



Office of the Bishop

DIocese OF DALLAS

August 25, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Last weekend I stood before parishioners at St. Cecilia Catholic Church and informed them of allegations of sexual abuse by their former pastor, Reverend Edmundo Paredes.

Father Paredes was first suspended and removed from ministry in June 2017 after financial irregularities were discovered. In February 2018, three adult men made credible accusations of criminal sexual acts by Father Paredes that occurred when they were in their mid-teens. The Diocese immediately notified law enforcement but, respected the victim's request to not publicly announce the allegations. It was never a question of if we would eventually make the allegations public, only when.

I want you to know that I am working with diocesan staff to find additional strategies to the ones already in place to create a safer environment. It is my pledge to make sure that all children are safe. The diocese will take these further actions:

- 1) There will be a Ceremony of Sorrow at St. Cecilia Catholic church in the near future.
- 2) There will be four town hall meetings in the coming months for parishioners in the diocese. These meetings will include liturgy and a listening session.
- 3) Plans are being made to expand the Safe Environment protocol. The diocese will survey parents, grandparents, and parishioners as to the effectiveness of the current Safe Environment program within their parish.
- 4) A researcher has been commissioned to explore what we can learn from the Pennsylvania grand jury report and identify how we in the Diocese of Dallas can do better.
- 5) Knowing that we must combat this evil with prayer, I have asked all priests, ministers and parishes of the diocese to pray the rosary before every Mass throughout the month of October, the month of the rosary, whenever possible, for the healing of all victims and the sanctification of priests.

As I have said, the Diocese of Dallas must do everything to ensure the safety of our people. I encourage anyone who has experienced sexual abuse by clergy, or those who suspect someone is being abused, to report it to law enforcement. In Dallas, these cases are investigated by the Dallas Police Department, who can be reached by calling the DPD Child Exploitation Unit [214-671-4215]. In other cities, please contact local law enforcement. In addition, anyone who suspects that a child is being abused should report it to the Texas Abuse Hotline [1-800-252-5400].



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As we continue to work for the protection of children and youth, I need you to know that in the Diocese of Dallas, we are committed to doing what is right and just. I assure you of my prayers as we hold onto the hope and reassurance that sin and evil will not have the last word.

I ask you to please join me in praying for all victims of sexual abuse and their loved ones, and for the St. Cecilia community.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Edward J. Burns
Bishop of Dallas