



+ BISHOP WILLIAM KEITH WEIGAND

Priest of the Diocese of Boise, Idaho, 1963 - 1980
Seventh Bishop of the Diocese of Salt Lake City, 1980 -1993
Eighth Bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento, 1993 - 2008
Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Sacramento, 2008 - Present

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Fr John Boll, Diocesan Archivist

William Keith Weigand was born on May 23, 1937 in Bend, Oregon, the third son of Harold J Weigand and Alice P Kennedy. William's three brothers are Brother Francis, OSB of Mt Angel Abbey, St Benedict, OR; Dr Robert, MD of Spokane and Kenneth of Surprise, AZ.

As young William began his elementary education, he attended Mt St Joseph Academy in Tekoa, WA and then St Mary School, St Maries, Idaho. After the 8th grade, he entered Mt Angel Minor Seminary in St Benedict, Oregon for high school and two years of college. In 1957 he transferred to St Edward Seminary in Kenmore, WA for his final two years of college, graduating with a bachelor degree in philosophy. He continued his theological education at St Thomas Seminary where he earned a Master of Divinity degree in 1963. He was ordained a priest on May 25, 1963 by Bishop Sylvester Treinen at St Mary Church in St Maries, Idaho for service to the Diocese of Boise.

After his ordination he was named parochial vicar of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Lewiston, ID for a year and then to St Mary Parish in Boise for a year. In 1964 his bishop appointed him chancellor and vice-officialis of the diocese, a post he held until 1968 when he left Boise to serve the diocesan mission parish of St John the Baptist in Cali, Colombia, South America. Fr Weigand served the Cali parish for nine and a half years. During those years he promoted the growth of 40 Comunidades Cristianas de Base within his parish of 60,000 economically impoverished parishioners. Within several years, these neighborhood communities revitalized the faith-life of the people, transformed family life and deeply influenced social changes in the barrios and in the structure of the parish.

In October 1973, Fr Weigand was one of four delegates from Colombia who attended an international meeting in Rome of leaders of spiritual renewal in the Catholic Church. In July 1978, he addressed more than 1000 deacons, priests and bishops at the National Priests' Conference in Steubenville, OH about parish renewal through evangelization and basic Christian communities.

At the end of 1977, Fr Weigand returned from Cali to Boise and was appointed pastor of St Hubert Parish in Homedale, a bi-lingual and bi-cultural parish. He promoted a similar program of parish renewal in Homedale as he had done in Cali.

On September 3, 1980, Pope John Paul II appointed Fr Weigand the seventh bishop of the Diocese of Salt Lake City. Bishop-elect Weigand addressed the people of Salt Lake in a prepared statement saying: "My appointment as seventh bishop of Salt Lake City leaves me stunned. I have not sought this honor, and would have preferred to shrink from it. I am very aware of the heavy responsibility of the office of bishop. Yet, my faith and my experience assure me that God's grace, more than my abilities, will make it all work. I know, too, that I can count on the full

cooperation of the people of Utah.”



William Weigand was ordained bishop on November 17, 1980 by San Francisco Archbishop John R Quinn, Bishop Sylvester Treinen of Boise and Bishop Joseph Federal of Salt Lake City and installed as bishop of Salt Lake City in the Madeleine Cathedral.

Soon after he was named bishop, Bishop Weigand was diagnosed with a potentially fatal liver condition called *primary sclerosing cholangitis*. His doctors told him he may have only three to five years to live. By prayer, diet, strenuous exercise and state-of-the-art medical assistance, Bishop Weigand defied the medical odds, though he could not completely conquer the disease.

Bishop Weigand served as bishop of Salt Lake City for 13 years and during that time he opened Marilliac House for homeless women and set up a

Bishop Weigand with Utah Governor Scott Mattheson

St Vincent de Paul soup kitchen. He expanded services for the poor and vulnerable. Responding to the growing Catholic community, he established three new parishes in Salt Lake Valley and a number of rural missions. Several orders of religious were welcomed into the diocese and he raised \$9.7 million dollars for the restoration of the Cathedral of the Madeleine. He also oversaw a coordinated outreach to Hispanic Catholics in Utah by ordaining Spanish speaking seminarians and bringing Hispanic priests to Utah to serve the large Hispanic population that had previously been under served.

After accepting Bishop Francis Quinn's request to retire, on November 30, 1993 Pope John Paul II appointed Bishop Weigand as the eighth bishop of Sacramento. Although he grew up in the Pacific Northwest, Bishop Weigand's family history had many connections with California. His paternal great grandparents, migrating from Europe, settled in Northern California from 1855 to 1867. His paternal grandparents were both born near Sacramento in 1869 and 1878. The family eventually moved to Oregon where they homesteaded south of The Dalles. A generation later, William's parents were married by Father Robert J Armstrong at St Paul Church in Yakima. A year and a half later, Fr Armstrong was named the fourth bishop of Sacramento.

On the day of his appointment to Sacramento, Bishop Weigand made a statement to the Church of Sacramento saying in part: “It will not be easy following Bishop Francis A Quinn, whose gentleness, kindness and wisdom have rightly won your hearts. I feel privileged to walk in Bishop Quinn's footsteps. But I cannot be his carbon copy. I can only be me. I ask the people of Sacramento and the whole diocese to open your hearts to me. I promise to dedicate my whole energies to you and to the leadership of this great diocese. My talents are somewhat modest,

but I bring some diverse experience to the task, as well as my total commitment. Together, and with God's abundant assistance, I believe we can continue the great traditions of this diocese."

Bishop Weigand was installed as bishop of Sacramento on January 27, 1994 by Archbishop John R Quinn who ordained him a bishop in 1980. In the presence of the Church of Sacramento and Apostolic Nuncio Agostino Cacciavillan, Archbishop Quinn led Bishop Weigand to the *cathedra* and handed him the crosier. Bishop Weigand then addressed the assembly saying: "I suppose my style will be different. I tend to run a pretty tight ship. In troubled times like ours, that can be useful." Then turning around to the priests seated in the sanctuary behind the altar, Bishop Weigand said: "You are probably more worried than I am, and I pray for you." These unfortunate words addressed to the clergy would begin an adversarial relationship with the new bishop.

After the installation liturgy, I remember Fr Richard Doheney saying to the priests standing nearby: "Well, boys, it looks like this is the end of home rule." Indeed, the bishop's words were fair warning that a new era was beginning. This era would be a blow to the principle of subsidiarity in parish life and later become a source of conflict over issues like kneelers in new churches, the age for first reconciliation and the scuttling of restored sequence. It was not a good way for Bishop Weigand to get started on his first day.

As Bishop Weigand began his episcopal ministry in Sacramento, a deep sense of duty and responsibility to his pastoral office propelled him forward. The Diocese of Sacramento continued to grow in population which increased the demand for new parishes to be established. However, new churches would have to be larger to accommodate more people. On the other hand, an effort was made, where possible, to consolidate smaller parishes in order to make better use of the shrinking number of clergy available to serve the diocese.

The diocesan permanent diaconate, began during Bishop Alden Bell's time, continued to increase in number. Bishop Weigand sought to improve the quality of instruction for the deacons and appointed Sister Paulina Hurtado, OP to oversee both the English and Spanish diaconate programs.

Increasing the number of priests to serve the diocese became a priority for Bishop Weigand. He appointed Fathers James Murphy and Humberto Gomez as vocation directors and instructed them to recruit young men not only from the local area but also from the Philippines, Mexico and Columbia to serve the Church of Sacramento. To help foreign born seminarians adjust to the American environment, Bishop Weigand purchased the unused convent at St Anne Parish and converted it to a house of formation for foreign born seminarians calling it the St John Vianney House.

Bishop Weigand also adopted a form of parish administration used in other dioceses which allowed permanent deacons, religious women and laypersons to administer parish affairs while a non-resident priest provided Eucharistic celebrations on the weekends. About four parishes in the diocese made use of this new form of administration.

No doubt the most difficult crisis Bishop Weigand experienced while bishop of Sacramento was the sexual abuse crisis. This international scandal is one of the most devastating crises in the

history of the church. In 2000, three priests were accused of past sexual misconduct and it was later revealed that over the past 40 years 14 Sacramento priests had been accused of sexual misconduct with children. Bishop Weigand initiated a series of policies to help those abused to come forward by calling an 800 telephone number so they could receive pastoral care and counseling. He held open forums to deal with the subject honestly and openly. He adopted a diocesan policy that would later be known as “zero-tolerance” meaning that any priest credibly accused of sexual misconduct with a minor would be permanently removed from ministry. Bishop Weigand appointed an independent review board to investigate allegations of sexual misconduct in the diocese that was headed by retired judge Robert Puglia, a Methodist.

As the national sexual abuse scandal began to become public, the long planned diocesan capital campaign was underway. This was the first capital campaign in the diocese since the major fund drive by Bishop Bell in the 1960s. The goal of the campaign was to raise \$50 million dollars for a series of diocesan projects. The fund drive surpassed its goal with nearly \$77 million dollars in pledges. Part of the drive was to do major repairs to the diocesan cathedral. The cost of the cathedral repairs skyrocketed, surpassing the original estimate and costing \$34 million dollars. The cathedral was closed from August 2003 to November 2005 for retrofitting and repairs. On the Feast of Christ the King, November 20, 2005, the cathedral was solemnly rededicated and the following day Bishop Weigand celebrated his twenty-fifth anniversary of ordination as a bishop.



Photo by Cathy Joyce, *Catholic Herald*

The Opening Mass of the Diocesan Synod at St Isidore Church, Yuba City, October 11, 2004

The last major event during Bishop Weigand's fifteen year ministry as bishop of Sacramento was the convoking of the third Diocesan Synod. After a survey was conducted in all parishes of the diocese by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) and a convocation of the priests at Konocti Harbor resort at Clear Lake, the Synod preparation team under the leadership of Sr Eileen Enright, RSM made final preparations for the Synod. The historic three day Synod opened on October 11, 2004 at St Isidore Parish in Yuba City with 400+ lay and clergy

representatives from all the parishes of the diocese.

The Synod delegates came to consensus on eight pastoral initiatives with goals and objectives for implementation in the local parish, parish clusters and deaneries. These initiatives set the direction for diocesan pastoral planning for years to come. The Synod called for greater emphasis on faith formation at all levels with particular attention on evangelization and promotion of the lay apostolate. In addition, the Synod members recognized the critical need for vocations to the priesthood and asked for a comprehensive youth and young adult ministry. Collaboration, shared responsibility, social justice ministry and cultural diversity were also seen as priorities for the future.



Photo by Cathy Joyce, *Catholic Herald*

At the Closing Mass of the Synod, Bishop Weigand Signs the Synod Initiatives

Bishop Weigand reconvened the Synod participants on January 9, 2005 to promulgate the initiatives of the Synod. The following year, January 16, 2006, Synod participants gathered once again at the Cathedral for an accountability update on the implementation of the initiatives and goals developed by the Synod members.

During the Synod, Bishop Weigand's liver disease spiked once again with a grave threat to end his life. A liver transplant was his only hope for survival. Dan Haverty, a firefighter and parishioner of Holy Trinity Parish in El Dorado Hills – Cameron Park, came forward and offered to give part of his liver to the bishop. In 2005, Bishop Weigand received a living-donor liver transplant from Captain Haverty which has restored the bishop to health once again.

Reflecting on his fifteen years as bishop of Sacramento in 2005, Bishop Weigand noted how “my limitations and personality made me ill-suited for the role of bishop from the beginning and now the slow progress of the (liver) disease finally caught up with me.” However, the surgery was a turning point for him. “Five months later, I am back at work with strikingly new health and vigor. It is a 'resurrection' of sorts,” he said. Pondering on why God had called him to serve in the role of bishop, he takes comfort in the words of St Paul in Second Corinthians: “We hold this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing power may be of God and not of us.”

On this point, church historian Fr Steve Avella writes, “That too is the history of the Diocese of Sacramento, of all who have sought to lead, serve, and work out their own individual salvation in the unique conditions of Catholic life in northern California over the course of many generations. Observed as a purely human phenomenon, the story alternately attracts and repels, incites interest and becomes tiresome. But as a concrete testimony to the manner in which God uses the weak things of this world to achieve His ends, it is an inspiring story of faith and an invitation to the hope 'that does not disappoint.'”

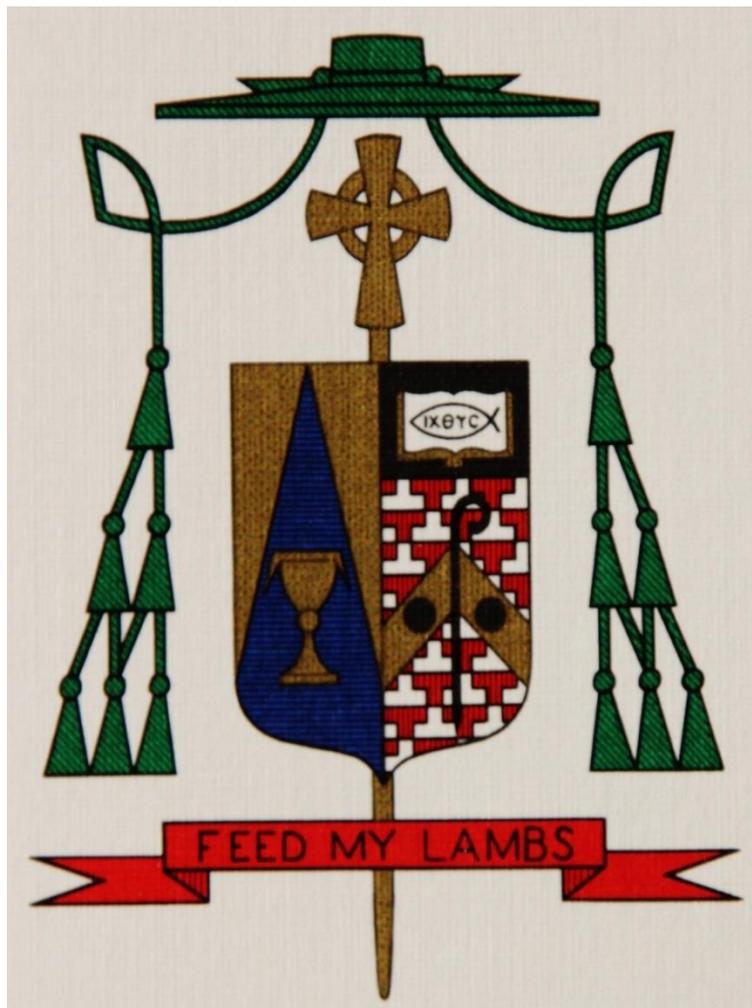


Photo by Cathy Joyce, *Catholic Herald*

Bishop Soto Present his Letter of Appointment as Co-adjutor Bishop to Bishop Weigand

In 2007, Bishop Weigand requested Pope Benedict XVI to appoint an auxiliary for Sacramento. On October 11, 2007, the pope named Bishop Jaime Soto, auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Orange, as coadjutor bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento. On November 29, 2008 Bishop Weigand retired and Bishop Soto succeeded him as the ninth bishop of Sacramento.

Bishop Weigand continues to live in Sacramento and is learning to enjoy retirement. He helps Bishop Soto with confirmations and is available to help in parishes on weekends. We thank Bishop Weigand for his 15 years of ministry with us and his leadership in helping to move the diocese forward to meet the challenges of the 21st century. We wish him health and happiness in retirement. Ad Multos Annos!



Diocesan Archives

Bishop William Keith Weigand's Coat of Arms

"Feed My Lambs"