

Father Mazzuchelli also supervised the building of the first Bishop's House at Dubuque in 1839 and the new St. Raphael's Cathedral in the same village. The latter was dedicated in 1861.

Upon the shoulders of newly-appointed Bishop Loras fell the huge task of bringing the spiritual comforts of the Catholic faith to the inhabitants of a vast and unexplored area. In 1839 Iowa was still a territory. The inhabitants numbered a few miners around Dubuque, some soldiers stationed at military posts, a few immigrants planning to homestead on the fertile land, and, of course, the thousands of Indians that roamed free and unmolested throughout the land.

Interesting it is to glance at the statistics Bishop Loras himself gives of his immense diocese in September, 1840.

Population	Iowa including Minnesota etc.	Wisconsin	Illinois around Galena
Catholics	3,100	3,600	1,200
Protestants	1,500	10,000	6,000
Non-believers	25,000	16,000	9,000
Indians	28,500	11,000	

Clergy: 11. No native priest.

Missions: Iowa 5, Wisconsin 9, Illinois 4.

Baptisms: (1 year)

Iowa, Children 123, Adults 7.

Illinois, Children 75, Adults 6.

Wisconsin, Unknown.

Confirmation: 191.

Easter Communion: Iowa 350, Illinois 250, Wisconsin Unknown.

The last statistical statement from his pen just four months before his demise gave the following figures for his diocese which now was co-extensive with the state of Iowa alone:

"8th October, 1857
 54,000 Catholics
 550,000 Heretics and non-believers
 50 Adult Baptisms -- Converts
 30,000 Easter Communions
 48 Mission priests
 1 Native priest
 50 Churches
 40 Chapels or Missions
 1 seminary not yet completed
 1 hospital
 5 boarding schools for girls held by Sisters
 1 monastery of Trappists
 2 houses for Brothers of the Sacred Heart who keep a free school."

This was the new diocese to which Bishop Loras had come in 1839 with the few missionary priests whom he had assembled in Europe. That his labors bore fruit is evidenced if we look at the number of Catholics and dioceses in this state today. According to figures obtained from the Diocesan Chancery Offices, the Catholic population of Iowa at the present time is 435,624. The

state is divided into four dioceses and the Catholic population of each is as follows:

The Archdiocese of Dubuque 169,684

The Diocese of Sioux City 103,000

The Diocese of Davenport 92,506

The Diocese of Des Moines 70,434

The population of Iowa is 2,736,408, Catholics make up about 16% of the population.

Bishop Loras died in 1858, but before his death he had established parishes in northwest Iowa, (the present Sioux City diocese), and had heard reports of the missionary priests who had visited in our own vicinity.

First Parish In Sioux City Diocese

To Fort Dodge belongs the honor of being the community to establish the first parish within the present Sioux City Diocese. Although priests from Fort Des Moines traveled in the Fort Dodge area as early as 1852 the first resident pastor, Father Vahey, did not arrive until the spring of 1856. The construction of the first church was started in the fall of 1856 and was dedicated under the title of "Corpus Christi." Father J. C. Griffin who was among the first pastors of our parishes, was later pastor of this Corpus Christi Church, the mother church of our diocese.

Early Catholic History of Sioux City

There is some question as to when and where the first Mass was celebrated in Sioux City. Some of the old settlers claimed that Father DeSmet, the celebrated missionary who passed up and down the Missouri River several times before and after the foundation of Sioux City, had visited at the Theophile Brughier home on one of these trips and possibly offered Mass on that occasion. Mr. Brughier, a French Canadian, had settled in what is now Sioux City in 1849 and the present Riverside Park was part of his farm.

Although some historians claim that Father DeSmet was the first Mass offered in Sioux City, others say that the first Mass in Sioux City was offered by Father Tracy of St. John's, now Jackson, Nebraska. Father Jeremiah Tracy was born in Drogheda, Ireland, in 1821 he came to America with his parents in 1831, was educated and taught school in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and was one of the defenders of the Catholic Church in