

# SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

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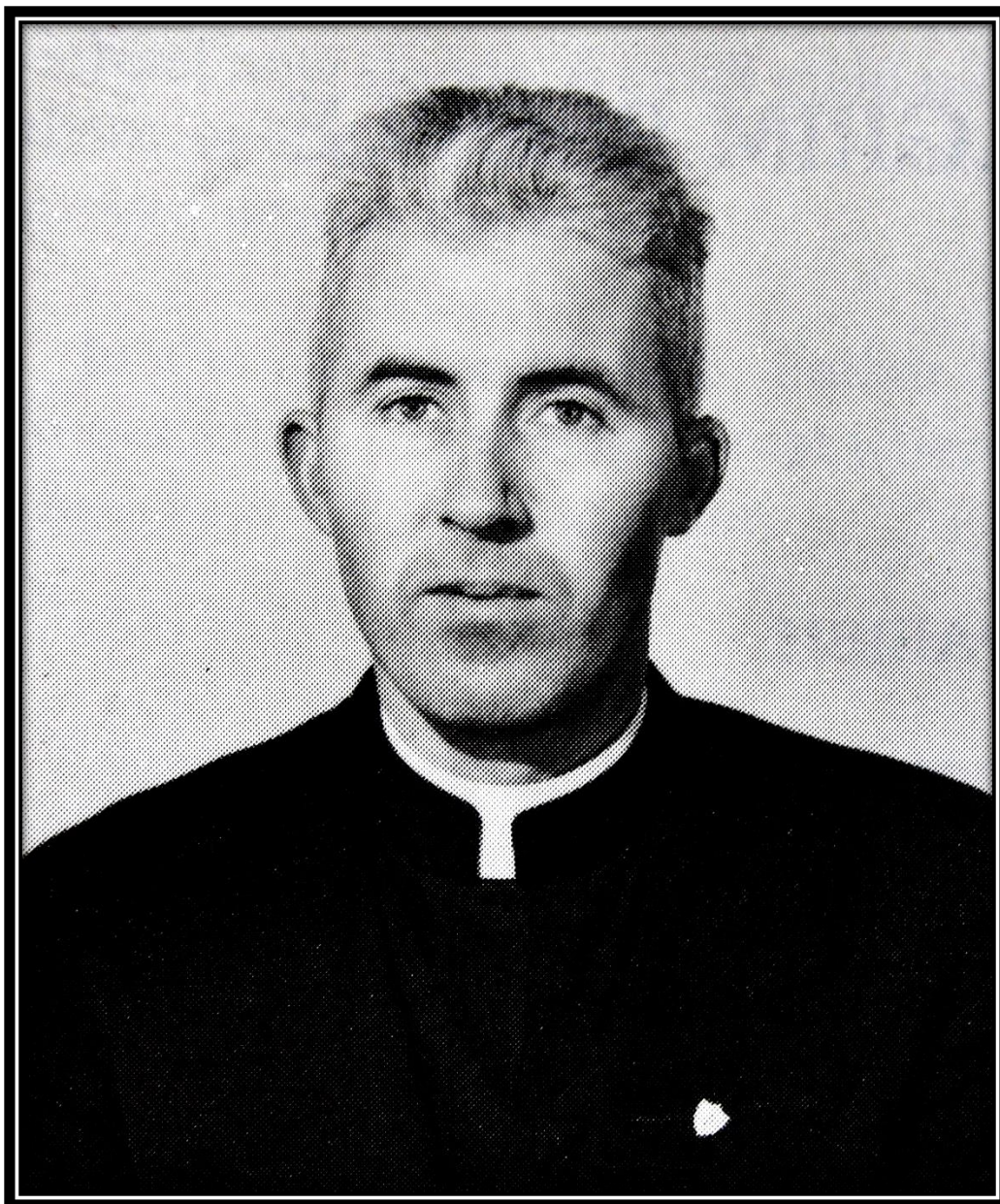
*Father Patrick Joseph Lyons*

Native Son of Dunmore, County Galway, Ireland

Priest of the Diocese of Sacramento

Founding Pastor of Saint Theresa Parish, South Lake Tahoe

March 23, 1917 – February 29, 1956



***Patrick Joseph Lyons was born on March 23, 1917*** in Dunmore, County Galway, Ireland. He entered Mount Mallery Minor Seminary at Waterford in September 1934 and in 1941 transferred to All Hallows College, Dublin for his studies in theology. He was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Sacramento on June 24, 1945 in All Hallows Seminary chapel.

He arrived in the Diocese of Sacramento the following year and began his first assignment as assistant pastor of Saint John the Evangelist Church in Dunsuir in June 1946. In November of 1947, he was appointed assistant pastor of Saint James Church in Davis where he remained until his appointment to South Lake Tahoe.

#### **Founding Pastor of Saint Theresa Parish, South Lake Tahoe**

In 1951, Father Lyons was appointed the founding pastor of the newly created Saint Theresa Parish in what was known then as Al Tahoe. It was a small town of 200 to 300 permanent residents. Father Lyons received permission from the US Forest Service to build a small church on Forest Service land where the present church is now located. There was a small house nearby used by priests from Truckee when they came to celebrate Mass in South Lake Tahoe during the summer months. The house originally had only one bedroom.

During the five years Father Lyons served as pastor, he built the church which included an outside seating area to accommodate the large groups of summer vacationers who attended the Sunday Masses. He also added two rooms to the priest's house to accommodate other priests who came to help with Masses in the summertime.



Photo from St Theresa Parish Archives

**Original Saint Theresa Church, South Lake Tahoe**



### **Father Lyons Dies at the Early age 38**

While serving as pastor in South Lake Tahoe, Father Lyons was diagnosed with Leukemia and suffered from this disease for over a year. He spent his last month of life at Saint Mary Hospital in Reno, Nevada. On Wednesday morning, February 29, 1956, Father Lyons died. He would have celebrated his 39<sup>th</sup> birthday a month later on March 23.

### **One of Three Father Lyons who served the Diocese of Sacramento**

Father Patrick Lyons' brother Vincent, also a priest of the Diocese of Sacramento, was assistant at Saint John the Baptist Church in Chico and chaplain of the Newman Club in Chico. Fathers Patrick and Vincent were nephews of Monsignor Michael L Lyons who was pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Sacramento.

### **Funeral Mass for Father Lyons**

A Requiem Mass was celebrated for Father Lyons in Saint Theresa Church where he had been pastor for five years. On that Monday afternoon, Father Lyons' body was taken to Sacred Heart Church in Sacramento where the clergy of the diocese gathered that evening to pray the Office of the Dead.

The following day, a Solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated for Father Lyons in Sacred Heart church at 10 am. After the Mass his body was taken in procession to Saint Mary Cemetery, Sacramento for burial in the Priests' Section of the cemetery.

At the time of his death, in addition to his brother Father Vincent Lyons and his uncle Monsignor Michael Lyons, Father Patrick was survived by his sister in Dublin and a brother and sister in Dunmore, Ireland.



**Father Patrick Joseph Lyons' Headstone at Saint Mary Cemetery, Sacramento**