

San Isidro Catholic Church

The Good Shepherd Pastor, Reverend Thomas Gaul, on October 2000, realized how fast the Spanish population was growing in the boundaries of his Parish. Therefore, he asked members of the Parish Family to begin an Outreach Spanish Ministry program. These group of families got together with Catholic Charities, some of the Cumberland County School Counselors and other agencies in the area to begin serving some of the population east of our Parish.

Within a year we realized, even though we were meeting their physical needs, more was needed. We organized Rosaries and provided some classes, but their children needed to be baptized, couples wanted their marriages blest and many children had not received their First Communion. There were other churches that offered Spanish Masses, but they were 20 to 30 miles away from the location we were serving.

On January 6th, 2002 we began a Parish Mission in the Stedman area. At our first Mass we had 28 adults and 16 children to attend. The Pastor of Cokesbury Methodist Church opened his doors to celebrate Mass. Because we did not have an assigned Priest to celebrate Mass, we depended on the generosity of our Diocesan Priests; we scheduled the Mass at 2:30 PM. On the first year we average about 75 people a week and we celebrated two (2) Marriages, 12 First Communions, eight (8) baptisms and one (1) confirmation.

We chose the name of Saint Isidore, the Farmer, since he is the Patron of the rural communities in the United States. He was born in the 12th Century in Spain and toiled the fields. According to tradition, as he kneeled to pray angels came down and continued his work while he was worshipping God.

On 2004, the Most Reverend Bishop Joseph Gossman authorized the purchase of two (2) metal buildings, which were converted one (1), into a beautiful Church and the other as the Catechetical building and social hall. On 2006, Bishop Gossman, appointed the First Pastoral Administrator and also dedicated the Church. On Palm Sunday 2007 we began an English Mass at 5 PM on Sundays. Around the same time The Reverend John "Jack" Kelly, after retiring from Saint Patrick Catholic Church committed himself as our Sacramental Minister. Since then, both Masses have been changed to Sunday mornings and today we have the English Mass at 9 AM and the Spanish Mass at 11:30 AM. Religious education for our children is taught in between the two (2) Masses with over 90 children registered. Attendance to the English Mass average 75-100 people and for the Spanish Mass is 200-250.

About two years ago, we learned that HWY 24 is going to be expanded and that our Church is a victim of progress. On February 2011, we were contacted by the Department of Transportation and were notified that the State of NC will be taking possession of part of our Land and the Church on December 2011. For over 18 months we have been looking for land to

not avail. We have attempted to purchase few pieces of property, but for one reason or another each one had failed through.

Currently we are working on a piece of land that we hope we will be able to acquire. Since May 2010 the San Isidro Community, has raised over \$88,000 and expect to have over \$150,000 by the end of June with a Brick fund raising that is currently running. We take pride that our small community has always met and exceeded the BAA campaign and that on 2003 began the campaign without been formally asked to do so. Generosity, openness to new comers and a sense of family has been the constant thread of our small community from the first time we met at Cokesbury Methodist Church.