

## Press Release 11-29-06

### Bishop Vann's Press Conference on Release of Cleric Files

**Editor's note:** *The following is the text of Bishop Kevin Vann's remarks made to a press conference at The Catholic Center Thursday, Nov. 29, 2006.*

"On August 11, when I spoke of how the Diocese of Fort Worth would move forward with integrity, as we looked toward the release of the files of those priests accused of sexual abuse of minors, I said this would represent a turning point on the journey toward healing and reconciliation. I spoke of what we have learned as a church, including the necessity that we each be ever vigilant, each of us truly living our faith.

"I stand by those words.

"As I said at that time, reading through the records that were released Tuesday was a very painful experience. I want to reiterate today that I am embarrassed, disheartened, appalled, and angered by the behavior described in these files.

"In reading through these records it is evident to me that as a church we could have acted more promptly, forthrightly, and with greater compassion for those who came forward with allegations. The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young people, adopted by the U.S. bishops in 2002, mandates the stringent requirements we must and will operate under.

"Once again, I offer my personal and sincere apologies to any victim who has been injured by these or any acts of sexual abuse and to their families as well.

"This sinful and criminal behavior is extraordinarily painful for those who have suffered abuse. As a church, we are united to that pain. Though we cannot experience it at the same level as those who have been directly violated, our unity within the Body of Christ makes that pain our own as well.

"Unfortunately, we cannot change the past. I can assure you of my commitment to maintain a proactive program that has trained to date over 15,000 clergy, employees and volunteers throughout the Diocese. This training focuses on the recognition of abuse, reporting of abuse to civil authorities and doing everything possible to provide a safe environment for our children and young people.

"Additionally, I want to make it very clear that we are committed to addressing any claims of abuse of minors quickly and forthrightly. I urge anyone with such claims to contact us.

"Now, I want to specifically address the information in the newspaper about Philip Magaldi. I was shocked to read that Philip Magaldi has disobeyed my clear directive that he is not allowed to say any public Masses. I will address this issue with him immediately and directly.

"Furthermore, we are close to completing a process I began months ago to submit Philip Magaldi's case to the Holy See for laicization. This is the second case I have decided to submit to the Holy See for laicization. Rudy Renteria's case is already in Rome awaiting their decision.

"Pending the outcome from Rome on these two cases, I am working to determine the feasibility of monitoring these two individuals, subject to their individual rights.

"I again want to say, as bishop of this diocese, that I am committed to the adherence to the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, which commits us as a church, as the people of God, to zero tolerance of any sexual abuse of minors.

“Once again I want to say a few words to the priests of our Diocese. You have been truly faithful to your vows and extraordinarily dedicated in your devotion to your mission. Cases such as these do not reflect in any way on your strength of character or faithful exercise of your priestly ministry.

“In closing, I want to add to what I said to the victims of James Reilly at St. Maria Goretti Parish this past weekend. ‘I deeply regret the damage and struggles that endure to this day because of the abuse of any victim at the hands of a priest. In the name of the church, I offer an apology to these victims and their families for this abuse and at the same time petition the Lord for forgiveness and ask the forgiveness of all those involved.’”