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FATHER PATRICK MANOGUE The Busy Pastor of Virginia City

By Father John Dwyer, printed in the September 2, 1976 issue of the *Catholic Herald*

The heart of Patrick Manogue was keenly sensitive to those children he found who were like himself orphaned by the accidents in the mines or by the hardships of pioneer living. Within two years after his arrival in Virginia City he had succeeded in obtaining Sisters of Charity to come and establish a school and orphanage. To prepare for this, Father Manogue built a frame building on H Street. The new orphanage opened on January 8, 1864, with Sister Fredrica McGrath and two other Sisters in charge. Their school opened on October 17, 1864. In the following year Father Manogue built a new building three stories high to accommodate the growing number of orphans and pupils in the school. He did this even though Virginia City was in the midst of a depression between 1865 and 1868. (No photographs of this orphanage and school have been uncovered to date).

In 1868 Father Manogue decided that the first church was inadequate for the needs of the community and he set out to build a new one of brick, which when completed was considered one of the finest in the west. The cost was \$65,000.



Picture from the Diocesan Archives

In the same year the Vicariate of Marysville was raised to the status of a diocese with Grass Valley as the See City. Bishop O'Connell immediately appointed two vicars general, Father Dalton of Grass Valley for California, and Father Manogue of Virginia City for Nevada. When Bishop O'Connell was away in Rome during 1869 for the First Vatican Council, it was these two who took care of the diocese in his absence. Virginia City improved in the period between 1873 and 1883. Father Manogue built another addition to the school in 1873. Then in 1875 he undertook the building of a hospital to be staffed by the Sisters of Charity.

Assisted by the ever generous Mr. and Mrs. John MacKay of the famous Silver Kings – Fair, Flood, MacKay and O'Brien – a former garden site was donated on Union Street and a brick hospital (which still stands) capable of caring for 50 patients was erected. By the time it received its first patient on March 15, 1876, it had cost \$45,000 for both building and equipment. That first year the hospital served 144 patients and in 1877 there were 176 patients. In its 72 years of existence the hospital served 1,531 patients.

While the hospital was under construction, a tragic fire devastated Virginia City. The orphanage and the hospital, since they were on the edge of the city, were spared but the beautiful St Mary's in the Mountains was a victim of the fire. Once again Father Manogue set out to rebuild. The walls, although intact from the fire were lowered to the window level and new gothic windows were installed and the church rebuilt in all its splendor at a cost of \$60,000. It was dedicated in August 1877 with the famous Father Bouchard, SJ preaching the dedication sermon.

But Father Manogue's days in Virginia City were now numbered. Bishop O'Connell was wearing out and was beseeching Rome to appoint a coadjutor bishop. On October 29, 1880, Rome chose Father Manogue for this post, to the great joy of the clergy of the diocese among whom he was the popular choice. His consecration as bishop took place in (Old) St Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco on January 16, 1881, with Archbishop Alemany as consecrator and Bishops O'Connell and Mora (Monterey) as assistants.

Since he could no longer be pastor of Virginia City, Father Daniel O'Sullivan was chosen to succeed him. Bishop Manogue's confirmation tour in 1882 took him over the same territory that used to be his mission. Accompanied by Father William Moloney, the two in horse and buggy, covered 600 miles before ending the tour in eastern Nevada where the bishop boarded the train to return to Virginia City.

When Bishop O'Connell's resignation was accepted by Rome on Marcy 17, 1884, Bishop Manogue automatically became the second bishop of Grass Valley. He then left Virginia City and Grass Valley became his principal residence for the next two years. He had meanwhile been carrying on negotiations with Archbishop Alemany and with Rome to have the city of Sacramento transferred to the diocese as it lacked any principal city. Finally on May 16, 1886, Rome changed the boundaries and made Sacramento the new See City. By September 1886, the official papers had arrived, the public announcement was made, and Patrick Manogue began to sign himself as Bishop of Sacramento.



Photo from the Diocesan Archives

Bishop Patrick Manogue
Founding Bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento in 1886
1831 - 1895