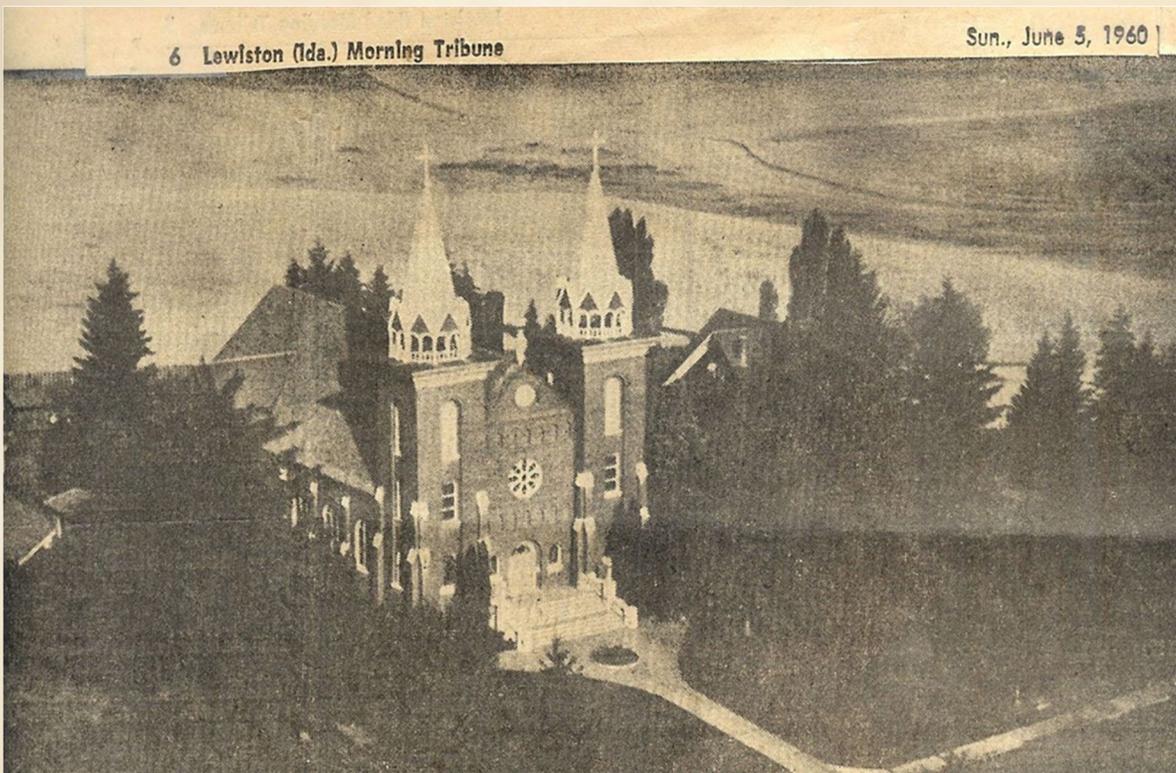


St Boniface to Dedicate New School, Marks a Milestone in Church History

By Charlotte Druffel, Tribune Correspondent



UNIONTOWN - St Boniface Catholic parish will combine the dedication of its newly-completed parochial school building and the golden anniversary of the consecration of its church in one memorable celebration here Thursday.

The new concrete block St Boniface School building, which replaces the old frame building erected in 1884,

will be blessed and dedicated by the Most Rev. Bernard J Topel, bishop of the diocese of Spokane, in ceremonies starting at 4:30 p.m. The dedication will be followed at 5 p.m. by the solemn mass of the consecration in St Boniface church in the presence of Bishop Topel. A 6:30 p.m. dinner in the Community Building will close the day's events.

St Boniface parish is one of the oldest in the diocese. In the fall of 1878, with the help of the mother parish at Walla Walla, a small church was begun and the first mass was said in it the following spring. In 1882 the church was dedicated in honor of St Boniface, and its first pastor, the Rev. Fr. Don M. Cesari of Pomeroy, was assigned the whole Palouse territory embracing the larger part of Whitman County and a portion of Idaho.



TWIN CELEBRATION.— Aerial photographs show the twin spires of St. Boniface Catholic Church, which will celebrate the 50th anniversary of its consecration Thursday. Below: the old frame St. Boniface school building, erected in 1884, which has been replaced by a modern building. The new school building will be dedicated Thursday.

Area Grew

Growth of towns in the surrounding area and the coming of the Northern Pacific Railway in 1887 gradually whittled away the missions served by the parish. In 1894 its last mission was taken from it when Genesee received its first resident pastor after having been attached to the Boise diocese the year before.

The foundation for the present stately brick church was laid in 1893, but the financial panic of that year, and the area crop failure caused by incessant rains, made it impossible to continue with construction. After a lapse of 11 years, work on the church was resumed. The cornerstone was laid July 1, 1904 and the first service in the new church was held on Christmas Day of that year. Numerous other improvements, including the construction of a brick rectory, followed.

Debts Liquidated

By 1910 the parish had liquidated its obligations and the pastor, the Rev. Fr. W. J. Metz, realized his ambition to have the church consecrated by the Rt. Rev. Bishop O'Dea of the Seattle diocese on the first Sunday in June, the feast of St Boniface. The Seattle diocese was divided in 1913 and the Spokane diocese was formed. St Boniface church was the first, and now one of only two churches, in the diocese to be consecrated.

Only a bishop may consecrate a church and it must be of brick or stone construction. Most churches in Europe are consecrated, according to the Rev. Fr. Raymond Klemmer of St Boniface parish, but the custom is not so common here, partly because regulations bar the rite for all churches of frame or partial frame construction.

Freedom from debt, or a reasonable certainty of such freedom, is also necessary because once consecrated, a Catholic church may never be used for any other purpose. An annual commemoration mass celebrated each anniversary of the consecration.