



DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH  
THE BISHOP'S OFFICE



**Bishop Michael F. Olson's Statement to the Faithful of the Diocese of Fort Worth  
Regarding the Diocese of Scranton's letter about Reverend Christopher R. Clay**

November 19, 2024

The Diocese of Scranton has posted the following statement on its website regarding the Reverend Christopher R. Clay, who had recently celebrated Mass illicitly at the Arlington Carmel without permission or faculties from the Bishop of Scranton or from me, the Bishop of Fort Worth. He has previously been prohibited from the exercise of priestly ministry in the Diocese of Fort Worth, and that prohibition remains in effect, along with the further prohibition imposed upon him as articulated in the accompanying statement from the Diocese of Scranton.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

*+ Michael F. Olson*

Most Reverend Michael F. Olson, STD, MA  
Bishop of Fort Worth

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Statement of the Diocese of Scranton Regarding Reverend Christopher R. Clay**

(November 19, 2024) – On July 11, 2024, the Diocese of Scranton became aware that Reverend Christopher R. Clay, a priest of the Diocese of Scranton, was attempting to exercise priestly ministry in the Diocese of Fort Worth, Texas.

Until this point, the Diocese of Scranton had been unable to locate Father Clay, who has been unlawfully absent from this diocese since June 2004. In 2004, the Diocese of Scranton prohibited Father Clay from exercising priestly ministry after receiving a credible accusation of sexual assault of a minor against him.

To be clear, since 2004, Father Clay has been prohibited from celebrating any sacrament with any member of the Christian Faithful or anyone else. He has not possessed the faculties to preach the Word of God, hear confessions, and has been prohibited from wearing clerical attire or presenting himself as a priest.

On July 17, 2024, after learning that Father Clay attempted to exercise ministry in the Diocese of Fort Worth, the Diocese opened a new canonical investigation into a second credible accusation of sexual assault of a minor received through the Diocese of Scranton's 'Independent Survivors Compensation Program.'

As part of the formal decree opening this investigation, updated and stricter prohibitions have been imposed on Father Clay. While remaining absolutely forbidden to exercise priestly ministry in any capacity, and being forbidden to present himself as a priest or publicly participate in the celebration of the Most Holy Eucharist, Father Clay is now also prohibited from being present in the territory of the Diocese of Fort Worth, Texas.

Father Clay has been – and remains – on the public list of priests of the Diocese of Scranton who are credibly accused of sexual assault of minors.

At the conclusion of the investigation into the newest accusation against Father Clay, the Diocese of Scranton transmitted its findings to the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith at the Vatican, as required by canon law. The Diocese of Scranton will await further direction from the Holy See on how to proceed.

If anyone is aware that Father Clay is attempting to exercise priestly ministry in any capacity, they are requested to contact the Vicar General of the Diocese of Scranton, Reverend Gerald W. Shantillo, at (570) 207-2269.

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