



DIOCESE OF CHARLOTTE

Communications Office

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement of findings regarding Monsignor Mauricio West

**From Benedictine Abbot Placid Solari, Chancellor of Belmont Abbey College
and the Most Rev. Peter J. Jugis, Bishop of the Diocese of Charlotte**

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — We regret to announce that additional allegations against Monsignor Mauricio West of sexual misconduct involving adults have been found credible in four alleged incidents in the 1980s and early 1990s, and that he continues on administrative leave. The finding of a credible allegation is not a finding of guilt but is an allegation of improper behavior that both the diocese and the college take seriously.

The additional allegations emerged after the diocese announced in March that Msgr. West had stepped down from his position as vicar general and chancellor of the diocese. He was placed on administrative leave in March following an initial credible allegation of sexual misconduct involving an adult student at Belmont Abbey College in the mid-1980s, while Msgr. West was Vice President for Student Affairs at the school.

Two of the new allegations involved adult students at Belmont Abbey College in the 1980s while Msgr. West was supervising students. Another involved an alleged incident in 1991 with an employee at the House of Mercy in Belmont. And one involved an incident in 1993 with an employee at St. Gabriel Catholic Church in Charlotte, while Msgr. West was appointed by the diocese to serve as parochial vicar at the parish.

All of the alleged incidents occurred while Msgr. West was a monk serving under the authority of Belmont Abbey but were not reported to the college or monastery at the time. Each incident was described by victims as unwanted kissing and, in one case, touching on the thigh as well. Msgr. West has denied the allegations.

The diocese's independent Lay Review Board investigated all of the allegations this year, after they were received by officials at the college and the diocese. Clergy placed on administrative leave are not given a ministerial assignment. A final determination of Msgr. West's status will be made by the diocese at a later date.

Although none of the allegations against Msgr. West involved a minor, it is the diocese's policy to refer allegations of sexual misconduct involving adults to the Lay Review Board. Sexual misconduct includes boundary violations and inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature.

Personally, and on behalf of the Diocese of Charlotte and Belmont Abbey College, we extend our sincere apologies to all who have suffered from sexual abuse and misconduct by clergy. Both the diocese and college have zero tolerance for sexual abuse or misconduct of any kind. We continue to strengthen policies and procedures adopted by the U.S. Catholic bishops in 2002 to protect against abuse, and to maintain and strengthen an environment founded on civility and respect. To promote justice and healing for victims, we also encourage anyone who believes he or she has suffered sexual abuse or misconduct to report the allegation to civil authorities.

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