

St. Andrew's celebrates 75 years

Boulder City parish has rich history

St. Andrews Catholic Community will be celebrating its 75th anniversary on Friday, October 13, 2006.

The liturgical celebration begins at 6:00 P.M. followed by a complimentary buffet in the Parish Hall.

Please RSVP by Friday, September 22, 2006. Contact Mary at the parish office (293-7500) or standrew@dioceseoflasvegas.org.

THE JOURNEY OF ST. ANDREW CATHOLIC COMMUNITY 1931 - 2006

The news spread rapidly. It was 1930, and "Uncle Sam" was getting ready to build the world's highest concrete dam in the Black Canyon of the Colorado River, between Nevada and Arizona. Men by the thousands beat a path to the construction site in the Southern Nevada desert. All wanted to be a part of the challenge of building the greatest engineering project of all time.

Years earlier, engineers from the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation had surveyed the dam and town sites. The first arrivals lived in tents and shacks until dormitories for the singles and houses for the married people could be built. Some even slept on the courthouse lawn in Las Vegas near the hiring hall, hoping to get jobs at the dam site. It was rough going—the hardships were great.

But, like the Pilgrims who set foot in America three centuries ago, these men and women, these pioneers who landed in Boulder City to build Hoover Dam in 1931, brought their faith with them. Their zeal for worship no doubt would have pleased the Catholic, Mormon and Protestant missionaries who left footprints in the desert sands of Southern Nevada many years earlier—long before people had dreamed of damming the mighty Colorado River in Black Canyon.

The '31ers, those directly involved with the construction of the dam, began their church buildings almost as soon as they moved into houses built by the Hoover Dam contractor, Six Companies, Inc., and the Bureau of Reclamation. Construction funds came from the church's national and regional headquarters as well as from local residents. Six Companies and Reclamation pitched in with machinery and voluntary labor. Churchmen and non-churchmen alike donated hours of their time.

Pioneer Bruce Eaton, a foreman with the Bureau of Reclamation and in charge of all maintenance for the public housing, once said that everyone seemed to agree that Boulder City needed churches if it were to do its best job in building Hoover Dam.

When French architect S. R. DeBoer, under contract with the Bureau of Reclamation, laid out Boulder City, he designated certain lots which were leased by Uncle Sam to the churches. Following the turnover by the Federal Government of the community in 1960 to an incorporated citizenry, this general leasing policy was continued and the churches were also permitted to buy their lots.

Nevada Catholic Bishop Thomas Gorman did not waste any time in providing for the spiritual needs of the Catholic families in Boulder City. In 1931, he established a parish named for St. Andrew, brother of St. Peter, first vicar and pope of the Catholic Church. Priests from Las Vegas celebrated Mass in homes and in Anderson's mess hall until the parish's first pastor, Father Cuthbert D. Hogan, arrived early in 1932. Under his direction, construction of a chapel on the triangular lot bordered by Utah, Wyoming and H Streets began. Parishioners supplied the labor, while Six Companies donated materials. William McCullough, who worked in the power house for the Bureau of Reclamation at Hoover Dam, assisted by Joseph Dietch, a Christian Brother, built pews and cabinets in the Six Companies carpenter shop.

Although the parish began to gather for community worship in 1931, the Bureau of Reclamation's official monthly magazine, *The Reclamation Era*, April 1932, records that construction of the Catholic church was under way. Later it was reported that the church was dedicated on April 10, 1932. Its construction was closely followed by the Episcopal, Grace Community and Mormon churches. The May 1932 issue of *ERA*, reporting on construction in Boulder City, carried this item: "Boulder City now has three churches, a community church headed by Rev. Thomas Stevenson and which is representative of 20 Protestant denominations; a Catholic church with Father Hogan as pastor; and an Episcopal church with Rev. Arthur S. Keane as pastor." A month later the magazine reported: "A branch of the Latter-day Saints (Mormon

Church) has been established in Boulder City, with Laurence Wortley as presiding elder.

"Six Companies' Frank Crowe and Reclamation's Walker Young, construction engineers at the Hoover Dam site, and their crews who volunteered labor, were largely responsible for the speedy construction of the church buildings. Crowe, although not a regular "church-goer" due to his seven-day work schedule, felt the Christian influence in the lives of the people who worked on the dam was very important, according to S. L. "Red" Wixson, Crowe's right-hand man who lived in Boulder City after his retirement.

A building that once served as a temporary jail for early-day law offenders in Boulder City was moved from the east entrance of the town to the corner of Wyoming and Utah Streets, adjacent to the church building, to serve as the priest's residence. A later pastor, Father John Ryan, in 1945 extensively remodeled the building into a comfortable home.

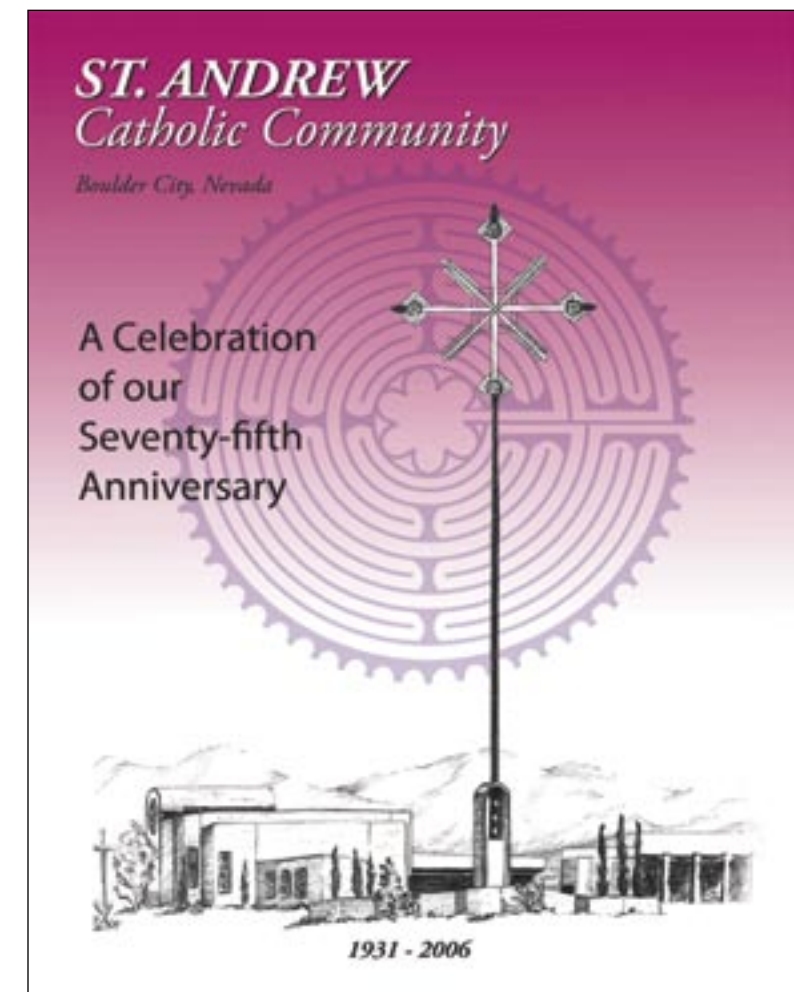
The St. Andrew Altar Society and the Holy Name Society were organized in 1932 and two years later the Sisters of Holy Family and women of the parish began religious instruction for children. These groups fostered the growth of community involvement in parish activities.

Foreseeing the time when the small St. Andrew's chapel could not accommodate the ever-increasing parish membership, Father Joseph Baldus in 1977 began efforts to purchase land for a new church site. In 1978 Father Joseph Annese became pastor of St. Andrew's. After two and a half years of five liturgies on each weekend in the small chapel and a round trip to Searchlight, Nevada, for a sixth liturgy there, Father Annese said that it was definitely time for more worship space and greater parish facilities. With permission of the bishop at that time, the Most Reverend Norman McFarland, Father Annese finalized arrangements with the City for the present location on San Felipe Drive and proceeded with plans for the new church, parish offices, hall and residence.

In beautiful autumn weather on October 12, 1980, Father Annese and this community broke ground for the new church building, office and parish centers. Some 500 parishioners celebrated the event by participating in an outdoor liturgy. The A. F. Construction Company of Las Vegas began work November 12, 1980, and the new building rose quickly. Interestingly, the sanctuary of the church sits on the first tee of Boulder City's original golf course on which some of the city's pioneer golfers knocked little white balls among the desert's cacti and rocks. Near the southeast corner of St. Andrew's property, there remains the last tee box of that desert golf course.

Father Annese recalls the first service held in the new building before it was fully completed. It was on a cold, windy Easter Sunday, April 19, 1981, that the Mass of the Resurrection was celebrated. The beautiful faceted glass windows and the pews were not yet installed, but the sound of the wind whistling through the church was diminished by the enthusiastic singing of the parishioners in their joy at realizing that their church was deed becoming a reality.

It was standing-room only at the two Easter Masses in the new church building. The 500 folding chairs that substituted for pews were oc-



cupied and several hundred people stood along the back and side walls. Approximately 1,400 people attended the two services, although Father Annese had celebrated a well-attended 8:00 P.M. Easter Vigil liturgy the day before in the old chapel on Wyoming Street.

That year, 1981, the first communion class of the parish celebrated its First Eucharist in the far-from-completed church on May 3. On May 24 the church was officially occupied. A regular schedule of church services began on Pentecost Sunday, June 7. The Golden Jubilee of St. Andrew's Parish was celebrated November 30, 1981, and the new church building, which seats 500 comfortably, was dedicated by the Most Reverend Norman F. McFarland, Bishop of Reno-Las Vegas. Some forty priests of the Diocese of Reno-Las Vegas joined many parishioners in the dedication.

The priest's residence, matching the architecture of the new church, was built a year later. In planning the new St. Andrew's Church, Father Annese preserved much of the history of the parish and memories of early Hoover Dam construction. The old wooden cross and the bronze statue of St. Andrew were brought from the old building and mounted on the wall of the new church at the entrance. That statue of the patron saint, from its cubicle above the entrance of the old building, and the cross on the roof had looked upon worshippers entering and leaving the little chapel on Wyoming Street for forty-eight years. The statue was given in 1931 in memory of J. F. Shea, whose firm was one of Six Companies Inc. that built Hoover Dam. The inscription on the base of the statue is the only inscription on any of the church appointments.

A striking feature of the new St. Andrew's Sanctuary is the massive concrete altar beneath the domed ceiling. Explains Father Annese: "The poured reinforced concrete base of the table is analogous to Hoover Dam which enhanced life by means of taming the unpredictable energy of the river water into a controlled source for flood control, hydroelectric power, irrigation and recreation. The dam is a source of new life just as the Eucharist celebrated at this altar is the source of spiritual nourishment and divine

life for the members of this Catholic Christian Community."

The large candlesticks are designed along the lines of the intake towers at the dam site. The ambo (pulpit) picks up the theme of the dam's fluted concrete similar to the altar. The front of the ambo where the Gospel book rests is decorated with an X-shaped cross symbolizing the patron saint of this community, St. Andrew who traditionally is believed to have died on an X-shaped cross. The four stones inserted in the cross are actual borings that were made before the dam was built. The X-shaped cross is made from brass because of all the brass used in the dam itself.

Since the Dam is the determinate factor in the very existence of Boulder City and consequently, of St. Andrew Catholic Community, many of the Liturgical furnishings in the church were designed to incorporate themes from the construction of the Dam.

The Baptismal font is constructed of polished grey granite highlighted with a terra cotta vein. Warmed water cascades from the infant immersion basin on the uppermost level, over the descending steps into the lower adult immersion pond where the elect are baptized during the Easter Vigil Liturgy into Christ's Community of the Catholic Church. On the corner of the walls is the Ambry (oil cabinet) which contains the sacred ointments used in sacramental rites.

The Paschal Candlestick, slightly larger than the Processional Candlesticks, is a symbol of the risen Christ—again inspired by the tall towers at the dam. It is made prominent during the Easter season, and thereafter is placed near the Baptismal Font while recalling the Spirit Over Living Waters theme as depicted in the stained glass window hovering over the font.

The stained-glass windows throughout the church, depict the seven sacraments -- Baptism, Confirmation, Penance or Reconciliation, The Eucharist, The Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders and Marriage. The large circular abstract window in the sanctuary is titled "The Window of Love & Life." This window through symbol and abstract design mani-

PASTORS WHO HAVE SERVED DURING THESE 75 YEARS

1931 - 1934

Cuthbert E. Hogan

1934 - 1935

Rev. John Lamb

1935 - 1937

Rev. Joseph Donnellan

1938 - 1941

Rev. John Groves

1941 - 1942

Rev. Gerard Fanning

1942 - 1945

Rev. William Devlin

1945 - 1948

Rev. John J. Ryan

1948 - 1950

Rev. Florence Flahive

1950 - 1953

Rev. Joseph Donnellan

1953 - 1954

Rev. William Condon

1954 - 1956

Rev. George Eagleton

1956 - 1964

Msgr. John Sibon

1964 - 1968

Rev. George Fanning

1968 - 1977

Rev. Hugh Smith

1977 - 1978

Msgr. Joseph Baldus

1978 - present

Rev. Joseph P. Annese

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St. Andrews offer a variety of worship and prayer opportunities for spiritual growth

feasts God's eternal action radiating through creation. The circle symbolizes balance, perfection and wholeness. In the world of nature, the sun is the source of life and growth just as God is the creative process and source of all love and life.

In the vestibule of the church, the Holy Water Font was carved out of the original marble from the Baptismal Font in the original church. This new form is accented by plaques, which are of the identical granite of the new Baptismal Font.

The latch-hook tapestry which hangs on the wall across from the Baptismal Font was created by designer, Sue Massi. Sister Mary Georgina Gleason, who provided initial input on its design, came from California to start and oversee the project. Parishioners — men, women and children became an enthusiastic community of "latch-hookers." The wall hanging, created with love, incorporates the symbols of the Liturgy—the Chalice, grapes, wheat and the Sacred Host. The words "Welcome to our Catholic

Christian Community" were chosen to greet visitors to the parish. A total of 1600 cumulative hours of patient labor went into the project which was completed in six weeks in August of 1983.

In 1982, the library and the large multipurpose classroom were completed. Later, the multipurpose classroom was divided into two classrooms, St. Joseph and St. Mary. Today, the parish hall is also used as a multipurpose room for religious education classes, adult enrichment workshops, as well as parish socials and other church events.

In 1998, the Blessed Sacrament Chapel was built onto the church (left corner) to provide a special setting for the Tabernacle that would be separate but accessible to all. The Tabernacle, by its size and simplicity, calls immediate attention to the presence of the Blessed Eucharist with a Sanctuary Lamp continuously burning nearby. The Blessed Sacrament Chapel, except for the stain glass windows, was designed and built by volunteers of the parish. It is used during the week to offer a

more intimate and practical daily liturgy and for private adoration on weekdays.

Ours is a unique Christian community because Boulder City is unique in the true sense that if there were no Hoover Dam, there would—in all likelihood—be no Boulder City, no St. Andrew's. In the course of these seventy-five years, fifteen priests have had turns as Pastors in this Catholic Christian Community. Not only has the community grown, although not as rapidly as other Catholic communities in Clark County because of the controlled-growth policy in Boulder City, but the assembly has grown in consciousness, aware of their God-given gifts, and have in turn used these gifts in a variety of ministries so obvious in our community.

In the fall of 1999, construction of the St. Andrew's Labyrinth was begun with all of the work done by volunteers, and the material needed was donated. The Labyrinth, dedicated on September 30, 2000, offers away of journeying, inviting one into a sacred quiet place. The labyrinth

is a path for prayer and medication. Fr. Joe Annese, after much reading about the labyrinth and then participating in a workshop at Chartres, France, at the famous cathedral and its labyrinth, which was built around 1220, decided that indeed, the labyrinth is definitely a tool for prayer and meditation and a great addition to St. Andrew's. To walk the labyrinth is to make a pilgrimage to discover something about oneself and God. People of all faiths have since come to St. Andrew's to walk on the sacred ground. For a continued path to spiritual growth, St. Andrew's parishioners, on a volunteer basis, funded the Woman at the Well statue. In June of 2006 the bronze statute arrived and was placed under the olive tree at the courtyard entrance. The statue is the result of a wonderful marriage of thought and inspiration, for a period of one year, between Fr. Joe Annese and the sculptor, Timothy P. Schmalz, of Kitchener, Canada. The Woman at the Well statue was dedicated on June 24, 2006 and represents the inspiring story of the Samaritan

Woman and Jesus as recorded in John's Gospel, Chapter 4. People of all faiths are welcome to come and rest in the presence of this original piece of art and reflect on the messages in the gospel.

St. Andrew's is a community aware of its mission to worship, to give thanks and to serve others, thus helping to create the reign of God on Earth.

During the early years of St. Andrew's up until 2005, the Altar Society was an active group and prominent in the day-to-day workings of the parish. They not only provided decorations for liturgies, they held an annual boutique, rummage and bake sale, and other fund raising events for the community. When they were first formed in the early years of the church, they also ran the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) program (or Religious Education program). As the community grew and as many of the members aged, other ministries and staff personnel took over many of their functions.