

PH0357057

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUL 13 1976
DATE ENTERED SEP 8 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

**

Our Lady of Sorrows Church

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

West National Avenue

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Las Vegas

__ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

#1

STATE

New Mexico

35^{CODE}

COUNTY

San Miguel

CODE

047

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Archdiocese of Santa Fe

STREET & NUMBER

202 Morningside Drive, S.E.

CITY, TOWN

Albuquerque

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

New Mexico 87100

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

San Miguel County Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Las Vegas

STATE

New Mexico

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties

DATE

March 1, 1974

__FEDERAL STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

New Mexico State Planning Office, 200 West de Vargas

CITY, TOWN

Santa Fe

STATE

New Mexico 87503

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Our Lady of Sorrows Church, an impressive red sandstone building combining Gothic and Romanesque architectural styles, is the church of the first Roman Catholic parish established in the historic northern New Mexico town of Las Vegas. Situated one block east of the original Las Vegas plaza (National Register 12/74) across the street from the San Miguel County Courthouse at the corner of National Avenue and Morrison Street, it was erected to replace the earlier adobe structure which had been built on the plaza in 1836. Masonry work on the walls of the church was begun in 1852 but the interior details were not completed until 1885 when the enormous water-powered Kilger organ was installed. Since then the church has remained almost unchanged. Its stone construction and Gallic architectural style contrast sharply with the traditional Spanish adobe churches characteristic of northern New Mexico and exemplify the influence of the first U.S. bishop, French-born Jean Baptiste Lamy.

Constructed of broken-coursed rough-dressed sandstone, quarried locally, the walls of the 60' x 150' church rest on concrete footings added after original construction to prevent settling. Rising from the corners of the south facade and flanking the main entrance to the structure are two square towers which protrude slightly from both outer walls, and are topped by belfries with four arched openings. The east belfry contains the two church bells. A portico added in 1968 covers the entrance, an arched double doorway with frosted glass panels in the upper portions of light blue doors. Under the portico concrete steps and iron railings lead to a cement walk extending to the street through the old cemetery which is enclosed by a low stone wall.

Below the apex of the metal covered pitched roof is a round clear glass window, formerly a rose window, above a large white crucifix which is located between two stained glass lancet windows. In each side wall of the nave between the front towers and the corners formed by the transept are three arched stained glass windows with geometric and floral designs, gifts of parishioners, former priests and confraternities of the parish. Covered by low wood-shingled roofs topped with small spires, each end of the transept forms an abbreviated octagon (as does the apse) containing a small arched doorway and two arched windows.

From the northeast corner of the structure behind the east end of the transept extends a 30' x 50' adobe wing known as the "Chapel of the Holy Sacrament" which receives heavy use by parishioners for midweek prayers and confessions. In the opposite corner behind the west end of the transept a high brick chimney rises above the boiler room which is recessed below ground level and is covered by a corrugated metal roof. To the east of the church stands a new structure housing the rectory and parish offices.

Opposite the main entrance in a small vestibule is a pair of wooden swinging doors opening into the center aisle under the choir loft which contains the huge organ. A small area on each side of the vestibule has been partitioned off to provide storage space and access to the choir loft stairway. The plastered walls of the nave are painted light brown below the window sills and pale blue from that level to the ceiling; small pictorial representations of the fourteen Stations of the Cross hang on each side.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES Original construction 1852-1885 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Our Lady of Sorrows Church, completed in 1885, is significant as the church of the first Roman Catholic parish established in the important 19th century northeastern New Mexico mercantile center of Las Vegas. The imposing stone structure, often erroneously called "The Cathedral" because of its size and impressive appearance, exemplifies the introduction of a new and alien element into the lives of the Spanish Catholics who originally settled the area in the 1830's. Soon after U.S. Occupation of New Mexico in 1846 its citizens were confronted not only with a new system of government but a foreign hierarchy establishment as well, a situation compounded in Our Lady of Sorrows parish by misunderstandings between factions within the church and the parishioners. Despite these problems and intermittent financial difficulties Our Lady of Sorrows Church has served Roman Catholics in Las Vegas for over a century.

The first permanent settlement in the Las Vegas area was made by twenty-nine families from the nearby Pecos Valley community of San Miguel del Vado who were placed in possession of the Las Vegas Land Grant by Justice of the Peace José de Jesús Ulibarri y Durán on April 6, 1835 by order of New Mexico governor Francisco Sarracino. Most of the same area was later claimed as having been granted by Mexican authorities in 1820 to Luis María C de Baca who had attempted to establish a ranch near the Gallinas River but had abandoned the land because of Indian depredations. The conflict between the Baca heirs and the residents of the Las Vegas Grant was resolved by the Surveyor General of New Mexico in 1858 in favor of the town grant with the Baca claimants being given land elsewhere.

The 1835 settlers established the traditional plaza on the west bank of the Gallinas and the community soon became a major stopping place on the Santa Fe Trail. Brigadier-General Stephen Watts Kearny, following the famous trade route, arrived at the Las Vegas plaza on August 15, 1846 and from the roof-top of the alcalde's (chief local official) house officially proclaimed U.S. sovereignty in the area.

Following New Mexico custom a small adobe chapel in the shape of a cross was one of the first buildings erected on the plaza, a structure often mentioned, usually unfavorably, by Anglo travelers of the 1850s and 60s. During its early years the little church of Nuestra Señora de Dolores (Our Lady of Sorrows) was a mission under the jurisdiction of the parish priest of San Miguel del Vado and received only bi-weekly visitations. In 1852 it was made a full parish by first U.S. Bishop Jean Baptiste Lamy who appointed Fr. Alexander Grzelachowski resident priest. Grzelachowski known as "El Padre Polaco" because of his Polish birth, who also served as chaplain for Roman Catholic soldiers stationed at the nearby U.S. Army Post of Fort Union, later renounced Holy Orders and became a prominent merchant and sheep rancher

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Callon, Milton W. Las Vegas, New Mexico. . . The Town that Wouldn't Gamble. Las Vegas, 1962.
 Chavez, Fray Angelico. Archives of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, 1678-1900. Washington, 1957.
 Davis, W. W. H. El Gringo, or New Mexico and Her People. Santa Fe, 1938.
 (See Continuation Sheet #4)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 2 3/4 acres.

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 1 3	4 7 9	3 0 0	3 9	3 8	5 0 0	B					
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING						
C							D					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

John O. Baxter, Archivist I

ORGANIZATION

State Records Center and Archives

DATE

July 6, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

404 Montezuma

TELEPHONE

827-2321

CITY OR TOWN

Santa Fe

STATE

New Mexico 87503

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Thomas W. McLean

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

7-6-76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

9/8/76

Attest: DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Attest: *Robert B. Pettig*
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

9/3/76

Acting

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY
JUL 13 1976
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED SEP 8 1976

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 & 8 PAGE #1

#7

A double row of heavy wooden columns formed by sheathing native timbers with a veneer of planed lumber capped by local interpretations of Corinthian capitals supports the high white ceiling. Standing on pedestals attached to four of the columns approximately seven feet above the floor are statues of St. Theresa of Avila, St. Anthony of Padua, Mother Cabrini and St. Jude Thaddeus. The vaulted design and gold trim found in the ceiling are repeated at lower level over the side aisles and behind the high altar. The unadorned golden brown wood pews are arranged in four sections divided by five aisles.

Dominating the sanctuary is a large crucifix suspended between statues of Our Lady of Sorrows and St. John the Apostle placed behind the large, grey simulated-marble high altar which is decorated by a carved fresco of The Last Supper. Statues of The Sacred Heart of Jesus and The Immaculate Heart of Mary stand on small pillars on each side of the altar slightly behind a simply designed wooden lectern. The sanctuary is enclosed by a wrought iron communion rail and carpeted with gold covered material which also covers the steps leading to the hardwood floor of the nave.

In each end of the transept are small side chapels. The altar in the east chapel is embellished by a representation of Jesus in the Tomb enclosed in glass beside a large statue of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. The west chapel, decorated more simply, is dominated by a fresco of the Holy Family behind the simple white wooden altar.

Under the leadership of Fr. Sabine Griego, the present priest, a program has been launched by the Parish Council for the renovation of the church. The plan includes stabilization of the walls, a complete rehabilitation of the organ, replacement and rearrangement of the pews, refurbishment of the stained glass windows and extensive landscaping. The plans have been carefully designed to preserve the integrity of the old building and in some instances to restore its original appearance by eliminating the 1968 portico.

#8

in the Las Vegas area. He was the first of a succession of European priests appointed by Lamy to minister to the Las Vegas parish, a situation which caused some tension among the parishioners who were basically Spanish Catholic by tradition.

Lamy had come to New Mexico in 1851 as the first U.S. prelate with the title of Vicar Apostolic. He was named Bishop of Santa Fe in 1853 when New Mexico was separated from the Diocese of Durango. Dissatisfied with many of the local traditions of his Hispanic flock and aware that the few native priests, long subject to the Mexican Bishop of Durango, were out of sympathy with his administration, Lamy recruited heavily in his native land to fill vacant churches and establish new parishes and missions. A vigorous administrator, the new bishop began a far-reaching reorganization of church affairs

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUL 13 1976

DATE ENTERED

SEP 8 1976

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE #2

with particular emphasis on doctrine and education, and a building program patterned after the architectural forms with which he was familiar.

In 1853 Grzelachowski was followed at Las Vegas by ex-French army officer Fr. Jean Francois Pinard. Under Pinard's supervision and that of his successor, another Lamy protege, Fr. Joseph M. Coudert, 1865-1891, the present Our Lady of Sorrows Church building was erected and was stamped with its distinctive French character.

As the 19th century progressed Las Vegas entered a period of population growth and prosperity which continued intermittently until the 1890s. From its modest beginning as the first place on the Santa Fe Trail where travelers could purchase fresh produce its commercial activities rapidly expanded after the Civil War as it became a good market for the raw materials of ranchers, miners and lumbermen throughout the Territory and the center where they could purchase needed supplies. With the arrival of the railroad in 1879 a new town known as East Las Vegas, predominantly Anglo in character, sprang up across the Gallinas from the old plaza (now called West Las Vegas) which had been bypassed when the tracks were laid and the depot erected. The subsequent shift in social and economic activity caused ill feelings which lasted for several decades. The influx of new settlers included many Roman Catholics and as early as the 1850s it was evident that a new church was needed to accommodate the growing parish and to replace the old adobe structure on the plaza.

An imposing stone building, quite different from the traditional adobe structures of West Las Vegas, was begun in 1852 the same year in which Our Lady of Sorrows became a parish. Since much of the work was done by the parishioners as volunteers, progress was slow; the walls were not finished until 1868 when a canvas covering was stretched over the top in lieu of a roof so that the building could be used. In an effort to encourage the church members to finish the building Bishop Lamy sold the old church in 1870 and it was soon razed to make way for a commercial building. On viewing the partially completed structure at this time one observer called it a "handsome edifice built of brown stone" but also "a magnificent refrigerator," so cold that children taking part in their first communion service were crying.

Because of a chronic lack of funds during the period of Mexican rule the level of education was at a low ebb when Lamy arrived, a situation which persisted until a free public school system was established in 1891. Distressed by the high rate of illiteracy the bishop encouraged the various teaching orders of the Roman Catholic Church to come to the Territory to establish schools first in Santa Fe and later in other important towns. In Las Vegas the Academy of the Immaculate Conception was founded by the Sisters of Loretto in 1869 and six years later the Jesuits opened Las Vegas College in a borrowed building despite some opposition from Fr. Coudert. Although

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUL 13 1976

DATE ENTERED

SEP 8 1976

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE #3

the college soon became a source of pride in the community the arrival of the Jesuits evidently caused a rift within Our Lady of Sorrows parish. Some members began using the college chapel for prayers and confessions finding a rapport with the Jesuits who were more fluent in Spanish than their own priests.

Having close ties to the ecclesiastical hierarchy in Santa Fe Coudert quickly objected to Lamy, who had been named Archbishop in 1875, concerning the diminution of his congregation. To add to the confusion and disunity the parish of the Immaculate Conception of Mary was established in East Las Vegas in 1884 primarily for English-speaking Catholics in the new town. Despite several attempts at compromise, the breach between Coudert and the Jesuits continued until 1886 when the Order, lacking support from the new Archbishop J. B. Salpointe, moved the college to Colorado on the invitation of Bishop Machebeuf. Re-named Regis College it was permanently established in Denver two years later. The closing of the college was a great blow to the civic pride of the citizens of Las Vegas but protest meetings and appeals to influence both the Archbishop and the Pope were of no avail.

The demands on Roman Catholics in the community for financial support resulting from the diversity of church activities, combined with a dislike of Fr. Coudert's French background by some parishioners, explain the long delay in the completion of the new Our Lady of Sorrows Church building. However, in the midst of the furor, the project was finally concluded. A metal roof replaced the canvas covering, interior details were completed and, most significantly, the magnificent pipe organ was installed in 1885.

Under the leadership of French-Canadian merchant Charles Blanchard, a church trustee, the parish was able to raise \$4,000 with which Blanchard purchased the finest organ available. Manufactured by George Kilgen of St. Louis, it was shipped west by freight car followed by the maker and his son who spent a month in Las Vegas assembling and tuning the enormous instrument. On October 22, 1885 a "Grand Pipe Organ Concert" was held in the church. Announcements for the event read: "The Largest and most Powerful Organ west of St. Louis. Buy a ticket to the Concert and encourage Music and Education."

Although its past history has been stormy on occasion Our Lady of Sorrows Church has continued to serve the parish of West Las Vegas. Plans are underway for its rehabilitation so that it may continue to do so. The appointment of Fr. Sabine Griego, present priest and the first native born New Mexican to hold the position has aided materialy in the unification of the historic parish.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUL 13 1976
DATE ENTERED	SEP 8 1976

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE #4

- Hollister, Ovando J. Boldly They Rode. Lakewood, 1949.
- Horgan, Paul. Lamy of Santa Fe. New York, 1975.
- Jenkins, Myra Ellen and Albert H. Schroeder. A Brief History of New Mexico.
Albuquerque, 1974.
- Owens, Sr. M. Lilliana. Jesuit Beginnings in New Mexico 1867-1882. El
Paso, 1950.
- Wallace, William S., ed. A Journey through New Mexico's First Judicial
District in 1864. Los Angeles, 1956.