



DIOCESE OF METUCHEN

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

July 21, 2014

Dear Parishioners of St. James Parish,

I have learned that the appeals court assigned to hear the charges of sexual abuse of a minor against your former pastor, Msgr. Michael Cashman, has ruled that he was guilty of "ongoing sexual abuse" of two minor children in the early 1980s. The court also imposed the penalty of dismissing Msgr. Cashman from the priesthood.

For the sake of the victims, your parish, and Msgr. Cashman, I wish that a final decision in this matter could have been reached long ago. I have every confidence, however, that Msgr. Cicerale and your parish leadership will continue to guide the parish through the process of healing and reconciliation.

I am also mindful of every diocesan bishop's obligation to see that a person dismissed from the priesthood is assisted with the transition to his new state in life if he is left in need because of the penalty.

Finally, I wish to express my solidarity with the recent words of our Holy Father, Pope Francis: "Before God and his people, I express my sorrow for the sins and grave crimes of clerical sexual abuse [...] There is no place in the Church's ministry for those who commit these abuses, and I commit myself not to tolerate harm done to a minor by any individual, whether a cleric or not." Please pray that I may have the Lord's assistance at every moment in fulfilling this most important commitment.

Sincerely in the Lord,

Most Rev. Paul G. Bootkoski
Bishop of Metuchen