

# SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

Vol 4

Father John E Boll, Archivist

No 7

## THE CENTENNIAL HISTORY OF SACRED HEART PARISH Modoc County, California 1883 – 1983

By the Parish Centennial Committee of Alturas



Sacred Heart Church, Alturas

## THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS

In the northeast corner of California lies the county of Modoc, a vast area of 4200 square miles and 2.6 million acres. As in former times, it is the land “where the West still lives”. With its fertile valleys, spring-fed rivers and majestic mountain peaks, Modoc is called the “gem of the high plateau”, which extends from Goose Lake in the north to the Pit River Valley in the south. It is the land of the cattle rancher, the Basque shepherd, and the open range. Stretching from the Adin Pass in the west, past the Warner Range to the Nevada border and from the Oregon border some eighty miles to the south, Modoc is the site of a pre-historic lava flow, a national wildlife refuge, and the Modoc National Forest. East of the Warner Range is Surprise Valley which the town of Cedarville at its center. At the head of this fertile agricultural valley is Fort Bidwell, a hub of military activity in the late 18-00s and early 1900s. At the foot of the valley, forty miles to the south stands Eagleville, situated at the base of and named after Eagle Peak, the highest point in the Warner Range. From the earliest days, Modoc has been the producer of fine cattle, sheep, and alfalfa hay which, still today, finds their markets in the distant Sacramento Valley.

In 1870, a pioneer named Presley A. Dorris staked out his land claim near what is now Alturas. At first, the little community which sprang up along the Pit River was known as Dorris Bridge. In 1874 the county was organized from the eastern section of Siskiyou County and given the name Modoc, derived from the Klamath Indian word *Moatokni*, meaning “people living south”. The town’s name being changed to Dorrisville, it was declared the county seat. In 1876 the name was again changed to Alturas, meaning “the heights” in Spanish.



Courtesy of Modoc County Museum

**The Dorris Family**

“Smiles of the Gods” was how the native inhabitants described their homeland. Even though the terrain and environment were harsh, even brutal, the area held an abundance of fish, game and edible foliage. For many years the harsh environment discouraged the white settlers and the three Indian tribes (Modoc, Pit River and Paiute) enjoyed peaceful co-existence.

The first known white settlers entered the area in 1831-1832 led by John Work of the Hudson Bay Company. From all reports the initial contacts were peaceful. However, within a few short years a spirit of mistrust and hostility emerged which later provoked open warfare. It was in this land that the last and most costly of the Indian Wars was fought.

Alturas is also the center and headquarters of a Catholic parish which is composed of greater Modoc and northern Lassen counties, covering 4500 square miles and 2.8 million acres. On a high prominence in the northeast corner of the city stands Sacred Heart Church, a small edifice of native lava stone built in Irish-styled gothic architecture.



The first known visit by a priest to Alturas occurred in 1875 on the Feast of All Saints. The local newspaper of the time, The Alturas County Independent, stated that the Reverend J.J. Callan of Yreka visited Modoc County on Halloween and preached a sermon in the courthouse. The next morning he preached on “Christian Unity.”

**Father James J Callan**

In 1881, Mother Dolores, Superior of the Dominican Sisters in Reno who ran a boarding school, Mount Saint Mary’s Academy visited in an effort to persuade Catholic girls to attend their school.

The Catholics she approached told her that it had been four years since a priest had visited the area. Mother Dolores was asked to use her influence to urge her pastor, Father Thomas Nugent, to relieve the situation. That same year Father Blanchette from Jacksonville, Oregon, was in Lakeview on a mission and received a message to come to Alturas for a sick call. He came on horseback and stayed on to celebrate Mass in some of the homes of the country.

**The following is quoted from the memoirs of Father Nugent:**

*Leaving Reno in September 1881, I went by stage to Susanville (ninety miles away in Lassen County where I said Mass on Sunday, and left that night at one o’clock for Alturas. The following night was spent in Bieber (eighty miles more), where hotel accommodations were out of the question, as there were horse races etc., bringing many strangers to town. The next morning I mounted a buckboard (snow having fallen at night) and arrived in Alturas that same afternoon (fifty-three miles away). A Catholic named John McGahey met me in the hotel and kept me in his house, showing me every hospitality I could desire. A sermon was preached in the Courthouse and Mass was celebrated in the home of a Catholic, Dr. Forrest. Besides Mr. and Mrs. McGahey and the doctor’s family, there were present Mrs. John Doten and two or three Ivory families. They were all very generous to me. Then I went to Cedarville, eighteen miles to the east, where I said Mass in a hotel owned by a Catholic named Monchamp and I preached*

*in the Methodist church. The following Sunday I officiated in Ft. Bidwell (twenty-six miles farther north) where a few Catholics, including a soldier or two, formed the congregation.*

*I returned on the stage to Reno, the driver permitting me to lie on the bottom of the stage under the seats on some scattered straw. This trip from Ft. Bidwell occupied three days and nights of continuous travel.*

On this visit Father Nugent baptized many children, and in many instances marriages of only civil contracts received the blessing of the Church.

In 1883, two years after the visit of Father Nugent, Father Patrick Kirley came to Modoc and founded a parish in Alturas. Mr. L.C. Estes, a non-Catholic, donated a tract of land where the church now stands. John McGahey also donated five acres to the church at this time, suggesting it be used for a school. Father Kirley immediately began the erection of a stone church crowning the hill on Fourth Street. The Burke Brothers, stonemasons from Reno, laid the foundation in the fall of 1883. In the spring of 1884, cornerstone ceremonies were held, and the rising church was placed under the patronage of St. Joseph. When the outer walls were finished, all available funds were exhausted and the Catholics, few in number, were unable to complete the building. For twenty-seven years the imposing walls with their four Celtic crosses would remain a lonely and somber sentinel overlooking the town as a rebuke to the present and a challenge for future generations.



**Father Patrick Kirley**

In 1885, Father Kirley petitioned Bishop Manogue for funds to return to Grass Valley; and the priests of Reno, and later Truckee, made occasional visits to Modoc during the following years. The skeleton church and grounds were known as “Catholic Hill”. Children used the church as a fort during the summer and tobogganed in the snow on the hill in winter. Some passersby also carved their names or initials into the exterior stone walls.



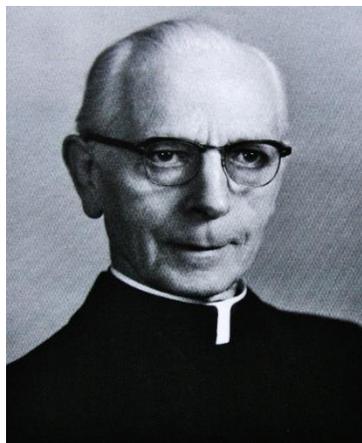
Electa Clark Fogerty, (*left*) a native Modocer, remembers a priest coming from Truckee by horse and buggy in the 1890s. The round trip took him three months because he stopped at every house or group of houses to celebrate Mass and hear confessions. The home of Electa’s mother in Jess Valley was one of these stops.

In 1900, during the pastorate of Fr Patrick Gleeson the number of Catholics in Modoc began to increase, and Mass was usually celebrated in a dancehall owned by E. Lauer and Sons. In this same year, Father Gleeson found that the

unfinished church and surrounding property had been sold for taxes. Evidently the first transfer of land from L.C. Estes to the parish was never recorded in the county records in 1883. Possibly because it was sold for taxes, the land along with the unfinished church was held by J.B. Estes, who sold it to James Laird in August 1901. On February 19, 1902, this same piece of land "including the old stone building and all the building stone thereon" was sold by Mr. Laird "for the consideration of Five Dollars, Gold Coin of the United States of America, to him in hand paid by the said party of the second part", who was Bishop Thomas Grace. These negotiations having taken place, the taxes were paid annually by the local Catholics. In 1906 the N.C.O. (Nevada-California-Oregon) Railroad was completed into Alturas and highways were being improved. There was telephone and telegraph communication with the outside world.



**Father Patrick Gleeson**



In this same year an ambitious young priest with a vision, Father Thomas E. Horgan, (*left*) came to Alturas and wanted to complete the church. Parishioners were delighted. But how were the funds to be raised? Father Horgan was not discouraged and formed plans which he submitted to Bishop Grace. In 1909 the Bishop gave his permission to dispose of the excess property owned by the parish. The next step was to have the five acres that were donated by John McGahey plotted and accepted as an integral part of the City of Alturas. In recognition of Father Horgan's efforts the City Council, in accepting the plot, ordered that the tract of land be henceforth known as the "Horgan Addition". The lots, which had no streets, water or sewers, were sold for \$10.00 each. In 1910 Father Horgan was the pastor of Truckee and had Alturas as a mission. This fact made it very difficult to work out the final plans and finances. But, thanks to the generosity of many individuals, the Altar Society of San Francisco and the Catholic Extension Society, the church was finally completed.

It was commonly said for many years that the church was completed in 1910. However, records recently obtained from the Catholic Extension Society in Chicago prove that the church was "under roof" in the spring of 1911 and thus was given a grant of \$450.00 for its completion. The following certificate also substantiates the fact that Father Horgan designated Saint Patrick as

the new patron of the parish. However, this must have been a short-lived dream of the pastor since the local press accounts continued to call the parish "Saint Joseph's" until 1923.

**CERTIFICATE**

\$ 450.00 ✓

Disb. Order No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Check No. 2461

**THE CATHOLIC CHURCH EXTENSION SOCIETY**  
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**CHICAGO**

GENTLEMEN:

We hereby certify that the church of St Patrick in Alturas, Calif.  
(insert name of Church)  
Diocese of Sacramento for which The Catholic Church Extension Society of the United States of America holds a Designated Gift, entrusted to it by one of its patrons, is now under roof and plastering begun.

Thomas Grace  
Bishop of Sacramento  
Thomas E. Hogan  
Pastor

Church  
Committee  
EBL\*JAD.

(Please do not omit **Town and Date**. Write remarks on reverse side.)

### Catholic Church Extension Society Designated Gift of \$450 for Alturas Church Construction

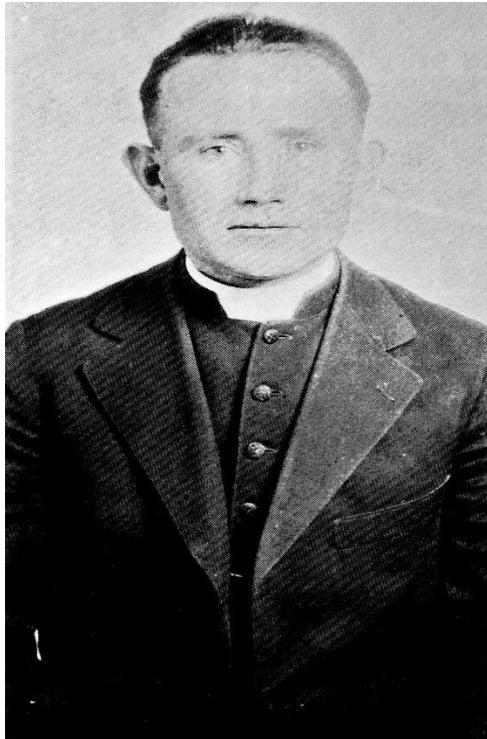
In the spring of 1911 the \$1000 altar donated by John McGahey, the pews and the confessional were installed. And in June of that same year the first marriage between Frank Own Wells and Bertie Marie Kemble was solemnized by Father Michael O'Mally, a Jesuit from Lakeview, Oregon. Leo Gloster and James Vincent and Murray Kemble served at the altar.

In the autumn of 1911 a new parish was created encompassing Modoc and Lassen counties; Alturas was no longer a mission of Truckee. Father O'Reilly was pastor with headquarters in Alturas for two years. Later he established himself in Susanville and Alturas received monthly visits. Still later, with the opening of the lumber industry in Susanville and Westwood the Catholic population of these towns began to increase and Father O'Reilly asked to be relieved of the Modoc mission. In response to these requests, Bishop Grace established a new parish of Modoc County and in the autumn of 1915, Father C. Tevlin arrived to take charge.

On Easter Sunday, 1916, a fire partially damaged a portion of the sanctuary. Non-Catholics sponsored a benefit dance to repair the damages. On July 2, 1916, Cordelia Pepperdine and Peter C. Weber were married at the Home of Anna Bernhardt, Peter's aunt, because the repairs to the church were not yet completed.

In 1917, the parish again found itself without a resident pastor. During this time the priests from Lakeview, Oregon often traveled the fifty-seven miles to care for the sick in times of emergency. It was one of these priests, Father Felix Geis, who celebrated the Solemn Requiem Mass for Catherine Gloster, one of the old and esteemed pioneers of Modoc County, on March 22, 1922. Father Enright of Susanville made occasional visits to the area, but found that the 110 miles was too distant in time of emergency.

In August 1923, Bishop Keane confirmed a class of children and formally dedicated the church in honor of the Sacred Heart. In 1884, Father Kirley had intended to have the church known as Saint Joseph's. Father Horgan had honored the patron of his homeland, Saint Patrick. But in 1910 when the Sunday school was placed under the patronage of the Sacred Heart, all participants wished the church to bear that name. On the occasion of the dedication the parishioners were also notified that Modoc would once more be a mission of Susanville with Father McCarthy as pastor. From 1923 – 1927 the Mission was served by Father McCarthy or his assistants Fathers Connors, Lynch, Mayer and O'Driscoll, in turn.



In the winter of 1926 – 1927 Modoc County was once more made an independent parish with Father Gerald O'Driscoll (*left*) as pastor. Serving the parish from 1926 – 1933, Father "Gerry" was well liked and respected in the parish and the community at large. His work was done so well that Modoc County was never again without a resident priest.

In 1928, the sacristy was built on the back of the church. The Alturas Plaindealer recorded the particulars in its October 26, 1928 issue.

In the fall of 1928, it was decided that the parishioners of Surprise Valley should have their own church. For many years Mass had been celebrated in the Jacob's home and later in the Community Hall. J.P. Seminario, John Haran and R.C. Tierney formed a committee with Father O'Driscoll to formulate plans. Two lots at the corner of Bonner and Garfield streets were purchased from J.K. and

Frankie Kerr for the sum of \$10.00 Gold Coin and the building was begun immediately by Earl Boston and Francis Page. The Extension Society was again called on for funds. In October, Saint James Church being "under roof," a grant in the amount of \$1000 was obtained. According to his personal records, Father O'Driscoll celebrated Mass for the first time in the new church on March 3, 1929. However, according to the following article in the Modoc County Times dated June 25, 1931 Saint James was not blessed by the Bishop until July 28 of that year.

The rectory in Alturas was added in 1929. Father O'Driscoll was also very concerned about the spiritual needs of the parishioners and made certain that the children were instructed in their religion. He was even known to make trips out to some of the ranches to instruct the children himself.

It was also at this time that the Sacred Heart Altar Society assisted the Surprise Valley parishioners in raising funds for the new church. The Modoc County Times, in its April 18, 1929 issue, recorded the details of one of these events from which all the proceeds went to Saint James Church.

In 1933, Father O'Driscoll was succeeded by Father William O'Toole who served the parish until 1936.

Father James Casey became pastor from 1936 – 1940. He left Alturas to become editor of the diocesan newspaper, The Superior California Register, in Sacramento. The Catholic Herald, issue of April 19, 1982, Bishop John Cummins of Oakland is quoted as asking Monsignor Casey what it was like to be pastor in Alturas at the age of twenty-seven years. "There," he answered, "is where I learned to read and write."



**Father James Casey**

From April 1940 – November 1942 Modoc was served by Fathers Patrick Keene and Maurice Kiely. It was during this time that the metal circular staircase was installed in the church. Originally art of the E. Lauer & Sons dancehall where Mass was usually celebrated in 1900, the staircase was donated by Orville Spath.

On December 19, 1942, Father Matthias Oberaigner became pastor. It was during his pastorate that Nubieber became a second mission of Alturas. Father Oberaigner recently reflected on his travels:

*Since no priest was taking care of Burney at the time I scheduled a Mass there once a month, going there Saturday PM, giving instructions and then Mass at 7 a.m. with a second Mass on my way home at Nubieber lastly at 11 a.m. in Alturas...I also had Mass once a month at Fall River.*

In October 1944 the Trinitarian Fathers were asked by Bishop Armstrong to take charge of the parish. Father William McLaughlin came in that same year with Father Michael Proulx as his associate. In 1951, Father Dominic Antonelli served as pastor with Father Proulx assuming that role in 1954. From 1959 – 1972 the Trinitarian Fathers continued to serve the parish under the leadership of Fathers Aloysius Silvestro, Ignatius Estes, Raphael Hollis and Anthony Vanucci. During these years many improvements were made, both spiritual and material. Both Sacred Heart and Saint James were remodeled, the grounds landscaped, and a parish hall built by Harry Pinneo. To insure the success of this last project a fund drive chaired by John Weber and Delbert Fitzpatrick raised almost all of the needed \$25,000.

In 1958-59 Mary P. Young was president of the Altar Society which sponsored the first event held in the new Holy Trinity Hall, an Irish Faire and luncheon on Saint Patrick's Day, 1959. The profit realized for the building fund was \$1,760.

On August 31, 1972, Father J. Dermot Dwyer arrived from Sacramento to assume leadership of the parish. During his tenure extensive reinforcement was done to the stone walls of the church

and a new roof was installed. Virgil Buhrman and Albert Sears built the entryway to the parish hall, donated their labor. The Men's Club was started along with Bible study classes for the whole parish. Father Dwyer selected the new linoleum for the hall with a little Irish green in it. He said, "You can think of me whenever you look at it." In an effort to reduce the parish debt he also sent a letter to all parishioners asking for a donation of \$150 from each family. The response was very favorable. William and Ruby Goulden donated some land at the front of the church property for a parking lot.

Recently, Father Dwyer offered this reflection:



*The people were leisurely, friendly and kind in Sacred Heart Parish, Alturas, where I had my first assignment as pastor. I appreciated it as it was the first time I had the opportunity to put "my legs under my own table" and that gives a sense of security. "Modocers" are most understanding. Unforgettable memories linger. I can say that they gave me more than I gave them. Their simple, strong faith was an inspiration to me.*

*Sacred Heart Alturas is far distant from neighboring parishes in N.E. California and the winter seasons get a little rough sometimes. But warm-hearted and friendly parishioners compensated for any feelings of isolation or unpleasant inconveniences. Their help and co-operation were fantastic. It was a happy time with the ever-present sense of challenge and the joy of sharing with these sincere and generous people.*

*I often thought of those who went before me on "Catholic Hill." I often think of those who came after me. I am eternally grateful for the honor and the opportunity to be part of the great event you are remembering and celebrating – The Centennial Portrait – One hundred years when "Modocers," brothers and sisters in God were a living part of the world-wide Church.*

In October 1974, Father Joseph McGloin, S.J., a scholarly priest and author of many fine books, came to Modoc. He was followed by Father John Hannan in October 1975 and Father Felix Mysliwicz, a retired Army Colonel and Chaplain, in January 1976. At this time the parish was still in debt so Bingo was started to raise funds. Father Mysliwicz was also an outdoorsman, keeping the grounds himself. Many parishioners also volunteered their time in painting the inside of the rectory and remodeling the confessional and sacristy where Mass was celebrated daily.

In the late spring of 1977, Father Michael Kiernan (*right*) assumed the role of pastor. One of his first projects was to reactivate the Bible Study classes and the Men's Club which did a tremendous job in reducing the parish debt. He was also greatly involved in the Marriage Encounter which was very beneficial to many couples in the parish and the community at large.



In mid-1978, the McHugh family donated the new organ and sound system for the church in memory of their parents, Pat and Kitty. A

bequest from the John and Dorothy Wistos Estate was added to other monies being used for a major renovation of the interior of the church. Other project accomplished by the parishioners under Father Mike's leadership were the reinforcing of the retaining walls bordering the church lawn, new sidewalks and gutters and the landscaping of the area around the parish hall. The debt was also paid off. A Spanish Mass was added on Sundays for the benefit of the Mexican families of the parish.

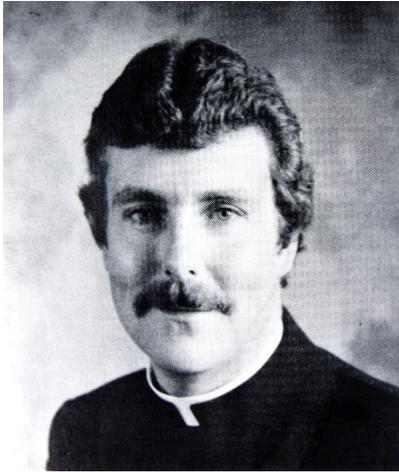
Father Kiernan's last, but by no means least, project was the building of the new Saint James Hall in Cedarville. Thanks to partially donated materials and an all-volunteer labor force, the cost of the 1400 square foot structure amounted to only \$19,000. The new hall, consisting of a large meeting room, kitchen and restrooms, was blessed by Bishop Francis Quinn in June 1981.



**Bishop Francis Quinn Blesses the New Church Hall in Cedarville in 1981**

For many years Sisters had been coming to the parish especially in the summers to visit and to teach religious education classes. Father Mike continued this tradition in arranging for visits by the Sisters of Mercy of Auburn who, in February 1982, under an agreement with the Modoc County Board of Supervisors, assumed control of the hospitals in Alturas and Cedarville.

In November 1981, Father James Sheets assumed his first assignment as pastor in coming to Sacred Heart. Father Jim has guided the parish in a continuing renewal of the church's physical



**Father James Sheets**

renovation and the community's spiritual life, offering a balanced blend of both. Through individual donations, the original pews were refinished by Jones Refinishing of Klamath Falls, Oregon, and the stained glass windows were repaired and restored by the Hogan Studies of Felton, California. In keeping with the dictates of liturgical renewal, the sacristy at Saint James in Cedarville has been transformed into a bright and comfortable Reconciliation Room.

Weekly Adult Education Classes in Scripture, Liturgy and the Sacraments have been introduced. In addition the CYO has been restructured and the CCD Program in Cedarville revitalized. The Church has always maintained that the Mass is the high

point of Catholic life. In keeping with this doctrine, Father Jim has focused particular attention on the liturgy of weekend Masses. Ministries of the Word and Eucharist have been more formalized; and music has been given greater emphasis as an integral part of the celebration of the Eucharist. In keeping with modern liturgical environment, some sanctuary appointments have been removed, thereby providing a more simple area for celebration.

For one hundred years the Catholic faith in Modoc has experienced continued growth. The "old stone church on the hill" stands only as a symbol of the true Church—the living Body of Christ. As that body, Sacred Heart Parish is a witness of faith in God, Our Father, and Jesus, Our Savior. Not with great fanfare or flamboyance, but in simple everyday affairs the Church grows in love with God by service to each other and those outside our community of faith. Participation in the various educational programs, service clubs, and events of the parish attest to the eagerness of the Body of Christ to learn more about the faith while serving the needs of those within the community. Attendance at weekend and daily Masses and various devotions bears witness to the unshakeable faith and trust in God by His people.

As the arduous journey of faith beckons, the people of Sacred Heart meet that challenge as they begin the next 100 years.

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The foregoing Centennial History of Sacred Heart Parish was compiled by Mary P. Young and the Sacred Heart Centennial Committee using the following sources:

- The Memoirs of Father Thomas Nugent
- The unpublished History of Sacred Heart Parish by Dorothy Gloster (date unknown)
- "Hallowed were the Gold Dust Trails" by Henry L. Walsh, S.J. (1946)
- The Alturas Plaindealer
- The Modoc County Times
- "1000 California Place Names" by Erwin G. Gudde, 3<sup>rd</sup> Revision, 2<sup>nd</sup> Printing, 1971
- The personal reflections of many parishioners and friends, in particular:  
Mrs. Irma Laird, Mrs. Electa Fogerty, Mrs. Cordelia Weber, Mr. Erin Forrest

Father Raphael Hollis, Msgr. James Casey, Fr. Mathias Oberaigner, Fr. J. Dermot Dwyer  
And Rev. Ignatius Estes.

## THE CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE



*L-R Mary Young, Ray Brennan, Father Jim Sheets, Doris Harris, Rhea Jones, K.C. Tierney*

Special appreciation is extended to the following who helped in the research for this Centennial History:

Herbert Leue, Modoc County Recorder's Office  
Robert Sloss and Cathie Scheetz of the Modoc County Record  
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Father William Spring, Diocesan Archivist  
The Catholic Church Extension Society, Chicago  
The Dominican Sisters, St. Mary's Hospital, Reno  
Ann Odgers, Curator, Modoc County Museum  
Steve & Cheryl Baker, Niles Saloon and High Grade Room  
The Sisters of Mercy, Grass Valley  
Rev. John Dwyer, Saratoga

## Priests Who Have Served the People of Modoc County

1875 - 1881	Rev. James J. Callan
1881 - 1883	Rev. Thomas Nugent
1883 - 1885	Rev. Patrick Kirley
1900 - 1906	Rev. Patrick Gleeson
1906 - 1911	Rev. Thomas E. Horgan
1911 - 1915	Rev. Patrick O'Reilly
1915 - 1927	Rev. Christopher Tevlin
1927 - 1933	Rev. Gerald O'Driscoll
1933 - 1936	Rev. William O'Toole
1936 - 1940	Rev. James Casey
1940 - 1941	Rev. Patrick Keane
1941 - 1942	Rev. Maurice Kiely
1942 - 1944	Rev. Mathias Oberaigner
1944 - 1950	Rev. William McLaughlin, O.S.S.T.
1950 - 1953	Rev. Dominic Antonelli, O.S.S.T.
1953 - 1959	Rev. Michael Proulx, O.S.S.T.
1959 - 1960	Rev. Aloysius Silvestro, O.S.S.T.
1960 - 1968	Rev. Ignatius Estes, O.S.S.T.
1968 - 1971	Rev. Raphael Hollis, O.S.S.T.
1971 - 1972	Rev. Anthony Vanucci, O.S.S.T.
1972 - 1974	Rev. Dermot Dwyer
1974 - 1975	Rev. Joseph McGloin, S.J.
1975 - 1976	Rev. John Hannan
1976 - 1977	Rev. Felix Mysliwicz
1977 - 1981	Rev. Michael Kiernan
1981 - 1987	Rev. James Sheets
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1988 - 1990	Rev. Rodolfo Delgado
1990 - 1993	Rev. P. Vincent Lenehan
1993 - 2000	Rev. Rodney Hall
2000 - 2006	Rev. Patrick Henry
2006 - 2007	Rev. Godwin Xavier
2007 - 2008	Rev. Benjamin Raze
2008 - 2009	Rev. Jeremy Leatherby
2009 - 2015	Rev. Bernardin Mugabo

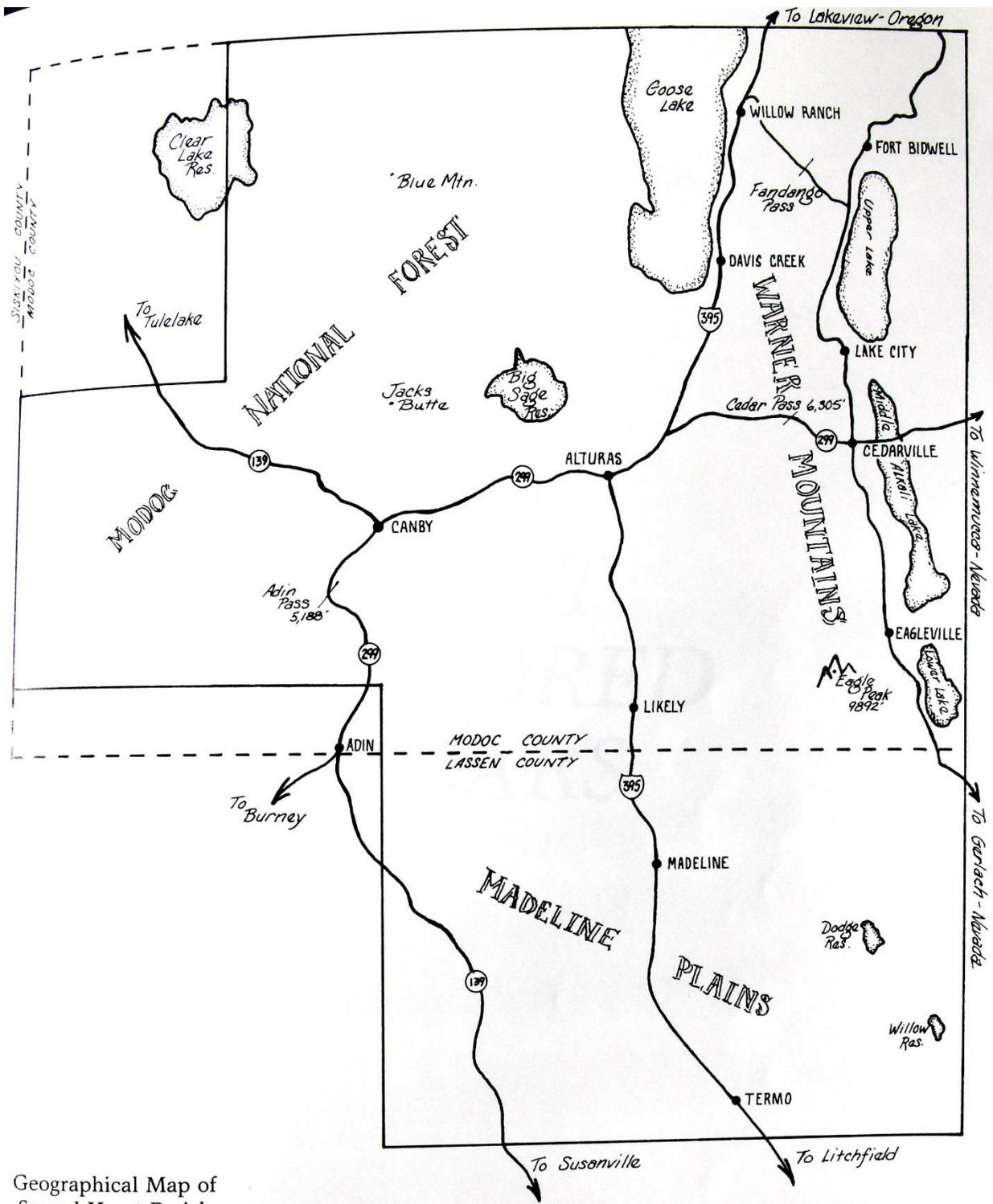


**The Parish Shield** is divided into two parts by the parish motto: *"Gloria a Dios en las Alturas,"* a Spanish translation of the angel's hymn on the first Christmas night, *"Glory to God in the Highest."*

The upper portion of the shield incorporates the religious symbols of the parish: the Sacred Heart of Jesus to which the parish and church are now dedicated; the carpenter's square to denote Saint Joseph, the former patron of the parish; and the sword depicting the instrument of martyrdom of Saint James, patron of the Surprise Valley Mission.

The lower portion of the shield incorporates secular symbols for the County of Modoc. The feathers symbolize the Modoc, Paiute and Pit River Native American tribes, the earliest inhabitants of the country. The tree denotes the Modoc National Forest, a major employer of county citizens. The soaring bird represents the Modoc National Wildlife Refuge, home to many species of fowl. The mountains depict the Warner Range dividing the county from north to south which forms Eagle Peak, also known as "Saddleback." Below are the rolling hills of the high desert which naturally cultivate the native foliage of sagebrush, juniper and mahogany. The alfalfa symbolizes ranching, the major industry of the county which produces cattle, sheep, alfalfa and a few other grains.

The Centennial Shield was designed by Cathie Scheetz in consultation with the Sacred Heart Centennial Committee, and was executed by Paul J. Sullivan.



Geographical Map of Sacred Heart Parish

**Map of Sacred Heart Parish, Alturas**



Photo by John E Boll 2012

**Interior of Sacred Heart Church, Alturas**



Photo by John E Boll 2012

**Saint James Church, Cederville**



Photo by John E Boll 2012

**Saint James Parish Hall, Cederville**  
**Built in 1981 during the Pastorate of Father Michael Kiernan**