

# SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

Vol 3

Father John E Boll

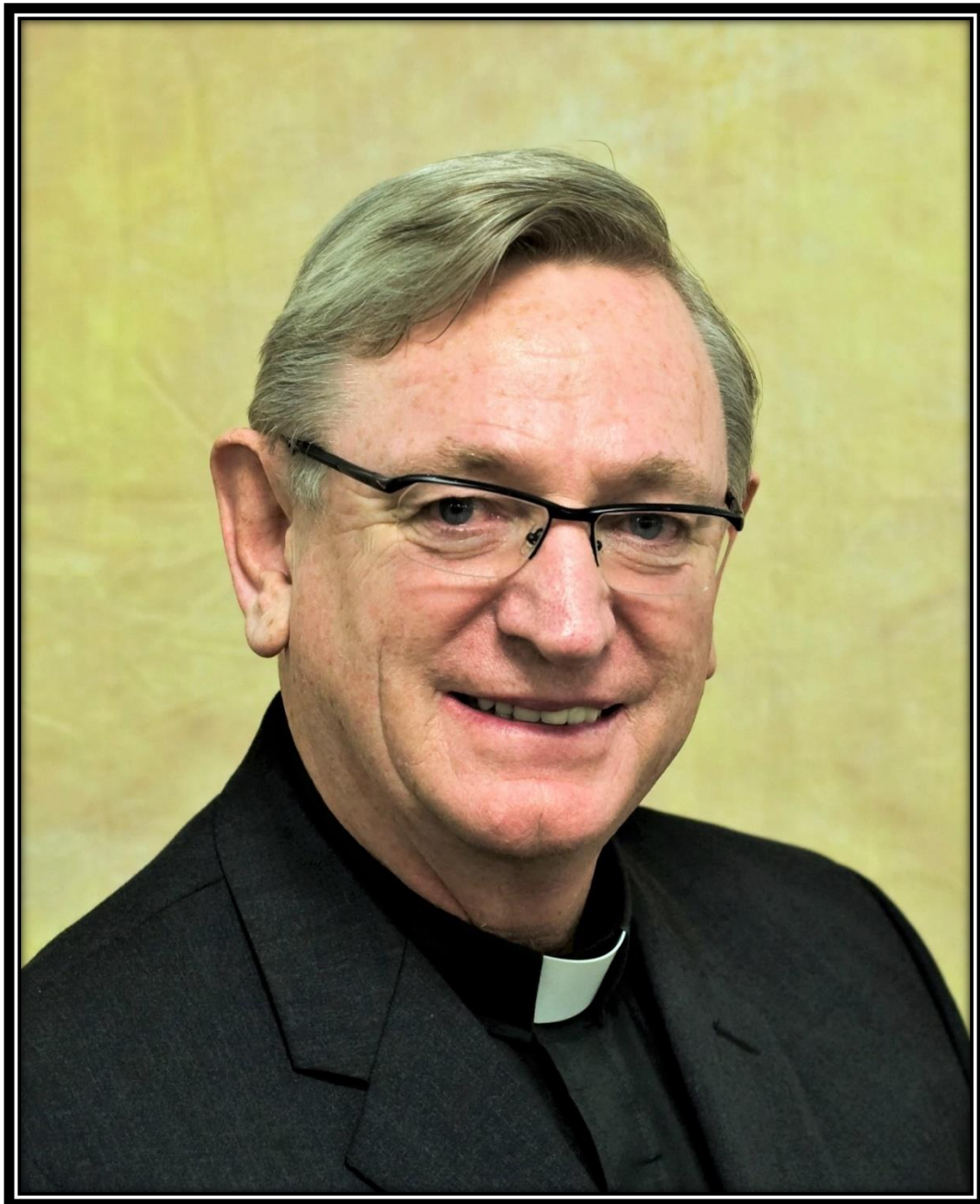
No 35

## *Father Daniel Anthony Looney*

Native of Killarney, County Kerry, Ireland

Priest of the Diocese of Sacramento

Pastor Emeritus of Holy Spirit Parish, Sacramento





**Dan with his father Jack & Tom his mother Alice**

**Daniel Anthony Looney, Son of Jack Looney and Alice O'Neill**, was born on July 3, 1947 in the town of Killarney, County Kerry. He is the second of five children born to the Looney family. The Looney children, in order of birth, are Thomas Brendan, Daniel Anthony, James Martin, Sean Anthony and Mary Jane Bernadette. Each child was born about three years apart and the Looney children were quite independent with each doing the things that interested him or her. The older brothers in the family helped in the rearing of their only sister, Mary Jane.

### **GROWING UP IN KILLARNEY**

Dan grew up on the outskirts of Killarney along the Cork Road. Killarney in those days was quiet and there were not many children living on the Cork Road close to Dan's age. He says the children of the area were fortunate that there was an empty field at the crossroad which no one knew who owned it, so it became the playground for the children of the area.

### **DAN BEGINS HIS EDUCATION**

Dan began his education at the Presentation Convent School in Killarney. In the area there were both Presentation and Mercy Sisters but because Dan's mother Alice had a relative who was a Presentation Sister, the Looney family was committed to the Presentation Sisters. Dan attended the Presentation School from age four to eight. He then transferred to the local Presentation Monastery School for Boys.

### **TRANSFER TO THE COUNTRY SCHOOL**

In the sixth grade, Dan's mother transferred all the children of the family to a nearby country school which had a very good reputation. The new school was a wonderful experience for Dan and from that school he received a scholarship to attend high school at Saint Brendan's College.



**The Looney Family**

### **SAINT BRENDAN COLLEGE**

As Dan began his high school years, the college was the only boarding school for boys in the county. Although popularly known as “*The Sem*”, it was not operated as a minor seminary. However, all those planning to go on to Maynooth Seminary for the Diocese of Kerry had to attend a minimum of two years at Saint Brendan’s College. Dan attend the college for the full term of five year.

### **DAN DECIDES TO ENTER THE SEMINARY**

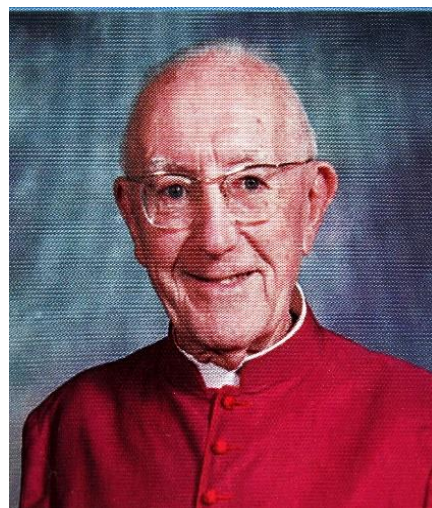
Dan does not know when the idea of priesthood began for him but he always felt called to the priesthood. He had never discussed the priesthood with anyone. At the end of his high school years he had to take the Leaving Certificate final exam and the results came out in August. He did well in the exam and decided to turn his focus on becoming a priest.

### **CONSULTS WITH FATHER MOYNIHAN**

Dan spoke with the priest-president of Saint Brendan College, Father John Moynihan, about the possibility of going to the seminary. Because Dan’s older brother Thomas was already in the seminary at Maynooth studying for the diocese of Kerry, he thought he would do something different. When he talked with Father John Moynihan, Dan had no fixed place in his mind where he wanted to serve as a priest. It was Father Moynihan who suggested the Sacramento diocese to him because some former graduates of Saint Brendan College were serving as priests in Sacramento. He told Dan, “You will not be lonely in Sacramento.”

Dan had only two questions for Father Moynihan: where was Sacramento located and does it rain a lot there? Given the fact that Killarney has an average rainfall of 85 inches a year, Dan was thinking of a place that had a drier climate. His questions were on point.

Within a week of that interview, Dan received a call from his mother telling him that the Cardinal of Sacramento was looking for him. His mother was not familiar with the word “chancellor” so she used the term “cardinal.” Monsignor Cornelius P Higgins, Chancellor of the Diocese of Sacramento, called to speak with Dan and to tell him he was happy to sign Dan up for the Diocese of Sacramento. He offered him three possible places for his theological education, Maynooth in Ireland, the Irish College in Rome, or All Hallows in Dublin. Dan made the choice to study in Rome since his older brother Tom was already at Maynooth, so going to a different place to study made sense to him.



**Msgr Cornelius Higgins**

### THE IRISH COLLEGE IN ROME

Dan began his studies in Rome in 1965 which was the year of the last session of the Second Vatican Council. The Irish cardinal and bishops and the Irish periti attending the Vatican Council all lived at the Irish College during the Council sessions so the seminarians had the opportunity to hear firsthand from the bishops what was being discussed at the Council. The seminarians were able to attend some of the open sessions at the Council.



Photo from the Irish College Website

### The Irish College, Rome

Dan had the opportunity to attend the liturgical ceremony of the mutual lifting of the Excommunication of 1054. This event was called *the Catholic-Orthodox Joint Declaration of 1965* which was read on December 7, 1965 simultaneously at a public gathering in Rome and at a special ceremony in Byzantium. It withdrew the exchange of excommunications between the Holy See of Rome and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, commonly known as the Great Schism of 1054. The Church of the West was represented by Pope Paul VI and the Church of the East was represented by Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I.



Photo from the Web

### **Pope Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I Meet in 1965**

#### **STUDIES AT THE LATERAN UNIVERSITY**



Dan became a student at the Lateran University in Rome for the next six years. This University was located just around the corner from the Irish College so it was very convenient for him.

For Dan, the main education he received in Rome was a broadening of understanding and perspective of theology of the Universal Church around the world as seen in the great diversity of thought and practice represented in the Eternal City.

Photo courtesy of Fr Daniel Looney

### **Dan as a Seminarian in Rome in 1965**

## **ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD**

Daniel Anthony Looney was ordained a priest on July 4, 1971 in Saint Mary of the Angels Cathedral in his hometown of Killarney by Bishop Eamonn Casey, bishop of the Diocese of Kerry. Many years later, Father Dan and his brother Father Tom made a visit to Bishop Casey who was in a nursing home in County Clare. The bishop did not recognize Dan or his brother Tom. Although his mind was beginning to fade, Bishop Casey sang a song for Fathers Dan and Tom during their visit, one of their father's favorite songs called, *The Kerry Dances*. Upon leaving, Father Dan told Bishop Casey that he stopped by to say hello because he had ordained Dan a priest. Bishop Casey looked at Dan sincerely and said, "Was it a good thing?" Father Dan replied, "Bishop, it was a marvelous thing. Thank you very much."



Photo courtesy of Fr Dan Looney

**Saint Mary of the Angels Cathedral, Killarney, Ireland**

## **FATHER DAN HEADS FOR SACRAMENTO**

After his ordination to the priesthood, Father Dan spent a few months with his family because the visas for America were delayed. He and Father Theo O’Sullivan traveled together by plane from Ireland to San Francisco and were met by Father Richard Higgins at the San Francisco Airport. Father Richard drove them to Saint Rose Parish in Roseville where he was stationed. Fathers Dan and Theo spent their first week in California at the Roseville parish.

## **VISIT TO THE CHANCERY OFFICE**

The newly ordained priests of 1971 were introduced to the Chancery staff by Father Patrick Nolan as Father Dan and the other newly arrived priests waited to hear where their first appointments would be. Father Dan was assigned to All Hallows Parish in Sacramento with Father Patrick Corkell as pastor.

Father Dan did not know how to drive a car when he arrived in Sacramento. Father Brendan Lawlor who was the other assistant at All Hallows Parish became Father Dan’s mentor and taught him how to drive a car with an automatic transmission. Early in his ministry in Sacramento, Father Dan’s father Jack died in Ireland on January 6, 1974. He was able to attend the funeral in Ireland and be with his family at this difficult time.

It was about this time that the MAT (Master of Arts in Teaching) program was established for the Diocese of Sacramento by Father Patrick McGrath and the University of San Francisco. Father Dan found this program very helpful and essential for those born outside the USA to adjust to the religious culture of the diocese. (Father Dan had to find out what CCD meant.)



Photo by John E Boll

**All Hallows Church, Sacramento**

### **FATHER DAN'S FIRST EXPERIENCE IN AN AMERICAN PARISH**

Father Dan ministered in All Hallows Parish almost two years and says this about himself: "I was somewhat of a rebel because I opposed Father Corkell's conservative style." Dan was formed in the vision of the Second Vatican Council and was now in a parish with a mindset of the church of the 1950s. During this period, there was a division in the diocese between the younger clergy and the older, more established clergy.

### **NEXT APPOINTMENT, SAINT VINCENT PARISH, VALLEJO**

The second appoint for Father Dan was as assistant to Saint Vincent Parish in Vallejo where he succeeded Father Maurice O'Brien. For a century, Saint Vincent Parish was founded and staffed by Dominican priests until the Dominican Order turned the parish over to the Bishop of Sacramento in 1965 because the Dominicans did not have enough clergy to continue staffing all the parishes where they were assigned.



Photo by John E Boll

**Saint Vincent Church, Vallejo**



When Father Dan arrived in Vallejo, the pastor of Saint Vincent Parish was Father Patrick O'Regan. This parish was very busy with 4 daily Masses, 6:30 AM in the church, 7 AM in the convent, 8 AM in the church and 5:15 PM in the church. During Lent, there was an added noon Mass at 12:15. There was also a mission church a few miles down the street named Saint Louis Bertrand. At the end of Dan's first year, Father O'Regan went to Ireland on his vacation and while there decided to retire in Ireland and never returned to Vallejo.

The next pastor was Father Patrick O'Neill with a new assistant, Father Vincent Brady. Both priests arrived at the same time. As it turned out, these two priests and Father Dan developed a good team and the next four years were very productive for Father Dan since Father Brady was a supportive brother priest to him. Father Dan served at Saint Vincent Parish for five years.

### **NEXT ASSIGNMENT, SAINT ANTHONY PARISH, SACRAMENTO**

In 1978, Father James O'Dea, a member of the Priests' Personnel Board, called Father Dan to see if he had any thoughts where he might like to serve in his next assignment. Father Dan told Father O'Dea he would like to go to Saint Anthony Parish in the Pocket Area. This parish was new and not ready for a second priest. Father O'Dea told Father Dan it was good that he was proactive. As it turned out, Father Dan was appointed to Saint Anthony Parish, much to his surprise.

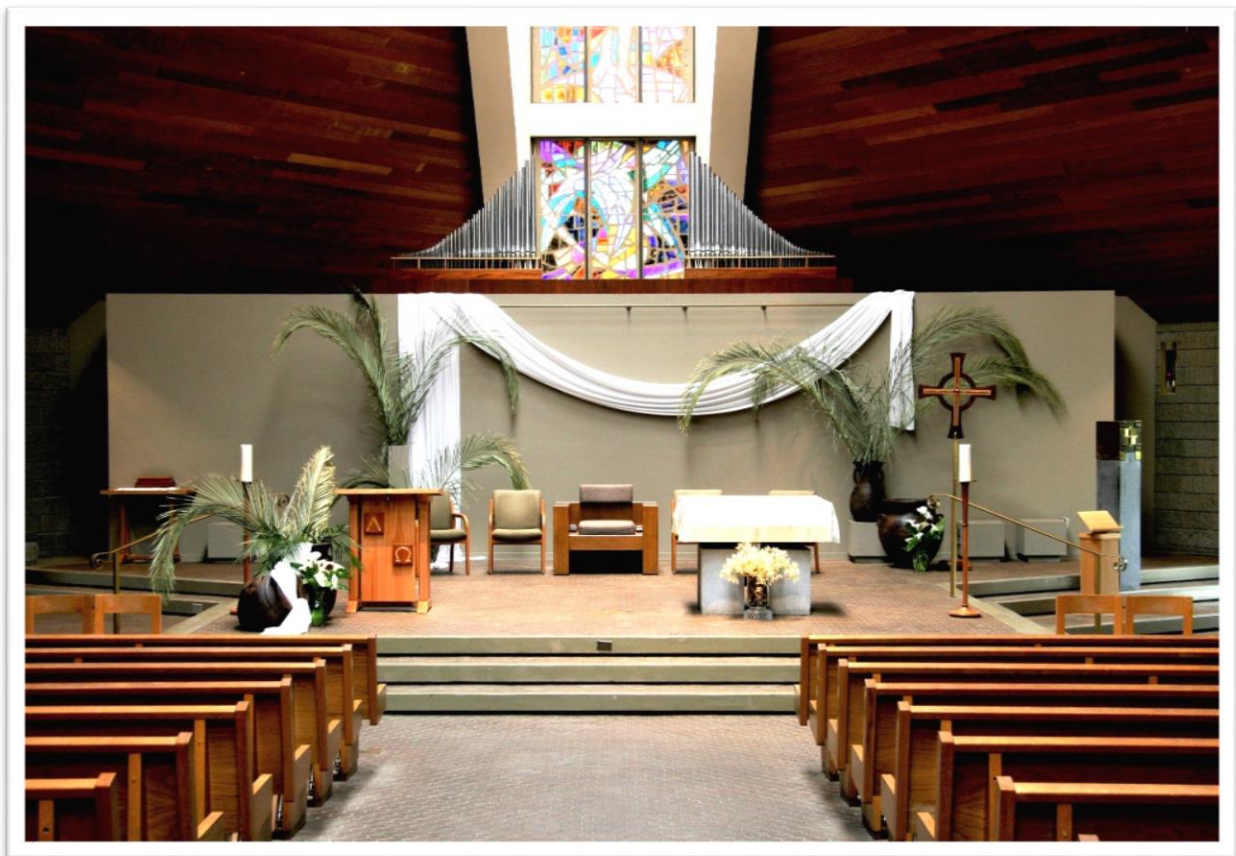
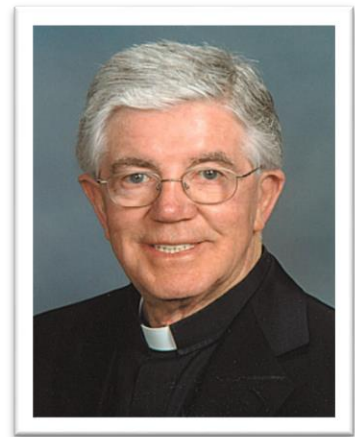


Photo by John E Boll

**Saint Anthony Church, Sacramento**

Father Dan met with Father Brendan O’Sullivan to talk about the parish. It was a very positive meeting although Father Dan was a bit intimidated by the reputation of Father O’Sullivan who was known as a good teacher and fine preacher.

After this meeting, Fathers Dan and Brendan went out for lunch and they happened to meet a parishioner who came up to Father O’Sullivan and said to him, “Father O’Sullivan, the homily you gave last Sunday was marvelous.” Father Dan asked the woman what Father O’Sullivan had said in the homily and she replied, “I have no idea, but it was wonderful.”



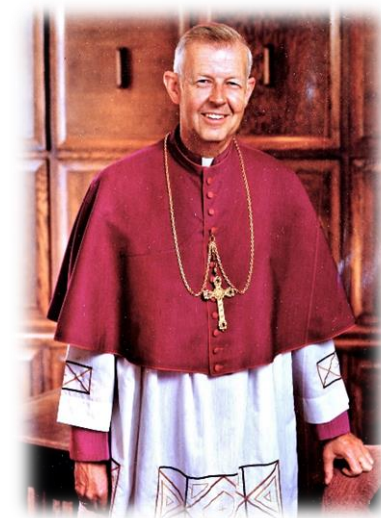
**Msgr Brendan O’Sullivan**

When Father Dan arrived at Saint Anthony Parish as assistant, building plans were already in place to construct a new church, rectory, and religious education center. The plans for the new parish complex were well thought-out.

At his first appearance in the parish before his assignment became official, Father Dan attended the ground breaking ceremony for the new church. Bishop Alden J Bell blessed the building site and Father Dan took photos of the event and continued taking photos as the buildings began to take shape. Father Dan served at Saint Anthony Parish for five happy and fruitful years.

### **FATHER DAN RETURNS TO SCHOOL**

It was during his time at Saint Anthony Parish that Father Dan realized he needed to deepen his knowledge of Scriptures. He wrote to the Priests Personnel Board requesting permission to take an advanced course in Biblical Studies. He received a letter back from Father Sean O’Leary, Secretary of the Personnel Board, saying it was a pleasure to recommend him for Biblical Studies rather than sending him for studies in Canon Law.



**Bishop Francis A Quinn**

In 1983, Bishop Francis Quinn sent Father Dan to Rome to do a course in Biblical Studies at the Pontifical Biblical Institute. He spent three and a half years in Rome in intense study of the Scriptures. It was a very positive experience for him and he graduated with a Licentiate Degree in Sacred Scripture with the added honor of *magna cum laude*.

As part of the requirements, Father Dan had to become proficient in Biblical Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew as the basic languages needed to study the Scriptures. He also had to have a working knowledge of Latin, Italian and French. This three year course of studies entailed a lot of hard work for him but he learned a great deal about the Sacred Scriptures of the Church.

## RETURN TO SACRAMENTO FOR A NEW APPOINTMENT

Upon his return to Sacramento, Father Dan received a letter from Bishop Quinn appointing him to the Office of Clergy Education under the leadership of Father Patrick McGrath. The area he was put in charge of was the **RENEW** program which was a practical biblical study of the Sunday Scripture readings for parishioners in the parishes of the diocese.

Sister Susan McCarthy, RSM, became his part-time assistant in the RENEW program. Father Dan worked in the RENEW office for three and a half years with his residence at Saint Anne Parish in the Meadowview area of South Sacramento. When he completed his time with the RENEW program, Bishop Quinn appointed him pastor of Saint Anne Parish.

## PASTOR OF SAINT ANNE PARISH

Serving as pastor of Saint Anne Parish was a wonderful multi-ethnic experience for Father Dan. The parish was located in an impoverished part of the City of Sacramento but was a delightful parish community with an excellent parish school. Father Dan says that the unifier of the parish was the annual *Christmas Carols* program which brought together the various cultures of the parish in a Christmas program for the whole parish community. The Tongans were excellent singers and all the music groups of the parish blended together in a beautiful way.



Photo by John E Boll

**Saint Anne Church, South Sacramento**

### **APPOINTED PASTOR OF SAINT JAMES PARISH, DAVIS**

Father Dan had served as pastor of Saint Anne Parish for three and a half year when Monsignor Coffey retired as pastor of Saint James Parish in Davis. Father Dan decided to apply for the Davis parish in 1994 and was appointed the new pastor. Monsignor Coffey had served as pastor of Davis for 32 years. With Father Dan's appointment to Davis, It became a time of transition for the parish.

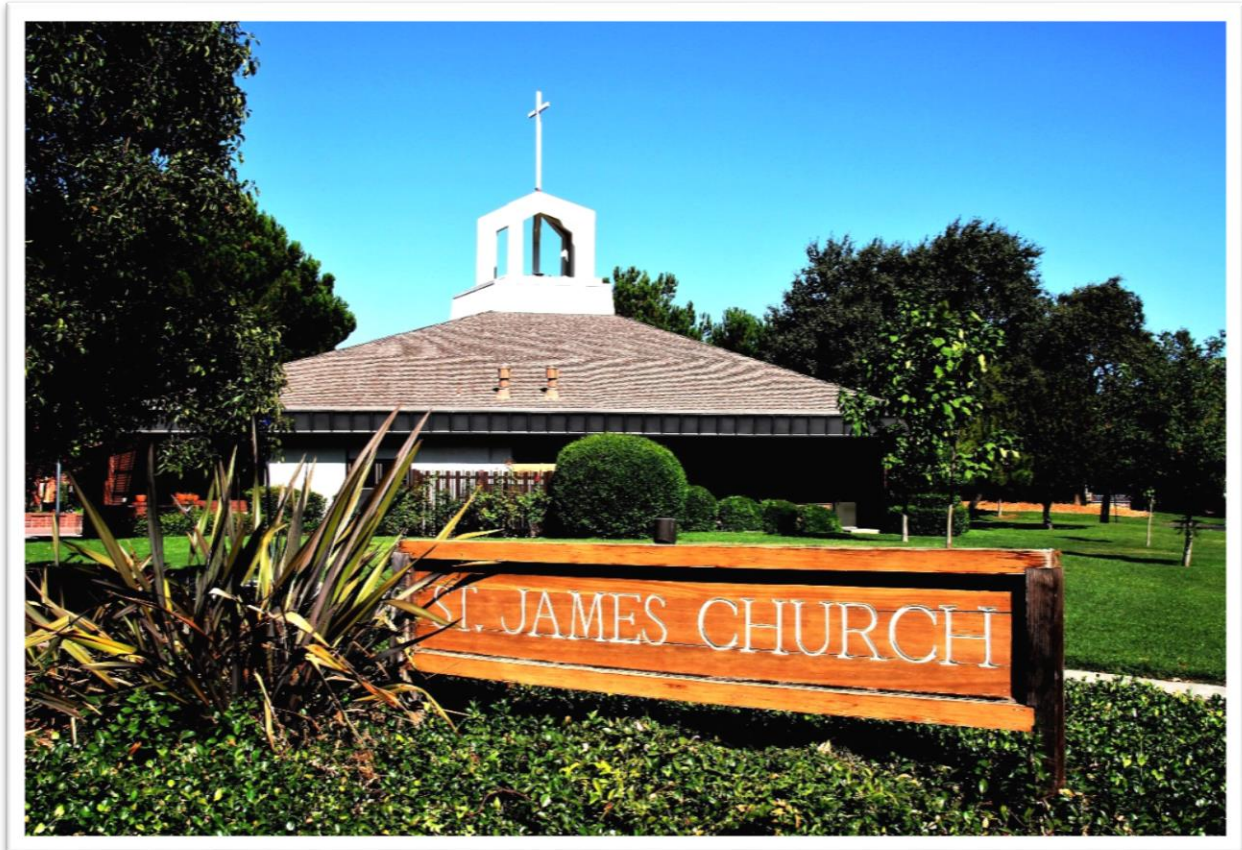


Photo by John E Boll

### **Saint James Church, Davis**

Saint James was a lively and active parish and Father Dan gave the best years of his life to this parish community. During his thirteen years as pastor, the church was renovated and the new Saint James Memorial Center was built. This new facility has become the center of life and activities for the parish as groups meet for prayer, study, work, recreation and mission.

After his retirement, Monsignor Coffey moved to a house in Davis but as time passed, his health began to fail and Father Dan graciously invited him to move back to the rectory to live which he did and lived there until his death in August of 2010.



Photo by John E Boll

### **Saint James Memorial Center**

### **ST JOSEPH PARISH, VACAVILLE**

After thirteen years as pastor of Davis, Father Dan knew it was time for a move. Saint Joseph Parish in Vacaville was established in 1992. Originally, the area of this new parish was part of Saint Mary Parish which was established in 1947. Father Vincent O'Reilly was the founding pastor of this parish and Father Dan succeed Father O'Reilly as the second pastor.



### **Notre Dame School, Vacaville**

Notre Dame Parish School had been built on this site in east Vacaville before Saint Joseph Parish existed, and it was here that the diocese established the new parish. The school became a shared school between the two Vacaville parishes. When Father Dan arrived as the new pastor of the parish, Notre Dame School was undergoing a difficult time. His focus that first year was getting the school back to a solid financial base.



Photo by John E Boll

### **Saint Joseph Church, Vacaville**

Father Boyet Vibandor was the first parochial vicar in the parish and helped to improve the computer program at the school. He became friends of the students and their parents and the school continued to thrive and grow. As it turned out, Father Dan's time as pastor of Saint Joseph Parish in Vacaville was relatively short.

### **FATHER DAN'S FINAL APPOINTMENT**

Father Looney had been pastor of Saint Joseph Parish in Vacaville only three years when Holy Spirit Parish in Sacramento became vacant due to the retirement of Monsignor Albert O'Connor. Father Dan received a call from a priest friend who suggested that he apply for Holy Spirit Parish.

Father Dan made a visit to see Holy Spirit parish and was impressed by the newly renovated church. Since he was in the middle of his six year term as pastor in Vacaville, he decided to ask Bishop Soto how he would feel if he applied for Holy Spirit Parish. Bishop Soto told Father Dan he would be open to that possibility.

Father Dan applied for Holy Spirit Parish in Sacramento and Bishop Soto appointed him as the new pastor. Father Dan enjoyed the parishioners of Holy Spirit parish very much, both the older established ones and the younger families moving into the parish. He was fortunate that Monsignor O'Connor had taken great care of the parish facilities and there was no need for further renovations.



Photo by John E Boll

### **Holy Spirit Church, Sacramento**

After a few years in the parish, Father Dan realized that the parish needed some meeting space on the parish grounds which was landlocked. He purchased a duplex close to the church which became the priests' residence. He was hoping to renovate and expand the old rectory into a parish meeting center and to move the Religious Education Office to this new facility.

However, at the end of 2016, Father Dan decided he would retire at the end of the calendar year of 2017 and not take on the task of renovating the old rectory. He made the decision to live each day of his last year as pastor savoring all the final events of his active ministerial life. He did just that and enjoyed each event during the year as his way of preparing for retirement.

### **RETIREMENT**

Father Dan retired on December 31, 2017 and took up residence at the Priests' Retirement Village in Citrus Heights. He now enjoys his time living at the Priests' Village, spending time with his brother priests and calling his relatively small apartment his new home. He enjoys occasionally

helping in parishes of the diocese when needed and celebrating Mass at the Mercy Convent in Auburn once a week. He also travels quite a bit, especially to Ireland and Italy.



Photo by John E Boll

### **Father Dan's Apartment at the Priests' Village, Citrus Heights**

Father Dan does not regret leaving behind the administrative work of the parish but misses the pastoral work he did with the people of the parishes he served. Now, he celebrates God's goodness each day in retirement.

### **FATHER DAN'S BROTHER FATHER THOMAS**

Father Dan's older brother Thomas is also a priest serving in the home Diocese of Kerry in Ireland. Father Tom is currently pastor of a small parish on the outskirts of Killarney named Prince of Peace Parish in Fossa, located close to one of the Lakes of Killarney.

Father Tom has been a priest for 50 years and will be stepping down into retirement sometime in the near future.





Photo courtesy of Fr Dan Looney

**Prince of Peace Church, Fossa, Killarney, County Kerry  
Where Father Thomas Looney is the Pastor**



Photo courtesy of Fr Dan Looney

**FINAL THOUGHTS**

Father Dan has been a great asset to the Diocese of Sacramento over the past half century as a priest. As is the experiences of every priest, some parish assignments have been better than others. But over this half century, wherever Father Dan has ministered, he has helped people grow in their faith in God and commitment to the Lord.

The Lakes of Killarney are one of the most beautiful spots on earth but the area is often very wet due to the many rainstorms that pass through the area. When Father Dan asked Father Moynihan at Saint Brendan College what kind of weather Sacramento had, that was no idle question. He has found lots of sunshine in the great Sacramento Valley unlike the many cool and wet years he spent in Killarney.

Father Dan has had great opportunities to continue his studies, especially when Bishop Quinn sent him to Rome for advanced Biblical Studies. He used those skills to help establish a thriving RENEW program in the diocese which continue to this day in many parishes.

We thank you, Father Dan, for your friendship and life of ministry with us in the Diocese of Sacramento. We wish you many happy years of good health surrounded by many friends as you continue your journey toward the Kingdom of God in its fullness. Remember, the best is yet to come!

## *Ad Multos Annos!*

### Photos of Father Dan's Life Journey



Photo courtesy of Fr Dan Looney

**Windows in the Baptistery of the Killarney Cathedral**

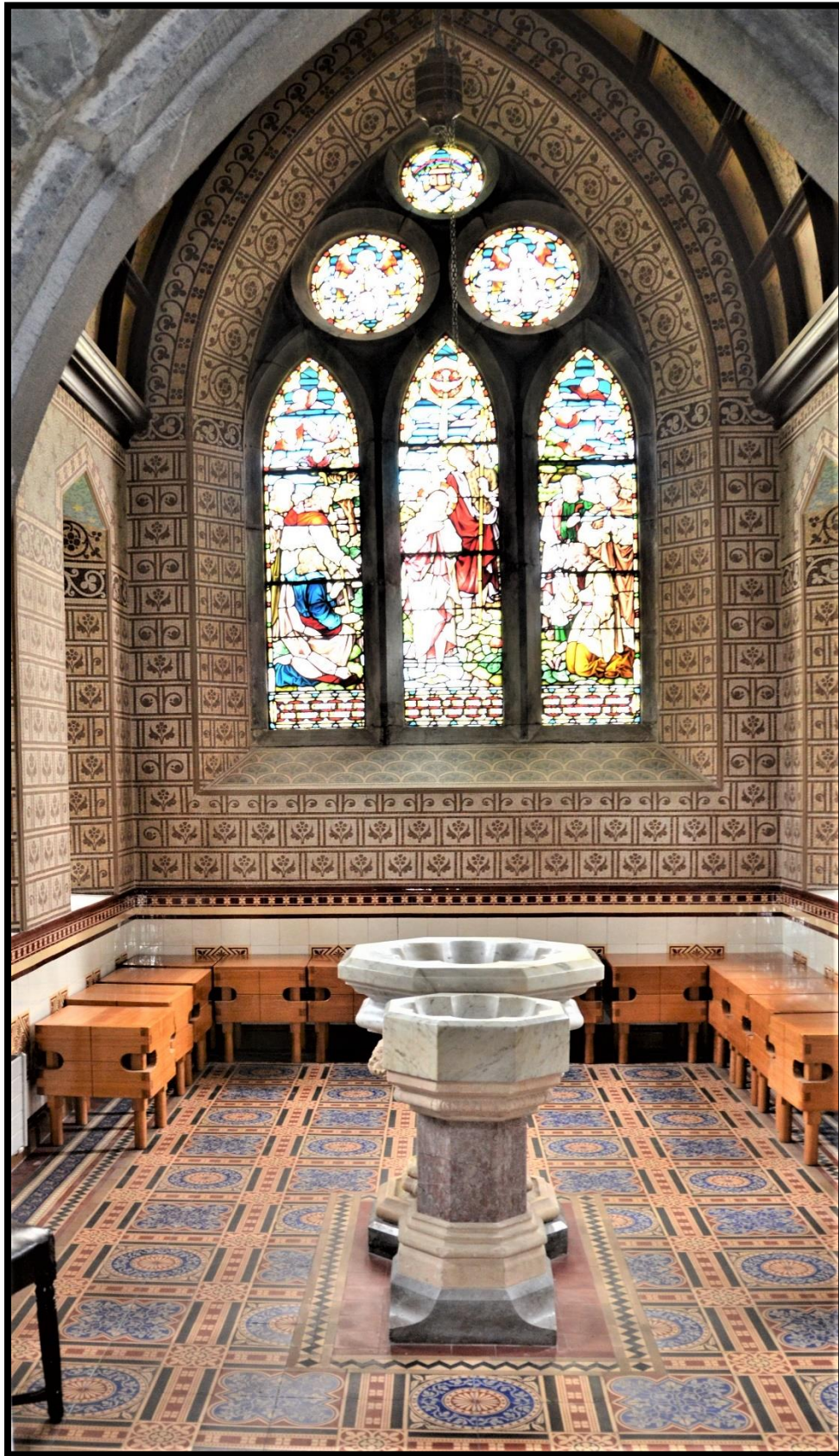


Photo courtesy of Fr Dan Looney

**Baptistry of the Killarney Cathedral where Fr Dan was baptized in 1947**

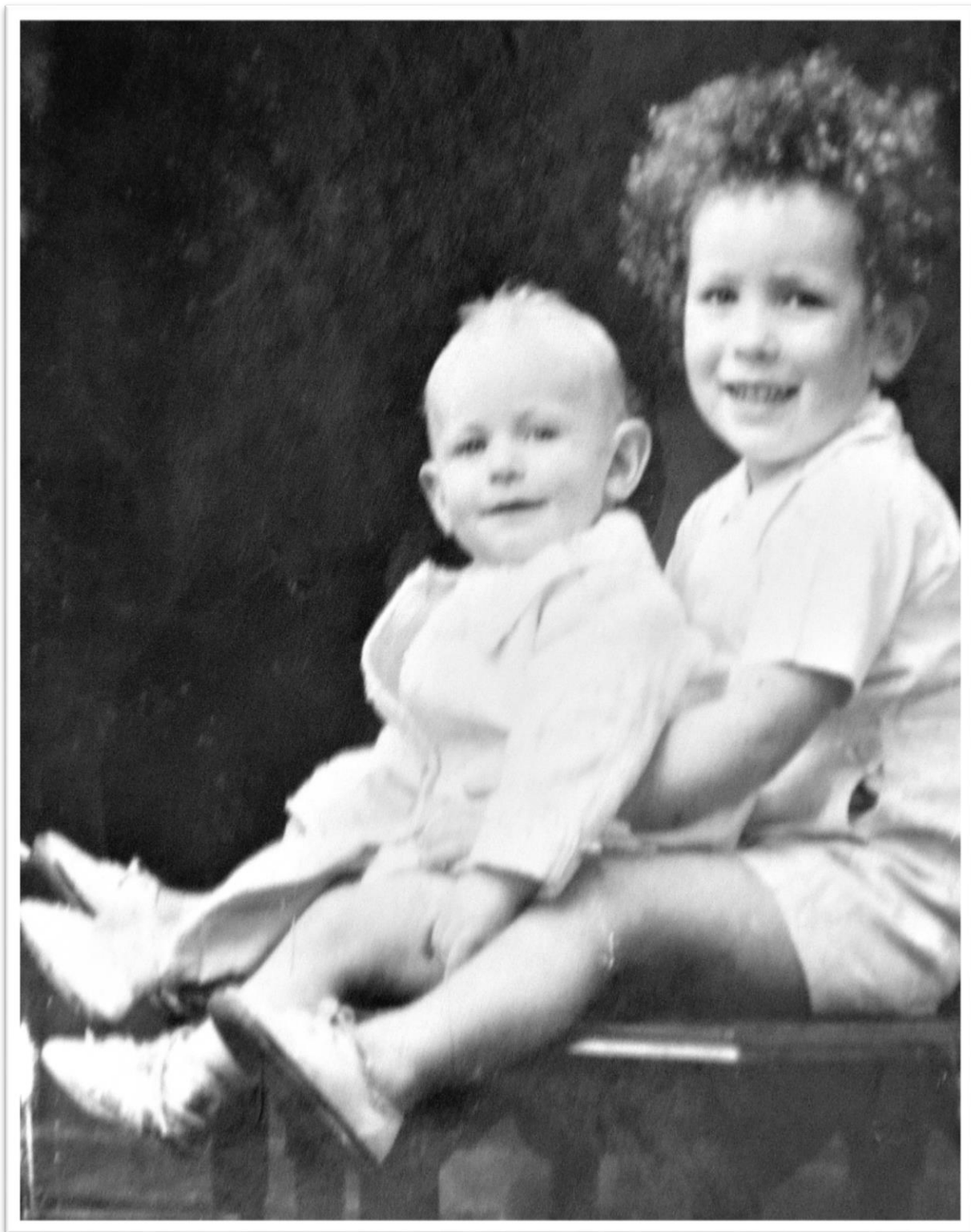
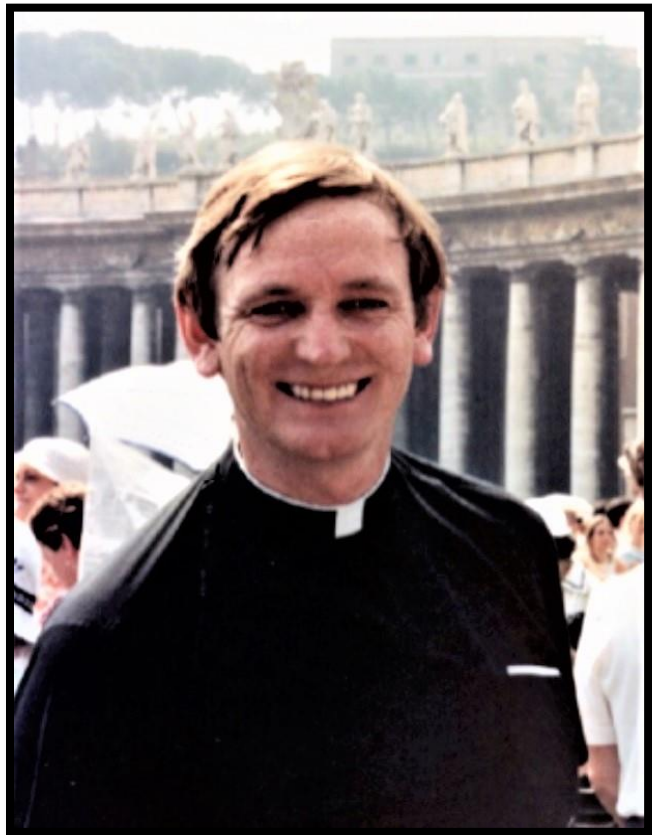


Photo courtesy of Fr Dan Looney

**Daniel and his older brother Thomas  
1948**



Father Dan Looney Discovers the Hidden Treasures of Rome in 1983



Photos courtesy of Fr Dan Looney



Photo courtesy of Fr Dan Looney

**Father Dan meets Pope John Paul II in 1984**





Photos courtesy of Fr Dan Looney

**The Five Adult Looney Children**  
L-R, Sean, James, Mary, Tom and Dan



**The Looney Family Visits Father Dan as they Tour Sutter's Mill in Coloma**  
L-R, Dan, Sheila & James, Sean and Mona, Tom and Mary

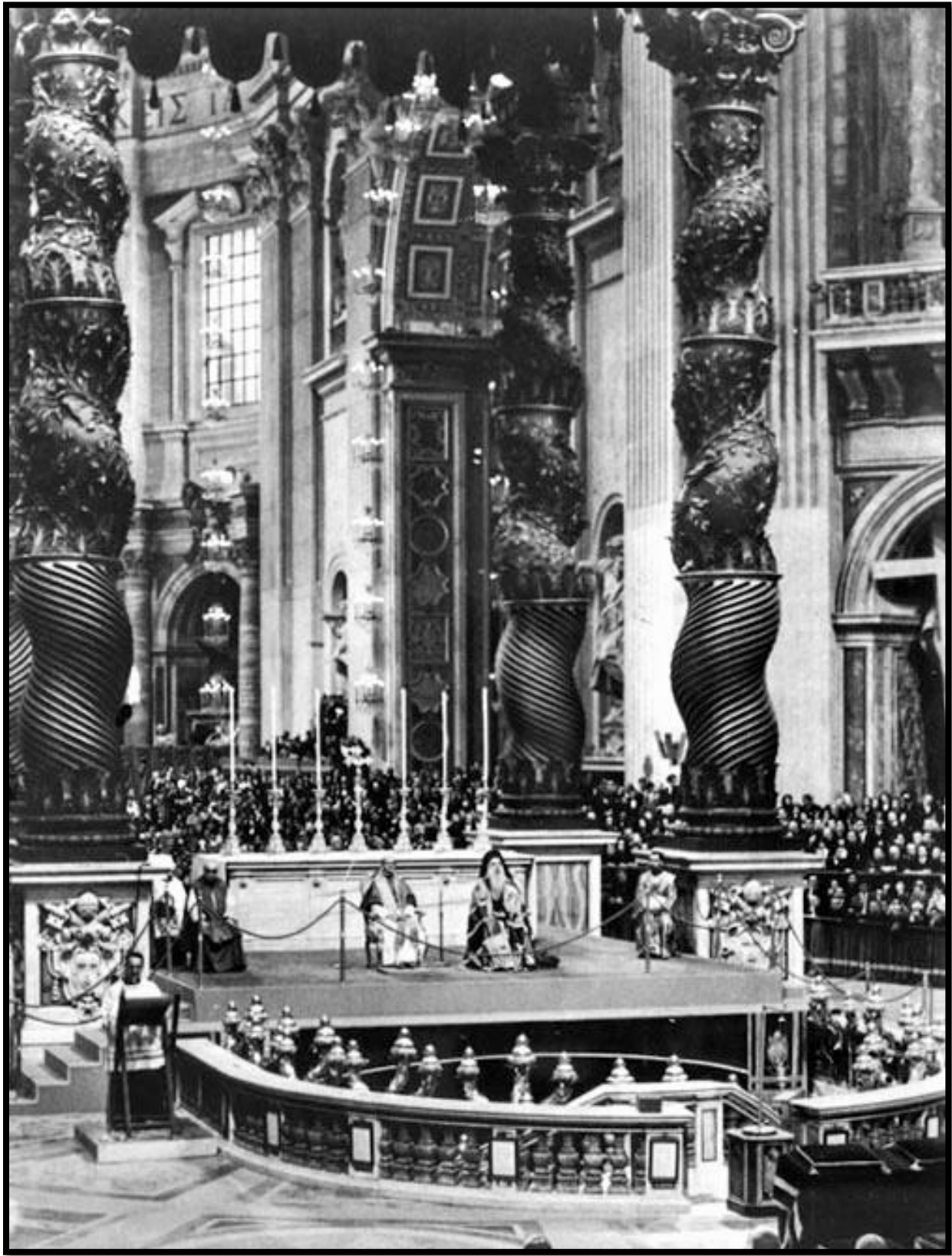


Photo from the Web

**The Church of the West and the Church of the East  
Mutually Lift the Excommunication of 1054  
December 7, 1965**



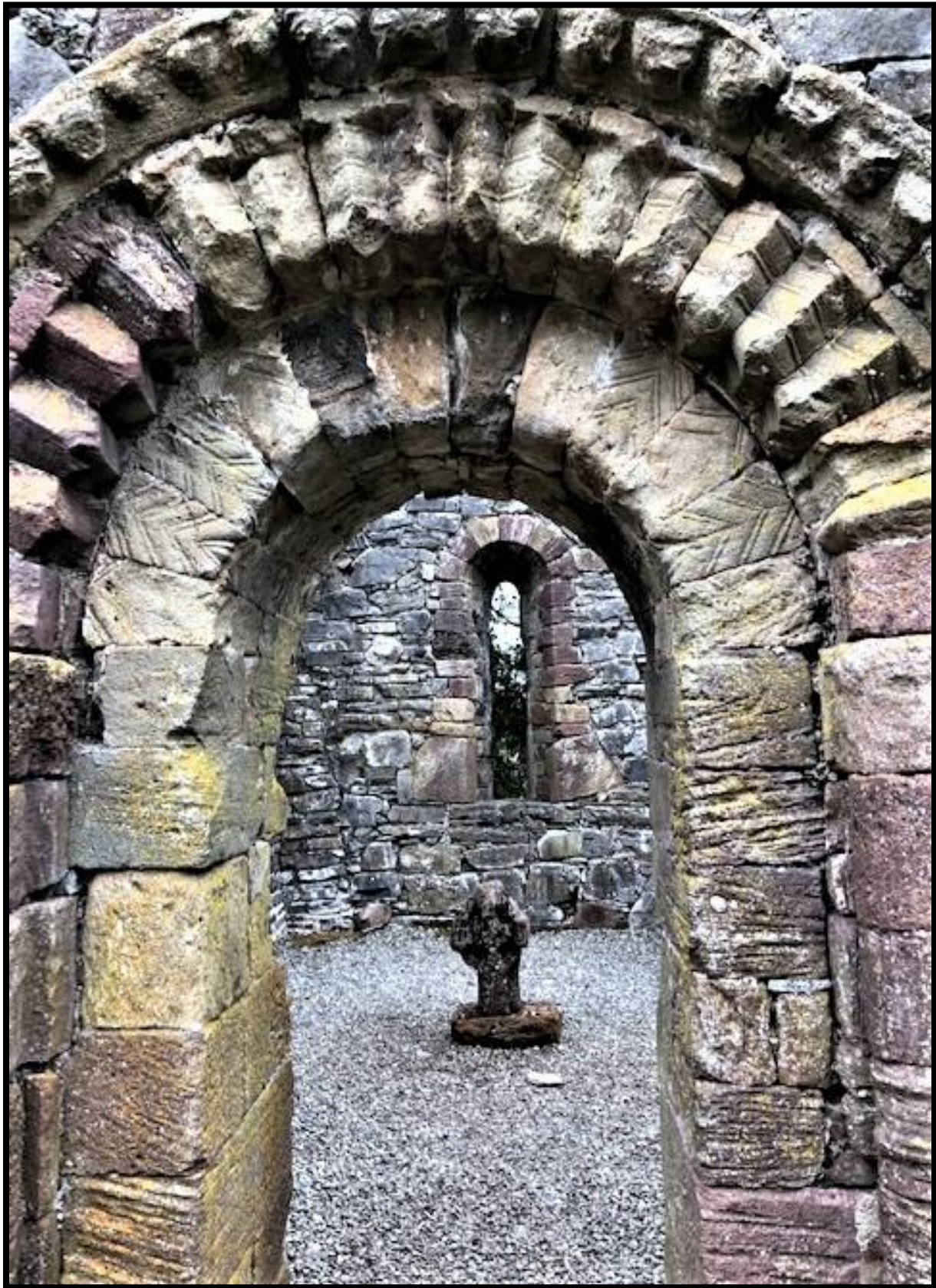


Photo by Fr Dan Looney

**Romanesque Doorway of the Sixth Century Chapel at Inisfallen Island, Killarney, Ireland**



Photos courtesy of Fr Dan Looney

**Interior of the Killarney Cathedral**



Photo courtesy of Fr Dan Looney

**One of the Lakes of Killarney**



*Father Daniel Anthony Looney*