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SERVING THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO AND  
THE DIOCESES OF STOCKTON, SANTA ROSA AND RENOP-LAS VEGAS

By Roberta Ward

St. John Vianney Parish in East San Jose will be celebrating its first 25 years on Sunday, June 26, with a special concelebrated Mass at 4 p.m., including the blessing of new stained glass windows.

In 25 years, the parish has developed from a "mission" of old St. Patrick's Church in downtown San Jose, to a thriving parish in an area that has grown to include almost 8,000 Catholics.

**THE PARISH** property was originally part of El Rancho Pala, a large Mexican land grand, previously owned by Charles White who came to San Jose in 1846. The second owner was Mrs. Jennie H. Roberts.

The deed for the seven acres of property now owned by St. John Vianney parish passed from Jennie Roberts to Virginia Piercy in 1950 and from Virginia Piercy to the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Francisco in 1951.

**Founded in 1952, the parish began with Easter Mass, offered by founding pastor Father Fred Cook, in the historic home, now the rectory, at 4609 Alum Rock Ave.**

The two-story Mediterranean style house, with tile roof in the Spanish tradition was once the center and ranch home of El Rancho Pala and Charles White who, at that time, had stables, and tank house, and an iron fence completely surrounding the home.

**THOSE THINGS** are gone now but the handsome home still sits amidst the giant palm and shade trees and will be the site of the reception following the Mass on June 26.

Christmas, 1953, was the date of the first Mass in the new church Spanish in style and the following year the school was started.

**The east valley began to grow and in 1961 two other parishes were formed from the area served by St. John Vianney: St. Victor's and Most Holy Trinity. Though reduced in size the parish grew in people in the developing Alum Rock area of San Jose.**

Father Denis G. Moore was the second pastor and the late Father Francis E. Reilly followed him. In 1973, Father John Cunningham was appointed pastor and he has seen the parish through the last four eventful years.

**1974 SAW THE** fire in the sacristy of the church which caused \$100,000 damages. Restoration was begun, as well as a few additional improvements, which are complete with the new stained glass windows.

Father Cunningham a warm humorous priest sees the parish as all the people, and himself as the servant as well as the pastor.

**Having ben a high school teacher, some years ago, Father Cunningham is especially known for his "way" with teenagers in his parish. "They really love him," said Mrs. Teddy Bruno. "He talks their language, but he's still boss and they know it and respect him for it."**

The kids are enterprising, too. The parish youth group grows produce and provides food enough to feed two poor families a day. Someone is always on call in case of an emergency.

**IN THIS 200<sup>TH</sup>** year of the city of San Jose, St. John Vianney's is the only Santa Clara county parish to be celebrating a jubilee, with the exception of St. Joseph's which is also celebrating its bicentennial, and St. Clare's parish which is 100 years old.

Mrs. Bruno says that over 2300 invitations have been issued for the June 26 jubilee and that honored guests will include the mayor of San Jose and many other civic representatives.

**Concelebrants will include many priests who have served as assistants in the parish over the years, and several priests who are natives of the parish.**

Totally, the parish claims six of its own who have been ordained and they are Father William J. Rewak, S.J. current president of the University of Santa Clara; Father Richard R. Fries, M.M., serving in the Phillipines; Captain (Chaplain) Philip C. Blake, S.J., Arizona; Fathr Robert C. McGuire, M.M., Chaplain to a U.S. Army paratroop division in Turkey; Father Ronald Sanfilippo, S.J.; and the late Father C. Kelly Canelo.

**THE PARISH** also claims many women Religious as well.

Besides Father Cunningham, the parish is served by Father Eugene O'Donnell, and Spanish-speaking Permanent Deacon Jose Alvarez. Father Anthony McGuire is also in residence there, but he is full time Vicar for the Spanish-speaking in Santa Clara county, and Director of El Centro Pastoral.

**All parishioners and alumni of the parish are welcome to attend the Silver Anniversary celebration June 26, beginning with Mass at 4 p.m., followed by a reception between 5 and 6 p.m. in the rectory gardens, after which a box supper, entertainment and dancing will continue until 9 p.m. The box supper will be \$3.50 per adult, \$1.75 for children, with a \$10 per family maximum.**