



DIOCESE OF VENICE IN FLORIDA

Communications Department

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Susan Laielli
Director of Communications
(941) 484-9543
Laielli@dioceseofvenice.org

**Diocese of Venice in Florida Statement
Regarding
OFFICE OF STATEWIDE PROSECUTION'S REPORT ON SEXUAL
ABUSE IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN FLORIDA**

Venice - This inquiry by the Statewide Prosecutor was not occasioned by any new allegation of abuse. Over the past two years of the investigation, the Diocese of Venice offered its full cooperation to the Statewide Prosecutor. The Diocese provided access to diocesan files of specific priests requested by the investigators.

The investigators have now issued a report which lists priests from throughout the State of Florida who have been identified by the Statewide Prosecutor as to have had a credible allegation of a sexual offense against minors. This list includes priests who have moved into Florida from other Dioceses. The investigation involved historic cases.

Most Reverend Frank J. Dewane, Bishop of the Diocese of Venice, expresses compassion for all victims of child sexual abuse; the harm done is grave. On behalf of the Church, Bishop Dewane asks the forgiveness of those who have been harmed by Clergy or others involved with the Church, and we pray for the healing of the victims and the Church.

Included on the list are nine priests of the Diocese of Venice against whom a substantiated allegation has been identified in the investigation (list on Diocesan website). None of the priests listed are allowed to minister in the Diocese. Some have died, some have been laicized or dismissed from clerical state, and others have had their priestly faculties permanently removed.

The State Report is a reminder of the grave harm done in the past to minors by some who were ordained to provide pastoral care to the Faithful. Regrettably, the Priests who have offended can obscure the truth that most Catholic priests serve with fidelity, generosity, compassion, and care.

The investigation recognized the Diocese has followed its policies and provided, once again, the opportunity for the Diocese of Venice to reiterate its commitment to stand firm in implementing the *USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. The Diocese will continue to do all that is within its power to remain faithful to the long-established policies for protecting children and promoting moral integrity of those who serve in the Church.

This moment also allows for the Diocese to once again encourage all who have been abused to report it to the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) and if it involves clergy of the Diocese of Venice, to contact also the Diocesan Victim's Assistance Coordinator. The Diocese will take every report of abuse seriously and respond promptly.