

SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

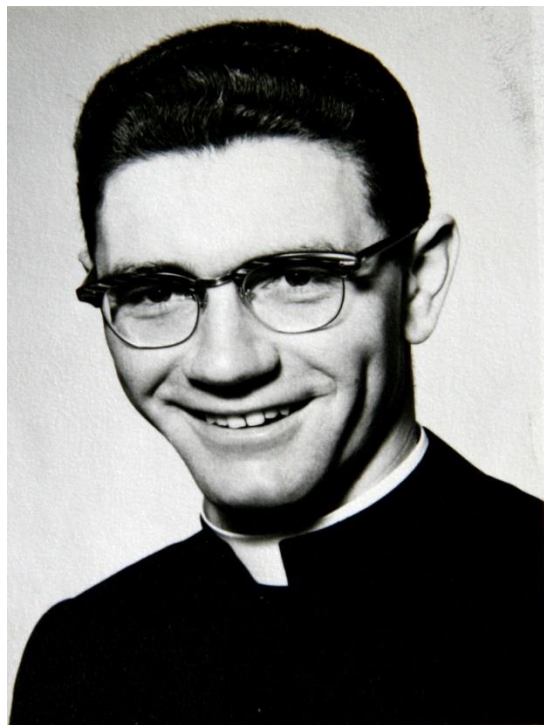
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Father John E Boll, Archivist

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FATHER JOHN BOLL LEAVES UC DAVIS CAMPUS MINISTRY AND BEGINS A SABBATICAL IN ISRAEL

Interview by Marjorie Wellings, printed in the Davis Enterprise, Friday, May 30, 1980



The Rev. John Boll, director of the Catholic Student Community's Newman Center since 1973, will be leaving August 1 for a sabbatical in Israel, followed by a new assignment in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Sacramento.

In order that UC Davis students may say goodbye to Father Boll before leaving for the summer, a Liturgy of Thanksgiving, followed by a reception, will be held this evening at 7:30 p.m. in the Newman Chapel. All friends of Fr. Boll are invited.

In September, the priest will enroll in a semester program sponsored by St. John University in Collegeville, Minn., and Chicago Theological Union. He will study Old Testament and New Testament Scriptures at Ein Karem, near Jerusalem. Included in the study program will be a trip to Egypt and on-site archeological studies in Jerusalem and Galilee.

Father John Boll

A native of Placerville, Boll entered St. Pius X Seminary during his high school years and graduated from St. Patrick College and Theologate in Menlo Park. He was ordained a priest at the Blessed Sacrament Cathedral in Sacramento in 1970 and spent his first three years of ministry there before coming to Davis.

Entering clerical life at a time of dramatic changes in the Roman Catholic Church, Boll says one of the most important challenges facing the Church is the dwindling number of ordained ministers, and its effect on lay ministry.

"For a very long time, the clergy were in charge of and controlled the ministries in the church. My guess is that God is teaching us a lesson by the shortage of priests. The lesson is that ministry belongs to the whole people of God, not just the ordained.

"Every Christian is called to serve and to build up the body of Christ—the body being the community of God's people.

“With the coming of age of the laity, new ministries are beginning to develop. Lay people are now recognized as readers of the Scriptures at liturgy, as teachers, counselors and Eucharistic ministers who takes Communion to the sick. People have many needs and new ministries will be created to serve them.”

Fr. Boll feels that many parishes have become very large and he’d like to see a return to smaller congregations like the early church.



Photo by John E Boll 2011

UC Davis Newman Chapel

“If Christian life is to be vibrant, it must be lived in a more intimate way.” Boll says there is a definite tendency toward formation of Christian households in Davis where three to seven people “come together to live a common Christian life.” He says there are at least two such communities of college students connected with the Newman Center who are doing this.

“Such communities aren’t easy—there are struggles in communal living. These households have to come to grips with their expectations which may be unrealistic. But it’s a hopeful sign.”

Boll says he’s going to Jerusalem to study the Bible on location because “the Bible is an ancient library of books written from an Eastern mentality and culture very different from the Western experience. “It will be helpful for me to experience that culture, language and way of thinking. Sometimes the Bible can be a source of disunity. It is not an answer book but rather the story of a people learning to be attentive and faithful to God. We rely on Scripture today as the written part of the much larger oral tradition which is inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit. God continues to guide us on the journey. As we encounter new challenges, we are challenged to grow in insight and understanding of the real message of Jesus for Christians today and in the future.”



Photos during Campus Ministry Days at UC Davis in the 1970s



Priests today are ministering frequently to “disenfranchised Catholics,” says Boll, “people who have felt they had to leave for the sake of their own spiritual life. Part of our work is to listen to their hurts and show our care for them – helping people to forgive themselves and those who have hurt them, showing them that the church can be different from what they experienced in the past and enabling them to return to the life of the community once again.”

He says religious questions are alive in today’s students, and it’s not unusual for young people to attend services in two or more different churches on a weekend. “Students go where their spiritual needs are being met. Some students check out all the churches in town.”

The church is ministering to divorced persons and single parents, says Boll, and there is a growing need to speak compassionately to those affected by economic and racial strife. “Davis seems very progressive, liberal and open-minded, but it has its racism, bigotry and closed-mindedness just like any other community. These things might be covered with a veneer of sophistication, but they’re still there. “So the message of Christ’s Gospel is just as needed here – perhaps more so.”

Boll says his decision to leave Davis was a hard one. “It’s been a great experience – but it’s time to be challenged by a new adventure.”

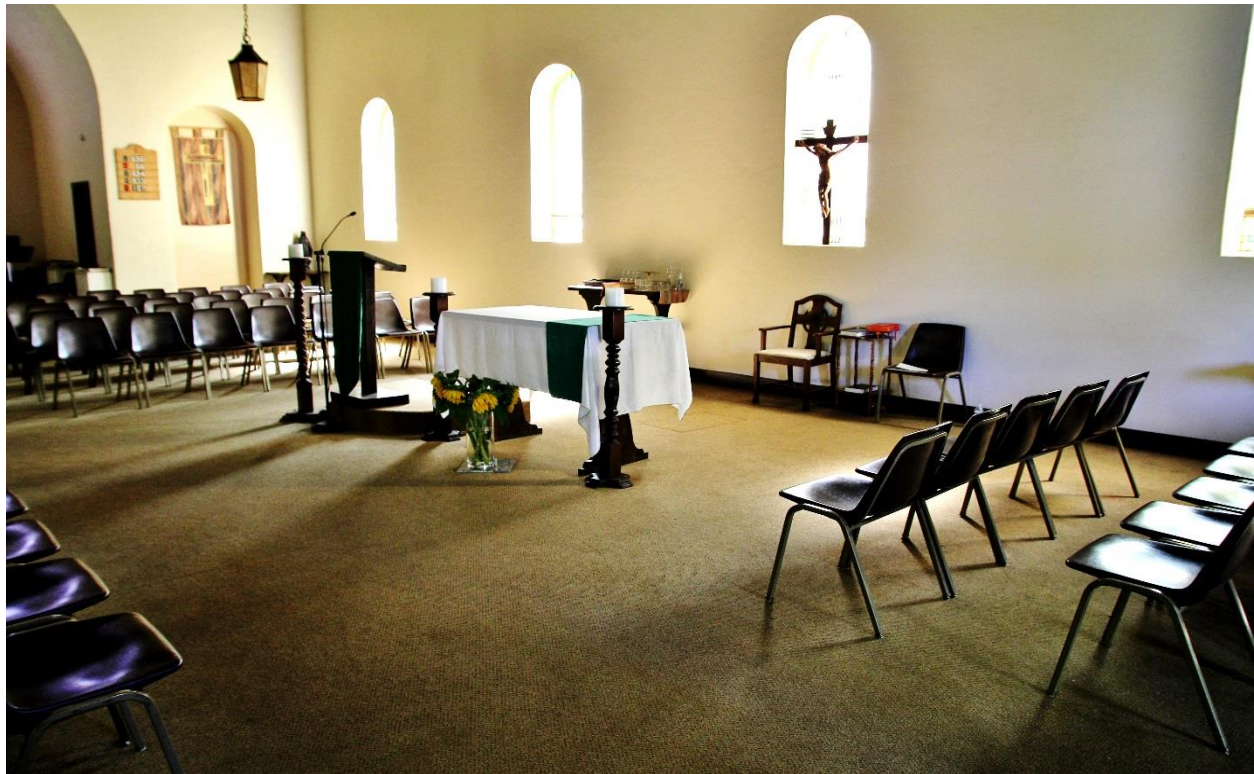


Photo by John E Boll 2011

Interior of the Davis Newman Chapel

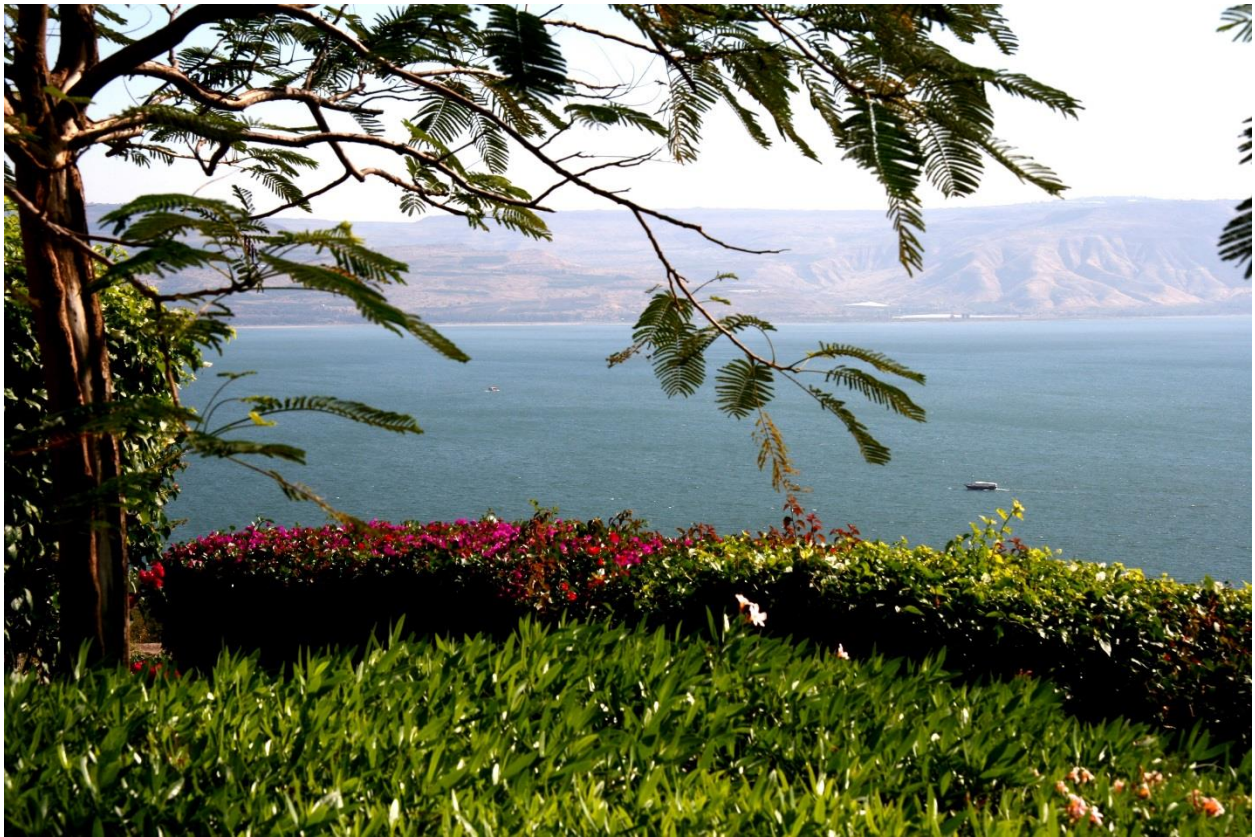


Photo by John E Boll 2008

Lake of Galilee from the Mount of Beatitudes



Photo by John E Boll 2008

Cave near the Dead Sea where the Dead Sea Scrolls were Discovered in 1946