

SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

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Father John E Boll

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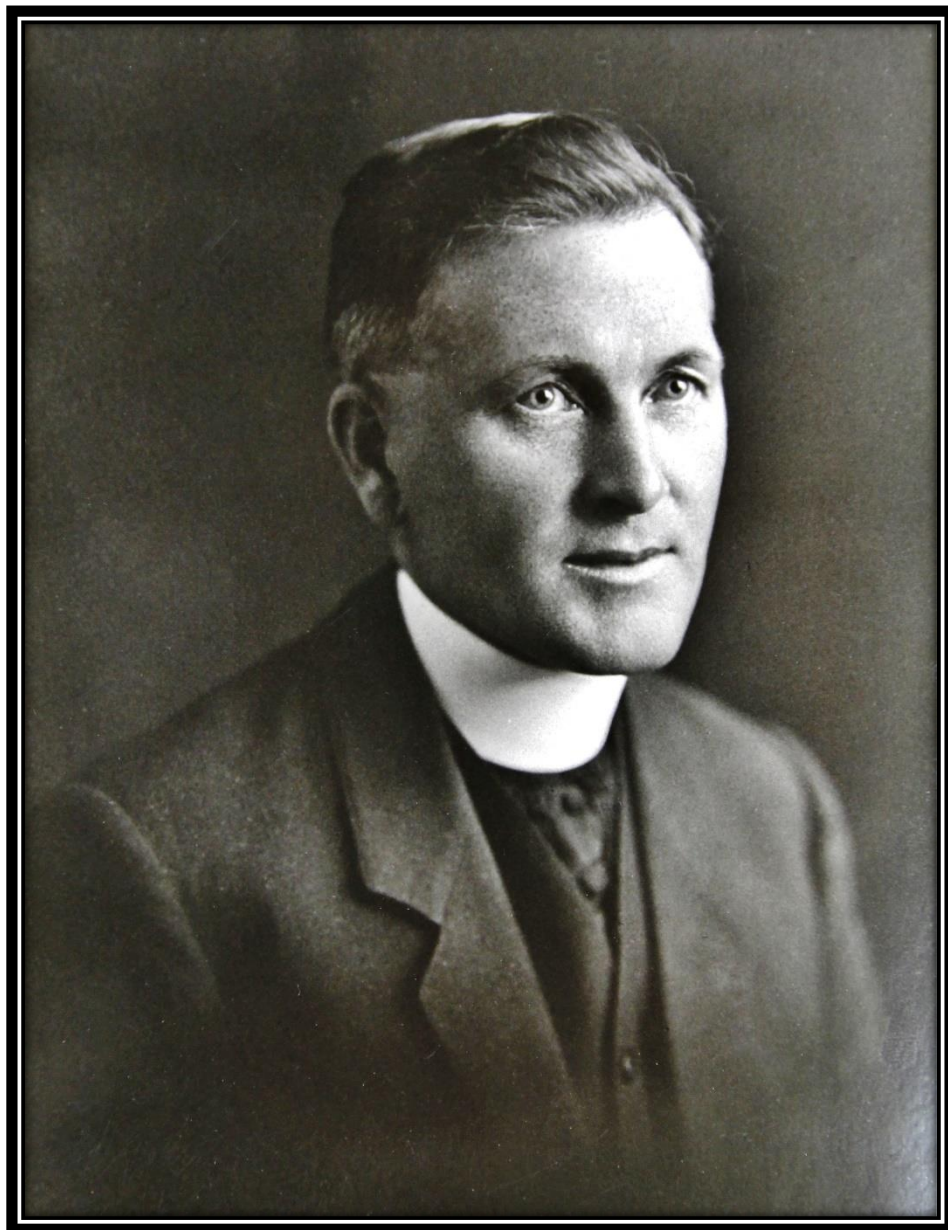
Father Patrick J Sears

Native of Ventry, County Kerry, Ireland

Priest of the Diocese of Sacramento

Chaplain, Mercy Hospital, Sacramento

1875 - February 3, 1937



Patrick J Sears was born in Ventry, County Kerry, Ireland in 1875 and received his classical education at Saint Brendan Seminary, Killarney, where he was a classmate of Thomas Horgan who years later became the Vicar General and pastor of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament.

A STUDENT AT ALL HALLOWS COLLEGE, DUBLIN, IRELAND

He studied philosophy and theology at All Hallows College, Dublin, and was ordained a priest in June 1902 in the All Hallows Seminary Chapel. Patrick came from a very talented family whose members gave distinguished service to the Catholic Church in Ireland, Canada and America.

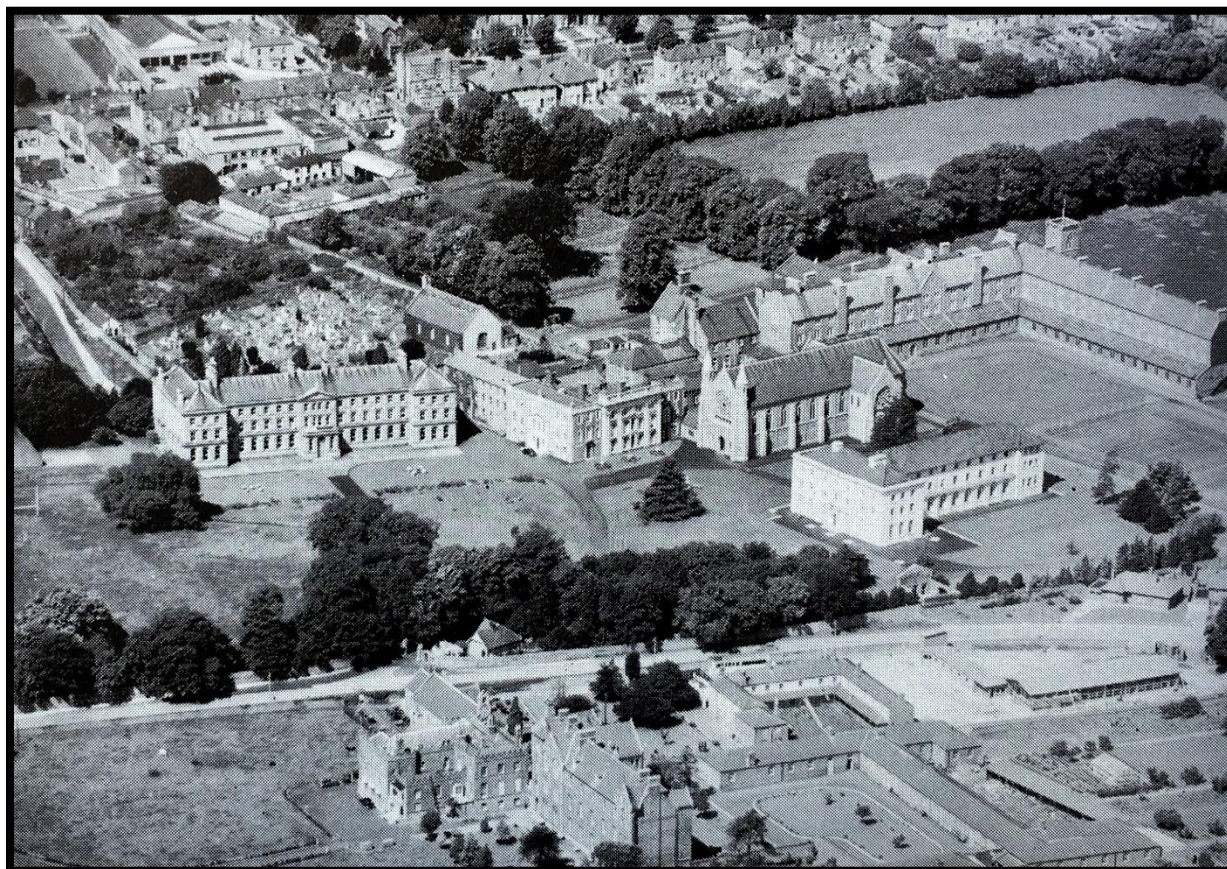


Photo from *Missionary College of All Hallows* by Kevin Condon, CM

All Hallows College, Dublin, Ireland

DISTINGUISHED FAMILY MEMBERS

Patrick's uncle, Monsignor Thomas Sears, was the first Prefect Apostolic of what is now the Diocese of Saint George, Newfoundland. Monsignor Sears was appointed to that office in 1871 and was one of the noted pioneer missionaries in Newfoundland. Patrick's older brother, Monsignor Andrew Sears, DD, of Searston, became Vicar General of the Diocese of Saint George and had a distinguished career as a missionary and administrator.

Father Martin G Sears, Patrick's younger brother, was a priest of the Diocese of Saint George but came to Sacramento for health reasons and was pastor of Fallon, Nevada when he died in 1924 at the age of 41. He is buried in Saint Mary Cemetery in Sacramento. Father Patrick's nephew,

Father Patrick Sears, was Inspector of Schools for the Diocese of Kerry, Ireland, and a niece, Sister Mary Charles, was a member of the teaching staff at Presentation Convent, Dingle, Ireland.

In addition to the above family members, Father Sears also had other brothers and a sister, Garrett Sears of Sacramento, John Sears and Miss Mary Sears of New York, and Thomas Sears of Ventry, County Kerry, Ireland.

MINISTRY IN THE DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

Father Sears came to the diocese of Sacramento in the fall of 1902 after his ordination in Ireland and was appointed assistant to Very Reverend Charles M Lynch, V.G. of Grass Valley. Later he was appointed pastor of Saint Joseph Parish in Lincoln and labored in that parish when it included the Roseville and Nicolaus districts.



Photo by John E Boll

Church and Rectory, Saint Joseph Church, 6th & D Streets, Lincoln

Father Sears ended his pastorate of Lincoln, including Roseville and Nicolaus, when his health broke down completely and he became an invalid for a number of years, suffering excruciating pain with remarkable fortitude and patience.

CHAPLAIN OF MERCY HOSPITAL, SACRAMENTO

After a partial recovery of his health, Father Sears was appointed chaplain to Mercy Hospital in Sacramento where he served until 1922.



Photo from Diocesan Archives

Mercy Hospital, Sacramento in 1925

Father Sear's health broke down again and he was forced to take time to recuperate before he could return to Mercy Hospital to continue as chaplain until his death. After a short two-day illness in the hospital, he died on Wednesday evening, February 3, 1937 at the age of 62.

He was one of the best-known priests in the Diocese of Sacramento because of his ministry to the sick which he carried out with great devotion, compassion and kindness. His presence was greatly missed by the clergy of the diocese and the thousands of patients he ministered to at Mercy Hospital while he served as chaplain.

FUNERAL MASS AT THE CATHEDRAL

The Funeral Mass for Father Sears was held on Monday, February 8, 1937, at 10 AM in the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament. Bishop Robert Armstrong presided at the Mass in cope and miter. Chaplains to the bishop were Monsignor Michael J Hynes of Colfax and Father Michael L Lyons of Sacramento.



Bishop Robert J Armstrong

Celebrant of the Mass was Father Patrick J O’Sullivan of Sacramento, assisted by Father Cornelius H Murphy of North Sacramento as deacon and Father Arnold Schaffer as sub-deacon. Father John E Tumult, secretary to the bishop, was master of ceremonies.

Before the Final Commendation at the end of the Mass, Bishop Armstrong paid high tribute to the thirty-five years of devoted service Father Sears had given to the community, both as a vigilant and zealous pastor and as hospital chaplain devoted to the care of the sick in Mercy Hospital. The bishop made special mention of the patience and fortitude with which Father Sears bore his own illness and pain for many years during his priestly ministry.

DIOCESAN PRIESTS’ CHOIR SINGS AT THE MASS

The Diocesan Priests’ Choir led the music for the Funeral Mass. Members of the choir were Fathers Thomas J Hayes, Placerville; Maurice Kiely, Galt; Alphonsus Gavin, Redding; William O’Toole, Clarksburg; Thomas J Morgan, Grass Valley. Members of the choir from Sacramento were Fathers James O’Shea, Francis McEnaney, Michael L Lyons, Patrick J Bennett, Michael McGoldrick, Patrick A McHugh, Thomas H Markham, John V Azevedo, Timothy Watson, OFM, James Kenny, Michael Fitzgerald, P.J. O’Sullivan, Arnold Schaffer, and C O’Connor.

Other members of the choir were Fathers Joseph M Hanrahan, Sutter Creek; Bernard McElwee, Marysville; Carrol W Lawson, Ione, Thomas B Bracken and Michael J Gaffney, Woodland; Patrick J Cronin, Folsom; Michael M Hogan, Winters; Patrick J O’Reilly, Nevada City; Michael J Kearney, Jackson; Daniel P Twomey, Lincoln; John O’Connor, Auburn; James T Grealy, Roseville; Edward M Looney, Livermore; James Healy, Walnut Grove; Patrick Donnelly, Orland; Patrick Casey, Broderick; Raymond Renwald, Colusa; John J McGarry, Maxwell; Cornelius H Murphy, North Sacramento; Gerald O’Driscoll, Gridley; and Monsignor Michael J Hynes, Colfax.

BURIAL AT SAINT MARY CEMETERY

At the conclusion of the Funeral Mass, the body of Father Sears was taken in procession to the Priests’ Section of Saint Mary Cemetery. Bishop Armstrong, flanked by the priests of the diocese, commended the soul of Father Sears to the Lord as his body was lowered into the grave.

Father Patrick Sears was buried close to the grave of his younger brother Father Martin Sears who died in 1924.

Gormely and Sons Funeral Home were in charge of the funeral arrangements.



Photos by John E Boll

Headstone of Father Patrick Sears, Saint Mary Cemetery



Priests' Section, Saint Mary Cemetery, Sacramento

IN MEMORIAM

The family of Father Patrick Sears had an authentic missionary spirit. As we have seen, he came from a family of distinguished missionaries who left Ireland and became noted pioneer missionaries in far flung Newfoundland. Three sons of the Sears family became missionary priests, Monsignor Andrew and Fathers Patrick and Martin.

Father Patrick was a dedicated priest who spent his energy ministering to parishioners. The demands of ministry eventually broke his body and he suffered great physical pain. As he slowly regained some of his health, he returned to ministry as chaplain to Mercy Hospital in Sacramento until he could give no more. In the end, the Lord mercifully called Father Patrick home to the glory of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Church of Sacramento was blessed to have this gentle, patient and compassionate priest who gave his life to the missions of the great Sacramento Valley. May Father Patrick abide now in peace, joy and eternal life.

*Lord,
You called Father Patrick Sears to be
A messenger of the Gospel.
He served faithfully as a herald of your
Divine Love for the world.
After a time of pain and suffering,
You called him home to be
With You forever.
Grant him rest, peace and eternal joy*