

SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

Vol 3

Father John E Boll, Archivist

No 21

FATHER CHARLES BRADY

Native Son of Arva, County Cavan, Ireland

Priest of the Diocese of Sacramento

Pastor Emeritus of Holy Spirit Parish, Sacramento

October 2015



Charles Brady was born on July 12, 1930 in Arva, County Cavan, the third of eleven children born to Thomas Brady and Kate Leddy. Of the eleven children, two are priests, two farmers, two veterinarians, two nurses and three auto agents for Mercedes and Volkswagen. The nine siblings who married provided Fathers Charles and Vincent 54 nieces and nephews of whom they are very proud.

Charles Begins his Education

Charlie attended school at Killygarry, County Cavan. When he was 10 years of age, he went to live with his Aunt Mary and Uncle Peter who had no children. He stayed with them for 9 years while he attended St Patrick College/high school until he entered the seminary in 1949. Charlie rode his bicycle to high school from his aunt's home five days a week, a 10 mile round trip.

After high school, Charlie thought about entering to the seminary so he consulted his local parish priest. Father Smith told Charlie that he should give it a try and "if they don't fire you," he said, "you can become a priest."

Seminary Years



In 1949, Charles Brady entered Saint Kieran's Seminary, County Kilkenny, where he began his college studies and completed his course work in theology.

The brother of Charlie's mother, Father Patrick Leddy, was a priest of the diocese of Monterey-Fresno for many years. He visited his family in Ireland every year and was highly respected by them. Father Leddy told Charlie that if he wanted to be a priest, he should consider coming to California since there was a need for priests there and the people were very good.

Charles Offers to Serve in the Diocese of Monterey-Fresno

Charlie wrote to Bishop Aloysius Willinger in Monterey-Fresno offering to serve that diocese. The bishop wrote back to Charlie thanking him for his offer but told Charlie that because Fresno had its own seminary, he had an adequate number of priests for his diocese. He suggested that Charlie try Sacramento or Spokane. The president of the seminary told Charlie he could go to Sacramento if he wanted to.

Charles Accepted by the Diocese of Sacramento

Charlie met Tom Delahunty at Saint Kieran's Seminary and the two of them decided they would apply to Sacramento. Charlie discovered that Sacramento would take only two seminarians and those openings were already filled. He was advised to choose another diocese. However, one of the two seminarians studying for Sacramento decided to leave the seminary and Charlie was accepted for Sacramento.



Photo courtesy of Fr Charles Brady

The Brady Family Celebrated Father Charles' Ordination on June 5, 1955

After 6 years of study at St Kieran's Seminary, Charles was ordained a priest in Kilkenny's Saint Mary Cathedral on June 5, 1955. Father Charles then prepared for his journey to Sacramento.

The Journey Westward to California

Father Brady left for Sacramento from the port of Cobh, Ireland for the week's voyage across the Atlantic. He arrived in New York Harbor on Labor Day weekend in early September 1955. New York was hot and humid and the only clothes he had with him were wool Irish clothes. The New York traffic gave Father Charles a fright. He spent three weeks in New York visiting his uncles and aunts.

Father Brady Arrives in Sacramento

The Diocese of Sacramento issued railroad tickets to the new priests traveling across America to Sacramento. Father Charles' uncle, however, worked for the Grand Central Railroad and was able to exchange the rail tickets for an airline ticket. Charlie flew to Los Angeles where he was

met by his uncle Father Leddy, pastor of Saint Francis Church in Bakersfield. Charlie's uncle drove him by car to Sacramento.

Father Charles and his uncle checked into a motel in West Sacramento for the night. The next day they drove to Roseville to visit Father Jerry Boland who was assistant pastor at Saint Rose parish. Father Leddy and Father Boland were classmates at Saint Kieran's Seminary. The next day they went golfing even though the temperature was 110 degrees. Charlie then paid a visit to his friend Father Thomas Bannon who was pastor of Our Lady of the Assumption Parish in Carmichael.

Father Charles Checks in with the Bishop

Father Charles was scheduled to meet Bishop Armstrong at the diocesan chancery office but because the bishop was suffering from cancer and not feeling well, the bishop did not meet the seven new priests who were reporting for assignment. Instead, these newly arrived priests were administered an oath against Modernism at their first meeting in the diocese.

No Assignment until November

Father Brady was not given a parish appointment until November. The newly arrived priests received no salary until they were assigned. Money from the All Souls collection was the first financial support they received. Father Brady was eventually assigned to Saint Joseph Parish in North Sacramento with Father Michael O'Connell, the uncle of Father John Hannan. Father Brady served the North Sacramento parish for two years. Father O'Connell died of cancer on September 7, 1957 and succeeding him as the new pastor was Father Patrick McTague.

Father Brady Appointed Assistant to Holy Spirit Parish, Sacramento



Father Patrick McHugh

Just as Father McTague arrived in North Sacramento, Father Brady was appointed assistant pastor to Father Patrick McHugh in Holy Spirit Parish, Sacramento on Land Park Drive, effective October 1, 1957. Father Charles served Holy Spirit Parish for ten years and says those were very happy years for him.

It often happened that as many as five priests lived together in the Holy Spirit rectory, some only in residence. A good spirit existed among the priests in the house which made living at Holy Spirit church a positive and happy experience.

Assignment to Saint Philomene Parish

Father Charles' next assignment was to Saint Philomene Parish to work with Father Daniel Twomey who was pastor. He served in this parish as assistant pastor for almost 4 years. Father

Cornelius O'Donnell lived in residence as well and taught at Loretto High School next door to the parish.

Father Brady Appointed Pastor of Burney

Father Brady's first appointment as pastor was to Saint Francis Parish in Burney, effective March 18, 1971. He soon discovered that the famous singer/actor Bing Crosby was a parishioner of Burney when he spent time at his home there. Bing was a fly fisherman and fished at Rising River Lake located on his property.

During his two and a half years as pastor of Burney, Father Charles celebrated Mass at Manzanita Lake in Lassen Park during the summer months. He also served as chaplain to the Bieber conservation camp. During that period, his monthly priest salary was \$100 and the stipend from the State of California for services at the conservation camp was \$60. The offering for Mass at that time was \$2.



Father Charles Brady

Father Brady Appointed Pastor of Colusa



Photo by John E Boll 2013

Interior of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Colusa

From Burney, Father Brady was appointed pastor of Colusa by Bishop Francis Quinn. Monsignor John McGarry, pastor emeritus of Colusa, continued to live at the parish residence until his death on February 28, 1978. The Holy Cross Sisters had staffed the parish school for many years and when they withdrew from the parish the school was forced to close. A couple years later, Father Brady was able to reopen the school for which he was grateful. He was involved in the renovation of Our Lady of Lourdes church and through his efforts, the parish church was designated an historical building by the State of California.

When Father Charles arrived in Colusa, he discovered divisions in the parish community. This was a difficult period for him but he was able to calm the parish community by his efforts to save the historic parish church by renovating it rather than tearing it down to build a new church. Father Brady served as pastor of Colusa for a little more than 9 years.

Father Brady's Final Parish Assignment – A Return to Holy Spirit Parish, Sacramento



Photo by John E Boll 2013

Holy Spirit Church, Sacramento

In 1981 Father Brady was appointed pastor of Holy Spirit Parish in Sacramento, succeeding Monsignor Edmund O'Neill who was appointed pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Sacramento. Father Brady remained pastor of Holy Spirit Church for the next 25 years.

When he arrived at Holy Spirit Church, there were three daily Masses--a convent Mass at 6:30 am and parish Masses at 6:30 and 8 am. On Sundays, there were five Masses. One of Father Brady's goals in the parish was always to be nice to the people.

Holy Spirit School

The parish school was a major parish ministry. It was and is an excellent school and Father Brady often visited the children. He celebrated school class Masses on a weekly basis and a student body Mass on First Fridays. He always enjoyed spending time with the children and the children were very fond of him.

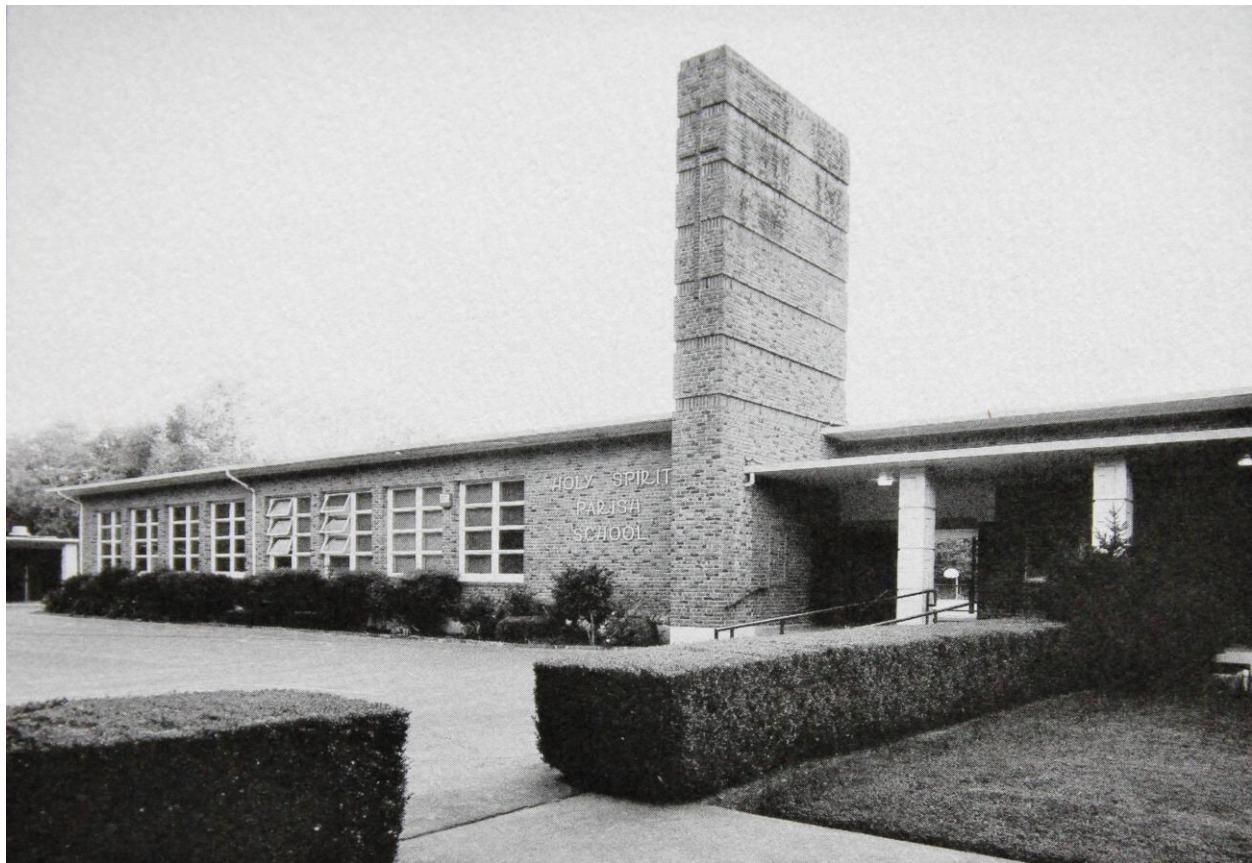


Photo from Holy Spirit School Archives

Holy Spirit School, Sacramento

Priests-in-Residence at Holy Spirit Rectory

During the years that Father Brady served as pastor of Holy Spirit Parish, he had a number of priests living in residence who worked in the California Catholic Conference of Bishops: Monsignor John Dickie, Monsignor James Peterson; Monsignor William Levada who was named auxiliary bishop of Los Angeles while living at Holy Spirit rectory; Father Michael Walsh and Monsignor Edmund O'Neill. Judge Anthony Kennedy, now a member of the United States Supreme Court, was a member of Holy Spirit Parish.

Father Brady Retires

At the age of 75, Father Brady's request for retirement was accepted by Bishop Weigand and he retired from Holy Spirit Parish in 2006. After his retirement, he rented a house on Miranda Court in the Pocket area of South Sacramento from his former parish secretary Margaret Fitzgerald where he lived on his own for nine years.

Father Brady suffers from macular degeneration in both eyes and no longer sees well enough to read. After falling in his home, he decided it was time for him to move to a place where he can receive the care he now needs.



Photo courtesy of Father Brady

Parish Celebration of Father Brady's Fiftieth Anniversary of Ordination



Fathers Vincent and Charles Brady, Priests of the Diocese of Sacramento

Father Brady is Grateful for a Happy Life as a Priest

Father Charles Brady has been a priest for over sixty years. The past six decades have been happy years for him and he has made many wonderful friends in the course of his priestly life. He says he has been blessed with wonderful priest friends and great parishioners whom he loves dearly. He continues to attend the weekly Saturday evening Mass at Holy Spirit Parish. He is grateful to God and to the many people who have become part of his life for making his journey a fruitful and happy adventure.

We wish Father Charles health and blessings as he continues his priestly journey in retirement.

AD MULTOS ANNOS!



Father Charles Brady

Published with the approval of Father Brady