



St. Thomas the Apostle

Chaldean Catholic Diocese of the U.S.A.

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Regarding Chaldean Church Worker Found Guilty of Child Sexual Abuse

From the Most Reverend Francis Y. Kalabat, Bishop | Issued August 29, 2019

On August 29, 2019, Hurmiz Risko Ishak, who had been the sacristan since 1997 at St. Joseph Chaldean Church in Troy, Michigan, was found guilty in Oakland County Circuit Court on one count of third-degree criminal sexual conduct. He was arrested immediately and taken into court custody. He is scheduled for sentencing on September 27, 2019.

The allegation against Hurmiz, 66, also known as Najib, was brought to the attention of the eparchy in October 2018. In honoring civil law, as well as prescriptions in Canon (Church) Law and under the norms and ground rules of the [Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People](#), Hurmiz was immediately reported to the authorities and removed from his position as a sacristan.

As a sacristan, Hurmiz's duties included opening and closing the church daily and preparing the church for all the liturgies. He also served as a subdeacon, assisting in Masses, weddings, baptisms, and funerals. Despite some media outlets reporting him as a "deacon," Hurmiz was not. A subdeacon (acolyte) in the Chaldean Church is not an ordained minister and is not allowed to perform any of the sacraments.

As Bishop of St. Thomas Chaldean Eparchy, I am deeply saddened that this abuse took place, and furthermore that it happened on Church grounds. I am truly pained by the horrific abuse and suffering inflicted on the victim and the families involved. I understand this has had a detrimental effect on our entire community. My prayers today are with all those who were impacted by this crisis and I ask for all of you to please pray for the peace and healing of both families involved.

As painful as this situation is, I am pleased that truth and justice have prevailed. I commend the brave efforts of the victim, the pastor, and associate pastors of St. Joseph Chaldean Church for immediately reporting the allegation to law enforcement. I also would like to thank the Troy Police Department, the prosecutor's office, and all civil authorities for their diligent work on this case.

We the Catholic Church have been given the mission to provide outreach, healing, and peace to victims and their families. We take the responsibility and duty in maintaining a safe environment for our children very seriously. I want to encourage all parents to take active roles in educating and safeguarding their children. As your Bishop, I will continue to do everything in my power to ensure the safety of all people within our church, especially our children and vulnerable adults.

I encourage any person who has been abused in the past or present and/or has knowledge of sexual abuse by clergy or other Church representatives, to contact local law enforcement and/or the Michigan Attorney General's Office at (844) 324-3374 or aginvestigations@michigan.gov. I also invite any person with knowledge of sexual abuse to come forth and meet with me personally or to call our confidential victim assistance line at (248) 354-3066. There are no time limits or restrictions on individuals wishing to report abuse.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Francis Y. Kalabat
Bishop of St. Thomas the Apostle
Chaldean Catholic Eparchy, U.S.A