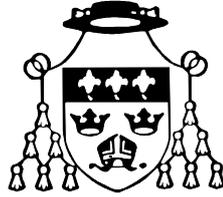


# DIOCESE OF EAST ANGLIA



## PRESS STATEMENT – SENTENCE OF REV. ANTHONY MCSWEENEY

### Statement by Bishop Alan Hopes

On 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015, the Rev. Anthony (Tony) McSweeney who served as a Catholic priest in the Parish of St George's, Norwich, Diocese of East Anglia, was sentenced to three years, following his convictions at Southwark Crown Court, London, on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

These are grave crimes, reflected by today's sentence. I wish to reiterate that I take the matter very seriously indeed and my thoughts and prayers are especially with the victims in this case, and all of those affected by the case. As a bishop and as an ordinary member of society, I share the experience of great sorrow and regret that such offences take place and I wish to assure the victims and their families that their suffering is taken seriously by the Church. I am firmly committed to observing those robust guidelines for the protection of children and vulnerable people that have been established in recent years, in line with the Nolan Report and more recently the Cumberlege Review. The Diocese of East Anglia takes its responsibilities with regards to safeguarding very seriously indeed and employs a professional and experienced Safeguarding Co-ordinator, who is supported by a Safeguarding Commission comprising professionals drawn from independent statutory bodies as well as from within the Catholic Church, within the field of safeguarding. The safeguarding policies of the Catholic Church are regularly reviewed and revised as safeguarding practice evolves.

All allegations are immediately reported to the police and any misconduct is dealt with strictly in line with the safeguarding procedures of the Catholic Church. The Diocese co-operates fully with the police in all cases and has co-operated fully with the police and statutory authorities throughout their investigations in this particular case. As I have said before, it is one of the fundamental duties of any society and institution to protect the most vulnerable.

Since the initial allegations of the offences were made and for which Fr. McSweeney has been convicted and sentenced, he has not exercised any active ministry in the Church. Now

that sentencing has taken place, the Church will begin her own disciplinary process which will reflect both the severity of the crimes committed; the sentence for those crimes and seek to ensure the protection of the vulnerable.

If anyone has any concerns at all relating to this matter, please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator, details of who can be found below.

Bishop Alan Hopes, Bishop of East Anglia

27<sup>th</sup> March 2015

## **Contacts**

### **Safeguarding Coordinator**

*Mr Michael Thurley; M: 07429 215344; E: Safeguarding.Coordinator@East-Angliadiocese.org.uk*

### **For Press enquiries**

*Rev. Padraig Hawkins; the White House, 21, Upgate, Poringland, Norwich, Norfolk, T: 01508 492202.*