

## Window...

From page 8

dow's donors, his grandparents James and Mary Coyle, lived.

"I don't think we appreciated the stained glass window until it wasn't there. You just took it for granted," said Coyle, who started going to Mass at Immaculate Conception 75 years ago.

He said his grandmother, a devout Catholic whose maiden name was Doyle, donated the window and property to the church in part "because it was time to have an Irish church in the neighborhood."

Javier Noguera remembers first hearing about the radiant image of the Immaculate Conception when he moved to Sacramento from Nicaragua 10 years ago.

"I was in shock," said Noguera, upon discovering that celebration of the feast of the Immaculate Conception on Dec. 8 was not as prominent in the United States as it was in his homeland.

When he saw the Immaculate Conception window stored in a back room of the church, he knew he had to do something to help bring the beautiful window back for all to see.

"The mother of God is very important



**Members of the Coyle family (from left, Patrice, Jim, Herta, Yvonne and Cyril) were present for the rededication of a stained glass window donated in 1916 by family ancestors James and Mary Coyle. The window had been removed during a church renovation in 1960. Cathy Joyce/Herald photo**

for us," Noguera said. "This church is her house."

It seemed providential, said Deacon Pauly, that after the church's air condi-

tioning system went out in 2002, the empty space at a side altar was "a perfect place for the window."

Among the first to volunteer to raise

funds to renovate the window and its original framing was Noguera, who enlisted the support of the large number of Latino members in the parish community. It was a project that also involved relocating a painting of Our Lady of Guadalupe to the opposite side of the church.

Fund-raisers included two church raffles netting more \$5,000, with sales of tamales and other Mexican foods following Mass bringing in another \$2,000.

"This is a very special church, because we are from many countries but are one faith," Noguera said.

Once the refurbishing work on the window was complete two months ago, Deacon Pauly planned a special blessing and rededication Mass on May 23.

Among those sitting in the front row at the Mass was James Coyle, a great grandson of the stained glass window's donors. Coyle had seen the simple, vivid richness of the artist's interpretation of Mary when the window was first uncovered by Father Madigan and was thrilled to see it back again.

"It's something to look at a piece of art your grandparents admired too," Coyle said. "The artistry is fantastic."

More than 200 members of the Immaculate Conception Parish community present for the Mass seemed to agree.

# Parish's stained glass window of the Immaculate Conception is home again

By Nancy Westlund  
Herald staff

Immaculate Conception Parish in Sacramento has been on something of a search and recovery mission.

The subject of the investigation was a circular stained glass window depicting the Immaculate Conception of Mary. The window, installed over the main altar, had been donated along with the property on which the church was built in 1916.

Its donors were James and Mary Coyle, an Irish couple who lived in a magnificent two-story home located on 28th and Y Streets.

For many parishioners, the Immaculate Conception window soon became very much the spirit of the church.

That was the case for Luella and Charles Davis, who were married in a double wedding ceremony at Immaculate Conception Church in 1959.

"You walked into the church and saw the window," Luella Davis said. "It kind

of drew us to church."

But in 1960 during a remodeling of the church, the window was paneled over in order to install a crucifix. It remained hidden until it was discovered in the early 1980s by Father Dan Madigan, then pastor of the parish, when he was in the attic on a rewiring project.

Recognizing "a treasure of a window" when he saw it, Father Madigan had the window brought down and placed in a room set aside for church artifacts.

Deacon Gerald Pauly, parish steward at Immaculate Conception, said when he first arrived as a parishioner at the church 41 years ago, there were frequent comments about the missing stained glass window.

"There were people here who never stopped lobbying to get that window back," he said.

Cyril Coyle was one of those people. He had, after all, grown up just one house over from "the big house" where the win-

Continued on page 9



Longtime parishioners Luella and Charles Davis, above, were among those present for the rededication and blessing of an 88-year-old stained glass window at Immaculate Conception Church in Sacramento. At left, a 1959 photograph of their marriage in the church reveals the stained glass

