

# SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

Vol 5

Father John E Boll

No 29

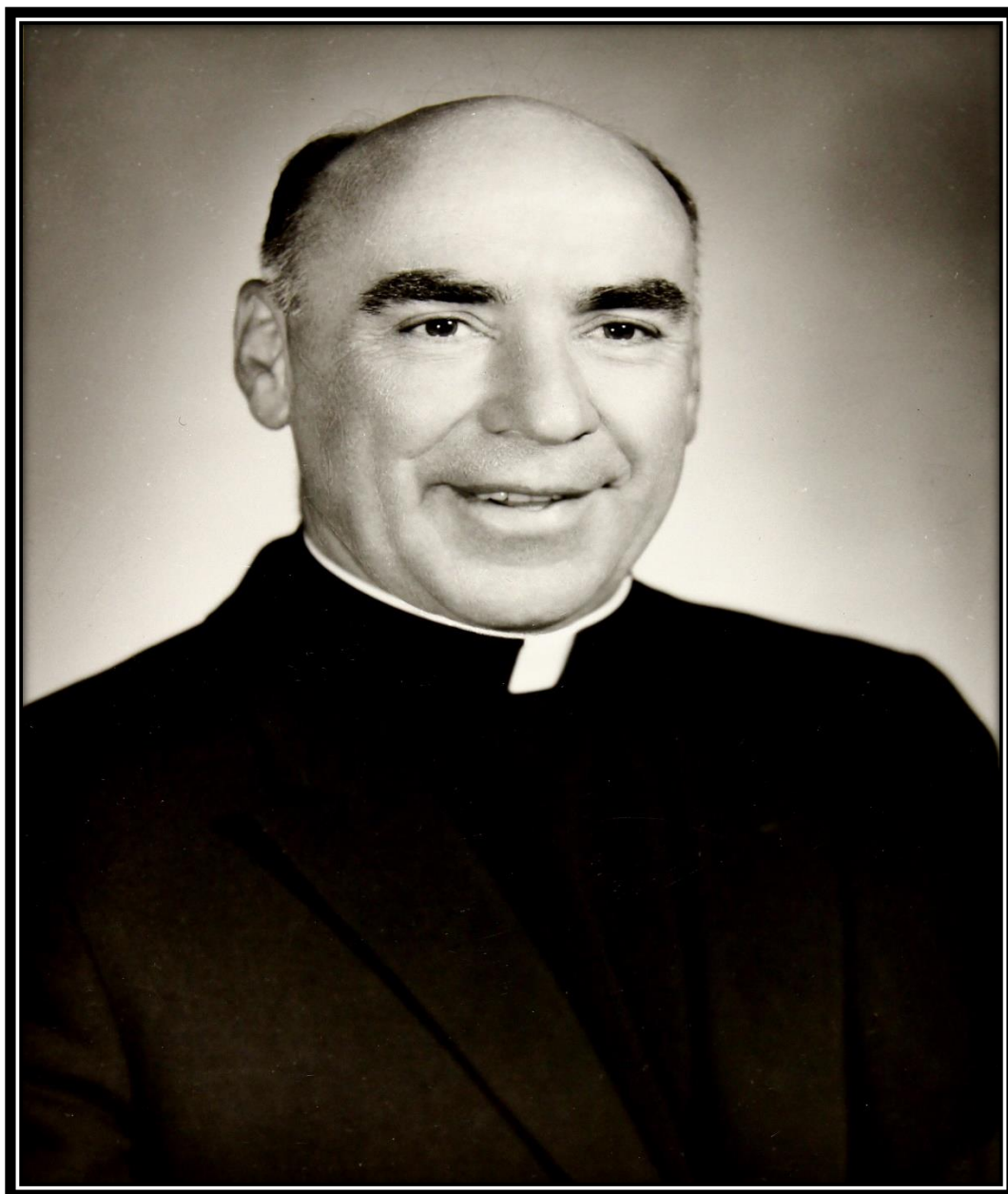
## *Father Walter Hugh Albrecht*

Native of Marysville, California

Priest of the Diocese of Sacramento

Pastor Emeritus of Saint Anthony Parish, Mount Shasta

November 10, 1917 -- January 27, 2005



Walter Hugh Albrecht was born in Marysville, California on November 10, 1917, son of Frederick Albrecht and Julia Roth. He attended Notre Dame School in Marysville from 1923 to 1931.

### THE DAYS OF WALT'S YOUTH IN MARYSVILLE

From his boyhood years, Walt recalls Father Gerald O'Driscoll who inspired and helped lead him to the seminary. He also remembers Sister Elizabeth, his seventh and eighth grade teacher at Notre Dame School in Marysville, who was an inspiration to him.

One day as a youngster, Walt fell out of a tree into a blackberry bush and then onto a broken glass jar. He ended up needing stitches. "When I went back to school," he says, "Sister Elizabeth called me 'the little bishop with the embroidered jaw.' It was a little bit of nonsense but the idea of priesthood stuck."

### JAMES POOLE A CHILDHOOD FRIEND

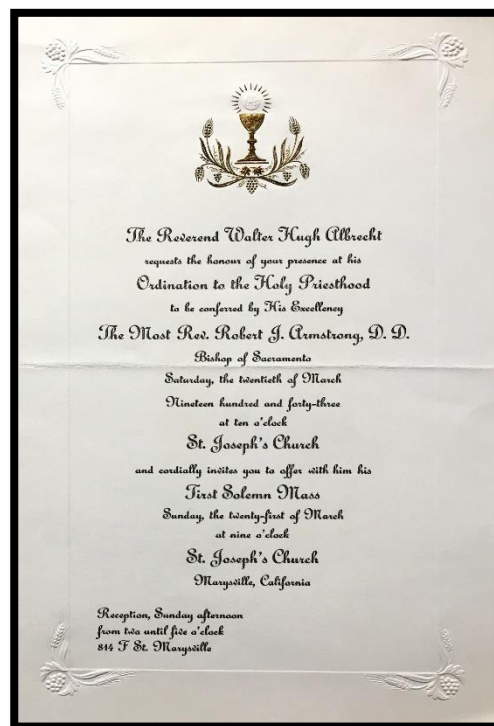
One of Walt's boyhood pals in Marysville was James Dallas Poole. "Only a vacant lot separated us," he says. "We played on the same teams. Then he moved to Benicia because of his father's job but we were reunited at the seminary in our freshman year of high school."

Walt began high school at Saint Joseph Minor Seminary in Mountain View and was a student there for the next six years. In 1938, he moved from Mountain View to Menlo Park where he began his theological studies at Saint Patrick Seminary.

Walt said his experience of the Sulpician Fathers who were his teachers and formators at the seminary was very positive. In an interview with the Catholic Herald in 1993 when he celebrated his fiftieth anniversary of ordination, he said the Sulpician Fathers motivated him and encouraged him in his vocations."

### ORDAINED FOR THE DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

Walter Albrecht was ordained a priest on March 20, 1943 in his home parish of Saint Joseph Church, Marysville, by Bishop Robert J Armstrong.



## FIRST MINISTRY ASSIGNMENTS



**Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament**

### **St John Parish, Dunsmuir**

Father Albrecht's first temporary assignment was for four months as administrator pro-tem of Saint John Parish in Dunsmuir filling in for the pastor, Father Michael O'Connell, who had taken ill.

### **St John the Baptist Parish, Chico**

In June 1943, Father Walt was assigned as assistant priest at Saint John the Baptist Parish in Chico with Father Patrick Cronin as his pastor.

### **Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, Sacramento**

Then in 1946, he was assigned to the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Sacramento with Father Gerald O'Driscoll as pastor.

## **NAMED FOUNDING PASTOR OF SACRED HEART PARISH, ANDERSON**

On Thursday, October 27, 1949, Bishop Robert J Armstrong formally created a new parish in Anderson called Sacred Heart. Father Albrecht was named founding pastor of the new parish. The parish boundaries were carved from Saint Joseph Parish, Redding and Sacred Heart Parish, Red Bluff. Saint Anne Church in Cottonwood, which had been a mission of Red Bluff, became a mission of the new Anderson parish.

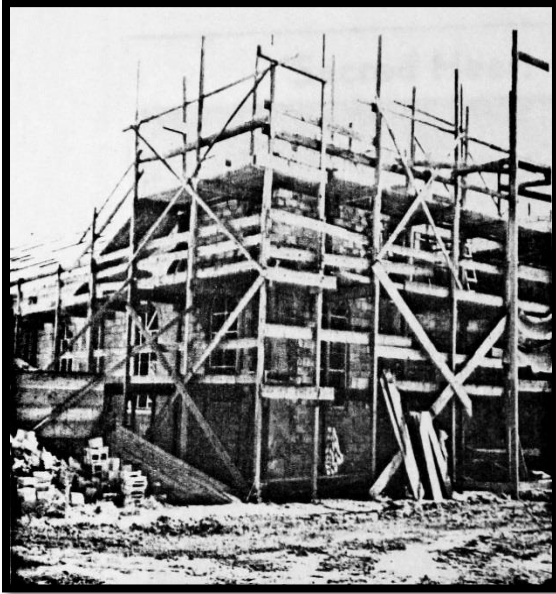
## **THE CHALLENGE TO BUILD A NEW CHURCH**

As Father Walt began his ministry in Anderson he found the people eager and anxious to learn more about the Catholic faith and to embrace it. There had been a lot of anti-Catholic bigotry and prejudice in the Anderson area and people wanted to know the truth. Father Walt said that the thrill of making converts was a wonderful and the most memorable experience of his life.

One of his tasks as founding pastor was addressing the need to build parish facilities where the religious and social life of the parish community could take place. In 1955, plans were completed to build a new church with a seating capacity for 400 people. With more than \$7000 in cash and pledges already in the construction fund, 25 two-man teams visited every home of parishioners in the Anderson-Cottonwood area seeking pledges for the new church. This was a one day drive held on Saturday, April 2, 1955, from noon to 9 pm and the goal was to raise an additional \$33,000 for the proposed new church building. A total of 139 pledges were received during this campaign.

The fund drive was a success and Stephen Roycroft, in whose home the first Mass in Anderson was celebrated in 1913, donated 23 acres of land on which the church was built. The design of the church was patterned after a sketch of a church in Guatemala and the architectural style was Spanish Romanesque. The floor plan was cruciform with a sloping floor that leads to the altar. The sanctuary conveyed a dramatic illustration of the hill of Calvary with a large crucifix behind the altar. Indented high in the wall was a circular window of the Risen Christ.

## CONSTRUCTION BEGINS



**Construction of the new Anderson church**

The building project began on June 6, 1955 when 155 men, women and children of the parish, in one day's time, laid the entire foundation for their new church. Each Thursday after that, members of the Saint Joseph Men's Club met and did practically all the heavy cement and carpentry work needed to complete the new church. Eighty percent of the construction of the church was done by volunteer help from parishioners.

These dedicated parishioners were inspired by the same spirit as those who raised the Franciscan mission churches in the early days of California. Like the missions of California, the Anderson church was built by volunteer labor from materials close at hand.

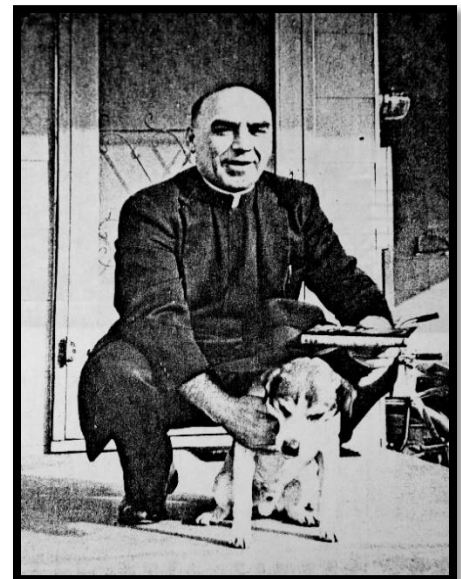
## IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION OF THE WOMEN OF THE PARISH

The women of the parish played a significant role in the building of the church. The men hauled to the building site raw materials for the tiles, screened the sand and helped with the heavier work. Then the women took over and made the tiles for the roof. Under the direction of Mrs Edward Harmon and her assistant, Mrs Jean Rice, 88 women worked for over seven months making 186 cement tiles a day until they reached 9550 tiles. They mixed water, cement, sand and a waterproofing compound in a power mixer. The slush was poured into a table with its top divided into 9 by 18 inch compartments. Each tile was reinforced with imbedded steel wire. The cement tiles were left to cure in the forms for 24 hours, then a water solution of red pigment was applied to their upper sides with paint brushes.

After the tiles dried and were sufficiently solid they were placed in the open air and left to cure under water-moistened cloths for approximately six weeks. Keeping the tiles moist with damp clothes prevented the tile from cracking.

When the tiles were ready for application to the building, the men of the parish carried them onto the roof and nailed them through the single hole left in each tile. The tiles were also imbedded in asphalt and the sticky asphalt applied to the edge of each piece sealed the butting points.

The church was constructed from concrete blocks and sits in the middle of an open field. The setting heightens the appearance of an early mission church. Two bell towers flank the front of the church.



**Father Albrecht with his Dog**



Photos from the Diocesan Archives

**Newly Constructed Sacred Heart Church in 1956**



**Interior of Sacred Heart Church in 1956**

### **BISHOP MCGUCKEN DEDICATES SACRED HEART CHURCH**

Bishop Joseph T McGucken, bishop of Sacramento, officiated at the consecration of the new altar and dedication of the church on March 15, 1959. Father Albrecht remained as pastor of Sacred Heart Church for two more years.

### **SAINT JOHN THE BAPTISM PARISH, FOLSOM**

On February 16, 1961, Father Albrecht was assigned as administrator of Saint John the Baptist Church in Folsom for a year and then the newly arrived Bishop Alden J Bell named Father Walt pastor of the parish. He served as pastor of the Folsom parish from 1961 to 1970.



Photo by John E Boll

**The Second Saint John the Baptist Church in Folsom during Father Walt's Pastorate**

### **FINAL PASTORATE IN MOUNT SHASTA**

In 1970, Father Albrecht began his last appointment as pastor of Saint Anthony Parish in Mount Shasta where he served until 1978. At the age of 61, because of failing health, Father Walt decided it best for him to retire from active ministry.

Father Albrecht was named Pastor Emeritus of Saint Anthony Parish, Mount Shasta, by Bishop Alden Bell on September 5, 1978.



Photo by John E Boll

### **Saint Anthony Church, Mount Shasta**

#### **RETIREMENT TO WASHINGTON STATE**

After retiring from active ministry, Father Walt moved to Aberdeen, Washington where he helped out on weekends at local parishes in the Aberdeen area as long as his health allowed. No doubt he enjoyed living in the cooler climate of Washington close to the Pacific coast.

#### **DEATH OF FATHER ALBRECHT**

Father Walter Albrecht lived for 87 years when the Lord called him home on January 27, 2005 in Aberdeen, WA where he had lived in retirement for 27 years. He died two months short of his 62<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of ordination. A Funeral Mass was celebrated for him at Saint Mary Church in Aberdeen, WA on February 2, 2005, at 11 AM followed by burial at the local Fern Hill Cemetery.

A Memorial Mass for Father Albrecht was celebrated on February 22, 2005 at Saint John the Baptist Church, Folsom, with the bishop presiding, together with the priests of the diocese and friends and parishioners of Saint John the Baptist Parish.

#### **IN MEMORIAM**

Father Albrecht was one of the few native born sons of Marysville to be ordained a priest for the Diocese of Sacramento. He and Monsignor James Dallas Poole were friends from childhood and remained so throughout their lives as they served the diocesan church of Sacramento. The only

time Father Walt left the diocese for any length of time was when he retired and moved to the State of Washington to enjoy the cooler weather along the Pacific coast.

When he was ordained a priest by Bishop Armstrong in 1943, the United States was deeply involved with the Allied Forces in fighting against Germany, Italy and Japan in the Second World War.

As a young priest, he had the task of establishing Sacred Heart parish in Anderson. He involved the whole parish community in the building project, men, women and children. It was a labor of love by the whole community and the church still stands today as a sign of the faith and love the Anderson community has for the Lord.

Even though Father Walt retired relatively young because of failing health, he lived to the age of 87 and celebrated 62 years as a priest.

We thank you, Father Walt, for dedicating your life to priestly ministry throughout your life. Your eighth grade teacher Sister Elizabeth helped plant the seed of a vocation in your mind and heart; Father Gerald O'Driscoll encouraged that vocation; and the Sulpician Fathers helped to form you for priestly ministry at Saint Joseph and Saint Patrick Seminaries. Thank you Walt, for your ministry to the people of this Diocese of Sacramento. Rest now from your labors, for our Father has called you home to enjoy life eternal in His Kingdom.



Photo by John E Boll

**Saint Joseph Church, Marysville**