



DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH
THE BISHOP'S OFFICE



January 15, 2012

Dear Friends and Parishioners of St. Matthew, St. Michael and Vietnamese Martyrs Parishes,

As your Bishop, I have the sad duty to address you about claims of sexual abuse by a priest who was assigned to this parish many years ago. Fr. Joseph Tu Nguyen was assigned to St. Matthew Parish from 1975 through 1977 and again from 1980 through 1993. St. Matthew Parish was the parent parish to Vietnamese Martyrs Parish. Fr. Tu was also assigned at St. Michael Parish from 1979 through 1980. Allegations of inappropriate sexual conduct were lodged against Father Tu and these allegations were found to have a semblance of truth. Father Tu has had his priestly faculties permanently suspended by the Dominican Order and he is under their permanent supervision; he is not in a position to do any harm again.

Eight women came forward to the Diocese with claims of sexual abuse by Fr. Tu. These claims were found to be credible and valid by the Conduct Review Board and me. These claims were investigated by both the Diocese of Fort Worth and the Southern Dominican Province of Saint Martin de Porres of the Religious Order of Preachers, of which Fr. Tu is a member. The claims were never recanted as had been rumored by some people.

To these women I want to profoundly apologize and express my sorrow for the damage, hurt and suffering they endured at the hands of Fr. Tu. I know that these events have resulted in tragic damage and loss of faith to these women and their families. It also affects me, this parish, the Diocese and the Church universal. As a priest, I am embarrassed, disheartened, appalled and angered by this behavior. That any priest would act in this way is a sin and a crime.

In the name of the Church, I offer my apology to each of these women, their families and to all who have been abused. I pray daily for all victims of these heinous acts and that the power of this evil may be broken by this public acknowledgment of the failures of Fr. Tu. I ask that we all pray for the victims and their families.

I once again want to state and assure each of you that I personally review the programs in the Diocese of Fort Worth titled "*Called to Protect: Keeping Children Safe*" which educate all throughout the Diocese about this important subject. It is one of the highest priorities of my administration to do everything reasonably possible to prevent any and all sexual abuse by anyone in the Diocese of Fort Worth. Many of you here today have completed our Safe Environment Program and I thank you and invite you to tirelessly work with me to stop any and all abuse.

If anyone here has been abused by a priest or anyone in service of the Church, I ask that you come forward and report it to start the healing process. My staff is ready and willing to help. The telephone number for the abuse hotline is on the Diocesan website (817-560-2452 Ext 201). Or you can call my office so you can be directed to the correct person.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Kevin W. Vann, J.C.D., D.D.
Bishop of Fort Worth

THE CATHOLIC CENTER