



Roman Catholic Diocese of Las Cruces

Most Rev. Oscar Cantú
Bishop

November 30, 2017

Parishioners of St. Helena Parish (and Citizens of Hobbs):

Today, an article was published in the News-Sun concerning Fr. Ricardo Bauza. When I was informed of the accusations this past summer, I asked Fr. Ricardo to absent himself from the parish and enter a treatment center for therapy. I also offered the victims counseling services should they desire. Fr. Ricardo had planned to take a month-long theology course in England. He had to cancel those plans so that he could enter therapy immediately.

I have not yet seen the police report, and cannot, therefore, comment on it. I would, however, caution that, at present, the charge against Fr. Ricardo is a criminal matter and thus it is not appropriate for any of us to comment on it until the police investigation is complete. It is also important to note that the persons involved in the allegations reported by the newspaper were adults at the time of the alleged actions. No minors were involved.

Wanting to respect the privacy of the accusers as well as the accused, I did not want to make this matter public. I did assure the victims, however, that they are always free to file a police report. I find it necessary to comment now that the matter has been reported to the media.

Although the Hobbs Police Department has not yet contacted the Diocese regarding this matter, I assure you the Diocese will cooperate fully in any investigation that authorities may be conducting. The Diocese is committed to maintaining a safe environment in our parishes and schools, and is doing all that is possible to make this commitment a reality. I urge you to withhold judgement and not engage in gossip or speculation, especially when we are not aware of all of the facts.

Please pray for the victims and for Fr. Ricardo.

Yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Oscar Cantú
Bishop of Las Cruces