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WAS THE CATHEDRAL FOR SALE? An Almost in 1923

By Eleanor Doyle, printed in the February 1968 issue of the *Catholic Herald*

The small word, "if" looms large in the history of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, whose future refurbishment is one of the goals of the Bishop's Development Fund V Campaign. Therein lies a tale which is practically forgotten by old timers who have followed the saga of the edifice for many decades.

If the third bishop of Sacramento, Patrick J. Keane, had sold the property, as was proposed in the year 1923, what would be the current status of the diocesan mother church? Actually, it almost happened. Here is what took place.

At that point in time, diocesan finances reflected the slump following World War I, and available funds were in desperately short supply. A real estate man negotiated with Bishop Keane, suggesting he could raise one million dollars for the downtown Cathedral property which encompassed a full half block.

The bishop gave strong consideration to the idea, determining that a new cathedral could possibly be constructed for one quarter of that sum, leaving a munificent balance for diocesan needs. It was a time of minimal building costs.

However, the news soon made the rounds and there was a tremendous backlash among old Catholic families, whose personal stance was one of great affection where the cathedral was concerned.

Whether their vociferous objections would have influenced the actual outcome will never be known, for the realtor was unable to come up with the stated purchase price and the status quo remained undisturbed.

There was one diminishment of cathedral property, however. Bishop Keane did sell that portion, at the corner of 12th and K, where the original rectory stood. Presumably, it was a profitable venture, for it called for a new priests' residence which was built on 11th Street.

Still inscribed above the entrance are the words, *Cathedral Presbytery*, a term little used today in favor of the word *rectory*. The year was 1924.

While new quarters were under construction, the bishop and his staff of priests took up residence in a flat at 1012 H Street.



Photo by John E Boll 2012

Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament