



*Fr. Fred Liccio*

## From the Office of the Bishop

The Diocese of Oakland warns the public of an ongoing phishing scam involving emails and texts purportedly from Bishop Barber, diocesan priests or parish/Chancery staff. This scam has hit many parishes across the United States, as well as other faith communities. The Federal Trade Commission provided information on this scam in July 2019. The email or text purports to be from a person the target knows, such as one's pastor, a parish staff member, the bishop or someone else from the Church. If the target responds to the fake email or text, the sender will follow up with a request for some sort of monetary assistance, often for gift cards, Google Play cards or iTunes cards.

It is truly unfortunate cyber criminals will attempt to exploit the generous nature of our community. Sending emails or texts asking for cash or gift cards is not how priests, parishes or the Diocese of Oakland seeks financial assistance for our work. If you receive an email or text from a trusted church personnel asking for assistance, confirm by calling that person and do NOT respond to the email or text.

If you or someone you know paid a scammer with a gift card, report it as soon as possible. Call the card company and tell them the gift card was used in a scam. Here is contact information for some of the gift card companies that scammers use most often. Then, tell the FTC about it at [ftc.gov/complaint](https://www.ftc.gov/complaint). Your reports may help law enforcement agencies launch investigations that could stop imposters and other fraudsters in their tracks.

### Report gift card scams

**Amazon** Call 1 (888) 280-4331  
**Google Play** Call 1 (855) 466-4438  
**iTunes** Call Apple Support at 1 (800) 275-2273,  
then say "gift card" to be connected to a live representative.

Many Blessings!