



# OBLATES OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

## WILMINGTON-PHILADELPHIA PROVINCE

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### Oblate of St. Francis de Sales Priest Removed During Investigation of Allegation

December 19, 2015 – Wilmington, DE -- The Wilmington-Philadelphia Province of the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales has temporarily removed Rev. Albert J. Gondek, OSFS, pastor of Our Lady of the Rosary Church in Lexington, NC, from his position in order to investigate allegations of sexual abuse of minors said to have occurred about five years ago.

In an abundance of caution, the Oblate provincial, Fr. James J. Greenfield, OSFS, in consultation with Bishop Peter Jugis of the Diocese of Charlotte, decided to have Fr. Gondek placed on administrative leave from his pastorate until an investigation is completed. During this period, Fr. Gondek will not publicly celebrate Mass or the sacraments or exercise ministry. He will live in an Oblate community, outside of North Carolina, that is not connected to a church property. The Oblates and the diocese will work with local law authorities to address this matter.

The allegation was reported to the Oblates from an incarcerated man who claims Fr. Gondek touched him in a sexually inappropriate way about five years ago when he was 18. The man also claimed that this occurred with minors, who have not come forth.

This allegation is unrelated to a previously false allegation that was brought against Fr. Gondek in 2007. He was later reinstated in 2007 when two independent review boards and an investigation led by a retired judge from Baltimore cleared the priest of any wrongdoing. The investigation included the results of interviews, a polygraph examination, and a documentation review.

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“Our commitment to protect children and create safe environments impels us to have Fr. Gondek step back from his ministry until a thorough investigation is conducted,” Fr. Greenfield said. “We make no judgment on either the accuser or Fr. Gondek. We await the results of the investigation and remain committed to guaranteeing the safety of children and advancing the truth.”

During the 2007 investigation, parishioners from Our Lady of the Rosary Church were invited to come forth with any information they may have about allegations. No one came forward. Again, the Oblates and the Diocese of Charlotte ask parishioners to share any information they have about these present allegations. If anyone has any information that would be helpful to this investigation, they are asked to contact the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales at 302-656-8529 or local law authorities.

The Oblates are fully accredited by Praesidium, an independent agency that evaluates the personnel, policies, and structures of organizations that work with children. The Oblates strongly encourage anyone who has been sexually exploited or abused by a priest, religious brother or sister, or any lay person employed by their community to seek help, and to report the abuse to law enforcement authorities and to the Oblates. The Oblates reiterate their commitment to care for the emotional, pastoral, and spiritual well-being of those who have suffered abuse by their members.

The Oblates of St. Francis de Sales is a religious community of priests and brothers who serves to connect the Gospel with the lives of people in the gentle and humble example of their patron, St. Francis de Sales. The Wilmington-Philadelphia Province works in schools, parishes, and other ministries from Boston to Southwest Florida.

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