



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

## DECREE

In the name of God.

WHEREAS, in May 2019, I opened a preliminary investigation into an allegation made against the **Reverend Joe Townsend** ("Fr. Townsend") concerning a possible violation of *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*, art. 4., that is, the sexual abuse of a minor below the age of eighteen years; and

WHEREAS, the investigation has been sufficiently conducted to enable me to make a prudent and objective evaluation regarding the matter;

THEREFORE, I hereby decree and declare, in conformity with the norm of law (*CIC*, c. 1718), the conclusion of the preliminary investigation. Having weighed the elements gathered by the duly appointed third-party investigators, along with their own professional opinion on the matter, and having consulted legal counsel and others possessing expertise concerning the issue at hand, including the Diocesan Review Board (USCCB *Essential Norms* n. 4a), I find and declare that the allegation made against Fr. Townsend is unsubstantiated.

As the preliminary investigation has come to a conclusion, the documents, proofs, and decrees of this preliminary investigation are to be maintained in accord with the provisions of ecclesiastical law (*CIC*, c. 1719).

Furthermore, it is my intent, as the Bishop of Tulsa, to utilize all reasonable means to restore the good name of Fr. Townsend, should it have been unjustifiably harmed due to the accusations made against him or the subsequent investigation into those allegations (USCCB *Essential Norms* n. 13). Such means may include the publication of this Decree in an appropriate manner and place.

A petition for revocation or emendation of this Decree may be made to its author, the Bishop of Tulsa, by one legitimately capable of doing so within the peremptory time period of ten (10) useful days. Recourse is subject to the applicable canons (*CIC*, cc. 1732-1739).

Given at the Chancery on the 27th of November, 2019, the Wednesday of the Thirty-Fourth Week of Ordinary Time.

The Most Rev. David A. Konderla  
Bishop of the Diocese of Tulsa

Harrison Garlick  
Chancellor & In-House Counsel