



# DIOCESE OF VENICE IN FLORIDA

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## *Communications Department*

### STATEMENT FROM THE DIOCESE OF VENICE IN FLORIDA

December 29, 2008

An allegation has been made against the Reverend Jean Ronald Joseph who is a priest in the Diocese of Venice in Florida. The allegation alleges that sexual misconduct occurred in 1993 between Father Joseph and someone who, at that time, was a minor.

Father Joseph denies the allegation and strenuously maintains his innocence. At Bishop Dewane's request, Father has agreed to remove himself from active ministry while the diocesan investigation is conducted.

The investigation of this allegation falls under the Policy of the Diocese of Venice in Florida for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults. The said policy conforms to the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* approved by the U.S. Catholic Bishops (November 2002), as well as the *Essential Norms for Diocesan Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse* approved by the Congregation for Bishops in Rome (December 8, 2002).

Anyone who believes that he or she has been sexually abused as a minor by another person connected with the Diocese of Venice in Florida, or any organization, should contact either law enforcement officials or the individual responsible for Victim Assistance in the Diocese of Venice in Florida. The Diocese of Venice remains committed to a zero tolerance policy for sexual abuse with a minor.

The Diocese of Venice has complied with its policy to protect against abuse, and to keep a safe environment in our Church. All priests, deacons, lay employees and those volunteers who have contact with children and vulnerable adults must undergo comprehensive background screening that includes fingerprinting.

We pray for the pain and suffering of all victims. We pray that the Lord of Truth and Light will guide all in His ways! These are very painful times for Father Joseph, the lay faithful as well as the clergy. Let us remain united in prayer.

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