Celebrating our 60th Anniversary as a Parish

June 2012
Raywood, TX
By the Grace of God, Sacred Heart Church is celebrating its 60th Anniversary.
May it continue, in the future, as we strive to live our lives pleasing to Jesus.

CONGRATULATIONS!
THE CATHERINE BOUTTE FAMILY

In loving memory of Peter and Mary (Honey) Gradney
We miss you dearly and will always cherish the wonderful memories we shared.

James and Rosie Gradney
AND FAMILY
Kim, her husband Robert and their daughters Morgan, Macy and Megan

Congratulations Sacred Heart Catholic Church
On your 60th Anniversary as a Parish

CONGRATULATIONS
SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH

PHYLIS & WILLIAM BLAND

God Bless
Sacred Heart Catholic Church began as a mission church and was dedicated in 1935 as part of Our Mother of Mercy parish in Ames. Following 17 years of growth, the mission became Sacred Heart Parish in 1952.

Late in the 1880s, a few black families left Louisiana and settled in the small community of Raywood in Liberty County Texas. Shortly after they moved there, other members of the families in Louisiana visited them and in later years decided to move their families to the small rural community. When these families came to Raywood, they brought their French culture and their love for their Catholic religion. They became successful farmers and purchased large tracks of land.

Because there was no Catholic church in Raywood, the families had to travel to Ames to attend Our Mother of Mercy. They went to church in wagons, horseback, Model T Fords, or walked. They were determined to keep their faith and dreamed of the day when they would have their own church. Ames was the mother church, because it was there that their children were baptized, made their First Communion, Confirmation, as well as married their children and buried their dead.

Due to the distance they traveled to church and with more people arriving, the farmers began to work and plan for a church to be built in Raywood. Jesse and Ella Griffith donated the land for the church. And in 1935, their dream became a reality when the first church was built and named Sacred Heart. Because there was no full-time priest, the little church became a mission of Ames.

Regardless of the lack of a priest, the people loved their church and made many improvements, such as a cemetery, a hall, and a rectory for a priest. These were built by members of the mission community. In 1952, after the completion of the rectory, Fr. James Faherty, S.S.J. was assigned to the parish as the first full-time priest. He served as pastor from 1952 to 1958 and again from 1968 to 1975.

The community continued to grow and the church became old and improvements were needed and some were made. But, the church was small and could not accommodate the parish. For many years, it was the desire of the parishioners to build a brick church. They remembered the changes from dirt roads to paved ones, from kerosene lamps to electricity, small schools to larger and better equipped ones, running water, telephones, air conditioning, central heat and the many other modern conveniences.