

A report from the joint meeting of CTK Pastoral council, School advisory council with Bishop Barber regarding Father George Alengadan

In the past few weeks an issue arose at Christ the King Parish involving Father George Alengadan which has caused great concern for many parishioners. You may have seen articles in the San Francisco Chronicle or the Bay Area News Group outlets.

On Monday, February 10, members of the Parish Council and School Advisory Council met with Bishop Michael Barber and Chancellor Steve Wilcox at the Diocese of Oakland, to discuss this issue and the turmoil it has caused at Christ the King Parish. This letter is a summary of the information provided.

At issue is a sexual harassment complaint filed against Father Alengadan in late July by five women (4 employees and one volunteer) at St Joseph Parish. None of the complaints involve minors. Father Alengadan denied these allegations; however, he was promptly placed on administrative leave by Bishop Barber as pastor of St. Joseph Basilica Parish after the allegations were made. One of the women did contact law enforcement and the Diocese will cooperate in any investigation.

An independent investigation was conducted, and in December a report was delivered to the Bishop that found these complaints to be factually substantiated. The report made no determination whether this conduct constituted sexual harassment or violated any law. Although this was the finding, the behavior clearly fell outside the standards of conduct expected of all employees of the Diocese of Oakland. Bishop Barber and Father Alengadan agreed he should resign as pastor of St. Joseph Basilica Parish for the good of the community. Father Alengadan did so promptly.

Bishop Barber relayed he received communications from many St. Joseph Basilica parishioners asking that Father Alengadan be returned to St. Joseph Basilica.

It should be noted the women are still employed at St. Joseph's school/parish.

Father Alengadan also agreed to additional training on avoiding and preventing sexual harassment as well as anger management classes. He was also provided with counseling.

Throughout this entire matter, Father Alengadan never lost his priestly faculties to celebrate the sacraments, including Mass. In other words, Father Alengadan continues as a priest in good standing.

By canon law, the Bishop has the responsibility to house and care for all priests of the Diocese. Father Paulson agreed to house Father Alengadan at Christ the King and to schedule him to administer sacraments and say Mass.

Unfortunately, neither the Bishop nor the Chancellor communicated details of Father Alengadan's situation before he was situated at Christ the King. Both Bishop Barber and Mr. Wilcox apologized for the failure in communication and recognize they breached a fragile trust relationship with our Catholic community. They seek to repair the damage and offered to meet with our parish in person. They committed to discuss timing for further clergy staffing assignment and to learn from the several diocesan missteps that led to the fear and anxiety caused by not communicating.

Christ the King school and parish leadership will work together to schedule and moderate this meeting at Christ the King. They seek to move forward to help inspire trust and transparency for the health of our church.

Bishop Barber reiterated his announcement last week that Father Alengadan will NOT be living at Christ the King or ministering in any way to our two parishes.

A letter from the Chancellor of the Diocese of Oakland describing the situation and a letter from Bishop Barber to St Joseph's Parish are available on our website which describes in more detail the situation.