

Parish Beginnings:

The 1st Mass & Dedication Day in the old church

In celebration of our 50th Anniversary, we are running a 12 part series of articles about our parish history. This is Part 2. If you have corrections or memories to add to the story, please contact Anne in the parish office. These articles are also being posted to our website.

The First Mass

After years of tremendous effort and physically exhausting work by dedicated volunteers, St. Joseph the Worker Catholic Church, aptly named for its hard working founders, was getting ready for its very first Mass. This was scheduled for February 21, 1965. Workers scurried to put on the finishing touches. They were frustrated to learn that there was a requirement that the Stations of the Cross and the Crucifix had to be purchased from Italy. (Note: there was no such restriction when we constructed the new church.) There was simply no way that they would get these in time for their scheduled opening. They compromised and hung purple velvet cloth where the stations would go. The crucifix was borrowed from Immaculate Conception Church. Several men drove up to Copperton in a large dump truck to get it. They were so afraid of breaking the crucifix, they cradled it gently in their laps all the way to West Jordan. An organ was borrowed for opening day because they couldn't afford one yet. Landscaping and black topping was to be done in the spring as soon as weather permitted.

The first Mass was such a significant time for the entire community. Father Sullivan was joyous and tremendously proud. His chest puffed out as far as it could go, recalls Jim Perry. "It's really going to happen!" he exclaimed. Marge Perry said her first feeling upon entering the new building was, "This church is huge!" It was much larger than the tiny rock church she was used to. "Finally! It's here!" said Evelyn Sanchez. "Things have all come together. It was a very high time for us. We saw our efforts become reality. It all came together— the bustle of it all!"

Dedication Day

After the beautiful wood carvings arrived from Rome, the official dedication was scheduled for May 16, 1965. On this day the church was blessed and dedicated by his Excellency the Most Rev. Joseph L. Federal.

An open house was held for the public. Many local officials were invited including LDS Bishops of the area. Marv Jensen came, as well as Mr. Eggbert from the city council. The Butterfield Family came. Nathan Butterfield, in fact, had been their building inspector. The church was packed with visitors. Local West Jordan residents, who were primarily LDS, were especially curious about the new church. They were treated to a guided tour. Father Sullivan was so concerned that these visitors be given correct information about the church, he had the tour guides memorize from carefully worded scripts.

The pride and sense of accomplishment by the parish community was so incredible and so strong, that you can still see it in the faces and hear it in the voices of the founders today, fifty years later. They were like a big family. They saw each other not just on Sundays, but on countless weekends and evenings. They worked together on a common goal that meant the world to them. The completed church structure was a tangible sign of their faith and their holy community.

Interesting Tidbits

- Even in the early days there was joking about the church's appearance. Many thought it looked like a barn or a barracks. Marilyn Mark's uncle, Mario Moser, used to call it "The Wonder Bread church".
- The siding on the church that most of us have always known to be green, used to be blue. It faded to a light green very quickly— within just a few years.
- The church has *always* had problems with dead flies in the fall. Old-timer will remember piles of them used to collect on the window sills.
- Many of us think of Catholics as a small minority in West Jordan. In fact, Catholics made up a sizeable portion of the population. This was due to the mining industry that brought in immigrants from all over the world. Many of them were Catholic. Also, during the summer months many of the farmers hired migrant workers, many from Mexico. There would be so many Spanish speaking Catholics here in the summer, that St. Joseph's held special Spanish Masses.
- Ed Lopez told us that his mother, Elizaida Lopez, used to rent the home on the church property before it was purchased by the parish. The sports field used to a field of alfalfa.
- Jim's Restaurant, located close to the church is a very popular restaurant for St. Joseph parishioners. Steve Zervos who used to work there remembers when the church was being built. His uncle owned much of the land near the church, in an area called "Greek Row". The Greeks and the Catholics of West Jordan have always had a close relationship says Steve.
- Nola Duncan who co-authored a book on the history of West Jordan shared the following interesting information with Anne Kurek:
 - In 1964, the population of West Jordan was less than 4000. Now it exceeds 108,000.
 - There were no "real" grocery stores in West Jordan in the 1960's. Nola had to drive to 3900 South State to buy her groceries.
 - The area around 1500 West was called Greek Row. There was a restaurant just down the street from St. Joseph's (by what is now the Utah Idaho Map Store) called the Redwood Inn. It served Greek food. Every Thanksgiving the owners would drive a bus and pick up homeless people and take them to the restaurant for a delicious meal.
 - Not all 1960's Jordan residents were farmers but nearly all had their own "Old MacDonald's Farm". A very popular crop in West Jordan was sugar beets. A sweet smell used to permeate the area from the Utah & Idaho Sugar Company plant when the beets were being processed into sugar.
- In a conversation with Louis Lopez, Sr. we learned some interesting information about the Hispanics of West Jordan. The Hispanics of the West were often considered to be immigrants "from Mexico". In fact, many of these Hispanics had lived in the West for generations-long before it was part of the U.S. The area encompassing Utah, California, Nevada, New Mexico and Arizona used to be the northern half of Mexico. It only became part of the U.S. in 1848 after the Mexican American War. These families were here long before the Mormon pioneers and other subsequent settlers came. And, yet, these long time residents were often discriminated against. They were looked upon as foreigners and were often asked to show their immigration papers. "What papers?" Louis Lopez would ask incredulously to those were, themselves the real newcomers. Many of St. Joseph's early parishioners were Hispanics with these very deep roots to the West.

West Jordan—The first Mass will be offered in St. Joseph Worker Catholic Church in West Jordan Sunday, Feb. 21, at 10 a.m. Another Mass will follow at 12 noon.

The finishing touches are now being put on the building by the men and women of the parish. The church is of modernistic style and was engineered and designed by Paul McGill, Cecil Holland, and Art Pasker of P. M. Engineering Company of Murray.

The exterior is of bayano ran brick, steel and aluminum. At the front entrance are two pre-cast granite panels—one depicting the Holy Family, the other, the name of the church.

The interior of the building is lined with red oak paneling and floors are of pebbled onyx. The center aisle and sanctuary are cherry red nylon carpeting. The upper walls are enriched with red naughahyde. The pews are white oak.

In the sanctuary are four walnut altars: the Blessed Sacrament altar, the sacrifice altar for Mass facing the people, two side altars, one to the Blessed Mother, the other, to St. Joseph the Worker. The communion rail is of white oak and walnut.

The church will seat 500 people.

In addition to the nave and sanctuary, are two sacristies, a choir, two confessionals, baptistry, cry-room, and two classrooms.

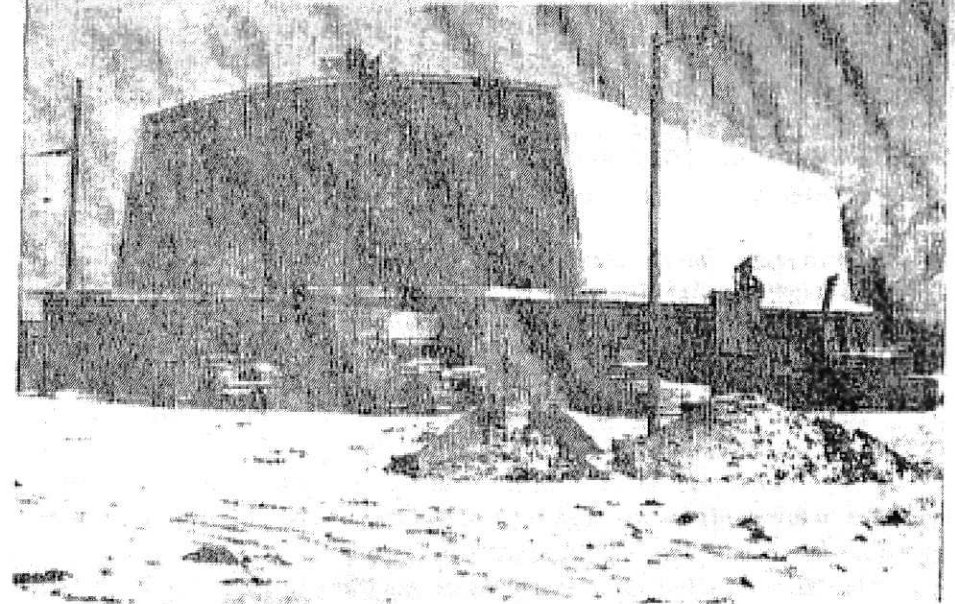
The building was constructed by volunteer labor under the supervision of Dorran Munro and employee of the Joseph P. Howe Construction Company. Work commenced July 1, 1964.

A contribution of \$10,000 was received from Chicago, Illinois, from the Catholic Church Extension Society, an organization of Americans. West Jordan which aids in the home mission a mission of Immaculate

Conception Parish in Copper-ton.

Landscaping and black top-ping will be done in the spring as soon as weather permits. Traditional statutes, altar crucifix, and stations of the cross will be wood carvings from Rome. After they arrive, the church will be blessed and dedicated by his excellency the Most Rev. Joseph L. Federal, bishop of Salt Lake City. At this time, open house will be held for the public.

Catholic Church to Hold First Mass in New Building

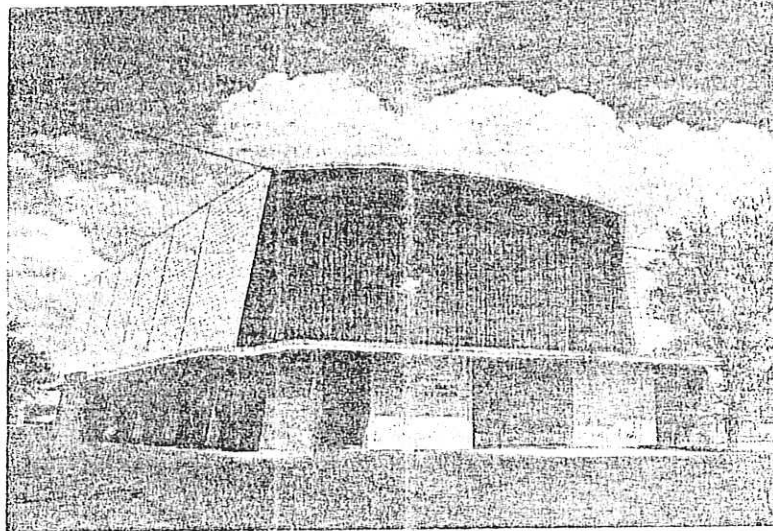


Workmen were busy this week putting final touches on St. Joseph the Worker Catholic Church in West Jordan in preparation for

the holding of first services in the new edifice this Sunday. Church is on Redwood Rd. at about 7500 South.

Old Newspaper Clippings
Circa. 1965

New West Jordan Catholic Church To Be Dedicated Sunday



ST. JOSEPH THE WORKER CHURCH — 7405 SOUTH REDWOOD ROAD

Dedication of the new St. Joseph The Worker Church pictured above, located at 7405 South Redwood Road, will take place this Sunday, May 16 at 12 noon. The public is welcome to attend.

His Excellency Most Reverend Joseph Lemoine Federal, D.D., bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City, will perform the ceremony. He will be assisted by Father John J. Sullivan, pastor and Father Matthew

O. Wixted, assistant pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish, of which St. Joseph The Worker Church is a Mission, and Father Murty M. Faly. Master of ceremonies will be Very Rev. John Hedderman, Chancellor of the Diocese of Salt Lake City. Mass servers for the occasion will be Steve Anzuera, Bob DeLuca, Philip Tso, Michael Santiago and Arthur Garcia. Dennis Stefanoff will be commentator.

Statues and votive lights: Mrs. Steve Stefanoff. Sacrifice Altar: Sam DeLuca. Servers' Sacristy: Steven Anzuera and Robert DeLuca. Furnace Room: James C. Mumford. Priests' Sacristy: Sister Clarissa. Blessed Sacrament Altar: Father Matthew Wixted. Choir: Miss Rita Fleckenstein. Baptistry: Conrad Sena. Hostess will be Mrs. Conrad Sena. Light refreshments will be

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Following the dedication ceremonies, the public is cordially invited to attend an open house from 2:30 to 5:00. A guided tour of the new church will be conducted. A complete display of sacred vessels, vestments, and altar appointments will be on hand. People will be able to inspect the confessionals and learn the meaning of holy water, stations of the cross, votive lights, incense, the rosary and other articles used in Catholic worship.

Those conducting the open house and explaining the various articles are men and women of the parish, including the following— Reception: Steve Anzuera and Joseph Mark. Registrar: Mrs. Edward Dominguez. Guides: Daniel Galesh, Emericio Lopez, Louis Lopez, Jake Paul, Pete Ruiz, John Sorich, Gilbert Trujillo, Ramon Trujillo, Leo Valenzuela, and Nick Velarde.

Explanations will be given of various points and articles of interest: Cry Room: Mrs. Joe Tafuya. Confessionals: Miss Bernardine Kinneth. Stations of the Cross: Larry DeLuca. Vestments: Sister Mary Doro-



REV. JOHN J. SULLIVAN
Pastor



REV. MATTHEW O. WIXTED
Assistant Pastor