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THE BISHOP BUILDS HIS CATHEDRAL

Bishop Patrick Manogue

By Eleanor Doyle, printed in the September 16, 1976 issue of the *Catholic Herald*

Cholera epidemics, the scourge of the last century, proved the common denominator in linking this first bishop of Sacramento, Patrick Manogue, and the first Mass celebrated in this city, Father Peter Augustine Anderson, OP.

For the Dominican priest, it proved an ending, but for young Pat Manogue, then a seminarian, it was the road to the west, the gold mines, the priesthood, and ultimately to his role of spiritual shepherd.

Father Anderson died in November, 1850, from the effects of administering to the victims of cholera in Sacramento several months after celebrating the first Holy Sacrifice here. Bishop Manogue early in his life had to forfeit continuing seminary studies near Chicago because of the dread epidemic which forced the school to close. It was then that he journeyed to the historic Mother Lode, where with pick and drill he chipped out gold from the rich veins of ore.

On St Patrick's Day, March 17, 1884, he had automatically succeeded Bishop Eugene O'Connell whom he served as coadjutor, as leader of the Grass Valley Diocese. The Holy See was immediately besieged with persuasive letters from Bishop Manogue requesting a change of name for the diocese. Once Rome had given the green light to the establishment of the Diocese of Sacramento, changing both the name and see city from Grass Valley, the bishop immediately set about to obtain property for a cathedral. Due to his penchant for keeping a minimum of files, there is no actual record of what steps he took to obtain a half block of property, bounded on three sides by 11th, 12th and K Streets.

However, because Manogue was a rugged individualist, it is likely that such a business dealing was already under consideration by the time definite word arrived that Pope Leo XIII had signed a Papal Bull, dated May 28, 1886, which instituted the Diocese of Sacramento.

That the prelate was a man of vision is exemplified in his choice of a site, bordered by unpaved streets many blocks away from the center of the business district. He purchased the property for \$40,811. Less than 40 years later, one of his successors, Bishop Patrick J. Keane, sold a portion of the property, the corner of 12th and K Street as far as the alley, to the Ware family for \$125,000.

Apparently, as a man of vigor and action, Bishop Manogue attracted men of similar attributes to assist him with the planning of a cathedral which would bear the name of the capital city.



Photo from the Diocesan Archives

Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, Sacramento

In this present age of large structures which are commonplace, it must be remembered that when Bryan J. Clinch of San Francisco, architect, designed the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, it was to represent the largest Catholic Church west of the Mississippi. Yet, in spite of its dimensions and the detail that had to be followed to assure its standing centuries later, the cornerstone was laid the following year, on June 12, 1887.

Few modern architects move with such alacrity. New stories of that time noted that the cathedral façade was inspired by Eglise de la Trinite, Church of the Holy Trinity, in Paris, a similarity which still is recognized today.

Cornerstone laying were big events three quarters of a century ago, and it is reported that on that June date, some 8,000 persons congregated in downtown Sacramento for the historic ceremony. A local daily paper stated that “thousands thronged the edifice and many ladies fainted, the crowd was so suffocatingly dense.”

Into the cornerstone was placed a document, written by hand by Bishop Manogue which read:

“This chief or cornerstone of the Cathedral in this city of Sacramento, dedicated to the Most Holy Sacrament for the greater glory of God, was consecrated and laid on the 12th day of June, in the year of our Lord 1887, by Right Rev. Patrick Manogue, Bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento, Leo XIII being reigning Pope and ruler of the Church of God; Grover Cleveland, President of the United States; Washington Bartlett, Governor of the State of California; Eugene Julius Gregory, Mayor of the city of Sacramento; Rev. J.M.C. Bouchard, of the Society of Jesus, preached on the occasion; Bryan Clinch, architect: J. Glynn, J. McGuire, A. McElroy, Messrs. Chatain & Gilette, builders of the sacred edifice; the great seal of the State of California, with the names of all the State officers; the Monitor, Sacramento Record –Union, Daily Bee, Sunday Leader and the Evening Star; the San Francisco daily papers; the New York Freeman’s Journal; six rare coins presented by Cashier Miller of D.O. Mills National Bank, are deposited in the cornerstone.”

That evening, Bishop Manogue entertained a group of clerical and lay leaders at a banquet in his residence which had already been built at the corner of 12th and K Streets. It was an imposing mansion, four stories high, and the funds for it had been given by Mrs. Theresa Fair, a close friend of the prelate. Some years earlier, when she obtained a divorce from James G. Fair, it was the personal support and intervention of Bishop Manogue that assured her of a tremendous financial settlement from the Bonanza King.

Tessie Fair never forgot this kindness and throughout her life she remained one of the Bishop’s most devoted and generous benefactors. Proof of her devotion was the rectory and its furnishings, as well as her donations for the building of the cathedral.

Among the guests at the Bishop’s mansion the night of the cornerstone laying was the Honorable F.D. Ryan, who regaled the others with a story about the YMI, who serenaded the assemblage during dinner. “The fealty of young men of the Church, as represented by the YMI procession at today’s ceremony,” exclaimed Ryan, “caused some excitement among few young ladies present. They were hard put to interpret the meaning of the initials on the YMI banner, until at length one exultingly exclaimed, ‘It means Young Men of Ireland.’”

That same year, 1887, the property of Sacramento’s Catholic Church, St Rose at 7th and K Streets, had been sold to the United States government for a new post office. Until the

Cathedral would be completed in 1889, Mass was offered in an abandoned building on 12th Street, adjacent to the rectory. The night of Bishop Manogue's banquet he explained that when St Rose Church was razed, there had been much consternation because no one was able to locate the cornerstone. In earlier years, a slough passed along 7th Street and for a time there was a wooden foot bridge leading directly to the church entrance. The Bishop concluded that since the land was once marshy, it was possible that the cornerstone had sunk out of sight.

The closest he ever came to conducting a fund drive for the construction of the Cathedral, which cost \$250,000, was the day of the cornerstone laying. On that occasion tables had been set and boxes placed out where persons could make contributions to the building fund. Signs were erected noting that anyone who gave \$5 or more would have his name recorded and announced later from the altar.

Old timers in Sacramento, whose families date back to the Manogue era, recall his chief disappointment while Bishop of Sacramento, was the lack of response from the laity towards helping build the Cathedral. He often commented upon the lack of financial support. However, it was an open secret in those times that he was being given sufficient help from the Bonanza Kings of the Comstock, and there was really not an actual need for their contributions.

Bishop Manogue never verified or denied this assumption.



Photo from Diocesan Archives

Interior of the Cathedral in the 1940s



Photo by John E Boll 2007

**Façade of Eglise de la Trinité, Paris
Used as the model for the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, Sacramento**



Photo by John E Boll 2007

Interior of Eglise de la Trinité, Paris