



+ BISHOP JAIME SOTO

Priest of the Diocese of Orange 1982 - 2000
Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Orange 2000 – 2007
Coadjutor Bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento 2007 - 2008
Ninth Bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento 2008 - Present

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Jaime Soto was born on December 31, 1955, eldest of seven children born to Oscar and Gloria Soto. He grew up in the city of Stanton in Orange County and attended the elementary school of Saint Polycarp Parish where the Sotos were active parishioners.

ENTERS SEMINARY IN 1970

Responding to a desire to be a priest, Jaime entered Our Lady Queen of the Angels Junior Seminary at Mission San Fernando in 1970. After three years there Jaime decided to leave the seminary and in 1973 transferred to Mater Dei High School in Santa Ana where he graduated in the spring of 1974. He found that year at Mater Dei to be a happy and positive experience. After graduating from high school, Jaime decided to return to the seminary, entering St John College Seminary in Camarillo. While a student at Camarillo, the Diocese of Orange was created in 1976 and Jaime became a seminarian of the new diocese of Orange. It was during his seminary years that Jaime began to study Spanish for the first time.

TRANSFERS TO SAINT JOHN SEMINARY, CAMARILLO

Jaime graduated from the seminary college with a bachelor degree in philosophy and then began his theology studies at Saint John Major Seminary. When he completed his theology course, he graduated with a master of divinity degree. As part of his seminary training, Jaime spent his deacon year at two different parishes, Saint Bonaventure Parish in Huntington Beach (June - August 1981) and Saint Joseph Parish in Santa Ana (January – May 1982). He was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Orange by his bishop William Johnson at Holy Family Cathedral on June 12, 1982.

ATTENDS COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, NEW YORK

The newly ordained Fr Soto returned to Saint Joseph Parish in Santa Ana where he served as parochial vicar until July 1984. Bishop Johnson decided to send Father Soto to Columbia University School of Social Work in New York where he graduated in 1986 with a master degree in social work. Following his return to the Diocese of Orange, he served as the associate director of Catholic Charities. In December 1986 he became director of Immigration and Citizenship Services for the diocese and was involved in the implementation of the Immigration and Reform and Control Act of 1986. In a short time he became widely known as an outspoken and skilled activist promoting Catholic values, defending immigrants, and advocating for the rights of the poor.

EPISCOPAL VICAR FOR HISPANIC MINISTRY

Bishop Johnson died in 1986 from a bacterial infection and was succeeded by Bishop Norman McFarland who had previously served as bishop of Reno. Bishop McFarland appointed Father Soto Episcopal Vicar for the Hispanic Community, a major responsibility in a diocese where the percentage of Hispanics was rising dramatically. The following year, Pope John Paul II named Father Soto a prelate of honor. Monsignor Soto served on an impressive number of public and church boards, councils and committees. He received a number of awards as various groups showed their appreciation for his zealous and effective participation in important social causes. He became known as a “voice for the voiceless.”

NAMED AUXILIARY BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF ORANGE

In 1999, Orange Bishop Todd Brown appointed Monsignor Soto his vicar for Charities. Then on March 23, 2000 Pope John Paul II appointed Monsignor Jaime Soto Titular Bishop of Segia and auxiliary bishop of Orange. His episcopal ordination was held on May 31, 2000 at Saint Columban Church in Garden Grove with principal consecrator Bishop Todd Brown and co-consecrators Bishop Norman McFarland and Bishop Michael Driscoll. Bishop Soto, the first native son of the Diocese of Orange to be ordained a bishop, chose as his motto "Gozo y Esperanza," "Joy and Hope."

APPOINTED CO-ADJUTOR BISHOP OF SACRAMENTO

In response to Bishop Weigand's request for an auxiliary, Pope Benedict XVI named Bishop Soto co-adjutor bishop of Sacramento on October 11, 2007. The priests of the Diocese of Sacramento were gathered in a diocesan priests' convocation at Kanocti Harbor on the shores of Clear Lake when the appointment was announced. After a news conference in Sacramento, Bishop Soto accompanied Bishop Weigand to Clear Lake where he was introduced to the Sacramento presbyterate assembled in convocation.



Photo by Cathy Joyce

Bishop Soto is Welcomed to the Diocese in 2007

BECOMES BISHOP OF SACRAMENTO

Bishop Soto was formally welcomed to Sacramento on November 19, 2007 at a special liturgy in the Cathedral. The new co-adjutor bishop worked with Bishop Weigand for a year and when Bishop Weigand chose to step down as ordinary on November 29, 2008, Bishop Soto automatically became the ninth bishop of Sacramento on that day.

When Bishop Soto began his new role as ordinary of the diocese, he became one of a growing number of Hispanic bishops who now serves as the ordinary of a diocese. Bishop Soto is computer literate and makes effective use of technology to communicate and promote the Gospel. If a priest wants to get a quick reply from the bishop, send him an e-mail and you may receive a response from Bishop Soto often the same day. The diocese now has simulcast in four locations in the diocese so that a program can be broadcast live in four centers in the diocese. This will be expanded to six sites in the near future.



Photo by Cathy Joyce

Mr and Mrs Soto at the Welcoming Ceremony with Bishop Todd Brown

Although Bishop Soto is an introvert by his own admission and needs his private time, he also enjoys relating with people and loves to discuss issues that are important to the life of the church and society. He has been a spokesman for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on immigration issues and has been featured in nationally televised interviews.

WORKING TO SAVE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN THE DIOCESE

Here in the Diocese of Sacramento, Bishop Soto is working with his staff to develop the goals established by the 2004 Diocesan Synod. In order to save our struggling Catholic schools, Bishop Soto has begun to reconfigure the way Catholic schools are managed. The new vision is to have all Catholic schools managed by a fiduciary board of directors made up of Catholic laity under the governance of the Diocesan Bishop of Sacramento. In schools where there is urgent need, the transition to the new model of governance will take place during the next three years. In other schools, the change will take place when most opportune.

The diocese has established an action plan for lay formation, youth and young adult ministry, vocations, communications, ministry of charity and Catholic revival. In addition to the work of renewal, Bishop Soto is investigating the possibility of a major diocesan capital campaign with a possible goal of raising sixty-five million dollars over a four year period. We will hear more about this plan in the coming months.

THE CHALLENGES OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

The twenty-first century presents many challenges to the Catholic community and at the same time offers new opportunities. Bishop Soto faces challenges but we hope that with his leadership, the Diocese of Sacramento will make the vision of the Diocesan Synod a reality in the years to come. We wish him a fruitful ministry as the ninth bishop of Sacramento.



Photo by Cathy

Installation Mass for Bishop Soto with Archbishop Niederauer and Cardinal Mahoney



Bishop Jaime Soto's Coat of Arms

"Joy and Hope"