

# SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

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Father John E Boll, Diocesan Archivist

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## THE DIOCESAN SYNOD OF 1929

On September 27, 1860 the Marysville Vicariate was created and established from the Diocese of San Francisco. Fr Eugene O'Connell on a three year loan to San Francisco from All Hallows Seminary in Ireland was named bishop of the Marysville Vicariate by Pope Pius IX. Eight years later on March 3, 1868 the Vicariate of Marysville had sufficient priests and people to become the Diocese of Grass Valley with Bishop O'Connell as the founding bishop of the new diocese. Eighteen years later, on May 28, 1886, Pope Leo XIII created the new Diocese of Sacramento that included the Grass Valley Diocese and the addition of 10 counties in Northern California and 8 in Nevada.

The Sacramento Diocesan Archives has many historical documents that go back to the beginning of the diocese. As we conclude Volume 2 of these articles about the life and history of the Diocese of Sacramento, I publish the following historical vignettes of the Synod of 1929 when Bishop Robert J Armstrong was bishop of Sacramento.

### Sacramento Diocesan Synod of 1929



**Bishop Robert J Armstrong**

We are familiar with what a diocesan synod is after experiencing the Third Diocesan Synod of 2004 convoked by Bishop William Weigand and held October 11-13 at St Isidore Parish in Yuba City. The Second Diocesan Synod was convoked in 1929 by Bishop Robert J Armstrong and the statutes of that synod were promulgated anew by Bishop Joseph T McGucken in 1958.

I thought you might find some of the 1929 statutes interesting and amusing in the light of our experience as priests of the twenty-first century. What follows are a few statutes that come from the 1929 Sacramento Diocesan Synod:

### SECTION: LIFE OF THE CLERGY

- 10 Except when engaged in parish duties, or for a similar legitimate reason, no priest shall be away from his presbytery or other assigned residence after eleven o'clock at night.
- 11 Each priest is allowed one free day each week. Let him remember, however, that if he makes a practice of being any oftener away from his parish for the greater part of the day, he is by no means doing his duty.

- 12 Each year within the first five years after his ordination every secular priest shall submit to and pass a written examination in the sacred sciences.
- 13 The younger priests of this diocese, that is, those who have not been ordained more than five years, are required to apply themselves to a serious study of the Spanish language.
- 15 In accordance with the rule of Canon 140 and the decree of the Consistorial Congregation (1916), We declare that all priests are forbidden to promote dances, even for a praiseworthy object, or even to be present at dances promoted by the laity.
- 16 Priests shall not enter taverns, hotel bars or similar public places where intoxicating drinks are sold, except to transact business, or to eat while on a journey; but even in those exceptional cases danger of scandal must be guarded against.
- 20 In conformity with Canon 124, We strictly forbid pastors to have their housekeeper or cook eat with them at the same table or, where there is a curate, to have young female relatives in the presbytery without Our permission; furthermore, We forbid any priest to ride alone in an automobile with a person of the opposite sex, except in circumstances which preclude danger of scandal.

**SECTION: CHURCH PROPERTY**

- 99 Pastors are allowed an annual salary of \$1,500.00; curates \$1,020.00. If the income of the parish is not sufficient for this, the respective salaries shall be proportionately reduced.
- 100 All current bills must be paid before the pastor and curate may draw their salaries. If a priest neglects to take or demand his salary within the year, he forfeits all right to it. Under such circumstances, he should consult Us.

- 106 Offerings on the occasion of various ministrations shall be as follows:

Mass Stipends

Ordinary low Mass	\$2.00
Legacy low Mass	\$3.00
Low Mass on appointed day	\$2.50
Anniversary low Mass	\$3.00
Nuptial low Mass	\$5.00
High Mass	\$15.00
Solemn Mass	\$35.00
Funeral low Mass	\$20.00
Funeral high Mass	\$30.00
Funeral Solemn Mass	\$50.00

Funeral services without Mass

\$15.00

Funeral services, including Mass, shall be given to the poor gratis.

This is a small slice of the statutes of the Church of Sacramento in 1929. Are you glad to be living in 2014?

Father John Boll, Diocesan Archivist