



Historical Highlights

Fr. Thomas Dowling O.F.M. Cap.

+January 7, 1951



Thomas Dowling was born March 18, 1874 in Kilkenny, Ireland. Thomas was one of the pioneers of our Province. In 1910, he was sent to Oregon with Luke Sheehan in, what was then, wide-open territory. He and Luke continued the ministry of spreading the Gospel in this sparsely populated land.

Despite his good work in Oregon, Thomas never questioned or hesitated when asked to go south to San Francisco. His greatest achievement was establishing the Parish of Our Lady of Angels at Burlingame in 1926 then a town of 13,000 residents and growing. Archbishop Hanna recognizing the need of a new parish entrusted the project to the Capuchins. Thomas Dowling was appointed the first pastor with Berchmans Cantillon as his assistant. The parish comprised what had been Ansell Easton's 1500-acre farm. With a \$35,000 loan, he purchased a cottage, a vacant lot, a small building, and the old Easton School. The old school served temporarily as a church and the cottage as a rectory. On Sunday, December 19, 1926, parishioners sat on wooden planks while attending the first Mass. Thomas saw the need for a school in the rapidly expanding parish. One of the little cottages at 1325 Cortez was renovated, additions added and on August 22, 1927 it opened as the first parochial school in San Mateo County. The Sisters of Mercy formed the staff.

Thomas was a Friar filled with love for his work. He did not spare himself. His love for the Order gave him energy. He was a great community friar, prayerful and kind to all around him. He died January 7, 1951 and is buried in Los Angeles, California. In gratitude to our brother, Thomas, and the friars of the Mother Province of St. Patrick, please pray one *Glory be to the Father*.

Adapted from: (Fr. Michael James O'Shea, OFM Cap: Necrology)