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SAINT MARY OF THE MOUNTAIN CHURCH Stonyford, Colusa County

Information for this article was taken in part from *Sentinels of Love, Rural Churches of California*, by Bette R Millis & Jeanne Mord and from Parish Historian John Huttman

The mission church in Stonyford is 30 miles northwest of Maxwell. For many years it was a mission of the Maxwell parish but because this parish has three churches, Maxwell, Williams and Arbuckle, the diocese in recent years assigned oversight of the Stonyford church to Saint Monica Parish in Willows 40 miles away. The pastor of Willows celebrates Mass twice a month at Saint Mary of the Mountain Church in Stonyford on Saturdays at 9 am.

History of the Stonyford Mission Church



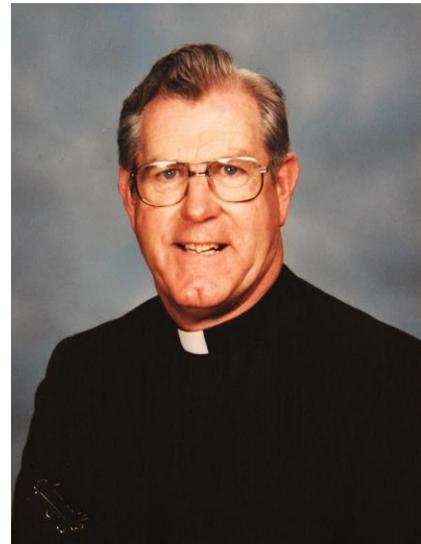
Father Michael Wallrath

The history of the Catholic Church in Stonyford goes back to the days of Father Michael Wallrath, known as a builder of churches, who laid the cornerstone of the original Saint Mary Church in the spring of 1896 at Catholic Point, three miles from Stonyford. The original site was located less than a mile from the store and post office known as Zachary. The church was built as part of a summer retreat for the Ursuline Sisters who taught at Saint Aloysius Convent School in Colusa. The church has been known as Mount Saint Mary and Mount Saint Zachery, but was dedicated in 1899 as Our Lady of the Visitation.

With the construction of East Park Dam, the little church had to be moved because the town of Zachary was destined to be flooded by the waters of the new dam. John and Eunice McDaniel sold a piece of land on Second Street in Stonyford to the Catholic Church in 1908 and Father Wallrath hired J.N. Stephens to direct the moving operation. The church was cut into three sections and moved to Stonyford on flat-bed wagons and then reassembled. The belfry was not replaced and the bell was stored in the church but later mysteriously disappeared.

The Catholic cemetery located near the original church at the Zachary site was also relocated to Stonyford.

In 1975, after almost 40 years of non-use, the little church had fallen into a state of neglect and disrepair. Under the guidance of Father Nicholas Phelan, the community began a major restoration. Two outstanding replicas are the shutters and the matching carved pieces made by Glenn McCune to restore the gingerbread used on the altars. The pews were refinished by youngsters from nearby Fouts Springs Boys Camp. Father Phelan donated the crucifix and Stations of the Cross. A new bell was donated by Warren and Mary Stone of Dobbins and hung in front of the church. The complete restoration took five years. The church was reopened on Christmas Eve in 1979 and Bishop Francis Quinn rededicated the church as Saint Mary of the Mountain on March 16, 1980.



Father Nicholas Phelan



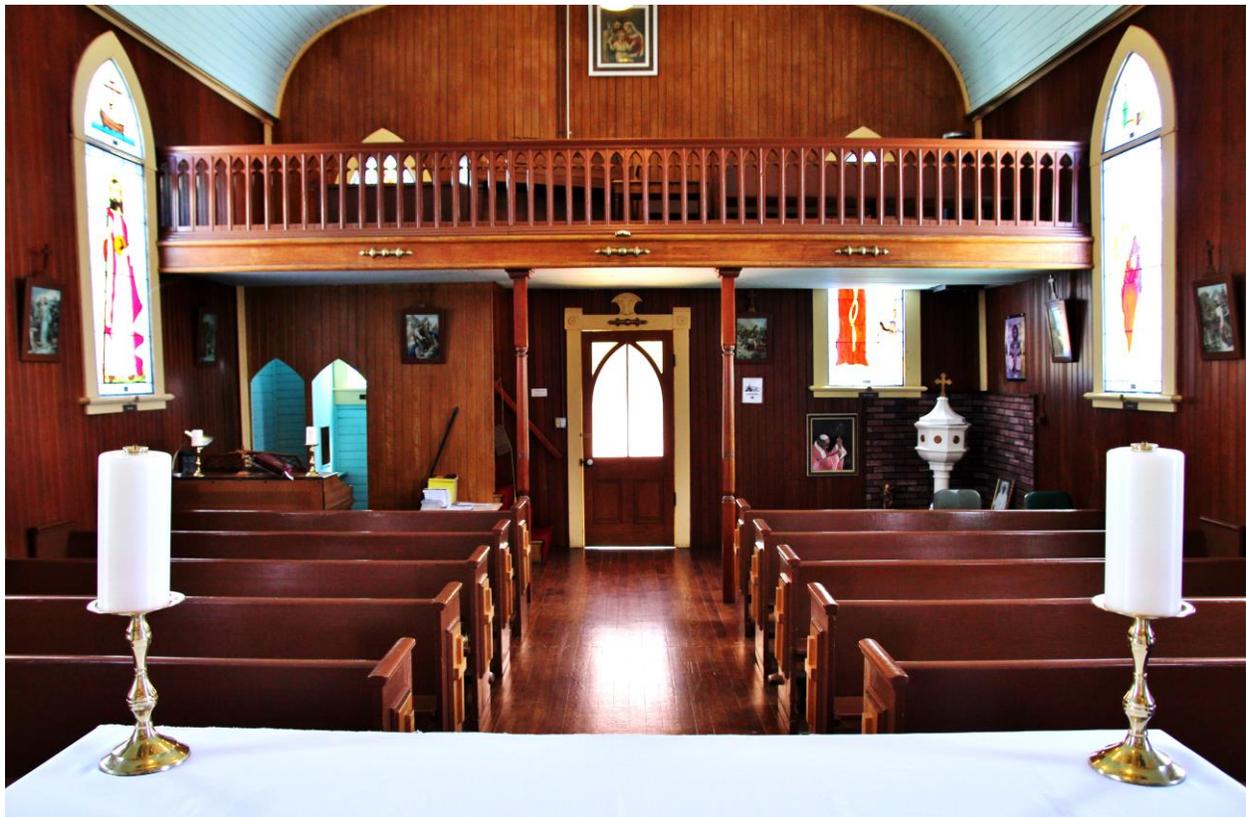
Photo by John E Boll 2015

Saint Mary of the Mountain Catholic Church, Stonyford

In 1984 a beautiful stained-glass window was presented to the church by Daryl and Joyce Bond. The window measures three by six feet, and the design was taken from a prayer card. Assisting the Bonds in creating this work of art were Robert Tavonatti, craft instructor at Fouts Springs Boys Camp, and one of the boys.



Interior of Saint Mary of the Mountain 2015





In early days of the church, a wood stove was used to heat the church in the winter. Today, the church is air conditioned and the stove has been replaced by the baptismal font. The church has a number of stained glass windows as well as a very small confessional as seen on the left.

Saint Mary of the Mountain Church is overseen by John Huttman and other parishioners living in the Stonyford area. This church is one of the gems of the early days of the Sacramento diocese.

Photos by John E Boll 2015



**Father Michael O'Connor, Pastor of Maxwell
1979-1985**



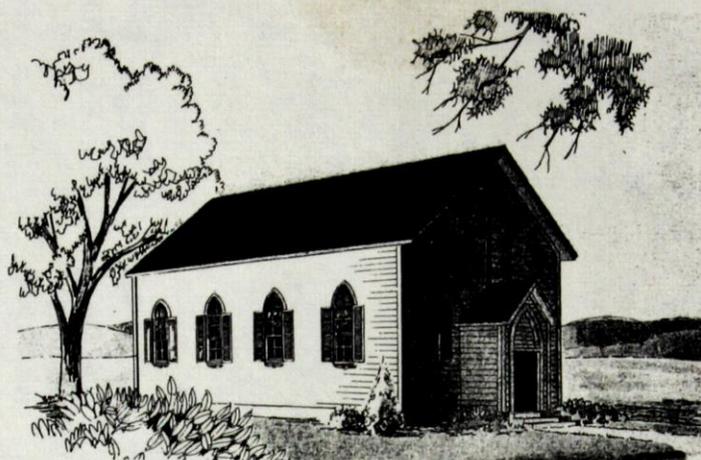
**Monsignor Michael J Hynes, Pastor
1926-1941**



Photo courtesy of John Huttman, Stonyford

Bishop Quinn Re-dedicates the newly renovated Stonyford Church on March 16, 1980

1896



1996

*Saint Mary of the Mountain
Catholic Community
requests the honour of your presence
at the
One Hundredth Year Celebration
of our Church
on Friday, the Twenty-seventh of September
Nineteen hundred and ninety-six
at four o'clock in the afternoon
Stonyford, California*

*Bishop William K. Weigand, Bishop of Sacramento Diocese
will officiate at the celebration.*

*Immediately following Mass
a Pot Luck Reception will
be held at the Grange Hall.*



Photo by John E Boll 2015

Grotto of Our Lady, Stonyford Catholic Church



Photo by John E Boll 2015

Saint Mary of the Mountain Church Today



Photo by John E Boll 2015

Congratulations
To the Catholic Community of
Saint Mary of the Mountain Church
For their Faith in Jesus and Dedication
To this Church for over a Century;
And to Father Michael Wallrath
And the Priests who succeeded him
In serving this Community in this
Beautiful Church in Stonyford