



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT

238 Jewett Avenue • Bridgeport, Connecticut 06606 • 203-416-1352 • FAX: 203-371-8323

January 31, 2015

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is my very sad duty to inform you that I have put Father Stephen DeLuca on administrative leave and have removed his faculties to exercise any and all forms of public ministry as a priest.

My decision was made after I determined, with the assistance of the Diocesan Review Board for Sexual Misconduct, that there is credible evidence of an incident of child abuse on the part of Father DeLuca more than 30 years ago.

I want to be entirely clear that the diocese did not learn of this allegation until recently, well after Father DeLuca retired on June 30, 2014. In accordance with both state reporting mandates and the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, we notified both the police and the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) immediately. Given the information available and the significant time which had passed, neither the police nor DCF took further action. As required by the Charter, the Diocese immediately initiated its own investigation into the allegation. As a result of this extensive and deliberative inquiry, which included the use of outside investigative resources, the allegation was ultimately judged to be credible. Please be assured that all available measures to fairly and thoroughly investigate the allegations were taken while protecting the privacy of the victim.

As a result and in accordance with the Charter, Father DeLuca will no longer reside at St. Catherine and is prohibited from any future ministry. Parish leadership where Father DeLuca served was notified of my action in advance of this letter. We have taken steps to work with Father DeLuca in this transition, and the services of our diocesan clergy counselor have been made available to him. Diocesan personnel will also be on hand as a resource to the parishes in which he served in the coming days.

It is important to note that, other than this reported incident, we are not aware of any other victim that has come forward with an allegation of misconduct by Father DeLuca in any of his previous assignments.

In order to protect the privacy of the victim, we cannot provide further details other than to say the diocese has reached out to the victim and the victim's family and offered assistance to promote healing.

I realize that this is distressing news for you and it further wounds the diocese and our Church as a family of faith. I can only reassure you that we remain committed to a zero tolerance policy for child abuse and total transparency in the handling of cases. It is for that reason that you are hearing of this news directly from me.

As you may know, on November 30, 2014, I re-promulgated all diocesan Safe Environments policies and practices that are integral to our work as a Church. These policies improve on the good work done over the past decade by redoubling our effort to protect our children and incorporate best practices from across the country.

I ask your prayers for all involved and pledge that the diocese will continue to do everything in its power to fulfill the sacred obligation we share to protect children, youth and vulnerable adults in our community.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Frank J. Caggiano". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano,
Bishop of Bridgeport

SAFE ENVIRONMENTS:

To report suspected abuse involving a minor, recently or in the past, contact: Erin Neil, L.C.S.W., diocesan director of Safe Environments: 203.650.3265; or Michael Tintrup, L.C.S.W., victim assistance counselor: 203.241.0987. Mandated reporters must also directly report any incident of sexual abuse of a minor to the State of Connecticut Child Abuse and Neglect care line: 800.842.2288. Those who are not mandated reporters may also report suspected abuse to the Abuse and Neglect care line at 800.842.2288