

# SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

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Father John E Boll

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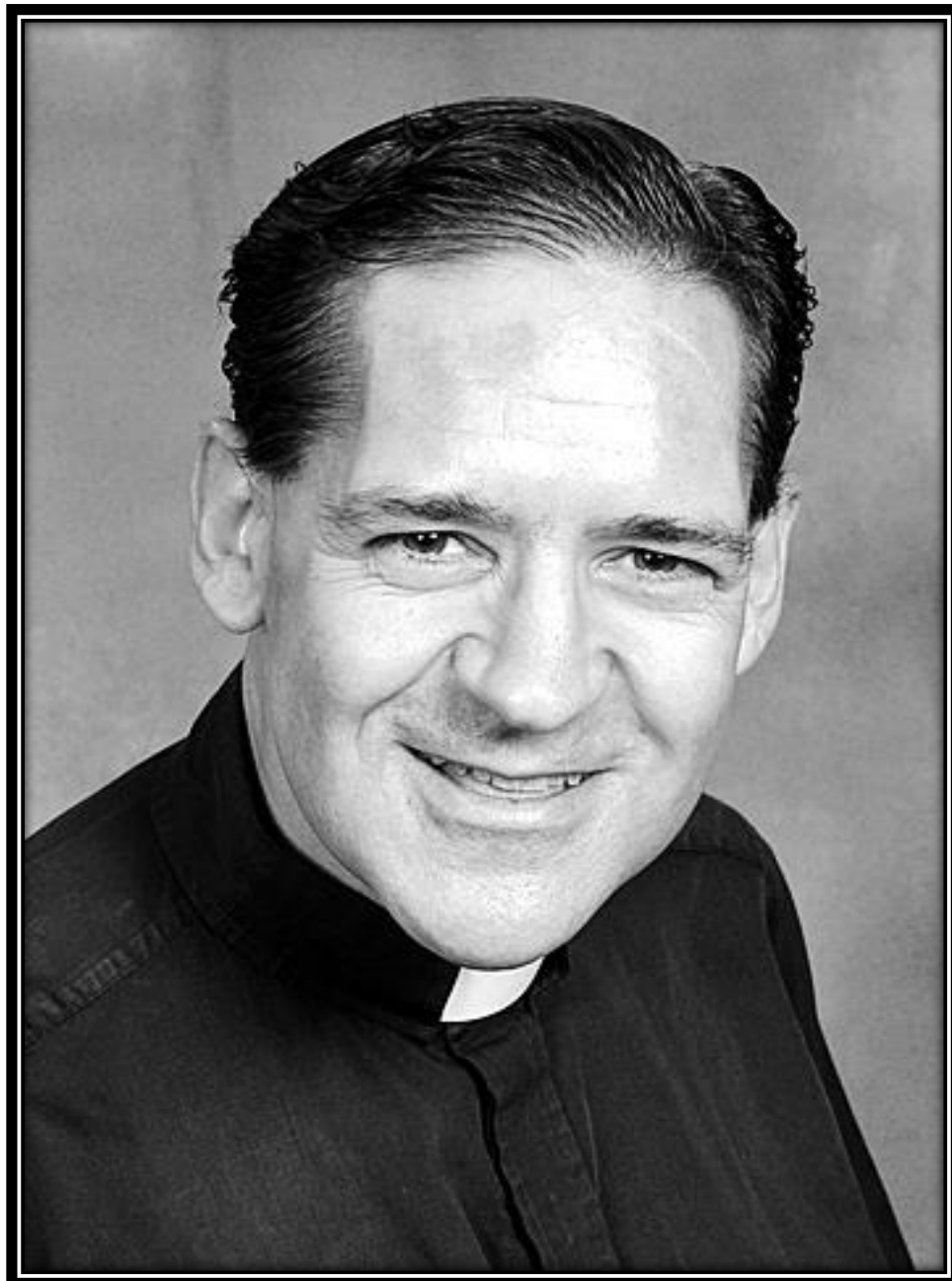
## *Father Martin Gregory Brusato*

Native of Sacramento, California

Priest of the Diocese of Sacramento

Pastor of Saint Christopher Parish, Galt, California

July 14, 1958 – January 1, 2018



**Martin Gregory Brusato**, the firstborn child of Ronald Louis Brusato and Carol Ann Dorney, was born on July 14, 1958, in Sacramento, California. He was baptized on July 24, 1958, at Saint Elizabeth Church in Sacramento. Martin was later joined by three sisters, Tamrah, Lisa and Julie.

#### **MARTIN BEGINS GRAMMAR SCHOOL AT SAINT ANNE PARISH SCHOOL**

The Brusato family were parishioners of Saint Anne Parish in South Sacramento. In September 1963, Martin began his education at Saint Anne Parish School, attending there until he graduated from grammar school in June 1972.



Photo by John E Boll

**Saint Anne Church and School**

#### **BEGINS CHRISTIAN BROTHERS HIGH SCHOOL**

Having completed his grammar school education, Martin transferred to Christian Brothers High School in September 1972 and attended his four years of high school at Christian Brothers, graduating in June 1976.

#### **MARTIN CONSIDERS A VOCATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD**

Since Martin's childhood, he felt called to the priesthood and considered the possibility of entering the seminary to study for the priesthood. He came to the conclusion that he wanted to be part of a religious community and applied to the Oblates of Saint Joseph religious community. He was accepted and continued his studies with residence at Mount Saint Joseph in Loomis.

### **BEGINS STUDIES AT SIERRA COLLEGE**

Martin registered as a student for Sierra College in Rocklin and began classes there in August 1976, spending two years at the college taking undergraduate courses. After two years at Sierra College, he began his novitiate year at Mount Saint Joseph in Loomis from 1978-1979.

In August 1979, Martin, as an Oblate, began studies at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley. He studied philosophy for two years and received his Bachelor's Degree from the Dominican Saint Albert College in 1981. After graduating from college, he decided to leave the Oblate community and returned to Sacramento.

### **ENTERS SAINT PATRICK SEMINARY, MENLO PARK**

Returning to Sacramento in 1981, Martin helped with youth ministry at Saint Anne Parish in South Sacramento for a few years, all the while considering a return to the seminary. He applied to the Diocese of Sacramento to become a seminarian for the diocese and was accepted.

In August 1984, Martin entered Saint Patrick Seminary in Menlo Park to begin his theological studies and spent the next four years there. In May 1988, he graduated with a Master of Divinity degree, and in 1990 was awarded a Master in Theology degree from Saint Patrick Seminary. During his pastoral year, he served at Holy Rosary Parish in Woodland with Father Cornelius O'Donnell as his pastoral supervisor.



Photo by John E Boll

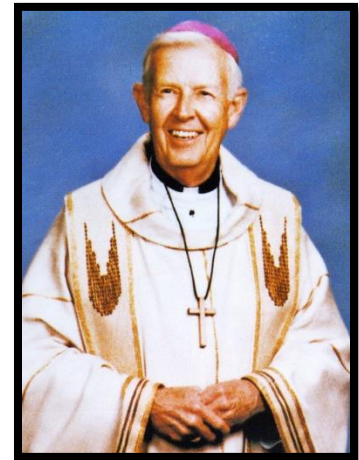
**Saint Patrick Seminary, Menlo Park**

### **ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD**

On Saturday, April 22, 1989, Martin Gregory Brusato was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Sacramento by Bishop Francis Anthony Quinn in the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Sacramento. Father Martin had some ability in speaking Spanish, Portuguese and Italian, but he said he was not fluent in speaking those languages.

### **FATHER MARTIN RECEIVES HIS FIRST ASSIGNMENT**

On August 1, 1989, Father Martin was assigned as parochial vicar to Presentation Parish in Sacramento to assist Monsignor Eymard Gallagher in the ministry of the parish. Unfortunately, Monsignor Gallagher was diagnosed with colon cancer and underwent surgery, followed by chemotherapy, but the cancer was too far advanced and he died on November 12, 1989, just three months after Father Martin arrived in the parish. Since Father Martin was now the only priest in the parish, this inter-regnum period between pastors fell to him to keep the parish functioning and to celebrate the Masses.



**Bishop Francis A Quinn**

### **A NEW PASTOR IS APPOINTED**

After the death of Monsignor Gallagher, Bishop Quinn appointed Father Daniel Casey as pastor of Presentation Parish. Not long after Father Casey began his pastoral role at Presentation Church, a conflict arose between him and the Presentation Sisters who had served the parish from its founding in 1961. The sisters decided to withdraw from the parish.



Photo by John E Boll

### **Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, Sacramento**

It soon became evident what caused the conflict between the Presentation Sisters and the new pastor. Father Casey was suffering from a brain aneurism which changed his personality and

almost ended his life. He had immediate brain surgery to deal with the aneurism and he survived this very serious surgery.

Once again, Father Martin had to serve as parochial vicar and administrator of the parish during Father Casey's recovery. This was an unfortunate, stressful and difficult time for this newly ordained priest to face in his first year of ordained ministry. Father Martin served Presentation Parish for two years until April 14, 1991 when he was given a new assignment.

### **SECOND APPOINTMENT, ELK GROVE**

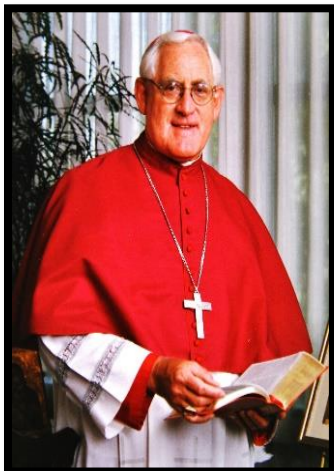
Beginning on April 15, 1991, Father Brusato was assigned by Bishop Quinn as parochial vicar of Saint Joseph Parish in Elk Grove. The pastor of the parish was Father Albert O'Connor who was a stabilizing presence in Father Martin's life at this point.



Photo by John E Boll

**Saint Joseph Church, Elk Grove**

### **APPOINTED PRIEST SECRETARY TO BISHOP WEIGAND**



Father Martin served the Saint Joseph Parish community for four years until February 28, 1995 when he was appointed priest secretary to Bishop William K Weigand who succeeded Bishop Quinn as bishop of Sacramento on January 27, 1994. During his time as Secretary to the Bishop, Father Martin lived in residence at the Cathedral Presbytery in downtown Sacramento.

One night in the early hours of the morning, a man suffering from an over-dose of drugs broke into the Cathedral Presbytery through an unlocked window on the second floor of the house. After entering the house, this intruder opened the unlocked door of Father Martin's quarters and attacked him as he slept in his rectory

apartment by smashing a bottle on Father Martin's head. This vicious attack caused serious neurological damage to Father Brusato's brain which began a series of consequences that would affect him for the rest of his life.

### **LIFE AFTER THE CATHEDRAL ATTACK**

After his initial recuperation from the attack, Father Martin worked in the Diocesan Marriage Tribunal for a short time and then was appointed pastor of Saint Christopher Parish in Galt where he served as pastor from 1996 to 1999. During his pastorate in Galt, he was involved with a major project of relocating the parish to a new site and building a new church. The stress of this major relocation and building project was too much for him to handle, given his compromised health.

In 1999, Father Martin had to give up his pastorate in Galt because of ongoing health related issues from the Cathedral attack. He was on medical leave from ministry until 2010 when he returned to part-time parish ministry for a short time at Saint James Parish in Davis from July 1, 2010 to March 1, 2011.



Photo by John E Boll

**Saint James Church, Davis**

### **ONE LAST ATTEMPT AT MINISTRY**

Father Martin was a dedicated priest and made one more attempt to return to ministry in 2011 at Saint Clare Parish in West Roseville, but he was forced to return to medical leave again later that year.

### **FATHER MARTIN IS FORCED TO RETIRE**

Because of the neurological effects from the attack he suffered in the Cathedral Presbytery in 1996, Father Martin was forced to permanently retire from ministry. The Brusato family owned a duplex in the Pocket Area of South Sacramento. Father Martin's sister Tamrah lived in one of the two apartments and he moved into the other where he lived for the rest of his life.

When he felt up to it, Father Martin offered some time working with Father John Boll in the Diocesan Archives and also did some work for Bishop Jaime Soto. As time passed, he had to give up his volunteer work for health reasons and remained at home in the Pocket Area.



Photo taken from the Web

### **Father Martin Celebrates the Holy Spirit Festa Mass and Blesses the Little Queens**

### **FATHER MARTIN CELEBRATES HIS 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF ORDINATION**

On May 5, 2014, Father Martin celebrated his 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ordination on Sunday afternoon at Saint Anthony Parish in the Pocket Area. Many of his friends and former parishioners from the various parishes where he had served attended the Mass and Bishop Jaime Soto presided Ad Coram. A number of fellow priests concelebrated the Mass with Father Martin.

Father Martin looked forward to his Silver Jubilee as a priest and to celebrate the Mass. His physical condition that day was not good because of a mix-up on his medication. He was able to finish the Mass but was not able to attend the dinner in the parish hall after the Mass, prepared for him and his many guests.



Photo by Stephen Crowley

**Bishop Jaime Soto and fellow Priests Concelebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mass  
with Father Martin Brusato at Saint Anthony Church, Sacramento**

**DEATH COMES TO FATHER MARTIN BRUSATO**

On New Year's Day 2018, Jeff Bianchini, a friend of Father Martin, stopped by to check on him and found him unconscious in his home. He called the Fire Department immediately and Father Martin was taken by ambulance to the hospital where he died. Father Martin was 59 years of age, seven months short of his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**FUNERAL MASS FOR FATHER MARTIN BRUSATO**

Because Bishop Soto was leading a pilgrimage in the Philippines when Father Martin died, he could not be present to celebrate the Funeral Mass, so retired Bishop William Weigand was the main celebrant of the Mass held on Thursday, January 11, 2018, at Saint Anthony Parish in South Sacramento. Monsignor Albert O'Connor was the homilist. Bishop Francis Quinn who ordained Father Martin a priest also concelebrated the Funeral Mass from his wheelchair in the sanctuary. A good number of priests from the diocese concelebrated the Funeral Mass.





Photo by John E Boll

### **Funeral Mass for Father Martin Gregory Brusato**

#### **EULOGY BY LISA BRUSATO MARTIN**

Good morning. My name is Lisa Brusato Martin and I am one of Martin's sisters. Bishop Weigand, Tamrah, Julie and I want to thank you for calling all three of us on our cell phones. Nobody has ever acknowledged us individually like that and it meant the world to us. Thank you!

On behalf of my family, we want to thank you for coming today to pay tribute to a man you all so respectfully called Father Martin. But at home, he had a few nicknames such as Matty, Uncle, Mat and Moe McClutch (after a character in one of Julie's childhood books, "Moe Q. McClutch, you smoke too much"), Brother and Special Uncle.

Uncle was his next favorite roll besides being a priest. When we started having our children, that's when he celebrated the Glory of God. He told his sisters that "Uncle" was good enough; his name did not have to be mentioned because he was the main Uncle!

During Epiphany, he would throw his nieces and nephews an extravagant party every year. It's fitting he would go home for Epiphany, his favorite holiday.

It's also very fitting that we are here in Saint Anthony Church, not only because it's been our parish and Martin's for over 30 years, but because when you read about the real Saint Anthony's life, it seems to match Martin's with many similarities.



Photo by John E Boll

### **Father Martin's Funeral Mass**

#### **Saint Anthony Prayer**

Like Saint Anthony, who was loved by the common people, especially those that lost their faith, he had hoped to become a missionary, but his poor health kept him from accomplishing this dream. Saint Anthony still expresses his love through his intercession as the patron of the lost and the many good deeds done for the poor in his name.

I think back when we were children and it is hard to believe Martin became a priest because he was such a little devil. When we were little, dad worked at the coroner's office and we finally found a way to escape when we visited him at work. If we all told our mother we needed to use the restroom, we could go together, but we never went to the restroom. We would walk very politely out the door and we would peek into rooms we had no business looking at, and we got a little surprise in some. When we were caught, we had to sit with Uncle Teddy Daley in the car and behave. No more going to the restroom!



Photo by John E Boll

### **A large number of Faithful attended the Funeral Mass**

We also loved playing church. We would tell Martin to get a little red plastic ice cream cup because that made a pretty chalice; and be sure to fill it up with Pepsi for the wine.

We also played funerals because our granddad was a mortician and had a funeral home we stayed at when we visited Monterey. This is where Martin got creative and liked to hide in caskets and jump out at people. However, his main job was being the priest at the funeral in our living room.

#### **In his Adult Life**

I'm not going to tell you about his religious career because you already know that, but I think it only makes sense (because we are all so broken this morning) that we should talk about some of his philosophies:

- 1 **Justice** - Every night he would have this discussion with his sisters after dinner or late at night. He said, be just and fair. When you are dealing with someone else's situation, be so careful that you make the best decision for their sake, regardless of what you want to do.

- 2 **The Worker is Worth his/her wage** - These are the words of Jesus. If someone does work for you, pay them immediately!
- 3 **Be a Christian Gentleman at all times** - No matter how much the times change, men do not wear hats in church!

He was an extremely non-judgmental teacher to us all. He would expect us to use his words to explain things to the children. And I'll try, Uncle; it is hard to live up to, but I'll try.



Photo by John E Boll

### **Bishop Francis Quinn Concelebrated Father Martin's Funeral Mass from his Wheelchair**

#### **Emma and Emily**

You are the youngest, and things were pretty chaotic last Monday, so I am going to explain to you what happened in Uncle's words, as he always explained it to children in this way: You know how we go to Portuguese Park and play, and we have so much fun. But sometimes you fall and skin your knee, and you get up and say, I'm OK. But sometimes you fall and you are not OK, and only Mommy will do. Well, that is what happened here.

On Monday, Uncle got very, very sick very, very fast. We could not save Uncle here. He had to go with Jesus and his Mommy Nona, because they are the only ones that could make him better. His back does not hurt anymore, and his head does not ache, and he can work there as much as he always desired to do on earth saying Mass.

But it's sad and confusing because we won't see him anymore and that's hard. But you have all of us to help you through it. If you look around, there are a lot of helpers here today who loved Uncle very much and would love to help you. So don't be afraid...we will get through this.

### **Ending the Eulogy**

So, everyone, don't be sad! We must be thankful for the mercies God has given us at this time. Martin went home fast and didn't suffer. He was not alone; Jeff was with him. And if anyone deserves the mercy and the peace of our Lord and Savior, our beautiful brother does now. In the words of our Great Granddad Dorney, "Thank you kindly for being here today."

### **THE SURVIVING FAMILY MEMBERS**

Father Martin is survived by his father Ron. Father Martin's mother, Carol Ann Dorney Brusato, died on April 16, 2005. He leaves his three sisters, Tamrah Brusato, Lisa Martin and her husband Doug, and Julie Schaffer and her husband James. He was Uncle to seven nieces and nephews and Grand Uncle to ten grand nieces and nephews.

### **BURIAL AT SAINT MARY CEMETERY**

After the Funeral Mass at Saint Anthony Church, the body of Father Martin was taken in procession to Saint Mary Cemetery in Sacramento for burial. He was buried in the mausoleum close to his deceased mother Carol.



Photo from the Web

### **The Crypt of Father Martin G Brusato, Saint Mary Cemetery, Sacramento**

### **FINAL REMARKS**

From a young age, Martin Brusato was being gently called by God to serve the People of God as a priest. At first, he felt called to the religious life and entered the Oblates of Saint Joseph who staffed Saint Mary Parish in Sacramento. After being part of the Oblate community for a few years, he decided to leave the Oblates and to seek acceptance by the Diocese of Sacramento to continue his studies and become a diocesan priest. The diocese accepted Martin as a seminarian for the Diocese of Sacramento.

The life-changing moment for Father Martin happened the night he was brutally attacked in the Cathedral Presbytery by a man who broke into the Cathedral Presbytery and hit him on the head with a bottle while he was asleep. He never fully recovered from that horrific attack. He once told Father James Murphy: "I am offering my suffering up for the priests who have been accused falsely, because I hate to see good suffering go to waste."

Even in the midst of his suffering, Father Martin never wanted to stop his pastoral ministry to the people he was ordained to serve. This was his greatest suffering, not being able to carry out his ministry to the people God had entrusted to him.

As the new year began on January 1, 2018, the Lord called Father Martin home to the Kingdom of Heaven where he would be free of his physical suffering and mental pain. As Saint Paul once wrote in 2 Timothy 4:7-8, "I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. From now on a merited crown awaits me; on that Day the Lord, just judge that he is, will award it to me – and not only to me, but to all who have looked for his appearing with eager longing."

We, the People of the Diocese of Sacramento, were blessed to have known and walked with Father Martin as he journeyed with us through the joys and sorrows of our lives. May he pray and intercede for us before the glorious Throne of God most High.



Photo by Stephen Crowley

**Father Martin Presides at his Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Mass of Ordination,  
May 5, 2014 at Saint Anthony Church, Sacramento**



Photo by Stephen Crowley

*Father Martin Gregory Brusato*  
*Rest now in Peace!*