



December 3, 2019

*Memorial of St. Francis Xavier, priest*

TO: Priests, Deacons & Chancery Personnel

FROM: Harrison H. Garlick  
Chancellor & In-House Counsel

RE: End of Preliminary Investigation

### MEMORANDUM

In his letter promulgating the *Policies & Procedures for the Protection of Children & Young People* (“Policies”), Bishop David Konderla states, “Our children, youth, and vulnerable adults are treasures to the Church, and as such the Diocese of Tulsa has a sacred obligation to protect them.” As part of that obligation and in adherence to the Policies, in May 2019, Bishop Konderla opened a preliminary investigation into an allegation of sexual abuse against a minor lodged against **Father Joe Townsend**, a priest of the Diocese of Tulsa.

On July 5, 2019, Bishop Konderla, in a spirit of transparency and due diligence, made the allegation against Fr. Townsend public and invited anyone with knowledge or concerns to come forward. On August 2, 2019, it was further disclosed that the allegation lodged against Fr. Townsend stemmed from when he served as an Associate Pastor at St. Pius X Catholic Church from June 1988 to June 1991.

After a thorough investigation that was both victim-centered and respectful of the rights of the accused, Bishop Konderla, in agreement with the third-party investigators and in consultation with the Diocesan Review Board, a board of primarily lay persons, has found the allegation against Fr. Townsend to be **unsubstantiated**. The official decree on this matter and this memorandum will be made public and posted on the diocesan website.

Bishop Konderla stated, “I want to personally thank Fr. Townsend for his cooperation and patience during this difficult ordeal.” Fr. Townsend is no longer on administrative leave and may again exercise his public ministry as a priest of the Diocese of Tulsa. Fr. Townsend will enter a season of healing and rest and will not be considered for a pastoral assignment until the Summer of 2020.

The Diocese has notified law enforcement of the findings of this investigation and remains committed to cooperating with civil authorities. Bishop Konderla extends his gratitude to all who participated in this investigation, everyone who came forward to share information, and those who generously kept all involved in their prayers.

Out of respect to Fr. Townsend and all involved, all media inquiries should be directed to Mr. Dave Crenshaw, Director of Communications for the Diocese, at (918) 307-4920 and [dave.crenshaw@dioceseoftulsa.org](mailto:dave.crenshaw@dioceseoftulsa.org).

End of the Memo