



Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

September 12, 2018

STATEMENT BY THE ARCHDIOCESE OF GALVESTON-HOUSTON

In 2001, a then-16 year old girl and her family notified this Archdiocese that Fr. Manuel La Rosa-Lopez had kissed and touched her inappropriately when he was assigned as Parochial Vicar at Sacred Heart in Conroe. We immediately referred this information to Children's Protective Services for further investigation. Father La Rosa-Lopez denied touching the girl inappropriately, and the girl's family decided not to pursue the matter, relocating out of the country that same year. After an internal review, including presentation of the above allegations to the newly founded Archdiocesan Review Board in 2003, Father La Rosa-Lopez was permitted to return to parish ministry in 2004.

Following her return to the U.S., the Archdiocese, in accordance with our commitment to provide pastoral outreach, provided the young woman with counseling services for a period of time, until she decided to discontinue her therapy.

For the last 17 years, no other allegations of inappropriate conduct involving minors were presented against Father La Rosa-Lopez until 2018.

During an interview in Houston on August 10, 2018, a 36 year old man formally presented an allegation to the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston stating that Fr. Manuel La Rosa-Lopez sexually abused him from 1998 through 2001, when he was a high school student and Father La Rosa-Lopez was still assigned at Sacred Heart in Conroe. The Archdiocese immediately reported this allegation to Children's Protective Services as well. Father La Rosa-Lopez has denied these allegations of sexual abuse.

Yesterday, the district attorney of Montgomery County issued an arrest warrant for Father La Rosa-Lopez, which we understand is the result of the above reports. Father La Rosa-Lopez voluntarily turned himself into the Conroe Police Department last evening.

We take these matters very seriously, which is why we reported the information we received from both individuals to CPS – and removed Father La Rosa-Lopez from ministry. We are pledged to cooperate with the civil authorities in their investigation.

The Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston recognizes it clearly has both a legal and a moral obligation to address any incidence of abuse — sexual or otherwise — to God's children. Such behavior simply will not be tolerated. To anyone affected by any form of abuse by anyone who represents the Church, the Archdiocese deeply regrets such a fundamental violation of trust, and commits itself to eliminating such unacceptable actions.

END