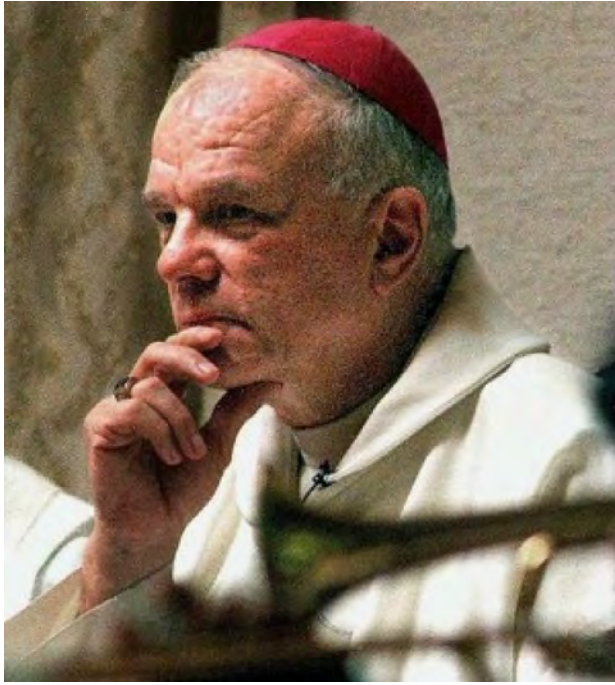


## My Unificationist Memoirs Chapter 25

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*Bishop George Patrick Ziemann*

My office in the chancery placed me at the center of diocesan activity. The priests, nuns, lay ministers, and donors all passed through my doors and were refreshed by my hospitality and of course, a Blessing with Holy Wine. I traveled throughout Northern California, visiting the parishes and assisting them with the implementation of the Diocesan Stewardship campaign. As I did so, I noted the skepticism pastors exhibited towards the financial stewardship of Monsignor Keys and his association with Tony Culley-Foster. Around this time, I discovered that Monsignor Keys was paying him \$120,000 a year from the diocesan coffers, and an additional \$120,000 a year from the National Scrip Center, a fundraising operation developed in the Diocese of Santa Rosa that had spread nationwide. From what I knew of Tony's work, he by no means merited this "double-dipping." Something else was going on.

A particularly jarring moment came when Monsignor Gaffey invited me for a chat over breakfast. He was a pastor whose integrity I never doubted and with whom I had had long and frank conversations. Using a priestly colloquialism for the chancery, he said, "I don't trust downtown. Be careful. Don't lose your faith." His mistrust extended not just to Monsignor Keys but to Bishop Ziemann.

I had also taken on a counseling and advisory role with an international missions program, "Hand of Help," started by a Marist Brother, Fred Buermann. Working with the Marist schools in Britain, Hand of Help would place recent high school graduates in parishes to work as lay missionaries during their "gap year" before beginning university. I enjoyed this work and would often host the young missionaries at my home for periods of RandR. During a counseling session with one of the young men, he described a drive north with Bishop Ziemann as one of the most "uncomfortable experiences" of his life. He sat shotgun in the front seat while the bishop drove. As they conversed, Ziemann would often place his hand on the missionary's thigh and squeeze when making a point. The young man couldn't wait to get out of the car. If

the bishop had been one of his "mates," he would have punched him. But he wasn't. I mentioned this incident to Brother Fred and we decided that none of our missionaries would ever again be left alone with the bishop.

On the other hand, Bishop Ziemann treated me with great respect and would publicly endorse my Unification Church background. Once at a meeting of all of the pastors in the diocese, he asked me to speak on the most important spiritual lesson I learned from my years with Reverend Moon. I've often thought about the answer I gave. Usually, I would speak about the Heart of God or living for the sake of others, when presented with this question. This time, heaven moved me differently. I spoke to the importance of good spiritual discipline and mind-body unity, if we were to be authentic representatives of Christ. As I look back, God used me to deliver a message of warning to Bishop Ziemann and many of his priests. It went unheeded.

We had begun work on a "Lay Pastoral Institute." The mission of the institute would be to more fully realize the teachings of Vatican II by training the laity in the pastoral skills necessary to minister to the needs of the diocese. Lay persons would be able to obtain certificates in spiritual direction, hospice work, parish ministry, liturgy, adult and youth catechesis, and nonprofit management. The training would focus both on the ministry needs of the parishes and those of Catholic Charities. Bishop Ziemann genuinely sought to raise the status of the laity in an antique and hierarchical church. Unfortunately, the Institute would be a casualty in the coming crisis.

As Executive Director of the Catholic Community Foundation, I also sat on the Board of Cardinal Newman High School, which was run by the diocese. This was my first exposure to the workings of the school that my good friend Steve Skikos had often disparaged. We held the school's trust accounts for scholarships and a small endowment fund that the alumni had managed to establish. Over time, I became aware of a history of financial mismanagement by the bishops since the founding of Cardinal Newman in 1964. Rather than investing monies generated by Newman back into the school, the diocese had treated the educational institution as a cash cow to replenish the general account. Thus, unlike schools run by the Jesuits or the Christian Brothers, Newman lacked a substantial endowment and existed largely from tuition income, like a family living from paycheck to paycheck. Having been trained by Mr. Kamiyama in the philosophy of "public money is poison," I saw this mismanagement as another red flag, a warning of systemic rot in the diocesan structure.

I relished my role on the Newman Board and began to read works by and about John Henry Cardinal Newman, the school's spiritual patron. The more I read, the more his thinking impressed me. In particular, his recognition of the conscience as the means by which God spoke to each human person, resonated with True Father's teaching. When I picked up his work on education, *The Idea of a University*, I discovered the timelessness of his insights. If only Catholic educators still heeded him! His spiritual memoir, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, justifiably ranks with Augustine's *Confessions*, as one of the greatest autobiographical stories of conversion. Ian Kerr's monumental biography of Newman put everything I absorbed into a historical and theological context. During these months, I took a deep dive into Newman and modern church history. When I met with the school principal, Dennis Crandall, after we discussed finances, we would turn our thoughts to John Henry Newman. It never failed, Dennis would end our conversations by telling me, "Don't you know you have a calling to teach? When are you coming over to Newman?" As always, and unknown to me, God was preparing my path for what lay ahead.

One summer evening, Bishop Ziemann tried to phone me. I wasn't at home and I was out of cell phone range. The next morning, I opened the paper to read that he had resigned in a sexual scandal.

We were entering very rough waters.