

SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

Vol 5

Father John E Boll

No 60

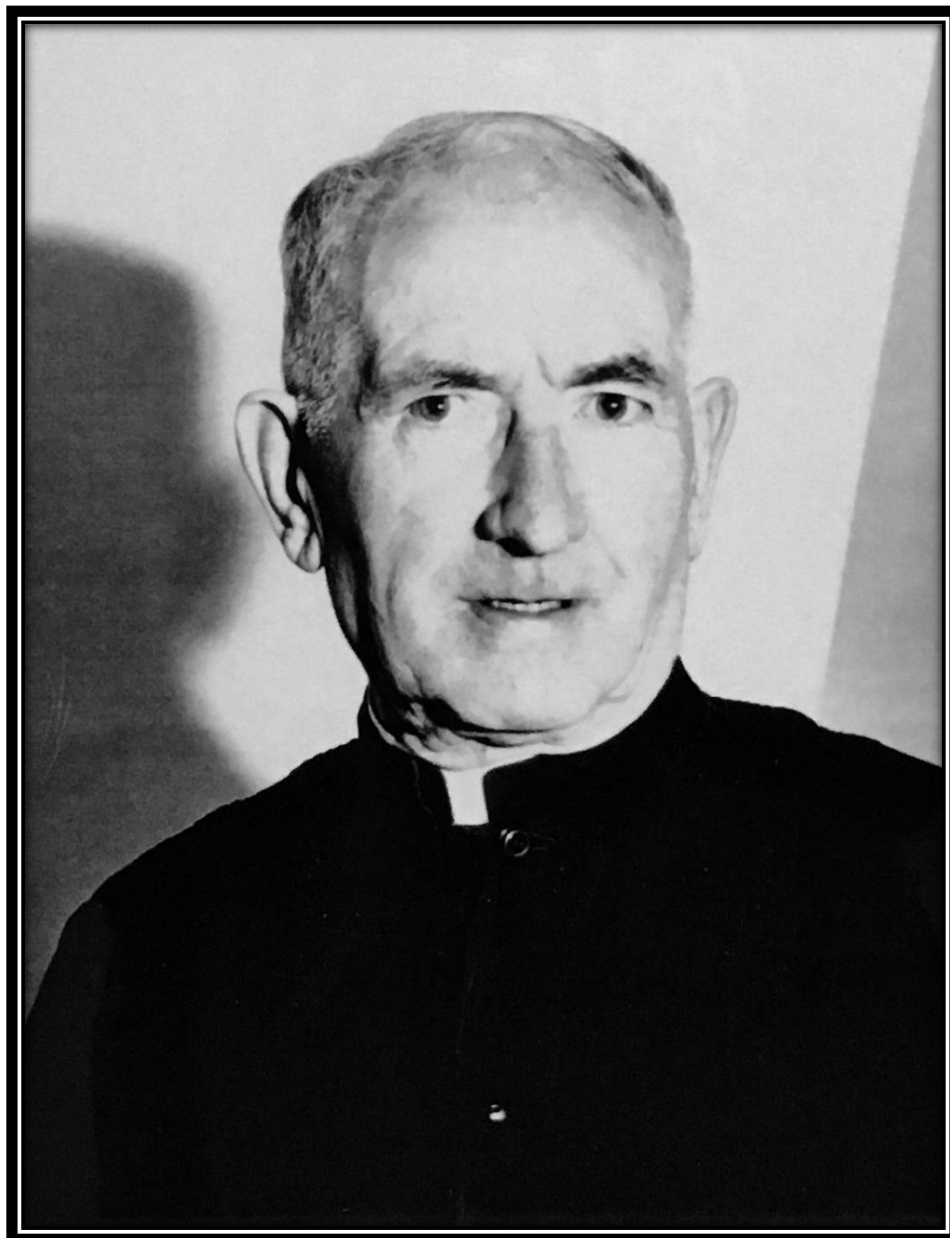
Monsignor Michael J Kearney

Native of Clonmel, County Tipperary, Ireland

Priest of the Diocese of Sacramento

Pastor of Saint Patrick Church, Jackson, California

October 24, 1876 – February 18, 1959



Michael J Kearney was born in Clonmel, County Tipperary, Ireland on October 24, 1876. He attended Saint Peter College in Wexford, Ireland and was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Sacramento on the Feast of Saint Joseph, March 19, 1906. He arrived in the Diocese of Sacramento in October 1906.

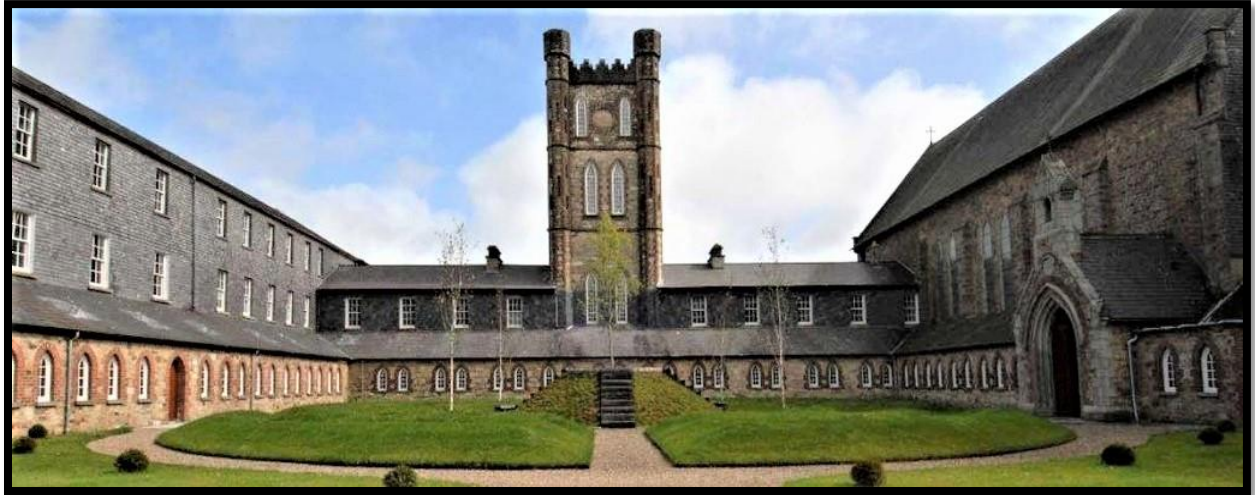


Photo from St Peter College Website

Saint Peter College, Wexford, Ireland

FIRST ASSIGNMENT

Father Kearney's first assignment was to Saint Patrick Church in Jackson where he worked for three years, October 1906 to November 1909, with Father Jeremiah J Gleeson, pastor.



Photo by John E Boll

Saint Patrick Church, Jackson

ASSIGNED TO MARIPOSA COUNTY

In November 1909, Bishop Thomas Grace assigned Father Kearney to Saint Joseph Parish in Mariposa County when that area was part of the Diocese of Sacramento. He served there five years until 1914.



Photo from the Web

Saint Joseph Church, Mariposa, CA

NEXT, SERVICE AT THE CATHEDRAL IN SACRAMENTO

In 1914, Bishop Grace assigned Father Kearney to the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament where he served for five years.



Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament

APPOINTED PASTOR OF JACKSON

After serving for thirteen years as an assistant, Bishop Grace appointed Father Kearney pastor of Saint Patrick Parish in Jackson where he labored for the next forty years until the day of his death.

NAMED DEAN OF MOTHER LODGE

In 1950, Bishop Robert Armstrong appointed Father Kearney as Dean of the Mother Lode Deanery which encompassed the counties of Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, El Dorado, Alpine and Modoc, a position he held for nine years until his death.

NAMED MONSIGNOR

Because of his dedication to the priestly ministry and his many years of service in the Diocese of Sacramento, on January 16, 1954, Pope Pius XII honored Father Kearney by naming him a Domestic Prelate with the title of Right Reverend Monsignor. In June of that year, Bishop Armstrong invested Father Kearney in the robes of his new office as a monsignor.

HONORED BY THE CITY OF JACKSON

The City of Jackson also honored Monsignor Kearney by naming a street after him, namely, Kearney Street.



Photo by John E Boll

Town Center of Jackson, California

DEATH COMES TO MONSIGNOR KEARNEY

In the early hours of Wednesday, February 18, 1959, Monsignor Kearney died in his sleep during the night. The previous day he was reported to be in good health and his death was attributed to his advanced age of 83. He had served the people of the Mother Lode for over forty years, first as assistant pastor, and then as pastor of Saint Patrick Church in Jackson.

FUNERAL MASS

Many of the faithful of the Jackson community came to the church on Sunday afternoon, February 22, 1959, when the body of Monsignor Kearney was brought to the church to lay in state until the Funeral Mass the next day.

On Monday morning, before the Requiem Mass began, the priests of the diocese prayed the Office of the Dead.

The Solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated for Monsignor Kearney in Saint Patrick Church where he had served as pastor for four decades on Monday, February 23, with Bishop Joseph T McGucken presiding.

The celebrant of the Mass was Father Joseph Hanrahan, pastor of Saint Patrick Church in Placerville, with Father James Kenny, pastor of Angels Camp, as deacon.



Bishop Joseph T McGucken

Father Daniel McCarthy, pastor of Ferndale, who formerly served as an assistant to Monsignor Kearney, served as sub-deacon. Father Niall Harrington, pastor of Sutter Creek, was master of ceremonies.

After the Communion Rite, Father John Maguire, pastor of All Hallows Church, Sacramento, and a long-time friend, gave a reflection on the life of Monsignor Kearney.

Assistants to Bishop McGucken were Fathers Charles Campbell of Ione and Keven Gaffney of Saint Catherine Church, Burlingame. Father William Slakey served as the bishop's master of ceremonies.

OLDEST PRIEST SERVING IN THE DIOCESE

At the time of his death, Monsignor Kearney had reached 83 years of age and held the title of being the oldest priest still serving as a pastor in the Sacramento Diocese.

BURIAL IN JACKSON

At the conclusion of the Mass of Christian Burial, the body of Monsignor Kearney was taken a short distance from the church to Saint Patrick Cemetery for the final prayers of committal and the lowering of the casket into the grave.



Photo by John E Boll

Grave of Monsignor Kearney, Saint Patrick Cemetery, Jackson



Photo by John E Boll

Monsignor Kearney's Headstone

IN MEMORIAM

Newly ordained Father Michael Kearney arrived in the Diocese of Sacramento in October 1906, in the first years of the twentieth century. He began his priestly ministry as assistant pastor in the Jackson parish and concluded his ministry fifty-three years later as pastor of the same parish. He served as pastor of Jackson for forty years.

For more than sixty years of the twentieth century, there were no term limits for pastors. Changes in this area did not happen until after the Second Vatican Council ended in 1965. Before the change, pastors often remained in office until their death, as was the case for Monsignor Kearney.

Monsignor Kearney was a well-respected priest in the diocese and was honored by Pope Pius XII who named him a monsignor and by Bishop Armstrong who appointed him dean of the Mother Lode Deanery. Monsignor Kearney chose not to retire and remained pastor of Jackson until the Lord called him home while he was asleep on February 18, 1959.

The people of the Diocese of Sacramento and the parish of Saint Patrick in Jackson were blessed by the many years of priestly ministry generously given by Monsignor Kearney. He chose to be buried among the people he served for four decades. May God grant him the crown of glory, joy and peace in the Kingdom of Heaven!

*Eternal Rest grant to Monsignor Kearney,
O Lord,
And may the light of your presence shine on
Him forever.*

*May his soul and the souls of all the
Faithful departed abide in peace.*

Amen