

Notes for March 22, 2010

On March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation, St. Cecilia Catholic Church will celebrate the 132nd anniversary of its founding as a Catholic parish in the city of Hastings, Nebraska. The Feast of the Annunciation celebrates the miracle of God's love, manifested to us in the Incarnation of His Son in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. God broke into human time and human life at this moment, in a new



and incomparable way: He became one of us. Eventually, he would walk our roads with us, eat our food, sleep under the stars we call our heavens, join in our songs, enjoy our friendship, and teach us how to walk and live with God and one another. The world has been different ever since, at the spiritual and the temporal levels. God revealed Himself to us in Jesus Christ and opened for us the gift of life with God. He also taught us how to love one another, and this teaching impacts every element of our life together. Love is more than an emotion, or a spiritual relationship between two people. Love is also practical: it directs our decisions in politics,

economics, the social order, and the family. In this way, the miracle of the Incarnation has important social implications. Because the Son of God became a man, we live communal life in a new way.

It pleases me that our parish was founded on this important feast in the calendar of the Church. The history of our founding began when Bishop James O'Connor appointed Father George Glauber to be a resident priest in Hastings. Father Glauber arrived in Hastings on March 22, 1878. Three days later, he convened a meeting of Catholics living in the vicinity and the group agreed to build a church in the community under the patronage of St. Cecilia. Three lots of land for the church site were donated by Thomas Farrell on Second Street and what would later become known as East Side Boulevard (where the old city police station is now located). A frame church was built on the site, measuring fifty feet by thirty-two feet. Later (1888) the church was moved to Seventh and Kansas Street where the present church (dedicated in 1912) now stands.

A parish is a spiritual home which nourishes faith in its members and gathers them to worship God. It is also a font, from which the members are filled with the life of Christ and carry Him forth into the world. In this way, the church is a leaven in society, a power of transformation, a tool of development in the community to bring the love of God into its streets and institutions, to assist the community in building the relationships and social structures that foster unity and prosperity for all. This is the social dimension of the mystery of the Incarnation and will always be the call and work of St. Cecilia Catholic Church in Hastings, Nebraska.

March 25 is the day we celebrate The Word became Flesh. It is also the day our parish moved from an idea to a reality. This day was our "incarnation" too. Happy Birthday St. Cecilia! Praise be Jesus Christ, Son of God, son of Mary, our Incarnate Lord. Amen.