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MONSIGNOR PATRICK AIDAN McHUGH 49 Years of Service in "This Beautiful Old City"

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By David Deas, Bee Religion Writer



Monsignor Patrick Aidan McHugh

Ireland lost a son of the sod but Sacramento gained a priest and enthusiastic booster 49 years ago when Patrick A. McHugh arrived. Today, Father McHugh retains his Irish brogue, speaking with happiness and pride of a career that has had him playing the roles of assistant pastor, pastor, founder and editor of a newspaper, shepherd of an important parish, church and school builder and a Catholic dignitary of high status.

**In 1962 Fathers Patrick McHugh and Patrick McTague
Were Named Monsignors by Pope John XXIII**



He entered the hierarchy of church government in 1961 when he was appointed domestic prelate, a monsignor, by Pope John XXIII. The Most Rev. Joseph T. McGucken, formerly bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Sacramento, invested him in his new duties March 19, 1962.

In a few days, the Rt. Rev. Msgr. McHugh will celebrate the golden jubilee of his ordination in the priesthood, 50 years of toil dedicated to carrying the Cross and burdens of his church.

McHugh was steered into the priesthood “by the grace and mercy of God” he said in an interview in the rectory of Holy Spirit Church, Land Park Drive and Cordano Way, where he has been pastor 32 years.

Born in County Cavan, Ireland, July 4, 1899, he brags that he made his debut into this world on American Independence Day. “That shows that the good God intended me for American citizenship, of which I am very proud,” he explains with a broad smile. “Of course, I’m also proud of my Irish ancestry. I hope I never lose my Irish accent. I wouldn’t want to lose my identity as an Irishman.”

He was educated at St. Patrick’s College in the county of his birth and at All Hallows College and the University College in Dublin.

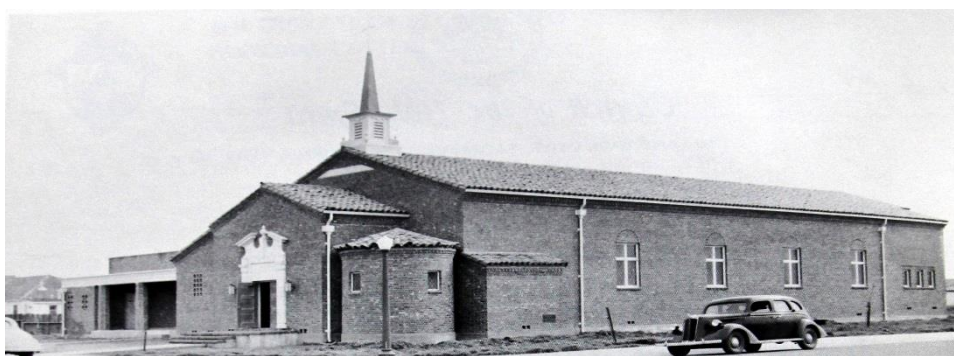
He studied for the priesthood at St. Patrick Seminary in Thurles, Ireland, and was ordained there June 11, 1922. Then he did graduate work at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. He was not particularly impressed with his first look at Sacramento when he arrived at the old Southern Pacific Co. depot at 3rd and I on June 20, 1923. But he proceeded to fall in love with the city. “That old wooden depot looked like it had been t here since 1849,” he remembered.

“Sacramento was a small city then. We had only 70,000 people, but it was our boast that the population equaled that of the entire state of Nevada.

“The city limits were at 31st Street, now Alhambra Boulevard. There was nothing south of Broadway but farmland and vegetable gardens. When I arrived in Sacramento, the Cathedral (of the Blessed Sacrament) rectory was at the corner of 12th and K, and right across the street they were wrecking the old Christian Brothers School to make room for Weinstocks.

The young priest founded the Superior California Register, the first diocesan owned Catholic newspaper in 1930 and he was editor of the publication until 1940. “I was reporter, rewrite man, head writer, copy reader, makeup man and editor – everything! At first, the paper was published in Denver but that wasn’t a very workable plan so, in 1932, I made an arrangement with The Bee to print our editions in their old plant at 7th and I Streets.

The late Bishop Robert Armstrong asked Father McHugh to organize the Holy Spirit Parish and on April 1, 1940, he was appointed first pastor of the parish. “We only had about 200 families in the parish then. Now we have about 1,100 families.



Photos from Diocesan Archives

Holy Spirit Church, Built in 1940

“I asked the late Harry J. Devine (Sacramento architect) to design our church, parish hall and rectory and we broke ground July 26, 1940. The buildings were ready for occupancy December 15, 1940 and the first Mass was said in the church that day.”

In 1948, Holy Spirit School and Holy Spirit Convent were erected. “Actually, our school started in 1947 with one kindergarten class which was held in the parish hall. Sister Mary Vincent was the teacher and she is still teaching the first grade. Now we have about 325 children in the first through the eighth grades.”

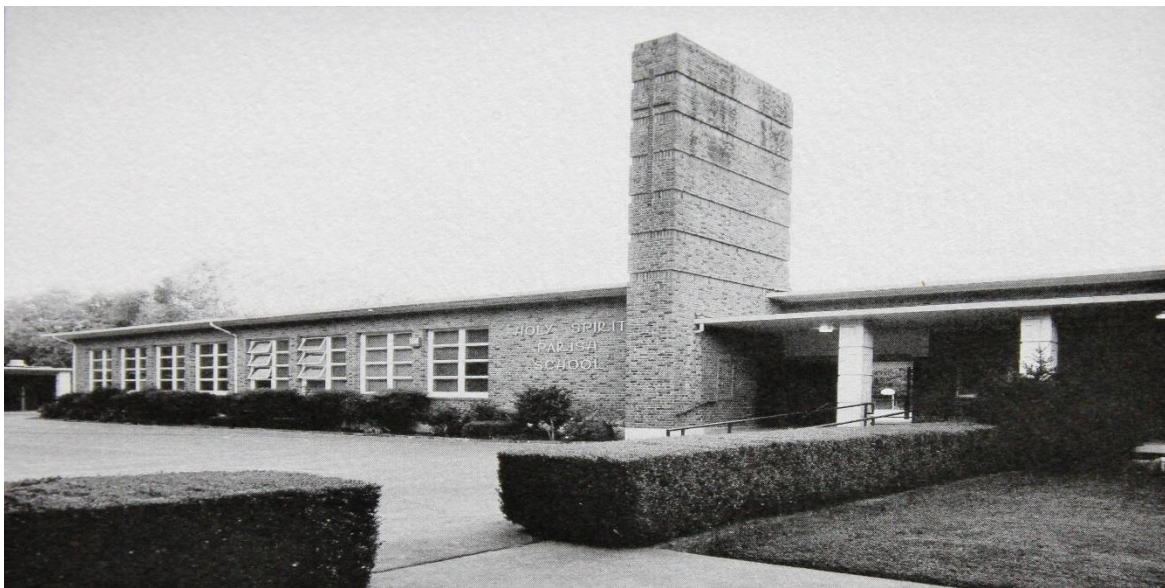


Photo from Diocesan Archives

Holy Spirit School Built in 1948

Although Father McHugh has returned to Ireland many times to visit his family – he still has a brother John and a sister Ann, both living in County Donegal – he returns to his adopted city of Sacramento with pleasure.

Next weekend priests of the diocese and friends in Sacramento will honor the veteran church leader. The Most Rev. Alden J. Bell, Bishop of the Sacramento Diocese, will preside during a Mass at 5:15 p.m. Friday in the Holy Spirit Church. Father McHugh will be principal celebrant, and former assistant pastors in the church will be concelebrants.

Following the Mass a dinner for the priests will be served in the auditorium of the parish school. The Rev Patrick J. Lanigan, a former assistant pastor, will be the toastmaster. Bishop Bell will preach a sermon and Monsignor McHugh will respond. Other speakers will be Monsignor Patrick McTague and the Rev. James F. Vaughn, a former assistant pastor.

The following Saturday a new \$25,000 pipe organ recently installed in the church will be blessed. The 700 pipe instrument was made in Padua, Italy.

The golden jubilee date, June 11, will be observed with a concelebrated Mass for the people of the Holy Spirit Parish at 5:15 pm in the church with Monsignor McHugh as principal celebrant. A dinner for the people will follow in the school auditorium with Leighton Hatch as toastmaster

and Peter E. Mitchell, a former parishioner and lifelong friend of the monsignor, the principal speaker.



Holy Spirit Church — First May Crowning

Photo from Diocesan Archives

First May Crowning in Holy Spirit Church in 1941

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO BE GIVEN TO
THE PERSON NATURALIZED

No. **3319951**

**CERTIFICATE OF
CITIZENSHIP**

Petition No. 191

Personal description of holder as of date of naturalization: Age 30 years, sex male, color white,
 complexion fair, color of eyes blue, color of hair brown, height 5 feet 8 inches,
 weight 188 pounds, visible distinctive marks -
 Marital status not married, race Irish, former nationality British
 I certify that the description above given is true, and that the photograph affixed hereto is a likeness of me.

ORIGINAL
Patrick Aidan McHugh
 (Complete and true signature of holder)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Be it known that Patrick Aidan McHugh
 then residing at 3801 H St., Sacramento, Calif.
 having petitioned to be admitted a citizen of the United States of America, and at
 a term of the U.S. District Court of
Northern District of California held pursuant to law at
Sacramento, Calif. on June 9, 1930,
 the court having found that the petitioner intends to reside permanently in the
 United States, had in all respects complied with the naturalization laws of the United
 States in such case applicable, and was entitled to be so admitted, the court thereupon
 ordered that the petitioner be admitted as a citizen of the United States of America.
 In testimony whereof the seal of the court is hereunto affixed this 9th
 day of June in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and
thirty and of our Independence the one hundred
 and 54th.

WALTER B. MALING
 Clerk of the U.S. District Court.

By Tom Lampert Deputy Clerk.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

From Diocesan Archives

Father McHugh's Certificate of US Citizenship in 1930



Monsignor Patrick McHugh



Photo by John E Boll 2014

Renovated Interior of Holy Spirit Church during the Pastorate of Monsignor Albert O'Connor



Photo by John E Boll 2014

Image of Jesus, the Risen Christ, in Holy Spirit Church