



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF TRENTON
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Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I ask your prayers in a special way today as I must share some deeply painful news affecting the life of your parish family.

I am writing to tell you that on Wednesday, June 3, the Diocese was provided with a copy of a complaint against your Pastor, Father Richard Milewski, the Church, the Diocese and others. The complaint, which has been filed as a lawsuit in the Ocean County Superior Court, alleges that Father Milewski was responsible for the abuse of a minor some 25 years ago.

This complaint against Father Milewski is completely new to us. The first we heard about it was late on Wednesday. The Diocese has had no opportunity to investigate this complaint to determine whether or not it is credible. Nevertheless, I discussed the complaint with Father Milewski, and he has agreed to temporarily step aside from his duties as Pastor at St. Rose of Lima Parish in order to allow the Diocese time to investigate and to make a determination as to whether or not the complaint is credible. At the conclusion of our investigation, I, as Bishop, will decide whether it will be necessary to take further administrative measures.

I am sure you know, the Diocese of Trenton takes every complaint of abuse seriously. We have a Review Board that consists of two priests and eight laity, all of whom are prominent citizens with judicial, law enforcement or counseling experience. The Review Board investigates every complaint that is made, and in turn makes recommendations to me about how to handle each complaint. In addition, the Diocese reports every complaint of abuse to the local county prosecutor. We are now taking the steps necessary to follow through on this complaint so that the rights of all parties will be handled respectfully.

I am also concerned for each of you and your families as you learn of this distressing matter. Allegations of such behavior shock all of us and undermine the work of so many priests who faithfully serve their people. You may feel your trust has been betrayed. This is an understandable reaction. Above all, parents need to be reassured that children and young people are our most precious treasure and that we have the greatest responsibility to protect and advocate on their behalf.

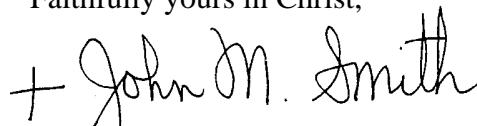
Our faith in the Gospel teaches us to pray for all those affected by this news – especially for Father Milewski and all of your parish community. As together we struggle

as a church community to respond to these allegations, it is only by turning to our Lord that we will find the courage to deal openly and honestly with this issue and to respond with justice and compassion to all those affected.

I am appointing Rev. Rocco Cuomo as Temporary Administrator for the Parish of St. Rose of Lima. I am grateful for his willingness to accept this responsibility.

Please know you will be in my prayers and I will do all I can to assist you throughout this most difficult time.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John M. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

Most Reverend John M. Smith
Bishop of Trenton

JMS/jnr