



OFFICE OF THE CARDINAL  
1011 FIRST AVENUE  
NEW YORK, NY 10022

July 1, 2019  
Month of the Most Precious Blood of Jesus

Dear Parishioners of Blessed Sacrament Parish,

I write to share some unpleasant and somber news concerning Father John Duffell, your just retired parish administrator. Although you will undoubtedly find this news disturbing, as do I, you have told us that you would prefer to hear it directly from me. We have promised you honesty and transparency.

Father Duffell has been directed not to publicly exercise his priestly ministry due to an allegation from the past that he abused his position of authority in a violation of his promise of celibacy. This allegation was made first to the District Attorney, and then brought to our attention. This allegation involves an adult; it does not involve a minor. It is important that the archdiocese take such allegations seriously.

Father Duffell's rights under canon (church) law are being protected, and he had the opportunity to defend himself against the allegation during a penal process that the archdiocese initiated. He also has the presumption of innocence of the allegation. He and his advocate had the opportunity to review all of the evidence and respond to it.

I am grateful that one of our most admired, respected, and experienced pastors, Bishop Gerald Walsh, currently retired as an auxiliary bishop, has agreed to serve as the temporary administrator of Blessed Sacrament parish, until a new pastor can be appointed.

Please keep Father Duffell, the accuser, and all those involved in this matter, in your prayers. I am sorry that you all have to go through this.

With prayerful best wishes, I am,

Faithfully in Christ,

+ T. M. Card. Dolan

†Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan  
Archbishop of New York

TMD:ab