



April 29, 2023

Dear Saint Lawrence Parish Family,

I am writing to share some difficult news with your parish. The Diocese has very recently received an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by Father Mark Menezes some 50 years ago while he served as Parochial Vicar at St. Dominic Parish in Bolingbrook. Father Menezes is a retired priest who served as Pastor of your parish from July 1982 to June 1994. In accordance with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, and in keeping with our diocesan child protection policies, I have suspended Father Menezes' faculties and directed him to step aside from ministry during the investigation of this allegation. Father Menezes is cooperating with this direction. Please understand that allegations are claims that have not been proven and for this reason there needs to be a full investigation.

In addition, as is required by our diocesan child protection policies, the allegation was reported to the Will County State's Attorney. The person making the allegation has been offered counseling services through our Victim Assistance Coordinator and the diocese immediately initiated its investigation of these matters.

It is crucial that you know nothing is more important than the welfare of the children entrusted to our care. The Diocese of Joliet takes seriously every allegation that is brought forth and investigates every allegation received. The diocese encourages anyone who feels they have been sexually abused by a priest, deacon, religious, diocesan employee, or volunteer, to come forward. Complete information about reporting abuse can be found on the diocesan website at <https://www.diojoliet.org>.

In the days and weeks ahead, members of the diocese's Office of Child and Youth Protection are available to answer any questions you may have about reporting abuse. The office's email and phone numbers can be located on the Diocesan website.

We will do our best to keep you informed of developments as they occur. Please know that you are in my prayers. As I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ronald A. Hicks". The signature is written in a cursive style and includes a small cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Ronald A. Hicks  
Bishop of Joliet