

SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

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Father Patrick Joseph Leslie

Born March 22, 1944 in Trim, County Meath, Ireland

Priest of the Diocese of Sacramento

Retired from Sonoma Developmental Center, Glen Ellen, CA

Interview by Fr John E Boll



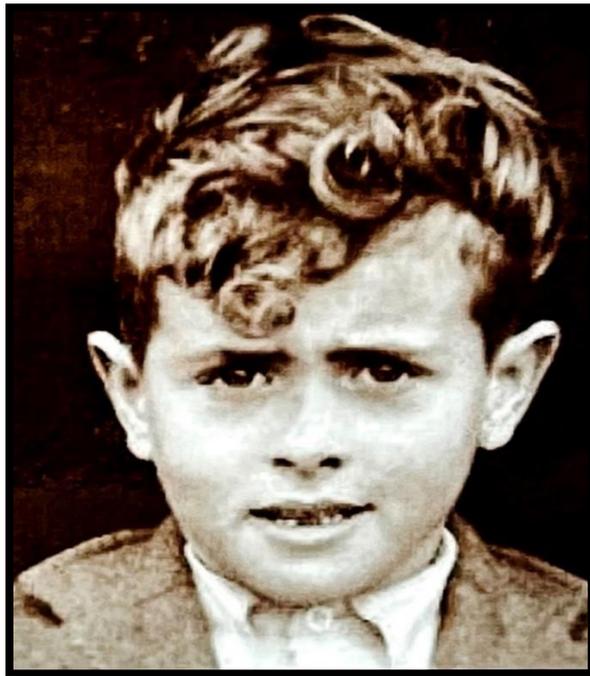
Patrick Joseph Leslie was born on March 22, 1944 in Trim, County Meath, Ireland, the eldest child of eight children born to John and Margaret Leslie. Patrick's other sisters and brother in order of birth are, Kathleen, Mary, Lillie, Larry, Margaret, Ann and Geraldine. The youngest child in the family was Geraldine, who was born with Downs Syndrome which would influence Pat's life in future years.



Trim, County Meath, Ireland



John and Margaret Leslie, Parents of Father Patrick Leslie



PATRICK IN 1951

PATRICK ENTERS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Patrick's family moved to County Westmeath where he began his primary education in Rath Streete, County Westmeath, Ireland for his first six years of school. The Leslie family then moved back to County Meath and he attended secondary school - high school - at Gilson School, Oldcastle, County Meath.



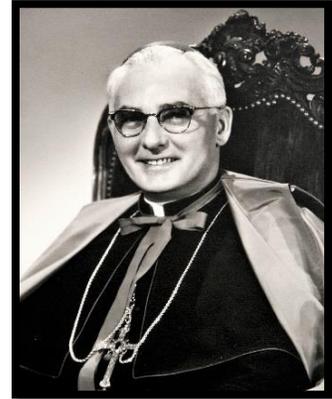
Pat's Graduation Class in Secondary School at Gilson School, Oldcastle, County Meath

PATRICK MEETS FATHER NED O'HARA IN IRELAND

In his second to last year in secondary school, Pat attended Father Ned O'Hara's First Mass and the idea of a vocation to the priesthood began to take root in him. After doing his final exams in secondary school in 1963, Pat decided he wanted to become a priest.

MEETING WITH BISHOP ALDEN J BELL IN IRELAND

In November 1963, Bishop Alden Bell, Bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento, paid a visit to the seminary in Carlow, Ireland, where Pat met the bishop for the first time. Bishop Bell visited both Pat Lee and Pat Leslie who attend the Carlow Seminary and had requested to study for the priesthood in the Diocese of Sacramento. Bishop Bell accepted both Pat Lee and Pat Leslie as seminarians studying for the Diocese of Sacramento.



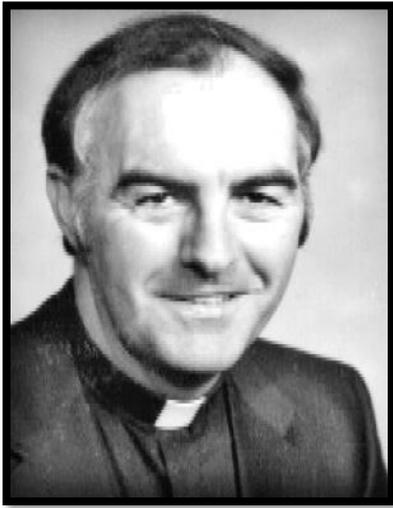
Bishop Alden J Bell



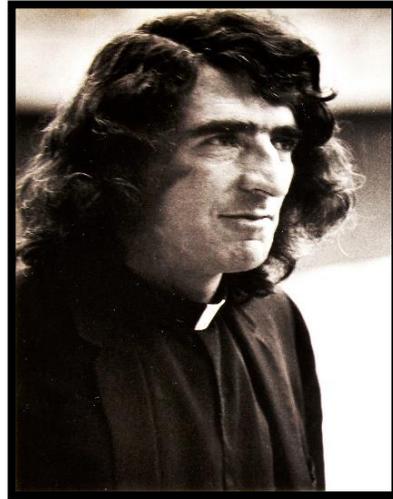
Saint Patrick Seminary College, Carlow, Ireland

PRIESTS WHO INFLUENCED PATRICK TO BECOME A PRIEST

As Father Patrick looks back on his life, he says he was influenced the most by Fathers Ned O'Hara and Sean Carrigy to become a priest. He also says that he survived the rigors of Saint Patrick Seminary in Carlow by playing a lot of sports.



Father Ned O'Hara



Father Sean Carrigy



Pat Plays Football with his Team Mates

A FEW PRIEST PROFESSORS AT THE CARLOW SEMINARY SPEAK ABOUT VATICAN II

While Patrick was a student in the seminary during the 1960's, the Second Vatican Council was taking place in Rome. There were a couple of seminary priest professors who shared with the seminary students what was happening at the Council. Pat was excited to hear about the

discussions the bishops were having at the Council, and those discussions by the Council Fathers encouraged Pat to move forward in his vocation to the priesthood.

FATHER LESLIE IS ORDAINED TO THE PRIESTHOOD

The Carlow Seminary is located next door to the Cathedral of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Carlow. Patrick Leslie was ordained a priest in the Carlow Cathedral with his classmates on June 7, 1969 for the Diocese of Sacramento by Bishop Patrick Lennon, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, Ireland.



Ordination Day, Father Patrick Joins with his Parents, his brother Larry, and six Sisters

After his ordination, Father Patrick Leslie spent time with his family in Ireland and in August of 1969, he left Ireland by plane and flew to the United States. He first stopped on the East Coast of the United States to visit a fellow priest friend a year ahead of him in the seminary who served as a priest in New Jersey. After his visit with his priest friend, Father Patrick flew to San Francisco where he was met by Father Sean Carrigy and Father Tom Gowing, a classmate who was ordained for the Santa Rosa Diocese. Father Pat stayed at the Cathedral rectory in Sacramento for a month before he received his first appointment.



**NEWLY ORDAINED FATHER PATRICK JOSEPH LESLIE
BLESSES HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AFTER HIS ORDINATION**



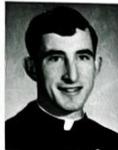
FATHER PATRICK WITH HIS SISTER GERALDINE



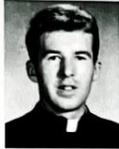
**GERALDINE MAKES HER FIRST HOLY COMMUNION
AT FATHER PATRICK'S FIRST MASS**



1969 ST. PATRICK'S COLLEGE CARLOW



PAT NICHOLSON
MOBILE



PAT CASHIN
CARDIFF



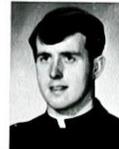
MICHAEL MURRAY
DOWN & CONNOR



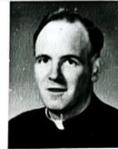
VERY REV. R. PRENDERGAST
PRESIDENT



MICHAEL THORNTON
NATCHEZ



PAT LESLIE
SACRAMENTO



JOHN DUNNE
PORTSMOUTH



AIDAN HAMILL
DROMORE



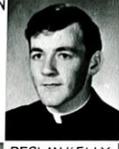
BRIAN EARLY
CLOGHER



TOM PYNE
STAUGUSTINE



WILLIAM HUGHES
CLOGHER



DECLAN KELLY
GALLOWAY



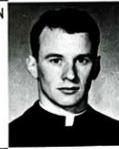
JOHN O'SHEA
PORTSMOUTH



SEAN ATKINSON
NATCHEZ



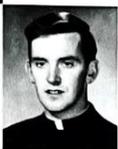
JOHN FALLON
MOBILE



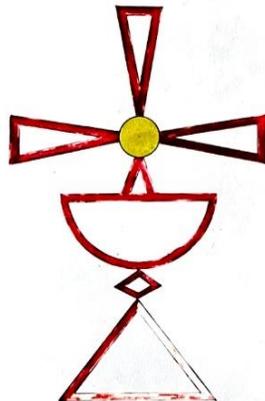
JOHN A. WALSH
SALFORD



EAMONN BARRY
CLOYNE



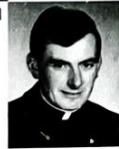
DONAL LEAHY
CLOYNE



CHARLES McCANN
WASHINGTON



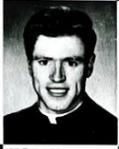
MICHAEL MCCARTHY
LEEDS



BILL CASEY
WELLINGTON



SEAN CAMPBELL
DOWN & CONNOR



TOM GOWING
SANTA ROSA



T.K. NOLAN
MIAMI



STEVE KENNELLY
SAN ANGELO



GO TEACH ALL NATIONS

Father Patrick Leslie's Ordination Class of 1969



Father Pat Leslie's Parents in 1969

FIRST APPOINTMENT FOR FATHER PATRICK, SAINT JOSEPH PARISH, NORTH SACRAMENTO



Father Pat's first assignment in September 1969 was as parochial vicar of Saint Joseph Parish in North Sacramento. Monsignor Patrick McTague was pastor of the North Sacramento Parish and was very supportive of Father Patrick.

Father Pat says his first assignment was a great assignment for him. He became very involved in the parish school named Our Lady of Fatima School at Saint Joseph Parish, and also with the parish Catholic Youth Organization. He helped restart youth soccer in Sacramento, and Our Lady of Fatima School, known as OLF, had 16 soccer teams by 1977 when he was transferred to his new parish assignment at Immaculate Conception parish in Sacramento.

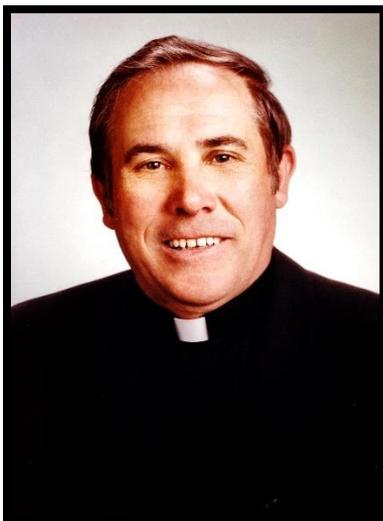
Monsignor Patrick McTague

SECOND ASSIGNMENT, IMMACULATE CONCEPTION PARISH IN SACRAMENTO

Father Patrick's second assignment was as parochial vicar to Immaculate Conception Parish in Sacramento with Father Dan Madigan as the pastor.



Immaculate Conception Parish, Sacramento



In early 1978, soon after his arrival at Immaculate Conception Parish, Father Pat applied for the position of Catholic Chaplain at the California Medical Facility in Vacaville. Much to his surprise, he was assigned to that position, beginning on July 1, 1978.

Father Dan Madigan

THIRD ASSIGNMENT, CATHOLIC CHAPLAIN AT CALIFORNIA MEDICAL FACILITY, VACAVILLE

The California Medical Facility in Vacaville was the main medical and psychiatric facility at that time for inmates in the State of California. In the early 1980s, it was designated to house and care for all inmates in the State Prison System who had HIV and AIDS. Father

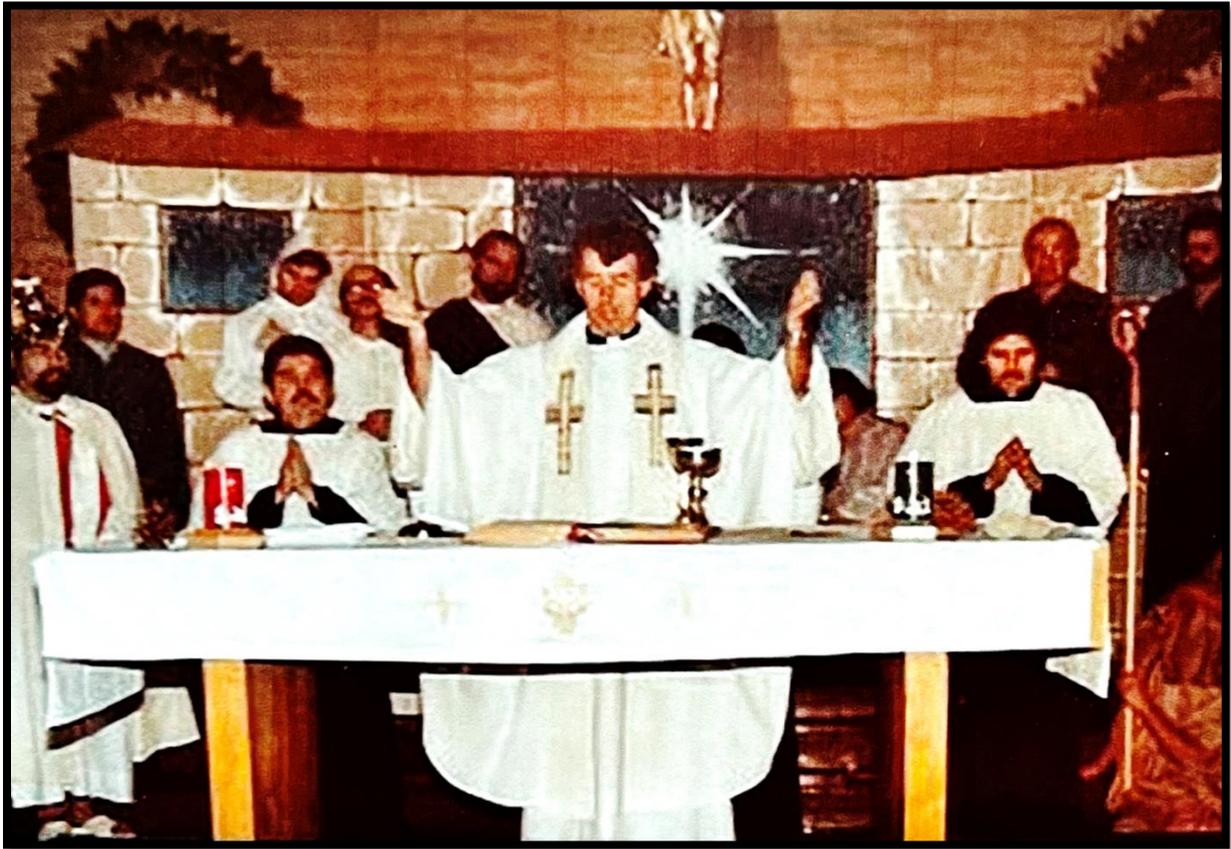
Patrick thought these inmates were treated very badly, and he lobbied for better care for them and he received great support from Bishop Francis Quinn of the Diocese of Sacramento.



California Medical Facility in Vacaville, California



Father Pat with his Parishioners at the California Medical Facility

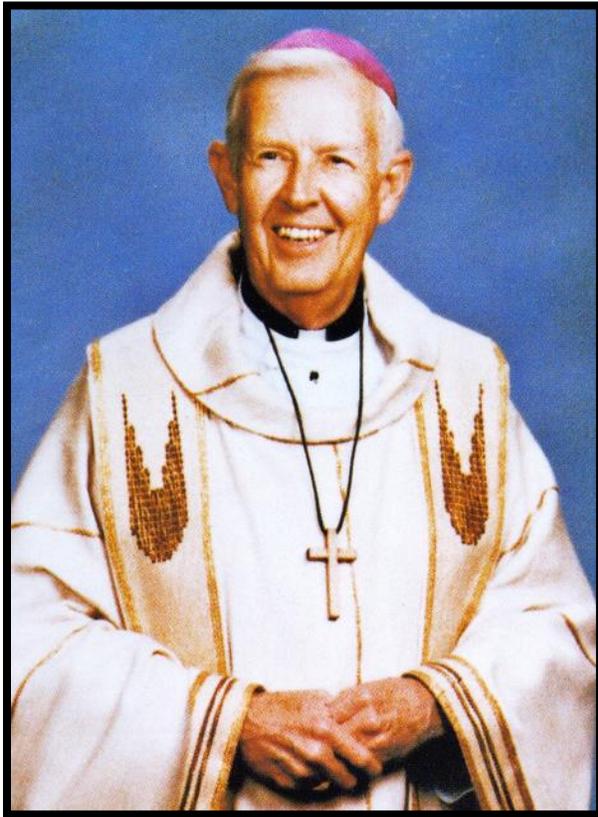


Christmas Mass in the California Medical Facility Chapel, Vacaville

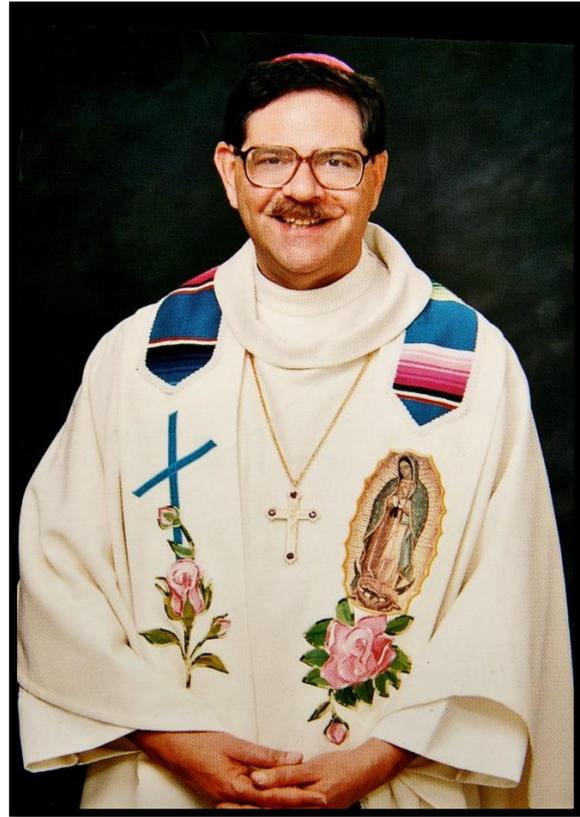
Father Pat says, “We started a hospice like program that we called Pastoral Care Services, with the assistance of Nancy Jaicks, a close friend of Elizabeth Kubler-Ross. We prepared inmates to sit with other inmates who were dying, so no one died alone.

“We made an AIDS Quilt and did the first display of the AIDS Quilt in any State Prison. Finally, in 1992, the Department of Corrections established Hospice at the California Medical Facility in Vacaville.

“Both Bishop Francis Quinn and Auxiliary Bishop Richard Garcia were very supportive of me and my work at the CMF in Vacaville which I appreciated very much.”



Bishop Francis Anthony Quinn



Auxiliary Bishop Richard Garcia

*The Sign of God's Kingdom happens when
People take the time to reach out to
A brother or sister who is in need.*



A Dying Patient at the California Medical Facility in Vacaville

THE FOURTH AND FINAL ASSIGNMENT, SONOMA DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER

After 15 years at the California Medical Facility in Vacaville, in March 1993, Father Patrick moved to the Sonoma Developmental Center close to Glen Ellen in Sonoma County. He was a chaplain there for over 20 years. This was the ministry that was always close to his heart.

Father Patrick says, “When I first arrived in Sacramento, I went to see Bishop Bell to tell him I would like to work with people who had intellectual and developmental disabilities, and with their families, since my youngest sister Geraldine was born with Downs Syndrome. Bishop Bell encouraged me to go to Sacramento State University which I did. I received a Master’s Degree in Special Education, specializing in Mental Retardation.” With this degree, Father Pat was able to be hired in 1993 and ministered at the Sonoma Developmental Center for the next twenty years.



Sonoma Developmental Center, Glen Ellen, California

FATHER PATRICK HELPS ESTABLISH CAMP ReCREATION

“I became part of a small Advisory Group, established by Sister Anne Lucey. We decided a good way to say to someone with special needs that you are loved and worthwhile, was to establish a Summer Camp for one week for them. Sister Anne Lucy, Ann Theobald and I established *Camp ReCreation* in 1983. We now have three one-week sessions every year at Camp Ronald McDonald at Eagle Lake near Susanville. Up to 120 campers participate every year.”

Father Patrick worked at Sonoma Developmental Center for over twenty years. He says: “We had over 1500 residents. I was humbled when I was given the honor of Employee of the Year in 2005. When I went to work at SDC, the previous chaplain, Monsignor Jerry Fahey, visited me to see if I would be an associate pastor at his parish, Star of the Valley Parish, in Oakmont, Santa Rosa, which is a Retirement Community. It was a great balance working at the Sonoma Developmental Center and also helping at a parish. I was part of that parish community for 28 years.”

Father Pat goes on to say, “On a personal level – thanks to Mike Carroll – I was able to play soccer on Sundays, even though my skills were limited. When I started to work in Vacaville, I began running. I ran several marathons, culminating with the Boston Marathon in 1982.”



CAMP ReCREATION PHOTOS









The Penal Cross

In the early 1980s, my brother Larry, brother-in-law Frankie, and nephew Paul, were on the farm owned by my brother in Garriskill, Streete, County Westmeath, cleaning out a chest in a barn belonging to my Grandmother, and unfortunately, throwing out all of our family history.

They came across an unusual looking Cross which my nephew immediately recognized as a Penal Cross. He had just studied about this in school. It is an authentic Penal Cross with the date of 1749 on the back.

In Penal Days in Ireland when it was illegal to offer Mass, priests would celebrate Mass in out of the way, safe locations. Mass was celebrated regularly on a part of Garriskill Bog owned by my family. It is truly a remote area, and so was safe from the British. This is a special relic for me and my family.

Father Patrick J Leslie



**Fiftieth Ordination Anniversary Mass
St Patrick Church, Placerville
Fathers Patrick Leslie, John Cantwell, and Thomas Maguire
May 3, 2019**

FATHER PAT SPEAKS OF HIS HEALTH TODAY IN HIS OWN WORDS

“I would like to add a little about my medical challenges today. I was blessed with good health until 1992. Following an old-fashioned medical test, it was discovered I had cancer in the sigmoid colon. Within 10 days, I had surgery. In January 2015, I was diagnosed with cancer on the outside wall of the rectum that had ‘invaded’ my sacrum.

“After radiation and endless chemotherapy, I had two major surgeries in 2015, one in May, and another in November. I now have a permanent colostomy and some rearrangements in the lower part of my body.

“On December 16, 2022, I was diagnosed with Parkinsons Disease. Fortunately, there is a great support system with the promise, ‘You are not alone in the journey.’ With this new adventure, I like what a person with Parkinsons wrote: ‘Life is like playing cards. These are the cards you have been dealt. Play your cards and play to win.’

“In September 2021, I returned to Sacramento to be close to the great support provided for those of us who are retired priests. I thank the Diocese of Sacramento and Louella Garcia, our Clergy Care Manager. I enjoy living at River’s Edge, an independent living facility in Sacramento.”

CONCLUDING REMARKS BY FATHER JOHN BOLL

Father Patrick Leslie has had an amazing life. As the eldest child in the family of John and Margaret Leslie, he was deeply touched by the condition of his youngest sister Geraldine who was born with Downs Syndrome. He always had a tender spot in his heart for those born with a physical handicap from birth. When Geraldine, the last-born child in the family, was born with Downs Syndrome, he wanted to help his sister and all children born with any detrimental birth defects.

Soon after his arrival in Sacramento, Patrick spoke with Bishop Bell about his desire to work with people suffering from intellectual and developmental disabilities, and Bishop Bell encouraged him to take classes at Sacramento State University. He received his Master's Degree from Sacramento State University in Special Education, specializing in Mental Retardation.

After serving as a parochial vicar in two parishes, he became chaplain at the California Medical Facility in Vacaville where he ministered to many inmates who were ill or dying. In the last 20 years of his ministry, he served youth and adults born with birth defects, showing them great love, compassion and acceptance. He was part of the leadership that established *Camp Re-Creation* where those suffering from birth defects could spend a week together and have fun.

Thank you, Father Pat, for being a great friend to the handicapped among us, showing God's love for all his children.

