



## *The Roman Catholic Diocese of Phoenix*

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### COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

## **Statement of the Diocese of Phoenix Re: Judgment Reached in Ecclesiastical Trial**

January 17, 2014

The Diocese of Phoenix has been notified that a judgment has been made in the canonical penal trial involving Rev. John D. Spaulding. The judgment was reached by a Special Tribunal, an independent panel of three judges from around the country who are priests with doctorates in canon law. The panel was convened at the direction of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) in Rome and tasked with the responsibility of investigating abuse allegations against Rev. Spaulding.

The Special Tribunal found Rev. Spaulding guilty of sins against the Sixth Commandment with a minor, and recommended that he be dismissed from the clerical state, a process commonly known as “laicization.” As a result of this judgment and penalty, he would no longer be permitted to function in any way as a priest of the Church and could not identify himself as a Catholic priest. The penalty would become effective upon finalization of the case by the CDF, following the completion of any appeal made by Rev. Spaulding and confirmation by the Holy See.

In June 2011, the faculties of Rev. Spaulding, then pastor of St. Timothy Parish in Mesa, were suspended and he was placed on administrative leave following an investigation and determination that an allegation against Rev. Spaulding of sexual misconduct with a minor was credible. The accusation dated back over 25 years. In the following months, three new claims were made, alleging that Rev. Spaulding engaged in sexual misconduct with three other individuals when they were minors in the 1970s and 1980s.

In accordance with its normal practice, and in compliance with the “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People,” and the “Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests, Deacons, or Other Church Personnel,” the Diocese of Phoenix conducted an independent investigation into each allegation. The Diocesan Review Board found that each allegation was credible. As mandated by canon law, all four cases were referred to the CDF for further proceedings.

The Diocese of Phoenix is committed to providing a safe environment where it values and honors every individual as created in the image and likeness of God. Great efforts have been made to put systems into place to keep our young people safe. Anyone who has been a victim of abuse or who may have information concerning these crimes is encouraged to call a local law enforcement agency.

Additionally, the Diocese of Phoenix provides support services through its Office of Child and Youth Protection at (602) 354-2396 or at [diocesephoenix.org](http://diocesephoenix.org) (click on “Youth Protection”).

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