



DIOCESE OF PALM BEACH  
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*Office of The Diocesan Bishop*

September 5, 2026



**My dear sisters and brothers in Christ,**

The Diocese of Palm Beach was informed on June 17, 2026, of serious allegations involving the Reverend Alex J. Vargas. In accordance with diocesan policy, this matter was reported to the appropriate civil authorities and law enforcement. An independent investigation into these allegations was initiated, entrusted to Renaissance Associates, Ltd., a professional investigative agency. Since there was no credible allegation of sexual abuse of a minor, upon the conclusion of said independent investigation, the findings were presented to the Adult Allegation Board (AAB) of the Diocese of Palm Beach for its review, deliberations and recommendations.

After careful discernment and deliberation, the AAB reached the following determinations:

1. There was insufficient information to substantiate the allegation of sexual abuse.
2. There was sufficient information to substantiate the following allegations:
  - a. Sexual misconduct;
  - b. Abuse of power, authority, and/or office;
  - c. Financial malfeasance; and
  - d. Violations of the Code of Conduct, including provisions relating to sexual contact, harassment, conflicts of interest, and administrative responsibilities.
3. For the time being, Father Vargas is deemed unsuitable for ministry.

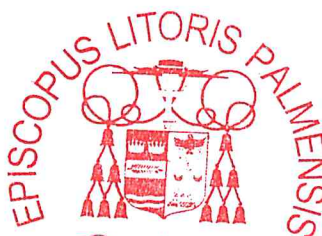
Following the determinations and recommendations of the AAB, which I have accepted, the Reverend Alex J. Vargas shall continue to be removed from ministry at this time, and his ministerial faculties shall continue to be withdrawn. The removal from ministry is not a legal determination of guilt. As provided by both civil and canon law, Reverend Alex J. Vargas remains innocent until proven guilty. In the same manner, Father Vargas will be afforded the opportunity to participate in a canonical judicial process, through which this entire matter will be adjudicated in full and the rights of all those involved will be carefully upheld. Until such canonical judicial process has concluded, no further information will be released.

I recognize that this news may be troubling and difficult to understand. Members of the Diocesan Healing Intervention Team will be available after all Masses on September 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> at St. Thomas More to offer support, answer questions, and provide a compassionate space for conversation and healing.

I have appointed the Very Reverend Antony Pulikal as the Parish Administrator of St. Thomas More Parish, with full pastoral and financial authority over all parish matters. I ask the parish community to work with him to ensure the wellbeing and common good of everyone at St. Thomas More.

With every good wish and the assurance of my prayers, I remain

Yours in Christ,



**Most Reverend Manuel de Jesús Rodríguez, J.C.D.**  
*Bishop of Palm Beach*