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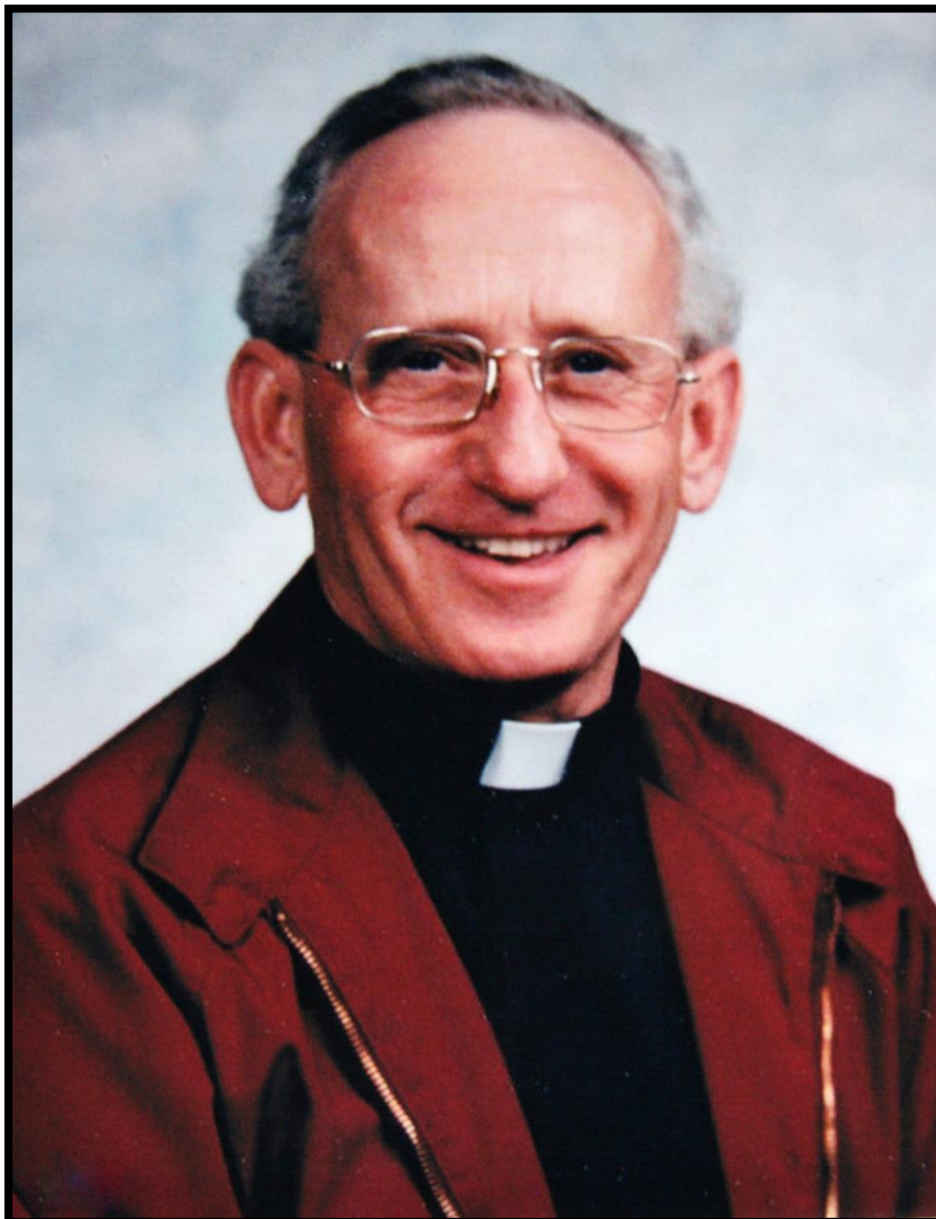
Father Rodney Lawrence Hall

Native of Old Orchard Beach, Maine

Priest of the Diocese of Sacramento

Pastor Emeritus of Our Lady of the Snows Parish, Westwood

November 2014



Rodney Hall was born on August 1, 1938 in Old Orchard Beach, Maine, the middle child of three born to Francis and Arline Hall. His older brother is Daniel Leighton Hall and his younger sister is Beverly Frances Hall. He came from a religious Puritan culture and the Hall family were members of the First Congregational Church.



Rodney

Beverly

Danny

Childhood and Adolescence

Rodney spent his childhood years in Saco, Maine where he attended Locke Primary School and then on to Thornton Academy in Saco graduating from high school in 1957. While a junior in 1956, Rodney joined the Air National Guard and was in a communication and cryptology unit. He did basic training in the Air Force between his junior and senior year.

The Family Moves to California

After completing high school, the Hall family moved to Hermosa Beach, California, a giant leap from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast. Because of the economic struggles of the 1950s in Maine, it was difficult for the Hall family to make ends meet so they were forced to leave Maine and move to California in the hope of a brighter future.



Life in California

After arriving in California, the only person in the family able to find a job was Rodney's mother Arline. Rodney went to El Camino Junior College but eventually had to drop out of school to get a job. He began working for the May Company which was a complete department store. He moved to the Los Angeles store and the company management wanted him to enroll in the junior executive training program but Rodney felt that was not for him. He moved to another company in downtown Los Angeles, the J.W. Robinson Company, but soon found that this store also wanted him to go into the junior executive training so he left the company and applied for classes at Sacramento State College and was accepted.

Rodney graduated from Sacramento State and did the extra year of training to get a teaching credential for high school and junior college. He began working as a teacher in the Sacramento School District but found the teaching profession difficult because of the uncertainty of not knowing whether he would be rehired the next year.

Rodney Begins a Career in Real Estate

At this point, Rodney decided to return to Manhattan Beach and was able to get his real estate license. He and his father both worked for the same broker. In 1974 the gasoline embargo went into full force. Rodney owned a Dodge Monaco and a Volkswagen. In addition to the gasoline shortage, there was a nation-wide economic recession happening. He left the real estate business and



found a job selling diamonds and jewelry in an upscale jewelry store. He discovered that neither real estate nor retail were careers he wanted to pursue.

A Move to Northern California

Rodney moved to Northern California and settled in Newcastle. He began to do substitute teacher, traveling wherever there was a need for a teacher. He moved to Grass Valley and took a job selling fine jewelry. He worked evenings and Saturdays selling jewelry and during the week was a substitute teacher. While living in Grass Valley, he decided it was time for him to begin instructions to become a Catholic through the RCIA program at Saint Patrick Church.

Conversion to Catholicism

Father Nicholas Phelan, the pastor of Saint Patrick Church, was on sabbatical in Rome at the time and Father Boleslaw Wdowiak was the parochial vicar. Rodney attended RCIA classes in Grass Valley in 1986 and was baptized, confirmed and received First Eucharist on March 27, 1986. He spoke with Mary Grace Tessone about his conversion and in the discussion said he had thought about the priesthood. Mary Grace thought for a while and then said to Rodney, "Would you be interested in talking to Bishop Quinn about becoming a priest?" Rodney said he would like to speak with the bishop.

Studies for the Priesthood



After talking with Bishop Quinn and Father Thomas Bland, the Vocation Director of the diocese, Rodney was accepted by the Sacramento Diocese to begin training for the priesthood. He was sent to Sacred Heart School of Theology in Hales Corner, Wisconsin.

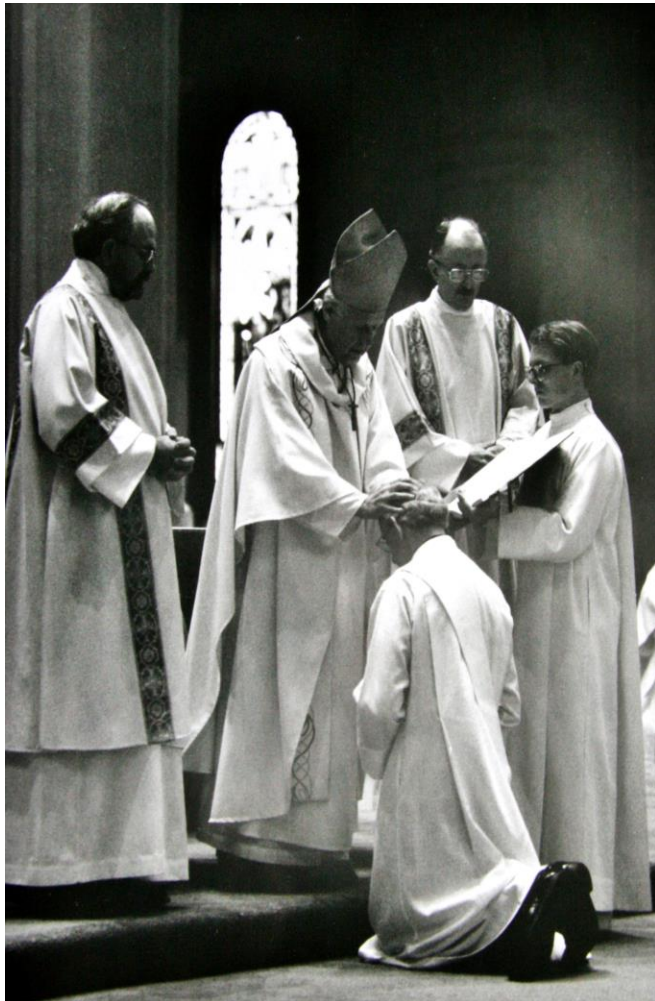
Rodney and his Parents at the Seminary in Hales Corner, Wisconsin

As he began his studies, the Vatican began a review of all US seminaries and Sacred Heart Seminary was one of the first to be reviewed. The Vatican gave Sacred Heart Seminary a 10 year certificate with no caveats. The review group recommended that Rodney and another recent seminarian convert continue their studies for the priesthood. Rodney had been baptized only 6 months before he entered the seminary. He very much enjoyed his seminary years and during

his five years at Hales Corner, Rodney attended the Mexican American Cultural Center (MACC) in San Antonio, Texas which included living a month and a half in Mexico and studying Spanish. The focus of the MACC program was on Hispanic culture rather than the Spanish language. Rodney was ordained a transitional deacon at the Wisconsin seminary in 1990. He found Diocesan Vocation Director Father Thomas Bland very helpful to him on his journey to the priesthood. Rodney returned to Sacramento and during his last semester was assigned to Saint Rose Parish, Roseville with Father Mike Cormack who was pastor. Rodney found Father Cormack to be very kind and helpful to him.

He returned to Hales Corner for his last semester of studies and during that semester, six other seminarians from Sacramento arrived at Sacred Heart Seminary to pursue their studies.

Ordination to the Priesthood in Sacramento



Bishop Quinn Ordains Father Rodney Hall

Rodney Hall was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Sacramento in January 1991 by Bishop Francis Quinn at the Cathedral in Sacramento. His first assignment was to Saint Joseph Parish, Auburn with Father Vincent O'Reilly. He and Father Vincent got along very well and Father Rodney served in Auburn from 1991 to 1993. He was then appointed pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Alturas with its mission in Cedarville.

First Pastorate in Alturas

His experience as pastor of Alturas was very positive and it was a great assignment for him. He received permission from Bishop Quinn of Sacramento and Bishop Daniel Walsh of Reno to celebrate Mass at Empire, Nevada.

Father Rodney's main focus was serving the Catholic communities of Sacred Heart Church, Alturas and Saint James Church, Cedarville for seven years.

Appointment to the Pastorate of Westwood and Chester

In 2002, Bishop Weigand appointed Father Hall to the pastorate of Our Lady of the Snows Parish in Westwood with its mission church of Christ the King in Chester in Plumas County.



Sacred Heart Church, Alturas in Winter Time

Father Rodney discovered in the first week of his ministry in Westwood that a few parishioners quickly formed a negative attitude toward him which continued during his entire ministry in Westwood. He says he never experienced this kind of negativity before.

The Chester community requested that the Blessed Sacrament be reserved in their church. A conflict arose between the communities of Westwood and Chester over this issue. Father Hall consulted Bishop Weigand about reserving the Eucharist in the Chester church and the bishop granted permission for a tabernacle to be installed in the Chester church for the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament.

Father Rodney found that the parishioners of Chester supported the idea of building a new church at Lake Almanor while the parishioners of Westwood were opposed. Father Hall under-



stood clearly why the Westwood parishioners were against the building of a new church at Lake Almanor; they would have to drive the treacherous winter road over the ridge from Westwood to Lake Almanor to attend Sunday Mass.

Health Begins to Falter

While Father Hall was in Westwood, something happened deep in his brain which caused him to lose his ability to walk. He was forced to move to Lake Almanor for six months while he recuperated. He was given medication for Parkinson's disease but the doctors soon discovered that he did not have this disease. However, the medication did help him regain his ability to walk once again.

Because of his weakened condition, Father Rodney stepped down as pastor of the Westwood-Chester parish and moved to Gerlach, Nevada where he continued to regain his health.

A Move to the Priests' Retirement Village

Father Thomas Bland called Father Rodney and asked if he would like to move to the Priests' Retirement Village in Citrus Heights. He drove to Citrus Heights to take a look at the village. In a discussion with Monsignor Robert Walton, the Vicar General, about moving to the Priests' Village, Father Rodney told Monsignor Walton that he had a cat and wanted to know if he could bring his cat with him. Monsignor Walton confirmed that Father Rodney could bring his cat Callie with him.

Father Hall moved to the Priests' Retirement Village in Citrus Heights in January 2005 and continues to live there. His intention is to remain living at the Priests' Village until the end of this life's journey.

Looking Back over the Years

As Father Hall reviews his life's journey, his eleven years as a priest were great years for him, especially his ministry in Alturas. He says he learned a lot from Father Vincent O'Reilly, his first pastor, and found him to be a good mentor in ministry.

Although his time in active ministry was not long, Father Rodney left his mark on the lives of the people he served in Auburn, Alturas and Westwood-Chester. As he spends these years of retirement at the Priests' Village, we hope he will continue to enjoy the changing of seasons with his fellow priests at the village and with his faith cat Callie by his side.

Thank you Father Rodney for the years of ministry you have given to the people of the Diocese of Sacramento.

AD MULTOS ANNOS!



Sunrise at the Priests' Retirement Village
October 2014

Published with the permission of Father Rodney Hall