



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON
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STATEMENT OF THE DIOCESE OF SCRANTON REGARDING THE INVESTIGATION INTO MONSIGNOR WALTER ROSSI

In August 2019, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of the Diocese of Scranton, announced an investigation of allegations of personal misconduct on the part of Monsignor Walter Rossi, Rector of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Monsignor Rossi was ordained to the priesthood in the Diocese of Scranton in 1987 and remains incardinated in the Diocese of Scranton at this time. Since 2005, he has served as Rector of the Basilica.

The investigation of allegations of personal misconduct was led by outside counsel assisted by a retired FBI agent with over thirty years of investigative experience. The investigation included interviews with numerous witnesses who have known Monsignor Rossi throughout his years in ministry. These witnesses included current and former Basilica employees, former CUA students, and current and former members of the clergy who were assigned to the Basilica or who worked with Monsignor Rossi.

Several witnesses were critical of Monsignor Rossi, including his managerial style at the Basilica, but none were aware of or could provide first-hand knowledge of sexual impropriety. By contrast, some of the witnesses merely re-stated unsupported and unsubstantiated rumors that previously appeared in certain publications. The investigator attempted unsuccessfully to interview many additional witnesses and searched diligently for witnesses who could possibly support the rumors against Monsignor Rossi, but found none. The investigator also tried to locate the unnamed "sources" for the critical articles, but could not.

The purpose of the Diocese's investigation was to seek out credible evidence of sexual impropriety and, if found, to determine an appropriate response. At the conclusion of its comprehensive investigation, the Diocese of Scranton found no such credible evidence.