

Most Sacred Heart Church

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April 20, 2002

- Statement to the Parishioners of Most Sacred Heart Parish in Eureka -

All of us have been affected by the recent scandal in the Church concerning sexual misconduct against children by priests. The protection of the innocence of children, the trustworthiness of priests, and the integrity of the Church are all at stake.

Today this situation is brought home here to Sacred Heart because I have been so accused. The allegation of sexual abuse is being brought by one of the former residents of Saint Joseph's Home for Boys in the City of St. Louis while I was chaplain there in the late 1980's. I want you to know, plainly and simply, that I did not abuse this child and have not sexually, physically or emotionally abused any child.

I have been in contact with Archbishop Rigali, Bishop Naumann, Bishop Dolan, and the attorney for the Archdiocese of St. Louis. I have assured them, as I assure you, of my complete innocence and of my unequivocal denial of these or any such allegations. I am deeply grateful to have the understanding and the support of the Archdiocese in this matter.

With the support of the Archdiocese, I instructed the Archdiocesan attorney to take these charges to Jennifer Joyce, the Circuit Attorney of the City of St. Louis. He did so this past Friday. Abuse of children is a terrible thing, and it is important that any such charge be investigated. But I have been falsely accused, and I want to clear my name.

As you can imagine, it is difficult to know what to say at a time like this, but I owe it to you to be open and honest with you. I will certainly keep you abreast of any future developments. I know this is disturbing news, and I deeply regret any distress or pain this may bring to any of you individually or to our parish. I pray for my accuser and I ask you to please pray for me.