NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

California priest jailed on teen molestation charge

Monica Clark | Dec. 2, 2011

A 32-year-old priest in the Diocese of Sacramento in California is being arraigned Friday on two counts of lewd and lascivious acts with a 14-year-old girl.

Fr. Uriel Ojeda, parochial vicar at Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Redding, Calif., surrendered to police Nov. 30, one day after diocesan officials received the complaint and reported it to Sacramento County Child Protective Services and the Sacramento Police Department.

At a press conference Thursday when the arrest was announced, Bishop Jaime Soto said Ojeda has been placed on administrative leave, meaning that he may not perform any of the duties of a priest.

"I have personally spoken to the family involved," Soto said at the press conference. "They are in great pain. They have been very brave in bringing this forward. We will do everything we can to make sure they get the help they need. I admire the courage with which they have come forward to bring this to my attention so that we can bring this to the attention of authorities.

"Protecting young people remains our No. 1 priority," the bishop added. "I am very grateful for the rapid and timely help and support we received from the Sacramento Police and the District Attorney's Office."

According to the diocesan website, an announcement will be made this weekend at the two parishes where Ojeda served as parochial vicar, encouraging other possible victims to step forward.

The priest, who was born in the United States and raised in Mexico, attended Mount Angel Seminary in St. Benedict, Ore., from 1998 to 2007 and was ordained to the priesthood in June 2007. He served at Holy Rosary Parish in Woodland from August 2007 to July 2009 and has been at Our Lady of Mercy Parish since July 2009.

Source URL (retrieved on *12/27/2014 - 22:08*): http://ncronline.org/news/accountability/california-priest-jailed-teen-molestation-charge