



Fr. Martin Moroney

*40th Ordination to Priesthood
June 9, 2007*



NO HOST BAR 6:30 – 7:30 PM

INVOCATION

Rev. Mr. Walter Little

DINNER 7:30 DINNER 7:30 DINNER

EMCEE

Charlie Clark

GUEST SPEAKERS

Trixie Poeschl

David Jimenez

Julia Boen

Rev. Mr. Walter Little

Rev. Fr. Humberto Gomez

REMARKS

Rev. Fr. Martin Moroney

CLOSING BENEDECTION

Rev. Mr. David Robinson

? ? MUSIC PROVIDED BY: ? ?

Rafael Billeda

Biography

It was no accident that a young Father Moroney, as a newly ordained priest, arrived in Sacramento in August of 1967 – leaving his native Ireland behind him and journeying to his new home in Northern California. For he had chosen Sacramento as his future home when he entered St. Patrick's College Seminary in County Tipperary seven years earlier – in September of 1960 - where he began his education on the path to priesthood. St. Patrick's Seminary developed priests for overseas, and required that each new candidate obtain a foreign bishop and diocese as a sponsor. It was young Martin's cousin, with whom he had grown up and who was also attending the very same seminary, who suggested the Sacramento diocese – having a vague idea of Sacramento through a relative who was serving as a priest in Sacramento.

It was the “rural” nature of Sacramento that appealed to young Martin. Having been born and raised in O'Callaghan's Mills - a small village in County Clare in the west of Ireland - he grew up on a small farm, the oldest of five children. Even to this day, Father Moroney prefers the open countryside to the enclosed city – and he carries a little piece of his rural Irish homeland in his heart, which he recharges each year when he returns to visit his family and friends.

Upon arrival in Sacramento, his first assignment was to St. Mel's in Fair Oaks – which was only short-term before then Bishop Bell assigned him to St. Anthony's in the town of Mt. Shasta. He served for over two years in this small lumber town in the Cascade Mountains, and it was here that he learned to ski on the slopes of Mt. Shasta. In 1970, the Bishop re-assigned Father Moroney to St. Theresa's in South Lake Tahoe, where he remained until 1976 – when he returned to Sacramento to serve at Sacred Heart in mid-town. In 1978, he transferred to All Hallows on 14th Avenue in Sacramento, which was his final posting as an Associate Pastor.

For his first twelve years as a priest, Father Moroney had been an assistant, or associate pastor, in all of the parishes in which he served. This is normal procedure for the Church, as it allows young priests to gain experience before assuming responsibility for their own parish. But in January 1981, Father Moroney took over his own parish, as pastor of St. John's in Quincy. He was now also responsible for the mission church in nearby Greenville. For 12 years, he served as the spiritual leader of the Catholic community in these two small towns in the mountains of Plumas County, and twice each week, he drove the 22 miles each way to Greenville to say Mass. While serving in Quincy, he was conscripted into the “chain gang”, where he learned the fine art of measuring yardage during the local high school football games.

In 1993, Bishop Francis Quinn asked Father Moroney if he would consider moving to St. John Vianney Parish in Rancho Cordova. Although he was happy with his post in Quincy, he agreed to come down out of the mountains to visit the parish before making a final decision. After spending a few hours with then-pastor Monsignor Wallace in walking around the grounds, checking out the church and the school, Father Moroney was on his way back to Quincy – his intent being to turn down the offer. As he was driving up the Feather River Canyon, he prayed for guidance – and it came to him. Upon reaching Quincy, he telephoned Monsignor Wallace and told him that he would accept the position as Pastor of St. John Vianney.

On May 18, 1993, Father Moroney celebrated his last Mass in Quincy, and the following day – May 19, 1993, he said Mass for the first time as Pastor of St. John Vianney Parish. Since that day, he has been asked by the diocese if he would like to move to a new parish, but so far, his answer has been that he is happy with his position at St. John Vianney, and that there is still much he can do here.

Since his arrival, there have been many improvements in the Parish. For example, outreach to the Hispanic community has resulted in a full-fledged Spanish program – with regular Spanish-language masses. The parish has just recently initiated a special program for the growing Indonesian community in the area – with an Indonesian mass held once each month. Father Moroney is very proud of his parish, and the fact that, in spite of the diversity, it is one community. Various parish organizations, like the Knights of Columbus, the Catholic Daughters and Caring Connections all work for the betterment of the parish and the Rancho Cordova community in general. He is glad that the \$200,000 debt that was burdening the parish when he arrived is now paid off. In fact, the parish school endowment fund has grown to a point that the interest earned will soon help to support the parish school.

For forty years, Father Moroney has devoted his life to serving God and the people of Northern California. He has served in some far-flung corners of the state, but spent more than half his time here in the Sacramento area. He still loves the mountains, and the outdoors, and even manages to play golf with his fellow priests once a week. Still a proper Irishman, he loves sports, and when a spare moment arises, he likes to watch football and basketball on the television. He remains a strong force in the lives of his congregation, and particularly in the lives of the children attending St. John Vianney School who love his sermons during the student masses. In 2005, Father Moroney renewed his commitment to continue his service at St. John Vianney for another six years – so we are looking forward to his support and guidance for the future.