## **CDF** involvement in Stephen Kiesle case

#### **June 1981**

Bishop Cummins petitioned the Pope to laicize Kiesle. States Kiesle was arrested for taking sexual liberties with at least six young men ages 11-13. States Kiesle pled no contest to the charges. November 1981 Diocese received a letter from Cardinal Ratzinger requesting additional information. (noted in Diocese 1983 memo) February 11, 1982 Diocese sent additional information to CDF. (noted in Diocese 1983 memo) September 24, 1982 Diocese hadn't received any word from CDF so they sent another letter asking about Kiesle case. (noted in Diocese 1983 memo) October 21, 1982 CDF sent a "rather curtly" letter that told the Diocese that the matter would be examined at an opportune time." (noted in Diocese 1983 memo) September 1985 Diocese letter to Ratzinger asking the status of the laicization petition on Kiesle. November 1985 Ratzinger wrote a letter to Diocese of Oakland about the petition for Kiesle's laicization. See AP Story - Ratzinger letter, Ratzinger says the arguments for removing Kiesle are of "grave significance" but added that such actions required very careful review and more time. He also urged the bishop to provide Kiesle with "as much paternal care as possible" while awaiting the decision, according to a translation for AP by Professor Thomas Habinek, chairman of the University of Southern California Classics Department. But the future pope also noted that any decision to defrock Kiesle must take into account the "good of the universal church" and the "detriment

	that granting the dispensation can provoke within the community of Christ's faithful, particularly considering the young age." Kiesle was 38 at the time.
<u>January 1986</u>	Diocese letter describes Ratzinger's 1985 letter. States that Diocese received a letter from the Prefect for the CDF (Ratzinger at the time). States CDF will need more time and CDF wonders if granting dispensation might "provoke some scandal among the faithful"
<u>1987</u>	Kiesle is laicized
<u>1988</u>	Kiesle is the youth coordinator at a parish in Pinole, CA in the Diocese of Oakland for at least 8 months.

\*



#### VOTUM EPISCOPI

Most Holy Father:

I wish to present the petition of Father Stephen Kiesle for laicization. He wishes to return to the lay state and to be relieved of all the obligations of the priesthood, including celibacy.

Father Kiesle was born on February 14, 1947 in Indianapolis, Indiana. He attended elementary school in Lakewood, California and San Lorenzo, California. He entered St. Joseph's High School Seminary in 1960. Upon graduation he entered St. Patrick's College Seminary in 1964 and began his theological studies at St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park in 1968. Father Kiesle was ordained on May 19, 1972 at St. Francis de Sales Cathedral by the Most Reverend Floyd L. Begin, Bishop of Oakland.

It does seem clear, now, with hindsight, that quite probably Father Kiesle should never have been ordained.

He has experienced a variety of psychological, emotional, and sexual difficulties during his priesthood. In August of 1978 he was arrested by the police and charged with having taken sexual liberties with at least six young men ranging from eleven to thirteen years of age during the period of November 1977 through May 1978. When he appeared in court, Father Kiesle pleaded "nolo contendere" to the charges. He received a three year suspended sentence and was to remain on probation for three years. He was to meet regularly with his probation officer. He was not to be alone with any juvenile, nor was he to work with any juveniles without an adult being present. He was also required to register with the police department of any city in which he would be residing. It was during this period of time that Father Kiesle took an extended leave of absence.

Unfortunately, from the time of Father Kiesle's first court appearance there was a great deal of publicity surrounding his conduct. Lengthy news reports appeared in all of the major newspapers in the San Francisco Bay Area, as well as throughout California. Some of the publications also printed pictures of Father Kiesle. As a result, his case and alleged wrong-doings received maximum publicity exposure. Some of the newspaper accounts were able to obtain rather specific details of his conduct from the police report. Father Kiesle has been in psychiatric therapy since this difficult situation first became public in August of 1978. He still continues to see a therapist on a regular basis.

I would credit Father Kiesle with great cooperation in seeking out psychiatric help when asked. On the other hand, his dealings with me as expressed in his own statement unearthed for me the problem he had with authority and obedience. I had arranged with two neighboring bishops to provide employment in special assignments for him outside of pastoral ministry during the months that he would be in thereapy. He adamantly refused to consider these although later, on his own, he took a temporary assignment in one of those same dioceses. I felt obliged to point out the inconsistency of his judgment.

I prevailed on one of our excellent young priests to provide him a home with some possibilities of limited work. That assignment carried on for many months but it was obvious that there was no development either in work or in any other interests. I feared the wasting of time was profoundly detrimental to a man of his age. At the time, therefore, that he did procure a job of reasonable support, I asked him to take a year away from the parish and assume responsibility for the managing of his own life. That decision, as hard as it was, seems to have been very beneficial to him. I believe it has contributed much toward his present resolution of his life.

Given all of the circumstances surrounding this case and Father Kiesle's irrevocable decision to leave the active ministry, it would seem to me most prudent that his petition be granted.

Therefore, since all of these things are attested to in the Acts of the case, it is our opinion that this case should be submitted to you with the petition that Father Stephen Kiesle be relieved of all of the obligations of the priesthood.

Given at the Chancery of the Diocese of Oakland this 19th day of June in the Year of Our Lord 1981.

D. Cummi

John S. Cummins Bishop of Oakland

RCBO-KIE 0158

4



Roma, die 17 novembris 1981 Plazza del S. Ufficio, 11

SACRA CONGREGAZIONE PER LA DOTTRINA DELLA FEDE

PROT. N. 469/815. (Si presa cliare il numero nella risposia)

Excellentissime ac Rev.me Domine,

Nuper ab hac S. Congregatione diligenti examini subiecta est petitio dispensationis ab omnibus obligationibus cum S. Ordinatione conexis, quae attinet ad Rev. Stephanum MILLER KIESLE, istius dioecesis.

Ut casus definiri valeat, acta compleantur oportet, ut infra notatur: 1. Superiores temporis formationis audiantur vel eorum depositiones scriptae requirantur, circa oratoris responsabilitatem atque idoneitatem ad Sacram Ordinationem suscipiendam;

2. Transmittantur documenta, quae in tabulariis seminarii asservantur circa accessum oratoris ad S. Ordines;

3. Exhibeantur attestatio iuramenti, quod attinet ad interrogatorium oratoris.

Una cum actis ne dedignetur Excellentia Tua votum de non timendo scandalo transmittere.

Aestimationis meae sensus Tibi obtestor permanens

Excellentiae Tuae Rev.mae add.mus

Exc.mo ac Rev.mo Domino Dno Ioanni S. CUMMINS Ordinario QUERCOPOLITAN.

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## 5ACRA CONGREGAZIONE PLR LA D'OTTRINA DELLA FEDE

Roma, nic 17 movembris 198 Plenced & Dates, 11

PROVA D: 469/8151

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Aestimationis meae sensus Tibi obtestor permanens

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Ordinario QUERCOPOLITAN.



2900 LAKESHORE AVENUE • OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, 94610 • 415/893-4711



Prot. Num. 469/81s

February 1, 1982

His Eminence Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith Piazza del S. Uffizio 11 Rome, Italy

Your Eminence:

This letter is written in response to the request of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith for some further information concerning the petition of the Reverend Stephen Miller Kiesle to be dispensed from all of the obligations of Sacred Ordination.

Enclosed with this letter please find a statement made by the Reverend James Laubacher, who was the superior of the Petitioner during the years he was engaged in theological studies. I would like to point out that Father Laubacher is now quite elderly and indicated to me in a separate letter that his memory is really quite weak.

We have also enclosed all of the documents which were kept at the seminary regarding the fitness of the Petitioner for ordination.

Additionally, you will find the oath which the Petitioner made at the time of his interrogation.

As I indicated in my previous Votum, it is my conviction that there would be no scandal if this petition were granted and that as a matter of fact, given the nature of the case, there might be greater scandal to the community if Father Kiesle were allowed to return to the active ministry.

I believe this responds to all of the inquiries which Your Eminence posed and I am hopeful that an affirmative decision might be granted in this case as soon as possible.

With every best wish, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

John S. Cummins Bishop of Oakland



SACRA CONGREGATIO PRO DOCTRINA FIDEI 00193 Romae, die 24 martii 1982 Fiarza del S. Ufficio, 11



PROT. N. 469/815. (In responsione fiat menule huius numeri)

Excellentissime ac Rev.me Domine,

Acceptis Tuis Litteris diei 1 februarii h.a., cum novis informationibus circa casum dispensationis ab omnibus muneribus sacerdotalibus, quod attinet ad Rev. Stephanum MILLER KIESLE, istius dioecesis, haec S. Congregatio Excellentiae Tuae Rev.mae communicat quod casus praedicti oratoris tempore opportuno examinabitur.

Hanc occasionem nactus impensos aestimationis meae sensus Tibi obtestor permanens

> Excellentiae Tuae Rev.mae add.mus

+ J. ther. o.1

Exc.mo ac Rev.mo Domino Dno Ioanni S. CUMMINS Ordinario OUERCOPOLITAN.



## TRIBUNAL DIOCESE OF OAKLAND 2900 LAKESHORE AVENUE OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94610 415/893-4711

12



September 24, 1982

His Eminence Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger Prefect Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith 11 Piazza del S. Uffizio Rome 00193

Your Eminence:

\_\_\_\_\_This brief note is being written to inquire as to the status of a petition that was presented to the Sacred Congregation on July 7, 1981 on behalf of Stephen Kiesle, a priest of the Diocese of Oakland.

I was wondering if perhaps there is something further that you might need in order to bring this petition to a conclusion.

If there is anything I can provide you with, please let me know.

With every best wish, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Reverend George E. Mockel Officialis

GEM/kv

Se

00193 Roma, die 21 octobris 1982 Piezz del 6. Ufizio. 11

SACRA CONGREGAZIONE PER LA DOTTRINA DELLA FEDE

> PROT. N. 469/815. (Si prepa citare il numero nelle risposta)

> > Excellentissime Domine,

Acceptis Litteris diei 24 septembris h.a. Rev.di Georgii E. Mockel, Officialis istius dioecesis, circa casum dispensationis ab omnibus muneribus sacerdotalibus, quod attinet ad Rev. Stephen MILLER KIESLE, istius dioecesis, haec Sacra Congregatio Excellentiae Tuae Rev.mae communicat quod casus praedicti oratoris tempore opportuno examinabitur.

Hanc occasionem nactus impensos aestima-

tionis meae sensus Tibi obtestor permanens

Excellentiae Tuae Rev.mae add.mus

+ Y. Gue

Exc.mo ac Rev.mo Domino Dno Ioanni S. CUMMINS Ordinario QUERCOPOLITAN.

the first this KIËSLE PROT. # 469/813 Me CORMICE OURTE (no Roment) Markes Pros SACRA CONGREGATIO

00H93 Romae, December 2, 1983 Pinza del S. Utica - 1.,

PROT. N. Priv. (In responsione par mento- humo- numera

PRO DOCTRINA FIDEI

Dear Bishop,

I regret that I am just now getting to write to you regarding the laicization cases about which you inquired during your ad limina visit here in September.

The two cases were Stephen Kiesle and Patrick McCormick, both from Oakland. Unfortunately, our records show no case for Kiesle at all. Regarding McCormick, we have only a Patrick McCormick from Brooklyn. I would suggest that you resubmit the documentation. If, however, you are sure that the cases have arrived here, that is if you have had them acknowledged in writing, then the problem must be that the names have been misspelled, as can easily happen. The key thing, then, would be to send me the protocol numbers, which you did not have when you visited here. Again, I am sorry for this delay. If there is anything I can do to help expedite matters just let me know.

> Sincerely in the Lord, Thm Rev. Thomas J. Herron

Most Rev. John S. Cummins Bishop of Oakland 2900 Lakeshore Ave. Oakland, CA 94610 USA



Diocese of Oakland

#### INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Date: December 20, 1983

To: Bishop John Cummins

From: George Mockel

Subject: Letter from your friend Rev. Thomas J. Herron

The case of Stephen Kiesle was originally sent to Rome on July 7, 1981. On November 17, 1981, we received a letter from Cardinal Ratzinger requesting additional information. The additional information was forwarded on to them on February 11, 1982.

We did not hear any further word; so, on September 24, 1982, I sent a letter asking for an update to which we received a response on October 21, 1982 stating (rather curtly) that the matter would be examined at an opportune time.

Stephen Kiesle's Roman Protocol Number is 469/81s.

Regarding Pat McCormick's case, we sent it to Rome on July 15, 1983 through the office of the Apostolic Delegate. We have never received any acknowledgement from Rome that they received it. However, inasmuch as Father Herron indicates that they have a case for a Patrick McCormick from Brooklyn, this is probably the same case since Pat is from Brooklyn.

May I suggest that you write him and give him the above information. (I would write the letter myself, but they never respond to "mere priests"!)

GEM: jcc



2900 LAKESHORE AVENUE . OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, 94610 . 415/893-4

January 17, 1984

Reverend Thomas J. Herron The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith 11 Piazza del S. Uffizio Rome, Italy

Dear Father Herron:

Thank you very much for your letter concerning the cases about which I inquired. There was no need to apologize for the timing. I appreciate the schedule.

Concerning the case of Stephen Kiesle, the Protocol Number is 469.81s. The case was sent to Rome on July 7, 1981. On November 17, 1981 we received a letter from Cardinal Ratzinger requesting additional information. That material was forwarded on February 11, 1982.

Our Officialis did make one inquiry on September 24, 1982. A letter of reply came from the Congregation on October 21, 1982, which indicated that no further information could be given at that time.

I trust the file is available. I hope something can be done for him. It would be impossible really to have him back trying to serve in the ministry these days.

Regarding the case of Patrick McCormick, we sent it to Rome, July 15, 1983, through the office of the Apostolic Delegate. We did not receive an acknowledgment from Rome. Inasmuch, however, as you have a case from Brooklyn for Father Patrick McCormick, that is probably the proper file. He served in the Society of St. Sulpice, but his home is the Brooklyn Diocese.

I would appreciate whatever information you can give me on these two cases.

Thank you for the kindness. Thank you, too, for the hospitality and the good amount of time you gave me when I was in Rome.

Good wishes for the new year.

Sincerely n S. Cu

John S. Cummins Bishop of Oakland



DIOCESE OF OAKLANL 2900 LAKESHORE AVENUE · OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94610-3697 · 415/893-4711

September 13, 1985

His Eminence Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger Prefect, Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith 11 Piazza del S. Uffizio Rome 00193 Italy Prot. Num. 469/81s

Your Eminence:

This letter is written inquiring as to the status of a petition that was presented to the Sacred Congregation on July 7, 1981 on behalf of Stephen Miller Kiesle, a priest of the Diocese of Oakland.

On November 17, 1981, we received a letter from Your Eminence requesting additional information which we forwarded on February 11, 1982.

Our Officialis did make one inquiry on September 24, 1982 which indicated no further information could be supplied at that time.

I would appreciate knowing the progress of this case and send my gratitude for any information you may be able to give.

With every best wish, I am

Sincerely,

John S. Cummins Bishop of Oakland

JSC:jcc



## SACRA CONGREGATIO PRO DOCTRINA FIDEI

00193 Romae, die 6 novembris 1985 Piazza del 6. Uffizio, 11

## RECEIVED

## 15 1565

BISKOP'S CFEICE

PROT. N. 469/818. (In responsione fat mentio huiss numeri)

Excellentissime Domine,

Acceptis Tuis litteris diei 13 septembris h.a., circa causam dispensationis ab omnibus oneribus sacerdotalibus quae attinet ad Rev. Stephanum MILLER KIESLE, istius dioecesis, officii mei est Tecum communicare quae sequuntur.

Hoc Dicasterium, etsi gravis momenti aestimet argumenta adducta pro dispensatione in casu postulata, attamen necessarium censet considerare una cum oratoris etiam Ecclesiae Universalis bonum, et ideo parvi facere nequit detrimenta, quae dispensationis concessio in christifidelium communitate provocare potest, attenta iuvenili praesertim oratoris aetate.

Oportet proinde hanc Congregationem subjicere huiuscemodi casus accuratiori examini, quod longius temporis spatium necessario requiret.

Interim Excellentia Tua ne omittat oratorem paterna qua pollet cura sequi, eidem insuper apte patefaciendo rationem agendi, huius Dicasterii, quod procedere solet habito prae oculis praeprimis bono communi.

Hanc occasionem nactus, impensos aestimationis meae sensus Tibi obtestor, permanens

Excellentiae Tuae Rev.mae add.mus

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Exc.mo ac Rev.mo Domino Dno Ioanni S. CUMMINS Ordinario QUERCOPOLITAN.

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#### INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Date: December 12, 1985

To: Bishop John S. Cummins

From: George Mockel

1340

12.

Subject: Rome Prot. Num. 469/81s Stephen Kiesle's Petition for Laicization

My own reading of this letter is that basically they are going to sit on it until Steve gets quite a bit older. My own feeling is that this is unfortunate.

I see two options:

- 1. Communicate the above to Steve and see what happens.
- 2. Communicate the above to Steve and send a letter to Cardinal Ratzinger indicating that despite his young age, the particular and unique circumstances of this case would seem to make it a greater scandal if he were not laicized.

Please advise.

GEM:jcc

P. S. There was a note from George Crespin attached to this letter which I inadvertently misplaced. My recollection of the gist of his remarks were along the lines of option number two.





TRIBUNAL DIOCESE OF OAKLAND 2900 LAKESHORE AVENUE OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94610 415/893-4711

January 13, 1986

81/1s

Mr. Steve Kiesle 3525 Savage Avenue Pinole, California 94564

Dear Steve:

At long last, we have received some word from Rome concerning your petition for laicization. I am afraid the response is not too encouraging. A letter signed by the Prefect for the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith indicates that they will need more time to appraise the situation in order to determine whether the granting of the laicization would be for your good as well as the good of the Church. There is also some concern whether the granting of a dispensation might "provoke some scandal among the faithful."

In trying to read between the lines, it seems they might be encouraging us to send some additional information and recommendation to them in order to impel the process.

The Bishop is willing to pursue this matter further if you are interested in doing so.

I would be happy to discuss this possibility with you in further detail either personally or by telephone.

I would appreciate hearing from you sometime soon.

I hope things are going well with you and, very best wishes for the New Year.

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Reverend George E. Mockel Officialis

RECEIVED FEB 2 5 1987 OAKLAND TRIBUNAL



## CONGREGATIO PRO DOCTRINA FIDEI

PROT. N. 469/818.

D.nus STEPHANUS MILLER KIESLE, sacerdos dioecesis

Quercopolitanae

## petiit dispensationem a sacerdotali coelibatu.

SS.mus D. N. IOANNES PAULUS, Divina Providentia Papa II, die <u>13 februarii 1987</u> habita relatione de casu a Sacra Congregatione pro Doctrina Fidei, precibus annuit iuxta sequentes rationes:

1. Rescriptum vim suam exserit a momento notificationis a competenti Auctoritàte ecclesiastica oratori factae, et amplectitur inseparabiliter dispensationem a sacerdotali coelibatu et simul amissionem status clericalis. Numquam oratori fas est duo illa elementa seiungere, seu prius accipere et alterum recusare. Si vero orator est religiosus, Rescriptum continet etiam dispensationem a votis; idemque insuper secumfert absolutionem a censuris, quatenus opus sit.

2. Notitia concessionis dispensationis adnotetur in Libris baptizatorum paroeciae oratoris.

3. Quod attinet ad celebrationem canonici matrimonii, applicandae sunt normae quae in Codice Iuris Canonici statuuntur. Ordinarius vero curet ut res caute peragantur sine pompa vel exteriore apparatu.

4. Auctoritas ecclesiastica, ad quam spectat Rescriptum cum oratore communicare, hunc enixe hortetur, ut vitam Populi Dei, ratione congruendi cum nova eius vivendi condicione, participet, aedificationem praestet et ita amantissimum Ecclesiae filium se exhibeat. Simul autem eidem notum faciat ea quae sequentur:

a) sacerdos dispensatus eo ipso amittit iura statui clericali propria, dignitates et officia ecclesiastica; ceteris obligationibus cum statu clericali conexis non amplius adstringitur;

Spulle 3hulo



## DEPARTMENT OF CATECHETICAL MINISTRIES DIOCESE OF OAKLAND

521 BODEN WAY · OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94610-3609 · (415) 834-7311

Dear Br. Haig,

I was not present for your meeting with our staff regarding the procedure for reporting sexual abuse. However, I need to inform you of my concern that a convicted child molester is currently the youth ministry coordinator at St. Joseph's Parish in Pinole. This fact was reported to you in September when Steve's name was turned in as coordinator, it was reported again in January when people from St. Anne's in Union City recognized Steve at Youth Day (and were furious), I reported it to Sister Leonard on April 13 after Steve requested to be a part of the preparations for SPLUNGE, and I mentioned it to the bishop on April 29.

Today, Steve spoke with Peggy regarding his parish's participation in Beginnings, and on the leadership day he has planned for volunteers NEXT YEAR!!. Obviously, nothing has been done after EIGHT months of repeated notifications. How are we supposed to have confidence in the system, when nothing is done? A simple phone call to the pastor from the bishop is all that it would take: "We do not allow convicted child molesters to work with children in this diocese."

I need to let you know that because of my personal experience (my husband and I cared for an abused teenager last summer). I personally refuse to speak with Steve, or to include him in on any of the projects I am coordinating. That includes Beginings, SPLUNGE, and Youth Day. Furthermore, I plan to make regular contacts with those in authority until he is removed, or until I am given a satisfacatory explanation as to why he should be permitted to remain.

Sincerely,

Maurine Berread

Maurine Behrend Office of Youth Ministry

RCBO-KIE 0084

CC: Dick Logan MASTER CATECHIST AND CATECHIST CERTIFICATION • MULTI-CULTURAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FAMILY-CENTERED CATECHESIS/EARLY CHILDHOOD • ELEMENTARY MINISTRY • YOUTH MINISTRY ADULT EDUCATION • RESPECT LIFE PREGNANCY SERVICE • SCRIPTURE • MEDIA CENTER • CATHOLIC YOUTH ORGANIZATION ATHLETIC PROGRAMS • CATHOLIC SCOUTING