

# SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

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## BISHOP ROBERT ARMSTRONG IS HONORED AT PONTIFICAL HIGH MASS FOR 25 YEARS SERVICE IN THE DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

By E Lyons, printed in the April 28, 1954 issue of *The Sacramento Bee*

A quarter of a century of service by Bishop Robert J Armstrong as head of the Diocese of Sacramento was acknowledged today with age old sacred ritual of the Catholic Church in the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament. Men, women and children of all walks of life assembled in the edifice at 11<sup>th</sup> and K Streets to assist at the Solemn Pontifical High Mass and pay tribute to the humble priest who 25 years ago was elevated to the bishopric.

Bishop Armstrong was the celebrant of the Silver Jubilee Mass. Adding to the significance of the occasion was the presence of James Francis Cardinal McIntyre of Los Angeles, who presided during the solemn ceremony.



Photo from Diocesan Archives

### Bishop Armstrong's Silver Jubilee as Bishop of Sacramento in 1954

#### Assisting at the Altar

Also assisting at the altar were archbishops, bishops, monsignori and other high ranking dignitaries of the Catholic Church in the western United States.

In the congregation of witnesses were clergy and religious of the diocese; state, county and city officials; business, civic and fraternal leaders; persons of means and the poor, all friends of the mild mannered bishop who has served them equally and patiently since his arrival here in 1929.

### **Sermon by Bishop Hunt**

Bishop Duane G Hunt of Salt Lake City in his sermon summed it thusly: "The honor belongs to the office and it is indeed superlative. But for the man there is only the added burden of responsibility, the inevitable loneliness and isolation and, how often, the crushing sense of inadequacy."

Bishop Hunt reviewed the growth of California and the Sacramento diocese during Bishop Armstrong's tenure of the last 25 years. "The story of these last 25 years in Sacramento," he said, "is characteristic of the State of California and other Pacific Coast states. It is a story that will be told and retold for generations to come, one of unparalleled growth and expansion, of tremendous progress for the church."

### **Unusual Problems**

"To the bishop of Sacramento, as to the other bishops of this region, the years have presented unusual problems. But they have been problems of health, not illness; problems of growth, not of decline; problems overwhelming at times but filled with the thrill of expectancy and hope and visions of the future.

"In Sacramento, as elsewhere, the record tells of new parishes, new missions and new institutions. The number of parochial schools has been doubled, with an enrollment multiplied four times. The Catholic population increased by over 200 per cent has called for ever more priests and pastors, a need which has been met as fully as possible."

### **Call for Christian Crusade**

A new Christian crusade of consecration to God was urged by Bishop Hunt as a means of solving the critical problems which threaten the world. "A new crusade is called for," he declared, "a crusade of consecration. Let us who claim the name of Christian consecrate ourselves anew to the service the Master, removed from our lives all love of self and offer ourselves as willing sacrifices for the cause of peace and good-will among men. There have been miracles of deliverance in the past. We can and should pray for miracles now.

"Today as we look back over the span of 25 years, as we give expression to our joy in this happy jubilee, we cannot but look ahead also and wonder what is before us. Such thoughts are not happy ones, for who knows what horrors await us next year or next month or tomorrow?

"Not that we doubt the perpetuity of God's church. From our Lord's explicit promise we are certain that, come what may, His church will survive. But there is no divine guarantee that Western Europe is safe; there is no divine promise over our own country. Most reasonably, therefore, we are disturbed, what with incredibly destructive weapons in the hands of those

who hate us. Most reasonably we should come to our knees in new petitions for God's help and with new resolutions for love of him."

### **Officers of Mass**

Officers of the jubilee Mass with Bishop Armstrong were Monsignor Raymond Renwald, assistant priest; the Reverend James D Poole, deacon; the Reverend Patrick Lyons, sub-deacon; the Reverend Maurice Connor, processional cross bearer; and the Reverend James Mulligan and the Reverend Leroy Peters, masters of ceremonies.

A choir of 200 voices of students of the St Francis High School, St Joseph Academy and Christian Brothers School presented a musical program during the Mass under the direction of Anton Dorndorf. Chanting the responses for the Mass were the Reverend William Serado, the Reverend Anthony Maio, the Reverend Edmund S O'Neill and the Reverend John McDonnell.

### **Honored at Luncheon**

Following the cathedral ceremonies, Bishop Armstrong was the guest of honor at a luncheon given by the clergy of the diocese in the Hotel El Rancho. He was honored last night at a formal dinner at the Sutter Club given by Harry J Devine, a knight commander of the Order of St Gregory.

Devine recalled he was assigned to meet Bishop Armstrong when the bishop arrived at the Southern Pacific Station 25 years ago. "I had an old car," he said, "and we honked the horn all the way to the cathedral to let Sacramento know the new bishop had arrived."

### **Elevated in 1929**

Bishop Armstrong was elevated to the bishopric by Pope Pius XI January 9, 1929, to succeed the late Bishop Patrick J Keane, who died September 1, 1928. Bishop Armstrong was pastor of St Paul Church in Yakima, Washington, at the time. He was consecrated March 12, 1929 in St James Cathedral in Seattle and was installed as bishop of the Sacramento diocese March 21, 1929. The silver jubilee celebration was set for today because of the Lenten season last month.

The bishop is a native of California. He was born in San Francisco and attended Gonzaga University. He was ordained a priest in 1910 in Montreal, Canada.

Monsignor Thomas A Kirby, chancellor of the diocese, was general chairman in charge of the jubilee arrangements. N.J. Culjis and Clarence Azevedo were co-chairs.



Photo from the Diocesan Archives

**Bishop Robert John Armstrong, Fourth Bishop of Sacramento**