



ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

FOR READING AT ALL GOOD SHEPHERD PARISH MASSES, JANUARY 1 and 2

January 1, 2011

Dear Friends,

In April this year I removed the priestly faculties of Father Mel Thompson, placed him on administrative leave and made the necessary report to civil authorities. I did so in accord with our archdiocesan policies for the protection of children and young people, because of an allegation made against Father Thompson of sexual misconduct 30 years ago with a minor. From the beginning, Father Thompson has maintained his innocence of this allegation. As you may know, Father Thompson once served at Good Shepherd Parish.

When allegations of sexual abuse of a minor arise, I rely on our Archdiocesan Conduct Response Team to investigate thoroughly the claim. Over the past seven months, the team has interviewed the parties involved and spoken with others who might have helpful information regarding this allegation. Based on their investigation of the facts, the members of the Conduct Response Team have unanimously concluded that the allegation against Father Thompson is not supported by the evidence they reviewed. They have recommended to me that nothing impedes Father Thompson's return to active ministry. Therefore, in light of the Conduct Response Team's recommendations, I have restored Father Thompson to priestly service, effective immediately.

Father Thompson has requested retirement. Having reflected on his experience of the last seven months and his current health issues, I have granted his request.

Obviously, any allegation of this nature creates immense pain both for the accuser and the accused. I'm grateful to all for their patience throughout this very demanding process.

I want to assure the people of the Archdiocese that the safety of our children and families is – and will remain – a priority for our Church. I also want to thank the dedicated professional laypersons who serve on our Conduct Response Team for their skill and wisdom, as well as our archdiocesan vicar for clergy, Msgr. Bernie Schmitz, in providing me with good counsel in these difficult matters. I ask you to keep our local Church and everyone affected by these matters in your prayers.

Sincerely yours in Christ,


Most Reverend Charles J. Chaput, O.S.M. Cap.
Archbishop of Denver