



DIOCESE OF METUCHEN

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

February 8, 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

It is almost a year now since our diocese was informed that several claims of the sexual abuse of minors had been made against your pastor, Fr. Kuffner. As I have done periodically in the intervening months, I write to you again today with an update on Fr. Kuffner's case and his status.

I wish that I had something new to share with you about the progress of law enforcement's investigation into the alleged incident involving Fr. Kuffner that took place in Massachusetts. We continue to be told by the office of the Hampden (Co.) District Attorney that this is an "open and active investigation." As long as the civil investigation is underway, we are, unfortunately, obliged to standby and wait for its conclusion. This is certainly frustrating to us all, but we have to give the time needed to the civil authorities for their investigation.

During this time of the civil investigation, Fr. Kuffner's term as pastor of Our Lady of Mount Virgin Parish expired. I have asked Fr. Skoblow to continue as administrator of your parish for the time being, and he tells me he is happy to be with you, pray with you and serve you.

I do feel sadness for your wonderful community since the permanent resolution has not yet arrived. However, I want to assure you that your mission as Disciples of Christ must and should continue with enthusiasm. Your mission is not stalled. Faithfulness to Christ and witness to Him with your charitable and good works are vitally needed right now. I have witnessed, and I hear many positive and encouraging things about your strong faith community in Middlesex. I so enjoyed my recent visits with you for your enjoyable anniversary celebration of the parish and for confirmation for your youth. Thank you for your heartfelt hospitality.

Right now, as you know, our Diocese of Metuchen is involved in a Year of Awakening of Faith. We are preparing to consecrate our diocese, and all of us in the diocese, to the maternal care of Our Lady of Guadalupe this coming December 12. This is a unique and special moment in our diocese for renewal. I know you are already dedicated to Our Lady of Mt. Virgin, but please redouble your prayers now to our Lady that renewal, hope and new life may fill your parish during this difficult time. You are in my daily thoughts and prayers, along with all victims of sexual abuse and Fr. Kuffner too. May Christ be close to you all at this time.

With renewed best wishes, I remain

Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend James F. Checchio, JCD, MBA
Bishop of Metuchen