

Press Release 2-7-07

Very Rev. Michael F. Olson, Vicar General of the Diocese of Fort Worth

I offer the following report as an update of recent activity regarding allegations and responses to allegations of sexual misconduct with minors received through my office as vicar general and overseer of the Conduct Review Board of the Diocese of Fort Worth. The Diocese's Victims Assistance Coordinator, Judy Locke, Bishop Vann, and I have had the opportunity to listen to victims and their families regarding their hurt over past misconduct on the part of clergy and the subsequent response on the part of the Diocese. At this point, in the name of Bishop Vann, and that of the entire diocese, I reiterate our shared commitment to place the healing of victims of past child sexual abuse by clergy and other church workers at the forefront of our collective effort. This news release is a part of Bishop Vann's ongoing effort toward a forthright and compassionate approach in addressing these sad and painful matters.

From November, 2006 through January, 2007, the Diocese of Fort Worth received five (5) allegations of sexual misconduct with minors against the late James C. Reilly. Two of these allegations have been brought forward by parents of four (4) adult men about whom the parents suspect sexual abuse and harassment perpetrated by Reilly. In each case, the Diocese offered to pay for counseling for the parents involved as well as to initiate contact with the men in question. In each case, there has been no further contact from any of the parties to the Diocese.

Two more of the five allegations leveled against Reilly come from adult men who allege sexual impropriety on the part of Reilly stemming from the middle 1960s and early 1970s while they were minors. In each case the Diocese has offered to pay for counseling services on behalf of the men. In one case the man in question currently declined counseling but "only wanted to report" what had happened. In the second case, the man has not responded to any of the Diocese's offers to pay for counseling services.

The fifth allegation leveled against Reilly, is brought by a woman who alleges sexual abuse in the early 1970s while she was a minor. The Diocese is working with her to arrange counseling services.

In these same months, the Diocese has received one (1) allegation against Father Joseph Tu Nguyen of the Dominican Order made by a woman. The woman alleges two incidents of sexual misconduct in the late 1970s while she was a minor. The allegation has been forwarded to the Dominican Order's Southern Province. The Diocese contacted the Euless police department whose jurisdiction includes the place of the alleged abuse. The Diocese further encouraged the woman in question to file a report on her own behalf with the police department. The Diocese has offered to pay for counseling services on her behalf and on behalf of her parents. The woman and her parents are currently considering the offer of the Diocese to pay for counseling services.

The allegation of sexual misconduct made against Philip Magaldi in October of 2006 by a man from out of state is still in process of being investigated by the North Richland Hills Police Department. The man alleges that he suffered abuse from Magaldi when the man was a minor. The Diocese has been in contact with this man's family and has offered to provide counseling for them as well as for the man in question. The man initially accepted the Diocese's offer to pay for counseling services but has subsequently declined the ongoing offer to pay for further counseling. The Diocese is awaiting the response of the family towards its offer to them.

The Diocese has also been in contact with another man who has expressed concerns about past mistakes on the part of the Diocese in supervising Magaldi as well as about inappropriate behavior on the part of Magaldi while the man was a minor at Saint John the Apostle Catholic Church in North Richland Hills. Diocesan officials contacted the North Richland Hills Police Department and provided them with the man's name and directory information as a helpful

contact in conjunction with the case in question. The man currently lives out of state.

The Diocese has received further contact from a man who claims to have been abused sexually as a minor in the late 1960s and early 1970s as perpetrated by the late James Fitzpatrick. Fitzpatrick was assigned at that time to Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Wichita Falls, Texas where he served until his death in 1974. The man first reported the abuse to the Diocese in March of 2004. At that time, the Diocese offered to provide counseling to the man and his family. Representatives of the Diocese will visit Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Wichita Falls to ask for other victims to come forward.

Diocesan officials visited in December the following parishes served by Gilbert Pansza as a priest and as a seminarian: Our Lady of Guadalupe (Wichita Falls), St. John the Baptizer (Bridgeport), Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Decatur), St. Mary's (Jacksboro), St. John the Apostle (North Richland Hills), and St. Francis of Assisi (Grapevine). At this date, the Diocese has received no allegations of sexual misconduct with minors against Gilbert Pansza. Bishop Vann removed Pansza from active ministry on December 14, 2006 for his admission of past sexual misconduct with a minor that occurred during the 1970s before he was a seminarian.

All first-hand accounts of sexual abuse against minors have been reported to appropriate police departments and the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (TDPRS).

Each of these allegations has been brought before the Conduct Review Board for their assessment in their advisory capacity to the Bishop. Our efforts at a renewal of trust among members of the church in the response by church authorities towards the handling and reporting of sexual misconduct with minors are part of an ongoing and at times painful process. Nevertheless, in the name of Bishop Vann and that of the Diocese I renew my own personal and official commitment with God's help towards responding more compassionately to those who have suffered abuse on the part of clergy or anyone who works for the Catholic Church.

If you have suffered, or if you know of anyone who has suffered sexual abuse from a member of the clergy, or from anybody else who works for the Catholic Church, please contact the Victims' Assistance Coordinator, Judy Locke, at the Catholic Center, at 817-560-2452 (ext. 201). Or you may contact the Vicar General, Fr. Michael Olson at (817) 560-3300 (ext. 107).