



March 8, 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

During this challenging time in the life of your parish, I write to provide you with some updates. I also assure you that everyone who has been affected by recent events in your parish has been and remains in my daily prayers.

Following procedures that respect confidentiality and due process for all affected parties, our Diocese continues to review a number of issues that have been brought to our attention. This process needs to be thorough and requires significant time in light of the seriousness of the issues.

Allow me to begin with an update regarding Father Escalante. Father has recently made a decision to take time for further prayer and reflection at this moment in his life. At this time, neither he nor I can predict exactly when he will return to public priestly ministry. No matter how long that might take, I will ensure that both the long- and short-term pastoral needs of the parish will be met.

I am aware and sincerely regret that there have been tensions and even division among parishioners as a result of the circumstances of Father Escalante's absence. Please remember that due to confidentiality and respect for the process, it is not possible to provide you with specific information and all the details related to these issues. In a spirit of Christian charity, I ask that everyone refrain from conjecture and judgments, as such judgments would be made without all of the necessary facts. Instead, please treat one another with dignity and respect and ask God to grant you the patience and perseverance that are required at this time.

Please know that I join you in thanking Monsignor Cregan for his service to your parish. Let us continue to pray for him and one another.

It is my hope and prayer that this sacred season of Lent will be a source of peace, consolation and abundant spiritual gifts for you, your families and your parish community.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge
Bishop of Arlington