

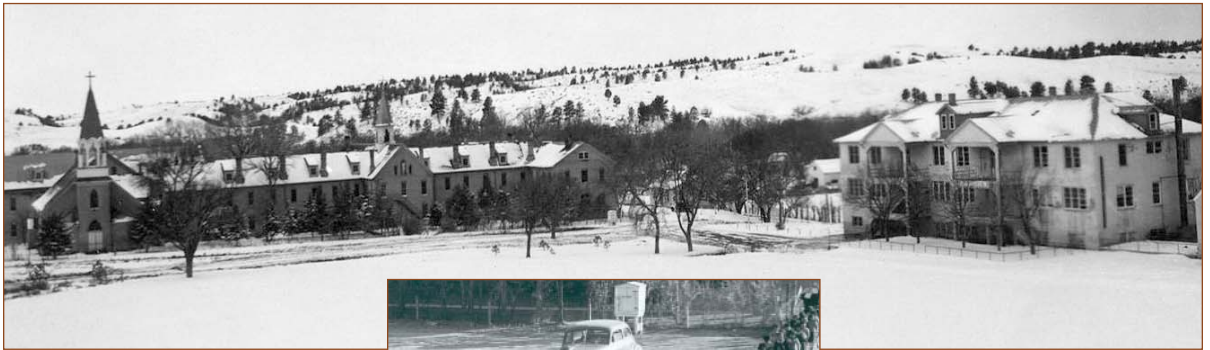


Red Cloud Indian School

Pine Ridge, South Dakota

Fall, 2003

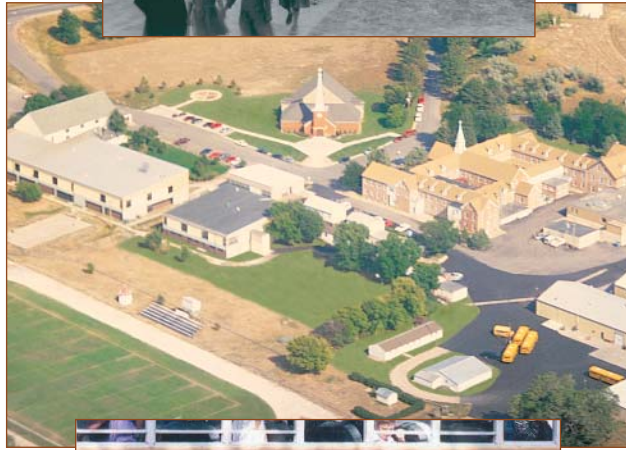
## Jesuits... Then – Now



On a hill to the east is Holy Rosary Cemetery rising beside Red Cloud Indian School's valley campus. Here Lakota men, women and children lay beside the sisters and priests, beneath yellow October sod. Near the crucifix, Chief Red Cloud's prominent gray headstone stands weathered after a century of insults by wind, rain and snow.



The old churchyard provides an anchor of memory. Historic Chief Red Cloud's school, born of a noble purpose, has a notable past. In 1887, Chief Red Cloud welcomed the Jesuits to begin a school as a way to prepare his people for the future. The Jesuit priests and brothers, aided by local Lakota men, fired the bricks and commenced building. A year later, joined by eight Franciscan Sisters, the school began. Within a



few decades, simple white churches arose in almost every community.

During this time period, a diocesan publication states:

“Somehow, across the chasm of alien cultures and jagged grief, here and there hope spread among the Lakota like wildflowers dotted in buffalo grass. Early Lakota catechists, including Chief Red Cloud and the Oglala Lakota medicine man Black Elk, spread the news about the promises of Jesus Christ to their families. Later they

would be joined by catechists like Phillip Fast Horse of Allen; William Randall, Louis Mousseaux and Edward White Crow of Wanblee; and Silas Fills The Pipe and Ivan Star

Comes Out of Red Shirt Table and No Water Community.” Red Cloud's invitation to the Jesuits bore plentiful fruit.

Times have changed and many old challenges with it. But for the Jesuits who

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continue the local work of their spiritual forebears, the goal of Red Cloud Indian School and the parishes remains essentially the same: preparing Lakota men, women and children for a future both immediate and eternal. Fathers Peter Klink S.J. and Bill Pauly S.J. have a combined experience among the Lakota that approaches half a century. At present, Fr. Klink is president of Red Cloud Indian School, Inc. and Fr. Pauly is the pastor of the parishes in the Manderson and Porcupine communities.

Fr. Klink began his journey to be a Jesuit priest in 1969. Having grown up admiring a cousin who was a Jesuit priest and having a father who graduated from Marquette University, his childhood experiences of Jesuits were deeply positive. Midway to the priesthood in 1975, and sensing his vocation leaned toward a role in academia, Fr. Peter came to Red Cloud for his three-year Regency after a year's study in Germany on a Fulbright Scholarship. What the young Jesuit found among the Oglala Lakota people deeply touched him. "What really struck me during that time at Red Cloud and even after at Theology in Berkeley, was the simple way in which I saw grandparents live lives of generosity and love."

As for a promising career in academia, it seemed God had another path. Twenty-eight years later, with a few years away in between, Fr. Peter remains touched by the Lakota way of sharing and how it has shaped his life.

"You still see grandmas hiking their way down the road to get food in Pine Ridge, and just taking care of kids and other people at their homes." Looking back at the road not taken, the Jesuit priest says; "At

some point I had to say, 'What's more important – living a good, caring life or writing another book?' Here at Red Cloud I started to put into perspective what is really of value. Even at Theology in Berkeley I would say; 'Now, okay, we're talking about this theological question: What would this mean to a family struggling with the issues families struggle with sitting in a pew in Porcupine back on the reservation?'"

The search for answers to such questions, combined with his experience among the Lakota peoples, changed the course of his life. "This is not to say the academic life and writing books is not important. It is to say the quality of living your life is more important than any one achievement you might be shooting for to make your mark. The more important mark is the mark we



make on each other's lives," said Fr. Peter.

More than a quarter century after coming to Red Cloud, Fr. Peter offered his thoughts on the nearby cemetery. "I don't immediately think of the Jesuits who are buried up there, although I certainly feel a connectedness with all of them. As I get older there's an increasing number I have lived with during my time here. But I also think of local people. I go up there and I see family names. If I haven't taught a child directly related to one of them, they are at least a distant relative. There is unity between the hopes and dreams of the Jesuits who are buried there and myself; there is also unity between the hopes and dreams of all Lakota buried there and their desire to see future generations reach the end of their lives having been proud of who they are."

Fr. Bill Pauly, born and raised near Green Bay, Wisconsin, has a love and affection for the Lakota people, Catholic and non-Catholic, which is both mutual and Reservation wide. Though he recently

served as Superior to the Jesuit Community on the Pine Ridge Reservation, he has returned to his first love as a local parish priest. For a decade and a half, Fr. Bill has watched and prayed for discernment over the changing role of the Jesuits in their service to church in the Lakota community.



“The image, for me, of the Jesuit role is that of John the Baptist vis-à-vis Jesus. As John the Baptist said, ‘He must increase, I must decrease,’ in the same way we now find the role of the Jesuit priests,” said Fr. Bill, though he added, “Lakota Jesuit priests might have a little different role.”

A small fraction of the number of priests and religious who served the Lakota people in the early stages of the mission are available today. The shortage of priests, brothers and sisters nationally has impacted the Pine Ridge Reservation as well.

“As a result, more and more talented Lakota lay people are taking on positions of leadership,” said Fr. Bill, “It all points to our role of being more in the background, supportive in training and educating the future leaders of the church. I think working with Lakota Deacon Gerald Bush, being there to walk with him on his path toward the Diaconate is an example.” Fr. Bill noted that the community acceptance and embracing of Deacon Bush in his new role in the church at Wanblee has been as satisfying as it was predictable.

An alumnus and member of the Our Lady of the Sioux parish council in Oglala perceives the



changing role of the Jesuits among the Lakota, is “giving of ourselves as the Jesuits have done for the people for decades is the way of the future and the path to more vibrant communities.” She notes “Generosity kindles the spirit of hope, that ties us to our community. The Jesuits have seen this aspect of our culture and have worked to be a part of it. They have given tirelessly of themselves so others can grow – and, can dream.” The Red Cloud graduate points to one Jesuit priest, Fr. Earl Kurth, S.J.



recently retired, as an exemplar of service to Lakota children. “Fr. Earl came to us in 1965. When he had his Golden Jubilee (50 years) as a Jesuit here in 1999, he asked the students to pray that he would have many more years

to walk with them. He had given so much, but he still wanted to continue to walk with us.” Though he is now retired, the alumnus believes Fr. Earl Kurth’s compassion and dedication will live on as part of the cherished legacy of the Jesuits.



# Thank You – Wopila

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**For more information** about ways to give, Please write me at 100 Mission Drive Pine Ridge, SD 57770 You may also give online at [www.redcloudschool.org](http://www.redcloudschool.org). You may also contact Red Cloud School Development Office at (605) 867-1105 or [rcgiving@redcloudschool.org](mailto:rcgiving@redcloudschool.org)

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for your caring support of Red Cloud which literally keeps our doors open and helps to ensure that today's kindergarten students are the Red Cloud graduates of tomorrow. We deeply appreciate all you do to provide an education of the mind and heart for the Lakota children at Red Cloud and the ways in which you help the many wonderful people working in collaboration with us.



With your help, students are able to attend school because a Red Cloud bus is there to pick them up. With your help, the students are met by caring and challenging teachers. With your help, children are eating a healthy meal each day. With your help, our graduates have the confidence and competence to do well at colleges and universities across the country.

I wanted to share some of the letters you have written to me in the past year. Your faithfulness to Red Cloud is a blessing!

*"Dear Fr. Klink, I wanted you to know that as a result of the down sizing in my company that I am losing my job. I am optimistic that I will be able to find another. In the meantime, I will do my best to continue my support of the work at Red Cloud."*

*"Dear Fr. Peter, Several years ago we were able to visit Red Cloud and were impressed with what you are accomplishing. We are not wealthy people, but we believe in what you are doing."*

*"Dear Fr. Klink, I am increasing my giving to Red Cloud because you bus your students over great distances to insure that they can come to school and because you do not send out trinkets. They are a waste."*

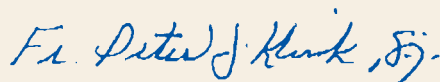
*"Dear Fr. Klink, I will be sending you a monthly donation. I hope this will help the children at the school."*

*"Dear Fr. Klink, I have named Red Cloud in my will. Having said that, please pray I don't use it for a while! I will continue helping the students as long as I can."*

*"Dear Father Klink, My mother raised six children on her own. She valued education and all of her children are college graduates. The work at Red Cloud meant a lot to her. It is in her memory that we make this gift. Please keep my mother in your prayers."*

*"Dear Fr. Klink, We received an unexpected inheritance. Although we have four children of our own, we know that the children there are in greater need. Know that you are in our prayers."*

We pray that God will abundantly bless you and those you hold in your heart. Thank you for all you are making possible. Together, we truly are making a difference child by child and heart by heart. *Lila wopila tanka* – many, many thanks, and may the Good Lord bless you.



Father Peter Klink, SJ, President