



Kurt Ellison

Monsignor Declan Murphy stands in front of St. Patrick's in Watsonville.

Msgr. Murphy to leave St. Pat's after 17 years

After 17 years of service at St. Patrick's Church in Watsonville, Monsignor Declan Murphy is being transferred to head the Carmel Mission.

His new assignment will take effect Jan. 1. Murphy will stay on in Watsonville until a successor is named, according to Bishop Thaddeus Shubsda, head of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Monterey.

He said it may take a few months to select a replacement.

"It's a very high honor to

be named to head the Carmel Mission," said Murphy. "But I'm torn between two things — I love the Carmel Mission, but I hate to leave Watsonville."

Murphy was born in Ireland and was ordained as a priest in Dublin in 1949. He was immediately assigned to the Fresno Diocese, which at that time also included what is now the Monterey Diocese. His first ministries were in Delano, Pacific Grove and Visalia.

In 1962 he was given his

first pastor assignment in Atascadero. He was transferred to Watsonville in 1971, where he has served as pastor ever since.

During his tenure, St. Patrick's parish, with its church on Main Street in Watsonville, has grown from about 4,000 members to 7,000.

"I've enjoyed the Irish background that is in Watsonville," Murphy said. "The people here have been very warm and I've felt at home since the first day I came."