

Rev. Alejandro Ortega

It is with a heavy heart and great sadness that I inform you of substantiated allegations of sexually inappropriate physical contact with a minor by Fr. Alejandro Ortega.

The child reported this inappropriate contact during a teen ACTS retreat. The parish notified the parents of the teen and reported the matter to the Archdiocese, who also informed the Bexar County District Attorney's Special Crimes Division of the allegation.

Upon the recommendation of the Archdiocesan Review Board, which assessed the report, I opened a preliminary canonical investigation into the allegation and asked Fr. Ortega to refrain from ministry during this preliminary investigation, which we conducted with the assistance of an independent private investigator. The Archdiocesan Review Board reviewed the investigation and advised me that there was sufficient evidence of sexually inappropriate physical contact with a minor to require that I refer the matter to the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith for their judgement on the matter. The Review Board further recommended that Fr. Ortega may pose a continuing risk to minors, that he should not be returned to ministry, and that the affected communities should be notified.

Because of this, I have removed Fr. Ortega's faculties and have prohibited him from exercising any priestly ministry and from using clerical clothes or clerical titles during the course of the canonical process.

I would like to publicly express my gratitude to the survivor for bravely coming forward and helping our Church by sharing this personal and painful experience. I hope that this will also assist the healing process, and provide inspiration to other survivors of sexual abuse to report to the authorities these tragic incidents.

The Archdiocese takes seriously any allegation of sexual misconduct with children. The safety and wellbeing of all people are very important, and the church's safe environment policies seek to protect all of God's children. We encourage anyone who is a victim of sexual abuse to contact the police. We also ask that victims within the Archdiocese contact the Office for Victim Assistance and Safe Environment at 210-734-7786. Any violation of our Code of Conduct can be reported through our third party Archdiocesan Misconduct Hotline 844-709-1169.

I pledge my commitment to continue to work toward making every Catholic Church, school and institution a safe harbor for all of our children. Please join me in prayer as we reach out to any and all who may be victims of sexual abuse.

*Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, M.Sp.S.*