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HISTORY OF NOVA “Now Other Vineyards Adjoining”

In the fall of 1981 three priest alumni of Saint Patrick Seminary in Menlo Park, John Monagle, Paul Gorman and Lou Persano, were having an Alma Mater/business lunch together in downtown Sacramento. As they strolled past the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, they vowed that the following March 17 they would host a Saint Patrick’s Day luncheon for as many Patrician priests (alumni of Saint Patrick Seminary, Menlo Park), married or not, as they could round up.

John Monagle



Photo by John Boll 2005

John Monagle rounded up not only the fathers but some outstanding bottled spirits as well. Paul Gorman spoke with Bishop Francis Quinn who gladly allowed them to use the Cathedral basement to host the event. Lou Persano planned and cooked the meal including green pasta al pesto in honor of Saint Patrick.

As the fraternity of 8 to 10 Patricians reached its apex of song and laughter, Bishop Quinn reluctantly pointed out that an AA meeting was being held in the room next door and asked that the partiers hold down the noise level.

From that humble beginning, more and more clergy, inactive and active, joined in the annual Saint Patrick’s Day festivities. Over the past 32 years, this annual event has been held in many different locations throughout Sacramento.

Thanks to Jim Mulligan and his numerous priest friends, social connections and vision for this group, the number of participants has expanded, including married priests from all over the world who now live in the greater Sacramento area.

Beginning around 1989, the NOVA group began meeting in smaller gatherings every few months for



Lou Persano

2007 St Patrick’s Day Luncheon

lunch. Terry Dosh, church historian and former Benedictine priest, has spoken at NOVA gatherings as he shared his theological and historical perspective on the life of the Church today.



Photo by John E Boll 2007

Bishop Francis Quinn Speaks at NOVA Luncheon

The work of married NOVA priests is now done quietly, whether visiting the elderly, feeding the hungry, officiating at weddings, counseling the confused or teaching children. None of the many works done today is more evident than what Dan and Chris Delany have done for the homeless in downtown Sacramento through the Loaves and Fishes Ministry that continues to feed hundreds of homeless and hungry people every day in downtown Sacramento.

With the passing of years, the number of NOVA member has dwindled from 100 to 50 but every March 17 the priests who left active ministry and married still come together in song, laughter and camaraderie as the sons of Saint Patrick and priests of Jesus Christ.

During the past few years, Bishop Jaime Soto has hosted a dinner for all NOVA married priests and their wives honoring their ministry in past decades and acknowledging their ongoing reach to people in other ways as ongoing partners **Now in Other Vineyards Adjoining (NOVA)**.

In 1995, Jim Mulligan initiated a newsletter called NOVA – **Now Other Vineyards Adjoining**, a title suggested by Bishop Quinn when NOVA was just beginning. In the quarterly newsletter he published a directory including married priests, active brother priests and lay persons interested in and supportive of NOVA. Jim helped spread the news about NOVA through national Catholic organizations like **Call to Action** and **Corpus**. NOVA has even reached the archives of Notre Dame University, the home of the Fighting Irish.



**NOVA Member Dan Delany
Co-Founder of Loaves & Fishes**



Photo by John E Boll 2015

BISHOP JAIME SOTO HOSTS THE 2015 NOVA DINNER



Photo by John E Boll 2015

NOVA Member Tony O'Carroll

RECENT NOVA LUNCHEON WITH BISHOP QUINN AT MERCY McMAHON TERRACE



Photo by John E Boll 2015

L-R Ollie Deegan, Pat Murphy, David Warren, Tony O'Carroll, Brendan Horan



Photo by John E Boll 2015

Lou Persano and Bishop Francis Quinn