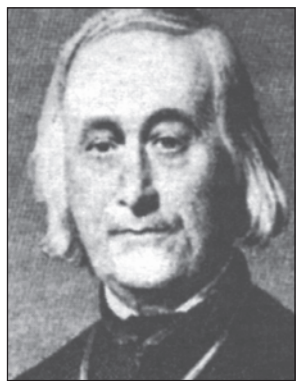




THE COMMUNITY PAGE

Catholics Make a Difference in Idaho Falls



Father Pierre DeSmet, pioneer priest in Idaho.

Even before any Roman Catholic families entered the Snake River Valley, the local Indian tribes were seeking spiritual guidance from the “Blackrobes.” This was their name for the Catholic priests,

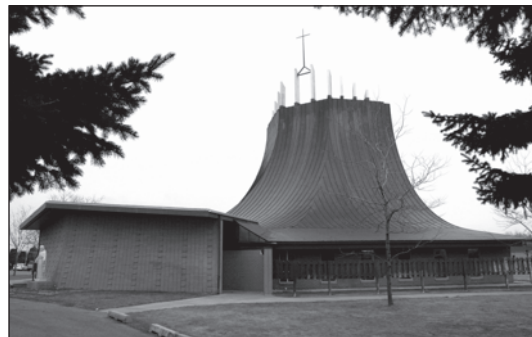
led by Father Pierre DeSmet, who traveled with early explorers and trappers to the area.

When settlers lived many miles away from each other or from supplies, they soon learned to lean upon and trust each other for their very survival. One of the hallmarks of life in the early days of Eagle Rock, now Idaho Falls, was hospitality. Hospitality was important for neighborliness, but even more for actual survival.

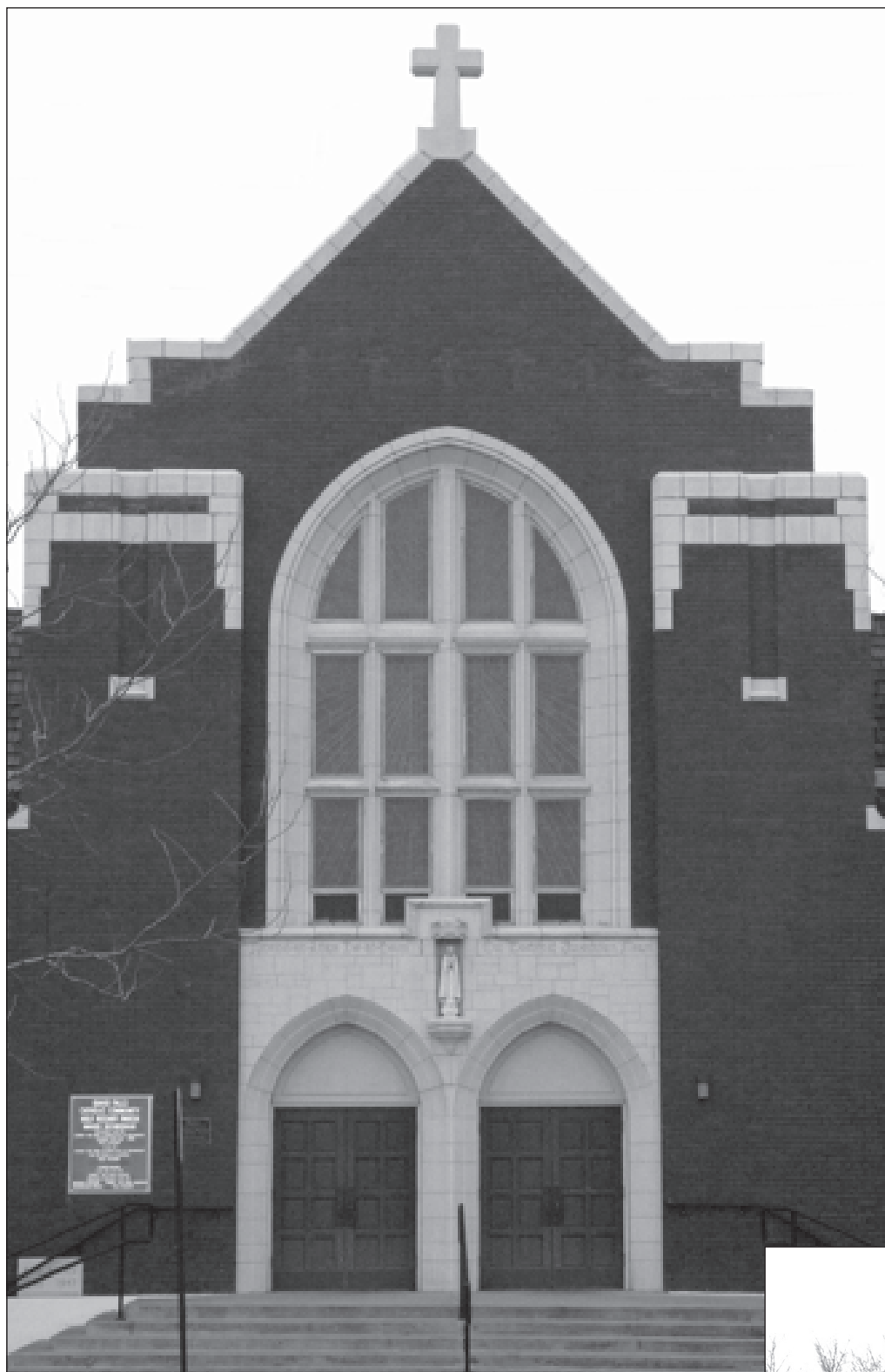
The modern world has changed the Idaho Falls community in many ways, but a sense of hospitality and caring still runs deep. Over the years, members of the Catholic Church and its leaders have made incalculable contributions to our community. These contributions are as varied as are the parishioners, but there are specific events and organizations that benefit especially from the Church’s generous support, and indicate its far-reaching interest in the betterment of our citizens.

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, a program of ministry to the needy, is an umbrella organization overseeing four different areas of need: A thrift store, a Christmas basket program, FREEMED prescription services, and combined Christian Services that include volunteers for the Soup Kitchen and supervision of the Jail Ministry.

The thrift store, used by the entire Idaho Falls community, receives and sells used clothing and some household items, using volunteers to sort and display, reselling items at prices fair to any in need.



Christ the King Chapel on 17th and Woodruff.



Entrance of the Holy Rosary Church on 9th and Lee displaying the historically registered building’s gothic revival style architecture.

Christmas baskets are assembled and provided in a non-denominational effort for families in need. This ministry combines the services of many other churches and organizations from the Eastern Idaho area. This generous effort blesses over 450 families in need at Christmas time with toys, gifts, and food. Many volunteer hours are donated every year to this worthy effort.

Another non-denominational program supervised by St. Vincent de Paul ministry is

FREEMED, a program designed to assist low-income people in receiving help with prescription medication at little or no cost. Clients are helped with information and paperwork aiding communication with over 300 health care providers.

Many of our Catholic

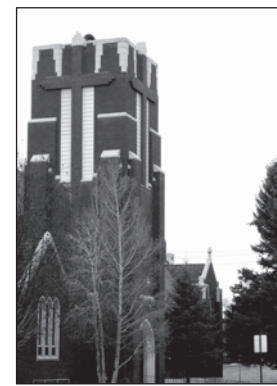
neighbors are found serving every Wednesday and the first Saturday of the month at the local Soup Kitchen, preparing and serving meals to those in need. The list of good works goes on and on with help for jail inmates, unwed parents, adoption services, classes for young mothers with children, singles looking for companionship, immigrant outreach, and assistance to local hospice programs for the terminally ill.

Approximately 200 children, kindergarten through 6th grade, attend the private school conducted by Holy Rosary. Though nuns no longer teach the children, the teachers are devout in their determination to instill respect and proper behavior as well as academics.

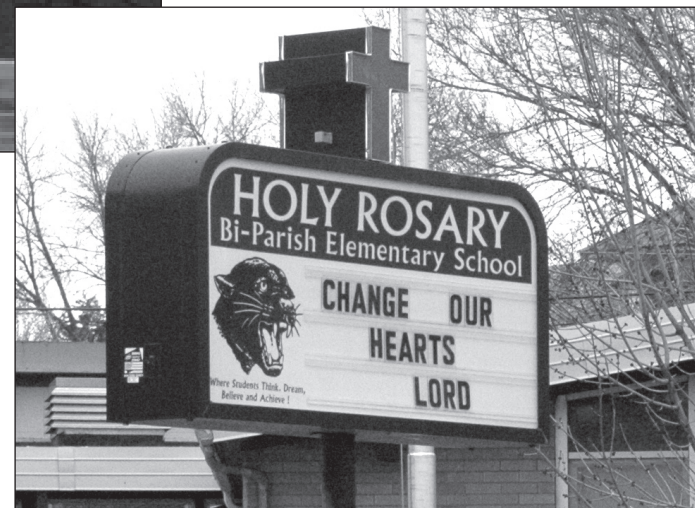
Catholic parishioners are also part of the two Interfaith Progressive Dinners held each September, sharing hospitality and good cooking with those of several other faiths, walking from building to building, making friends and sharing their love of community. All money raised from these dinners is donated to such worthy endeavors as The Haven, The City of Refuge, or the local Food Bank.

It is clearly evident that hospitality continues to be a strong part of the Idaho Falls culture, as evidenced by the selfless and out-

wardly focused ministry of the Catholic Church in Idaho Falls. The Parable of the Good Samaritan is not lost on these good neighbors, contributing to our sense of community and brotherhood.



The Bell Tower at Holy Rosary Church.



The marquee at Holy Rosary Elementary School shares a message that is the foundation for good works in our community.

Catholics are a Key Part of Idaho Falls History

In response to many repeated requests from Indian tribes to be taught about Christianity, the diocese of St. Louis sent Father Pierre DeSmet into Idaho in 1840. Sixteen hundred Flathead Indians, led by Chief Big Face, greeted him with tears and kisses as he entered the Victor Valley at a camp just three miles south of where Driggs now stands. Father DeSmet then traveled to Henry’s Lake where the first Mass in Idaho was celebrated on July 23, 1840. After his return to St. Louis and a favorable report, a mission was established at Fort Hall in 1841.

The first Roman Catholic families settled in Eagle Rock and the surrounding area in 1879, becoming farmers and ranchers. Some became employees of the Utah Northern Railroad shops. No church had been formally organized until 1900 when James E. Mooney was appointed the first pastor. Until that time, visiting pastors traveled from Hailey or later from Pocatello conducting Mass in homes of local parishioners.

The first High Mass was celebrated on Easter Sunday of 1901 in a small church built on Eastern Avenue, but continued growth demanded extensions and additional facilities until eventually the current Holy Rosary Church was dedicated in 1949. This distinctive building, at 9th and Lee Streets, is on the Historic Building Registry, recognized for its late gothic revival style, and for its inspiring chimes that uplift the entire neighborhood.

Continued growth required the eventual division of the parish, and the building of a new chapel, Christ the King, on 17th and Woodruff in 1967. Attendees at both churches have kept alive the great tradition of community awareness and involvement that highlighted the early years of their parish.



The original Holy Rosary School.



Faithful sisters served as the early faculty at the Holy Rosary school.



This 1947 photo depicts the combination of spiritual and academic education that continues today at the Holy Rosary Bi-Parish Elementary School.