



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

May 29, 2025

Prot. No. B 188/25

Dear St. Matthew parishioners,

I am writing to share news about Father Patrick Hoare and the pastoral leadership of St. Matthew Parish.

As Bishop Peter Jugis shared with you in 2020, Father Hoare was removed as your pastor after the diocese's Lay Review Board (LRB) reviewed specific claims of boundary violations with minors by Father Hoare and concluded that they had a semblance of truth. The LRB is an advisory group mandated by particular ecclesiastical law and its members are appointed by the diocesan bishop. The LRB is to independently evaluate claims of misconduct by clergy and other diocesan employees and to make recommendations to the bishop based on its findings.

Father Hoare appealed the decision to remove him as pastor to the Holy See in Rome, as was his right under canon law, and he has remained on administrative leave as his recourse moved through a canonical process over several years. That process prevented the Diocese of Charlotte from appointing a new pastor for St. Matthew, and Father John Allen has graciously served as Parochial Administrator since 2019.

The canonical appeals process in Rome recently concluded with a finding by the Holy See that Bishop Jugis' removal of Father Hoare as pastor was in accord with canon law. As a result, I will be appointing a new pastor of St. Matthew when priest assignments are finalized in the coming days.

At Bishop Jugis' request, the LRB in 2020 evaluated three complaints against Father Hoare of boundary issues with minors that were reported to have been observed in group settings at St. Matthew and St. John Neumann parishes. The complaints involved a hug, rubbing the shoulders or abdomen of a minor, and being "very touchy." The LRB recommended that Father Hoare remain out of ministry until he underwent an assessment and education program to address any issues identified. Since that time, Father Hoare has been engaged in this process as recommended.

As part of its scope, the LRB also examined two allegations against Father Hoare that were said to have occurred 25 years earlier in Pennsylvania, before he became a priest. Father Hoare denies those claims, both of which involved accusations of acts of inappropriate behavior with relatives when he was in his teens or early 20s. The LRB concluded that while some of those claims appeared credible, the precise ages of those involved could not confidently be ascertained based on the evidence presented to the LRB and recollections of people's ages and events decades earlier. Pennsylvania authorities also investigated the abuse claims in 2020 and reported to the diocese that they were unable to pursue charges.

I am aware that this process has been long and difficult for many. However, the faithful can be confident that in matters involving the welfare of minors we do not take shortcuts or risks. For this reason, in considering how Father Hoare might best serve the diocese in the future, I will take into consideration Father Hoare's satisfactory completion of the recommended assessment and training, along with consultation with diocesan leaders and the LRB.

In closing, I want to thank parishioners, clergy and lay leaders of St. Matthew for your commitment to living and deepening your faith, and to building your community as this matter moved to resolution. I am equally committed to appointing a pastor who will inspire and support you, as we open a new chapter at St. Matthew. Please keep everyone involved in this matter in your prayers and know that you all remain in mine.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "+ Michael T. Martin, OFM Conv.", is written over a red circular stamp.

Most Reverend Michael T. Martin, OFM Conv.  
Bishop of Charlotte

