



For all things give thanks.

1 THESS 5:18

Pastoral statement from Bishop Brian Mascord

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ

I write to you today about a very serious matter involving a former parish priest of St Francis of Assisi Warrawong and St Mary's Berkeley.

On 28 November 2024, Judge D Barrow delivered a judgment in the Sydney District Court regarding charges against Fr Martin Mai pertaining to seven counts of sexual offences committed against an adult in the year 2019. Fr Mai was found guilty of five counts of sexual touching against two adult males.

The Diocese of Wollongong respects the decision of the judicial and legal processes that have been made available to all involved in this matter.

Fr Mai, a priest and professed member of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual, was the parish priest at St Francis of Assisi Catholic Parish, Warrawong, and St Mary's Catholic Parish, Berkeley, from October 2016 until November 2020.

The Diocese of Wollongong was first made aware of an allegation against Fr Mai at the end of November 2020. The diocese reported the allegation to NSW Police and Fr Mai was removed from his position as parish priest and had his faculties to minister in the diocese withdrawn. Since first reporting the allegations, the diocese has consistently engaged with police, both proactively and in response to requests.

Abuse in any form is unacceptable. We take this opportunity to express our deep sorrow for the hurt experienced by all victims and survivors of sexual abuse, as well as their families and communities. As always, we strongly urge any person with any complaint of mistreatment or abuse to contact the police.

We are wholeheartedly committed to supporting people impacted by this matter, and encourage anyone who would like to access support to contact our Office of Professional Standards and Safeguarding on 0408 512 163 or via email at safeguarding@dow.org.au. A list of independent organisations that can provide counselling and support is also available on our website at safeguarding.dow.org.au.

I invite you to join me in praying for all those impacted by this matter.

Yours in Christ

Most Rev Brian G Mascord DD

BISHOP OF WOLLONGONG

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