

Diocese of Jackson

Statement on Fr. Arnulfo Arandia

June 10, 2002

In legal proceedings underway in Dade County, Florida, Kenneth Matias alleges that he was sexually abused by Father Arnulfo Arandia in December 1988. The first knowledge that the Diocese of Jackson had of any allegation of misconduct against Fr. Arandia was when we were notified by a reporter of the Sun Sentinel, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, of the filing of the suit in Dade County, Friday June 7th.

Fr. Arandia, a priest of the Archdiocese of Guayaquil, Ecuador, came to the Jackson Diocese in November 2000. He was appointed to Hispanic Ministry within the diocese in January 2001 and has occupied that position until the present. The Diocese of Jackson's Policy Against Sexual Misconduct With a Minor By Clergy Or Religious covers investigations of abuse of minors even if the report is made years after the alleged conduct occurs. Currently, the diocese is cooperating fully with the Archdiocese of Miami in the investigation concerning Fr. Arandia's alleged misconduct. Fr. Arandia has been suspended from priestly activities by Bishop William Houck of Jackson, pending the outcome of this investigation in Florida.

Since January 1, 1994, the Diocese of Jackson has had a policy in place that requires investigating current and past allegations of sexual misconduct by priests and religious. Sexual misconduct by church personnel violates human dignity and the mission of the Church. The Diocese of Jackson is committed to ensuring that children being served by the Church are not at risk of sexual abuse by Church personnel. The spiritual well-being of all victims, their families, and others in the community is of particular concern to the Diocese of Jackson. In accordance with our policy, we will cooperate with the investigation undertaken by the Archdiocese of Miami.