ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

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September 9, 2021

Dear Parishioners of St. Francis de Sales Parish,

Last November, I informed you of an accusation against your pastor, Father David F. Ryan, and that, in keeping with our procedures, he was asked to step aside from his pastoral duties until a thorough investigation and process could be completed. He has fully cooperated with civil authorities and the Archdiocese of Chicago during these months.

Following the determination by state officials, who are charged with the protection of minors, that the allegation of child abuse was unfounded, the Independent Review Board of the Archdiocese of Chicago investigated the allegations in accordance with our usual procedures. At their meeting on Saturday, August 21, 2021, they found there was insufficient reason to suspect Father Ryan had committed sexual abuse of a minor. Therefore, I am pleased to inform you that I am reinstating Father Ryan as your pastor effective immediately.

These have been difficult days and months for you as a parish. You have shown great patience as each jurisdiction completed its process. I thank you for doing so. Father Ryan has also suffered, as you well know, but he has offered that suffering freely, convinced of the need for us as a Church to keep our word that the protection and safety of our children remains the priority.

After the Independent Review Board meeting, I immediately contacted Father Ryan and shared the recommendations of the Review Board. He took the occasion to reaffirm his longstanding conviction that the Church must remain vigilant in protecting our children, and that we should spare no effort to bring healing to victim survivors who have been harmed. In keeping with the spirit he has demonstrated during these difficult months, he let me know that he fully embraces our longstanding policies and practices regarding the conduct of all church personnel, and asked that I take the occasion of this letter to remind our parishioners and the public that: 1) since 1992, we have enforced safe environment protocols and a code of conduct for all who work with minors and we have reached out to victims with pastoral and personal attention; 2) since 2002 we have reported all allegations to the civil authorities and in that year we reported all historical allegations to these authorities; 3) beginning in 2006, we have publicly listed the names of priests who have substantiated allegations of abuse of minors against them and in 2014 we published more than 20,000 pages of information on these cases; 4) in accord

with our zero tolerance policy, no priest with even one substantiated allegation of sexual abuse of a minor remains in ministry.

At the same time, I reminded Father Ryan that our policies also call us to do everything possible to restore the good name of priests when the process has determined the allegations to be unfounded. This, too, is a matter of justice. Therefore, both out of regard for Father Ryan and all our priests, I am resolved to see that Father Ryan's good name is restored. As a result, I will share this letter with all the parishes in the Archdiocese of Chicago, asking them to provide it to their parishioners. This letter will also be sent to the media and posted on our archdiocesan website.

Healing now must be the pathway forward for all of us. Father Ryan shares this very same sentiment and you can honor him by doing everything to make sure that a spirit of reconciliation and unity prevails as you move ahead with the efforts of *Renew My Church* to make your parish vibrant, vital and sustainable. In this way, the mission of Jesus can flourish. That is my prayer for you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Blase Card. Cupich
Archbishop of Chicago