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Father John E Boll

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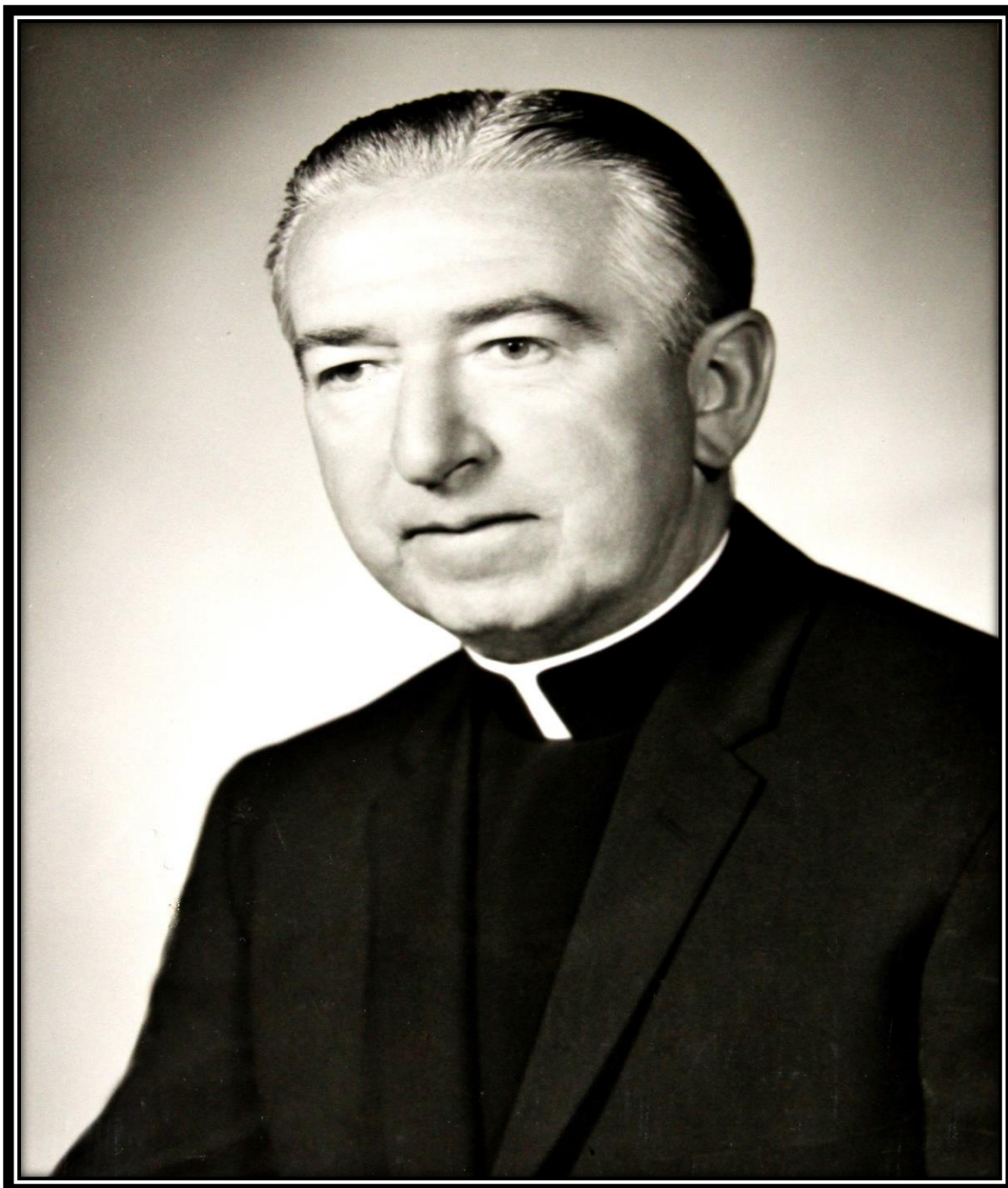
Monsignor John Gerald Terwilliger

Native Son of Sacramento, California

Priest of the Diocese of Sacramento

Pastor Emeritus of Saint Basil the Great Parish, Vallejo, California

November 16, 1916 – October 7, 2000



JOHN GERALD TERWILLIGER WAS BORN ON NOVEMBER 16, 1919 in Sacramento, California, the son of William Terwilliger and Mary Fitzgerald. He was baptized at Saint Francis Church on December 4, 1916, received First Communion and confirmation at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament and grew up in the City of Sacramento.

ATTENDED SAINT JOSEPH ACADEMY

Young Jack began his education in 1922 at Saint Joseph Academy, 8th and G Streets, in downtown Sacramento. This academy was staffed by the Sisters of Mercy of Auburn and Jack graduated from the eighth grade in 1930.

BEGINS STUDIES AT SAINT JOSEPH COLLEGE, MOUNTAIN VIEW

In the fall of 1930, Jack entered Saint Joseph College in Mountain View which was the minor seminary operated by the Sulpician Fathers for the Archdiocese of San Francisco. After completing high school and two years of college at Saint Joseph College, Jack transferred to Saint Patrick Seminary in Menlo Park where he completed his last two years of college and began his four years of theological studies.



Photo from the Diocesan Archives

Saint Joseph College Chapel, Mountain View

ORDAINED A PRIEST FOR THE DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO



Bishop Robert J Armstrong

Upon completion of his theological studies at Saint Patrick Seminary, John Gerald Terwilliger was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Sacramento by Bishop Robert J Armstrong in the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament on May 30, 1942.

BEGINS PARISH MINISTRY

The young Father Terwilliger received a temporary assignment of four months as assistant priest to Father William Daly at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Truckee from June to September 1942.



Photo by John E Boll

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church, Truckee

ASSISTANT AT SAINT MONICA PARISH, WILLOWS

Father Terwilliger's next appointment was to Saint Monica Parish in Willows where he served as assistant priest to Father Patrick A Grealy from September 1942 to February 1947. Father Grealy served the Willows parish as pastor for 35 years from 1911 to 1946, until his death on November 13, 1946.

ADMINISTRATOR PRO TEM OF BRYTE

In February 1947, Father Jack was sent to Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Church in Broderick-Bryte where he served as administrator of the church until April of that year. This was a temporary assignment before his appointment as assistant editor of the *Catholic Herald*.



Photo from the Diocesan Archives

Church of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament, Broderick

This church was erected in 1915 by Father Michael Wallrath, pastor of Woodland

ASSOCIATE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC HERALD

In April 1947, Father Terwilliger was appointed associate editor of the diocesan newspaper called *The Superior California Catholic* at that time. He worked with the editor, Father Richard Dwyer, from November 1947 to November 1952. During this time, Father Terwilliger lived in residence at Holy Spirit rectory on Land Park Drive, Sacramento 1947-48, Saint Joseph rectory, North Sacramento 1948-50, and the Cathedral 1950-52.

During this time at the *Catholic Herald*, Fathers Richard Dwyer and John Terwilliger co-authored a weekly column in the newspaper called "*Just Between the Two of Us.*" It was a popular feature on the opinion-editorial page. In this column, the two priests shared their views on the news of

the day as well as political and religious issues. The first column appeared in the March 14, 1948 issue of the paper.

In the last column written by these two priests on November 13, 1952, Father Dwyer called the joint venture “a happy arrangement of shared ideas and cooperative effort,” praising the “ability, diligence and industry” of Father Terwilliger. Even though the two editors had a difference of “political affiliation,” Father Dwyer noted “there has been a unity of opinion and expression that would be found in any conversation between two people who were friends.” He also credited many changes and improvements in *The Herald* to the “zeal and industry” of Father Terwilliger.

ASSOCIATE CHAPLAIN TO THE CALIFORNIA SENATE

In his last two years at *The Catholic Herald*, Father Terwilliger also served as associate chaplain of the California State Senate.

APPOINTED PASTOR OF KNIGHTS LANDING

After five years at *The Catholic Herald*, Father Jack was appointed pastor of Saint Paul Parish in Knights Landing where he served from November 1952 to November 1957.



Photo by John E Boll

Saint Paul Church, Knights Landing

FOUNDING PASTOR OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES PARISH

Father Terwilliger's next appointment was as founding pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Del Paso Heights. He served as pastor of this parish from November 1957 to September 1971. During those fourteen years, Father Terwilliger oversaw the building of the parish church and hall, the rectory and a convent where the Canossian Sisters have lived since they came to the parish. The convent was a joint venture between Our Lady of Lourdes Parish and Saint Joseph Parish, Lincoln since the Canossian Sisters oversaw catechetical instruction of the children in both parishes.



Photo by John E Boll

Our Lady of Lourdes Church and Hall, Del Paso Heights

FINAL APPOINTMENT

In September 1971, Bishop Alden J Bell appointed Father Terwilliger pastor of Saint Basil the Great Parish in Vallejo. He served this parish for eleven years until September 1, 1982.

Until 1962, Saint Basil Parish was part of the Archdiocese of San Francisco. After San Francisco Archbishop John J Mitty died on October 15, 1961, Bishop Joseph McGucken, bishop of Sacramento, was appointed archbishop of San Francisco.

On January 13 1962, the Vatican created three new dioceses in Northern California, the dioceses of Oakland, Stockton and Santa Rosa. In the alignment of diocesan borders, Solano County became part of the Diocese of Sacramento and all the parishes of that county, including Saint Basil Parish, became part of Sacramento. Nine years later, Father Terwilliger was named pastor of Saint Basil Parish.



Photo by John E Boll

Saint Basil the Great Church, Vallejo

NAMED MONSIGNOR BY POPE JOHN PAUL II

On May 4, 1979, Father Terwilliger was named a prelate of honor by Pope John Paul II. After Father Terwilliger's 37 years of service to the diocese, Bishop Alden Bell wanted to thank and honor him. He made a request to the pope to name Father Terwilliger a monsignor.

RETIREMENT

Monsignor Terwilliger retired as pastor of Saint Basil Parish on September 1, 1982. His successor was Father Anthony Maio who was a long-time friend. Monsignor Terwilliger continued to live in retirement at Saint Basil rectory and helped out at the parish for five years. Father Maio said of Monsignor Terwilliger that "He was an excellent preacher, always prepared his sermons diligently and wrote them out. "

Before his health began to decline, he played golf weekly and always served as master of ceremonies for the annual priests' golf tournament. Father Maio said Monsignor Terwilliger was always very funny and could have been a professional comedian had he not become a priest.

Monsignor Terwilliger and Father Walt Albrecht were in the seminary together at both Saint Joseph College and Saint Patrick Seminary for eleven years. Father Walt said of his friend, Father Jack, "He was the most humorous person you could ever come across. He was always joyful and took great delight in entertaining people with his stories." Father Albrecht said that Father Jack's

mother Mary had a great influence on his decision to become a priest. “He desired to devote his life to making our Lord better known, loved and shared in our Northern California diocese.”

RESIDENCE AT MERCY McMAHON TERRACE, SACRAMENTO

When Monsignor Terwilliger’s health demanded more care, he moved to the Mercy McMahon Terrace in Sacramento where he lived for the rest of his life. He was seriously injured in a car accident in Sacramento when he was riding home with other priests after a golf tournament dinner. He never fully recovered from that accident.



Photo by John E Boll

Mercy McMahon Terrace, Sacramento

DEATH COMES TO MONSIGNOR TERWILLIGER

On October 7, 2000, Monsignor Terwilliger died from chronic pulmonary disease at the age of 83, just a month shy of his 84th birthday. He was one of the first native born sons of Sacramento to be ordained a priest for service in the diocese.

FUNERAL MASS FOR MONSIGNOR JOHN TERWILLIGER

A Funeral Mass was celebrated for Monsignor Terwilliger on Monday, October 16, 2000, at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament where he had been ordained a priest in 1942. Father Dan Madigan, pastor of Saint Joseph Parish in Clarksburg, was the presider at the concelebrated Mass in the presence of Bishop William K Weigand. Father Dan had known Father Terwilliger since 1966 when he was assigned to Our Lady of Lourdes Parish as assistant to work with Father Jack. In his homily, Father Dan said that Monsignor Terwilliger was “a man of tremendous integrity

with a great sense of humor. He was outgoing, kind and gentle. I was lucky to have him as my first pastor because he was a very spiritual man and influenced a lot of my thinking as a young priest. He had a big part in shaping my life and we remained good friends as the years went by.”

After the Funeral Mass, the body of Monsignor Terwilliger was laid to rest in the Priests’ Section of Saint Mary Cemetery in Sacramento.



Photo by John E Boll

Headstone of Monsignor John G Terwilliger

IN MEMORIAM

Monsignor John Terwilliger had a great sense of humor and was one of the funniest priests in the Diocese of Sacramento. When Monsignor Richard Dwyer celebrated his Fiftieth Anniversary of ordination, he invited all the priests of the diocese to join him for a concelebrated Mass at the Cathedral in Sacramento, followed by a dinner on the Delta King on the waterfront in Old Town. He asked his good friend Monsignor Jack Terwilliger to be master of ceremonies for the evening.

Jack Terwilliger brought the house down with laughter. We priests were in tears from laughter. One of his jokes involved a letter of congratulations to Dick Dwyer from Cardinal Tutti Fruti Bevelaqua of Vatican City State. It was hilarious and we priests were totally unified by laughter!

That night what we experienced together was both elegance and humorous. Jack Terwilliger was absolutely superb as MC and comedian and we loved it. It was a night that made us happy and proud to be part of the presbyterate of the Diocese of Sacramento as we honored Senior Priests Monsignori Richard C Dwyer and John G Terwilliger.



*Lord,
Thank you for calling
John Gerald Terwilliger
to be a priest for the
Diocese of Sacramento.*

*Not only did he bring Your
Presence to the people through
the sacraments but also through his
great sense of humor and laughter.*

*Thank you for the gift of this priest
who journeyed with us
as our brother.*