

# SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

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Father John E Boll

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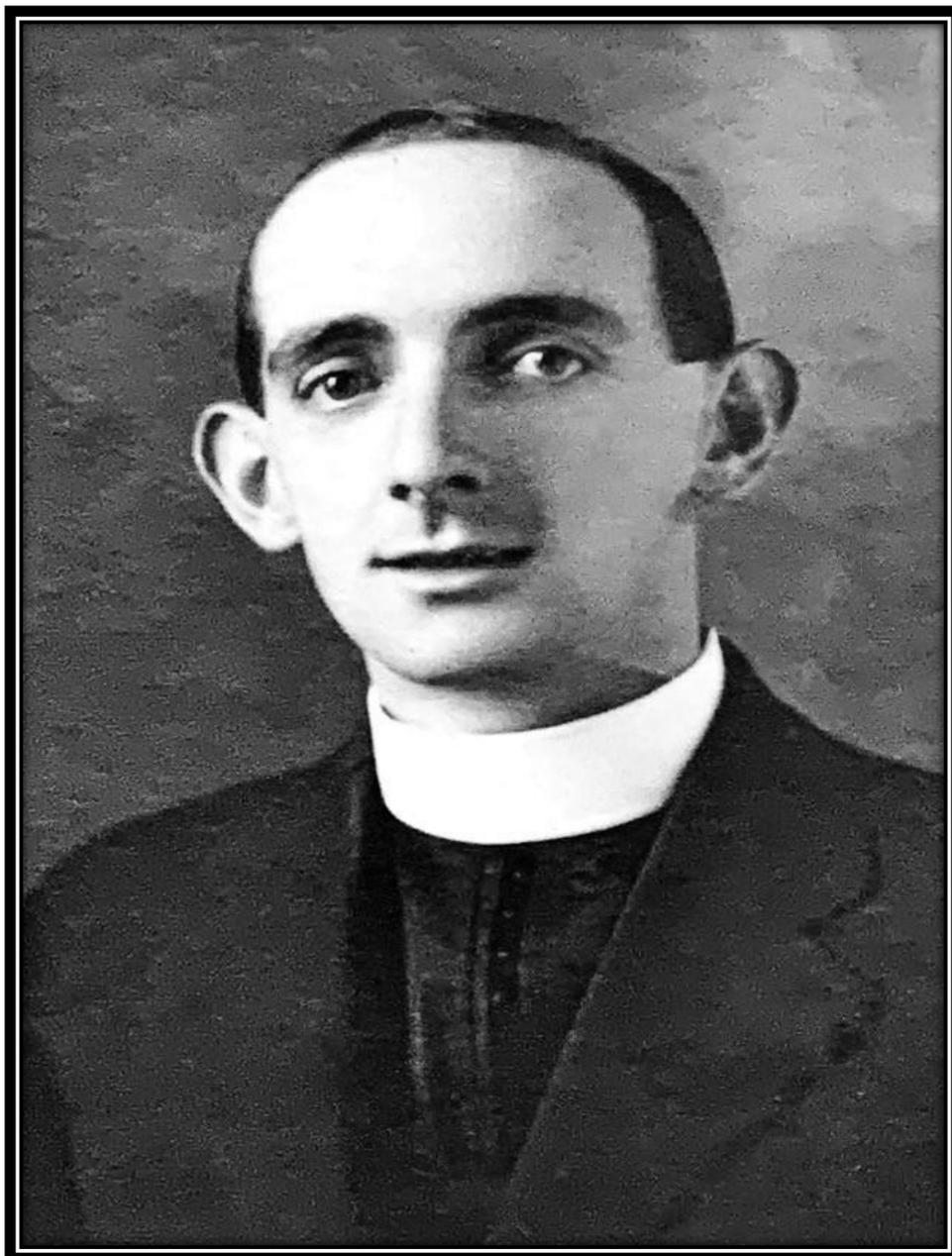
## *Father James Healy*

Native of Ardfert, County Kerry, Ireland

Priest of the Diocese of Sacramento

Pastor of Saint John the Baptist Parish, Folsom, California

August 8, 1894 – December 19, 1967



**James Healy, son of Philip Healy and Julia Fitzmaurice**, was born on August 8, 1894 in Ardfert, County Kerry, Ireland, was one of nine children. The Healy children are Maurice; James; Hannah; May; Philip, also known as Sonny, who is the father of Father John Healy of the Sacramento diocese; John; Thomas; Joe; and Frank.

### **BEGINS HIS EDUCATION**

At the age of 5, Jim began his primary education in Ardfert from 1899 to 1908. He then transferred to Saint Brendan Seminary in Killarney from 1908 until 1912.

### **ALL HALLOWS COLLEGE, DUBLIN**

In the fall of 1912, Jim moved to Dublin to continue his studies for the priesthood at All Hallows College for the next six years until 1919.

During his time at All Hallows College, he attended University College in Dublin from 1912 to 1915 when he earned his Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1915. He then continued his theological studies at All Hallows College Seminary for the next four years.



Photo from University College Website

**University College, Dublin in 2020**

### **ORDAINED A PRIEST FOR SACRAMENTO**

Completing his theological studies at All Hallows College, James was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Sacramento on June 22, 1919 by Bishop Gorman, Bishop of the Diocese of Sierra Leon in Africa. After a few months of vacation with his family, Father Healy prepared to depart from Ireland on his long journey by ship and then train to California.



Photo from Diocesan Archives

**All Hallows College, Dublin, Ireland**

### **SETS SAIL FOR AMERICA**

In the fall of 1919, Father James Healy boarded a ship bound for New York City and after sailing across the Atlantic and arriving in New York, he traveled by train across the United States arriving in Sacramento to begin his life of ministry.

### **FATHER HEALY BEGINS HIS MINISTRY**

When Father Healy arrived in Sacramento, Bishop Thomas Grace was coming to the end of his long ministry as bishop of Sacramento. Bishop Grace assigned Father Healy to Saint Joseph Parish in Marysville as assistant priest to Father Patrick Guerin who was pastor. He spent three years of ministry at Marysville from April 1920 to August 1923.

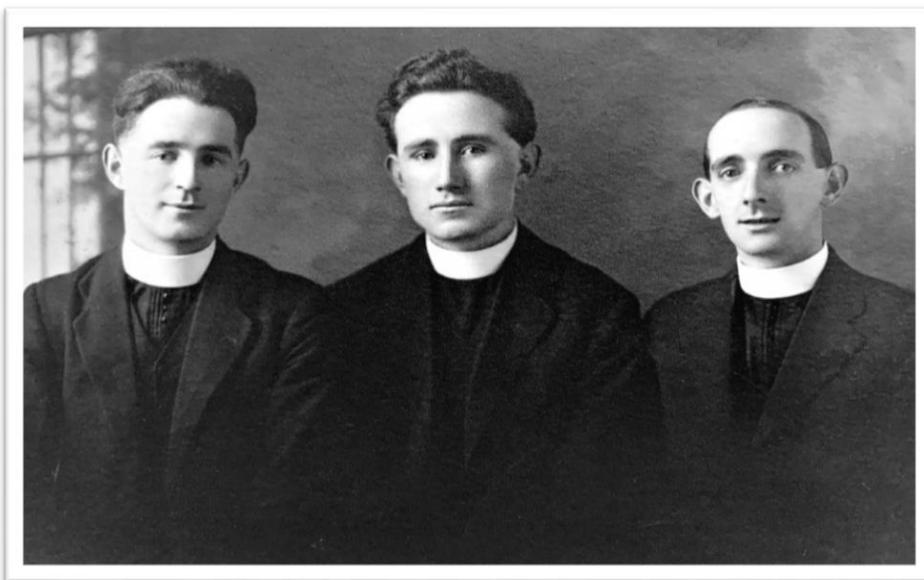


Photo by John E Boll

**Saint Joseph Church, Marysville  
Cathedral of the Vicariate of Marysville**

**ASSISTANT PASTOR, HOLY ROSARY PARISH, WOODLAND**

Father Healy was next assigned by the third bishop of Sacramento, Bishop Patrick J Keane, to Holy Rosary Parish in Woodland as assistant to Father Thomas Horgan who was pastor of the parish. Father Jim served the Woodland parish for three years, from 1923 to 1926.



**L-R, Fathers Michael V Myles, Gerald J O'Driscoll and James Healy**



Photo from the Diocesan Archives

**Holy Rosary Church built during the Pastorate of Father Michael Wallrath**

**SAINT JOSEPH PARISH, REDDING**

Father Healy's next appointment was to Saint Joseph Parish, Redding, as assistant to Father Alphonsus T Gavin. He served this parish for two years, from July 1926 to July 1928.

The original Saint Joseph Church, located on this site, was built in 1884. On April 30, 1905, the second church was dedicated by Bishop Thomas Grace but was destroyed by fire two years later on July 28, 1907.

The third church was built and dedicated by Bishop Thomas Grace on March 13, 1910 and continued as the parish church of Redding until it too was destroyed by fire on May 24, 1964.



Photo from Chester Mullen Collection, Shasta Historical Society

**Saint Joseph Church, Redding**

In 1966, under the leadership of Monsignor John O'Connor who was the pastor, the present church was built and continues in service to this day.

**SACRED HEART PARISH, SUSANVILLE**

Father Healy had a very short assignment as assistant to Father Patrick J McCarthy at Sacred Heart Parish in Susanville, just two months, August and September 1928, because he was about to be assigned to his first pastorate in September of that year.

**FIRST PASTORATE, SAINT ANTHONY PARISH, WALNUT GROVE**

After eight years as an assistant in four parishes, Father James Healy was assigned to his first pastorate at Saint Anthony Parish in Walnut Grove in September 1928. He would serve this parish for the next sixteen years until January 1944.



Photo by John E Boll

### **Saint Anthony Church, Walnut Grove**

After sixteen years as pastor of Walnut Grove, Father Healy was appointed to a new ministry for him, chaplain of Mercy Hospital in Sacramento.

### **CHAPLAIN OF MERCY HOSPITAL, SACRAMENTO**



Photo from the Diocesan Archives

### **Mercy General Hospital, Sacramento**

Father Healy served as chaplain of Mercy Hospital in Sacramento for three years, from January 1944 to November 1947. Twenty-five years later, Father Healy's nephew, Father John Healy, would serve as chaplain of Mercy Hospital in Sacramento for 40 years and 5 years at Mercy San Juan Hospital in Carmichael.

### **FINAL PARISH ASSIGNMENT, SAINT JOHN PARISH, FOLSOM**



Photo by John E Boll

### **Second Church of Saint John the Baptist Parish, Folsom**

In November 1947, Bishop Robert Armstrong assigned Father Healy to his final parish assignment as pastor of Saint John the Baptist Church in Folsom. He served as pastor of Saint John Parish for the next 15 years until June 1962.

### **FATHER HEALY RETIRES**

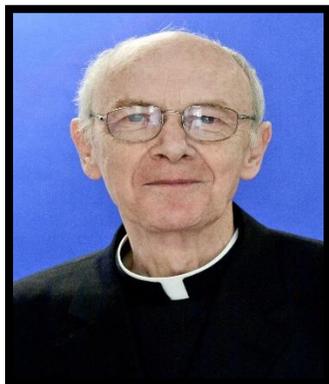
In June 1962, at the age of 67, Father James Healy retired as pastor of Saint John Parish in Folsom and was named Pastor Emeritus of the parish. Father Jim decided to return home to Ireland to spend the rest of his days in retirement there.

### **FATHER JOHN HEALY REMINISCES ABOUT HIS UNCLE, FATHER JAMES HEALY**

Father John Healy, nephew of Father James Healy, has served the Diocese of Sacramento for over 50 years, 45 of those years in hospital ministry.

Of the nine children in Father James Healy's family, some died quite young. Maurice, also known as Moss, who was Father John Healy's Godfather, died in the USA in 1948 at the age of 48. He is

buried in Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Upstate New York. The second child was Father James who served the Diocese of Sacramento for 43 years and died in 1967 at the age of 73. The third child was Sister Hannah who lived and ministered in London, England. The fourth child was May Burke who was married and had five children. The fifth child was Philip, the father of Father John Healy, who was in good health when he suddenly died in 1944 at the age of 45. The 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> children were John and Tom. After Philip died, his brother Tom lived with Father John's family. The 8<sup>th</sup> child was Joe who lived most of his life in Detroit and the ninth and the 9<sup>th</sup> and last son was Frank who died as a teenager in 1916 after being drenched by rain and died of pneumonia.



Father John says he knew his Uncle Jim quite well. Jim would stay in John's family home when he came to Ireland to visit the family and he corresponded with his nephew John when he was a student at All Hallows College in Dublin.

**Father John Healy**



Photo Courtesy of Fr John Healy

**Photo of the Healy Family**

L-R, Fr Jim, Mick, Jimmy Collins, Tom Collins, Tom Healy, Kathleen Healy, Fr John's mother, Nora Alpin, Paddy Collins, Fr John Healy, Millie Sullivan, Mickie Collins, May Burke, Timmy Collins and Billy Collins

Father John thinks his Uncle Jim never stopped being lonely for Ireland and says Father Jim was quite stubborn and opinionated and advised John to stay in Ireland. Father Jim was known as "The Doc" in Sacramento and was very close to Father Gerald O'Driscoll and a good friend of Bishop Robert Armstrong who stopped at the Healy home in Brandonwell, Ardfert to visit the family whenever he was in Ireland.

Father John says his uncle Father Jim could be very forgiving. The Irish War of Independence was a huge uprising. The 'Black and Tans' British Army shot John's uncle Tom and left him for dead. The British Army took John's dad in a cattle boat to Dartmoor Prison in England which was very hard on his father's health.

In the Irish War of Independence, James read the Proclamation of Independence in Ardfert. Later, when he was ordained a priest, the local pastor would not allow Father James to celebrate Mass in his home church because of this political action.

Over the years, these two priests became reasonably good friends. The local people of the Ardfert chuckled that these two priests are now buried next to each other in the church cemetery.

#### **DEATH COMES TO FATHER HEALY**

After returning home to Ireland, Father Healy spent the last four years of his life in Ardfert, County Kerry, until his death on December 19, 1967 from an apparent heart attack.

A Requiem Mass was celebrated for Father Healy at 11 AM on Friday, December 22, 1967 in Sacred Heart Church, Sacramento by his nephew, Father John Healy, who was assistant pastor at Saint John the Evangelist Church, Carmichael at the time. Monsignor James Mulligan was the homilist and the Priests' Choir sang at the Mass.

A Funeral Mass was also celebrated at the parish church in Ardfert, Ireland and Father Healy's body was buried in the parish cemetery in Ardfert.

*Lord, Holy God,  
Receive the soul of Father James Healy  
Who spent his life serving your  
People in the Diocese of Sacramento as a priest.  
You called him home to the Kingdom of  
Light, Joy and Peace.  
May Father James abide now in Your Kingdom  
of Joy and Peace!*



Photo courtesy of the Healy Family in Ireland

**Grave of Father James Healy, Ardfert Parish Cemetery, Ireland**  
**Inscription on Father Healy's Headstone**

*In Memory of  
Very Rev James Healy, PP  
Born at Brandonwell, Aug 1894  
Ordained All Hallows June 1919  
Parish Priest, Sacramento, Calif  
Died at Brandonwell 19 Dec 1967*

**IN MEMORIAM**

Father James Healy followed his dream to serve the missions in the Diocese of Sacramento in Northern California at the beginning of the twentieth century. Leaving Ireland was difficult for him and his nephew Father John Healy believes Father James never stopped feeling a sense of loneliness for his native Ireland.

After serving the people of the Diocese of Sacramento in six parishes and as chaplain at Mercy Hospital for a total of 43 years, Father Healy decided to retire at home in Ardfert, Ireland where he spent the last four years of his life.

Leaving his native Ireland and his large family must have been a great sacrifice for him. But the Lord's call to him to serve the missions was stronger than the safety of remaining at home close to his family. We are grateful for the personal sacrifices he made to serve the larger church throughout the world.

From that same Healy family came another vocation to the priesthood to serve the next generation of Catholics in the Sacramento Diocese. Father John Healy, nephew of Father James Healy, has served the same diocese for over 50 years, most of those tending to the spiritual needs of the sick at Mercy San Juan and Mercy General Hospitals in the greater Sacramento area.

The Healy family has made a great contribution to the Church in Northern California in the lives of Fathers James and John Healy through their dedication and service. The People of God are grateful for their ministries.

*May the Lord bless both  
Fathers James and John Healy  
For their Lives of Service to the Church of Sacramento!*



*Father James Healy*

*January 1927*