



CATHOLIC DIOCESE  
OF  
**BROWNSVILLE**

## STATEMENT

April 3, 2024

### **Bishop Daniel E. Flores' Statement to the People of the Diocese of Brownsville**

It is with a heavy heart that I inform you that the Diocese of Brownsville received an allegation of sexual misconduct with a minor against Msgr. Gustavo Barrera that is alleged to have occurred about 35 years ago.

Our Victim's Assistance Coordinator met with the person who came forward and encouraged the individual to report the allegation to the police. The individual declined to do so. However, as per policy, the Victim's Assistance Coordinator did file a police report on this matter.

In keeping with diocesan policy and procedures, on March 15, upon receiving the report from our Victim's Assistance Coordinator, I removed Msgr. Barrera's priestly faculties for ministry while the credibility of the allegation is being assessed by the Diocesan Review Board. The Diocesan Review Board is in the process of completing its assessment. A credible allegation does not mean guilty beyond a reasonable doubt; it means there is a semblance of truth sufficient for diocesan protocols to be enacted.

Subsequently, Msgr. Barrera submitted his resignation and retirement as pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in McAllen, which I accepted on March 23. At this time, he remains without faculties for public ministry. I have assigned Father Joe Luis Hernandez as parish administrator of the parish.

I am deeply saddened and ask you to join me as I pray for the individual who came forward and all the parties affected, including parishioners, and the clergy across our diocese who tend to their faithful with fidelity and compassion.

The Diocese of Brownsville takes seriously any allegation of sexual misconduct with children and vulnerable adults. The safety and well-being of all people are of utmost importance, and the Church's safe environment policies seek to protect all of God's children. We encourage anyone who is a victim of sexual abuse to contact their local police and the Texas Department of Protective Services at 1-800-252-5400. We also ask that anyone who has suffered abuse within the diocese contact our Victim's Assistance Coordinator Margie Garcia at (956) 238-1455 or [margie.garcia@cdob.org](mailto:margie.garcia@cdob.org).

The Diocese of Brownsville will continue to work tirelessly toward making every Catholic church, school, and institution a safe place for all.

May the Lord continue to bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

Most Rev. Daniel E. Flores,  
Bishop of Brownsville