



DIOCESE OF VENICE IN FLORIDA

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

March 14, 2024

Dear Parishioners of Sacred Heart Parish,

In a letter dated January 26, 2024, you were informed of an allegation of sexual misconduct against Reverend Jerome Kaywell. The allegation was taken seriously and was acted upon in accord with the Diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults. At the time the allegation was made and announced, an independent investigator was also engaged. Since the allegation involved a minor, the State Attorney's Office was necessarily notified. Throughout the process, Reverend Kaywell has maintained his innocence stating that the allegation could not have happened.

On February 13, 2024, the Diocese received notification from the Law Firm representing the alleged victim. The said letter informed that the alleged victim withdrew his allegation, and an apology was written by the accuser declaring it was a false memory. As the matter was investigated and reported in accord with Diocesan policy, the Review Board met on March 13, 2024, examined the investigatory report and all aspects of the matter, unanimously concluding that there was no evidence to support the allegation.

The Diocesan Review Board recommended that Father Kaywell be returned to ministry. I have accepted their recommendation and inform you that Father Kaywell has been returned to ministry, effective immediately. Therefore, I consider the matter closed and the good name of Father Jerome Kaywell restored.

Thank you for your prayers and understanding. The Diocese of Venice and its entities take very seriously the safety of all young people and work to prevent any instances of abuse.

The Diocese continues to pray for the pain and suffering of all victims; praying that the Lord of Truth and Light will guide us all in His ways!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Frank J. Dewane
Bishop of the Diocese of
Venice in Florida

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