

May 26, 2013

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

When I first learned several weeks ago that Father Michael Fugee may have violated a lifetime ban on ministry to minors, I immediately ordered an outside law firm to conduct a full and thorough investigation of the matter and to cooperate with the Bergen County Prosecutor in all areas. I told the firm that I wanted to know what happened and why.

The investigation found that the strong protocols we presently have in place were not always observed.

The seriousness of the situation with Father Fugee necessitated a thoughtful and effective response. Appointing a new Vicar General will be just one step in a comprehensive plan to review, and, where necessary, strengthen our internal protocols and ensure we are doing everything we can to safeguard the children of our community.

So, effective immediately, the Vicar General, Monsignor John E. Doran, has resigned his post and will no longer hold a leadership position with the Archdiocese. As a result of operational failures, both Monsignor Doran and I felt that the Archdiocese would be best served by his stepping down as Vicar General. This action clears the way for making more effective changes in our monitoring function. I am transferring that function to the Office of the Judicial Vicar of the Archdiocese.

We want our procedures to be among the strictest in the Catholic Church. This has been one of my priorities since becoming your Archbishop in 2001 and that will not change. In fact, the Archdiocese has an exemplary record of addressing allegations against our clergy. We, along with all dioceses in the state of New Jersey, report all allegations of misconduct to the appropriate prosecutors' office. I have personally removed 19 priests for substantiated allegations. I want to assure you that our strict oversight of, and adherence to, The Dallas Charter will continue.

Simply meeting standard guidelines is not acceptable. That's why we introduced several changes and new initiatives, all of which share the same goal – to ensure clarity and diligence in serving our community.

As part of this process, I will be appointing a new special advisor to our Archdiocesan Review Board. Additionally, I have committed to provide more resources to the Review Board, an independent group of expert, and mainly lay, volunteers who help the Archdiocese and me investigate allegations of clergy sexual misconduct involving minors and recommend any action under Church law.

All of these measures are geared toward safeguarding the members of our parishes and community. You can be sure we will continue to expand our efforts.

I want you to know just how seriously I take this lapse in our system and that I am committed to doing everything within my abilities to ensure nothing is left to chance, that all appropriate resources and efforts are utilized in protecting our youngest parishioners.

This is among the most sacred responsibilities that I share with the other honorable, dedicated clergy within our Archdiocese.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Sincerely in the Lord,

Most Reverend John J. Myers

Archbishop of Newark

+ John J. Ingon