



**Statement from
The Most Reverend Paul J. Swain
Bishop of Sioux Falls
November 10, 2016
*Memorial of Saint Leo the Great***

***Regarding the Reinstatement of
Reverend Joseph T. Forcelle to Public Ministry***

On September 21, 2016, Reverend Joseph T. Forcelle was placed on leave after the Diocese of Sioux Falls received notice from the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis that an allegation of child sexual abuse had been made against him. The alleged abuse took place while Father Forcelle was ministering in the Archdiocese. In accord with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young Persons*, Father Forcelle's leave was standard procedure and is threefold in its purpose: to ensure the safety of all children, to allow for an impartial investigation to be undertaken, and to protect the rights of Father Forcelle as defined in both civil and Church law.

Since his arrival to the Diocese in 1984, no prior accusations of child sexual abuse involving Father Forcelle had been received by the Diocese. In addition, there have been no allegations received since public announcement of his leave from public ministry was made.

Subsequent to being notified of the accusation, law enforcement in Minnesota indicated that a criminal investigation would not be initiated. Therefore, a private investigator was appointed to conduct an investigation. In the Diocese's effort to seek the truth, the investigator was charged to search for facts that would support the accusation.

After having been presented the findings of the investigation, the Diocesan Review Board concluded that the facts asserted do not substantiate this allegation. I accept the counsel of the Diocesan Review Board. Therefore, I have restored Father Joseph Forcelle's faculties and reinstated him to public ministry with the fullest confidence in him as priest and minister of the Church. His pastoral ministry at Saint Leo the Great Parish, Tyndall and Saint Vincent de Paul Parish, Springfield will resume on November 15, 2016.

As bishop and on behalf of the Church, I renew my encouragement of all victims of child sexual abuse to come forward to local authorities or to the Diocese so that they might be offered assistance.