



# Archdiocese of San Antonio

## Office of the Moderator of the Curia

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January 30, 2012

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On behalf of Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller, I offer a heartfelt apology for the abuse that you relate having suffered at the hands of Fr. Michael O'Sullivan. In my capacity as Moderator of the Curia, I assist the Archbishop with matters that relate to the protection of children, the Office for Victim Assistance and Safe Environment, and the Archdiocesan Review Board. I am especially sorry for the ways in which this abuse continues to cause you pain and anger, and hope, in this letter, to provide you with information that will in some way help facilitate your ongoing healing. I believe this information identifies specific mistakes made by the Archdiocese of San Antonio and the Diocese of Savannah in the decade of the 60's. The professional advice on which we relied in that era was erroneous and in the case of O'Sullivan did not prevent him from abusing children. We have learned much from this period, and beginning in the mid 1980's we have implemented much stronger policies and practices in the Archdiocese of San Antonio

On receiving word from Mr. Steve Martinez of your December 1, 2011 phone call and your December 16, 2011 email, I shared your allegation with Mr. Al Notzon, the chair of our Archdiocesan Review Board, and began to look for information that would help determine our next steps. I informed the District Attorney's Office of your allegation, in the case they could identify any possibility of criminal prosecution. The Archbishop has prepared a letter to each of the parishes where O' Sullivan ministered during his time in the Archdiocese. This letter is intended to reach out to any victims in the affected communities and offer them pastoral and counseling support. I have asked the pastors to print these letters in their parish bulletins on January 29 and February 5. I have additionally verified that O'Sullivan does not currently exercise any priestly ministry.

O'Sullivan was ordained in Ireland on June 12, 1955. He ministered in the Archdiocese of San Antonio from 1955-1964. On arriving, he was briefly assigned in 1955 to St. Mary's Parish in Fredericksburg and St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles Parish in San Antonio. From 1955-1960 he was assigned to St. Mary's Parish in Victoria, Texas which is now a parish of the Victoria Diocese. From 1960-1962 he

was assigned to Blessed Sacrament Parish, and from 1962 to 1964 he was assigned to St. Vincent de Paul Parish.

An allegation of sexual abuse of a minor was confirmed against O'Sullivan while he was assigned at Blessed Sacrament. This was the first time that the Archdiocese was aware of any acts of sexual abuse by O'Sullivan. He was placed under the care of a local psychiatrist, and on his recommendation was assigned to minister at St. Vincent de Paul Parish while his treatment continued. Because he re-offended at St. Vincent de Paul, he was sent for residential treatment to Conyers, Georgia under the care of Dr. Aloysius Miller, Ph.D., M.D. After about a year of this treatment, Dr. Miller proposed that

O'Sullivan's return to ministry would be of service to the community and profitable to his psychotherapeutic progress. Thankfully, even in the face of this proposal, the Archdiocese of San Antonio refused to accept him back to minister here, and insisted that any diocese where he sought to minister would have full knowledge of his past history of sexual abuse. Despite being provided this information, the Diocese of Savannah gave O' Sullivan a parish assignment in August of 1965. In the Fall of 1971, they discovered that he had again abused children, and the Diocese of Savanna relieved him of all priestly duties and asked him to leave their Diocese.

It appears that O'Sullivan returned to his hometown in Ireland, as the Bishop of Savannah copied the Archdiocese of San Antonio on a letter in 1973 warning the Bishop of Kerry of the history I have related here. A visitor from Savannah had encountered O'Sullivan presenting himself as a priest in Ireland, and the letter was intended to ensure that action would be taken to keep him out of ministry. Please be assured that O'Sullivan returned to Ireland without the support of any bishop in the United States and without permission from any bishop in the United States to exercise any priestly ministry. We have no record of specific assignments after O'Sullivan left Savannah.

I understand your preference to personally review the records of the Archdiocese relating to O'Sullivan. While this is not possible, I have attempted to answer each of your questions in this candid summary of his assignments and known abuse. Thank you for your support of Mr.— and for sharing your own experience of abuse by O'Sullivan. I believe that your courage, and the courage of other victims, in telling the story of their abuse, has been an important piece of the Church's learning during the last 50 years.

Please count on my personal prayers for you in your continued journey toward healing.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name of a priest, written in a cursive style.

Rev. Martin J. Leopold Moderator  
of the Curia