



**HISTORIC  
ST. FRANCIS XAVIER  
MISSION**

Located on the Big Horn River within the Crow Reservation in Montana, St. Francis Xavier Mission was established in 1886. The church building has been in continuous use since 1888 and a Capuchin ministry site for the last 50 years.

The church is a centerpiece for religious celebrations of the Crow Catholic Community and local non-Native population. Many people consider St. Francis Xavier to be the heart of the Catholic Church on the reservation. The church and rectory were placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1990.



Construction of the historic church was funded by St. Katharine Drexel who sought to create a sacred place of worship in mission territory. She used architects from the East Coast, and many elements of the wooden, gothic revival design church were shipped in on the newly completed railroad.

A school was built in 1888 and although the original building no longer exists, a Catholic school is part of the mission today.



Capuchin ministry at St. Francis Xavier is an important spiritual piece of the Reservation. Each week, 120 Native students attend school masses in the church. Students grow in the Catholic faith through sacrament preparation and deepen a respect of their rich Native American history by praying in the same sacred space as their ancestors. Sunday masses and funerals draw families from across the Reservation. St. Francis Xavier is a spiritual home and community gathering place for the Crow Reservation.

# ST. FRANCIS XAVIER RESTORATION CAMPAIGN







## WE NEED YOUR HELP

St. Francis Xavier church and rectory are in sore need of repair. Structural and exterior deterioration threaten the long-term integrity of the buildings. A three-phase restoration plan was created to keep these important buildings from ruin. Phase 1 work has been funded and completed. Phase 2 funding began with a matching grant from the National Fund for Sacred Places. Plans for Phase 3 will solidify after the completion of Phase 2.



## RESTORING ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

### PHASE 1 | COMPLETED

#### *The Church Building:*

- Foundation piers of the church repaired.
- ADA-accessible ramp constructed.
- Interior of church restored.
- Pews installed.
- New liturgical furnishings (Crow designs).



### PHASE 2 | CURRENT PLAN

#### *The Church Building:*

- Replace roof structure and cover materials.
- Restore wood windows, clad siding and cross.
- Paint the exterior.

#### *The Rectory:*

- Replace foundation.
- Replace roof.
- Restore wood windows, porch and clad siding.
- Paint exterior.
- Renovate interior.

### PHASE 3 | LONG-TERM GOAL

#### *The Mission Grounds:*

- Repair cemetery
- Create a visitor center.



## COMPLETING THE WORK

Phase 2 work will begin as funds are available. Using local craftsmen and products, restoration of St. Francis Xavier will bring economic benefit to the Reservation. Fundraising for the restoration projects is underway with a laser focus to match the \$100,000 grant by December 31, 2022, as specified from the National Fund for Sacred Places. Invitations to fund work on these historic buildings will be extended to foundations, religious orders and current supporters of the Capuchin Province of St. Joseph.

St. Francis Xavier is a place of memory and hope. It is alive with children and families. It is an intersection of Catholic and Crow cultures. Please prayerfully reflect on ways you can support this important restoration project. Together and with God's abundant help, St. Francis Xavier Mission will be the heart of the Catholic Church on the Reservation for many generations more.

