

SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

Vol 5

Father John E Boll

No 79

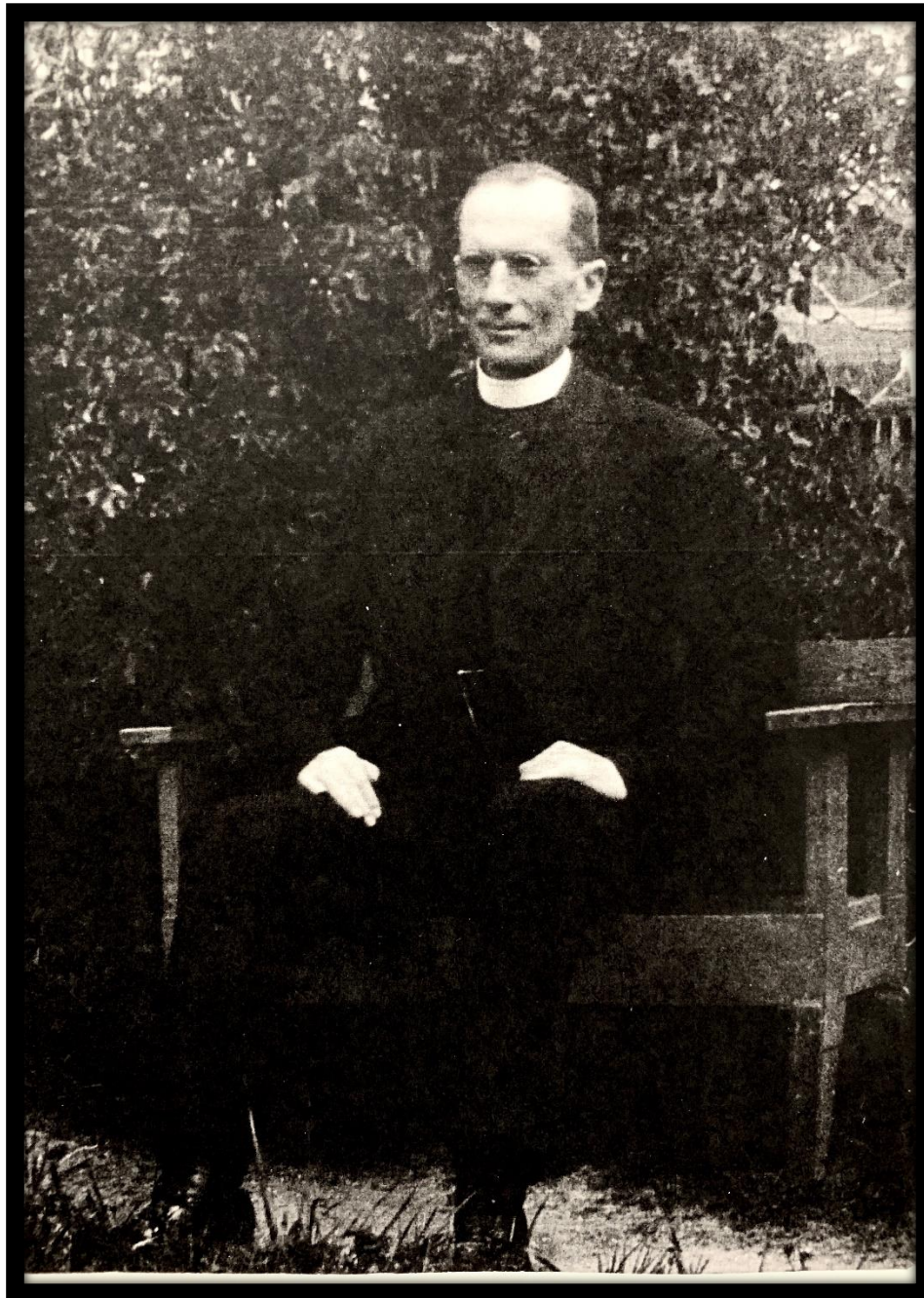
Father James O'Meara

Native of Tipperary, County Tipperary, Ireland

Priest of the Diocese of Sacramento

Pastor of Saint Patrick Parish, Grass Valley, California

November 1, 1865 – November 12, 1950



James O'Meara was born in Tipperary, Ireland on November 1, 1865. He was a seminary student at All Hallows College in Dublin and was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Sacramento on Friday, June 24, 1892 in the College Chapel. After the customary time with his family in Ireland, he sailed from Ireland to New York and then traveled by train on the long journey across America to Sacramento.

When Father O'Meara arrived in Sacramento, Bishop Patrick Manogue, founding bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento, welcomed him to California and the Diocese of Sacramento.

FIRST APPOINTMENT, SAINT JOSEPH PARISH, MARYSVILLE

Father O'Meara's first appointment in the Diocese of Sacramento was to Saint Joseph Parish in Marysville, the original Cathedral Church of the Vicariate of Marysville. He served this community as an assistant priest for two years, 1892 to 1894.



Photo by John E Boll

Saint Joseph Church, Marysville

APPOINTED PASTOR OF LINCOLN

After only two years in Marysville, Bishop Manogue appointed Father O'Meara pastor of the newly established Saint Joseph Parish in Lincoln in 1894. After serving the Lincoln parish for five years, Bishop Thomas Grace appointed him to his next assignment.



Photo by John E Boll

Saint Joseph Church, Lincoln

PASTOR OF YREKA

In 1899, the second bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento, Bishop Thomas Grace, appointed Father O'Meara pastor of Saint Joseph Parish in Yreka where he served for 3 years until 1902. It appears from diocesan records that after 1902, he remained in Yreka until 1919, but perhaps as an assistant since a series of other pastors are named in the record for Yreka after 1902.

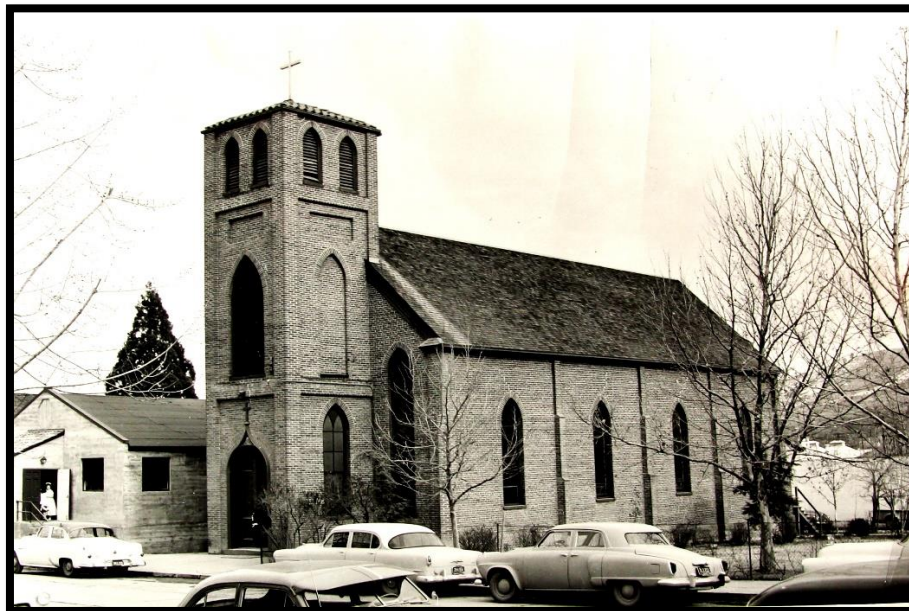


Photo from the Yreka Parish Archives

Saint Joseph Church, Yreka

NAMED PASTOR OF GRASS VALLEY

Bishop Grace named Father O'Meara to be pastor of Saint Patrick Parish in Grass Valley. This appointment began in 1919 and he served as pastor of this parish for the next 25 years until 1944 when his failing health forced him to resign. He was named Pastor Emeritus of Saint Patrick Parish and retired to Saint Elizabeth Hospital in Red Bluff where he lived for six years.

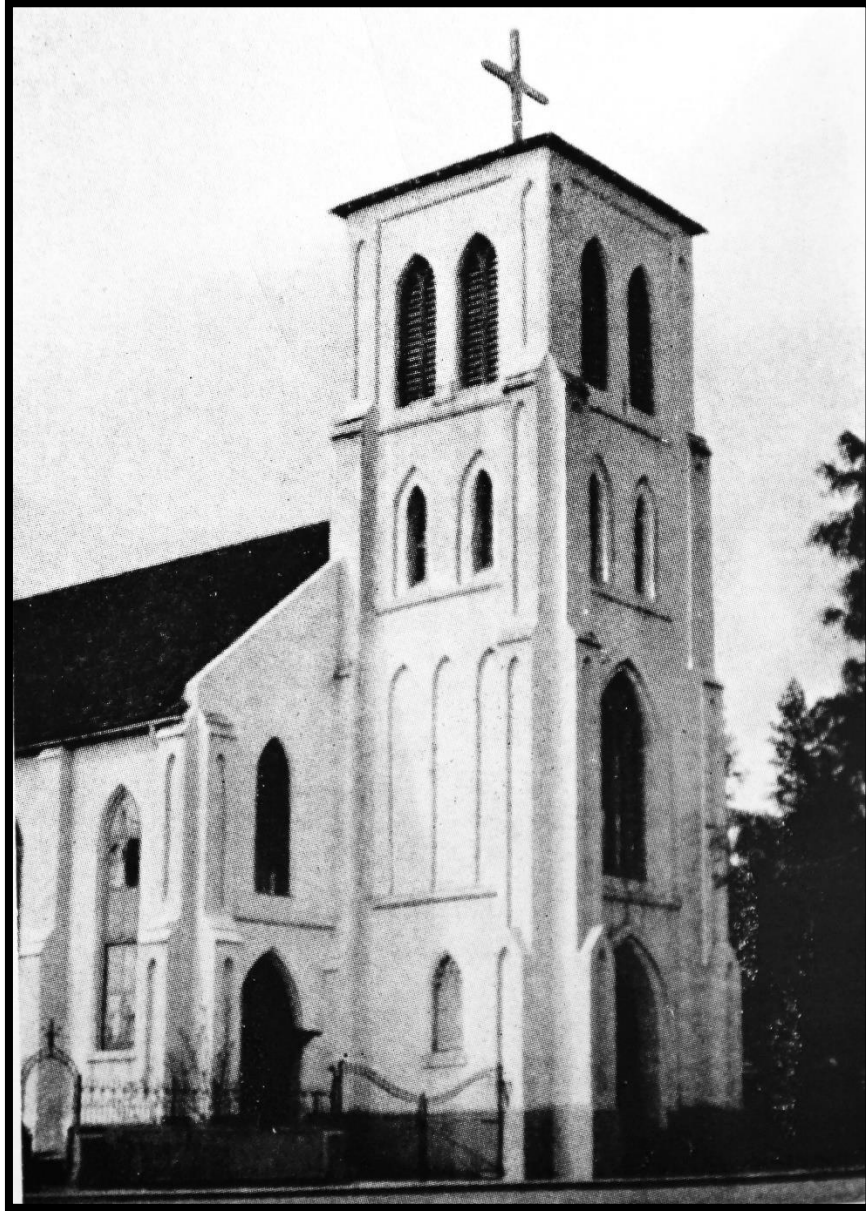


Photo from the Saint Patrick Parish Archives

The Original Saint Patrick Church, Grass Valley

SERVED DURING THE ADMINISTRATION OF FOUR BISHOPS

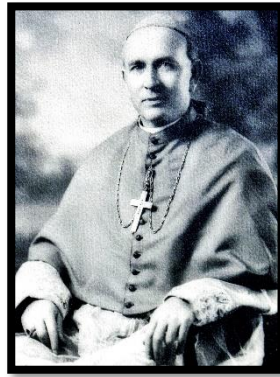
At the time of his death, Father O'Meara was the longest serving priest in the Diocese of Sacramento with 58 years of service. He arrived in Sacramento six years after it became the See City of the diocese and served during the episcopacies of four bishops, Bishops Patrick Manogue, Thomas Grace, Patrick Keane and Robert Armstrong.



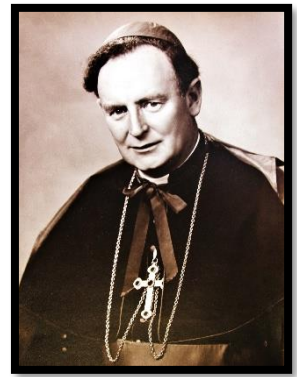
Bishop Patrick Manogue



Bishop Thomas Grace



Bishop Patrick Keane



Bishop Robert Armstrong

DEATH COMES OF FATHER O'MEARA

Having lived at Saint Elizabeth Hospital for six years in Red Bluff, Father O'Meara died on Sunday, November 12, 1950, in the hospital at the age of 85. A Solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated for him in Saint Patrick Church in Grass Valley where he had served as pastor for 25 years.



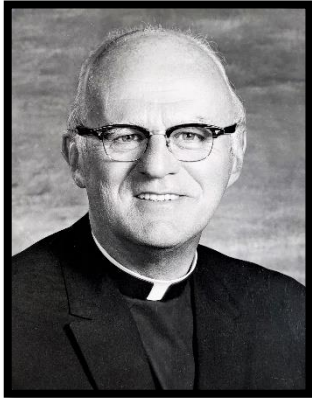
Photo from the Mount Lassen Website

The Beauty of the Mount Lassen Area near Red Bluff

THE FUNERAL MASS IN GRASS VALLEY

The celebrant of the Mass was Father James O'Shea, pastor of Our Lady of Grace Church, West Sacramento, and a former assistant of Father O'Meara. He was assisted by Father Thomas H Markham, director of the Catholic Welfare Bureau for the diocese, and Father William Horgan,

assistant pastor of Saint Patrick Church in Placerville. The Right Reverend Monsignor Thomas E Horgan, P.A. and Vicar General of the diocese and pastor of Saint Joseph Church in Marysville, presided in the absence of Bishop Armstrong who was attending the annual meeting of the United States Catholic Bishops in Washington, DC.



Monsignor John T Dwyer
Priest of the Archdiocese of
San Francisco

Father John T Dwyer, assistant director of Saint Vincent School for Boys in San Rafael, church historian, and a former resident of Grass Valley, was the homilist at the Requiem Mass.

After the prayers of Commendation of Father O'Meara to the Lord, his body was taken in procession to Saint Patrick Cemetery in Grass Valley where he was buried in the Priests' section of the cemetery.



Photo by John E Boll

Headstone of Father James O'Meara, Saint Patrick Cemetery, Grass Valley

SURVIVING FAMILY

Among the surviving family members of Father O'Meara were two nephews who are priests of the Archdiocese of Cashel in Ireland.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

At the age of 26, James O'Meara was ordained a priest for the missionary diocese of Sacramento. He left his family and homeland of Ireland to begin a new journey to a place and a people he had never seen before or met who were five thousand miles away from his family in Ireland.

He arrived in Sacramento in October 1892 to begin an adventure of a lifetime. After two years as an assistant, he was appointed to his first pastorate of Saint Joseph Parish in Lincoln at the age of 28.

During his 58 years of priestly service in the Diocese of Sacramento, Father O'Meara served the People of God in this diocese during the episcopacies of four different bishops of Sacramento. Bishop Patrick Manogue was one of the legendary figures in California history as a gold miner, seminarian and priest of the Comstock. In his 11 years as bishop, he moved the See City from Grass Valley to Sacramento and built the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament; Bishop Thomas Grace who first declined the call to be bishop because of his health, went on to serve as bishop of Sacramento for 25 years; Bishop Patrick Keane who was a priest of the Archdiocese of San Francisco and pastor in Oakland, served only 6 years as bishop before his death on September 1, 1928; and Bishop Robert Armstrong who served as bishop of Sacramento for 28 years until his death on January 14, 1957.

Father O'Meara's headstone in Saint Patrick Cemetery, Grass Valley, has his last name spelled incorrectly and his age at the time of death is also incorrect. Such are the errors and inconsistencies of life and history.

Father O'Meara served faithfully the people God sent him to serve and for that we are grateful; we thank God for Father O'Meara's life and ministry in the Church of Sacramento.

*Eternal Rest grant to Father James O'Meara,
O Lord.*

*May his soul and the souls of all the
Faithful Departed abide now in peace!
Amen*