



NEWS ARCHIVE:

Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon

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Holy Rosary Parish at Reward was founded 100 years ago: it became a pilgrimage site for the surrounding St. Joseph Colony.

Holy Rosary Parish at Reward celebrates 100th anniversary July 10-11, 2010

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

REWARD, SK – Residents and former residents, their descendents and family members joined together at the site of the historic Holy Rosary church south of the hamlet of Reward July 10 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the parish. The event was followed the next day by the annual pilgrimage to the historic Reward site for the surrounding St. Joseph Colony area.

Anniversary celebrations for the parish included prayers within the historic church building, celebration of the Eucharist at the outdoor shrine, a program of speakers and entertainment, sale of souvenirs, and supper on the site.

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Those attending the 100th anniversary celebration July 10 took shelter under a tent during a summer shower.

Serving the surrounding Saint Joseph's Colony as the site of an annual pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary since 1932, the parish itself was established in 1910.

During the anniversary celebration, masters of ceremony Charles Boser and Ernie Greter, along with speaker Al Greter presented the history of the community and parish in poem and story.

“In the words of one pioneer, we often admired the wild flowers and thought about the amount of dirt they had to go through in order to blossom and bloom,” related Ernie Greter, reflecting on the



hardships encountered by the German-Russian settlers who came to the area after St. Joseph Colony was established in 1905.

The parish at Reward was first served by Fr. Schultz, OMI, with the first church building a 40 by 28-foot structure built at a cost of \$1,300.

The present historic Holy Rosary church was constructed on ten acres of donated land in 1918 for \$12,000 under the leadership of Rev. Beiler, OMI. The “church on the hill” is a designated

historic site, and contains 15 large paintings completed in 1928 by Count Berthold Von Imhoff, depicting the 15 mysteries of the rosary.

In 1932 the priests of St. Joseph's Colony were asked by Bishop Prud'homme to arrange an annual pilgrimage in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, with the Holy Rosary Church at Reward chosen at the site because of its central location. The first pilgrimage July 16, 1932 saw 3,000 pilgrims travel to the site, congregating a half mile south for a procession to the shrine, greeted by the ringing of the church bells. A wooden outdoor grotto was built as the shrine in 1936, with the present shrine altar built in 1966.

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Area residents continue to care for and upgrade the building and pilgrimage site, including a number of repairs undertaken since a devastating hailstorm in 2005 that caused the cancellation of the annual pilgrimage that year, related Al Greter.

A new parish banner designed by Pat Welter was brought forward during the celebration by residents Frank and Agnes Sperle. MC Charles Boser explained the symbolism of each element of the banner.



Agnes and Frank Sperle carried forth a new parish banner designed by Pat Welter.

Rev. John Zunti, OMI, who was born and raised in the area, presided at the 100th anniversary Mass, and was also guest speaker during the afternoon program.

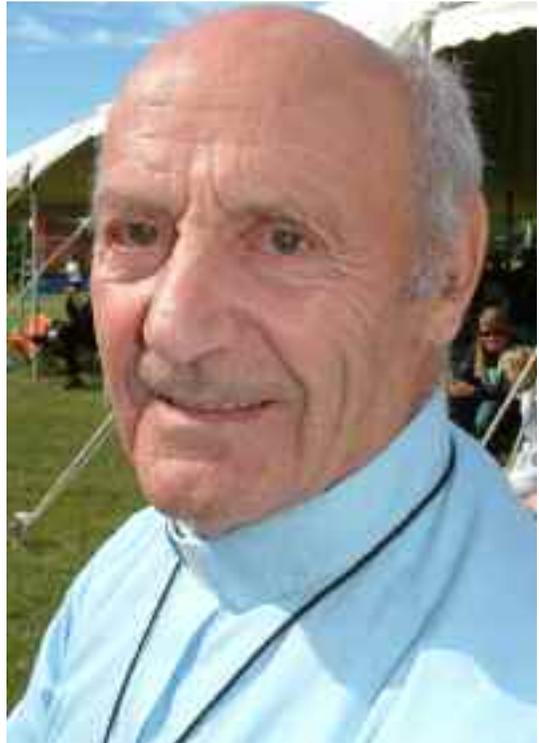
“For 100 years at this particular spot on our huge planet, this has been a place of celebration of our faith –a faith which we have received from our families.”

Zynti recalled how as one of 18 brothers and sisters, he knelt to receive his parent’s blessing on the day he left home. “My dad said a short prayer, and then he shared three short instructions with me. ‘Always keep your faith. Live your faith everyday. And don’t forget to pray.’ This prayer and this blessing have been a constant companion since that day in 1959,” he said.

“We are all truly thankful for the legacy of faith, prayer and way of life that our parents and grandparents, friends and neighbours have handed on to us,” said Zunti. “The sacrifices that many of them made and the hardships they endured were possible only because of their faith and commitment to prayer.”



Like Abraham, the German-Russian Catholic settlers left their homes and ventured into a new land. “God’s peace stayed with them and his understanding love guided their hearts and their minds. They were like the branches of the true vine of God, Jesus Christ,” he said.



Fr. John Zunti, OMI

Introduced by his brother Robert Zunti as the guest speaker during the program following Mass, Rev. John Zunti left home as a young man and went to the Peace River area of Alberta where he established a successful ranch. However, he continued to feel a call to the priesthood, eventually selling the ranch and enrolling in studies at Newman College. He was ordained in August 1987 and has served in a number of ministries in the north. In his talk after Mass, Zunti shared memories of growing up in the parish and of the faith formation received there. “Our times in the church were a huge contribution to our way of life.”

During the program, resident Agnes Sperle led a tribute to the priests of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate order who served Holy Rosary parish throughout the past century.

The day after the 100th anniversary celebration, the 79th annual pilgrimage to the shrine at Reward was held, involving parishes from throughout the St. Joseph’s Colony area.

Rev. Gerard Cooper of St. Peter’s parish in Unity officiated at the July 11 pilgrimage, which included exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the shrine church, the sacraments of reconciliation and anointing of the sick, praying of the rosary, benediction, a parade of parish banners, Mass, and supper.



Leading music ministry.



Parishes and Missions of St. Joseph Colony include St. Pascal, Leipzig (1905); St. Charles, Revenue (1905); Our Lady of Assumption, Kerrobert (1906); St. Henry, Salvador (1906); Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, Handel (1906); St. Michael, Tramping Lake (1906); St. Anthony, Grosswerder (1907); St. James, Wilkie (1909); Sacred Heart, Denzil (1909); St. Joseph, Scott (1909); Our Lady of Holy Rosary, Reward (1910); St. Francis/Sacred Heart, Broadacres (1910); St. John, Salt Lake (1910); St. Mary, Macklin (1910); Holy Family, Ermine (1910); Our Lady of Fatima, Landis (1910); St. Peter, Cosine (1914); St. Donatus, St. Donatus (1914); St. Peter, Unity (1914); Immaculate Conception, Major (1914); St. Eugene de Mazenod, Luseland (1915) and St. Elizabeth, Primate (1916).

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The interior of the historic church is decorated with artwork by Count Von Imhoff.

