



DIOCESE OF JEFFERSON CITY

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

January 11, 2019

Dear Parishioners of St. Martin,

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, asked the Bishops of the United States to attend a retreat this past week in Chicago for spiritual renewal in this time of crisis. I spent many hours on my knees before the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel praying for the Church, for her clergy and people. The retreat master ended with an impassioned plea for hope in the Risen Lord even while suffering the Cross. In one of the optional readings for our celebration of the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord this weekend, we also hear St. Paul remind St. Titus that through the gift of the Holy Spirit we have “become heirs in hope of eternal life.” Oh, how much we need the Holy Spirit to remind us of who we are, as sons and daughters of God the Father, and to renew our hope in these difficult times.

With sadness and a heavy heart, I informed one of my close advisors and your pastor, Father Mark Porterfield, that I had received an allegation of misconduct and asked him to take time away from ministry. While the allegation does not involve a minor, it does fall within the protocol of the diocese for clergy conduct and requires further consultation and investigation. Father Porterfield is not allowed to function publicly as a priest while on administrative leave. As is normative for such a process, the diocese will not provide any further information on the matter during the investigation. I am working diligently to resolve Father Porterfield’s case as quickly as possible for everyone.

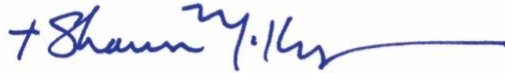
As your Bishop, I want you to know my concern for the accuser, for the well-being of Father Porterfield, and for your pastoral care. Our Victim Assistance Coordinator, Nancy Hoey, is helping me tend to the accuser; Msgr. Robert Kurwicki, our Vicar General, is assisting me with tending to Father Porterfield; and I have appointed Father Chris Aubuchon as your new temporary pastoral administrator to tend to your needs as a parish. I ask you to give Father Aubuchon your support and prayers. Father Aubuchon and I, along with other chancery staff, met with the lay leadership of the parish on Thursday evening. Their witness of faith and hope in this time of difficulty for the parish was an inspiration and

encouragement to me. I hope you can provide that same inspiration and encouragement to Father Aubuchon.

As I encouraged the person who reported this matter to the diocese to do, any person who believes that they have been the victim of misconduct involving a priest, deacon, religious, employee or volunteer is encouraged to contact appropriate law enforcement officials. You may see the statement from the diocese posted on your parish website to learn how to report inappropriate behavior toward children or vulnerable adults, or to make contact with our Victim Assistance Coordinator.

I know St. Martin is in the midst of many transitions today, but I pray that you will rely on our Christian hope and the gift of the Holy Spirit to uphold you in these difficult days. Through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "W. Shawn McKnight". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Most Reverend W. Shawn McKnight, S.T.D.
Bishop of Jefferson City