. They decided on formal dissolution, merging into Holy Rosary Chapter in Portland, as Prayer Members, on June 13th, 2010. They remain fully committed to serving Parish needs here at OLM.

For the remodeling project, Fr. Sean spearheaded a fundraising campaign, which lasted from late 2009 until late 2010. Remodeling of the church began October 2010, with the removal of everything inside the building.

The parish hall became our church during construction, and it served that purpose very well. Altar and tabernacle, Sanctuary lamp, ambo and holy oils were moved from the church proper to the room adjacent to the social hall, which was separated from the hall by a sliding sectioned wall. For Holy Mass, the wall was opened to reveal this temporary Sanctuary. Tables were removed from the hall and, at first, chairs were arranged in rows to serve as pews. Church pews had been sent out for refurbishing; as they came back a few at a time, they replaced the rows of chairs in the hall. After Sunday morning Mass, the hall was changed from “church” to social hall. The wall was closed, giving suitable privacy to the Sanctuary, kitchen staff brought out coffee and donuts, and visiting commenced. After the social hour, the change was reversed in time for the 11:30 Mass. Just before Christmas 2010, we moved back into what seemed like a brand new church. Our first Mass there was on Christmas Eve. The remodel even included the adoration chapel so long desired by Fr. Joseph.

When Archbishop Vlazney came to dedicate the “new” church, he quietly asked Fr. Sean how much we owed him for all the splendid work. That’s because it is so often necessary for a parish to borrow from the bishop’s funds to finance big projects. But Fr. Sean replied that we owed him nothing, because we raised all the money we needed first, before starting construction.

Fr. Sean also encouraged and mentored Ricardo Cervantes, who had been studying to become a permanent deacon. On October 29, 2011, after years of prayer and study, Cervantes was ordained at St. Mary’s Cathedral by Archbishop John Vlazney.³⁵ Now, he regularly assists at Holy Mass, conducts Communion Service when the priest is out of town, is Hispanic Ministry Coordinator and, as Pastoral Assistant, performs other duties as assigned.

In July 2012, after five years serving Our Lady of the Mountain parish, Fr. Sean was assigned to St. Pius X parish and school in Portland. He was replaced by Fr. Angelo Te.

³⁵ Catholic Sentinel Nov. 1, 2011.

After his ordination on June 4, 2011, Fr. Angelo was assigned to St. Peter's and St. Mark's in Eugene as Parochial Vicar; two months later he was moved to Sacred Heart church in Medford, where he served until the following July. He then replaced Fr. Sean at OLM

Fr. Joseph, after five years in Rome, returned to Oregon, where the community of Mount Angel Seminary installed him as the new President-Rector on October 24, 2012.

Meanwhile, the little old church on Sixth and "C" Streets, outgrown by the Pentecostals, is no longer a place of worship. It was purchased in 2013 by Greg Conaway and Cory Ross, who have remodeled it into a residence.³⁶ The exterior still looks like the original church, as required of a registered historic building. OLM parishioners took the original bell when they moved to the new church on Hillview, but Conaway found a close match, and that one has been installed in the refurbished belfry. The interior has a whole new look, as a private home. However, two church features remain: the Gothic windows typical of its church origins, and the *bas-relief* cross on the cove molding over what used to be the Sanctuary.

Recalling the old story of a big storm, and a leak that left a stain on the plaster that resembled a woman, Mr. Conaway provided the following information: While removing the choir loft and layers of paint and wallpaper down to the original plaster, they discovered an old stain above the entrance, just below one side of the belfry. They had also found a huge amount of debris in the belfry, which blocked the drain holes. If the same thing happened in earlier days, it probably caused the drain pan to overflow during a storm, resulting in a leak, which in turn stained the plaster. In addition, with the choir loft removed, a Gothic shaped five feet wide window frame was revealed directly above the main entrance.³⁷

Fr. Angelo served two years at OLM as Parish Administrator, then was assigned to Ascension Parish in Portland as pastor. He was replaced by Fr. Maro Escano.

Fr. Maro, who arrived July 1, 2014, came to us after serving as Administrator of St. Helen Parish in Junction City, and St. Rose of Lima Parish in Monroe. He has revived our earlier customs of Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament on First Fridays. He also started a new way of honoring individuals: One Sunday each month, the 9:30 Mass Intentions are for those who have birthdays in that month, and on a different Sunday the same for those who have wedding anniversaries.

We have come a long way since those early days of Holy Mass attended by a handful of people in someone's home once or twice a year in the 1850s, then growing so they needed to find ever larger quarters for ever more people, until finally there were enough to justify building a church of their own in 1889. That first little church was built to hold about 70 or 80

³⁶ Ashland Daily Tidings Monday, Nov. 10, 2014; Mail Tribune Thursday, Nov. 13, 2014.

³⁷ Information provided by Greg Conaway in conversation.

people.³⁸ It was more than ample for the Catholic population at the time, which was estimated to be about 97. Even with a church, Mass was only occasional, whenever a missionary priest came around.

The population would grow until, by the time Fr. Walsh arrived in 1958, the church was packed full at both of the two Sunday Masses. The new church, built in 1959, has a seating capacity of 300 in the pews, plus overflow seating in the social hall, and there are four weekend Masses. These days, the parish does a “head count census” of Mass attendance every year in December. The count for December of 2015 was 1,836 individuals.

September 17, 2015 marked 125 years since the dedication of the first Catholic Church in Ashland. Our Lady of the Mountain Catholic Parish is still going strong as we pray, worship and serve, both within and beyond church walls.

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Brief Mentions

Hispanic Ministry at Our Lady of the Mountain

By Alma Rosa Alvarez

Hispanic Ministry at Our Lady of the Mountain began in July 1997. Visiting priest, Miguel B. de las Casas Rolland, O.P. was charged by Fr. Anthony Rosevear, O.P., pastor of OLM to look into the viability of a Hispanic Ministry in Ashland. On July 6th, ten people interested in exploring the idea of Hispanic Ministry assembled during coffee and donuts. These individuals, with the help of Fr. Miguel coordinated a Hispanic-Anglo Potluck to foster and gauge OLM’s capacity for cross-cultural relations. After a successful potluck, parishioners, primarily from the Dominican Laity and the Social Justice Committee, worked on coordinating a Spanish mass. On July 20th, OLM celebrated its first Spanish language mass with approximately 50 people in attendance. Attendees were Anglo and Hispanic. Music and liturgical supplies were provided by Shepard of the Valley’s Hispanic choir and deacon-in-training, Raul Rodriguez. At this mass, Lou Montaigne provided a beautiful welcome to attendees. On July 27th, a second mass was offered in Spanish with the help of OLM faithful and Shepherd of the Valley Hispanic choir members. There were over 100 attendees. We have had Spanish mass at OLM ever since.

That fall, then DRE, Shirley Garcia, expanded religious education offerings to include Spanish language classes. While there were no Spanish-speaking priests in the early years of OLM Hispanic Ministry, this obstacle was mitigated by pastors willing to read the mass in Spanish and have translations of their homilies. Later, once Raul Rodriguez was ordained deacon, he was assigned to OLM and provided Spanish language homilies. Another great help with the language barrier was Fr. Carmelo, a retired priest from Sacred Heart Church in Medford. Once Deacon Rodriguez was assigned to a parish in Dayton, Oregon, Father Carmelo celebrated mass in Spanish at OLM for several years. Ricardo Cervantes, meanwhile, was hired

³⁸ Estimated from articles in Ashland Tidings August 23, 1889, and Catholic Sentinel May 2, 1889, page 4, col. 3.

as a part-time coordinator for Hispanic Ministry. In 2011, he was ordained deacon. He currently occupies a pastoral associate position and continues guiding Hispanic Ministry.

Dominican Laity By Connie Hendrycks

Some parishioners began forming a Dominican Third Order chapter in 1987, under the direction of Fr. David Farrugia. Third Order members seek a deeper spiritual life, while remaining in the world. They began formation by studying the Dominican way of life and the pillars that define the Order. The Chapter was committed to community life, prayer, reflection, and entering more fully into the life and activity of the parish. Service included Eucharistic visits to the homebound, transport to Mass, respite for a caregiver, a friendly phone call, other forms of “mission work,” various parish activities and services, in addition to a structured, monastic prayer life.

Father Joseph, our first pastor after the Dominican priests left Our Lady of the Mountain, was very supportive of Dominican Laity, including acting as their advisor. In 2003, he asked Dominican Laity to lead a Communion Service one day each week, which consisted of recitation of the Rosary, Liturgy of the Hours, and distribution of Holy Communion. This was a “first” for the Parish.

Sadly, after the Dominicans left, interest in Dominican Laity dropped off. Younger people were not attracted to the discipline of the Order, and membership declined. Eventually, the Chapter could not be sustained. The remaining members decided on formal dissolution, and Holy Rosary Chapter in Portland accepted them as Prayer Members on June 13th, 2010. The Laity remain fully committed to serving Parish needs here at OLM.

Ashland Catholics find unity in ACTS retreats By Clarice Keating³⁹

For many years, Carolina Senestraro said, she went to Mass at Our Lady of the Mountain Parish and felt like she was surrounded by acquaintances. Now that she and more than 100 other parishioners have gone on ACTS retreats, Senestraro said her church community feels more like an extended family, with people lingering on Sundays long after coffee and doughnuts. “You can’t get rid of us,” Senestraro said.

Coordinated by a team of leaders at Our Lady of the Mountain, ACTS retreats are held twice a year – once in the fall for women and once in the spring for men. The goal is to allow an opportunity for women and men to build purpose in their prayer lives, increase their presence at the liturgy and cultivate friendships in their parish community.

³⁹ Catholic Sentinel July 4-17, 2014, p4

Created by Texas-based Cursillo instructors in the late 1980s, ACTS is connected to the themes of Adoration, Community, Theology and Service. In 2011, a group of Our Lady of the Mountain parishioners attended an ACTS retreat in Texas along with then-pastor, Father Sean Weeks.

They were so moved by the experience that the five men and Father Weeks invited team leaders from Texas to teach Ashland Catholics how to organize their own retreats. After years of coordinating the weekends, Ashland ACTS leaders hope to take their show on the road as early as next year, leading retreats for people in other areas of Oregon.

“This isn’t like going to a retreat to sit all day and listen to a presenter,” Father Weeks said. “Instead, it’s men speaking to men about their relationship with Christ, and at the end of the retreat they come back with a strong sense of community.” Retreat organizers keep mum about what exactly happens at the retreat. Not knowing what to expect helps attendees keep open minds and hearts.

Karl Kemper, an athletic director and assistant principal, said the experience changed his life and relationship with the Lord. “Today, I don’t get out of church without getting about 30 hugs on Sundays,” Kemper said. “It’s really all about being joyful Christians.” Kemper said the ACTS weekends he’s attended as a retreatant and as a leader have been some of the best days in his life.

A parishioner at Our Lady of the Mountain for more than 30 years, Louann Rasmussen said their parish had always struggled to get young people involved in ministries. That has all changed. People of all ages are stepping forward to help at bake sales or to serve on the funeral committee.

Rev. Louis A. Sander

By Carita M. Culmer

Clips from the Catholic Sentinel:

Ordination of Rev. Louis A. Sander.⁴⁰

Louis A. Sander is a native of Kansas City, Missouri, where he was born April 3, 1895. As a boy he came to Tillamook, Oregon, with his parents. He received his first schooling from the Sisters of St. Mary’s. He has five brothers and one sister. His sister is a Carmelite nun in Santa Clara, California. He received his education at Mt. Angel College and Seminary and St. Patrick’s Seminary, Menlo Park, California. He was ordained a deacon Friday morning and a priest Saturday morning (May 17 as a deacon, and May 18 as a priest) by Archbishop Christie.⁴¹

Father Sander in his home parish.⁴²

Rev. Louis A. Sander celebrated High Mass in Ashland, his home parish, Sunday, June 23. The pastor was Rev. Father Conaty. Father Sander grew to manhood in Ashland, where his family has been, and he is looked upon with pride as the first newly ordained priest from the parish of Ashland.

⁴⁰ Catholic Sentinel May 16, 1918 p4, col. 6.

⁴¹ This is confusing. Article is dated before the happening, but speaks as though it has already happened.

⁴² Catholic Sentinel June 27, 1918 p4, col. 7

The following information was gleaned from the Sander family records, which were provided by Diane Engelhardt:

Louis Aloysius Sander was born 3 April 1895 in Moberly, Missouri, the 10th child of Joseph Clement Sander and Anna Klara (Pferdekamp) Sander. He was ordained on May 18, 1918 at St. Mary's Cathedral in Portland, and offered his first Mass at Mt. Angel Abbey the following day. Among his numerous assignments Father Louie was Pastor at McMinnville, Oregon, where his mother stayed with him until her death.

He was an accomplished preacher, and gave radio talks in Portland over KGW for many years. Father Louie left a heritage of his writings in the form of editorials, which he wrote for twelve years, every week. These editorials are on microfilm in the office of the Catholic Sentinel in Portland, and the library of Mt. Angel Abbey.

Father Sander had a special love for flowers. In McMinnville, it was the gladioli, in Corvallis he started roses with the help of Al's top soil and manure, to be continued at St. Anthony's Parish. He propagated many of his own and knew the name of every one. At Waldport he started collecting, cutting, and polishing stones from the beaches, and 'thunder eggs' from Eastern Oregon.

He died at Providence Hospital on December 13, 1955, after a long illness with cancer, and was buried in Mt. Calvary Cemetery in Portland, Oregon.

Reverend Pius Beatus Baur

By Carita M. Culmer

From 1928-1946 Our Lady of the Mountain was a mission church, served by Father Meagher, Chaplain at Sacred Heart Hospital. It was restored as a separate parish when Father Pius Baur was installed as resident pastor August 1st, 1946.⁴³

Fr. Baur was born and raised in Germany, and was ordained at Rottenburg June 29, 1933. He came to Oregon as a young man, was incardinated into the archdiocese in June, 1946, when he was appointed pastor of Our Lady of the Mountain church, Ashland.⁴⁴

From the memories of Betty Jo Krug: "As I remember, Father Bauer was our first resident priest. He lived in the rectory next to the church. He had no housekeeper, cook or secretary! Father Bauer was a fine priest and person, but he wasn't really very happy here. He spoke with a very pronounced German accent, and it seemed he found it very difficult to relate to people."⁴⁵

He wasn't really our first resident priest, but he was the first one since 1928.

⁴³ Catholic Sentinel June 27, 1946 and August 1, 1946. Ashland Tidings June 13, 1946.

⁴⁴ Catholic 1964 June 26, p1, col. 4

⁴⁵ Precious Memories: A history of Our Lady of the Mountain Catholic Church, compiled by Nancy Lynch, 1989.

Language difficulties aside, Fr. Baur transformed Our Lady of the Mountain from a mission church offering only one Sunday Mass per week to a parish offering two Sunday Masses, plus weekday Masses and Saturday Catechism.

In 1951, Fr. Baur was appointed pastor of St. Edward's Parish in Lebanon, and Fr. John Greene was assigned to the Ashland parish.⁴⁶ Fr. Baur returned to Germany in 1958, to celebrate his twenty-fifth anniversary of ordination.⁴⁷

He was pastor of St. Paul church in Silverton in 1964, when he died of a heart attack at the Dusseldorf, Germany airport, en route to his home to visit relatives.⁴⁸

Rev. William S. Walsh

By Carita M. Culmer

Fr. Walsh grew up in Portland, attending Immaculate Heart grade school, Columbia Prep, and was in the first class at Columbia College, now the University of Portland. He graduated from St. Patrick's seminary, Menlo Park, California, in 1926, then ordained September 12th at St. Mary's Cathedral in Portland, the first priest to be ordained for the Archdiocese by Archbishop Howard.⁴⁹

He served at St. Francis parish in Portland, Sacred Heart in Gervais, St. Lawrence parish, and St. Cecilia in Portland. In 1943, while pastor at St. Cecilia, he joined the Army as a chaplain. After serving 30 months in Europe, he returned to St. Cecilia. In 1950, he was called back to active duty as chaplain and served 14 months in Korea, then returned to the U.S. He served as chaplain at Army posts in Washington, Louisiana and Kansas before being released from active duty in 1957. He was assigned as pastor at Ashland in 1958.

A new church, parish hall and rectory were built by the time he completed his first year as pastor in 1959. Archbishop Howard came in June 1960, to dedicate the new church.⁵⁰ (This was the same Archbishop Howard who ordained Fr. Walsh in 1926.) In 1961, Fr. Walsh celebrated the 35th anniversary of his ordination.

Not content to rest on his laurels, Fr. Walsh once again launched an important project, this time to establish a Newman Center. His parents had purchased a house near the college, and donated it to the parish for that purpose. The Newman Center was dedicated by

⁴⁶ Catholic Sentinel August 23, 1951, p1, col. 7-8.

⁴⁷ Catholic Sentinel June 19, 1958, p4, col 1& 2.

⁴⁸ Catholic Sentinel June 26, 1964, p1, col. 4.

⁴⁹ Catholic Sentinel Sept. 7, 1961, p4, col. 1.

⁵⁰ Edward D. Howard was archbishop of the Archdiocese of Portland 1926-1966.

Archbishop Dwyer Sunday, December 15th, 1968.⁵¹ Sadly, Father Walsh was unable to take part in that ceremony. He had retired for reasons of health, and was no longer in Ashland.⁵²

Summary

by Carita M. Culmer

In the late nineteenth century, Catholics in Ashland had no church of their own. Beginning in the late 1850s, Ashland was a mission of St. Joseph's church in Jacksonville. At first, whenever a missionary priest was available, Holy Mass was offered in a private home. Soon, the congregation outgrew the capacity of a house, and larger quarters were borrowed or rented. In 1889, under the direction of Rev. F.S. Noel, funds were raised, and a church was built that summer on land previously purchased by the archbishop. That church, located at Sixth and "C" streets, was dedicated the following year, on September 17, 1890 by Most Reverend Archbishop Gross, assisted by Rev. Father Clark of Jacksonville, missionary pastor of the church. The church was given the name Church of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, usually called simply "Holy Rosary Church," or more often just "the Catholic Church."

Ashland Catholics finally had a church of their own, but no priest, so they remained a mission. Whenever a priest was scheduled for Ashland, a notice would be posted in the Ashland Tidings on the Friday before the Sunday he was due. Services were few and far between. In its first year of existence, there were only seven services.

Over time, more priests became available. In 1899, ten years after the church was built, Father Peter Beutgen was assigned to Ashland. He had a house built next door, and took up residence. With a church of their own and a priest of their own, the church was elevated from mission to parish, Holy Mass could be celebrated every Sunday, and related activities began to develop.

Alas, Father Beutgen was reassigned to another area, and there was no one to replace him, so Ashland once again became a mission. Over time, the Ashland church went back and forth between mission and parish, depending on priest availability. Meanwhile, the congregation continued to grow. Around 1912, exact date unknown, the church name was changed from Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary to Our Lady of the Mountain.

Reverend Pius B. Baur was installed as pastor of Our Lady of the Mountain parish on Sunday evening, July 21, 1946. From that time forward, it was never again a mission church. Fr. Baur started Saturday Catechism classes for school children, and those students received their First Holy Communion June 29, 1947.

⁵¹ Catholic Sentinel June 2, 1967, p17; Dec. 13, 1968, p1.

⁵² Catholic Sentinel Jan. 5, 1968, p1, p22.

Fr. Baur was reassigned in 1951. After a series of short-term pastors, Fr. William S. Walsh, formerly a chaplain in the U.S. Army, was named parish priest in 1958. He very soon stated the obvious – we needed a new, larger, church. The old church had a seating capacity of 97, which was adequate early on, but the congregation had long since outgrown it. Even with two Sunday Masses, the pews were full, and it was standing room only for those who did not get there early.

Fr. Walsh started a building campaign, with second collections, bazaars, rummage sales, special dinners, and whatever else could bring in the needed money. Land was purchased at what is now the corner of Hillview Drive and Peachey Road, a new church was built with a seating capacity of 300, and the first Mass was celebrated September 1959, just one year after Fr. Walsh arrived. A parish hall and rectory had also been built, allowing for many more parish activities.

In 1968, Fr. Walsh's parents purchased a house next to the college, and donated it to the parish to be used as a Newman Center for Southern Oregon College students. It was dedicated December, 1968. By then, Fr. Walsh had already retired due to ill health, so he was not there for the dedication. Church, parish hall, rectory, Newman Center – all came about thanks to Fr. Walsh.

Dominican priests came in 1977. The Dominican order requires at least three priests in one location, so the parish had more priests, who could engage more parishioners in more activities. About this time, the ecumenical movement was popular, so Catholics and Protestants were reaching out and engaging with one another, especially among younger people.

After twenty-five years, the Dominicans left Ashland July 2002, and Our Lady of the Mountain church went back to being a one-priest parish. Fr. Joseph Betschart was newly ordained, but his background as an officer in the U.S. Navy had very well prepared him for leadership.

By then, the church was in need of infrastructure upgrades and remodeling. Plans were drawn up, and a capital campaign was started. In 2007, Fr. Joseph was called to service in Rome. He was replaced by Fr. Sean Weeks, who continued the fundraising, and remodeling was completed. Fr. Sean was reassigned in 2012, and was replaced by Fr. Angelo Te, who was replaced by Fr. Maro Escano on July 1, 2014.

September 17, 2015 marks 125 years since the dedication of the first Catholic Church in Ashland. Our Lady of the Mountain Catholic parish is still going strong.

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**Our Lady of the Mountain
Catholic Church**

(Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary)

Dedicated Sept. 17, 1890