



+ ARCHBISHOP JOSEPH THOMAS MCGUCKEN

Priest of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles – San Diego 1928 - 1941
Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles 1941 – 1955
Co-adjutor Bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento 1955 - 1957
Fifth Bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento 1957 - 1962
Fifth Archbishop of the Archdiocese of San Francisco 1962 - 1977
1902 – 1983

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Fr John E Boll, Diocesan Archivist

Joseph Thomas McGucken was born on March 13, 1902 in Los Angeles to Joseph A. and Mary Agnes (Flynn) McGucken. He attended the Polytechnic High School in his native city and went on to study engineering at the University of California, Los Angeles for two years before beginning his studies for the priesthood at Saint Patrick Seminary in Menlo Park. He was sent to the Pontifical North American College in Rome for theology where he earned a Doctor of Divinity degree in 1928. He was ordained a priest in Rome on January 15, 1928 for the Diocese of Los Angeles – San Diego.

Following his return to Los Angeles, he served as secretary to Archbishop John Joseph Cantwell from 1929 to 1938. He was named a papal chamberlain by Pope Pius XI in 1937 and served as chancellor of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles from 1938 to 1948. He was named a domestic prelate in 1939 by Pope Pius XII. On February 4, 1941, Monsignor McGucken was appointed auxiliary bishop of Los Angeles and Titular Bishop of *Sanavus* by Pius XII. He received episcopal ordination on the following March 19 from Archbishop John J Cantwell, with Bishops Daniel James Gercke and Philip George Scher as co-consecrators. In addition to his episcopal duties, he served as pastor of Saint Andrew Church in Pasadena from 1944-55 and Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles from 1948-55.

After 27 years of priestly ministry in Los Angeles, Pope Pius XII appointed Bishop McGucken co-adjutor bishop of Sacramento in October 1955. Saint Andrew parish gave Bishop McGucken a gala farewell celebration at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium with a performance by Irish tenor Dennis Day, several choirs and an Army color guard.

Bishop McGucken served as co-adjutor bishop in Sacramento from 1955-57 and when Bishop Armstrong died on January 14, 1957, Pope Pius XII appointed Bishop McGucken as bishop of Sacramento. He served as Sacramento's ordinary for only five years until 1962 but during those five years he either authorized or approved the development of nine parishes, three high schools, 33 new church buildings and moved the St Pius X Diocesan Seminary from Rio Dell in Humboldt County to new seminary facilities in Galt.

After the death of Archbishop John J Mitty of San Francisco in 1961, Pope John XXIII divided the Archdiocese of San Francisco and in early 1962 creating the Dioceses of Oakland, Stockton and Santa Rosa. Bishop McGucken's North American College classmate Floyd L. Begin, auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Cleveland, Ohio was named the founding bishop of Oakland by Pope John XXIII. Auxiliary bishop Hugh A Donohoe of San Francisco was appointed the founding Bishop of the new Diocese of Stockton. San Francisco archdiocesan chancellor Monsignor Leo T. Maher was named a bishop and appointed the founding bishop of the newly created Diocese of Santa Rosa.

In February 1962, Bishop McGucken was appointed Archbishop of San Francisco and installed on April 3 that same year. He served as Archbishop of San Francisco for 15 years until his retirement in 1977. During his first year as archbishop, St. Mary Cathedral, built in 1891, was destroyed by fire. Archbishop McGucken gathered his consultants to begin the process of planning and constructing a new cathedral for San Francisco.

Architectural critic Allen Temko advocated a bold, new cathedral that would reflect San Francisco's status as a major international urban center. Archbishop McGucken added two internationally known architects to his team, Italian-born Pietro Belluschi, Dean of the School of Architecture of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who was placed in charge of designs, and Pier-Luigi Nervi, an engineering genius from Rome, who took over structural concerns. Archbishop McGucken was in Rome for the Second Vatican Council while the new cathedral was designed.

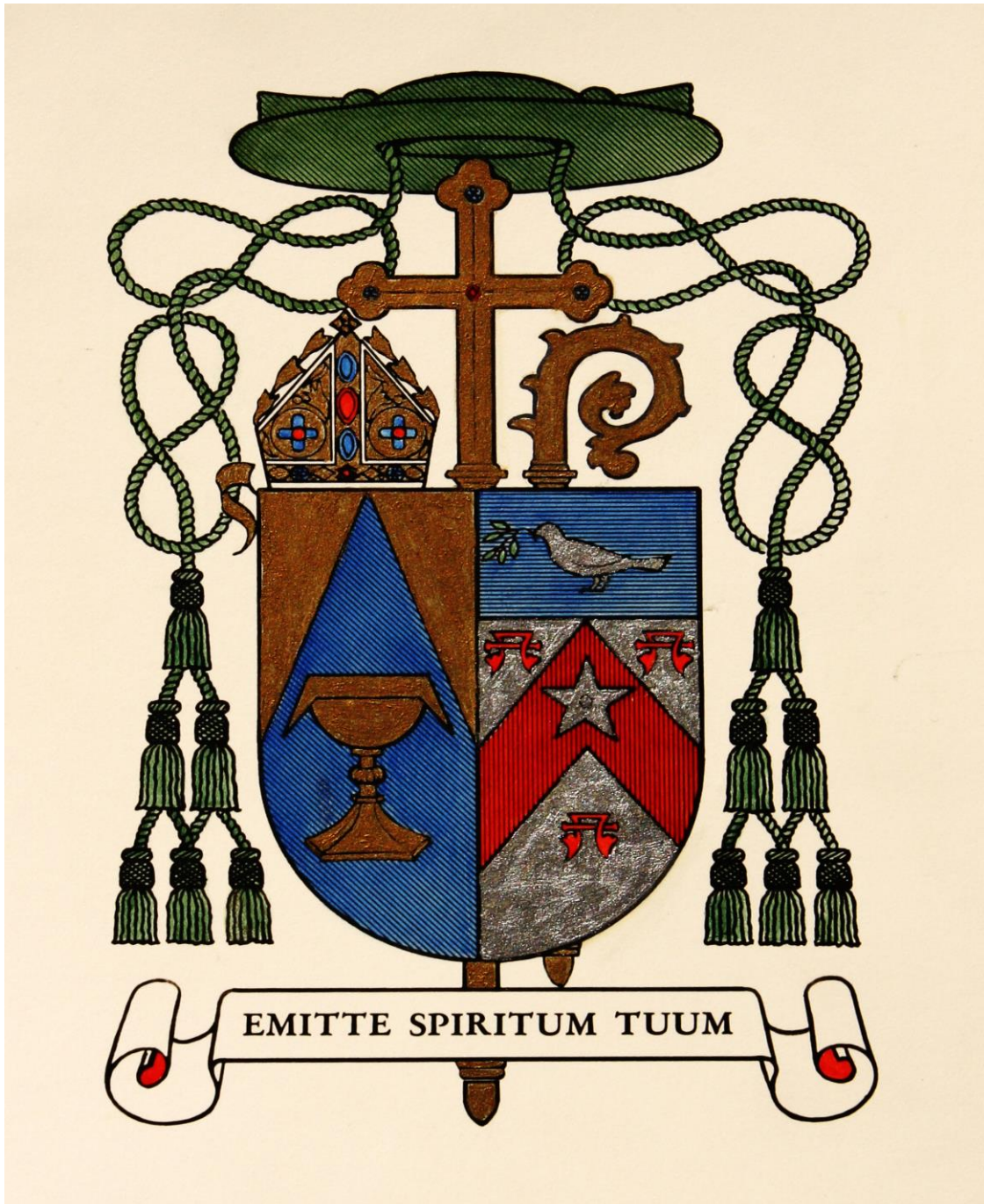
The strikingly modern design which was presented received high praise and has been called the "first cathedral truly of our time and in harmony with the liturgical reforms of the Council." Some gave the new cathedral the nicknames "Our Lady Maytag" or "McGucken's Maytag" due to the structure's uncanny resemblance to a washing machine agitator.

In 1966, Archbishop McGucken publicly voiced his support for the efforts of Cesar Chávez to organize farmworkers in California's vineyards, leading one vineyard spokesman to warn that "the Church leaders had better start looking for other financial means to carry out their radical theories."

Upon his retirement in 1977, Archbishop McGucken was given the title of Archbishop Emeritus of San Francisco. He died six years later on October 6, 1983 at the age of 81. His Funeral Mass was held in the beautiful Saint Mary Cathedral on Van Ness and Gough Streets that he commissioned to be built. He was buried in the Archbishops' Crypt at Holy Cross Cemetery in Colma.

Although Archbishop McGucken served only six years as Bishop of Sacramento, he participated in the ongoing growth and development of the diocese. He was instrumental in securing a gift of land in the outskirts of Galt where the diocesan minor seminary was relocated. As a seminarian of the diocese, I attended Saint Pius X Seminary both in Rio Dell and Galt and was present at the dedication of the new seminary in Galt in 1961.

Joseph Thomas McGucken served the Catholic communities of northern and southern California well. May he now rest from his many labors and enjoy his new life in the Kingdom of Heaven.



From the Diocesan Archives

Archbishop Joseph Thomas McGucken's Coat of Arms

"Send Forth Your Spirit"