

SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

Vol 5

Father John E Boll, Diocesan Archives

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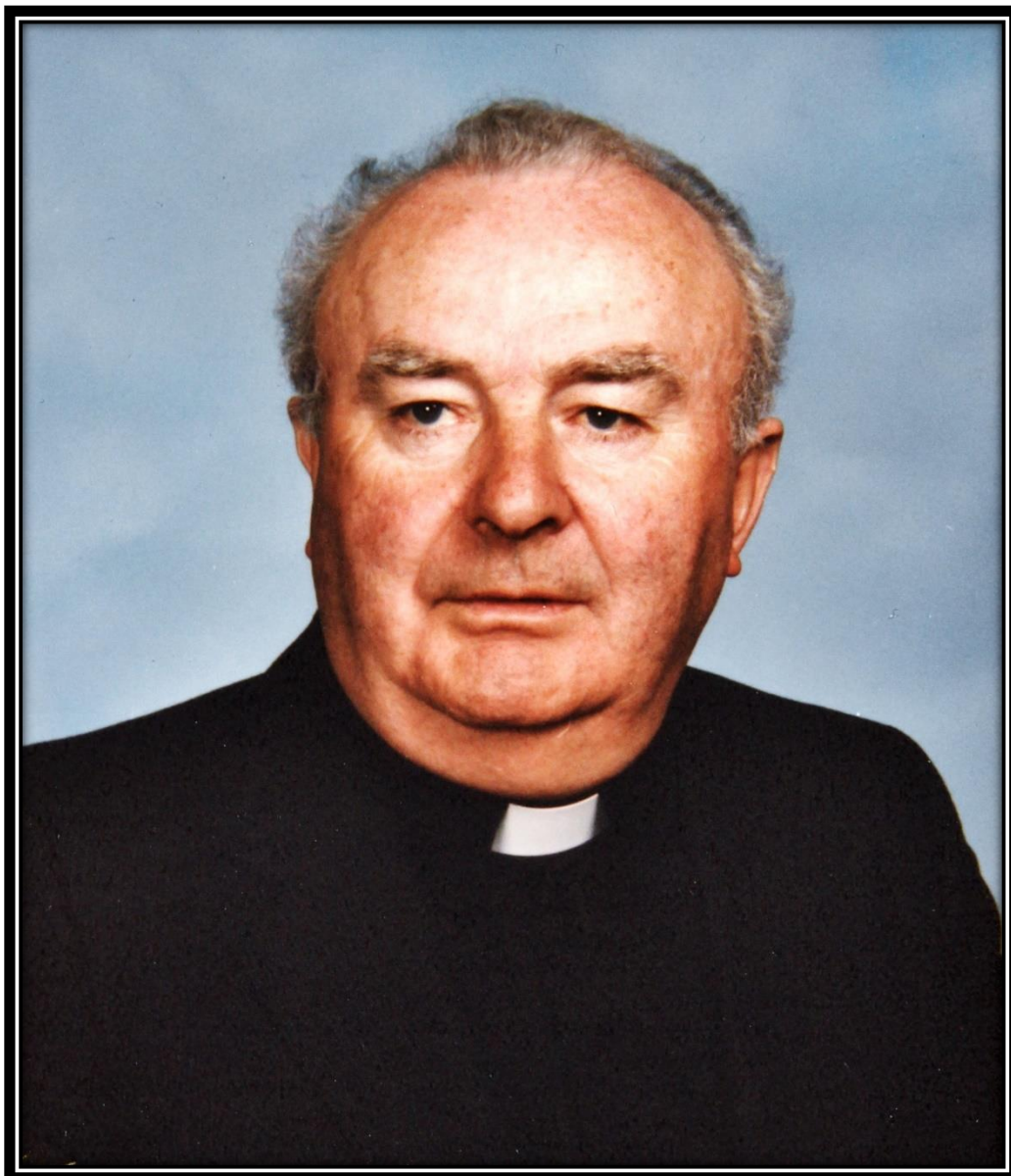
Father Patrick Joseph Lanigan

Native Son of Thurles, County Tipperary, Ireland

Priest of the Diocese of Sacramento

Pastor Emeritus of Holy Spirit Parish, Fairfield, California

April 22, 1925 – May 16, 2006



Patrick Joseph Lanigan was born on April 22, 1925 in Thurles, County Tipperary, Ireland to William Lanigan and Mary Treacy. He was baptized a week later in the parish church of Gortnahoe, Thurles, County Tipperary.

BEGINNING OF HIS EDUCATION

Patrick attended elementary school at Ballysloe National School in County Tipperary from 1928 to 1937. He then matriculated to Christian Brothers School, Thurles, from 1939 to 1942. He began his theological training at Saint Patrick College, Thurles, in 1944 and completed his studies in 1951.



Saint Patrick College, Thurles, Ireland

ORDAINED A PRIEST FOR SACRAMENTO

Pat was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Sacramento on September 16, 1951 at the Thurles Cathedral by Archbishop Jeremiah Kinane, Archbishop of Cashel and Emily. After his ordination, he spent some time with his family and then set sail westward on his journey to Sacramento.

YEARS AS PAROCHIAL VICAR

After arriving in Sacramento, Father Lanigan's was appointed assistant priest to Saint Patrick Church in Angels Camp where he served from April 1952 to March 1956.

His next assignment was to Holy Spirit Church in Sacramento as assistant priest to Father Patrick McHugh from March 1956 to March 1959.



Photo from the Holy Spirit Parish Archives

Holy Spirit Church in the 1950s



Father Lanigan's third assignment as assistant was to Saint Joseph Parish in Marysville where he served from March 1959 to September 1965. This appointment would be his last as an assistant priest.

FIRST PASTORATE, DUNSMUIR

Father Pat was appointed to his first pastorate at Saint John Parish in Dunsmuir where he served from September 9, 1965 to October 30, 1973. This is a mountain parish nine miles south of Mount Shasta. Dunsmuir is wedged in a narrow gap between the mountains and often received a lot of snow in the wintertime. No doubt he had to shovel his share of snow during the eight winters he was pastor there.

Photo during Father Pat's Holy Spirit years. Monsignor McHugh is standing with Fathers Tom Farrell (L) and Pat Lanigan (R) seated

MAT PROGRAM

Father Pat was ordained 11 years before the beginning of the Second Vatican Council which was convoked by Pope John XXIII in 1959 and held from 1962-1965. When the USF Extension Masters of Arts in Teaching program was offered to the priests and sisters of the Diocese of Sacramento through the tireless efforts of Father Pat McGrath, Father Lanigan was one of the first to sign up for this two year program.

Of the 35 priests and 10 religious sisters of the diocese who did signed up for the master's program and attended the weekly classes from February 1972 to December 1973, Father Lanigan was the priest who traveled the farthest each week driving from Dunsmuir to the Sacramento Newman Center, a distance of 400 miles round trip. But Father Pat thoroughly enjoyed the classes and felt the sacrifices he had to make were well worth the education he received from the master's program.

As a result of his master's degree he earned through this extension program from the University of San Francisco, Father Pat was later able to teach a course at the Solano Community College in Fairfield during his pastorate there.

NAMED PASTOR OF CHICO

After eight years as pastor of Dunsmuir, Father Lanigan was named pastor of Saint John the Baptist Parish in Chico where he served from October 30, 1973 to May 18, 1976.



Photo by John E Boll

Saint John the Baptist Church, Chico, CA

PASTOR OF HOLY SPIRIT PARISH, FAIRFIELD

Father Pat's last pastorate was Holy Spirit Parish in Fairfield where he served from 1976 until his retirement in 1995. When he arrived in Fairfield, he said "it was already a marvelous parish and unique because the people were very committed." He went on to said, "I just happened to be here during the years when so much renewal took place."

Many parishioners during his tenure became involved in the charismatic renewal and prayer groups which Father Lanigan always encouraged. Many of the prayer groups are still active in the parish.

Father Michael Downey who served as assistant to Father Lanigan says, "Father Pat gave people a great deal of freedom to start things which nurtured their own spirituality. He gave them freedom because he always felt they were mature in their faith."



Photo by John E Boll

Holy Spirit Church, Fairfield, CA

As a surprise to Father Lanigan, parishioners named the new parish center for him when it was dedicated in January 1994. The dedication plaque reads: “Father Lanigan, loving pastor and sincere friend, whose courage led us from the dream to the reality of our parish center.”

PARISH WEEKEND RENEWAL PROGRAM

During his pastorate in Fairfield, Father Pat initiated the Parish Renewal Program which was created by Father Chuck Gallagher, SJ. This program was a weekend parish renewal based on the Cursillo movement weekend.

As pastor of the parish, Father Lanigan had to participate in a week’s training with Fr Gallagher and the following week after he returned to the parish he spoke at all the weekend Masses to encourage parishioners to experience the program as he did during his week of his training. This program renewed both Father Pat and all parishioners who experienced the program with him.



Photo by John E Boll

Holy Spirit Community Center

As the ethnic makeup of the parish changed, Father Lanigan worked to help make all people welcome in the parish. “We are an international church,” he told The Herald in 1995, noting that he was proud of Holy Spirit’s large Latino and Filipino Catholic communities.

Father Lanigan retired from parish ministry in 1995 and moved to his own home that he purchased in the Fairfield area. He enjoyed his retirement years very much.

PARISHIONERS’ REMEMBRANCES

Parishioner Bob King knew Father Lanigan since 1980. They played golf together every week after he retired. He said Father Lanigan was “as kind a man as you could ever imagine and a fine golfer. He had patience, kindness and intelligence,” King said. “He was very bright and well-read and could quote Shakespeare and poetry at the drop of a hat. He would be on the golf course and he would quote Shakespeare and made you feel peaceful.”

FATHER LANIGAN’S JOURNEY

On the 50th anniversary of his ordination in 2001, Father Lanigan wrote in The Herald that although many demands were placed on him as a priest and he encountered “some bumps along the road,” on the whole, “these were good years, they were happy years. My good priest friends

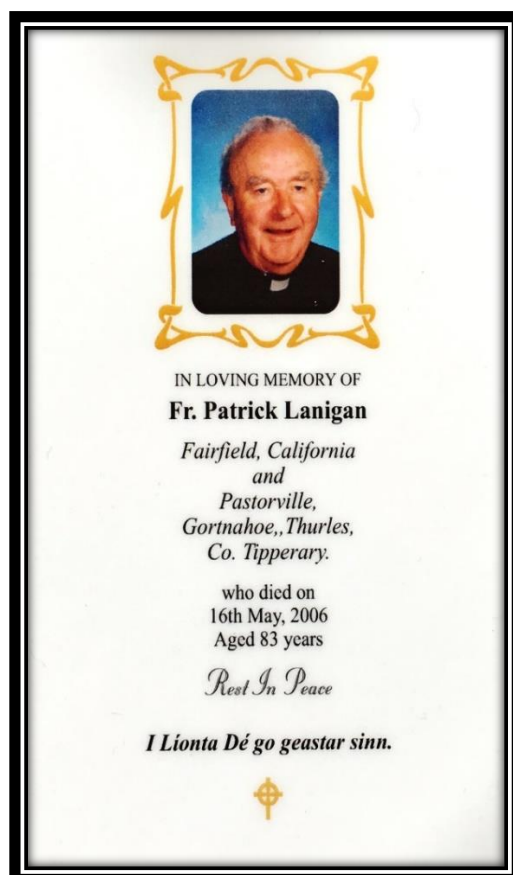
were a tremendous encouragement to me,” he said. “I am grateful to them and to the good people of God. The faith of parishioners was a great inspiration to me.”

OVERCOME BY ILLNESS IN IRELAND

In early 2006, Father Lanigan’s brother died in Ireland and he flew to Ireland to celebrate his brother’s funeral. While there Father Pat was diagnosed with cancer. He underwent surgery but during his recuperation he died on May 16, 2006 in his native Thurles, County Tipperary, at the age of 83. A Funeral Mass was celebrated for him in Ireland and he was buried in County Tipperary, the land of his birth.

Father Michael Downey, who succeeded Father Lanigan as pastor of Holy Spirit, celebrated the Memorial Mass for Father Lanigan at Holy Spirit Church in Fairfield on May 22, 2006 together with Auxiliary Bishop Richard J Garcia, Bishop Emeritus Francis A Quinn, many priests of the diocese and the parishioners and friends of Holy Spirit Parish.

In his homily, Father Downey recalled memories of his friend of many years. He had served as associate pastor under Father Lanigan from 1983 to 1989 and the two remained close friends while Father Lanigan lived in Fairfield during his retirement. “This was a man who had a lot of energy and a great passion for the church,” Father Downey said. “He adapted well to the changes that took place in the church during his priesthood. He loved people, regardless of who they were or where they came from. That really helped him to be an effective pastor.”





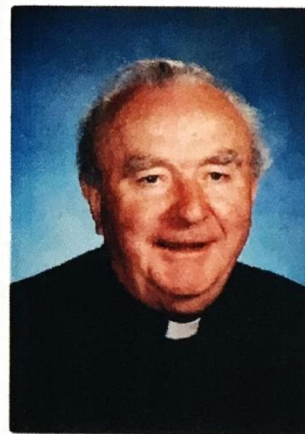
Pastorville
Gortnahoe
Thurles
Co. Tipperary

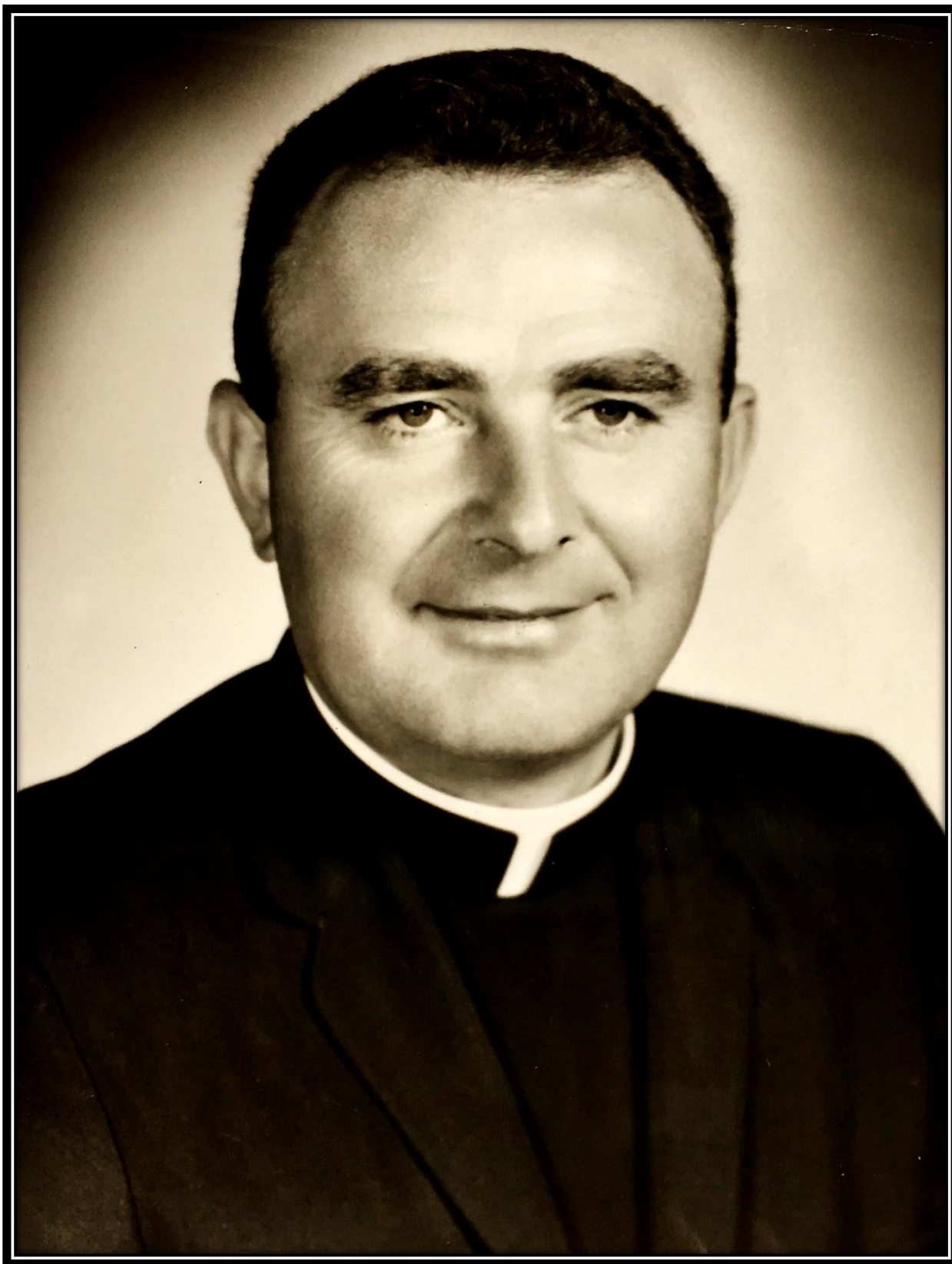
Fr. Pat Lanigan R.I.P.
22nd April 1923 – 16th May 2006

Mary, Liam and Anna,
sister, brother and sister-in-law
together with his nieces & nephews
would like to thank you most sincerely
for your kind expression of sympathy
on the sad loss of Fr. Pat.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass
has been offered for your intentions.

*Your life was one of kindly deeds,
A helping hand for others' needs,
Sincere and true in heart and mind,
Beautiful memories left behind.*





Father Patrick Joseph Lanigan