



January 23, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It has been a difficult couple of weeks for many of you after learning of my February 1 reassignment of Father Thomas Joseph from Saint Nicholas to the Metropolitan Tribunal at the Chancery. Now I must inform you that I am temporarily removing Father Joseph from active ministry due to an allegation of criminal conduct involving an adult that was recently made against him.

An adult contacted the Archdiocese's Office of Ministerial Standards and Safe Environment and alleged that Father Joseph had engaged in inappropriate conduct. We immediately contacted law enforcement. Director Tim O'Malley provided them with the information we had received, offered our assistance and described our procedures for handling such matters, including not taking any action that would interfere with their investigation. Monday, law enforcement notified us that our removal of Father Joseph would not interfere with an investigation they have begun of an allegation against Father Joseph of criminal conduct involving an adult. With that clarification, Father was removed temporarily from ministry, pending the outcome of the criminal investigation. It is our policy that clergy be removed from ministry during such investigations.

Father's removal from ministry should not be considered an indication or presumption of guilt. Anyone with additional information regarding this matter is encouraged to contact their local law enforcement agency.

It is important at this time to pray. Please pray for the person who made the allegation. Pray for Father Joseph. In addition, pray for investigators as they pursue the truth.

Please know of my prayers for all of you during this time of transition. Please pray for me.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Bernard A. Hebda  
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis