

SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

Vol 5

Father John E Boll

No 71

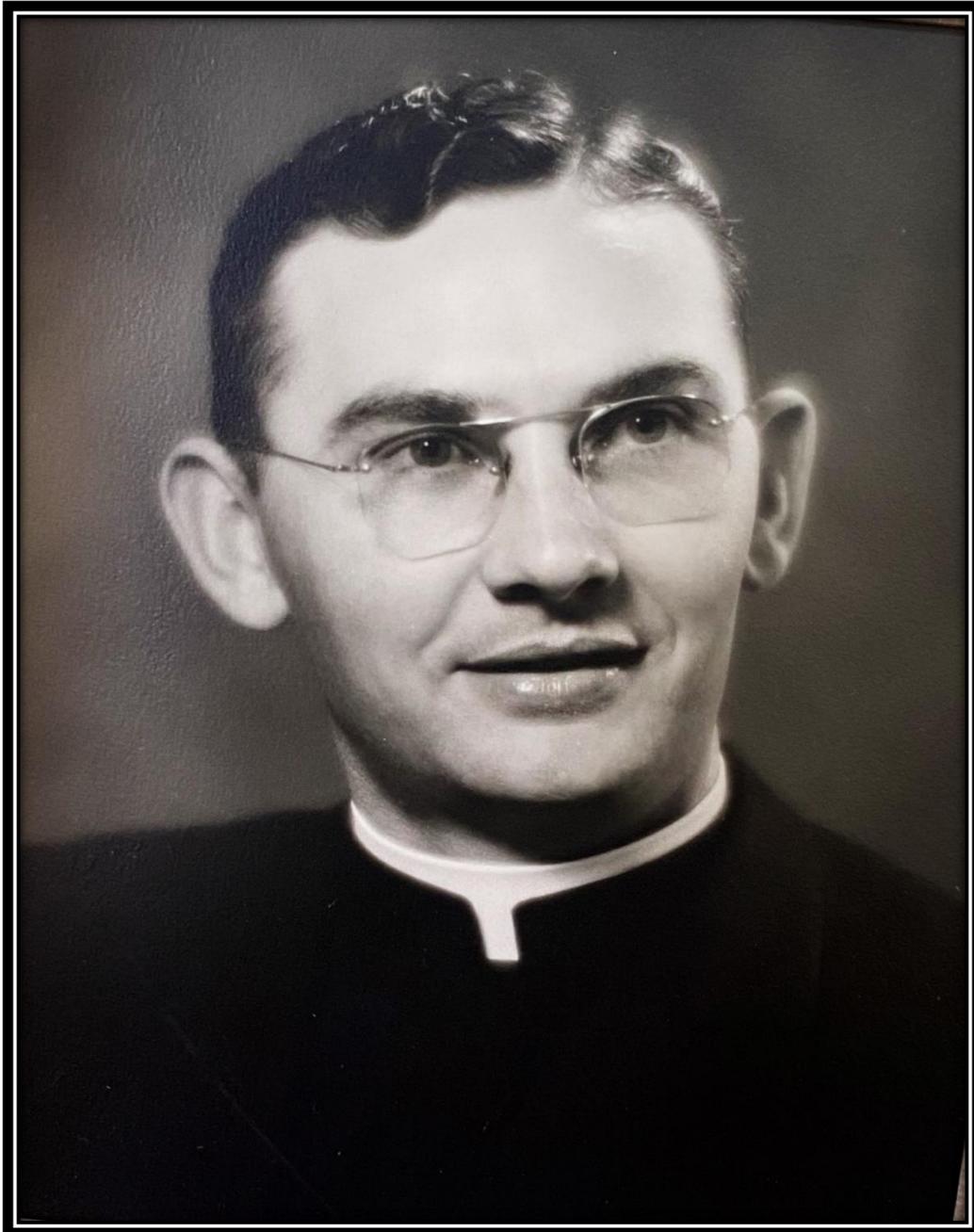
Father William Kieran Walsh

Native of Mooncoin, County Kilkenny, Ireland

Priest of the Diocese of Sacramento

Pastor Emeritus of Saint Joseph Parish, Rio Vista, California

September 30, 1925 - March 2, 2021



William Kieran Walsh, son of William Walsh and Anastasia Delahunty, was born on September 30, 1925, in Mooncoin, Count Kilkenny, Ireland. He was baptized on October 2, 1925 at the Church of the Assumption in Mooncoin. He was the fourth of nine children born in the family of five girls and four boys. His brothers and sisters, in order of birth, are: James, Margaret, Kathleen, Father Bill, Patrick, Alice, Mary, Laurence and Eileen. His two surviving sisters are Mary and Eileen.

THE BEGINNING OF WILLIAM'S EDUCATION

Bill began his education at the age of five in 1930 at Scoil Mhuire, the boy's National School in Mooncoin and attended there until 1937. In the fall of 1937, he entered Saint Kieran's College in Kilkenny until 1943. He then began his theological studies at Saint Kieran's Major Seminary until 1949 when he completed his studies for the priesthood.

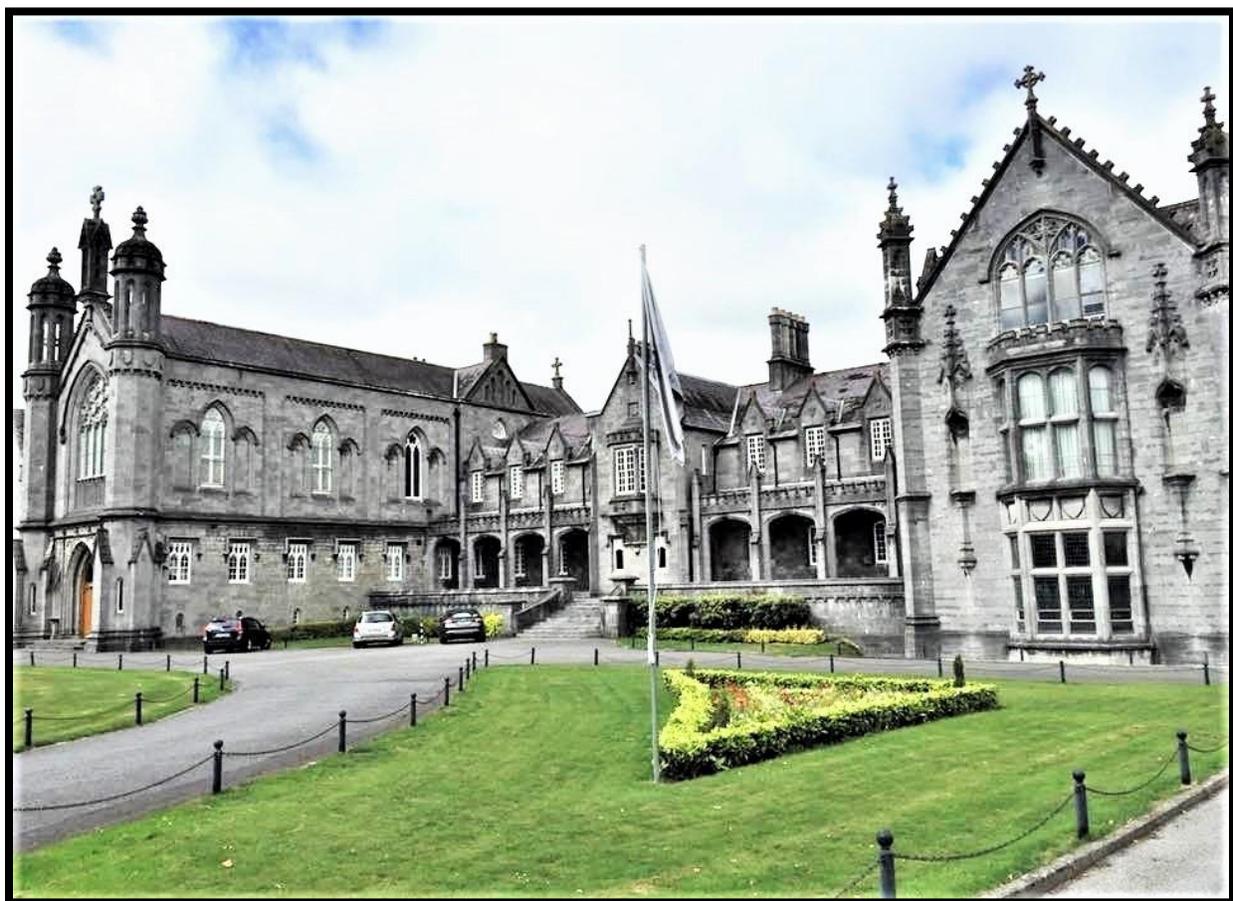


Photo from the Diocesan Archives

Saint Kieran's College, County Kilkenny, Ireland

ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD

William K Walsh, at the age of 24, was ordained a priest on June 5, 1949 in Saint Mary's Cathedral, Kilkenny, by Bishop Patrick Collier for the Diocese of Sacramento. After some vacation time with his family in Ireland, Father Bill began his journey to America by ship, arriving in New York Harbor. He spent some time with relatives who lived in the New York area and then began his journey by

train across the United States to Sacramento, the Capital City of California and the See City of the Diocese of Sacramento.

FIRST ASSIGNMENT OF MINISTRY

Father Walsh's first bishop in the Diocese of Sacramento was Bishop Robert J Armstrong who assigned him to Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Colusa on November 16, 1949. The Colusa parish is one of the older parishes in the Diocese of Sacramento, established in 1870. Father Walsh's first pastor was Father John J McGarry who arrived in Colusa just two years prior in 1947. Father Bill's first assignment lasted less than two months because on January 4, 1950, he received his second assignment.



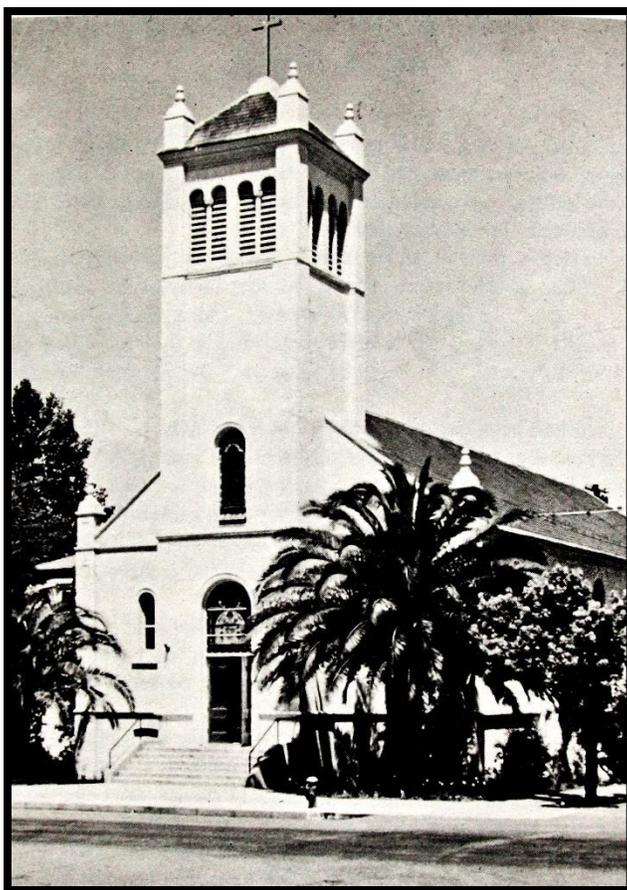
Photo by John E Boll

Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Colusa

SECOND ASSIGNMENT, SAINT JOSEPH PARISH, REDDING

Father Bill's second assignment was to Saint Joseph Parish in Redding. When he arrived in Redding, the pastor was Father Alphonsus T Gavin who had served there as pastor for 25 years. Father Gavin died on March 9, 1951, fourteen months after Father Bill's arrival in the parish.

The new pastor of Redding was Father Patrick McTague who only served as pastor of Redding for one year. In 1952, he was succeeded by Father John O'Connor who served as pastor of Saint Joseph Parish in Redding for the next 28 years until he retired in 1980. During Father Walsh's six years as assistant pastor of Redding, he served the parish with three different pastors, Fathers Alphonsus Gavin, Patrick McTague, and John O'Connor.



Photos from Diocesan Archives

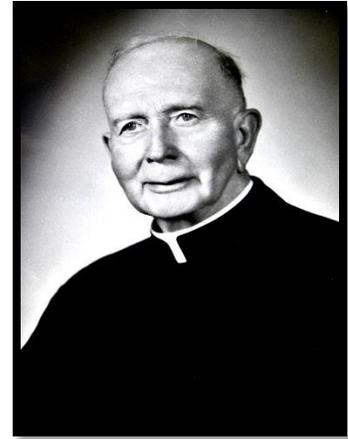
Saint Joseph Church, Redding in the 1950s



May 30, 1954, L-R: Fr Bill Walsh; Fr Patrick Nolan; Fr John O'Connor, Pastor, Redding, CA

BACK TO COLUSA

After serving six years as assistant at Saint Joseph Church in Redding, Father Walsh was assigned once again to Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Colusa. His stay in Colusa this time was only 15 months, from October 17, 1956 to January 15, 1958. Father John J McGarry was still the pastor of the Colusa Parish.



Monsignor John J McGarry

NEXT MOVE, ASSISTANT AT SAINT ROSE PARISH, SACRAMENTO

On January 15, 1958, Father Walsh was assigned to Saint Rose Parish in Sacramento. The pastor was Father Carroll Lawsen and the first assistant was Father Edward Kavanagh. This assignment was for only 19 months because after ten years of ordained ministry, Father Walsh was ready for his first pastorate.

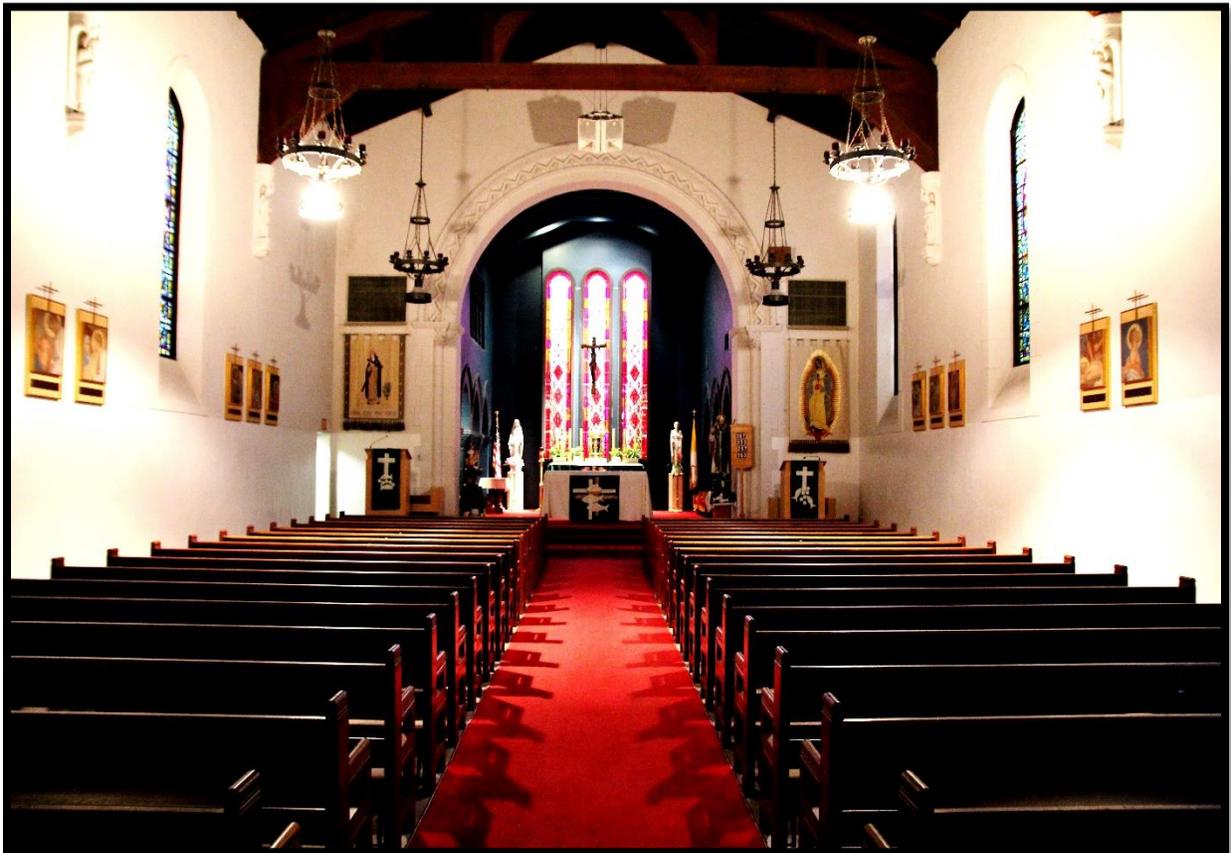


Photo by John E Boll

Saint Rose Church, Sacramento

FIRST PASTORATE, SAINT DOMINIC PARISH, COLFAX

Bishop Joseph T McGucken automatically succeeded Bishop Robert Armstrong upon his death on January 14, 1957, and was bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento at this time. Bishop McGucken appointed Father Walsh to his first pastorate at Saint Dominic Parish in Colfax on August 6, 1959. Father Bill served this parish for the next eleven years until September 8, 1970.



Photo by John E Boll

Saint Dominic Church, Colfax

BACK TO COLUSA ONE MORE TIME!

It is unusual for a priest to return to the same parish three times, but on September 9, 1970, Bishop Alden J Bell appointed Father William Walsh to the pastorate of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Colusa, succeeding Father Tony Maio. But this time, he was the pastor.

Father Bill's time in Colusa was relatively short, just two and a half years, from September 9, 1970 to April 25, 1973.

ONWARD TO WINTERS

The next appointment for Father Walsh was to the pastorate of Saint Anthony Parish in Winters, a small farming community in Yolo County. He succeeded Father Eugene G Lucas who had developed a ministry to the Spanish speaking members of the parish. Because Father Walsh was not a fluent Spanish speaker, he had to have an assistant priest who could speak Spanish. During

his fourteen years as pastor of Saint Anthony Parish, he had a number of Spanish speaking assistants who ministered to the Spanish speaking members of the parish.



Photo by John E Boll

Saint Anthony Church, Winters

FINAL PASTORATE, SAINT JOSEPH PARISH, RIO VISTA

At the age of 62, Father Walsh began his last pastorate at Saint Joseph Parish in Rio Vista, a town located on the Sacramento River in the Delta region of the Sacramento Valley. It was Bishop Francis A Quinn who appointed Father Bill to Rio Vista. Father Bill served this Delta community for seven years and retired as pastor of Rio Vista on May 1, 1994 at the age of 69. He was given the title of Pastor Emeritus of Saint Joseph Parish, Rio Vista.

LIFE IN RETIREMENT

Before he retired, Father Bill purchased a mobile home in Rio Vista that would be his permanent residence in his years of retirement. He was blessed with twenty-six years of retirement and for many of those years, he was able to take care of himself very well. He enjoyed taking a daily walk around town and the people of Rio Vista loved to see him and greeted him whenever they saw him in town.

As the years of retirement rolled by, Father Bill's memory gradually began to weaken and he needed some care at that point because he was forgetting to eat his meals. He had befriended

Rhoda Laquindanum who owned a senior care home in Rio Vista and Father Bill began spending the days in the Rio Vista Care Home where he received his meals.

RECOLLECTIONS OF FATHER BILL BY HIS NIECE, MARIE FOSKIN, WHO LIVES IN IRELAND

My first recollection of Bill was when he was coming home to Ireland on holiday from the U.S. and the excitement of his parents and family leading up to his arrival. And then the sadness when it came to the day when he had to depart again from these shores.

In later years, we remember the great fun we had with him touring around Ireland, which he loved to do. He also loved to visit the local hostelrys and meet up with the locals and reminiscing about the days gone by.

When we spoke to him on the telephone, there were some basic questions that he always asked – how were all the relatives doing? How was the country doing? And coming from a farming background, how were the farmers doing? He also loved the game of hurling which was the dominant sport in the parish of Mooncoin and in the county of Kilkenny, and he always enquired about how the county team was doing. He attended as many games as possible when he came back to Ireland.

The weather was another subject he always enquired about. Ireland is known for its inclement weather and when Bill was here, even if the sun was splitting the stones, he always brought a raincoat and an umbrella with him wherever he went. He used to say, “It’s a wise man that would bring a raincoat on a fine day.”

Father Bill had an uncle who was a priest in the United States. His name was Father James Delahunty who was the pastor of All Souls Parish in San Francisco. He died on July 15, 1936 at the age of 52, and was buried in Holy Cross Cemetery in South San Francisco.

Although Father Bill spent most of his life in America, he never forgot his Irish roots. We will all miss him, and we will always treasure the great memories we have of him.

May he rest in peace!



Photo by John E Boll

Saint Joseph Church, Rio Vista



Photo by John E Boll

Bishop Soto visits Father Walsh at the Rio Vista Care Home in December 2015



Photo by John E Boll

Father Bill at the Rio Vista Care Home in December 2015

A member of the Laquindanum family provided daily transportation for Father Walsh to and from his mobile home to the care home. Either Rhoda or a member of her family spent nights in Father Walsh's mobile home in case Father Bill needed emergency care.

For a year, Father Walsh became a resident at the Rio Vista Care Home and it was there that he died around 1 PM on Tuesday, March 2, 2021, at the age of 95 ½ years of age. At the time of his death, Father Walsh was the second oldest priest in the Diocese of Sacramento.

FUNERAL MASS FOR FATHER WILLIAM WALSH

On Thursday, March 18, the body of Father Walsh was brought to Saint Joseph Church in Rio Vista where there was visitation for parishioners from 3 to 5 PM. At 5 PM, Father Mervin P Concepcion, pastor of Saint Joseph Parish, presided at the Vigil for Father Walsh.

On Friday, March 19, the Feast of Saint Joseph, the Funeral Mass was celebrated at 11:30 AM by Bishop Jaime Soto. Concelebrating the Mass were Bishop Emeritus William K Weigand and about 20 priests from the Diocese of Sacramento. Because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the church was limited to about 20 parishioners from Rio Vista. The Mass was livestreamed enabling the participation of a group of parishioners outside the church by livestream or at home anywhere in the world. After Mass, box lunches were provided outside for all who attended the Mass.



Proclamation of the Gospel by Deacon Bill Bolduc



Homily given by Father Michael Downey, a close friend of Father Walsh

HOMILY AT THE FUNERAL MASS FOR FR WILLIAM K WALSH

By Father Michael Downey

March 19, 2021

Saint Joseph Church, Rio Vista, CA

We gather today to bring closure to the life of Father William K Walsh. We commend him to the goodness and mercy of our God.

Unfortunately, his family cannot be with us because of the Corona Virus pandemic and family illness. We pray for his niece, Patricia Conway, who is ill in Ireland. May the Lord touch her with his healing grace.

We extend our heartfelt condolences Mary and Eileen, Father Walsh's sisters, to Patricia and all his nieces and nephews, grand-nieces and grand-nephews and extended family, his friends in Ireland and England and here in the USA; to the parishioners of Saint Joseph Parish and to parishioners in the various parishes where he ministered.

We thank Rhoda and her staff at the care home here in Rio Vista who cared for Father Bill for many years. He was in good hands. Thank you very much. We thank all who made his life pleasant, comfortable, peaceful and happy.

Mooncoin was his parish in Ireland, County Kilkenny. That parish produced many priests. Two other priests from Mooncoin were twins, Fathers Joe and Toby Vereker, who died in 1999 and 2001. Two of his teachers in high school and seminary were natives of Mooncoin, Father Pat Dunphy and Father Tom Brennan. Sadly, on Good Friday 1956, Father Dunphy died suddenly in Saint Mary Cathedral, Kilkenny.

Father Walsh was born on September 30, 1925. He was ordained a priest on June 5, 1949; celebrated his Silver Jubilee in 1974; his Golden Jubilee in 1999; and 70 years of priesthood in 2019. Called home to the Lord on Tuesday, March 2, 2021 in his 96th year. Father deserves a big round of applause.

March 17 was the Feast of Saint Patrick, patron saint of Ireland. Today is the Feast of Saint Joseph, foster father of Jesus.

Father Walsh was a very quiet man. He worked quietly, diligently and served his people well. He took time off and played a game of golf with his priest friends, followed by socializing and dinner. He visited his long-time friend regularly, Father Pat Lanigan, who died in 2006. He went to visit his family in Ireland when he was able and free to do so.

He served in many parishes of the diocese: Our Lady of Lourdes, Colusa; St Joseph, Redding; St Anthony Parish in Winters and Saint Joseph Parish in Rio Vista. He had three different assignments in Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Colusa.

Bishop Armstrong was his first bishop. Bishop Armstrong was a close friend of Monsignor John McGarry, former pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Colusa. On one occasion, Bishop Armstrong and Monsignor McGarry set off for a meeting in Seattle. They stayed with Bishop Armstrong's sister in Seattle. The next day they left for the meeting but they never went to the meeting. They went to a baseball game. When they returned home, Bishop Armstrong's sister asked, "Bob, how was the meeting?" Bishop Armstrong said, "Fine, fine, fine."

The Season of Lent is gradually giving way to Easter. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Father Bill was a great light to his people. He was a man of deep faith and trust in God.

Last Sunday, Laetare Sunday, we were told to rejoice; the Lord is near. We are to look forward with hope to Easter, when light conquers darkness. Father Bill lived by that truth, he conquered the darkness. The Lord was his shepherd; now, he dwells in the house of the Lord.

John Henry Newman once wrote these lines: "Lead kindly light, amid the encircling gloom, lead Thou me on! The night is dark, and I am far from home --- Lead Thou me on! Keep Thou my feet, I do not ask to see the distant scene --- one step enough for me. Lead Thou me on!"

The Lord guided Father Walsh during his earthly life. He carried the torch of faith to his people. Like Saint Patrick he embraced the challenge. He has stepped into the light of heaven, dwelling in the house of the Lord for years to come. Rest in Peace.

*Eternal Rest grant to
Father Walsh, Oh Lord,
And let Perpetual Light shine
Upon him.
May he rest in peace!*



Photo by John E Boll

Bishop Jaime Soto Presides at the Funeral Mass



Photos by John E Boll

Bishop Soto Incenses the body of Father Walsh



Preparing for the Final Journey to the Rio Vista Catholic Cemetery



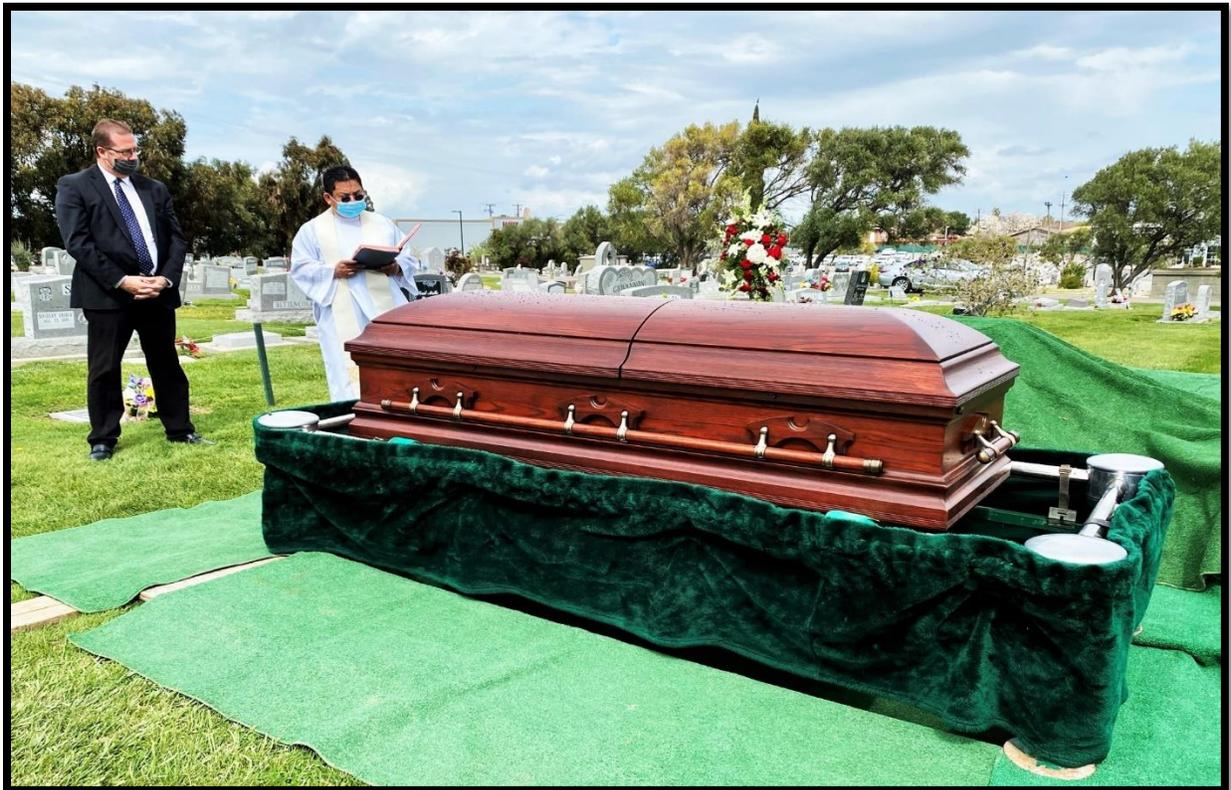


Bishops Soto and Weigand visit with priests while having box lunches before the Burial





Louella Garcia, Clergy Care Manager, speaks with Rhoda Laquindanum, owner of Rio Vista Care Home



Father Mervin Concepcion leads the prayers of committal at Saint Joseph Cemetery, Rio Vista



Rest in Peace, Father Bill, until we meet again in Heaven!

PHOTOS OF FATHER BILL'S JOURNEY OF LIFE



Father Bill in his younger days



Photo courtesy of Marie Foskin, Niece

The Parents of Father Bill Celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary in August 1969



Father Bill on holiday with his family in Ireland



Golden Jubilee Celebration at Saint Kieran Seminary, Ireland, August 17, 1999



Father Bill at leisure



Father Mike Downey has lunch with Father Bill



Sharing a meal at the Rio Vista Care Home



Father Bill visits with fellow housemates



Father Bill makes a visit to St Joseph Church



Celebrating Christmas in Rio Vista



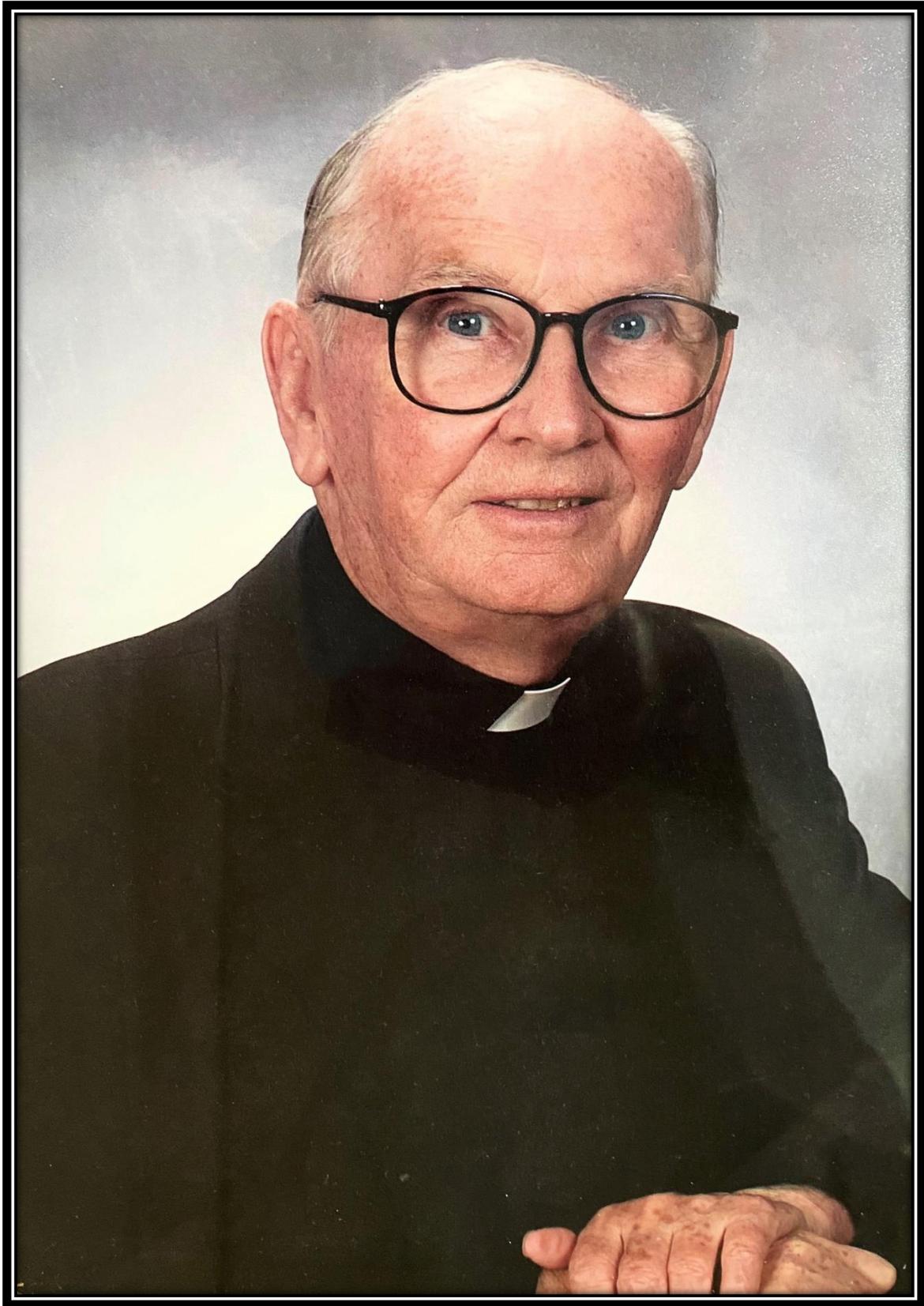
Father Bill with the Laquindanum Family at the Rio Vista Care Home



Father Bill with Rhoda, owner of the Rio Vista Care Home



The Residents at the Rio Vista Care Home



Father William Kieran Walsh