

SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

Vol 5

Father John E Boll

No 82

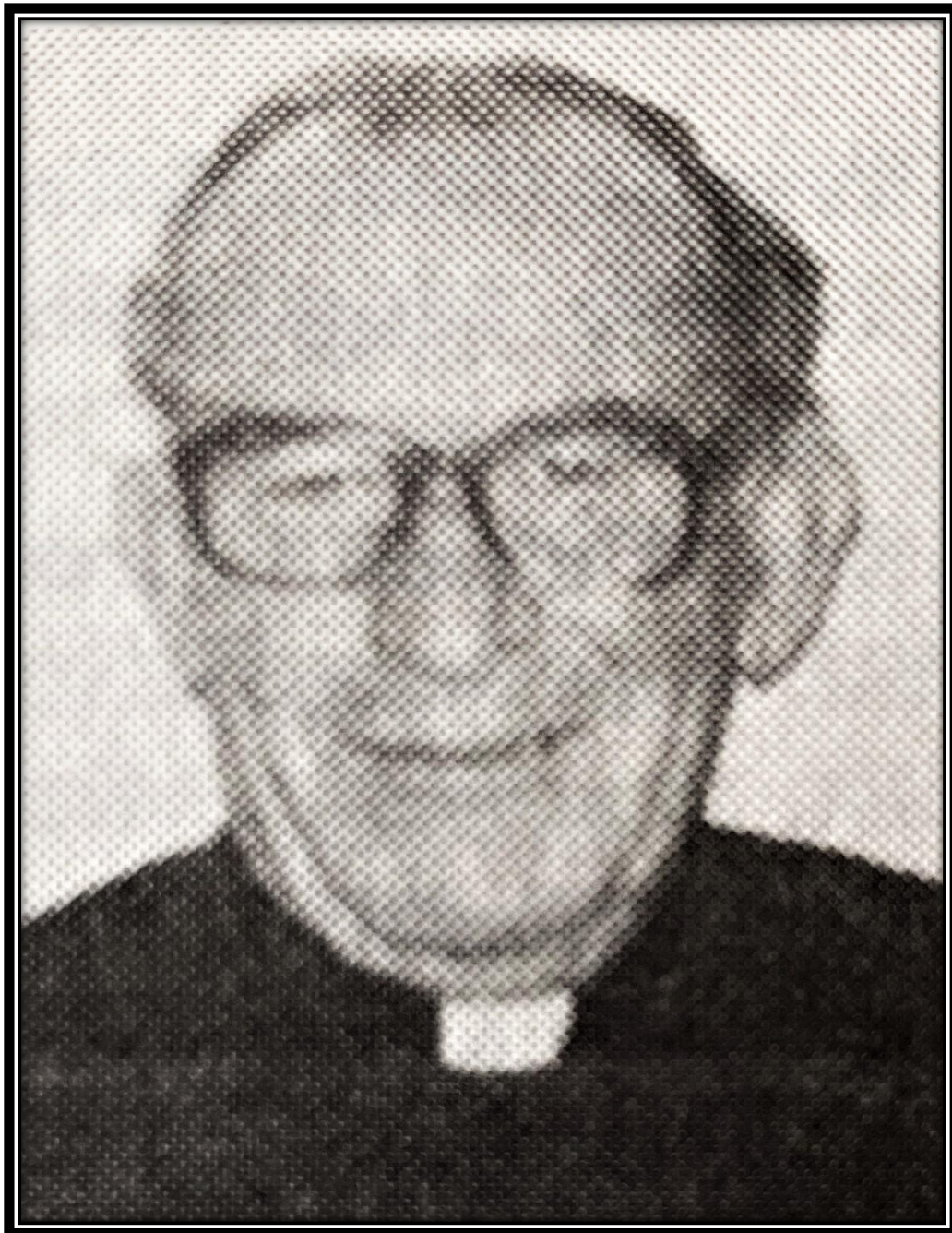
Father Hugh Joseph Bannon

Native of Dingins, Corlesmore, County Cavan, Ireland

Priest of the Diocese of Sacramento

Retired From Saint Joseph Parish, Marysville, California

December 11, 1922 – October 14, 1988



Hugh Joseph Bannon, son of Hugh Bannon and Bridget McCabe, was born on December 11, 1922, in Cavan, Ireland. He was baptized the next day at Holy Family Church, Loc Gowna, Cavan, Ireland. Hugh had an older brother Thomas who became a priest of the Diocese of Sacramento.

HUGH BEGINS HIS EDUCATION

In 1927, Hugh began his primary education at Saint Joseph School, Loughduff, County Cavan, and continued his studies there until June 1936.

HIGH SCHOOL DAYS

In September 1936, Hugh began his secondary education at Saint Mel's College in Longford, Ireland, graduating from high school in June 1941.



Photo from the St Mel College Website

Saint Mel College, Longford, Ireland

ALL HALLOWS COLLEGE, DUBLIN, IRELAND

After completing his high school education, Hugh transferred from St Mel's College in Longford to All Hallows College in Dublin in September 1941 to begin his theological studies for the priesthood. He spent six years at All Hallows College until 1947 when he and his classmates were ready for ordination to the priesthood.

ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD

On June 22, 1947, Hugh Joseph Bannon was ordained a priest in All Hallows Seminary Chapel for service in the Diocese of Sacramento by Bishop Marshall, Bishop of Salford, England.



Photo from the Diocesan Archives

All Hallows Seminary, Dublin, Ireland

As was the custom, Father Hugh spent about six weeks with his family before it was time for him to leave Ireland for his long westward trek to the Diocese of Sacramento in Northern California to begin his life of priestly ministry to the people of the Church of Sacramento.

ARRIVAL IN SACRAMENTO AND THE BEGINNING OF MINISTRY

Father Hugh Bannon arrived in Sacramento on the First of October, 1947, and met Bishop Robert J Armstrong, bishop in the Diocese of Sacramento.

For his first appointment, Bishop Armstrong appointed Father Bannon to Immaculate Conception Parish in Sacramento as assistant to Father Patrick J O'Sullivan who was pastor of the parish. Father Hugh served this parish for five years, from 1947 to 1952.

*Go Forth into the whole world and preach
The Good News, baptizing them in the Name of
The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.*

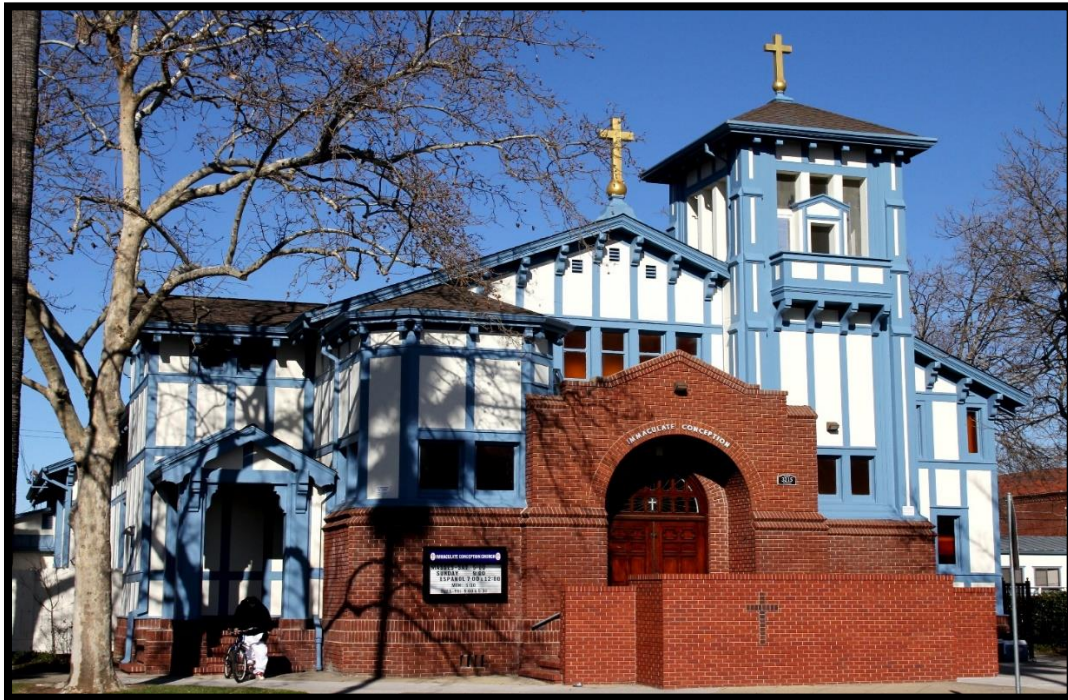


Photo by John E Boll

Immaculate Conception Church, Sacramento

NEXT ASSIGNMENT TO GRASS VALLEY

For his next assignment, Bishop Armstrong sent Father Bannon to Saint Patrick Parish in Grass Valley as assistant to Father Patrick Donnelly who was pastor of the parish. Father Hugh served the Grass Valley parish community for three years, 1952 to 1955.



Photo by John E Boll

Saint Patrick Church, Grass Valley

TWO SHORT ASSIGNMENTS FOLLOW

At this point in the history of the Diocese of Sacramento, Bishop Robert Armstrong was suffering from cancer and on October 25, 1955, Los Angeles Auxiliary Bishop Joseph T McGucken was appointed co-adjutor bishop of Sacramento.

In September 1955, Father Bannon was appointed assistant pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Maxwell to assist the pastor, Father Thomas Morgan. This parish had two mission churches, Annunciation Church in Williams and Holy Cross Church in Arbuckle. Father Hugh served this parish for a short time of four months, September 1955 to January 1956.



Photo by John E Boll

Sacred Heart Church and Rectory, Maxwell

In January 1956, Bishop McGucken moved Father Bannon to Immaculate Conception Parish in Corning to serve as temporary administrator of the parish from January to October 1956 because Father James F Vaughn, pastor of Corning, was named pastor of Holy Family Parish in Weed.

In October of 1956, Father Patrick McGrath was appointed the new pastor of Corning and he would serve the parish for ten years until 1966. This appointment necessitated a new assignment for Father Bannon since Father McGrath felt he could handle the parish on his own.



Photo by John E Boll

Immaculate Conception Church, Corning

NAMED PASTOR OF DOWNIEVILLE

After nine years as an assistant, Father Bannon was named to his first pastorate of Immaculate Conception Parish, Downieville, in October 1956.



Photo by John E Boll

Immaculate Conception Church, Downieville

The Downieville parish was one of the oldest parishes in the Diocese of Sacramento, established in 1853 by Archbishop Joseph Alemany when Downieville and its environs were a mining area and Downieville was part of the Archdiocese of San Francisco. Father Bannon's time as pastor of this parish was for only sixteen months, from October 1956 to February 1958.

APPOINTED ASSISTANT OF OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION PARISH, CARMICHAEL

Whatever the reason for Father Bannon's short pastorate in Downieville, he was next assigned to the parish where his older brother, Father Thomas Bannon, was founding pastor of Our Lady of the Assumption Parish in Carmichael in 1950. This was a very busy time in the life of the parish as Father Thomas Bannon worked with the parish community to raise the necessary funds to build a permanent church which was accomplished in 1967-68.

Father Hugh served as assistant pastor to his brother Father Thomas for four years, February 1958 to February 1962.



Photo by John E Boll

Our Lady of the Assumption Parish, Carmichael

SAINT ANNE PARISH, SACRAMENTO

In September 1963, Father Hugh was assigned as assistant pastor of Saint Anne Parish in South Sacramento to assist Father Patrick O'Neill who was founding pastor of the parish in 1961. Father Hugh served Saint Anne Parish for nineteen months and then was given a new assignment.



Photo by John E Boll

Saint Anne Church, South Sacramento

ASSISTANT OF HOLY SPIRIT PARISH, FAIRFIELD

Father Hugh's next assignment was to Holy Spirit Parish in Fairfield where he assisted the newly appointed pastor, Father James O'Dea, who served as pastor of Fairfield for only two years when he was sent to Saint Joseph Parish in McCloud in 1965 to serve as pastor.

Succeeding Father O'Dea as pastor in Fairfield was Father James A Vaughn, so Father Bannon had to adjust to another new pastor as well. Father Bannon continued as assistant in Fairfield until February 1, 1966 when he requested a sick leave from ministry until May of that same year.



Photo by John E Boll

Holy Spirit Parish, Fairfield

FATHER BANNON RETURNS TO MINISTRY

After being away for three months on sick leave, Father Bannon returned to ministry on May 4, 1966 and was given a new assignment as assistant pastor to Father Hugh McTague, pastor of Saint Robert Parish in Sacramento. Father Bannon served this parish for three years, May 4, 1966 to May 6, 1969.



Photo by John E Boll

Saint Robert Church, Sacramento

ADMINISTRATOR OF SACRED HEART PARISH, FORT JONES

On May 6, 1969, Bishop Alden Bell appointed Father Bannon administrator of Sacred Heart Parish in Fort Jones. This parish is located in Siskiyou County and was established in 1922 by Bishop Patrick J Keane, the third bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento.

Sacred Heart Parish is located in the Siskiyou mountains, a beautiful place to be when the weather is good. However, in the wintertime, there can be a lot of snowfall making driving conditions very dangerous. Over the years, a number of priests serving in this parish have slid off the road when the roads were covered with snow, hiding a layer of ice beneath the snow, making it dangerous and deadly to drive a vehicle.

The parish also had a number of mission churches to care for: Saint Mary Church, Etna; Saint Joseph Church, Sawyer's Bar; and All Saints Church, Happy Camp. This parish had its challenges and Father Bannon served as administrator of the Fort Jones parish for two years, March 6, 1969 to March 18, 1971.



Photo by John E Boll

Sacred Heart Church, Fort Jones

A MOVE BACK TO SACRAMENTO

On March 18, 1971, Bishop Bell gave Father Bannon a new assignment as assistant pastor of Saint Philomene Parish in Sacramento to assist Monsignor Raymond Renwald, pastor of the parish. Father Hugh served this parish for four years until October 20, 1975.



Photo by John E Boll

Saint Philomene Church, Sacramento

ON TO MARYSVILLE

Father Bannon's next parish assignment was to Saint Joseph Parish in Marysville to assist the pastor, Father J Declan O'Sullivan. Father Bannon served this former Cathedral parish for seven years, October 20, 1975 to April 19, 1982. This was Father Bannon's longest parish assignment.



Photo by John E Boll

Interior of Saint Joseph Church, Marysville

FINAL PARISH ASSIGNMENT, McCLLOUD

Bishop Francis A Quinn, Seventh Bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento, appointed Father Hugh Bannon to his last parish assignment as assistant pastor of Saint Joseph Parish in McCloud in Siskiyou County not far from Mount Shasta. This assignment was for nineteen months and Father Hugh would say it was nice to put his feet under his own table in the McCloud rectory.

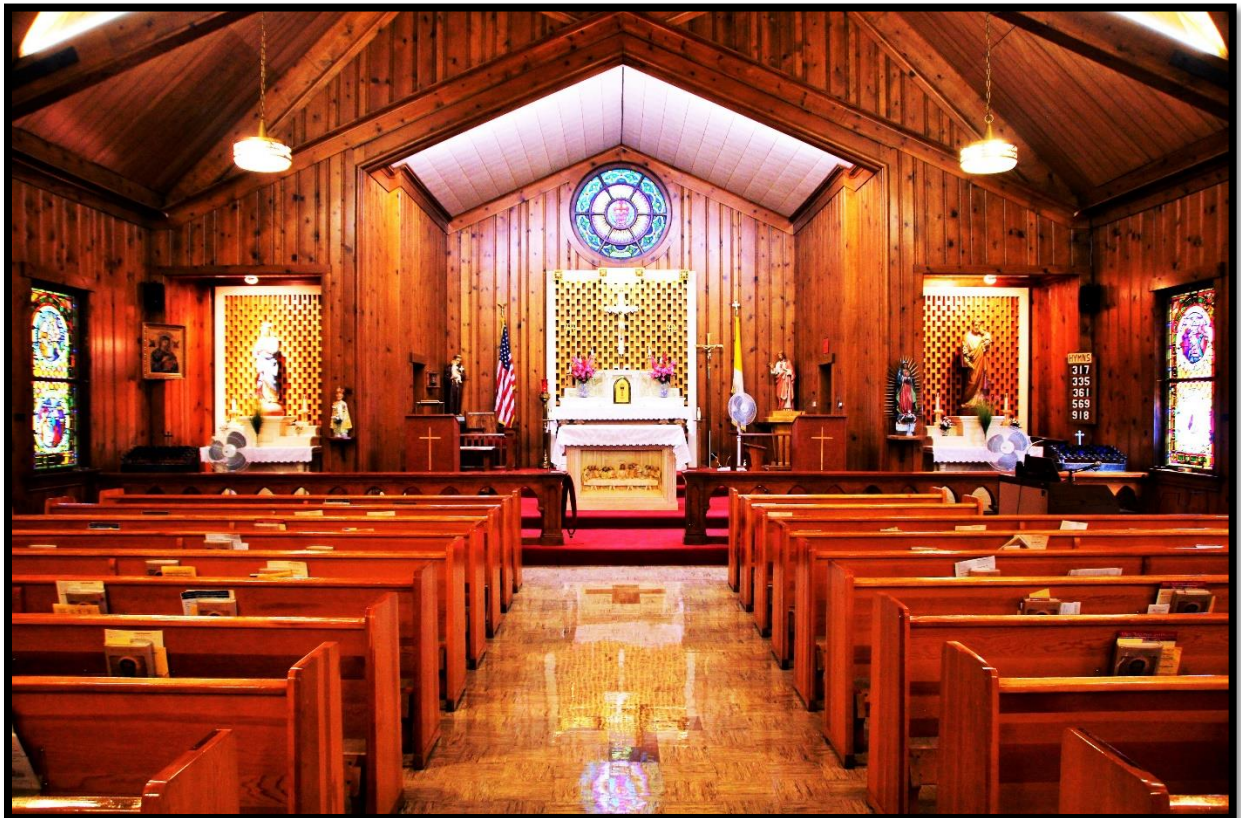
As the time passed, Father Hugh's health took a negative turn and on November 13, 1983, he once again went on sick leave and this time returned home to Ireland. He remained in Ireland for about three years and then decided to come back to California and the Diocese of Sacramento.

In 1986, Father Hugh officially retired from ministry and took up residence in Marysville where he had served for seven years.



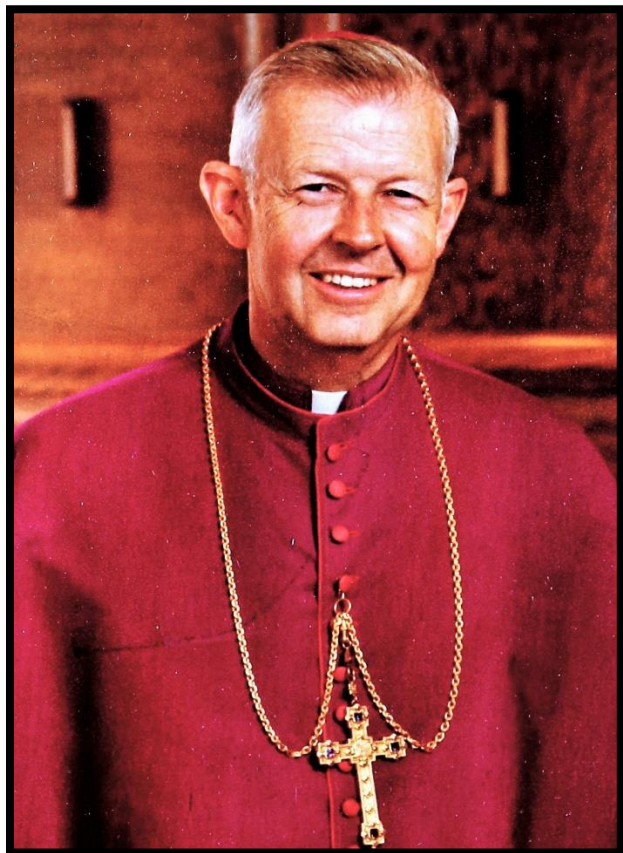
Photos by John E Boll

Church and Rectory of Saint Joseph Parish, McCloud



Interior of Saint Joseph Church, McCloud

DEATH COMES TO FATHER HUGH BANNON



Bishop Francis A Quinn

On Friday, October 14, 1988, Father Hugh Bannon died in Marysville at the age of 66. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for him on Thursday, October 20, in Saint Joseph Church in Marysville by Bishop Francis A Quinn as the main celebrant. Principal concelebrants were Fathers Vincent Brady, Charles Brady, Anthony Traynor, Bernard Burns, Vincent O'Reilly, Aiden O'Reilly, Thomas Relihan, Brendan McGinnis, Eugene Lucas and Thomas Marshall. There were about 100 priests concelebrating the Funeral Mass.

FATHER THOMAS MARSHALL WAS HOMILIST

The homilist at the Mass was Father Thomas Marshall, pastor of Saint Joseph Parish in Marysville, who commented on Father Bannon's uniqueness, stemming from his "sensing quite well the simple truth that nothing really matters except the journey back to the Father."

Father Marshall reminded the congregation, many of whom were Marysville friends of Father Bannon, that "every priest is cut from human fabric," cautioning them to use care in assessing or evaluating priests. "Somewhere in his boyhood, Hugh Bannon was attracted to the priesthood and committed himself for life to whatever this priestly experience would mean...and his faithfulness to his vocation tells us of a special faith that did not falter, his faith that the priesthood was right, that at the center of it all, God remains present, even if at times we do not see Him or sense that Presence. It is this that we remember first and foremost about Father Bannon, his priesthood and the faith that supported him over the past 40 year."

THE FAMILY MEMBERS OF FATHER BANNON

Present in the congregation at the Funeral Mass were Father Bannon's brother and nephew from Ireland, Patrick and Hugh. Other survivors included a sister in Ireland, Bridget Sheridan. His older brother, Father Thomas P Bannon, also a priest of the Diocese of Sacramento, preceded Father Hugh in death five years prior on January 9, 1983.

Pallbearers for Father Bannon's Funeral Mass were Jim Fuller, Bill Sparkman, Ben Armstrong and Don Robinson. Members of the Knights of Columbus Council 1869 were honorary pallbearers.

BURIAL OF FATHER BANNON

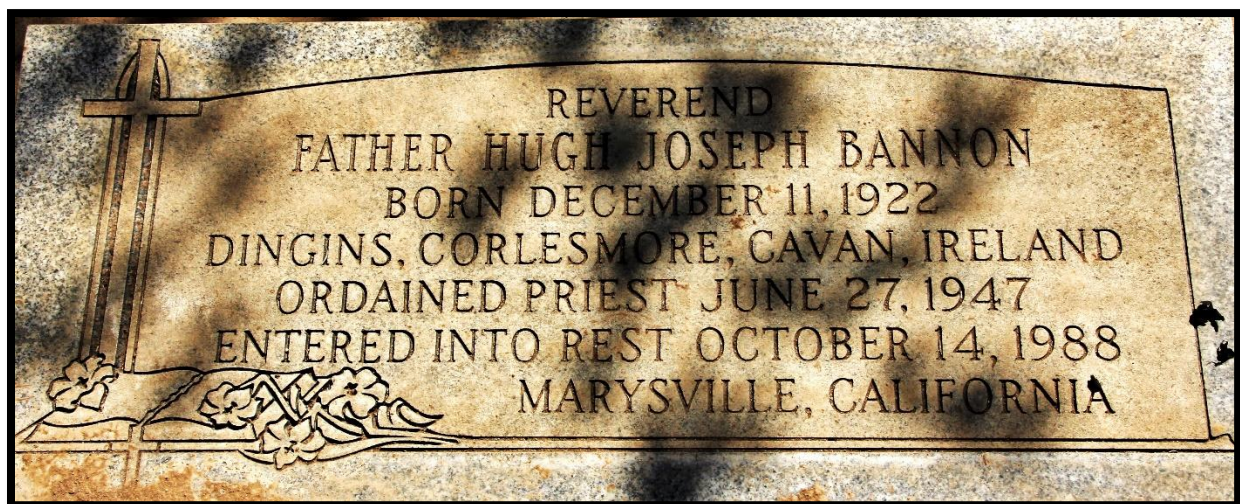
After the Funeral Mass, the body of Father Bannon was taken in procession to Saint Joseph Parish Cemetery east of Marysville. After the Prayers of Committal were offered to the Lord, the body of Father Bannon was lowered into the grave to await the resurrection of the dead when the Risen Christ will return to raise all the death from their tombs.

FINAL COMMENTS

As we have seen in this biography of Father Hugh Bannon, he served in thirteen different assignments during his forty years as a priest of the Diocese of Sacramento. His longest assignment was seven years as an assistant at Saint Joseph Parish in Marysville. When he officially retired in 1986 after returning to the Diocese of Sacramento from Ireland, he chose to retire in Marysville and is now buried in Saint Joseph Cemetery in Marysville. Obviously, he had a special affection for Marysville, Saint Joseph Church, and the people of the Marysville parish.

Father Thomas Marshall noted in his homily at Father Hugh's Funeral Mass, "Somewhere in his boyhood, Hugh Bannon was attracted to the priesthood and committed himself for life to whatever this priestly experience would mean, and his faithfulness to his vocation tells us of a special faith that did not falter, even if at times we do not see Him or sense His Presence. It is this we remember first and foremost about Father Bannon, his priesthood and faith that supported him over the past forty years."

Father Hugh has completed his earthly journey and returned home to God. Only now can he see the many people whose lives he touched and helped on their journey to see how much God loves them and all His children. Now, Father Hugh can be totally at peace in the eternal embrace of God's love for all eternity.



**Headstone of Father Hugh Joseph Bannon
Saint Joseph Parish Cemetery
Marysville, California**