

MEMO

To: Priests of the Diocese of Stockton
From: Bishop Blaire
Re: Modesto Bee article, June 4, 2010, on Annuity to Oliver O'Grady
Date: June 4, 2010

I am asking that this statement be made available to the people in your parish at all Masses this weekend. You may either provide a printed copy or have it read at Mass.

Dear People of the Diocese of Stockton,

On Friday, June 4, 2010 an article appeared in the Modesto Bee regarding an annuity to be paid to Oliver O'Grady upon his reaching the age of 65. This raises again a very painful time in the history of our Diocese, especially for those individuals and parish communities most affected by O'Grady. Even though my comments appeared in the newspapers and other media, I want to speak directly to you, the people of our Diocese.

When Oliver O'Grady was in prison, he refused to apply for removal from the priesthood, also known as laicization or defrocking. Already in 1993 Bishop Donald Montrose had removed O'Grady's authorization to exercise priestly ministry.

I came to the Diocese in March, 1999 and O'Grady was to be paroled in November, 2000. I was determined that he not leave prison as a priest. At the time, the church process for removal from the priesthood was lengthy and often uncertain. There was no guarantee that he would be laicized.

O'Grady's Canon lawyer informed me that O'Grady would voluntarily seek laicization if some retirement funds were made available for his later years. I found this arrangement very distasteful, but I was adamant that he not walk out of prison as a priest even though he had been removed from exercising ministry. So I reluctantly agreed to the proposal.

I wanted to provide some measure of justice for his victims and some peace of mind that he would never again use his priesthood to damage families.

+ Bishop Stephen E. Blaire