

SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

Vol 5

Father John E Boll

No 86

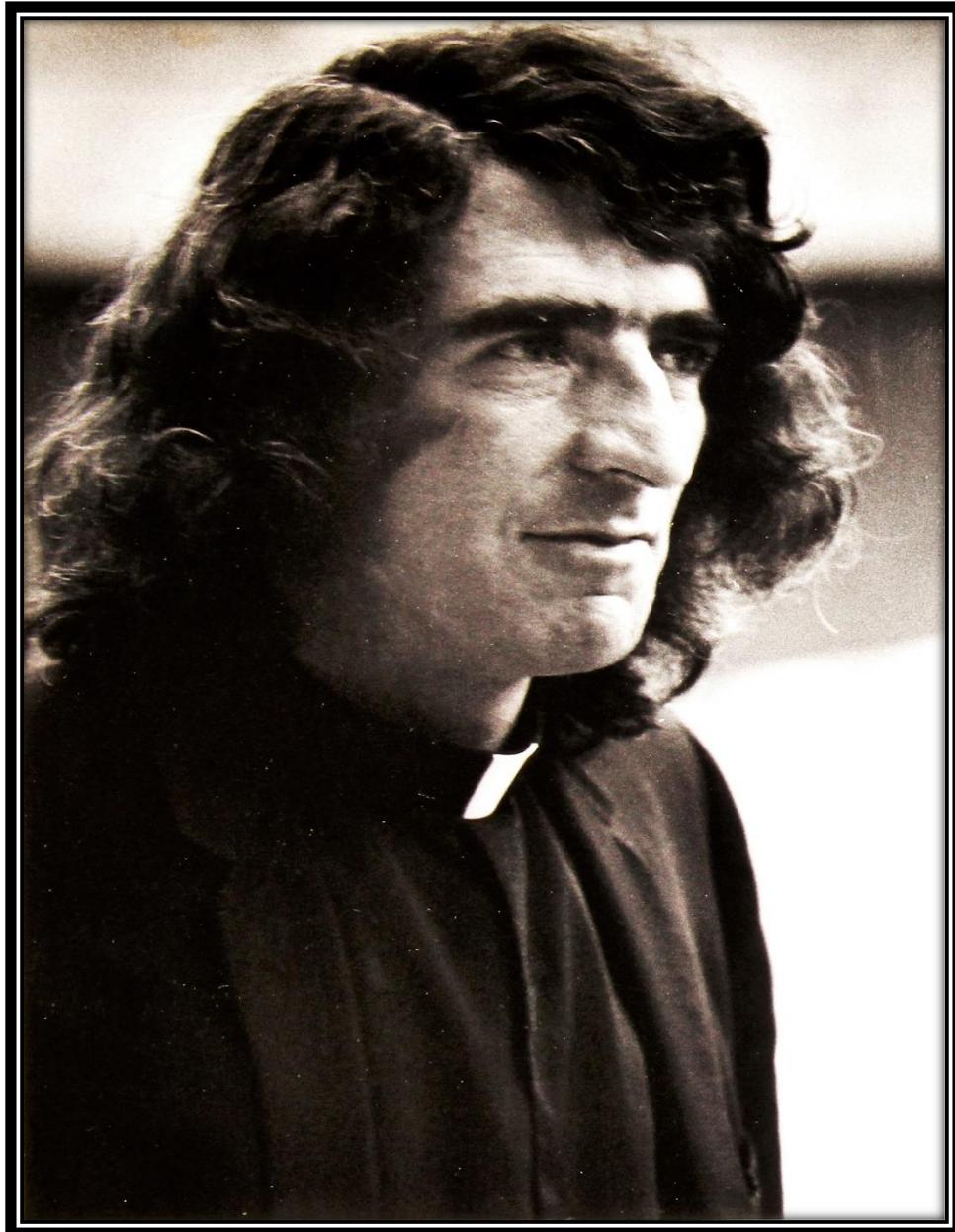
Father Sean Kevin Carrigy

Native of Garriskill, Streete, County Westmeath, Ireland

Priest of the Diocese of Sacramento

Parochial Vicar of Saint Catherine of Siena Parish, Vallejo

November 29, 1938 – December 24, 1978



Sean Kevin Carrigy was born on November 29, 1938 to Bernard Carrigy and Mary Reilly in Garriskill, Streete, County Westmeath, Ireland. He was baptized on December 4, 1938 at Saint Mary Church, Boherquill, County Westmeath, Ireland. Sean had one sister, Nancy, and three brothers, Noel, Tommy and Matty. Sean and his brother Tommy were the best of friends as they grew up in the family.

SEAN BEGINS SCHOOL

At the age of four, Sean began primary school in September 1942 at Rath School in Streete, County Westmeath, until June 1952. He then transferred to Saint Mary's Christian Brothers School in Mullingar, County Westmeath, from 1952 to 1957. During his five years in secondary school, Sean went by bicycle in all kinds of weather the 12 miles each way to attend classes at Christian Brothers School in Mullingar. After graduating from secondary school, he decided to enter Saint Patrick Seminary in Carlow.



Photo of Carlow Seminary is taken from the Web

Saint Patrick Seminary, Carlow, Ireland

SEAN ENTERS SAINT PATRICK SEMINARY, CARLOW

In September 1957, Sean entered Saint Patrick Seminary in Carlow to begin his theological studies. He chose Sacramento probably because his good friend Ned O'Hara who attended All Hallows Seminary in Dublin was preparing for ministry in Sacramento as well. Sean was incardinated in the Diocese of Sacramento in June 1960.

After six years of study at Carlow, Sean was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Sacramento by Bishop Thomas Keogh on June 8, 1963 at the age of 25. After his ordination, he spent time with his family in Garriskill until it was time for him to leave his native land of Ireland and begin the long journey westward to his new diocese in Sacramento.

Fathers Sean Carrigy and Pat Leslie were cousins and lived close to one another. Sean had a great influence on Pat, encouraging him to consider becoming a priest. Pat says Sean was always a very kind and gentle person. Sean became a very good Irish football player for his home team. Pat says that Sean was happy in priestly ministry in the Diocese of Sacramento. Because of Sean's influence, Pat Leslie entered the seminary and also became a priest of the Diocese of Sacramento.

FIRST ASSIGNMENT, SAINT JOSEPH PARISH, MARYSVILLE

Bishop Alden John J Bell was the bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento when Father Carrigy arrived in Sacramento. Father Sean's first appointment was to Saint Joseph Parish in Marysville to assist Father Patrick Donnelly who was pastor. Father Sean served the Marysville parish from September 17, 1963 to September 13, 1966.



Photo by John E Boll

Saint Joseph Church, Marysville

SECOND ASSIGNMENT, WILLOWS

After serving the Marysville community for three years, Father Sean was next assigned to Saint Monica Parish in Willows to assist Father John McGoldrick who was pastor. Father Sean served the Saint Monica community in Willows for six years, from September 13, 1966 to September 26, 1972. Because of his kind and gentle personality, Father Sean was able to help many of the youth in the parishes where he served.



Photo by John E Boll

Saint Monica Church, Willows

THIRD ASSIGNMENT, SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA, VALLEJO

Father Sean's last assignment was as assistant pastor of Saint Catherine of Siena Parish in Vallejo. His assignment in Vallejo began on September 26, 1972. Father Sean was ordained a year before Saint Catherine Parish was established. The pastor of the parish when Father Sean arrived was Father William J McLaughlin. The following year on December 20, 1973, Father McLaughlin died. In early 1974, Bishop Bell assigned Father Daniel Cullinan as the next pastor of Saint Catherine Parish in Vallejo.

FATHER SEAN TAKES A LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The change in pastors was difficult for Father Sean because he and Father Cullinan were very different personalities. Father Carrigy continued serving Saint Catherine Parish until January 9, 1978 when he was granted a leave of absence by Bishop Bell. Father Sean's leave of absence was for one year, from January 9, 1978 to December 24, 1978.



Photo by John E Boll

The Original Saint Catherine of Siena Church in Vallejo



Photo from the Diocesan Archives

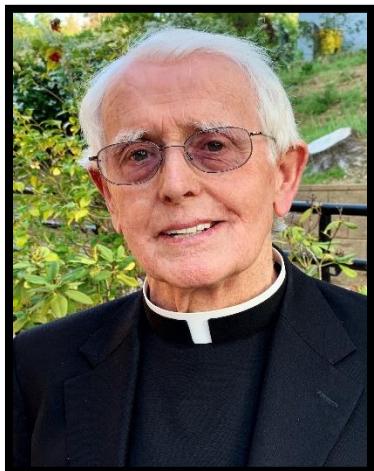
Father Sean Enjoyed Spending Time with the Youth of the Parish

Father Sean began working in the building industry in the San Francisco Bay Area to support himself. Father Ned O'Hara was a very close friend of Sean and on Christmas Eve in 1978, Sean was driving north on Interstate 5 heading to Divine Savior Parish in Chico to spend Christmas with Father Ned. As Sean was driving north, his car was struck head-on by a driver going the wrong way on a freeway off ramp on Interstate 5, two miles north of the Colusa-Yolo County line. When the two cars collided, Father Sean Carrigy was tragically and instantly killed in the accident at the age of 40.

FUNERAL FOR FATHER CARRIGY

Bishop Alden J Bell and 110 priests of the diocese concelebrated the Funeral Mass for Father Sean Kevin Carrigy at noon on Thursday, December 28, 1978, in Saint Catherine Church in Vallejo.

After the Funeral Mass, the body of Father Carrigy was taken to Ireland where a Mass was celebrated for him at his home parish in Garriskill, County Westmeath, Ireland. Father Edward O'Hara accompanied Father Carrigy's body to Ireland.



Father Patrick Leslie, Father Sean's cousin, planned to accompany Father O'Hara on the trip to Ireland with the body of Father Sean, but because he had not become a US citizen yet, he immediately applied for US citizenship which was granted the next day. He flew to Ireland immediately and arrived in Garriskill a half hour before the Funeral Mass was scheduled to begin. Father Patrick presided at the Mass and Father Ned O'Hara concelebrated the Mass with him.

Father Sean was buried in the cemetery in Edgewortstown on Saturday, December 30, 1978, after the Funeral Mass.

Father Patrick Leslie

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Sean Kevin Carrigy was an amazing man. As a youth, he rode his bicycle to secondary school every school day for the five years he attended Christian Brothers School in Mullingar which was twelve miles away from his home in Garriskill. So, every day, Sean rode his bike 24 miles, 12-miles to Mullingar and 12 miles back to Garriskill. In his youth, he loved to play Irish football for his home team and he became a very good football player.

As a young priest in the Diocese of Sacramento, Father Sean saw the need to develop his skills in counseling so he took a Master's course in Marriage, Family and Child Counseling at the University of San Francisco and received his Master's Degree in 1977. At the time of his tragic death, Father Sean was working with the Catholic Social Services in Butte, Yuba and Sutter Counties. He also served as a member of the Diocesan Priests Personnel Board from January 1976 to January 1978.

For those who knew him, Father Sean was a very kind and gentle man. He enjoyed accompanying parishioners on their life's journey and helping them deal with the struggles of family life and uncertainties of life.

Father Sean's sudden and tragic death at the age of 40 on the I-5 Freeway was a terrible shock and loss to the Church of Sacramento. When Sean's body arrived home in Ireland, his mother Mary desperately wanted to see her son but because Sean had died in a fiery crash, the funeral directors would not open the casket. This was a very painful moment for Mary Carrigy and her other children.

The Church of Sacramento was blessed to have Father Sean as a priest and friend in the diocese for 15 years. He touched the lives of many in Marysville, Willows and Vallejo as well as all those he counseled as a professional counselor.

Only God sees the big picture of reality, and as Saint Paul reminds us, "We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28) May we also remember the words of Preface I for the Dead which says:

"In him, (Jesus), the hope of blessed resurrection has dawned, that those saddened by the certainty of dying might be consoled by the promise of immortality to come. Indeed, for your faithful, Lord, life is changed, not ended, and when this earthly dwelling turns to dust, an eternal dwelling is made ready for them in heaven."



Photo by Paul McGivern

Memorial at Gravesite in Ireland from Friends of Father Sean in San Francisco



Photo by Paul McGivern

Headstone of the Carrigy Family in Edgewortstown, Ireland

*Lord, You have created each of us
special and unique to live with
You forever in the light of
your glorious presence.*

*You called Father Sean Carrigy
home on Christmas Eve in 1978.*

*May Sean be fully alive in Your
glorious presence and enjoy the
fullness of life forever in the
Kingdom of Heaven.*

Amen