



Final text

**Presentation of Most Reverend Archbishop Albert LeGatt
To the parishioners of Saint Bernadette Parish
November 19 and 20, 2016**

Dear friends, People of God,

It is my painful duty to inform you that certain allegations have been brought forward against your former pastor, Fr. Fred Olds. These allegations concern his responsibilities and duties as a shepherd, as a pastor of souls, as a Roman Catholic priest.

Guided by the law of the Church, called Canon Law, as a bishop I am bound to enquire carefully either personally or through some suitable person about the facts and circumstances of these allegations so as to arrive at the truth as best it can be known. Then I am to take the appropriate actions for the good of all, for the good of the entire People of God.

The Archdiocese therefore went ahead and engaged an independent third party, a certified clinical psychologist who holds a Ph.D., to conduct a preliminary enquiry. That psychologist interviewed a number of people, 28 in all. He has now submitted to me the report of his findings.

At this point, I must very carefully underline several things. The first is that this remains an **ongoing** investigation and that a person is presumed innocent until proven otherwise. We continue the search for the whole truth in the matter of these allegations.

Secondly, Fr. Fred was informed of this preliminary investigation as it began and was encouraged to seek legal advice and assistance.

Thirdly, the allegations do not involve minors.

In view of the report of the preliminary enquiry, I have decided to turn to the Holy See, to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, at the Vatican, to seek their advice and direction in this matter.

However and once again guided by Canon Law, this law of the Church, I am proceeding with the following actions which I deem necessary at this time:

1. Immediately removing Fr. Fred from membership on the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults.
2. Temporarily placing him on administrative leave from his office of Pastor of St. Timothy.
3. Temporarily restricting his faculties such that he is not to exercise public ministry in the Archdiocese of Saint Boniface. He may, however, continue to celebrate the Eucharist privately within his own home.

I am proceeding with these actions after much consultation with my senior advisors in the diocese, the College of Consultors, made up of six priests. I have also sought counsel from people steeped in Canon Law and/or civil law.

I have also taken these actions after much prayer, asking God to reveal to us what is truly best for all, for the entire People of God, for all the parishioners of St. Bernadette, for all those affected in any way by this matter and very much also for Fr. Fred himself.

Please be assured that the Archdiocese is taking all necessary steps to address things in a fair and appropriate way. In that regard, I ask that if anybody has any information at all that may be relevant or helpful to please contact my office immediately. We need the help of all to bring about the good of all. And we especially need the prayers of all.

In closing, I wish to once more underline what is most important: Firstly, this investigation is an **ongoing** one, seeking to determine conclusively what has taken place and how the Archdiocese is to respond in love, mercy and justice towards all.

In such a painful moment we must be guided by the law of the Church, by the mission of the Church, by the will of God as best we can discern it.

Secondly, at this point, and always with the desire of discerning properly the greatest good for all, I believe I must turn to the Holy Father, Pope Francis, through the office of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith for advice and/or direction. This Congregation will help me to discern what are my duties and responsibilities as bishop of this diocese in this situation.

And finally, I bring forward to all of you my deepest request at this time. Please pray. Please pray for the good of all, for the good of each individual. Please pray for the entire parish of St. Bernadette, for all its members and for all its families. Please pray for the entire Archdiocese

of St. Boniface, all of its laity and all of its priests. Please pray for Fr. Fred. Please pray for me.

In this moment of sadness and in the difficult times ahead, may our good and merciful shepherd, Jesus Christ, lead us and comfort us in all things. Thank you.

+ Albert LeGatt

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Archbishop of Saint Boniface