

History of the Vincentian Priest in Pampa

In 1626, St. Vincent de Paul organized a group of priests to give missions in the country districts of France, and also to train young men for the priesthood. When this group was recognized by Rome it took the name of CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION, and each member was entitled to put the letters C. M. after his name as an abbreviation of the title of his order. However, especially in America, this group came to be known as VINCENTIANS, a name coming from the founder, Vincent.

In 1818, a group of Vincentians came to America, led by Felix de Andreis, C.M., and settled in Perryville, Missouri, where they began caring for the spiritual needs of the early settlers of the area, and they also established St. Mary's Seminary, a training school for priests, and the first college west of the Mississippi.

Felix de Andreis, C. M. died shortly after his arrival in America, and due to his holiness has already arrived at the first step of the three steps to Sainthood, and is Venerable Felix de Andreis. He is buried in the Vincentian Church in Perryville. Missouri.

Somewhere in the early part of the year of 1940, Father Marshall Winne, C.M.V., the Provincial (head) of the Western Province of American Vincentians, was on his way to California on a Santa Fe train. When he arrived at Amarillo, Texas. Bishop Lucey, the Bishop of Amarillo boarded the train. From there on these two clergymen sat together and naturally talked "shop".

Bishop Lucey told Father Winne of the dire need for priests in the Diocese of Amarillo. At this time the Western Province of the Vincentians was being blessed with numerous vocations, and Father Winne volunteered to help the Bishop. He did this to aid Bishop Lucey and also to give the Vincentians a broader area of work in God's vineyard.

Shortly after this train ride Father Winne assigned Father William Stack, C.M. to be the first Vincentian pastor of Holy Souls Parish, Pampa, the parish assigned to the Vincentians by Bishop Lucey, as a result of the agreement with Father Winne.

Accordingly sometime before Sunday. September 29, 1940, Father Stack and Father Vincent Winn, C.M. arrived in Pampa for in the announcement book for Mass we find the following announcement, written in Father Stack's own hand:

"Father William Stack, C.M. is offering the Mass today. I would appreciate your waiting after Mass, so I can meet all of you."

Thus begins the long list of Vincentians in Pampa; a list of many zealous priests; a credit to the church and their founder St. Vincent de Paul.

No doubt a goodly portion of the credit for the affection the citizens of Pampa have always shown to the Vincentians is due to the fortuitous choice -- inspired is the real word - of Father Stack being chosen as the first pastor. Father Stack remained in Pampa only 6 years but in that time he accomplished a tremendous amount of good work not the least of which was the good will and friendliness he displayed which endeared him not only to the Catholics, but to the non-Catholics as well. Father Stack was a native of Kansas City, Missouri, but from his lanky stature, his friendliness, his openness, his love for people, his candor, he out-Texaned many real Texans.

Under Father Stack his assistants came and went with both the speed and regularity of the Santa Fe, on which it was so easy to both come and go.

Father Stack's first assistant was Father Vincent Winn, C.M. Soon Father Harold Guyot, C.M. arrived, and in 1942 Father William Brennan, C.M. arrived. Also in 1942 Father John Casey, C.M. came, and in 1943 Father Francis Lynn, C.M., and Father William Gaughan, C.M. In 1944, Father Robert McWilliams, C.M., and in 1945 Father Leo Moore, C.M. During this period, the years of the Second World War, Father Frederick Coupal, C.M. was chaplain at the Pampa Air Base. Father Theodore Nuss, C.M. was chaplain at the hospital in Dalhart, and Father James Lewis, C.M., and Father Jan Jankowski, C.M. were assigned as pastors of Canadian.

In 1946 Father Stack was transferred and Father Otto Meyer, C.M. became pastor. Father Meyer's first assistant was Father Allen DeWitt, C.M. In 1947 Father Robert Brennan, C.M. came, and in 1948 Father Frank Kunz, C.M. and in 1949 Father Anthony Soklich, C.M. arrived.

In 1951 Father Meyer was transferred, and Father Myles Moynihan, C.M. became pastor. (It was under the pastorship of Father Moynihan that plans to abandon the site of Holy Souls, and move out to a new location were finalized.) In 1953 Father James McDonnell C.M. arrived, and in 1953 Father Richard Lang, C.M. began his first of two assignments in Pampa. In the same year Father Vincent Walsh, C.M. and Father Ignatius Weiczarek, C.M. were in Pampa. In 1954 Father John Clark, C.M. came, and in 1955 Father Edward Whalley, C.M. and Father Philip LeFevre, C.M. were assigned to Pampa.

In 1957 Father Meyer returned to Pampa, replacing Father Moynihan. In 1957 Father Edward Horan, C.M. and Father John Roche, C.M. assisted Father Meyer. In 1958 Father Edward Cashman, C.M. came, and in 1959 Father Ronald Ransom, C.M.

Due to illness, Father Meyer had to relinquish the pastorship of Holy Souls, and he was replaced by Father Edward Cashman, C.M. Father Cashman's first assistant was Father Jerome Calcagno, C.M. and in 1963 Father Charles Welter, C.M. came. It was during the tenure of Father Cashman that the school, rectory and convent of St. Vincent de Paul Parish was built, replacing in fact as well as in name. Holy Souls Parish.

In 1964 Father William Brennan was appointed pastor, and in 1968 Father Francis Hynes, C.M. became assistant. It was under Father Brennan that St. Vincent de Paul Church was built.

In 1970 Father Francis Hynes, C.M. became pastor, and his new assistant was Father Wendelin Dunker C.M. In 1974 Father Hynes was transferred and Father Wendelin Dunker, C.M. took over as pastor with Father Martin Culligan, C.M. as assistant, and also administrator of Canadian.

In 1975 Father Frederick Marsch, C.M. became pastor, and in 1976 when Father Dunker became administrator of Sacred Heart in Canadian, as well as remaining as assistant in Pampa, Father Joseph Gregor, C.M. came as an assistant to St. Vincent de Paul.

In 1977 Father Marsch was transferred and Father Francis Hynes, C.M. returned to Pampa as pastor of St. Vincent de Paul for the second time.

This is a list of the priests who have labored here in Pampa during the past 37 years, receiving very little material rewards. Many of them have now not only left Pampa, but have left this world as well. Let us beg Almighty God to reward them all, both living and dead.