



Saint Ignatius of Antioch Parish

Rangely, Colorado
Established 1931

Two Franciscans padres, Atanasio Dominguez and Silvestre Vélez de Escalante, passed through this area in September 1776, discovering the White River near which Rangely lies. In all probability, these Spanish priests said the first Mass in what is now Rio Blanco County.

A trading post was established on the site in the 1880s but did not become a significant town until the Rangely oil and gas field was tapped in 1902. This subterranean "gold mine", still producing in the 1980s, has proved to be far and away the richest petroleum discovery in Colorado.

Saint Ignatius Mission in Rangely was established in 1931 by Father Francis J. Brady, pastor of Holy Family Parish in Meeker.

During the 1940s, Father Blaise Schumacher, OSB flew in two Sundays a month to hold Mass in the Purdy family home.

The family also allowed the mission to use their home as a rectory, church and catechetical center.

By 1950, Saint Ignatius Mission had grown to about 100 members and had outgrown the Purdy residence. With the help of the Catholic Extension Society, the mission purchased an abandoned grocery store for use as a parish hall. Archbishop Vehr consecrated the hall on June 21, 1951. The parishioners decided to move their church into a larger building called the Pan-American Oil Patch Recreation Hall and sold their old home to Trinity Lutheran Church in 1957. Father Leo Blach was appointed to be the first resident pastor of Saint Ignatius Parish in 1958.

Two Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa arrived to assist the parish in 1982. Since then, parish houses were built in both Rangely and Meeker to allow for parish meetings and to provide a residence for the Dominican Sisters. Father Bert Chilson was the priest from 1983 to 1986. Father Lawrence T. Solan became pastor in 1986 and began splitting his time between the two parishes of Holy Family and Saint Ignatius with one week in Rangely and the next week in Meeker. Father Roger Lascelle became pastor in 1991 and continued serving both parishes in Meeker and Rangely. In 1998, he also became the pastor of Saint Michael Parish in Craig. Father James R. Fox has served as pastor of Saint Ignatius of Antioch Parish in Rangely, Holy Family Parish in Meeker and Saint Michael Parish in Craig since 2004.