

# SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

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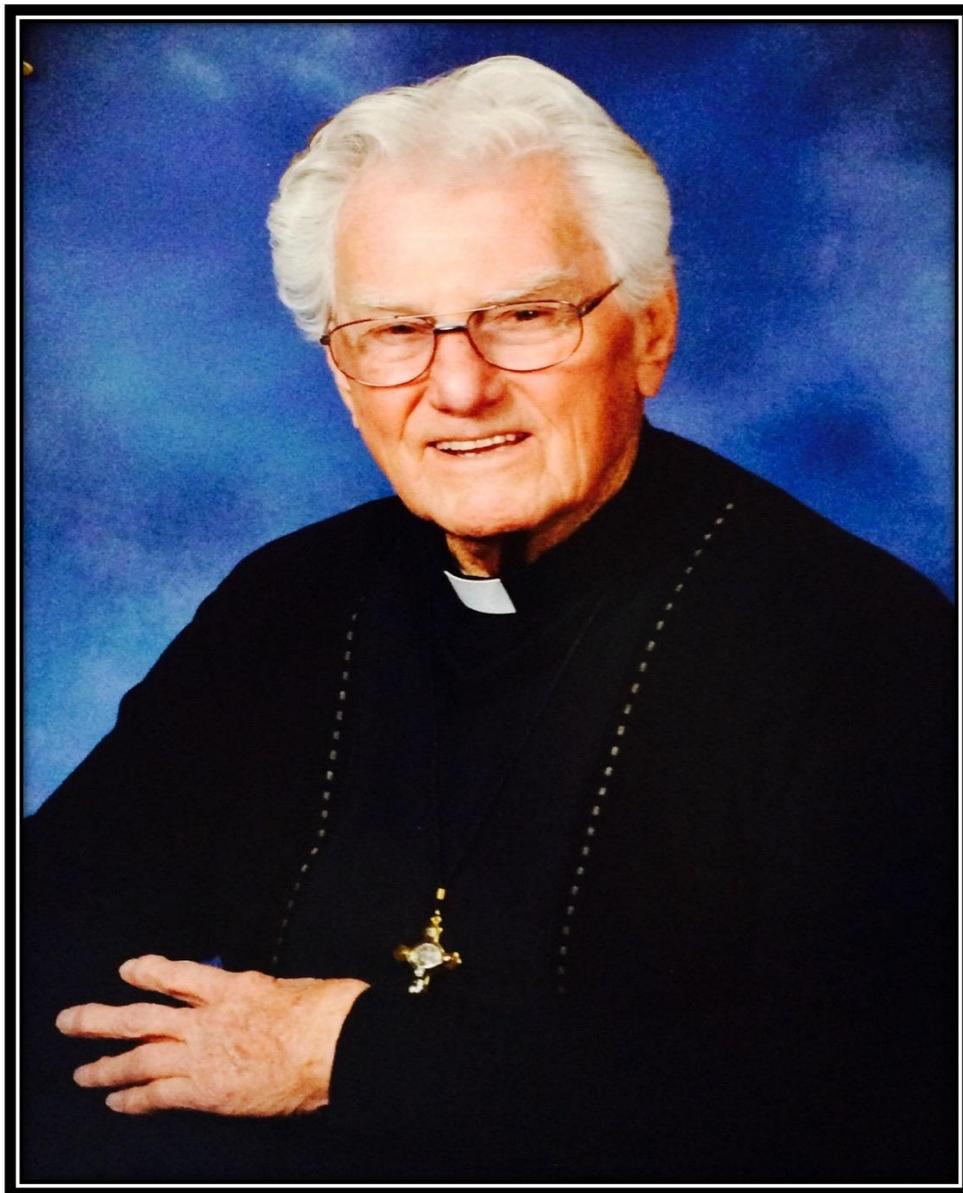
## *Father Keith Edward Canterbury*

Native Son of Faribault, Minnesota

Priest of the Diocese of Sacramento

Pastor Emeritus of Saint Patrick Parish, Weaverville

September 30, 1929 – February 16, 2020



**Keith Edward Canterbury, born on September 30, 1929 in Faribault, Minnesota**, is the eldest of two sons born to Charles Edward Canterbury and Rose Arlene Campbell. His younger brother is named Dean. Keith comes from a family of ministers; his grandfather Joseph Campbell was a Methodist minister for a time before returning to life on the farm.

### **GROWING UP ON A FARM**

Keith grew up in Faribault and life was free and happy for him. He and his buddies would jump on their bikes and ride to the nearest lake to swim and have fun together. He attended elementary and high school in Faribault until the eleventh grade. During his junior year, the Canterbury family moved to Minneapolis where Keith attended Thomas Edison High School in northeast Minneapolis.

### **KEITH'S CALL TO MINISTRY**

Very early in Keith's life, he felt called to ministry. In his junior year in high school he had an epiphany. When he was a child he went with his mother to a tent revival. When the altar call was given, his mother had a hard time keeping Keith from walking to the altar to profess his faith in Jesus Christ. In his junior year, Keith attended the Nazarene Church and there was an altar call. Moved by the Holy Spirit, he responded to the altar call and came forward to profess his faith in Jesus. After that profession of faith, his approach to the Scriptures became more literal and he says he became a fundamentalist Christian for a while.

### **KEITH BEGINS HIS CAREER IN THE NAVY**



In 1946, at the age of 17, Keith joined the US Navy which began a 20 year career in the Navy. After his basic training, he was sent to the San Diego Naval Hospital where he trained as a corpsman. The Navy then transferred him to Mare Island Naval Hospital for a year and a half. From there he was assigned to MATS VR 8 in Honolulu, Hawaii. While In his Hawaii assignment, Keith flew with the Air Force all over the Pacific to pick up wounded soldiers and bring them back to Hawaii and then on to the mainland. These wounded soldiers often received treatment at Travis AFB Hospital in Fairfield.

**Keith and Cora**



### **KEITH MEETS HIS FUTURE WIFE CORA**

It was while Keith was working at the Naval Hospital in Vallejo that he met Cora May Bounds who became his wife. They were married by the Justice of the Peace in Vallejo in 1949 and began to attend the local Vallejo Nazarene Church. The following month they renewed their marriage vows in the Nazarene Church.

For two years, Keith worked at the naval dispensary in the naval shipyards in Vallejo. He says his work in the dispensary was a positive experience for him. At the hospital there were

two German born prisoners of war who were quadruple amputees and once they were able to get into their prostheses they were able to move around on their own. Keith was moved and amazed by the strength of their wills to take back their lives and live as normal a life as best they could.

### **THE CANTERBURY CHILDREN**

Keith and Cora have two daughters, Rosellen and Deborah, who were born at the military hospital on Mare Island, and a son named Charles who was born at Sharps Hospital in San Diego



Family Photos Courtesy of Father Keith Canterbury

### **The Canterbury Children – Rosellen, Deborah and Charles**

### **SERVICE TO THE MARINE CORP**

Keith was then attached to the Marines Corp and went to Korea to work in a field hospital unit. He remained in Korea for a year and a half. Temporarily attached to the Marines, he was then loaned to the Army because of his interest in laboratory medicine and clinical pathology. He worked in the lab at the Army Hospital in Okinawa for about a year.

### **RETURN TO SAN DIEGO**

Keith returned to the Naval Hospital in San Diego where he took 18 months of training as a laboratory technician, now called a laboratory scientist. Completing his studies in laboratory science, he graduated with honors and became a teacher in the pathology lab. He began working with cytopathology and was sent to Fort Baker in San Francisco to receive training on how to set up a cytopathology lab.



Photo by John E Boll 2016

### **The Navy Base at Coronado, California**

#### **HOW THE CANTERBURY FAMILY CONVERTED TO CATHOLICISM**

During his time at Fort Baker, Keith spent weekdays in San Francisco and weekends in San Diego to be with his family. On one of the weekends in San Diego, Keith was driving with his one and a half year old son on his lap on his way to pick up his daughter. Unfortunately, Keith ran a stop sign and hit the side of a car driven by a Jesuit priest who was driving through the intercession. Luckily, no one was injured, just the cars were damaged.

The next day, Keith went to the school where the Jesuit was a teacher to exchange auto insurance information. Keith told the priest about a conversation he and Cora had two days before. Sitting at the kitchen table having coffee, they discussed the need to get back to church because with their attention focused on raising their three children, they had drifted away from church.

Being a good Nazarene, Cora said to Keith, "Pick a church, any church. As long as we can worship together as a family, I am good with that." Keith asked the priest, "Do you think God is trying to tell us something?" The Jesuit responded, "I don't know; but check with Father Karr at Saint Patrick Church where you live." Keith and Cora took that advice and went to talk with Father Karr. The following Easter the entire Canterbury family became Catholic. There was no RCIA at that time; they took private instruction with Father Karr. Keith was 33 years of age when he became a Catholic. Soon after their entry into the Catholic Church, the family became active in the Catholic Youth Organization, the Christian Family Movement and later, the charismatic movement.

## **ANECDOTAL EXPERIENCES**

During his assignment to the Naval Hospital he met a physician who was studying for his Pathology Boards. The doctor was Catholic and through discussions about the faith, Keith and the doctor became good friends. The lab received slides for the board applicants to study. Keith often reviewed these slide and knew the diagnosis. He and this doctor friend often pulled practical jokes on one another. Keith recalls one incident when the doctor brought him a slide to see if he could identify the pathology. Having seen the slide previously, Keith quickly identified it as showing "Oat Cell Carcinoma." Taken by surprise, the doctor responded "How did you know that?" Keith responded "Just a good guess." It was two days later when Keith told the doctor the truth. For many years, Keith has remembered his close relationship with the doctor.

Another time, corpsman Norman B Colson was working with a black soldier on base. Colson, as far as Keith knew, was from the CIA and made disparaging remarks about blacks. One day during their conversations, the KKK came up and the Afro-American sailor said to Colson, "I was in the KKK until they stepped on my sheet and my cover was blown."

## **KEITH IS SENT TO OKINAWA WITH THE MARINES**

While in San Diego, Keith took his board exams for clinical laboratory technologist and passed. He also did part time work in local hospitals. His next mission with the Marines was to Okinawa and then on to Viet Nam. He was stationed at the Da Nang hospital and was put in charge of collecting and clearing soldiers who came in wounded or dead like the MASH unit on television. He served in Viet Nam for about a year.

## **RETIREMENT FROM THE NAVY**

Since Keith was now close to retirement, the Navy sent him back to the United States, to Coronado Island in San Diego. He was attached to a chopper squadron for a few months and then transferred to the Navy fleet reserve or, as we would call it, retirement. His retirement took effect in 1965 at the age of 36.

### **Keith and Cora**

## **LIFE AFTER THE NAVY**

Keith already had a job at the El Cajon Valley Hospital before retiring from the Navy. He also worked for Hillside and Heartland Hospitals in the San Diego area. He then became a real estate agent in the San Diego area but real estate was a hit and miss business. His work in real estate lasted about a year and he then took a job with Glendale Federal Savings and Loan in San Diego for a year, making FHA and GI loans.

Keith then was hired by a company in Los Angeles that sold pneumatic tools. He worked as a sales coordinator about a year in San Diego, Washington, Denver and Phoenix-Tucson. He says that was a tough job because the company did not have the quality tools necessary to compete with the competition in the marketplace.



### **CORA DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER**

During this time of transition, Keith's wife Cora was diagnosed with cancer. They hoped the cancer would be curable since it was caught early and the recovery rate was good. However, Cora's family had a history of cancer which reduced the odds for recovery.

### **KEITH AND CORA TRAVEL THE USA**

Keith and Cora decided to sell their house in Lakeside and purchased a motor home and began to travel around the United States for the next two years. Keith says: "We got a great look at the face of the Roman Catholic Church in this country. It was an exciting time. Things were growing and changing."

### **CHARLES AND JEANNE OSBORN**



Keith and Cora knew Charlie Osborn who opened a school of Catholic Lay Evangelism. On their travels, they met up with Charlie in Wisconsin and attended one of his meetings. Keith remembers a memorable experience when the group attending the meeting gathered for a meal. While they were all eating, there developed a gradual sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the room. This was a deeply moving moment for Keith that has stayed with him to this present day.

While in Dayton, Keith and Cora became involved with a Catholic charismatic group that did an ecumenical Life in the Spirit gatherings in the Dayton Arena with 300 to 500 people. Their two years of travel around the United States provided Keith and Cora with many experiences of how God was working among his people. As they traveled the nation, Keith had a directory that listed the meeting schedule of charismatic groups throughout the country. He called ahead to confirm that the prayer group was meeting.

### **SETTLING DOWN IN VALLEJO**

As their funds began to get low, Keith and Cora headed back to Vallejo. Keith says "We recognized our need to stop for a while and replenish our funds. We were visiting friends in Vallejo. It was the Easter season. We dedicated ourselves to concentrated prayer and discernment to determine what to do about our financial needs. We decided that Vallejo was the best spot to settle. We were married there and we had friends there."

### **KEITH AND CORA BECOME ACTIVE AT SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA PARISH**

Keith took a job as a carpenter's assistant. As they settled into Vallejo, they attended a talk given by Father Gerald Ryle who was living in residence at Saint Catherine rectory. Father Ryle spoke about Mary to a local Protestant group and Keith and Cora attended the presentation. They were greatly impressed by Father Ryle and followed him back to Saint Catherine Church to tell him what a great talk he had given. From that day forward, Keith and Cora began to attend Mass at Saint Catherine Church.

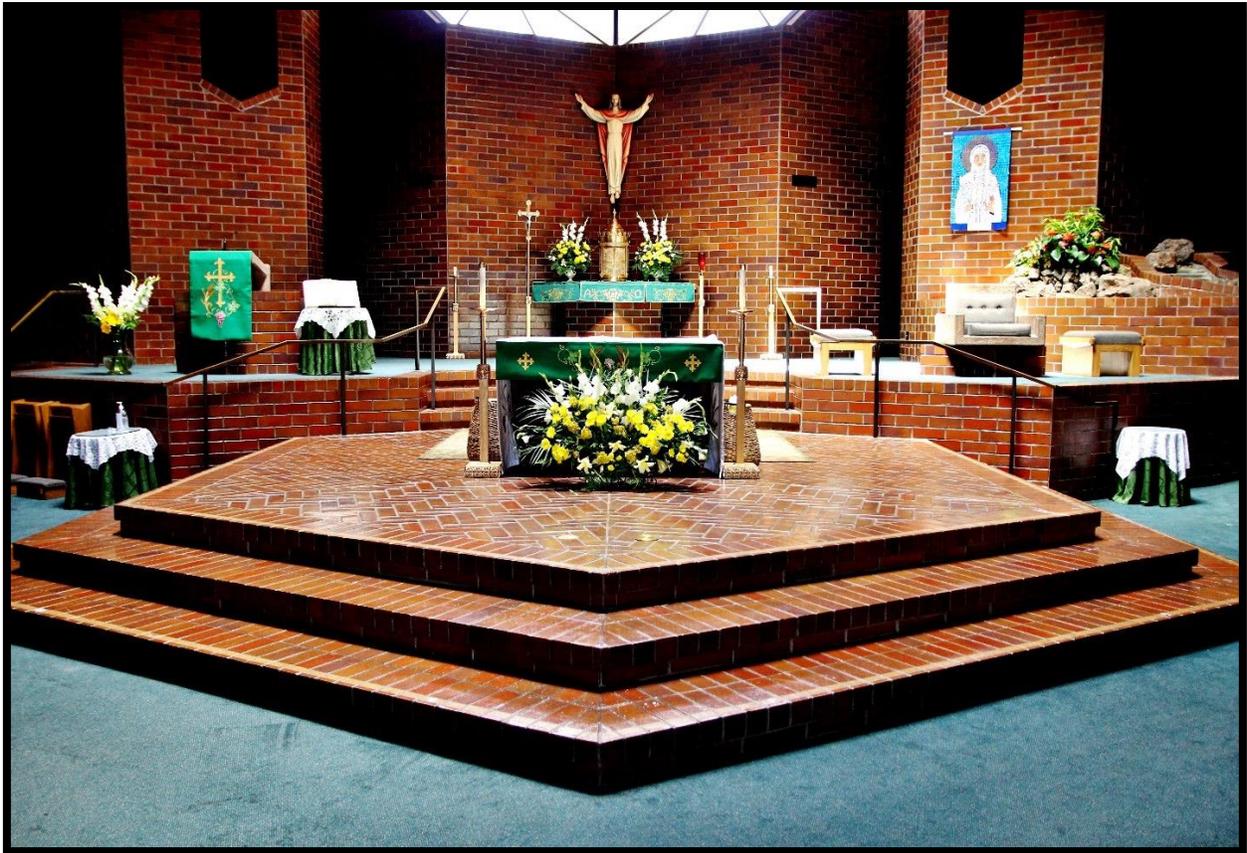


Photo by John E Boll 2015

## **Saint Catherine of Siena Church, Vallejo**

### **KEITH BECOMES A CURSILLISTA**

Keith became active in the Cursillo movement at Saint Catherine Church and in 1985 made his first Cursillo. Later, Cora made her Cursillo and she loved the experience. In a matter of a few weeks, it was like they had been in the parish forever. Keith and Cora fell in love with the Saint Catherine community and Keith says the love and support of this group was a contributing factor in his becoming a priest,

Three months later, Keith injured his knee. While recuperating, he enrolled in a clinical pastoral education program at Mercy San Juan Hospital in Carmichael. Father Colm O'Kelly, pastor of Saint Catherine, hired Keith as a parish pastoral assistant. Keith worked at the parish for about a year until Father Phil Wells was assigned as parochial vicar. Keith stepped down since there was now a second priest to serve the parish. He began working at the parish school setting up the school computer lab and teaching the children how to use a computer.

### **KEITH ENTERS THE SACRAMENTO DIACONATE PROGRAM**

Keith decided to enter the diocesan diaconate program in 1986. In his second year in the program, Cora's cancer returned and her health continued to deteriorate until she died in November 1988. After her death, Keith applied to the diocese to enter the seminary to study for the priesthood. Father Tom Bland who was diocesan vocations director met with Keith and told

him that unfortunately, at the age 61, Keith was beyond the diocesan age limit for acceptance into the seminary.

### **SACRED HEART SEMINARY, HALES CORNER, WI**



**Seminarian Keith Canterbury Makes his First Commitment to Priesthood**

### **Diocesan Hesitation**

The diocese is always hesitant to accept older people to begin studies for the priesthood. The reason is practical and reasonable: if an older man is ordained and becomes serious ill, the cost

of treating the illness could put the diocese in financial jeopardy. That was the bishop's concern in Keith's case since he was already 61 years of age. Keith pointed out that since he had a career in the US Navy, any medical care he might need in the future would be covered by the Veterans Administration.

Keith also gives the *Catholic Herald* some credit for helping to influence the bishop. *The Herald* ran a story about a man who was ordained a priest at age 80, retired at age 90 and died at age 96. Keith also recalled the story of the persistent widow who kept pestering the judge until he finally gave the woman justice.

### **PERSISTENCE WINS THE DAY**

After three persistent inquiries about entering the seminary, Bishop Francis Quinn made an exception for Keith and allowed him to begin studies for the priesthood at Sacred Heart Seminary, Hales Corner, Wisconsin. Keith studied at Hales Corner for 4 years with other Sacramento seminarians Patrick Henry, Terry Fulton, Michael Hebda and Joseph Nguyen.



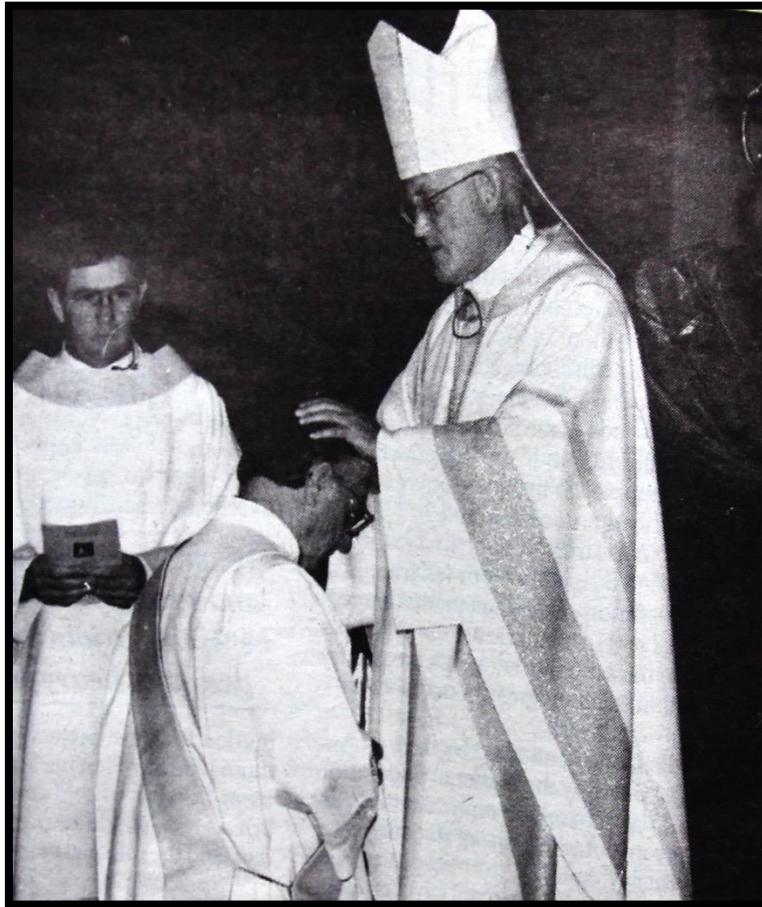
Photo from Sacred Heart Seminary Website

### **Sacred Heart Seminary Chapel, Hales Corner**

#### **KEITH CANTERBURY ORDAINED A PRIEST**

After completing his four years of theological studies at Sacred Heart Seminary, at the age of 65, Keith Canterbury was ordained a priest by Bishop William Weigand in the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Sacramento on June 11, 1994 with his classmate Terry Fulton.

After a long and winding journey, Father Keith finally arrived at this important and transforming day in his life. Now he was ready to begin a new chapter in his life, serving the people of God in the diocese of Sacramento as an ordained priest of Jesus Christ.



**Bishop Weigand Ordains Keith Canterbury a Priest**

#### **FIRST ASSIGNMENTS**

Keith's first assigned was to Saint Anthony Parish in Sacramento with Father Brendan O'Sullivan who was pastor. After six months of service there, Father Keith was transferred to Sacred Heart Parish, Red Bluff with Father Sean O'Leary who was pastor. Keith says he and Father O'Leary worked well together and he served Sacred Heart Parish in Red Bluff for a year and a half.

#### **AWAY FOR A WEEKEND AND LOOK WHAT HAPPENED**

Father Keith was asked by a friend to come to Notre Dame, Indiana to celebrate his parents' 50th wedding anniversary. While Keith was there, Bishop Weigand called the parish in Red Bluff to speak with him. When Keith returned to Red Bluff, he was told that the bishop was looking for him. Keith called Bishop Weigand and the bishop told him he wanted Father Keith to move immediately to Saint Patrick Parish in Weaverville to be pastor. The next week, Father Keith was in Weaverville, succeeding Father John Lawrence who had been appointed hospital chaplain at Mercy Hospital in Redding.

#### **PASTOR OF WEAVERVILLE**

Father Keith served as pastor of Weaverville for a little more than 12 years. He says his life and ministry in the County Seat of Trinity County was outstanding. In spite of the snow, he loved Weaverville and continues to live there in retirement.



Photo by John E Boll 2016

### Saint Patrick Church, Weaverville

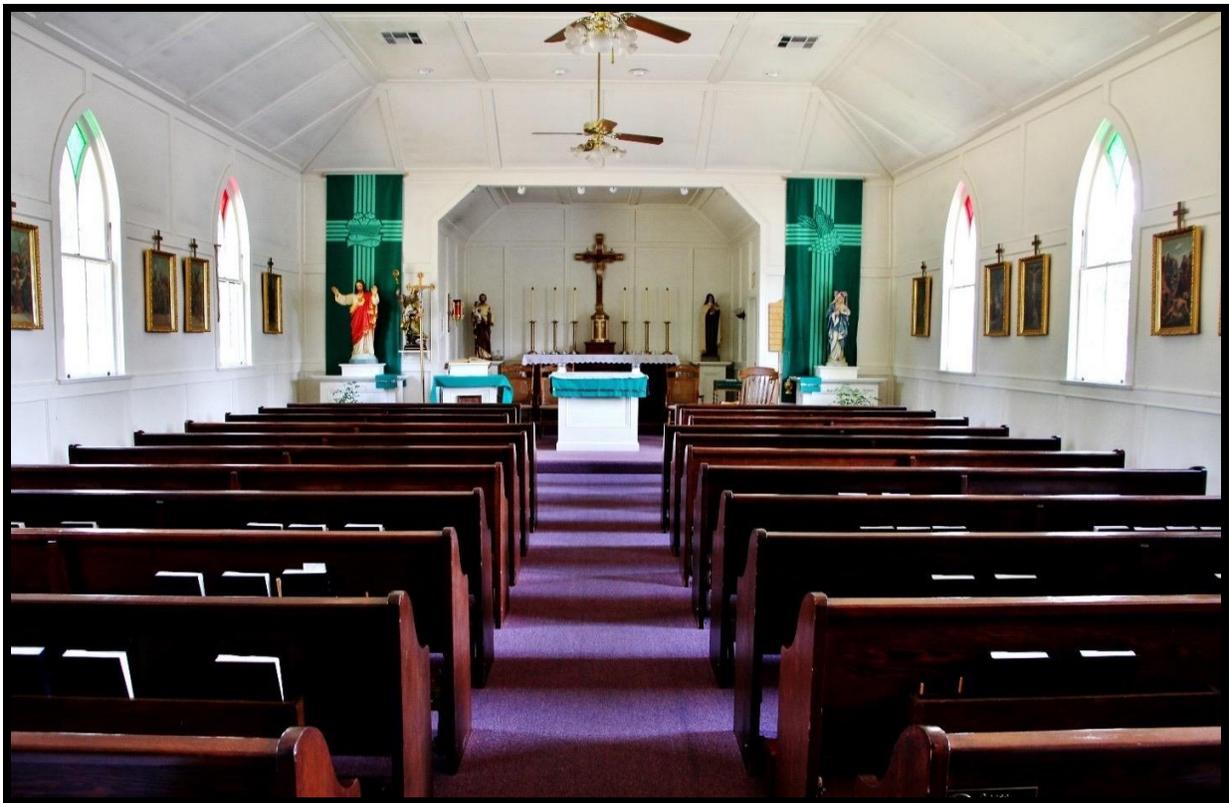


Photo by John E Boll 2016

### **FATHER KEITH'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN WEAVERVILLE**

Father Keith believes his most important achievement in Weaverville was building the ecumenical community with the other ministers in town. The ministerial association was strong during those years when Father Keith was the Catholic pastor of Saint Patrick Parish in Weaverville. Even today, people speak about how Father Keith touched their lives. They appreciated his wise counsel on family issues and struggles on how to deal with children as they grow into young adults. Father Keith was a wise, caring and compassionate pastor of the parish which includes Weaverville, Lewiston, Hayfork and Trinity Center.

### **CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW PARISH HALL**

During his 12 year pastorate, Father Keith guided the parish in its efforts to build a new parish hall on the parish site in Weaverville. The land was purchased by Father John Lawrence without diocesan approval. However, it was a wise purchase at a fair price and the new hall stands on that site today.



Photo by John E Boll 2016

**The Weaverville Parish Hall is named “Saint Patrick Parish Canterbury Hall”**

### **OTHER PARISH IMPROVEMENTS DURING FATHER KEITH'S TENURE**

The parish also installed a new roof on Holy Trinity Church in Hayfork, fenced the Catholic cemetery in Weaverville and installed a sprinkler system, built a *Way of the Cross* behind the church in Weaverville, and started an ecumenical soup kitchen which is run by a group of churches in town.

Father Keith was also a member of the North Valley Catholic Social Services in Redding. He has been on the local Social Services Board for about 10 years. NVCSS operates a free store in Hayfork where clothing and household goods are given to people in need without cost.



Photo by John E Boll 2016

### **Holy Trinity Church, Hayfork**

#### **STATIONS OF THE CROSS**

A parishioner of Saint Patrick Parish constructed the *Stations of the Cross* behind the church in Weaverville where parishioners can spend time in prayer. Before his retirement from the Weaverville parish, Father Keith placed a memorial plaque along the *Stations* in memory of his wife who died of cancer on November 15, 1988, six years before Keith was ordained a priest.

#### **FATHER KEITH'S DAUGHTER DEBORAH LIVES IN WEAVERVILLE**

After Father Keith became pastor of Weaverville, his daughter Deborah and her husband Gary retired and moved to Weaverville because they love the area so much. Deborah and Gary purchased a home on the east side of town and Father Keith purchased a mobile home and moved it on their property. He now lives only 200 yards from his daughter's home. This has been an ideal retirement location for Father Keith; close to his daughter and in the community where he pastored for a dozen years and is loved by the Weaverville community.

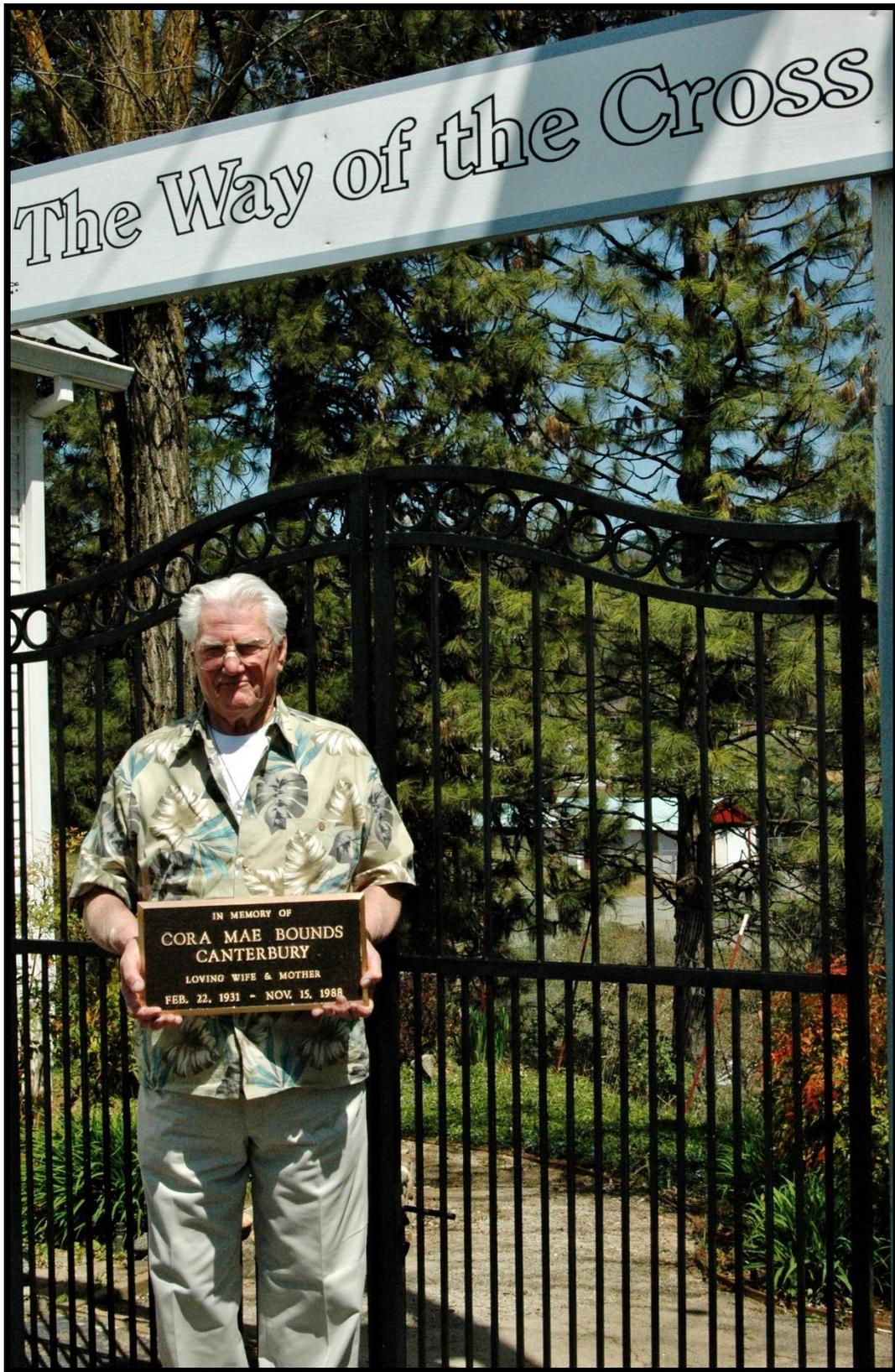


Photo by Cathy Joyce, *Catholic Herald*

**Father Keith Places a Memorial Plaque in Honor of his Wife Cora Mae**

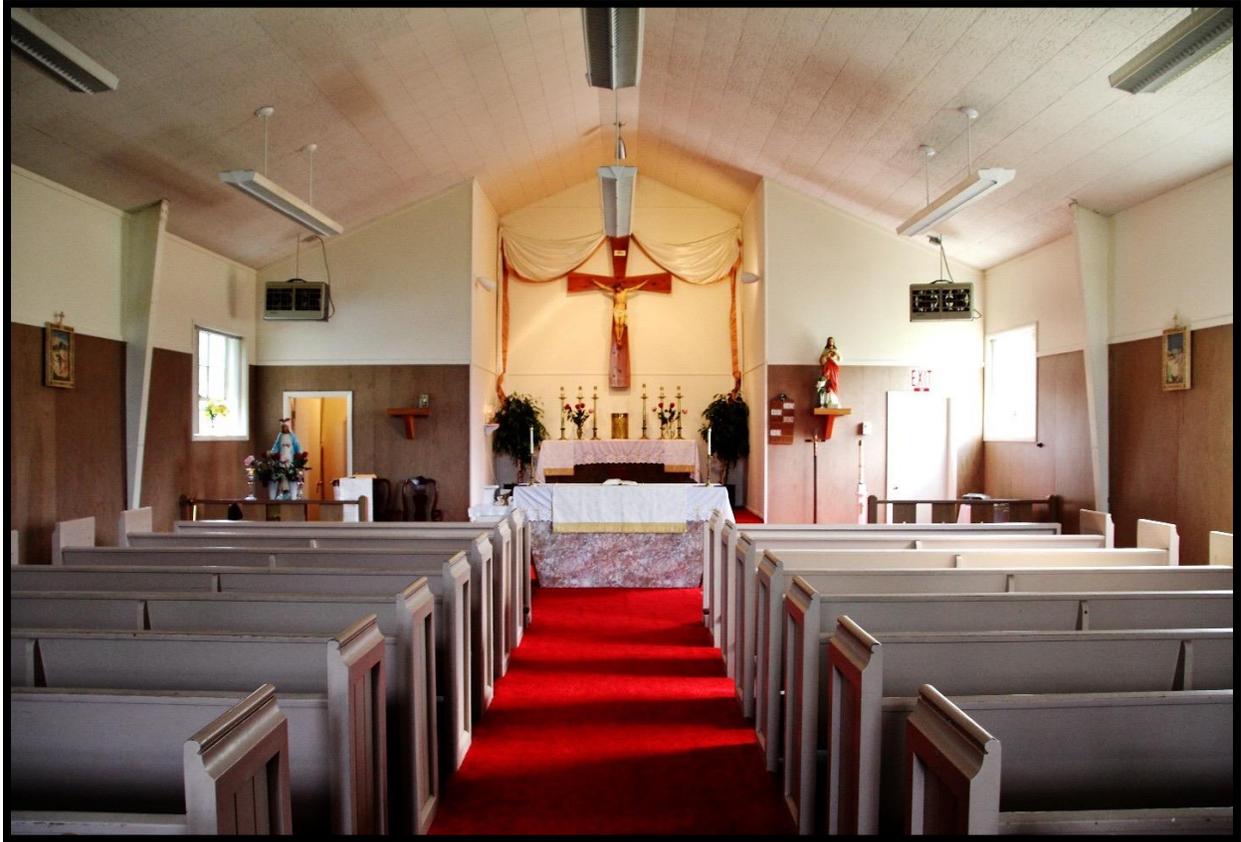


Photo by John E Boll 2016

### **Interior of Saint Gilbert Mission Church, Lewiston**

#### **FATHER KEITH'S REFLECTION ON HIS LIFE**

When I asked Father Keith how he would summarize his life's journey, he quickly and simply said this: "What a ride this has been! Praise the Lord!"

#### **FINAL THOUGHTS AND THANKS BY THE ARCHIVIST**

Father Keith turns 87 years of age on September 30, 2016. Even though the diocese was hesitant to allow him to study for the priesthood because of his age and fear of future health needs, he has now been a priest for 22 years and Bishop Quinn who accepted him for priestly studies turns 95 on September 11, 2016.

Father Keith has served the parish community of Saint Patrick Parish in Weaverville and its missions of Lewiston, Hayfork, Trinity Center and Mad River for 12 years as a faithful shepherd. He is loved and admired by his parishioners and the adults who became Catholics in the Weaverville parish because of Father Keith's positive and caring influence.

The encouragement of many people helped him persevere in his desire to become a priest – Father Colm O'Kelly who was his pastor at Saint Catherine Parish, Sister Patricia Simpson of the diaconate program – especially Sister Connie Raymond who became a Sister of Mercy as a widow. "Sister Connie is so joyful," Keith says. "She said the end point is so good it's worth the effort."

The Church of Sacramento is grateful to Bishop Quinn for accepting Keith to begin his theological studies for priesthood and to Bishop Weigand who ordained him a priest. Accepting Keith has turned out to be a good decision on the part of both bishops.

I thank both Father Keith for allowing me to interview him and Patrick Joyce who wrote an article about Keith Canterbury and Terry Fulton when they were ordained priests. Patrick's article was published in the June 24, 1994 issue of the *Catholic Herald* which I found helpful in preparing Father Keith's life story.

Thank you, Father Keith, for your faith, love and years of service to the people of God in this diocese of Sacramento. We wish you good health and continued love and support from your children, your friends and many parishioners whose lives you have touched and who have touched, affirmed and encouraged you on your journey. We wish you. . .



Photo by John E Boll 2016

## **A June Sunset in Weaverville 2016**

### **THE FINAL YEARS OF FATHER KEITH'S LIFE**

Father Canterbury continued to live in his mobile home in Weaverville next to his daughter's home during his last years of retirement. He continued to enjoy good health for the most part until the beginning of 2020 when he suffered a serious setback. He was taken to the hospital in Redding where he remained until he died on February 16, 2020.

### **FUNERAL MASS FOR FATHER KEITH**

The Funeral Mass for Father Keith was held on Friday, February 28, at Saint Joseph Church in Redding. Bishop Jaime Soto was the main celebrant of the Mass, together with about 25 priests of the Diocese of Sacramento.

The homilist at the Mass was Deacon Michael Mangas, deacon at Saint Joseph Church in Redding and a good friend of Father Keith. After the Mass, there was a lunch served in the parish hall.

In early March, the body of Father Keith was buried in the Veterans Cemetery in San Diego next to his wife Cora who died in 1988. Once again, Keith and Cora are reunited in the Kingdom of God for all eternity.

### **FUNERAL MASS FOR FATHER KEITH CANTERBURY**



Photo by John E Boll

**Gathering for the Funeral Mass  
Saint Joseph Church, Redding  
February 28, 2020**



**Bishop Jaime Soto Presides at the Funeral Mass**

Photos by John E Boll



**Deacon Michael Mangas is the Homilist**



Photos by John E Boll



*Lord,  
We thank you for the twenty-five years of  
Ministry you gave to Father Keith as a priest  
Of the Diocese of Sacramento.*

*He was a gentle shepherd to your people  
Who grew to love him for his compassionate  
pastoral care to them over the years.*

*You have called him home to your Kingdom  
Of light and peace. May he and his wife  
Cora praise your Holy Name forever  
In the joy of your Kingdom of light and peace.*

*Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon them.*

*Amen*



*Father Keith Canterbury*