

SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

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Father John E Boll

No 80

Monsignor James Dallas Poole

Native of Marysville, California

Priest of the Diocese of Sacramento

Founding Pastor of Saint Charles Borromeo Parish, Sacramento

July 18, 1918 – November 10, 1997



James Dallas Poole, son of Horatio Devore Poole and Mary Elizabeth Finnegan, was born on July 18, 1918, in Marysville, California. He was baptized on July 28, 1918 in Saint Joseph Church in Marysville by Father James Grealy. His baptismal sponsors were James and Elizabeth McElroy. Jim was confirmed by Bishop Robert Armstrong on February 15, 1931.

JAMES BEGINS HIS PRIMARY EDUCATION

In September 1924, at the age of 6 years, James began his primary education at Notre Dame Catholic Grammar School in Marysville which was staffed by the Notre Dame Sisters. After completing the fifth grade in 1929, Jim's parents sent him to Saint Catherine Academy in Benicia for his three years of junior high where he graduated from the eighth grade in the spring of 1932.

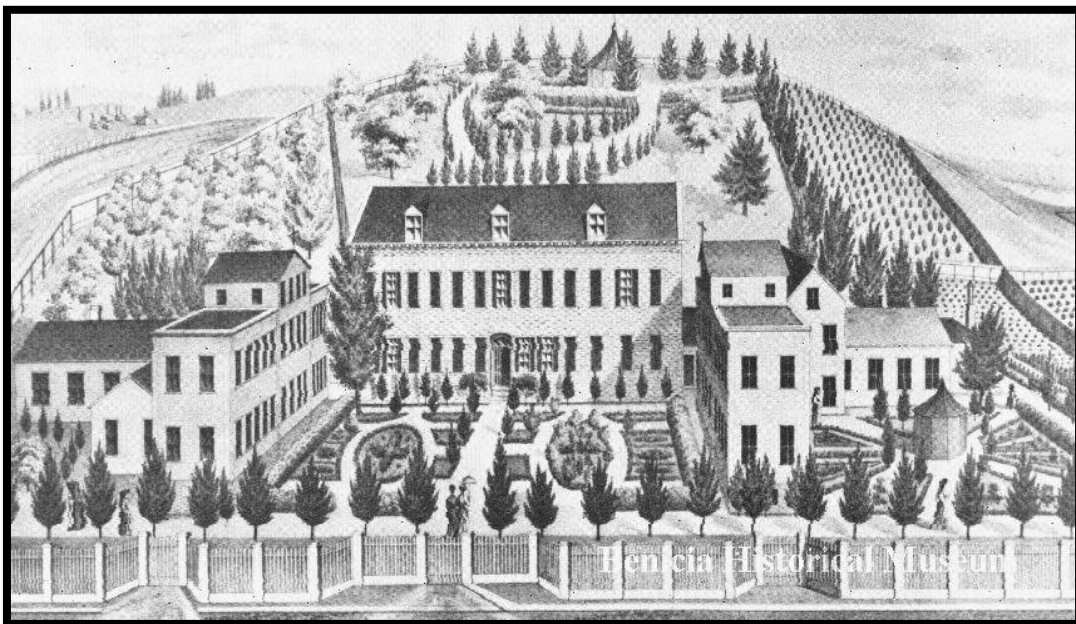


Photo from the St Catherine, Benicia Website

Saint Catherine Academy, Benicia, California

BEGINNING OF HIGH SCHOOL

In September of 1932, Jim transferred to Saint Joseph College Seminary in Mountain View where he began his four years of high school, graduating in June 1936. He then began his first two years of college at Saint Joseph College from 1936 to 1938.

Jim Poole was a tall, handsome and intelligent student who was also an excellent athlete. If he had chosen to enter the professional world of sports, he could have made it to the professional leagues since he had the physical height, natural skill and brilliant intelligence to be a professional baseball player. Instead of pursuing a career in baseball, he chose a life of ministry as a Catholic priest.

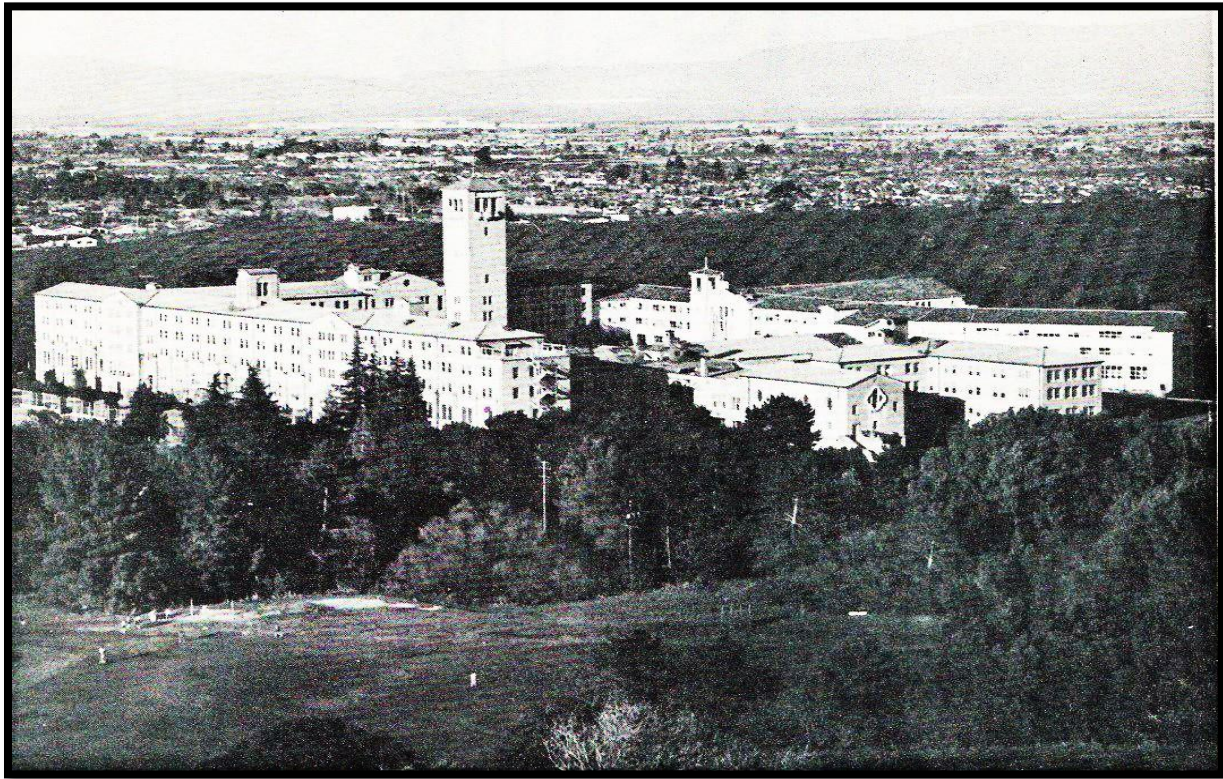


Photo taken from the St Joseph Website

Saint Joseph Seminary, Mountain View

JIM TRANSFERS TO SAINT PATRICK SEMINARY, MENLO PARK

In the fall of 1938, James Poole transferred to Saint Patrick Seminary in Menlo Park to complete his last two years of college and then began his theological studies. He graduated from college with a Bachelor of Arts degree.



Photo by John E Boll

Saint Patrick Seminary, Menlo Park, California

Because the United States was engaged in the battles of World War II, in order for seminary students to maintain their deferment from military service, they had to attend school year-round without any vacation during the summers. Consequently, Jim completed his normal four years of theological studies in three years. In preparation for his ordination, he was incardinated in the Diocese of Sacramento in 1940.

JAMES POOLE ORDAINED A PRIEST

On December 18, 1943, James Dallas Poole was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Sacramento in Saint John the Baptist Church, Chico, by Bishop Thomas Gorman who was bishop of the Diocese of Reno. Why he was ordained in Chico by Bishop Gorman rather than Bishop Armstrong is not known at this time.



Bishop Thomas Gorman
Bishop of Reno

FATHER POOLE IS GIVEN HIS FIRST APPOINTMENT

After his ordination and time spent with his family to celebrate his ordination, Father Poole received his first appointment from Bishop Robert J Armstrong as assistant to Monsignor William Coen at Sacred Heart Parish in Red Bluff. It appears Father Poole and Monsignor Coen became good friends since Father Poole served as assistant in Red Bluff for seven years, 1944 to 1951.



Photo by John E Boll

Sacred Heart Church, Red Bluff

SECOND APPOINTMENT

On October 31, 1951, after serving seven years as assistant in Red Bluff, Bishop Armstrong appointed Father Poole Assistant Superintendent of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Sacramento with residence in the Cathedral Presbytery in Sacramento. He was also appointed director of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine for the diocese. While working in all these areas, he found time to earned his Master's Degree at Sacramento State College in 1954.

Father Poole coordinated two large fund drives. The first was raising money for Bishop Armstrong High School and the second drive was for funding the first diocesan seminary named Saint Pius X which was first located near the town of Rio Dell in Humboldt County. As the number of students increased in the seminary, a major diocesan campaign was launched to build a new seminary on land donated to the diocese in the Galt area. The new seminary facilities in Galt were dedicated on April 23, 1961. For more information, see Archive Articles, Volume 4, Numbers 12, 13 & 14.

APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF BISHOP ARMSTRONG HIGH SCHOOL

On September 18, 1956, Coadjutor Bishop Joseph T McGucken appointed Father Poole Director of Bishop Armstrong High School. He was the official head of the school in order to coordinate girls' and boys' departments and to assume full authority and responsibility for the school's financial management. However, for any expenditure over \$500, he had to get the approval of the bishop.

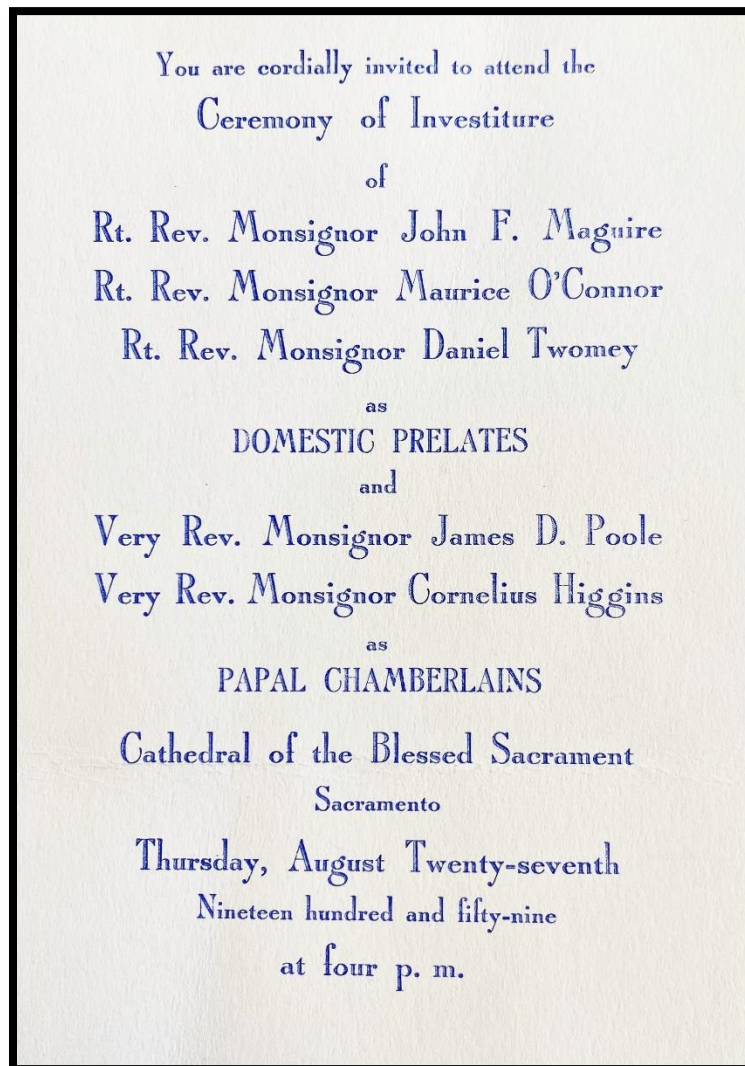


Photo by John E Boll

Bishop Armstrong High School, now renamed Christian Brothers High School

NAMED PAPAL CHAMBERLAIN

On April 30, 1959, Father Poole was named a Papal Chamberlain by Pope John XXIII. The ceremony of investiture was held in the Cathedral on Thursday, August 27, 1959, with Bishop McGucken presiding. The invitation to that ceremony follows.



Invitation to the Ceremony of Investiture

OTHER HONORS GIVEN TO MONSIGNOR POOLE

On July 21, 1965, Pope Paul VI named a new group of monsignors in the Diocese of Sacramento. Monsignor Poole was raised to the rank of Domestic Prelate at that time. The Investiture Ceremony was held on Sunday, December 19, 1965, in the Cathedral at 3 PM with Bishop Alden J Bell, Bishop of Sacramento, presiding.

For some years, I had heard that Monsignor Poole was asked to become bishop of Boise, Idaho. I contacted his nephew, Father James Sullivan, who is a priest of the Diocese of Oakland to see if that story is true. Father Jim told me, "Yes, my Uncle Jim was offered the episcopacy of Boise." Father Jim said, "My Uncle Jim had no desire to go to Boise. My grandmother and Archbishop

McGucken did their best together to prevail on my uncle to accept the appointment. But Uncle Jim did not want to leave the people of Sacramento so turned down the call to be bishop of Boise. I personally always admired him for that decision.”

APPOINTED FOUNDING PASTOR OF SAINT CHARLES BORROMEIO PARISH IN SACRAMENTO

In 1960, Bishop Joseph McGucken appointed Monsignor Poole as the founding pastor of Saint Charles Borromeo Parish while continuing on as Superintendent of Schools until September 1970.



Photo by John E Boll

Saint Charles Borromeo Church, Sacramento

Monsignor Poole started the parish by celebrating Mass in the garage of his residence several blocks away from where Saint Charles Parish eventually was built on Center Parkway. The parish was built in stages and by the time it was finally completed, there was a school, convent, rectory, parish hall, and church. In a *Catholic Herald* interview with Father Michael McFadden who succeeded Monsignor Poole when he retired, he said Monsignor Poole was “a dedicated priest who loved the church and loved his vocation. He had all the qualities of a gentleman in the true sense of the word.”

Apostles of the Sacred Heart Sister Aloysius Como met Monsignor Poole in 1977 when she became principal of Saint Charles Borromeo School. She described Monsignor Poole as “truly a prince.” She went on to say that, “He would give the shirt off his back if someone needed it.”

Sister Aloysius said part of Monsignor Poole's skill as an educator was challenging those around him to excel. While serving as diocesan superintendent of schools from 1951 to 1970, there was a building boom that included construction of three Sacramento Catholic high schools: the former Bishop Manogue, Christian Brothers and Saint Francis High Schools.



Photo by John E Boll

Saint Charles Borromeo School

"To the thousands of people Monsignor Poole served during his years as pastor," Sister Aloysius said, "he will be remembered most for his great sense of humor. It was not uncommon for him to pepper his homilies with anecdotes of his escapades as a student at Notre Dame School in Marysville and Saint Catherine Academy in Benicia."

As an avid football fan, he was also known to have said a prayer or two at Mass for the San Francisco 49ers football team during football season.

Monsignor Roy Peters was a life-long friend of Monsignor Poole since they were in the seminary together. He said of Monsignor Poole, "He was a great priest. He loved his people and always responded when people needed him."

MONSIGNOR POOLE RETIRES

In his letter of resignation as pastor to Bishop Quinn at the mandatory age 75, Monsignor Poole wrote, "I consider my pastorate at Saint Charles Borromeo to be the most gratifying and fruitful

years of my priestly life. One reason for this is the successful operation of our elementary school.” As the former superintendent of Catholic Schools and as a pastor, he took great pride in the Saint Charles Borromeo parish school.

As was the custom in that era, Monsignor Poole continued to live in Saint Charles rectory for the next three years of his retirement.



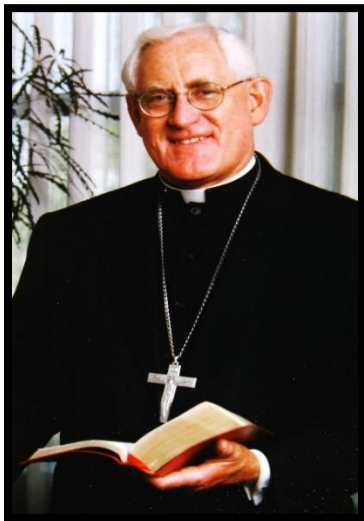
Monsignor James Dallas Poole

AFFLICTED WITH CANCER

After Monsignor Poole retired, he was stricken with cancer and the losing battle began. As the cancer progressed in intensity, so too did the pain. In the final conversation Monsignor Peters had with his life-long friend one week before Monsignor Poole’ death, Jim Poole still saw the lighter side of life. Monsignor Peters said, “He called me and asked me who I was betting on,

Michigan or Penn State.” His last word to Roy Peters was the Hawaiian farewell, “Aloha, until we meet again.” Monsignor Poole died on Monday, November 10, 1997, at the age of 79.

FUNERAL MASS FOR MONSIGNOR POOLE



Bishop William K Weigand

Bishop William K Weigand, bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento, was the principal celebrant at the Funeral Mass for Monsignor Poole at Saint Charles Borromeo Church. After the final commendation to the Lord, the body of Monsignor Poole was taken in procession to Saint Mary Cemetery in Sacramento, to the Priests’ Section, for the Prayers of Committal and burial.

Monsignor Poole was survived by his half-sister, Sara Sullivan, of Marysville, and many nieces and nephews.



Photo by John E Boll

**Headstone of Monsignor James D Poole
Saint Mary Cemetery, Sacramento**

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As a student at Saint Joseph College in Mountain View, some of the lower classmen called Jim Poole “god” because of the professional way he carried himself when he played baseball. Jim was a 6’2” natural born athlete, and in the classroom, he excelled in his studies. No doubt, his physical prowess and intellectual excellence caught the eye of seminary professors and students alike.

Father Jim’s first appoint as assistant of Sacred Heart Parish in Red Bluff was for seven years which was a long first assignment. The obvious conclusion is his pastor, Monsignor William Coen, must have been very pleased to have him as an assistant in the parish.

From Red Bluff, he moved to the Cathedral to become Assistant Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Sacramento and then Superintendent. To move from assistant pastor to assistant superintendent and then superintendent of Catholic schools is a great jump in responsibility. He became Diocesan Moderator of the NCCW, Director of CCD, Director of the Saint Thomas Aquinas Library and Gift Shop, and Diocesan Director of the Bishop’s Development Fund. The obvious next step would be bishop, but when Monsignor Poole was offered that position, he declined.

Monsignor Poole touched many lives in his ministry and the Church of Sacramento can be proud to have had such a powerful figure as a priest of the diocese for 54 years in ministry. Thanks, Jim, for your life of priestly ministry in the Diocese of Sacramento!



*In Christ Jesus, the hope of
blessed resurrection has dawned,
that those saddened by the certainty of dying
might be consoled by the promise of
immortality to come.
Indeed, for your faithful, Lord, life is changed not
ended, and when this earthly dwelling turns to
dust, an eternal dwelling is made ready
for them in heaven.*

Preface I for the Dead



Photo by John E Boll

Newly Renovated Saint Charles Church 2021



Monsignor James Dallas Poole