



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

July 1, 2020

Dear St. Matthew parishioners,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am writing to let you know I have accepted the report and recommendation of the Diocese of Charlotte's independent Lay Review Board that Father Patrick Hoare remain out of active ministry at this time. Father John Allen will continue as administrator of St. Matthew Parish.

As I shared with you previously, the diocese placed Father Hoare on administrative leave Dec. 9, 2019, after receiving an allegation against him of child sexual abuse that was said to have occurred in Pennsylvania more than 25 years ago, before Father Hoare entered ministry.

The Abington Township Police Department in Pennsylvania investigated this allegation, as well as a similar claim of abuse in Pennsylvania that subsequently emerged. Father Hoare denies the allegations, both of which involved accusations of inappropriate touching of relatives in the 1980s and early 1990s when he was in his teens and early 20s. In February of this year, Abington police informed the diocese that their investigation found the claimants to be credible but, citing the statute of limitations, local authorities said they were unable to bring charges.

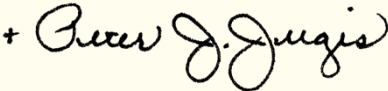
Under Pennsylvania law, the diocese did not have access to the police investigation. Upon my request, the diocese's Lay Review Board conducted its own investigation. The Review Board concluded that while some of the allegations appeared credible, no specific incident of sexual abuse of a minor was identified based on the evidence presented and recollections of ages and events decades earlier.

I want to emphasize the diocese has not received any allegations that Father Hoare committed abuse during his ministry in the diocese. However, the Review Board did consider three complaints against Father Hoare alleging several instances of inappropriate physical contact with minors that were observed by others in group settings at St. Matthew and St. John Neumann parishes. These complaints were reported recently and did not constitute sexual abuse but involved a hug, rubbing the shoulders or abdomen of a minor, and being "very touchy." The Review Board concluded such behavior represented boundary violations that raised questions about Father Hoare's judgment.

Considering the totality of these findings and the questions they raise, as well as the culture of prevention we have established in this diocese, Father Hoare will remain on administrative leave. Under Church law, he may exercise his right to appeals within the diocese as well as to the Holy See in Rome, and a final determination of his status will be shared at a later date. The diocese's decision in this matter aligns with our unwavering commitment to accountability and to providing a safe environment for all people, especially the young and vulnerable.

In closing, I want to express my profound gratitude for your understanding and support during this difficult time. Please know you remain in my prayers, and I invite you to join me in praying for God's blessing and peace upon St. Matthew Parish.

Sincerely Yours in Christ Jesus,

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The Most Reverend Peter J. Jugis
Bishop of Charlotte