



## **Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon OFFICE OF THE BISHOP**

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### **Bishop's Message Regarding Priest Charged**

#### **Dear Clergy, Religious, and Lay Faithful of the Diocese of Saskatoon:**

I am sure like all of you, my heart sank upon hearing of another accusation of abuse by one of our priests. This despite all the work and the great steps we have taken over the last while to create safer church communities and eliminate all forms and threats of abuse. I realize that each time the terrible crime of sex abuse is reported, victims and their families are wounded again, the vast majority of faithful priests bow their heads in shame, and sincere Catholics, Christians, and people of good will, experience shock, sorrow, anger and righteous indignation.

I wish very much that I could say to you that because of our efforts there will be no more accusations. However, what I will say strongly is - as your bishop, I join with the many lay women and men who have contributed hard work and much time to developing our Safeguarding Action Plan to continue our efforts at eliminating all forms of abuse! I also commit to honouring complainants, victims and their families, the accused, and in this case, the parishes of the communities of Lake Lenore, Annahiem, and St. Gregor – as well as all of our clergy and lay faithful throughout our diocese and beyond – to not jump to conclusions and allow our legitimate frustration and anger to overwhelm the commitment to respect and support the investigative processes of the police and our own diocese to determine guilt or innocence, and the proper response.

This current allegation of another case of abuse involving one of our families is an occasion to again affirm our commitment to respond to all those who have been victimized and hurt by any person acting in the name of the Church. The Diocese of Saskatoon stands in solidarity with any and all victims and commits to being an instrument of reconciliation and healing. It also commits to building safer churches and stronger communities: the theme of our Safeguarding Action Plan. I join with all our diocese in sharing both pain and strong resolution.

Yours in Christ

✠ Most Reverend Mark A. Hagemoen