

SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

Vol 5

Father John E Boll

No 86

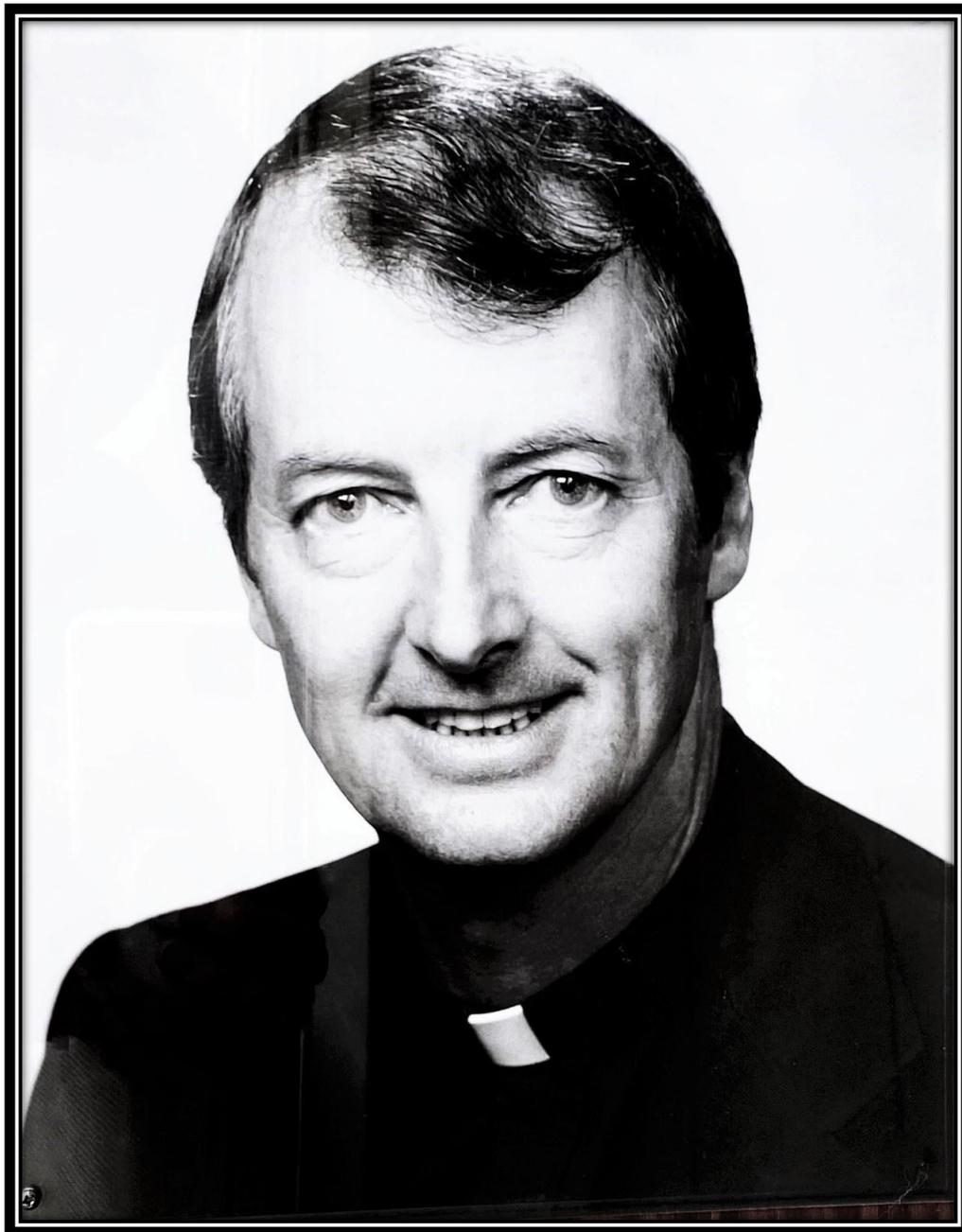
Father Nicholas Stephen Duggan

Native of Glenmore, County Kilkenny, Ireland

Priest of the Diocese of Sacramento

Pastor of Saint Paul Parish, Sacramento, California

January 28, 1937 – October 3, 2018



Nicholas Stephen Duggan was born on January 28, 1937, in Glenmore, County Kilkenny, Ireland, son of Richard Duggan and Mary O’Gorman, the sixth of seven children born in the family. He was baptized a few days later in his home parish in Glenmore. The children, in order of birth, are Tony, Fr John, Richard, Michael, Annie, Fr Nicholas and Sister Mary.

BEGINNING OF NICHOLAS’ EDUCATION

At the age of four, as was the custom in Ireland, Nicholas began his primary education in 1941 at Ballyfacey School in Glenmore, County Kilkenny, and continued at that school until 1950.

Nicholas then entered the De La Salle College in Waterford from 1951 to 1953 and then transferred to Saint Kieran’s College in Kilkenny from 1953 to 1956.



Photo from the Web

Saint Kieran College, Kilkenny, Ireland

In the fall of 1956, Nicholas began his theological studies at Saint Kieran College and continued until he completed his courses there in 1962. On June 3, 1962, he was ordained a priest by Bishop Dunne for service in the Diocese of Sacramento, California.

As was the custom, Father Nicholas spent two months with his family until it was time for him to begin the journey westward to the Diocese of Sacramento where he would begin his 56 years as a priest of the Diocese of Sacramento.

FATHER DUGGAN BEGINS HIS MINISTRY

When Father Nicholas arrived in the Diocese of Sacramento in late September 1962, the recently installed bishop of the diocese was Bishop Alden J Bell. It was Bishop Bell who gave Father Nick his first appointment to Saint Thomas More Parish in Paradise to assist Father Mathias Oberaigner who was the founding pastor of the parish. Father Nick began his first appointment on September 28, 1962 and served the parish for six years until September 4, 1968.



Photo by John E Boll

Copy of a Painting of the Original Saint Thomas More Parish, Paradise

NEXT PARISH ASSIGNMENT, HOLY FAMILY CHURCH, CITRUS HEIGHTS

After his first parish assignment of six years, Bishop Bell next assigned Father Nick to Holy Family Parish in Citrus Heights. Holy Family Parish was a much larger community than his first assignment, and the parish had three priests, the founding pastor, Father Vito Mistretta, and Father Thomas Marshall was the other assistant at the time.

Father Nick served the Holy Family Parish in Citrus Heights for five years, from September 4, 1968 to June 5, 1973.



Photo by John E Boll

Holy Family Church, Citrus Heights

THIRD ASSIGNMENT, PAROCHIAL VICAR OF SAINT ANNE PARISH

Father Duggan's third assignment was to Saint Anne Parish in South Sacramento as parochial vicar to Father Patrick J O'Neill who was the founding pastor of the parish in 1961. Father Nick served for only 15 months because Father O'Neill was named pastor of Saint Vincent Parish in Vallejo and Father Duggan was named to his first pastorate at Saint Anne Parish on September 9, 1974.

PASTOR OF SAINT ANNE PARISH, SACRAMENTO

It was Bishop Bell who appointed Father Duggan as pastor of Saint Anne Parish in Sacramento. Father Nick loved Saint Anne Parish which had a thriving parish school and sisters teaching at the school from the religious community of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary who were based in London, England.

Father Nick was a traditional pastor who was prayerful, friendly and kind. He developed various volunteer groups within the parish who helped maintain the parish facilities. He was a pastor who imitated Jesus, the Good Shepherd. The Saint Anne Parish community loved Father Nicholas who served the parish for two terms as pastor. With his 15 months as a parochial vicar of the parish and his two terms as pastor, he served for a total of over 13 years at Saint Anne Parish.

Since Father Nick had served for two terms as pastor, it was time for him to move to one more parish to be pastor, so on April 25, 1986, Bishop Francis A Quinn appointed Father Nick to his final parish.



Photo by John E Boll

Saint Anne Church, Sacramento

FINAL ASSIGNMENT FOR FATHER DUGGAN

As Father Duggan's final parish appointment, Bishop Quinn sent him to Saint Paul Parish in South Sacramento as pastor. Father Michael Hogan served the church from 1958 to 1960. In 1960, Saint Paul Church became a parish with Father Richard Doheny named pastor in 1960. He served this parish for 16 years until 1976. Succeeding Father Doheny was Father John Hannan who served as pastor for 10 years, 1976 to 1986. Then Father Nicholas Duggan was appointed the pastor and served Saint Paul Parish for 17 years.

Father Nick was a very kind and compassionate person. One of the projects he took on was building a new and permanent church for Saint Paul Parish. The first facility the parish built was a multi-purpose building that became the first church of the parish for 33 years.

Father Nick had to first discern whether parishioners were ready to move forward with this building project. His second task was to organize a major fund drive to raise the money it would

take to build a permanent church. He was successful in discerning the mind and will of parishioners and in completing a successful fund drive to accomplish the goal.

The Architectural Firm of Carissimi & Rohrer Associates was hired, a church design was made and approved, and a new church became a reality for the Saint Paul Parish community. Bishop William Weigand who succeeded Bishop Quinn as bishop of the diocese, dedicated the new church, anointed the altar, and celebrated the first Mass in the church on Saturday, April 24, 1993.



Photo by John E Boll

Saint Paul Church, Sacramento

DIOCESAN MINISTRIES

During his years of active ministry, Father Duggan served as a member of the Priests' Personnel Board from 1971 to 1976 and was a member of the Diocesan Liturgical Commission from 1977 to 1980. He also was the Dean of the Southern Deanery from 1991 to 1998.

FATHER DUGGAN'S HEALTH BEGINS TO FAIL HIM

As time passed, Father Nick began to have problems speaking clearly. The medical doctors discovered that he was beginning to show the effects of Parkinson's disease which was affecting not only his speech but also his ability to walk. It became clear to him that he could no longer continue his ministry as pastor and decided to resign as pastor and move to the newly built Vianney Center for retired priests.

Father Nick retired on September 30, 2003 and immediately moved to the Vianney Priests' Village in Citrus Heights where he lived until 2012. It was getting too difficult for Father Nick to go to the store to purchase groceries and prepare his own meals, so he decided to move to the Nazareth House in San Rafael, north of San Francisco in Marin County, where he would have more care and his meals would be prepared for him.

FATHER NICK MOVES TO NAZARETH HOUSE

In 2012, Father Nick made the move to Nazareth House in San Rafael. There were a number of retired priests from the Archdiocese of San Francisco who also lived at Nazareth House so Father Nick felt very much at home there.

Every so often, his priest friends from the Diocese of Sacramento came to San Rafael to visit Father Nick. He seemed to be doing well in his new home and continued to live there until his death on October 3, 2018.



Photo by John E Boll

Bishop Jaime Soto visits Father Nick at Nazareth House in San Rafael on December 30, 2015

DEATH COMES TO FATHER NICHOLAS DUGGAN

On Wednesday, October 3, 2018, Father Nicholas Duggan died at Nazareth House in San Rafael. His body was brought back to Sacramento in preparation for his Funeral at Saint Paul Church in Sacramento where he had served as pastor for 17 years.

FUNERAL MASS FOR FATHER DUGGAN

On Monday, October 8, 2018, the Funeral Mass for Father Nicholas Duggan was held in Saint Paul Church on Florin Road in South Sacramento. Bishop Jaime Soto was the main celebrant at the Mass, joined by retired Bishop William Weigand and many priests of the diocese. The church was filled with members of Father Nick's family, friends and parishioners of the various parishes where he had served over the past 56 years.



Photo by John E Boll

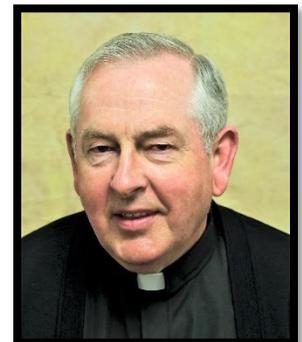
Beginning of the Funeral Mass

The homilist for the Funeral Mass was Monsignor Albert O'Connor. The following is the text of the homily:

The Homily

We gather this morning to remember and pay tribute to Fr. Nicholas who served God and God's people as a priest for 56 years in the Diocese of Sacramento.

Fr. Nick, on being ordained a priest, gave his word freely to serve God and the Church. The commitment which he made on that day was kept most faithfully. Like the Good Shepherd, he laid down his life for his flock and now the Good Shepherd has called him home to receive his reward.



To remember is to give life and in remembering Fr. Nick, we give thanks to God for the great gift he was to the Diocese of Sacramento and to St. Paul's Parish.

Our celebration this morning is a celebration of Joy because we are overjoyed to see Fr. Nick's life crowned with the Crown of Life, which the Lord has promised to those who follow him faithfully in this life.

It is our time-honored custom in the Catholic Church to pray for the dead and commend them to God by our prayers. We do so because we believe that few people will have attained at the time of death the kind of perfection that will admit them immediately into the presence of God. Habits of sin, which have become engrained in us, cannot be instantaneously eradicated at the moment of death.



In the case of Fr. Nick, however, who had put on the mind of Christ, in whom the image of Christ had been engrained, I can say that Nick has already heard these words, "Come Nicholas Stephen Duggan, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you."

It is time for us to be happy, to burst forth in shouts of joy because we have great assurance that this life, so faithfully lived, has now seen fulfillment and completion in the fact that Nick now

looks upon God, face to face. The priests who have known him over his years of service have always called him a saint.

Nick was born on January 28, 1937 in Glenmore County Kilkenny. He was brought up in a vocational culture; and a vocational culture is one in which people have a sense of being called to make life better, a sense of possessing a gift to offer, a sense of having to live a worthwhile life and do things that count on a human level whether it brings fame or fortune. It was the culture of Ireland that filled convents and seminaries and monasteries in the 40's and 50's and 60's. It was in this environment that Nick, as a young man, heard the Lord call his name, and without hesitation, he enrolled at St. Kiernan College where he was ordained on June 3, 1962.



Upon arriving in the Diocese of Sacramento, he took up his first assignment at St. Thomas Moore Parish in Paradise. He next served at Holy Family Parish in Citrus Heights. Then it was on St. Anne's Parish where he served one year as Assistant before becoming Pastor and served before coming to St. Paul as Pastor in 1986.

He had 17 great years here at St Paul's Church where he built a great church community and this fine Church. It was not his wish to leave here. He left with a heavy heart, but good health deserted him and he found it impossible to continue. He was overcome by poor health for the remainder of his life but he accepted the Cross and bore it in imitation of his Savior.

Like all priests, he was cut from human cloth, “Taken from among men”, and therefore beset by all the weaknesses of the human condition. And so, one needs to be careful in assessing or evaluating the priest.

“Taken from among men?” Yes, “And made their representative before God?” Yes. “To offer gifts and sacrifices for sin?” Yes. “And made a super human by ordination?” No. By no means.

The Scriptures say, “The priest is beset by weakness.” The question proper to the priesthood is not whether a man is good enough but whether a man is weak enough to be a priest. Is he weak enough so that he lives with a certain amount of failure, so that he feels what it is like to be an average person? Because this is what the New Testament looks for in the priest, because it is in this weakness that the power of the priesthood lies: “He is able to deal patiently with sinners, for he himself is beset by weakness.”



“Taken from among men;” “Weak enough” to understand all humankind and the daily grind of life, yet to be a gracious, understanding priest. Nick understood human weakness and was himself a saintly priest.

My first real meeting with Nick was on Christmas Day 1972. I had seen him casually before that. The meeting took place at Mercy Hospital where I was a patient.

Nick was stationed at Holy Family Parish at the time and he drove in to Sacramento to visit me whom he hardly knew. To do this on Christmas Day, after his busy morning, really impressed me. But that was the measure of the man.

I was residing at St. Anne's when Nick was assigned there and I had the pleasure of working with him for five years. There I got to know what a great priest he was. These were happy years for me.



Nick was full of pastoral zeal and he did everything well, very well. There was one funny incident which I can share with you. It was a Saturday towards the end of November. Notre Dame was playing USC in Los Angeles. The time of the game coincided with the time of Confession at St. Anne's. Nick dutifully went to the confessional but the little rascal brought a small transistor radio with him and an earplug. During slow times in confessional, he tuned into the game.

Everything was going well until a person entered the confessional. In Nick's haste to turn off the radio he pulled out the earplug instead, and before he got the radio off, this was heard in the church: "Touch Down, Notre Dame! The elderly lady said, "I didn't know Notre Dame was playing today." To which Nick calmly replied, "Are they?"

When the Scriptures are read in the church, it is God himself who speaks to us. And what did we learn today? Our first reading was taken from the book of the Prophet Isaiah, a passage written

600 years before the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Already at that time, God made us a wonderful promise. And what was that promise? That God would destroy death forever and wipe away the tears from all faces. And that promise was fulfilled in Jesus our Savior.

Our second reading was taken from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans and in that passage, Paul assured us that those joined to Christ in baptism and who try to follow him faithfully in the course of their lives, will be raised up in company with the Lord Jesus.

The Gospel passage which I read for you needs a little explanation as to the background. It was at the end of our Lord's earthly life and his mission on earth was accomplished. He announced to his Apostles that he was departing from them. He could see that this caused great consternation for them.



He said, "Hold it, you're getting it all wrong! It is to your advantage that I go away because I am going to prepare a place for you." Another wonderful promise, this time made by the Risen Lord Jesus himself. And it was not just meant for the 12 people in the immediate hearing, no it was meant for all God's faithful people, Nicholas included. So, we can say that Nick has journeyed to his heavenly home accompanied by our prayers.

And so today, we are not remembering a defeat; we are celebrating victory, a victory in which we all share because we are all linked to Christ in his conquering of death.

There is no need for fear. It is simply a change of tense: from the present, which is imperfect, to the future, which is indeed perfect.

Although Christ takes away the fear of death, he does not take away the grief, because that is part of our human nature. For those who grieve most - for Nick's family and for his friends, we ask God for comfort in your time of grief.

May Christ who knew so well the grief of death and the pain of leaving friends, ease and bless your sorrow. And may the goodness of Nick continue with you all your days from his place with God. We can say of Nick that he died as he had lived, full of resignation, strengthened in faith, and joyful in hope.

We can also say of him: life's race well run, life's work well done, life's crown well won. Now comes rest. May he rest in peace! Amen.

BURIAL AT CALVARY CEMETERY, CITRUS HEIGHTS

At the conclusion of the Funeral Mass at Saint Paul Church, all were invited to lunch in the parish hall. After lunch, there was a procession to Calvary Cemetery in Citrus Heights where the body of Father Nick was laid to rest. Father William Kinane officiated at the Rite of Committal and burial of Father Duggan's body.



Photos by John E Boll

Rite of Committal by Father William Kinane



Photo by John E Boll

Preparing to lower Father Duggan's Casket in the Priests' Section of Calvary Cemetery

FINAL REFLECTION

Father Nick Duggan was an amazing person. He was an honest, fair and compassionate man and brother priest. From time to time, on his day off, he would drive to Christ the King Retreat Center to spend the day in quiet prayer. He also served as Vicar for Priests during the time when Bishop Francis Quinn was the bishop of the diocese. Any priest who was going through a difficult time could call Father Nick and he was ready to listen and give any help he could to a brother priest.

In 2012, when Father Nick celebrated his 50th Anniversary of Ordination, Bishop Soto and most of the retired priests at the Vianney Priests' Village in Citrus Heights drove to San Rafael to concelebrate with Bishop Soto and Father Nick his 50 Anniversary as a priest. After Mass, we enjoyed a delicious meal together with Father Nick at the Nazareth House dining room. It was a memorable time to celebrate with and honor Father Nick Duggan, one of our finest brother priests in the Diocese of Sacramento.

The whole Church of Sacramento was blessed to have known Father Nick Duggan and to have shared time with him. May he now be fully alive in the joy of the Lord!



Father Nicholas Stephen Duggan