

Church of Our Lady of Refuge
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My Dear Parishioners,

This is the hardest letter I have had to write in my 48 years of priesthood.

As Cardinal Dolan's accompanying letter makes clear, an allegation of abuse was brought against me through the archdiocese's *Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program*, and that allegation was eventually found to be credible and substantiated by the *Lay Review Board*.

While I have the utmost respect for both the IRCP and the Review Board, and know that they have a great burden as they confront the evil of sexual abuse, I continue to steadfastly deny that I have ever abused anyone at any time. Therefore, I will ask the Vatican, which has ultimate jurisdiction over such cases, to review the matter, with the hope of ultimately proving my innocence.

In the meanwhile, I will abide by the protocols of the archdiocese's policy, and will not be publicly exercising my ministry. I will also be stepping aside and moving as pastor of Our Lady of Refuge until the matter is settled.

As many of you know, I am still rehabbing from my first hip surgery, and will be undergoing a second surgery on my other hip in the coming month. Thank you for all your cards, letters, calls, and, most especially, your prayers. They have been my strength.

Would you also please pray for the person who brought this allegation against me, and for all those who are victim-survivors of abuse? You will all have a special place in my prayers and in my heart, and I sure need a place in yours.

In Christ,

Most Reverend John Jenik