



THE CATHOLIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Diocese of Amarillo

806-414-1076 + Fax 806-383-8452

P. O. Box 5644 + Amarillo, TX 79117-5644

4512 N. E. 24th Avenue

Email: sgarner@dioama.org **NEW**



VOLUME FOUR

WINTER

2017

HAVE YOURSELF A MERRY LITTLE CHRISTMAS...



For Now: Friday Mornings
and by Appointment.

Soon: Several days a week.

Catholic Historical Society Officers/Board Members

Bishop Patrick Zurek - Honorary Chair
Susan Garner - President/Editor
Msgr. Norbert Kuehler - Vice-President
Kathrine Brown - Secretary
Ann Weld - Treasurer/Curator

Board

Larry Gray
Natalie Barrett
Jim Jordan
Peggy Newcomb
Rev. Tony Neuch
Rev. Francisco Perez
Rev. Scott Raef
Jane Roberts
Doris Smith

The priest-builder, the priest-moderator, and the priest-pastor

THE BUILDER OF CHURCHES

In devoting a few paragraphs of reminiscences of the early days of the church in this area to three priests, it is not intended to detract from the efforts and accomplishments of others. Had such opportunities been presented, any pioneer priest would have met the need. Three categories present themselves: the priest-builder, the priest-moderator, and the priest-pastor. Father John H. Krukkert typifies the priest-builder.

The early pioneer priest, Father Dunn, who is given credit for establishing fourteen churches in this part of Texas before the erection of the diocese, had his counterpart in Father Krukkert. Father Krukkert worked untiringly with Bishop Gerken "to build up the House of God". He may not have had a direct order as did Francis of Assisi, but he devoted all of his energy as though he did.

Father was born in Enschede, Holland, in 1890. He was educated for the priesthood in Switzerland and was ordained there in 1920 for the diocese of Dallas in the United States. The year following his ordination, he arrived in Dallas and was assigned as an assistant in a parish there.

When Father Krukkert arrived in this country, he had no knowledge of the English language. One of the first tasks he necessarily set for himself was learning it. He soon had a speaking knowledge but never completely mastered it. In 1923 Father Krukkert was sent as pastor to the parish of St. Francis at that time in the Dallas diocese.

The scripture quotation, "The harvest indeed is great but the laborers are few", (Matt. 9:37) seemed to fit Father Krukkert's life. He could see beyond the needs of the parish of St. Francis to many 'ripening fields'. Many times he followed the muddy or dusty unpaved highway along the Santa Fe railway to Panhandle with no church, to White Deer where there was an established parish but no priest, to Pampa where an effort was just being made to organize a parish. He then followed the tracks of the oilfield traffic across the sand hills to the boom town of Borger where a few Catholics were with



Fr. John H. Krukkert

-out Mass. Father continued for a number of months in 1926-27 looking after these five congregations. He arranged his schedule so that he offered the holy sacrifice of the Mass once or twice each month in each of these missions. Later Sacred Heart Parish of White Deer was given a resident pastor and Holy Souls in Pampa became its mission. Father Krukkert continued to serve Panhandle and Borger as missions until the fall of 1927.

As Father made these trips to the various missions, he was busy every minute baptizing, validating civil marriages, giving instructions, hearing confessions. I often wondered how he accepted the contrast of the well-established church in his native Holland with what he found in the oil boom towns. During this time, Father built a new church at St. Francis.

This was the first church built after the establishment of the diocese.

shortly after the completion of the church there, he built Saint Theresa's in Panhandle. The famous little "tar paper" church in Borger had been built by him in late 1926 and before he was transferred, he had plans underway for St. John's frame building. During his pastorate at St. Francis, while Pampa was still its mission, he bought two lots for a church there and personally financed them, although he was later reimbursed. He also built the rectory in White Deer when the parish was given a resident pastor.

Plainview was developing rapidly at this time, and the number of Catholics was increasing. The small, frame church was no longer large enough for the growing congregation. Father Krukkert was sent to Plainview in October, 1927 with instructions to begin plans for a new church. The project developed rapidly, and by early summer of 1928, a brick church was completed. It was our privilege to be present for the dedication. Mr. and Mrs. D. C. Kennedy and their young son, Dick, my husband, and myself drove from Borger for the services. Msgr. William O'Brien, who was president of the Catholic Extension Society at that time was the guest of honor and gave the dedicatory sermon. The church was named St. Alice at his request in memory of his mother. While working in and out of Plainview, Father Krukkert enlarged the church and built a rectory at Littlefield. He organized the parish of St. Mary at Jayton and built a small church. He built St. Joseph rectory and a home for the catechists in Lubbock to aid the Mexican-American Catholics there.

Then, working out of Jayton, he built Sacred Heart Church at Aspermont and St. Joseph Church and rectory in Rotan. In starting plans for a church to be known as St. Margaret Mary at Lamesa, he met face to face religious bigotry when an attempt was made to stop the construction of the building. After some delay this was overcome and the church completed.

In 1930 Father was transferred to San Angelo to be pastor of Sacred Heart Church there. He soon realized, however, that the most urgent need was with the Mexican-American population. The people had no church of their own and many were being lost to the faith. Bishop Gerken directed Father to start a church, to have classes in Christian doctrine and in every way try to revitalize the faith among them. Before the first year was little more than half over, St. Mary's Church had been built for them and almost at once a thriving parish was realized.

Working in and out of San Angelo, this untiring priest completed a rectory for St. Ann's Church in Sonora. He built Sacred Heart Church in McCamey, St. Peter's at Mertzon, and St. Thomas at Rankin.

No one could continue indefinitely at the pace Father set for himself. Until this time, the need, the urgency had served as an impetus, but finally his health failed. He took leave from the diocese in 1935 and spent the next few years in California. In 1942, Father Krukkert returned to the diocese. On the death of Father Dolje, in 1944, he was made pastor of St. Mary's parish in Umbarger. While serving in Umbarger during World War II, he was able to secure the services of some Italian artisans to redecorate the interior of the church. These men were being held as prisoners of war at a camp nearby. There were woodcarvers and painters who gladly gave their talents. As a result, St. Mary's Church has one of the most beautiful sanctuaries in the diocese. Father Krukkert died of a heart attack in 1947. It was at his death that Bishop FitzSimon had a portion of the Catholic cemetery in Amarillo

reserved for the burial of priests. He was the first to be interred there. Indeed, Father Krukkert belonged not to one parish but to the diocese to which he had given so much of his priestly services. Hattie R. Roche

'Tar Paper Church'

When the tar-paper church was built, the town of Borger was not a year old. Buildings had sprung up on the open prairie like mushrooms after a rain. The developing oil and gas industry was uncertain. Such oilfield towns, having sudden birth and depending entirely upon one industry, could not be assured of permanency. If such a town survived, sometimes the population shifted rather quickly in one direction or another.

A portable altar was part of the equipment of all missionary priests. They had to be prepared to offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass in unusual places. Sometimes it was in a theater, a civic hall, a residence, or the rear of the priest's car under the open sky. The few Catholics in Borger had just such a problem. Mass was being offered in the dining room of Mrs. Gray's Boarding House. Under these circumstances, it was decided to construct a temporary building at a minimum cost and await developments of the town. A rough frame building was erected which was covered with tar paper, including the outside and the inside walls and the roof. The flooring was substantial but with a few cracks which gave the ushers a little concern when coins were dropped. There were enough windows for sufficient light and the roughly made pews would seat probably one hundred people. A confessional was installed in the rear of the building. But what was important HERE WAS A CHURCH AND AN ALTAR!



In the early part of the summer of 1927, Bishop Gerken visited the parish in Borger and brought dignity to the little church with his presence. Father Krukkert was still the pastor at this time. In making preparations for the official visit of the bishop, Father was concerned about having a suitable chair for him during the services.

Almost all the parishioners in Borger felt that they were there on a temporary stay and house furnishings were meager, if, indeed, one was lucky enough to have a house! But the spirit of ecumenism was abroad in the land even then. A good Presbyterian family, Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Kelley, who seemed to have more faith in the town than most of its inhabitants, had built a substantial house and furnished it. They graciously offered the 'host' chair of their dining room suite. Placed in the sanctuary, it became the bishop's throne for the day.

Another instance that occurred one Sunday during Mass soon after the completion of the church remains vivid in the minds of all who were present that day. Anyone familiar with the moods of the Panhandle weather, the capricious winds and the biting dust, will appreciate this incident.

As the Holy Sacrifice was being offered, a gale hit the building with sudden fury. Attention was turned for a moment to the sandstorm outside. Sounds of material being torn were heard and curiosity turned to consternation as a few realized the building was losing its roof. A half dozen men quickly left the service, and soon the sound of hammers could be heard above the whistling of the wind.

The tar paper church was only a foundation on which to work and build. As one sees the established churches of the diocese today and learns of the active life in each parish, the importance of the foundation becomes more significant. The Catholic people of this area provided a much firmer foundation upon which to build than it at first appeared to be. Hattie R. Roche



THE PRIEST MODERATOR

"Receive the Holy Spirit..." "These four words, along with the imposition of hands, confer apostolic powers upon a new bishop of the church. In January, 1962, Rt. Rev. Thomas J. Drury received apostolic powers as he was consecrated bishop of the newly-established diocese of San Angelo. He was consecrated bishop by Archbishop Robert E. Lucey of San Antonio, who had ordained him a priest. Msgr. Drury was the first priest of the Amarillo diocese to become a bishop.

A span of about twenty-seven years from the above event had elapsed since this man had come to Amarillo to be ordained for the diocese. He was a native of Ireland but had come to the United States at the age of fifteen to live with a sister in St. Louis, Missouri. He was educated in St. Louis and in Atchison, Kansas. He completed his seminary studies at Kenrick Seminary, Webster Grove, Missouri. His ordination took place in Sacred Heart Cathedral, Amarillo on June 2, 1935.

Following Father Drury's ordination, we can say in truth, every day, every hour of these years have been filled with service to his fellowman, his country, and his God. His day usually begins at 6:00 a.m. and lasts until past midnight. It was at an organizational meeting of the Amarillo Diocesan Council of Catholic Women in the fall of 1936 that I first met Father Drury. He had just been appointed moderator of the Council. He continued in this position until he left the diocese temporarily as a military chaplain. In the first years of this appointment, he was to make many trips over the diocese with Bishop Lucey as they explained the Council and inspired the women to become an organized unit. As long as he remained moderator, he attended each Deanery and Diocesan meeting, and the tremendous growth and influence of the Council was due to a great extent to his guidance.

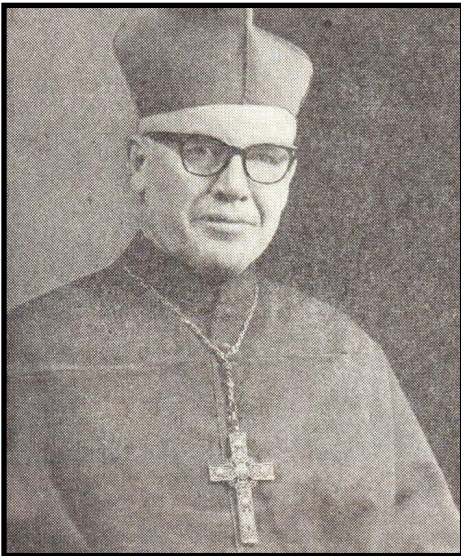
Father Drury spent the first ten years of his priesthood in the Cathedral parish. He was an assistant until 1940 when he was made rector. The following year, in 1941, he was made pastor.

Along with his duties in the large and growing Cathedral parish, he was made director of a number of diocesan programs. Besides his duties previously mentioned, he was diocesan Director of Catholic Action, Diocesan Director of the Holy name Society, moderator for both boy and girl scouts, director of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. He kept the programs and activities all going well.

All this time, when lay organizations were stressed and extended, there was a special need for a Catholic communication media. To fill this need, The Texas Panhandle Register was established in 1936. In addition to his myriad of other duties, Father Drury was named the first editor of this new Catholic weekly and continued in this capacity for two years. In 1945, Father Drury asked for leave of absence from the diocese and became a chaplain in the U.S. Air Force. He served for two years. Upon his separation from the Air Force in 1947, Archbishop Lucey requested Bishop FitzSimon to permit him to work in the Archdiocese of San Antonio. Here he was made moderator of the program for the Spanish-speaking people and director of Catholic Action.

In 1949, Father Drury was recalled to the Amarillo diocese to supervise the planning and erection of Gerken Hall at Price College High School. Before this project was completed, however, the Korean War had started. There was need for more chaplains with the Armed Forces and father was requested again to serve the men in military services. Upon his return to the Amarillo diocese from his second tour of military duty, he was appointed pastor of St. Joseph Parish, Rowena. This was in 1955.

He was there less than a year when he was named pastor of St.



FR. Thomas J. Drury Named Bishop of San Angelo

Elizabeth Parish in Lubbock. Here his foresight and vision served the Catholic population well. Lubbock was a rapidly growing city and the two existing parishes could no longer take care of the Catholic needs. Father Drury bought a sizeable plot of land on the southwestern outskirts of the city. There he planned and supervised the building of the beautiful Christ the King plant. He became the first pastor. While servicing in Lubbock in 1960, Father Drury was made a Domestic Prelate. And it was while pastor of Christ the King Church that he was elevated to the episcopacy. Father Drury was well known as an organizer. His kind and sympathetic understanding of people and their problems was a great asset in getting people to accept responsibility. But it was his untiring zeal as he gave his own time and effort to any and every project which brought results. Hattie R. Roche



An altarboy carries the train of Bishop Drury's cape.



Premiere Night at the Museum



Bishop Morkowski of Amarillo and Bishop Drury



THE PRIEST-PASTOR

"Joseph Most Just,
Joseph Most Prudent,
Joseph Most Obedient,
Joseph Most Faithful,
Mirror of Patience ..."

If the name of John were substituted for Joseph, it would give a very real description of the Rt. Rev. John Steinlage, affectionately known as Father John. Father John typifies the 'priest-pastor', the 'father' of his flock. He is also a very competent administrator, as we shall see.

John Steinlage was born in Iowa. He received his seminary education at the Josephinum Seminary, Columbus, Ohio. He was ordained for the priesthood in 1927 for the Archdiocese of Dubuque, Iowa. There he served for three years after his ordination. He heard the call of Bishop Gerken for priests in the mission diocese of Amarillo. He was one of the first to heed this call and arrived in the See city in August, 1930. His first assignment was as rector and teacher at the newly-established St. George College.

It was not an easy task keeping the school in operation those first years. It really operated 'on a shoestring'. The faculty had to be obtained from among the local priests, food must be provided, funds were almost non-existent. Even the preparation of the meals was a problem until the arrival in 1933 of the Franciscan Sisters of Mary Immaculate who took over the domestic duties of the school. The title, 'rector', included some unusual duties. He might be a plumber one day, a cook the next. One duty that fell to the rector was looking after the college farm. Bishop Gerken had purchased the farm with a dual purpose in mind. One purpose was that some food for the boarding students would be provided; the other was that jobs would be available for those unable to pay full tuition. It proved to be an unprofitable venture and was later sold.

Father John continued as administrator until 1935 when he was named pastor of St. Francis parish with its missions of St. Theresa in Panhandle and St. John in Borger.

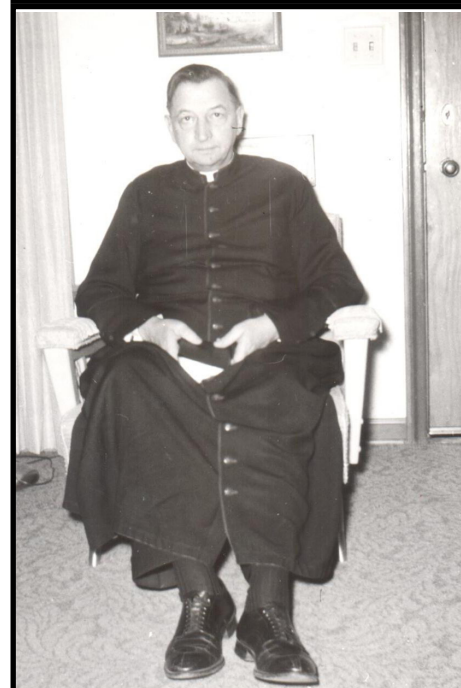
In 1938, Father Steinlage was made a Domestic Prelate with the title of Rt. Rev. Monsignor. Later, in 1954, he was made Protonotary Apostolic. Msgr. Steinlage was named to the Diocesan Board of Administration in 1944. In 1954, he was named Vicar General of the diocese. In 1945, Msgr. Steinlage was appointed pastor of the Sacred Heart Cathedral where he remained for fourteen years.

When the Catholic Children's Home (then called the Bernard Gordon Memorial Home) was just getting started in 1959, Monsignor (Father John) was asked to go to Panhandle and assume pastoral duties at St. Theresa parish and to be administrator of the Home. Again, he met the challenge. That the Children's Home is now operating smoothly and free of debt is due to a very great extent to Father John's dedication and ability.

In 1963 when the dream of a home for the aged became a reality in the building of St. Ann's Home, the bishop turned again to his 'trustworthy right hand'. Father was put in charge of this institution along with his other duties previously mentioned. Again the qualities displayed are like a

a litany: justness, prudence, obedience, faithfulness, patience. With these qualifications, he has built and directed a home for the elderly people of the area in which we all take pride.

Indeed, if it were possible to remove from this diocese the work and influence of the Rt. Rev. John Steinlage, there would be a great vacuum. He is one whom the laity love and upon whom his superiors can depend. Hattie R. Roche





RT. REV. JOHN A. STEINLAGE, P. A., V. G., V. F.

Frs... Ed Hartigan and John Steinlaue in front of St. Mary's Chapel. Circa 1950



Wise and Otherwise

Here No more

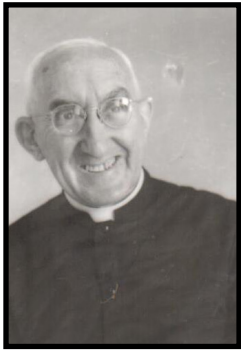
By Bishop L.T. Matthiesen

Once they were here, so much a part of our lives.

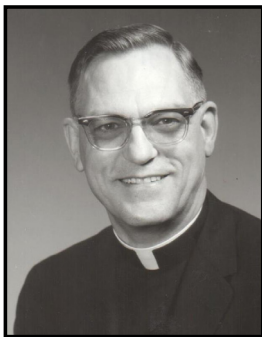


Monsignor John Steinlage -- Father John -- big and tall, purposeful, tense, gruff, given to moralizing (in a talk delivered at a St. Mary's Price high school dinner he once advised the juniors and seniors not to excuse themselves easily for their failures for fear "you may slide into hell on your "butts.") He was a tower of strength and stern taskmaster (in the new age of gadgets we installed a telephone answering device, only to find to our chagrin on our return the first evening that the first message was from Father John: "Why don't you priests stay at home some time?")

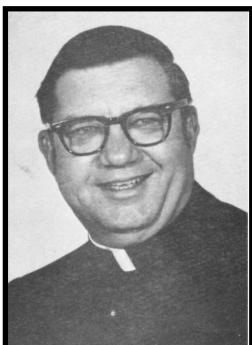
It is not difficult to conjure up a picture of old Sacred Heart Cathedral rectory and Father John in his Monsignor's cassock. Both are memories.



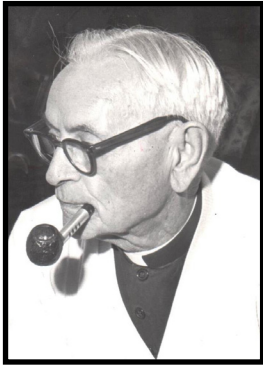
Monsignor Bart O'Brien -- Father Bart- stained cassock and all, tacking endless prayers on at the end of the Mass, exhorting God to convert the Russians, bring rain down on the soil, and re-convert the strays, and marshaling an array of Irish and sundry saints in the unending battle of Holy Mother Church. His Bible was the Irish Ecclesiastical Review, copies of which he brought with him to deanery clergy conferences, to overwhelm fellow priests with the sheer weight of pages of argumentation, occasionally on the subject at hand. A desperate cleric on one occasion marked the day of the month on a calendar and passed it around the table to Father Bart, who shook off the friendly insult and droned on.



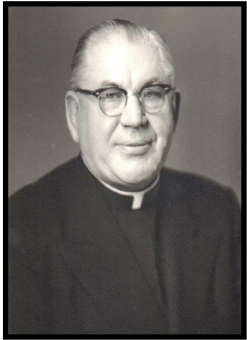
Monsignor James Fitzgerald, energetic, quick of mind, with more theological depth than showed at first blush, ambitious for the Church, known to thousands in the diocese and throughout the country, loyal to those who helped him along the way. Most of us thought he would be a bishop -- his mother was sure of it -- but he died in the prime of his life shortly after he buried his mother. And many of our dreams went with him.



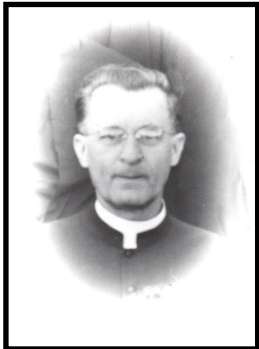
Father Hubert Halfmann, roly-poly, wise. We chortled the first time he played golf at Ross Rogers course in Amarillo, teasing him when he teed off at number four, hit a drinking fountain, and lost 50 yards on the drive. He took it good-naturally as was his way, only to come back in a few months to wipe out our foursome in a hail of pars and birdies. He had come out of the pastures of Olfen and the playing fields of San Antonio to fire balls at baffled batters, and went from there to become a leader among his own in the diocese. He is painted in our memory with a philosophical smile on his face and a pipe in his mouth, a peace with the world and with himself.



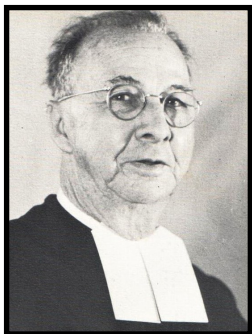
Father Andrew Quante, the good man who quietly went away one cold winter day in the Panhandle. Gentle as rain, he nurtured the faith of those around him. His delight was to be with the children of men, even to the extent of doffing his cassock after Benediction on Sunday afternoons in Nazareth and donning a baseball uniform to pitch for the locals. His thumb was a green , and we delighted to walk along the paths of his garden in Groom, to smell the flowers along the way.



Father Rupert Schindler, who lived out our philosophy professor's formula for a long life : Get a chronic illness early in life and take care of it. When we first met Father Schindler in was in Groom in 1937, where Father Arnold Boeding had taken us to pick him up on our way to the Carlsbad Caverns. "A bad heart, you see, said Father Schindler as he declined to descend into the caverns with us. He stayed on top, to live another 30 years and more. They were curious years. He sometimes disappeared. Once he showed up on the farm of a parishioner, whom he had instructed not to tell anyone where he was. It was an effective way of getting away from it all. But, in spite of such idiosyncrasies, he lived and died a loyal priest.



Father Frank Kaminsky, in some ways the strangest of us all, yet with a depth of spirituality that wiped the smirks off our faces. He was given to passing out warm soft drinks ("cold soft drinks are bad for your stomach," he told us altar boys who had come to mow the rectory lawn in Olfen). Drinking onion juice, eating Limburger cheese, sleeping on top of dining room tables, and forbidding the men to enter the rectory with pipe in mouth (after which our father never entered the rectory again). One summer, when we were home from the seminary, we marveled at what he was doing in the pulpit; equipped with a stack of theological books, he announced to the farm folk that summer he would take them through the "School of the Holy Ghost." "He means well," people said. It was clear that Olfen was not ready for St. Thomas Aquinas and the like. Then one evening, years later, we had supper with him and teased him about the picky way he chose his food. Next morning we found him dead in his chair.



Brother Paschal, for whom Paschal Stadium was named and who came in time to be known as "Brother Price." The affable eighth grade teacher for years kept scrapbooks filled with clippings and pictures detailing every bit of the history of Price Memorial College and of the Church in Amarillo. He saw the birth of a new parish in Northeast Amarillo and it was his often expressed wish to see St. Laurence Church built on the northwest corner of the school property, but he died in 1960, before his dream was realized..

There were many others, now gone, men like Fathers Ed Clinton, Gregory Boeckman, Wilfred Bosen, Matt Schafle, Fred Hyland, "Tex" Mulholland, Jerome Hancox, Dan O'Sullivan, Tom O'Brien, Francis Higgins, Charley Dvorak, Charles Knapp, Leo Lavoie, Bill Hammond, Fedelis Albrecht, Gerald Lynch, Jim Daley, James Erickson, Ed Chrisman, Stanley Crocchiola, Dick Neyer, J. Arnold Carlson, Gary Sides, Pete Morsch, Tim Dran, Raymond Gillis, Antonio Rodriquez.

Once they were here, so much a part of our lives, cherished, now remembered with fondness.

September 30, 2017 - November 30, 2017

Contributions

M/M Steven Beckham	20
Neva Burks	50
Marlene Casasanta	25
M/M Edward M. Dunigan	100
Jeanette Herring	50
Jim Jordan	100
Ron Kershen	50
Alice Kuehler	100
Shirley Mager	25
Ludi Martin	25
Lori Monceballez	25
Dee Ramirez	25
Audrey Hargrove Wink	50
Total	645

Museum Memberships

Ludi Martin	25
-------------	----

St. Lucien Project

Maida Villasenor in memory of Manny Villasenor	25
--	----

THANKS TO:

The Benedictine Monastery for various religious statues and plaques.

Ron Kershen for a ceramic Ciborium and Cross for serving as a Communion Minister at Mass by Pope John Paul II in San Antonio, Texas.

Madeline Ryberg for Pope-Blessed rosaries and crucifix.

Joe Gable for Knight's of Columbus memorabilia and bow tie.

Thank you for your continued generosity!

Volunteer Needed

We are in need of a volunteer to be in the museum one morning a week. This is so the museum can be open to the public that morning. We have someone for a weekly afternoon. Contact Susan: 383-2243

Best Housekeeper Award

Monsignor Peter Morsch had a dog he dearly loved. While he was away one year visiting relatives and friends in Holland the dog died. Sophie, his house keeper, broke the news to him on his return. He said he wished he had been at home at the time. He would have given his pet a proper burial. You still can, Sophie said, I knew you would want to do that so I kept him in the freezer for you...



We will be selling prints of the Museum mural painted by Randy Friemel, in the near future.



Premiere Night at the Museum



P.O. Box 5644
Amarillo, TX 79117-5644

Return Services Requested

PLEASE LET US KNOW
Address corrections
when moving
Wishing to discontinue
Receiving duplicates
SO WE MAY UPDATE
OUR MAILING LIST
THANKS!

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 309
AMARILLO, TX



Louise Ross and Truetta Brandt...

Sam Pace and Jim Jordan

If you missed the Diocesan Museum Premiere Opening,
you missed a wonderful Jubilation!