

St. Robert Parish
1955-2005



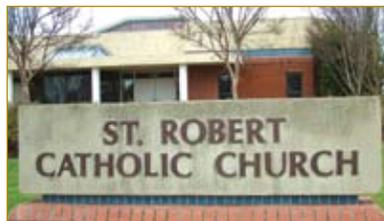
St. Robert — A VITAL AND ACTIVE FAITH COMMUNITY

ST. ROBERT PARISH, LOCATED IN THE HEART OF SACRAMENTO'S HOLLYWOOD PARK NEIGHBORHOOD, IS A VIBRANT AND ACTIVE FAITH COMMUNITY. ST. ROBERT IS INTEGRAL NOT ONLY TO THE COMMUNITY ITSELF, BUT ALSO TO THE LIVES OF ITS PEOPLE WHO COME TOGETHER TO WORSHIP AND SERVE THE LORD. OVER THE YEARS, ST. ROBERT HAS ENRICHED THE LIVES OF LITERALLY THOUSANDS OF PARISHIONERS AND STUDENTS. IT IS A PARISH THAT CONTINUES TO GROW AND CHANGE AND THRIVE SINCE IT WAS CREATED IN 1955.

THE STRENGTH OF ST. ROBERT IS ITS PEOPLE — ITS DIVERSE, FRIENDLY AND CARING PARISHIONERS OF ALL AGES AND ALL WALKS OF LIFE. TOGETHER WITH THE LEADERSHIP OF THEIR PASTORS, THE PEOPLE OF THE PARISH HAVE LITERALLY BUILT THIS COMMUNITY FROM THE GROUND UP. THEY SUPPORT AND MAINTAIN THEIR CHURCH, THEIR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, THEIR OTHER PARISH FACILITIES, AND THEIR COMMUNITY THROUGH SUCH ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES AS THE ALTAR SOCIETY, THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS, THE LEGION OF MARY, AND LOAVES AND FISHES. WITH THEIR COMMITMENT AND INVOLVEMENT, AND WITH THE GUIDANCE OF THEIR PASTORS, ST. ROBERT SCHOOL ENJOYS AN EXCELLENT ACADEMIC REPUTATION, A STRONG ATHLETICS PROGRAM, A TOP NOTCH FACULTY, A TOP NOTCH ADMINISTRATION, AND INVOLVED PARENTS. THE PEOPLE OF ST. ROBERT ALSO SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER, OFFERING PRAYER AND A HELPING HAND WHENEVER THE NEED ARISES. AND SO, AS THE PARISH TURNS 50, AS WE CELEBRATE OUR JUBILEE, IT IS FITTING THAT WE LOOK BACK AT THE HISTORY, THE PROUD TRADITIONS AND THE PEOPLE THAT HAVE MADE ST. ROBERT A VERY SPECIAL FAITH COMMUNITY.



Brian James is the principal of St. Robert School. He was recently honored for 25 years of outstanding teaching and administrative leadership at St. Robert



Father Kieron McMahon
— Pastor since 1992

*Fifty Years Ago—1955—*A VERY DIFFERENT TIME AND PLACE

AS WE TURN BACK THE CLOCK 50 YEARS—TO 1955—IT WAS A VERY DIFFERENT TIME AND PLACE IN AMERICA, IN CALIFORNIA, AND IN SACRAMENTO. IT WAS THE 1950'S, A TIME OF GREAT PROSPERITY, POPULATION GROWTH, AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE. IN THE POST WORLD WAR II ENVIRONMENT, AMERICANS WERE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE. SOLDIERS RETURNED HOME, ANXIOUS TO GET ON WITH THEIR LIVES. AND THE WOMEN WHO HAD WAITED FOR THEM WERE EAGER TO GET ON WITH THEIR LIVES AS WELL. ONE RESULT WAS A RUSH TO HAVE BABIES, A PHENOMENON LATER TO BECOME KNOWN AS THE “BABY BOOM.”

WITH MILLIONS OF NEW BABIES, THERE WAS A GREAT NEED FOR HOUSING. HOMES, HOWEVER, WERE EXPENSIVE, AND WERE GENERALLY NOT AFFORDABLE TO THE MIDDLE CLASS. THE SOLUTION WAS TO BUILD HOMES IN MASS PRODUCTION—IN HOUSING SUBDIVISIONS—THEREBY SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCING COSTS. WITH THE AMERICAN DREAM OF HOME OWNERSHIP NOW AFFORDABLE FOR THE MIDDLE CLASS, HOUSING SUBDIVISIONS POPPED UP OVERNIGHT AND BECAME A PROMINENT PART OF THE LANDSCAPE OF THE 1950'S.

AS AMERICANS SETTLED INTO THEIR NEW HOMES, THEY ENJOYED MANY NEW CONVENIENCES THAT MADE UP THE GOOD LIFE. REFRIGERATORS, AIR CONDITIONERS, WASHING MACHINES, AND TELEPHONES WERE ALL KEY COMPONENTS OF THE AMERICAN DREAM. HOWEVER, IT WAS THE TELEVISION SET THAT BECAME MUST-HAVE COMMODITY, AND THIS INVENTION IMMEDIATELY TRANSFORMED FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT. TELEVISION EXPLODED ON THE SCENE IN THE 1950'S, AS FAMILIES EVERYWHERE GATHERED AROUND TO WATCH THEIR FAVORITE SHOWS.

IN PRACTICALLY EVERY ASPECT OF AMERICAN LIFE, THE FAMILY WAS THE CENTER OF FOCUS. FOR INSTANCE, DISNEYLAND OPENED ITS DOORS IN ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA, ON JULY 17, 1955; AND DISNEY MOVIES SUCH AS, “THE LADY AND THE TRAMP” WERE GREAT FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT. TO MEET THE NEEDS OF FAMILIES ON THE GO, “FAST FOOD” BECAME POPULAR. IN 1955, MCDONALD'S AND KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKEN FIRST BEGAN TO FRANCHISE. BUT THE FOCUS ON FAMILIES AND THE GOOD LIFE WAS NOT JUST RELATED TO MATERIALISM

AND ENTERTAINMENT. INDEED, AFTER WORLD WAR II, THERE WAS A STRONG RESURGENCE IN RELIGION AND CHURCHGOING IN THE UNITED STATES. AS NEW PARENTS CONNECTED OR RECONNECTED TO THEIR RELIGIOUS FAITHS, THEY INVOLVED THEIR CHILDREN AS WELL. THE POPULAR SAYING OF THE TIME WAS, “FAMILIES THAT PRAY TOGETHER STAY TOGETHER.” ALL ACROSS THE COUNTRY, AMERICANS WERE RETURNING TO CHURCH. AND, PARENTS NOT ONLY BROUGHT THEIR CHILDREN TO CHURCH AND SUNDAY SCHOOL, BUT ALSO ENROLLED THEM IN RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS.

JUST AS THE BABY BOOM, FAMILIES, HOUSING SUBDIVISIONS, TELEVISION, FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT, AND THE RESURGENCE OF RELIGION DEFINED THE LANDSCAPE OF AMERICA IN THE 1950's, SO TOO DID THESE PHENOMENA DEFINE THE LANDSCAPE OF SACRAMENTO DURING THIS PERIOD OF TIME. TWO MILLION SERVICEMEN WERE RELEASED IN CALIFORNIA AFTER WORLD WAR II, AND SACRAMENTO WAS A POPULAR DESTINATION. ASTOUNDINGLY, DURING THE DECADE OF THE 1950's, THE POPULATION OF GREATER SACRAMENTO NEARLY DOUBLED—FROM 250,000 TO 480,000. WHOLE NEIGHBORHOODS POPPED UP OVERNIGHT, AS THOUSANDS OF NEW HOMES WERE BUILT, MOSTLY IN LARGE SUBDIVISIONS. ON ITS SOUTHERN BORDER, SACRAMENTO EXPANDED RAPIDLY, ESPECIALLY SOUTH OF SUTTERVILLE ROAD AND WEST OF FREEPORT BOULEVARD. HOWEVER, THERE WERE ALSO A FEW SUBDIVISIONS OF NEW HOMES POPPING UP IN AN AREA EAST OF FREEPORT—AN AREA CALLED, “HOLLYWOOD PARK.” JUST SIX YEARS LATER, THIS AREA WAS FULLY DEVELOPED. THIS DEVELOPMENT BROUGHT TENS OF THOUSANDS OF NEW INHABITANTS TO THE HOLLYWOOD PARK COMMUNITY, MOST OF THEM FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN. AND, LIKE SO MANY OTHER FAMILIES IN AMERICA, THEY WERE LOOKING FOR PLACES TO GO TO CHURCH AND PLACES TO SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO SCHOOL.



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October 27, 1955 — THE CREATION OF ST. ROBERT PARISH

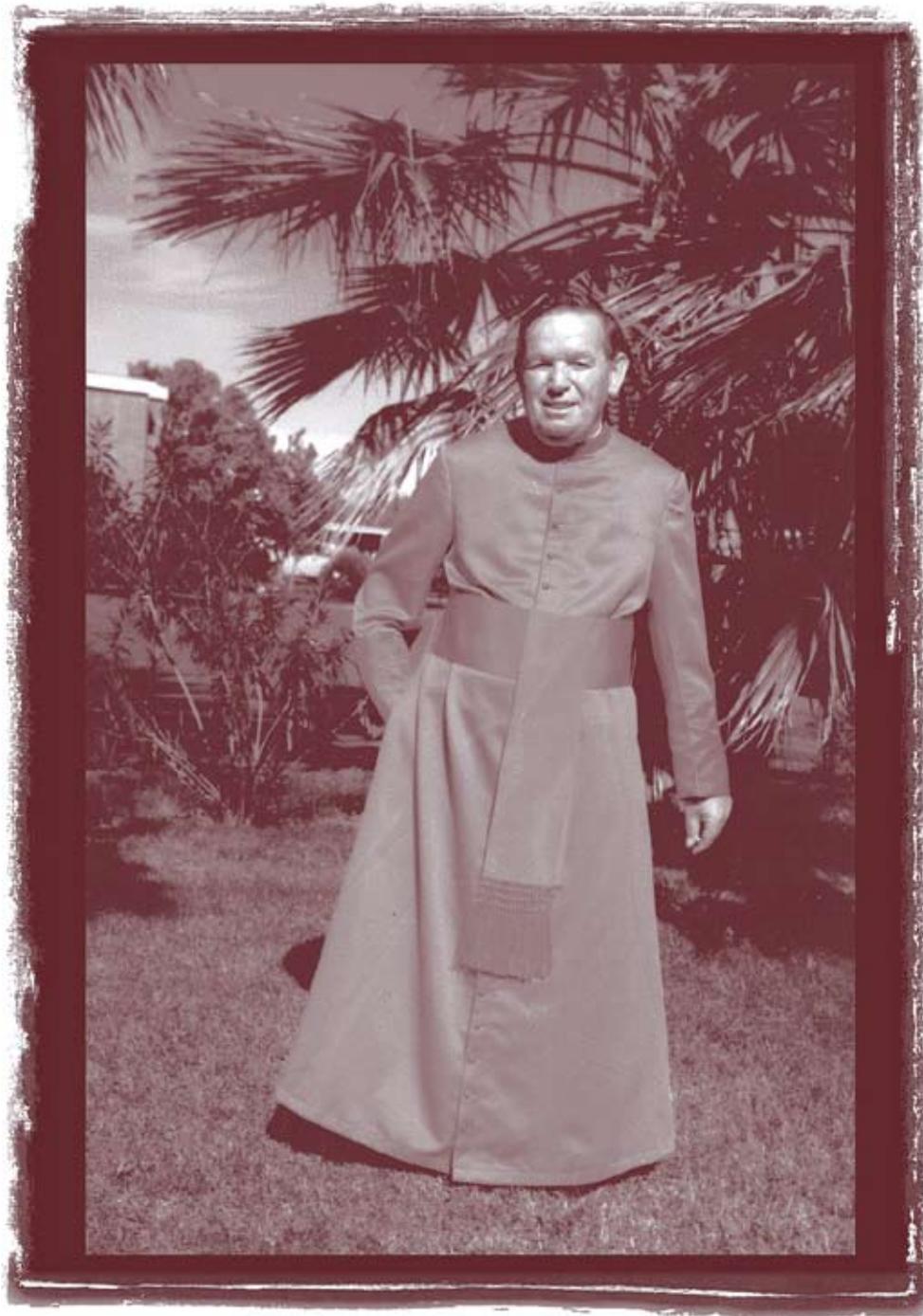
WHEN IT CAME TO FINDING CATHOLIC CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS, THE RESIDENTS OF HOLLYWOOD PARK HAD A TWO-PRONGED DILEMMA. FIRST, THE NEW COMMUNITY HAD NEITHER A CATHOLIC SCHOOL NOR A CATHOLIC CHURCH. THE CLOSEST PARISH WITH A SCHOOL WAS HOLY SPIRIT, IN THE LAND PARK AREA, SOME FOUR MILES AWAY. THERE WAS ALSO ST. ROSE PARISH, WITH ITS ST. PATRICK SCHOOL, ON FRANKLIN BOULEVARD, AGAIN OVER FOUR MILES AWAY. SINCE MOST FAMILIES ONLY HAD ONE CAR, AND SINCE MOST HUSBANDS WORKED, IT WAS NO EASY TASK TO GET THE CHILDREN TO SCHOOL.

WHILE THE LONG DISTANCE TO HOLY SPIRIT AND ST. ROSE PRESENTED A CHALLENGE, THE REAL DILEMMA WAS THAT THESE SCHOOLS AND THEIR CHURCHES WERE RUNNING OUT OF ROOM FOR BOTH STUDENTS AND WORSHIPPERS. THERE WAS SIMPLY NO WAY THESE ESTABLISHED PARISHES COULD HANDLE THE EXPLOSIVE POPULATION GROWTH THAT WAS OCCURRING NOT ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD PARK, BUT ALSO IN THE ENTIRE SACRAMENTO REGION.

WITHIN THE SACRAMENTO DIOCESE, THEN BISHOP ROBERT J. ARMSTRONG WAS ACUTELY AWARE OF THIS DILEMMA, AND HE AND HIS ASSISTANTS WERE BUSY PLANNING AND ESTABLISHING NEW PARISHES AT A RECORD PACE. INDEED, FOR 1955 ALONE, THE DIOCESE'S PLANS CALLED FOR THREE NEW PARISHES TO BE ESTABLISHED IN SACRAMENTO: ST. ROBERT IN HOLLYWOOD PARK, ST. PETERS IN SOUTH SACRAMENTO, AND ST. LAWRENCE IN NORTH HIGHLANDS.

FOLLOWING THROUGH ON THESE PLANS, BISHOP ARMSTRONG ESTABLISHED THE ST. ROBERT PARISH ON OCTOBER 27, 1955. IN THE OFFICIAL RECORDS, THE PARISH WAS NAMED AFTER ST. ROBERT OF NEWMINSTER, ENGLAND, WHO LIVED DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE 12TH CENTURY. INFORMALLY, HOWEVER, THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE THAT THE PARISH WAS ALSO NAMED AFTER BISHOP ROBERT ARMSTRONG. REGARDLESS OF THIS BIT OF INTRIGUE, THE DOCUMENTS FROM THE ARCHIVES AT THE SACRAMENTO DIOCESE PASTORAL CENTER SIMPLY STATE THAT BISHOP ARMSTRONG, WITH THE CONSENT OF HIS COUNCIL, CREATED THE ST. ROBERT PARISH, WITH BOUNDARIES TO BE DETERMINED LATER.

ON THAT SAME DAY—OCTOBER 27TH—BISHOP ARMSTRONG ALSO NAMED FATHER HUGH MCTAGUE AS THE FOUNDING PASTOR OF ST. ROBERT. FOR FATHER MCTAGUE AND THE COMMUNITY OF HOLLYWOOD PARK, ST. ROBERT WAS THUS A PARISH WITHOUT A CHURCH, A SCHOOL, OR ANY OTHER BUILDING FOR THAT MATTER. THE SOLE ASSET WAS PLOT OF VACANT LAND—LESS THAN TEN ACRES—FRONTING IRVIN WAY. WITH THIS SIMPLE BEGINNING, AND WITH LITTLE ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE DIOCESE, THE PEOPLE OF THE PARISH, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THEIR NEW PASTOR, TOOK IT UPON THEMSELVES TO BUILD THEIR FAITH COMMUNITY FROM THE GROUND UP.



Father Hugh Mc Tague was appointed as the founding Pastor of St. Robert Parish on October 27, 1955. Mc Tague was born and raised in Ireland, where he was ordained to the Priesthood in 1937. He served the Sacramento Diocese for 18 years—in North Sacramento, Auburn, Angels Camp and Westwood—before coming to St. Robert. Organized, on-task, resourceful, and patient, Mc Tague oversaw the development of a fully functioning parish. Neither boastful nor brash, he was a quiet man who loved children. He served the Parish for 25 years, until June 1, 1980, and passed away on November 27, 1982.

The First Year—FATHER MC TAGUE AND THE PARISHIONERS SET PRIORITIES AND GO TO WORK

BISHOP ARMSTRONG'S DECISION TO APPOINT FATHER MC TAGUE AS THE FOUNDING PASTOR OF ST. ROBERT WAS EXTREME GOOD FORTUNE FOR THE NEW PARISH. FROM THE BEGINNING IT WAS CLEAR THAT MC TAGUE'S EXPERIENCE AND TEMPERAMENT WERE WELL SUITED TO BUILDING AN ENTIRE FAITH COMMUNITY FROM SCRATCH.

LIKE MOST OF THE PRIESTS OF THE TIME, FATHER MC TAGUE CAME FROM IRELAND. BORN IN LEITRIM, IRELAND IN 1910, MC TAGUE SPENT THE FIRST 27 YEARS OF HIS LIFE IN THAT COUNTRY. UPON COMPLETING HIS EDUCATION AT ALL HALLOWS COLLEGE IN DUBLIN, HE WAS ORDAINED TO THE PRIESTHOOD IN 1937. IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER, HE CAME TO AMERICA, WHERE HE SERVED THE SACRAMENTO DIOCESE FOR EIGHTEEN YEARS IN VARIOUS OUTLYING AREAS, INCLUDING NORTH SACRAMENTO, AUBURN, ANGELS CAMP, AND WESTWOOD. HIS EXPERIENCES IN THESE RUGGED AND UNDEVELOPED AREAS ENABLED HIM TO BE RESOURCEFUL AND PATIENT; AND, HE ALSO LEARNED TO MAKE DO WITH WHAT HE HAD.

IN MID-SEPTEMBER OF 1955, BISHOP ARMSTRONG SENT FATHER MC TAGUE A LETTER, REQUESTING HIM TO ACCEPT AN APPOINTMENT AS PASTOR TO ONE OF THREE PARISHES THAT WERE BEING ESTABLISHED IN SACRAMENTO. THE BISHOP INDICATED HE HAD NOT YET DECIDED WHICH PARISH IT WOULD BE. FATHER MC TAGUE ACCEPTED, AND HUMBLY REQUESTED THE BISHOP TO KEEP HIM IN MIND FOR THE PARISH THAT WAS BEING ESTABLISHED IN HOLLYWOOD PARK. AS WE ALL KNOW, FATHER MC TAGUE GOT HIS WISH; AND ON OCTOBER 27, 1955, HE WAS APPOINTED AS THE FOUNDING PASTOR OF THE NEW ST. ROBERT PARISH.



Father Hugh Mc Tague,
Founding Pastor



St. Robert held its first few Sunday
masses in a cafeteria at the
Holy Spirit School, in Land Park

FATHER MC TAGUE WOULD GO ON TO SERVE ST. ROBERT FOR TWENTY-FIVE YEARS. ORGANIZED, ON TASK, RESOURCEFUL AND PATIENT, HE OVERSAW THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FULLY FUNCTIONING PARISH. HE NOT ONLY PRESIDED OVER THE CONSTRUCTION OF ALL ESSENTIAL FACILITIES— INCLUDING THE SCHOOL, THE CONVENT, THE HALL, AND THE RECTORY— BUT HE ALSO ATTRACTED HUNDREDS OF NEW PARISHIONERS. NEITHER BOASTFUL NOR BRASH, MC TAGUE WAS A QUIET PERSON WHO LOVED CHILDREN. ON MAY 12, 1977, HE WAS ELEVATED TO THE RANK OF PRELATE OF HONOR, A RARE RECOGNITION. HE SERVED THE PARISH UNTIL JUNE 1, 1980, AND PASSED AWAY TWO AND A HALF YEARS LATER, ON NOVEMBER 27, 1982.

STANDING ON THE PLOT OF VACANT LAND IN 1955, FATHER MC TAGUE'S FIRST PRIORITY, BOTH FROM THE BISHOP AND HIS PARISHIONERS, WAS TO BUILD AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. THE DECISION TO BUILD THE SCHOOL FIRST, INSTEAD OF THE CHURCH, WAS A DEFINING EVENT IN THE HISTORY OF THE PARISH, A DECISION THAT CONTINUES TO SHAPE ITS CHARACTER AND VALUES. PROCEEDING FIRST WITH THE SCHOOL SAID THE PRIORITY WAS EDUCATION, ON PROVIDING A CATHOLIC SCHOOL EXPERIENCE FOR THE CHILDREN. IT ALSO SAID THAT IN ORDER TO MEET THIS PRIORITY, THE PARISHIONERS AND FATHER MC TAGUE WERE WILLING TO TOLERATE THE CONSIDERABLE INCONVENIENCE OF NOT HAVING A CHURCH. THEY WERE WILLING TO MAKE DO WHILE THE NEEDS OF THE CHILDREN WERE PUT FIRST, BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED HAVING THE SCHOOL WOULD BE BETTER FOR THE FUTURE OF THEIR FAMILIES AND THEIR FAITH COMMUNITY.

AND MAKE DO THEY DID. FOR THE FIRST FEW WEEKS AFTER THE CREATION OF THE PARISH, SUNDAY MASS WAS SAID AT THE CAFETERIA AT HOLY SPIRIT SCHOOL. MASSES DURING THE WEEK WERE SAID IN ST. ROSES CHURCH ON FRANKLIN BOULEVARD. THE FIRST MASS WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF ST. ROBERT'S PARISH WAS SAID ON THANKSGIVING DAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1955, IN THE RANCH SHOPS—A VACANT ROOM IN A STRIP MALL ON 4868 FREEPORT BOULEVARD—AT WHAT IS NOW THE CURRENT SITE OF RALEY'S SUPERMARKET. AN OIL STOVE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM WAS THE ONLY SOURCE OF HEAT; AND, DEPENDING ON PROXIMITY TO THIS HEATER, ONE WAS EITHER UNBEARABLY HOT OR UNBEARABLY COLD. REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THEY WORSHIPPED IN A CAFETERIA OR A VACANT STORE, AND REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THEY SAT ON WOODEN BENCHES WITH SPLINTERS OR FOLDING METAL CHAIRS THAT WERE HARD AND COLD, THE PARISHIONERS WERE PROUD OF THEIR NEW FAITH COMMUNITY AND WERE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE FUTURE.

EARLY ON, FATHER MC TAGUE HAD NEITHER CHALICE NOR VESTMENTS. PARISHIONERS STEPPED FORWARD TO REMEDY THIS SITUATION: JENNIE FRIES DONATED A CHALICE, AND MARY AND NICK DOMYANCIC DONATED TWO SETS OF VESTMENTS. OTHER PARISHIONERS DONATED THE OTHER VESTMENTS, AND THE HEINRICH'S DONATED A CIBORIUM. IN ACKNOWLEDGING THESE CONTRIBUTIONS ONE SUNDAY, FATHER MC TAGUE WENT ON TO SAY THAT MANY PARISHIONERS WERE ASKING HIM WHAT THEY COULD DONATE. HE MENTIONED THAT HE HAD JUST PURCHASED 200 CHAIRS, AND THAT ANYONE WHO WISHED COULD BUY THE CHAIR HE OR SHE WAS SITTING ON FOR \$5.00. THAT SUNDAY FORTY CHAIRS WERE PURCHASED; AND, WITHIN A FEW DAYS, ALL 200 WERE SOLD.

ALSO TRUE TO THE SPIRIT OF TAKING MATTERS INTO THEIR OWN HANDS, THE PARISHIONERS TAUGHT CATECHISM TO THE CHILDREN IN 1956. WITH NO SCHOOL FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE PARISH, AND WITH NO SISTERS, THERE WAS NO ONE TO TEACH CATECHISM. A PLAN WAS DEvised TO HAVE NINE WOMEN (MOST WITH FAMILIES OF THEIR OWN) TEACH A GROUP OF CHILDREN IN THEIR OWN HOMES. AS A RESULT, ABOUT 90 CHILDREN WERE TAUGHT CATECHISM AND PREPARED FOR FIRST COMMUNION. BECAUSE THE CHURCH AT THE RANCH SHOPS LOCATION WAS TOO SMALL TO ACCOMMODATE THIS ENTIRE GROUP, THREE SEPARATE FIRST COMMUNIONS WERE HELD ON MAY 6TH (23 CHILDREN WHO ATTENDED HOLY SPIRIT), JUNE 3RD (47 STUDENTS FROM C.C.D.) AND JUNE 17TH (45 ADDITIONAL STUDENTS FROM C.C.D.)

WITHIN THE FIRST YEAR, THE PARISHIONERS ALSO RALLIED TO CREATE AND JOIN THE VARIOUS NECESSARY SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING THE ALTAR SOCIETY, THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS, AND THE LEGION OF MARY. FROM THE EARLY DAYS, THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF PARISHIONERS IN THESE ORGANIZATIONS HAS ADDED IMMEASURABLY TO THE VITALITY AND FUNCTIONING OF THE PARISH. WITHIN THE LARGER DIOCESE, THE PARISHIONERS OF ST. ROBERT WERE ALSO ACTIVE. IN PARTICULAR, THE PARISHIONERS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ON THE FRONT LINES OF SUPPORTING AND HELP OPERATE LOAVES AND FISHES.



In May and June of 1956, St. Robert celebrated three separate Holy Communions. Because the church at the Ranch Store location on Freeport Boulevard was so small, the children had to be broken up into three groups, with 23 children receiving Holy Communion on May 6th, 47 children on June 3rd, and 45 children on June 17th. Against the backdrop of the parking lot for the strip mall, the children lined up on the sidewalk and filed into the church.

*Facilities Boom—1956 to 1959—*THE SCHOOL, THE CONVENT, AND THE HALL ARE BUILT:

WITH CONSTRUCTION OF THE SCHOOL BEING THE HIGHEST PRIORITY, THE PARISH WASTED NO TIME. CONSTRUCTION TOOK LESS THAN A YEAR, AND ST. ROBERT SCHOOL WAS DEDICATED ON DECEMBER 2, 1956. CONFIRMATION WAS ALSO CELEBRATED AT THE SCHOOL THIS SAME DAY. TEN MONTHS LATER, THE SCHOOL WAS FIRST OPENED IN SEPTEMBER 1957. IT OPENED WITH THREE GRADES (1ST THROUGH 3RD), WITH A GRADE ADDED EACH YEAR. THE SISTERS OF ST. LOUIS STAFFED THE SCHOOL, WITH SR. MARY ANTONIA AS PRINCIPAL. AFTER SERVING THE SCHOOL FOR NEARLY TWENTY YEARS, THE SISTERS OF ST. LOUIS WITHDREW, AND THE SISTERS OF MERCY CAME IN TO STAFF THE SCHOOL.

AFTER THE SCHOOL WAS OPENED, WORSHIP SERVICES WERE MOVED TO THE SCHOOL BUILDING. THE FIRST MASS AT THE SCHOOL WAS CELEBRATED ON OCTOBER 7, 1956, AND THE SCHOOL SERVED AS THE CHURCH FOR ABOUT TWO YEARS. AS WE SEE FROM THE PICTURE OF HOLY COMMUNION IN MAY OF 1957, THE CHURCH WAS SIMPLY TWO OR THREE CLASSROOMS OPENED UP, WITH THE CONGREGATION SITTING ON FOLDING CHAIRS.

SHORTLY AFTER THE SCHOOL WAS OPENED, FATHER MC TAGUE SHIFTED FOCUS TO OTHER FACILITY NEEDS. HE STARTED A CAMPAIGN TO BUILD A CONVENT AND A FACILITY THAT COULD SERVE AS A CHURCH. HE MADE IT KNOWN TO ALL THAT IT WAS GOING TO BE IMPOSSIBLE TO RECRUIT NUNS TO TEACH AT THE SCHOOL UNLESS THERE WAS A CONVENT. AS TO THE LONG-AWAITED CHURCH, FATHER MC TAGUE ENVISIONED A BUILDING THAT COULD BE USED FOR MULTIPLE PURPOSES, INCLUDING A CHURCH, A SOCIAL HALL, AND AN AUDITORIUM FOR THE



Right after the school, the convent became the highest priority

Sister Mary Urban is pictured with the change of habit

After the school opened in the fall of 1957, Holy Communion was celebrated in the classrooms

SCHOOL. WHILE THERE WAS STILL STRONG SENTIMENT FOR CONSTRUCTING A STAND-ALONE CHURCH, AND WHILE THIS WAS FATHER MC TAGUE'S DREAM, HE BALANCED THE COMPETING NEEDS AND DECIDED UPON A FACILITY THAT COULD MEET THE NEEDS OF BOTH THE CHURCH AND THE SCHOOL. HE AND THE PARISHIONERS WERE WILLING TO WAIT, AND THEY WERE WILLING TO ADJUST PRIORITIES SO THAT THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND THE SCHOOL COULD BE MET.

CONSTRUCTION ON THE CONVENT STARTED IN 1957, AND CONSTRUCTION ON THE HALL COMMENCED SHORTLY THEREAFTER. THE CONVENT WAS DEDICATED ON FEBRUARY 22, 1958. THE FOLLOWING YEAR, IN 1959, THE HALL WAS DEDICATED BY BISHOP JOSEPH MCGUCKEN. WITH THE OPENING OF THE HALL, THE PARISH FINALLY HAD A FACILITY THAT WAS AT LEAST PARTIALLY DESIGNED AS A CHURCH.

ONE OF THE KEY ASPECTS OF THE HALL THAT MADE IT FEEL SO MUCH LIKE A CHURCH WAS THE VERY LARGE MOSAIC OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA APPEARING TO THE THREE CHILDREN AT FATIMA. THIS 8 FOOT BY 12 FOOT MOSAIC WAS DESIGNED AND SET BY ROBERT HALON, A PARISHIONER. HALON HAD SPENT TIME IN ITALY DURING WORLD WAR II, AND LEARNED THE ART OF SETTING TILE. FATHER MC TAGUE BECAME AWARE OF HALON'S TALENT, AND ASKED HIM TO WORK ON A PIECE FOR THE CHURCH. WORKING ON THE FLOOR OF HIS GARAGE, AND USING TILES IMPORTED FROM ITALY, HALON LABORED AWAY PAINSTAKINGLY. IN ORDER TO VIEW HIS WORK FROM A PROPER PERSPECTIVE, HE HAD TO SCRAMBLE UP IN THE RAFTERS OF HIS GARAGE AND LOOK DOWN AT THE PIECE. AFTER NEARLY EIGHT MONTHS, HALON HAD SET EVERYTHING BUT THE FACE OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA. THE FACE, HOWEVER, WAS ALMOST HIS UNDOING, AND ENDED UP TAKING HIM AN EXTRA YEAR. WANTING TO GET IT JUST RIGHT, HALON SET AND RESET THE FACE 40 TIMES BEFORE HE WAS SATISFIED! AFTER HALON FINISHED THIS BEAUTIFUL WORK, IT TOOK ELEVEN MEN TO LIFT IT INTO PLACE INSIDE THE HALL. TO THIS DAY IT HANGS IN THE SAME LOCATION—ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE FRONT WALL.

IN RETROSPECT, THE DECISION TO PROCEED WITH A MULTI-PURPOSE BUILDING TURNED OUT TO BE THE BEST ONE. WITHIN MONTHS, THE HALL BECAME A VITAL CENTER FOR THE PARISH, A STATUS IT ENJOYS TO THE PRESENT DAY. ON ANY GIVEN DAY OR EVENING, PARISHIONERS OR THEIR CHILDREN WOULD FIND THEMSELVES AT THE HALL FOR MASS, A WEDDING, A SCHOOL ASSEMBLY, A DINNER, A PANCAKE BREAKFAST, A PARTY, A PTA MEETING, A CUB SCOUT OR GIRL SCOUT

MEETING, OR EVEN A RUMMAGE SALE. STILL, NO ONE EVER ANTICIPATED THAT THE HALL WOULD CONTINUE TO SERVE AS THE PARISH'S CHURCH AS LONG AS IT DID. INDEED, IT WAS NOT UNTIL 1988—ALMOST 30 YEARS AFTER THE HALL WAS DEDICATED— THAT THE DREAM OF A STAND-ALONE CHURCH WAS FINALLY REALIZED.

WITH THE INCREDIBLE AMOUNT OF CONSTRUCTION THAT OCCURRED BETWEEN 1955 AND 1959, THE PARISH HAD INCURRED A LARGE DEBT. RECORDS AT THE DIOCESE INDICATE THAT CONSTRUCTION OF THE SCHOOL WAS INITIALLY FINANCED THROUGH A LOAN FROM THE BANK OF AMERICA. ADDITIONAL LOANS WERE NECESSARY TO CONSTRUCT THE CONVENT AND THE HALL. THE PARISH WORKED VALIANTLY TO PAY DOWN THIS DEBT; HOWEVER, LATE IN 1959, IT STILL OWED OVER \$300,000. IN OCTOBER OF 1959, FATHER MC TAGUE CALLED FOR A MAJOR EFFORT TO PAY DOWN THIS DEBT SO THAT THE SCHOOL COULD BE EXPANDED AND OTHER PARISH FACILITIES COULD BE BUILT. THE EFFORT CALLED FOR SECURING PLEDGES FOR INCREASED GIVING BY PRESENT ENVELOPE USERS, AND FOR SECURING MORE ENVELOPE USERS. THE DRIVE FOR FUNDS WAS LED BY PARISHIONER JERRY KEATING DURING 1960. THE PARISHIONERS ONCE AGAIN RESPONDED TO THE CALL, AND A LARGE PART OF THE DEBT WAS PAID DOWN OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS.



Inside the Hall, circa 1970



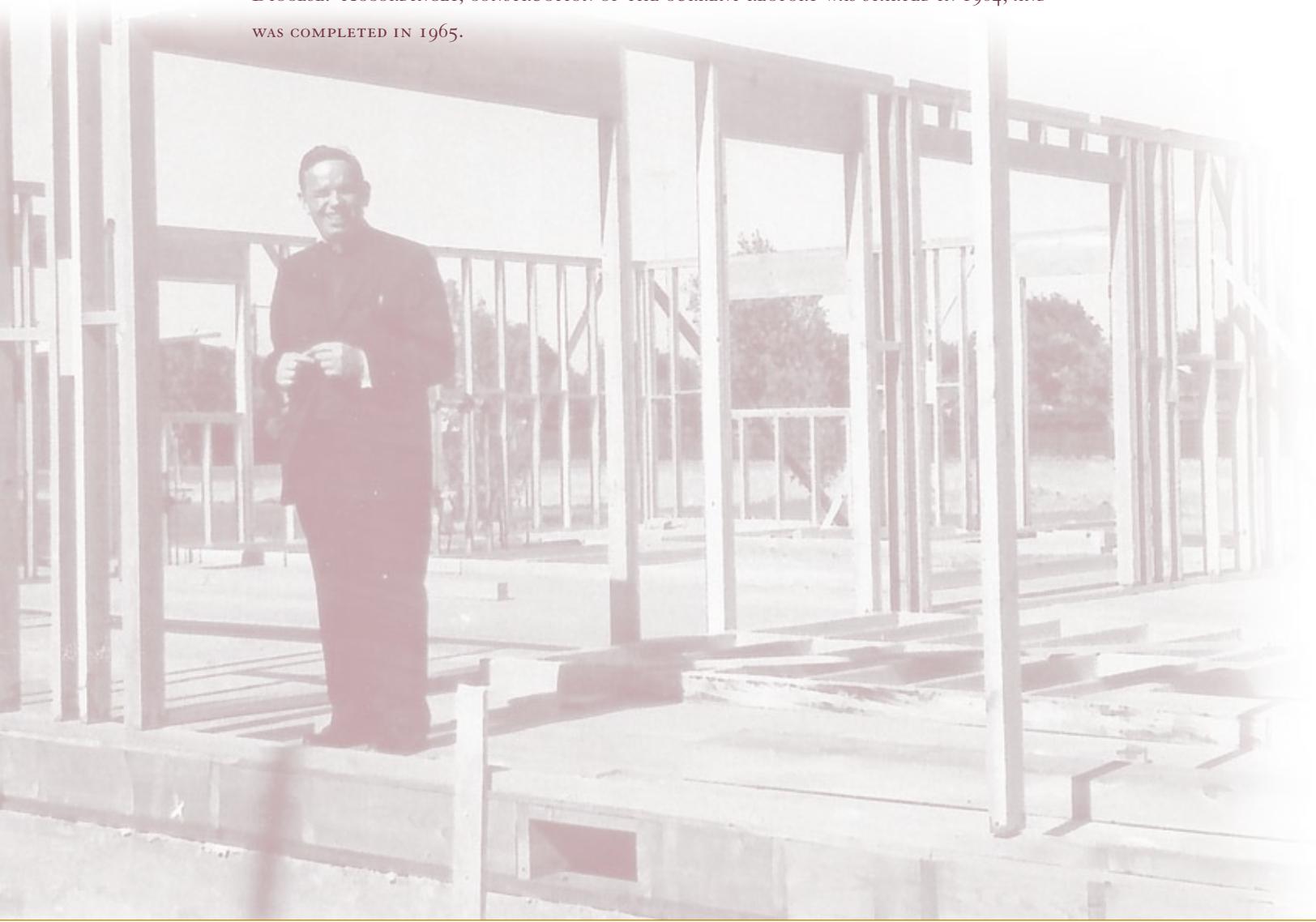
The large mosaic, "Our Lady of Fatima", which continues to hang at the front of the Hall, on the right.



The newly-completed Hall, circa 1960

The Rectory—1964-65

WITH THE COMPLETION OF THE HALL, THE PARISH HAD ALL MAJOR FACILITIES IN PLACE EXCEPT A RECTORY. FOR FATHER MC TAGUE, HOWEVER, A RECTORY WAS NOT A HIGH PRIORITY. INSTEAD, HE WAS CONTENT TO LIVE IN A HOUSE ON IRVIN WAY, WHICH WAS RENTED BY THE PARISH. WITH THE SCHOOL, THE CONVENT, AND THE HALL COMPLETED, FATHER MC TAGUE NEXT WANTED TO BUILD THE CHURCH. HOWEVER, THE BISHOP'S PRIORITY FOR THE PARISH WAS A RECTORY THAT COULD ALSO SERVE THE NEEDS OF HOUSING OTHER PRIESTS OR ASSISTANT PRIESTS WITHIN THE DIOCESE. ACCORDINGLY, CONSTRUCTION OF THE CURRENT RECTORY WAS STARTED IN 1964, AND WAS COMPLETED IN 1965.



Father Mc Tague, with the rectory under construction in 1964.

The Fall Festival—A LONG AND IMPORTANT TRADITION FOR THE PARISH

WHILE THE CONSTRUCTION OF PARISH FACILITIES IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE HISTORY OF ST. ROBERT, THE BUILDINGS ONLY TELL PART OF THE STORY. ALSO IMPORTANT ARE VARIOUS ANNUAL EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS—MANY OF WHICH HELP RAISE FUNDS—THAT HAVE BECOME PART OF THE FABRIC OF THE PARISH. UNQUESTIONABLY, THE MAIN PARISH-WIDE FUNDRAISING EVENT FOR ST. ROBERT IS ITS FALL FESTIVAL. LIKE NO OTHER PARISH EVENT, THE FALL FESTIVAL BRINGS THE CHURCH AND SCHOOL TOGETHER. PARISHIONERS, PARENTS, CHILDREN, AND FACULTY AND STAFF ALL COME TOGETHER TO PLAY GAMES, EAT, DRINK AND CONVERSE IN A CONVIVIAL AND CARNIVAL-LIKE SETTING. FUELED BY THE UPBEAT MUSIC AND HAPPY CHILDREN RUNNING ABOUT, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE NOT TO FEEL UPLIFTED. AND, AS THE YEARS GO BY, WE FIND OUR MEMORIES OF FALL FESTIVALS BECOMING MORE AND MORE NOSTALGIC.

WHILE THE YEAR OF THE FIRST FALL FESTIVAL IS NOT KNOWN, MOST LONG-TIME PARISHIONERS RECALL IT STARTING DURING THE FIRST FEW YEARS. THE EARLIEST FALL FESTIVALS WERE LOCATED ON IRVIN WAY. A TENT WAS SET UP WHERE THE CHURCH NOW STANDS, AND BARBEQUED CHICKEN WAS COOKED UP IN HUGE QUANTITIES. BOOTHS, GAMES, AND OTHER FESTIVITIES WERE SET UP IN THE SURROUNDING AREA, AND IN THE HALL. LATER, IN 1965, MEXICAN FOOD WAS ADDED, AND BECAME INSTANTLY POPULAR.



Photos of early Fall Festival



Each year, the 8th grade graduating class lined up for the traditional photo in front of the Hall. Judging from the dress of the students, this photo is of a class graduating in the late 1960's or early 1970's. Paul Rodgers, a parishioner, was the official school photographer for many years.

The Changing Demography of the Parish

DIVERSITY BRINGS RICHNESS AND STRENGTH

THE FACT THAT MEXICAN FOOD WAS SUCH A HIT AT THE FALL FESTIVAL IS JUST ONE INDICATOR OF HOW ST. ROBERT EMBRACED AND CELEBRATED ITS GROWING DIVERSITY. STARTING IN THE LATE 1960's, INCREASING NUMBERS OF HISPANICS/LATINOS BEGAN MOVING TO THE HOLLYWOOD PARK NEIGHBORHOOD. AS THE DEMOGRAPHY OF CALIFORNIA GREW MORE DIVERSE, ESPECIALLY WITH RESPECT TO THE LATINO POPULATION, IT WAS NOT SURPRISING TO SEE SACRAMENTO AND ITS VARIOUS NEIGHBORHOODS REFLECT THIS DEMOGRAPHIC. BY THE LATE 1970's, THE PERCENTAGE OF LATINO CHURCHGOERS AND STUDENTS HAD CLIMBED SUBSTANTIALLY, AND THE PERCENTAGES OF ASIANS AND AFRICAN AMERICANS HAD INCREASED AS WELL.

IN ITS CUSTOMARY FASHION, ST. ROBERT WELCOMED ITS GROWING DIVERSITY AND, IN SO DOING, ENHANCED THE LIVES OF ALL ITS PARISHIONERS AND STUDENTS. UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF ASSISTANT PASTOR FATHER JOHN CUFFE, AND AS A MEANS OF REACHING OUT TO THE SPANISH SPEAKING COMMUNITY, THE CLUB SAN ROBERTO WAS FORMED IN 1971. THE LIST OF GOALS FOR THE CLUB WAS LONG, BUT THE TOP PRIORITY WAS STARTING A SPANISH MASS. BY THE END OF 1971, ST. ROBERT BEGAN CELEBRATING THE SPANISH MASS. IN ADDITION, THE OTHER MASSES WERE ADAPTED SO THAT PORTIONS WERE SAID OR SUNG IN SPANISH. DURING THIS SAME PERIOD OF TIME, THE "FIESTA MEXICANA" WAS INITIATED AS A CELEBRATION AND FUNDRAISING EVENT. WITH THESE AND COUNTLESS OTHER ACTIONS TO RECOGNIZE AND CELEBRATE ITS DIVERSITY, THE PARISH HAS NOT ONLY ADDED TO ITS TRADITIONS AND CELEBRATIONS, BUT HAS ALSO ENRICHED THE EXPERIENCE OF ALL PARISHIONERS AND STUDENTS.



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Class photos from 1970's



Groundbreaking for the long-awaited church took place on a windy, clear day on March 28, 1987. Bishop Francis Quinn (far right) and Father Vereker (at podium) presided. Here, as part of the ceremonies, Bishop Quinn blesses the property with holy water. At last, after more than three decades, the Parish began to realize its dream of a stand-alone church.

The Father Vereker Years—1980-1992

AT THE SAME TIME THAT THE PARISH WAS EMBRACING ITS DIVERSITY AND EXPANDING ITS TRADITIONS AND CELEBRATIONS, IT STILL HAD NOT REALIZED ITS DREAM OF A STAND-ALONE CHURCH. WITH THE RETIREMENT OF FATHER MC TAGUE IN 1980, THE QUEST TO REALIZE THIS DREAM WOULD NOW FALL TO THE NEW PASTOR, TOBIAS VEREKER.

TOBIAS VEREKER WAS BORN IN MOON COIN, WATERFORD, IRELAND, IN 1933. ONE OF EIGHT SONS, VEREKER GREW UP AND WAS SCHOOLED IN IRELAND. HE WENT TO ST. KEIRNAN'S SEMINARY IN KILKINNEY IN 1952-58, AND WAS ORDAINED THERE IN 1958. UPON HIS ARRIVAL IN SACRAMENTO IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER, HE WAS ASSIGNED TO VARIOUS PARISHES IN THE DIOCESE, INCLUDING: ST. MEL'S, ST. CHRISTOPHER'S IN GALT, HOLY FAMILY IN CITRUS HEIGHTS, ST. ISADORE'S IN YUBA CITY, AND ST. JOSEPH'S IN SACRAMENTO. HE ACCEPTED HIS ASSIGNMENT AT ST. ROBERT IN JUNE OF 1980, AND SERVED AS PASTOR UNTIL 1992. AFTER LEAVING ST. ROBERT, HE SERVED AS ASSISTANT PASTOR AT ST. VINCENT'S FOR FIVE YEARS; AND, AFTER A PERIOD OF ILL HEALTH, DIED ON SEPTEMBER 4, 2001.

MANY HAVE DESCRIBED FATHER VEREKER AS EASY GOING, AND AS HAVING LOTS OF FRIENDS. DESPITE THESE ATTRIBUTES, MANY ALSO SAY HE WAS ACTUALLY QUITE SHY, AND NEVER WANTED TO BE IN THE LIMELIGHT. ALMOST EVERYONE REMEMBERS THAT FATHER VEREKER NEVER WASTED ANY TIME IN SAYING MASS. AND, IN HIS LIMITED FREE TIME, HE LOVED TO PLAY GOLF, AND WAS QUITE GOOD AT IT.

WHILE FATHER VEREKER WAS BOTH AFFABLE AND CALM IN Demeanor, THIS DID NOT MEAN HE WASN'T FOCUSED ON HELPING THE PARISH REALIZE ITS VISION OF HAVING A STAND-ALONE CHURCH. IN FACT, HE WAS TIRELESS IN THIS REGARD; AND HIS LEADERSHIP AND PERSISTENCE MADE A DEFINING DIFFERENCE IN BRINGING THE NEW CHURCH INTO REALITY. IT WOULD TAKE HIM EIGHT YEARS, BUT HIS PERSISTENCE FINALLY PAID OFF IN 1988.



December of 1988, parishioner Martin Rodriguez brought his tractor to help prepare the site for the new church



As construction commences, three key people are regularly on the scene. Jim Hiltz (the Parish's construction superintendent), Father Vereker, and Martin Rodriguez



By April of 1988, the frame for the church began to appear, as girders were lifted into place

The Dream is Realized—CONSTRUCTION OF THE CHURCH

IN JANUARY OF 1986, FATHER VEREKER INITIATED A THREE-YEAR DRIVE TO RAISE FUNDS TO BUILD THE CHURCH. THE EFFORT WAS LED BY PARISHIONER CHARLES HEINRICH, ASSISTED BY A BUILDING FUND COMMITTEE OF DEDICATED PARISHIONERS, AND THE PROFESSIONAL FUNDRAISING FIRM OF REYNOLDS JOHNSON. WITHIN THE PARISH, AN AGGRESSIVE CAMPAIGN FOR PLEDGES WAS UNDERTAKEN, AND VIRTUALLY EVERYONE CONTRIBUTED. EVEN THE STUDENTS OF ST. ROBERT—THROUGH THEIR STUDENT COUNCIL—CONTRIBUTED \$600. BY LATE 1986, THE CAMPAIGN WAS SUCCESSFUL ENOUGH THAT THE PARISH COULD INITIATE THE PROCESS OF CONSTRUCTION.

GROUNDBREAKING TOOK PLACE ON MARCH 28, 1987. BISHOP FRANCIS QUINN AND FATHER VEREKER PRESIDED. IN ADDITION TO BREAKING GROUND, BISHOP QUINN ALSO BLESSED THE PROPERTY WITH HOLY WATER.

IT WAS SEVERAL MONTHS LATER BEFORE CONSTRUCTION ACTUALLY BEGAN. ON DECEMBER 10, 1987, PARISHIONER MARTIN RODRIQUEZ (NOW A DEACON) ARRIVED WITH HIS TRACTOR TO BEGIN EXCAVATION WORK. AFTER FOUNDATION, WATER, SEWER, AND ELECTRICAL WORK WERE DONE, THE FRAME OF THE CHURCH FIRST STARTED TO TAKE SHAPE IN APRIL OF 1988. GIRDERS WERE LIFTED INTO PLACE; AND, A MONTH OR SO LATER, THE WOOD FRAMING WAS NEARLY COMPLETE. AS THE INTERIOR BEGAN TO TAKE SHAPE, THE PARISH'S CONSTRUCTION SUPERINTENDENT, JIM HILTS, GAVE A SMALL GROUP OF PARISHIONERS A GUIDED TOUR.

THE STAIN GLASS WINDOWS FOR THE CHURCH WERE DONE BY PAT HAGAR, FROM SAN JOSE. THIS WAS HER FIRST CATHOLIC CHURCH, AS SHE HAD PREVIOUSLY DONE WINDOWS FOR PROTESTANT CHURCHES. SHE CONSIDERED THE "OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE" WINDOW IN THE CONFESSIONAL THE BEST WINDOW SHE HAD EVER DONE.



By May of 1988, wood framing was completed, and the church was wrapped in plywood



Stain glass windows are installed

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS ARE OF WOOD, HAND CARVED IN ITALY. THE ORIGINAL ESTIMATE FOR THESE EXQUISITE WORKS WAS \$4,000, AND PARISHIONERS JOHN AND SUSIE UHART GENEROUSLY AGREED TO COVER THIS COST. WHEN IT TURNED OUT THAT THE STATIONS ACTUALLY COST \$10,000, THE UHARTS AGREED TO COVER THE ADDITIONAL COST. AGAIN, PARISHIONERS WERE DOING WHATEVER IT TOOK TO REALIZE THEIR DREAM.

THE TABERNACLE FOR THE NEW CHURCH CAME FROM THE HALL. THE ORIGINAL DESIGN BY THE ARCHITECT CALLED FOR THE TABERNACLE TO SIT ON A SHELF COMING OUT OF THE WALL. BUT WHEN IT CAME TIME TO MOVE THIS 250-PLUS POUND OBJECT, IT WAS CLEAR THE SHELF WOULD NOT BE STRONG ENOUGH TO HOLD THE TABERNACLE. FOR A COUPLE OF YEARS, THE TABERNACLE WAS THUS PLACED ON A TEMPORARY TABLE. LATER, JIM HILTS DESIGNED, BUILT AND INSTALLED A PERMANENT TABERNACLE TABLE. THE COST OF THE TABLE WAS PAID FOR BY DORIS FRIED, A FORMER PARISHIONER. WHILE SHE WAS MOVING TO THE MIDWEST, SHE AGREED TO PAY FOR THE TABLE ON ONE CONDITION — THAT SHE BE ABLE TO WRITE A NOTE TO BE ATTACHED TO THE TABLE FOR POSTERITY. THE NOTE IS STILL THERE.

THE CHURCH WAS DEDICATED ON DECEMBER 4, 1988. PRESIDING AT THE CEREMONY WERE BISHOP FRANCIS QUINN, AUXILIARY BISHOP ALPHONSE GALLEGOS, AND FATHER VEREKER. OTHER PASTORS WHO HAD SERVED AT ST. ROBERT, INCLUDING FATHERS MORGAN CURRAN, RICARDO CHAVEZ, AND ROBERT COFFEY WERE ALSO PART OF THE CEREMONY. THE CHURCH WAS HANDED OVER TO THE BISHOP, WHO THEN BLESSED IT AND PROVIDED THE PRAYER OF DEDICATION. THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY THE ANOINTING OF THE ALTAR AND THE WALLS OF THE CHURCH, THE INCENSATION OF THE ALTAR AND THE CHURCH, AND THE LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR AND THE CHURCH. LATER THE SAME DAY, A SPECIAL DINNER WAS HELD TO CELEBRATE THE DEDICATION OF THE CHURCH.



The stained glass windows for the church were done by Pat Hagar, of San Jose. Here the window for the vestibule is installed

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The Father McMahon Years

HAVING PUSHED LONG AND HARD TO BUILD THE CHURCH, FATHER VEREKER COULD NOT REST. THE PARISH WAS STILL IN DEBT, OPERATING THE SCHOOL WAS FINANCIALLY CHALLENGING, AND ADDITIONAL FUNDS WERE NEEDED FOR MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS OF AGING FACILITIES. HE CONTINUED TO WORK HARD WITH EFFORTS TO REDUCE THE DEBT AND MEET OPERATIONAL NEEDS. HAVING COMPLETED TWELVE YEARS AS PASTOR OF ST. ROBERT, FATHER VEREKER WAS ASSIGNED TO ST. VINCENTS IN VALLEJO AS ASSISTANT PASTOR LATE IN 1992.

FATHER KIERAN McMAHON WAS APPOINTED PASTOR OF ST. ROBERT ON FEBRUARY 28, 1992. McMAHON WAS BORN IN LIMERICK, IRELAND, IN 1939. AFTER COMPLETING HIS COLLEGE EDUCATION IN DUBLIN, AT ALL HALLOWS COLLEGE, HE WAS ORDAINED INTO THE PRIESTHOOD IN 1965. HE IMMEDIATELY CAME TO THE SACRAMENTO DIOCESE, WHERE HE SERVED ONE YEAR AT PRESENTATION BEFORE BEING APPOINTED TO REDDING IN 1966. AFTER FIVE YEARS IN REDDING, HE WAS APPOINTED TO YREKA FOR TWENTY-TWO YEARS—FROM 1971 TO 1993. HE FINALLY CAME BACK TO SACRAMENTO—THE ST. ROBERT PARISH—IN 1993.

FROM THE OPENING MOMENT, FATHER McMAHON HAS BEEN A GOOD MATCH FOR THE PARISH. HE BROUGHT STRONG ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS AND FISCAL ACUMEN—JUST WHAT WAS NEEDED TO GET THE PARISH OUT OF DEBT AND TIGHTEN UP ITS OPERATIONS. HE BROUGHT CERTAIN LITURGICAL SKILLS AND ENCOURAGED THE CONGREGATION TO SING. AND, FOR GOOD MEASURE, HE BROUGHT A WRY AND SUBTLE SENSE OF HUMOR—JUST WHAT WAS NEEDED FOR PARISHIONERS TO WARM UP TO THEIR NEW PASTOR. HERE WAS A MAN—DIGNIFIED, LITERATE, AND PRECISE—WHO IMMEDIATELY EARNED BOTH THE CONFIDENCE AND RESPECT OF PARISHIONERS.

IN HIS YEARS OF SERVICE TO ST. ROBERT, THE PARISH IS OUT OF DEBT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ITS HISTORY. THE SCHOOL IS RUNNING SMOOTHLY. MASSES ARE WELL ATTENDED. FUNDS ARE SET ASIDE FOR REPAIRS. AND, BY CREATING A PASTORAL COUNCIL, FATHER McMAHON HAS FURTHER ASSURED THAT THE PARISH WILL ANTICIPATE AND MEET ITS NEEDS IN THE FUTURE.

The Jubilee: A YEAR OF CELEBRATION

AS ST. ROBERT TURNS FIFTY, THE PARISH HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN A YEAR OF CELEBRATION. A CAREFULLY PLANNED SET OF CEREMONIES AND ACTIVITIES HAS TAKEN PLACE DURING THE YEAR.

ON SUNDAY, APRIL 3, 2005, A SPECIAL MASS WAS HELD AT 4:00 PM TO OFFICIALLY INITIATE THE PARISH'S GOLDEN JUBILEE. THE CHURCH WAS FILLED TO CAPACITY, AS PARISHIONERS GATHERED TO RECOGNIZE THE SPECIAL DAY. FOLLOWING THE CEREMONY, A CATERED DINNER WAS HELD IN THE HALL, COMPLETE WITH STRING TRIO AND CONVIVIAL ATMOSPHERE. BISHOP GARCIA, APPEARING ON BEHALF OF BISHOP WIEGAND, GAVE THE BLESSING AND HELPED INITIATE THE CELEBRATION. PARISHIONERS, OLD AND NEW, ENJOYED JACK SAPNARO'S RECOUNTING OF DAYS GONE BY.

ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2005, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE FALL FESTIVAL, A SPECIAL FAMILY OUTDOOR MASS WAS HELD AT 10:00 AM TO COMMEMORATE THE ACTUAL 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PARISH. BISHOP GARCIA, PRESIDED, ASSISTED BY FATHER MC MAHON AND DEACON DOUG TOKUNO, AS HUNDREDS GATHERED ON A BRIGHT, SUNNY, CRISP FALL MORNING. AGAINST THE COLORFUL BACKDROP OF BALLOONS AND BOOTHS, THE OCCASION WAS BOTH FESTIVE AND DIGNIFIED.

ON OCTOBER 24, 2005, AT 7:00 PM, A SPECIAL CEREMONY WAS HELD TO DEDICATE THE ICON OF ST. ROBERT OF NEWMINSTER. AS A PART OF GOLDEN JUBILEE, THE PARISH COMMISSIONED SISTER ANNE SEKUL, RSM, AN ACCOMPLISHED WRITER OF ICONS, TO CREATE AN ICON FOR ST. ROBERT. AFTER MANY MONTHS OF WORK, SHE COMPLETED THE PIECE IN LATE SEPTEMBER. THE CEREMONY TO DEDICATE THE ICON WAS HELD TO COINCIDE AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE TO THE ACTUAL 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PARISH—OCTOBER 27, 2005. BISHOP WIEGAND PRESIDED, AND FATHER MC MAHON DELIVERED THE HOMILY, AS HUNDREDS GATHERED TO VIEW THE ICON AND TAKE PART IN THE DEDICATION. ACCOMPANYING THE ICON IS THE AUTHOR'S DEPICTION OF THE PIECE, WHICH IS ALSO INSPIRING. THE ICON OF ST. ROBERT NOW RESIDES IN ITS PLACE ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE SANCTUARY, IMMEDIATELY TO THE RIGHT OF THE TABERNACLE.

FINALLY, AS PART OF THE JUBILEE, AN ARCHIVE IS BEING CREATED. DOCUMENTS, PICTURES, AND ARTIFACTS FROM THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS ARE BEING COLLECTED AND PRESERVED FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. AS A PART OF THIS ACTIVITY, EXTENSIVE VIDEO FOOTAGE HAS BEEN TAKEN OF THE GOLDEN JUBILEE MASSES, DEDICATIONS, AND CELEBRATIONS. EFFORTS ARE UNDERWAY TO CREATE A DOCUMENTARY THAT COMBINES VIDEO FOOTAGE, NARRATIVE, STILL PHOTOGRAPHS AND MUSIC. ONCE COMPLETED, THIS DOCUMENTARY WILL BE AVAILABLE IN BOTH DVD AND VHS FORMATS.

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A Bright Future: BUILDING ON THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS

IN SO MANY WAYS, IT IS THE PEOPLE WHO DEFINE THE UNIQUE CHARACTER OF A PARISH. ST. ROBERT IS A COMMUNITY OF DOWN-TO-EARTH PEOPLE OF ALL AGES AND WALKS OF LIFE — A DIVERSE COMMUNITY THAT FUNCTIONS HARMONIOUSLY. WE ARE A PEOPLE WHO PLACE A HIGH VALUE ON EDUCATION. WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN RESOURCEFUL. WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN PATIENT. AND WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN WILLING TO MAKE DO WITH WHAT WE HAVE. WE HAVE ALWAYS ACCEPTED RESPONSIBILITY FOR GETTING THINGS DONE. WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN GENEROUS. WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN STRONG IN OUR CONVICTIONS AND FAITH, AND WE HAVE ALWAYS SUPPORTED ONE ANOTHER IN FRIENDSHIP AND IN FAITH. AS ST. ROBERT'S CELEBRATES ITS FIRST 50 YEARS, WE CAN LOOK BACK WITH PRIDE AND A GREAT SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT. AND, AS WE LOOK TO THE FUTURE — THE NEXT 50 YEARS — IT IS CLEAR THAT THIS VERY SPECIAL FAITH COMMUNITY WILL CONTINUE TO EVOLVE, AND GROW AND THRIVE IN THE SERVICE OF THE LORD.