

Father McCabe: *He Built Churches, Schools In Local Area; Now He's Headed For Santa Barbara Parish*

BY JOE GRAZIANO
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Father McCabe, in his heavy Irish accent, mused about leaving Santa Maria with mixed emotions, referring to himself in the third person:

"He has saved all the sinners in Santa Maria and he believes there are a few left in Santa Barbara."

Then he laughed. It was a good joke.

But he had another joke—he always seems to have another joke. "Santa Maria is a wonderful place to live, if we can get rid of the wind."

Somehow, his Irish accent makes the jokes all the more funny.

The smiling Catholic priest, in his 50s with nearly 18 years behind him in two parishes in the Santa Maria area, is grateful to the people here who have been "awfully nice to me." But, he said, "I won't be very far from Santa Maria, and I will be back often."

The Rev. Vincent McCabe, pastor of St. Louis de Montfort Church off Clark Avenue and St. Anthony Church of Los Alamos and coordinator of St. Joseph High School, will leave Santa Maria to become pastor of San Roque Church of Santa Barbara, effective July 1. The transfer was announced by Timothy Cardinal Manning, archbishop of Los Angeles. Father McCabe's place will be taken by the Rev. Martin McGovern, pastor of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church of Sun Valley, who in 1953 was an associate pastor of St. Mary of the Assumption Church of Santa Maria.

On Sunday, a Mass at 11:30 a.m. in St. Louis Church and a reception from 12:30 to 2:30 a.m. in St. Joseph High will honor Father McCabe.

Father McCabe's new parish is in the LaCumbre Plaza area of Santa Barbara and has a membership of about 900 families, which is slightly more than St. Louis. The parish

includes an eight-room elementary school for grades one to eight, and Bishop Garcia Diego Catholic High School is located within the parish boundaries.

San Roque was founded in 1953 by the Franciscan Fathers. But due to lack of priests in the order to staff the parish, Father McCabe said the Franciscans are giving the parish to the Los Angeles Archdiocese, effective July 1.

Referring again to himself in the third person and reflecting about leaving, Father McCabe said, "He leaves with mixed emotions. He started and built this place and it became his baby. But it is now becoming the custom of the (Catholic Church) to change anybody over 10 years in one place. That is one of the reasons Father Marum left."

(Father Kieran Marum, recently elevated to monsignor, was pastor of St. Mary's for 10 years until last month when he too left Santa Maria to become pastor of St. Finbar Church of Burbank.)

Father McCabe was named pastor of St. Louis in 1963, moving from St. Mary's where he had been an associate pastor since November of 1956, when the then Archbishop of Los Angeles, James Francis Cardinal McIntyre announced the formation of the new parish because of the growth of Santa Maria.

Father McCabe started the parish literally from scratch. There was no church nor school. Mass was said in an old Army Air Corps barracks at the Santa Maria Public Airport. The next year St. Louis elementary school was built and a year later the church went up. Father McCabe was able to obtain nuns from the Daughters of Mary and Joseph to staff the school.

He also saw a need for a Catholic high school in the Santa Maria area and persuaded the Los Angeles Archdiocese to build St. Joseph High. Father McCabe helped in the building and staffing and has been coordinator of the school

all along. He is also responsible for the building of St. Anthony Church in Los Alamos.

Together, St. Louis and St. Anthony churches, St. Louis elementary and St. Joseph school cost more than \$2.5 million to build, and "due to the great generosity of the people of Santa Maria, it is all paid off," he said.

While Father McCabe was an associate pastor at St. Mary's, he saw the building of a new church and school in that parish.

He was also involved, as a representative of the Los Angeles Archdiocese, in the planning and building of Marian Hospital.

Father McCabe is well known in the Santa Maria area, and over the years has attended countless civic functions. He is a member of the Elks and Moose lodges.

An outdoorsman, who has hunted pheasant, quail and pigeon, "a pretty good golfer—and I hope to spend more time at it in Santa Barbara—" Father McCabe said he is particularly "fond of the farmers in Los Alamos and enjoyed going to their barbecues and functions."

Born in 1921 in Ireland into a family of eight children, he studied in Ireland and was ordained in June of 1946 at St. Patrick's College in Maynooth, Ireland. He came to the United States in November of the same year, and was appointed an associate pastor at St. Peter and Paul Church of Wilmington, where he "learned to play golf and fish." In April of 1950, he moved to St. Philip Neri in Compton as an associate pastor. Six years later he came to Santa Maria.

His family has spread out. Two brothers are also Catholic priests, Gerald in Scotland and James in Ireland. A sister, Edmond, is a nun in England. Another sister, Kathleen is married and living in San Francisco. The rest of the family is in Ireland.



The Rev. Vincent McCabe