

Detailed Plans for New St. Mary's School Told by Parishioners of Sacred Heart; Old Academy's History Recalled by Fund Campaigners

Institution Started By Father Blanchet

St. Mary's school has served the Catholic parish in Jackson county for more than 80 years. The parochial institution has been recognized as an example of the best in Catholic education. Parishioners say the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, as instructors throughout its history, have taught a spirit of self-reliance, humility and true religious conviction that has been a daily guiding force in the lives of parishioners.

Today it is felt that the spiritual and material strides made by the parish through the years can no longer be matched in education with present school building.

Sacred Heart parishioners, nevertheless, have determined to maintain their educational heritage by providing new facilities that will enable the sisters to continue their work. That is the reason that they have decided to launch a parish campaign and public solicitation for funds to erect a new structure of steel and concrete on the site of the present frame building on 11th street between Holly and Ivy streets.

They are determined to make the new St. Mary's school a reality—now.

Catholic people here have cherished and supported the educational program of their faith during the entire life of their community. They look upon Catholic education as a solemn and sacred duty for perpetuation of the faith.

Determination, faith and duty are a part of the heritage of St. Mary's school, the story of which is part of the pioneer history of southern Oregon. Its beginning precedes that of Medford as a community.

Opened in 1865

The Rev. F. X. Blanchet was moving force behind the school which opened its doors first in Jacksonville in 1865. At his invitation the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary agreed to operate the school which until recently was known as St. Mary's academy.

Father Blanchet collected \$2,139 in southern Oregon and northern California for the project. With the money he bought an entire block in Jacksonville and paid for \$1,400 piano. Transportation of the Sisters Mary of the Seven Dolours, Mary Fabronia and Mary Zolique from Montreal was also paid from the funds.

The sisters opened the school in the renovated county hospital building and used an adjoining building as a dormitory. In one year enrollment grew to 12 boarding pupils and 33 day youngsters. Some were not Catholics.

Small Pox Epidemic

Temporary closure of the school in 1868 resulted from a small pox epidemic. The sisters volunteered to nurse the sick, and the Jacksonville board of health, although reluctant to endanger the educators, accepted their offer.

In 1869 the sisters again closed the school because of lack of "spiritual succor." Not until 1891 was the academy reopened. It continued in Jacksonville until 1908 with an average yearly enrollment of 60 to 70 pupils.

Jacksonville's population had decreased and Medford's had grown. So in 1908 the academy was moved to its present Medford location. Its first enrollment there was 23 boarders and 93 day pupils. Registration grew by 1920 to 150 students. Today more than 330 young people attend the school.

Only Catholics Now

In the early years of the school more than 50 per cent of the students were of other faiths. Now only Catholic children can be accommodated by the facilities. St. Mary's became a day school in 1947. Space that had been occupied by residence students was given over to use by the increasing number of day students. In November of last year St. Mary's academy became St. Mary's school. Sacred Heart parish purchased the building, grounds and most of the equipment from the sisters, who, however, continue as directors of the institution.

Through the years St. Mary's has provided high school studies for those qualified. It is recognized as a standard college preparatory school, accredited by the state department of education and the Northwest Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

Alumni of St. Mary's have won many scholarships. Graduates of the school now attend a number of colleges.

Music, Art Departments

The music department dates

Living Memorials Seen Possibility For New Building

Construction of a new St. Mary's school will give Catholics and non-Catholics of Medford a large number of opportunities to create living memorials to departed loved ones or in honor of living persons, according to the Very Rev. John Berger, pastor of Sacred Heart parish here.

A brochure, copies of which are being circulated among parishioners, lists the opportunities to place memorials through out the many rooms of the projected two-story school.

By donating the cost of either construction or equipment, or both, of any of the spaces or facilities designated, a contributor can provide a memorial for any person he wishes.

A bronze plaque will be placed on or beside the facility contributed, Father Berger said. The plaque will be as enduring as the building.

Father Berger pointed out that the nation owes many of its schools, colleges, hospitals and other institutions to persons who have given toward living monuments, such as the new school.

From the piano purchased by Father Blanchet. It continues to offer instrumental and vocal instruction to Catholics and non Catholics alike. Both the music and art departments have been highly regarded for years.

Both boys and girls have always been admitted to elementary grades, but boys have been enrolled in the high school only since 1927. As their numbers have increased the St. Mary's athletic program has expanded. St. Mary's high school teams vie in football, basketball and baseball in the Jackson county "B" school league. Interclass competition also includes sixth, seventh and eighth grades.

School athletics and Sacred Heart parish activities have been enhanced by the completion two years ago of a \$60,000 gymnasium near the school.

Realize Challenge

They realize that this period of world reconstruction presents a challenge to Christianity. They feel the great need for men and women equipped for great responsibility, grounded in Christian social, political and economic ideas and ideals, and that body, mind and spirit must be trained in order that individuals may fully undertake their roles in home, state and church.

There will be sacrifice for many in the pledging of funds for the new school's construction. But church leaders point out that there will be a great reward.

Parishioners will build and dedicate the new St. Mary's school for "Our Youth—To Whom God Gave Tomorrow."

SECOND SECTION

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MEDFORD TRIBUNE

Second Section

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CATHOLIC PARISH PLANS NEW SCHOOL—The proposed new St. Mary's Catholic school building is pictured above. It would replace the old frame structure on the present building's site, 11th street between Holly and Ivy streets. The two-story L-shaped facilities, to be erected at a cost of \$315,000, would provide 16 classrooms and a convent for 18 sisters. A chapel, an auditorium, a lunch room and library are among facilities planned in the building. The quakeproof and fireproof structure will be constructed of concrete and steel. William Laing, Medford, is architect.

Campaign for Parochial School Organized; Building Described

Additional details concerning the need for a new St. Mary's school building, the type of building to be erected, the fund raising campaign and organization for the drive were outlined yesterday by Sacred Heart Catholic parish and campaign leaders. Plans for the drive's kickoff meeting will be related later this week.

Construction of a new school of concrete and steel is desired because the present frame building, the best that could be afforded more than 40 years ago, is obsolete and inadequate by current school standards, according to Larry Schade Sr., general chairman for the fund solicitation.

Limited space has forced the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary to deny entry to some youngsters in the fifth and sixth grade levels. Children of other faiths once made up half the enrollment. They are now admitted only to the music department. Present enrollment is 330, double that of 10 years ago.

Building Described
A concrete and steel, two-story, L-shaped new building, costing \$315,000, is contemplated, Schade reported. There will be 16 classrooms and a convent wing for 18 sisters. The estimated cost includes \$16,000 expenditure for the heating plant already finished.

Only \$150,000 of the total amount required is being asked from parishioners and friends of

Catholic education here. The bulk will come from Catholics.

An estate valued at \$75,000 has been left to the parish for new school construction. Other necessary funds will be found by prudent borrowing. Land on which the structure will be erected at the corner of Ivy and 11th streets is owned by the parish.

There will be two phases in the drive, a parish phase directed by L. A. McCormick and public phase headed by Paul Meyers.

Brochures Sent Out

Brochures have been sent out and this week a letter from the Very Rev. John Berger, pastor of Sacred Heart church, will be mailed to parishioners, McCormick said. He pointed out that in the parish solicitation immediate cash gifts will not be sought. The program is so designed that payment of pledges will be made

out of income over a 20 month period.

The parish campaign will commence the latter part of this week. Approximately 250 Catholic laymen will call upon every wage or income receiving member of the faith. McCormick said that Catholics will be asked to remain at home and await the call of solicitors on the opening night of the drive. Unity and strength among those soliciting was shown last week when more than 200 attended an organizational meeting.

Because of the school's value to the community and because of civic interest expressed, business and industrial men and other non-Catholics will be given an opportunity to contribute in the public phase. The public in this campaign will be approached during the first week in May.

How the parochial school

eases the public school burden is indicated in estimates that eight more elementary rooms and perhaps four more high school rooms would be needed by Medford public schools to handle an additional 330 students, the St. Mary's registration.

Also, according to Medford tuition rates set by the board of education, the cost of educating an elementary pupil is \$220 and of a student in the ninth through 12th grades \$300. There are 260 St. Mary's grade school youngsters and 70 high school pupils. Educating them in the parochial school means a saving of approximately \$78,000 in the public school budget.

"This is not a campaign for immediate cash gifts," Schade declared, "but a

solid investment in steel and stone and mortar that will serve our children for many years. It is a capital investment."

Workers Named

Father Berger is executive chairman and treasurer for the drive. The parish committee consists of John Batzer, Dr. A. M. Depner, Paul W. Haviland, Louis G. Lemire, Joseph H. Meyer, Ray A. Mikesche, Joe Naumes and John J. Wilkinson.

Advisory councilmen are Dr. Fred T. Burich, Gerald L. Clark, Joseph F. Clark, Dr. Depner, Frank De Souza, James Dunlevy, J. J. Finnigan, Dr. O. J. Halboth, Haviland, Edward C. Kelly, A. K. Kertes, William Laing, John C. Malone, McCormick, Aurele Meunier, Mikesche, J. P. Naumes, Joe Naumes, Paul B. Newcomb, L. L. Rentz, Charles R. Smith and Joseph Zeleznick.

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OUTMODED BUILDING—Obsolete and no longer adequate for the educational needs of Sacred Heart parish is the frame constructed St. Mary's school, above, erected in 1908. Residents of Catholic faith here are contemplating construction of new school shown also on this page. By fire department decree boarding pupils have not lived in the present school since 1947. (Christopher photo.)

Archbishop Gives Approval to School

A letter commending the people of Sacred Heart parish here for their decision to erect a new St. Mary's school has been received from The Most Rev. Edward D. Howard, DD, Catholic archbishop of Portland in Oregon.

"I am happy to learn of your decision to engage in a campaign for funds for the construction of a much needed grade and high school," he said.

"Sacred Duty"

"I am particularly pleased to observe in this Holy Year recognition of the undeniable fact that is our sacred duty as Catholics to provide for our youth the opportunity for a complete Christian education," he added.

The Archbishop reminded parishioners that it is time now that "Catholic Action" be demonstrated. The drive will require

united and concerted effort, he brought out.

The appeal, according to the archbishop, represents one big effort to establish faith in the hearts and minds of the youth while at the same time providing academic learning.

He will be here for the meeting opening the drive.

Crossing at Jackson Street to Be Closed

Police Traffic Sergeant Clyde Fichtner announced Saturday that the Jackson street crossing across the Southern Pacific tracks will be closed by the railroad company beginning Monday.

The closure is for the purpose of making crossing repairs, Fichtner said, and will be effective for several days.

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