

MEMORANDUM

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To: Msgr. John Urell  
From: Rev. Msgr. Jaime Soto  
Date: June 30, 1993  
Re: Conversation with Bishop Berlie regarding Fr. Ramos

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I spoke with Bishop Berlie this afternoon shortly after 12:00pm. After a brief exchange of greetings I presented to him the reason for my call. I told him that there have been new allegations regarding Fr. Al Ramos and that we have reason to believe that there is a substance of truth to what has been presented.

Bishop Berlie interrupted me to emphasize that he had recieved Al Ramos at the request of Bishop Johnson. He went on extensively about what a wonderful man Bishop Johnson was and that out of respect for him he had continued to allow Al Ramos to serve in his diocese. He related me that Bishop Johnson was very upset when he had called to make the request that Bishop Berlie accept Fr. Ramos. He said that Bishop Johnson wept over the matter.

I explained to Bishop Berlie that because these new allegations have come forward Bishop McFarland felt obligated to inform him of these and to stress again that Fr. Ramos is suspended from functioning. I told him that Bishop McFarland counsels him against allowing Al Ramos to function as a priest. He is putting at risk his own people, most particularly the children who might be under his care. Bishop McFarland considers it criminal that he would be allowed to function. I asked if Fr. Ramos was still functioning. The Bishop responded yes. He said that they have had cases such as these where men have recovered.

Bishop Berlie then went on for about 10 minutes on what he thought about the American Church's manner of responding to these cases. He thinks that the Church is allowing itself to be exploited, that we are kneeling, bending under the attacks that have been leveled against us. I tried to explain to him that this matter was largely out of our control. We have already taken steps to respond but the media has exploited these cases for their own agenda. I also informed him of the Holy Father's letter to the Bishops. He was unaware of the letter and requested that it be sent to him by fax. He did say that he had a high regard for the Church in the United States and for the colossal work being done. For that reason he finds the current attacks and the Church's response incomprehensible.

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I returned to the matter of Fr. Ramos and repeated what I had said earlier. Fr. Ramos should not be allowed to function. I explained that we had strong reason to believe that Fr. Ramos has not been cured of this and that he continues to hold in his possession indecent photos of some of the young people he victimized.

Bishop Berlie said that he understood that Al Ramos was still a priest of Orange and that his bishop has suspended his faculties. He requested some days before giving a response. He asked that I call on Friday. I suggested Monday since I will be away on Friday. He said fine but that I should speak to the Vicar General, Msgr. De La Cerda.

We exchanged good wishes and ended our conversation.