



*Office of
the Bishop*

Catholic Pastoral Center
Diocese of El Paso

PRESS RELEASE

January 11, 2012

As Bishop and shepherd of the Diocese of El Paso, I have a pastoral duty to safeguard the resources of the diocese and each individual parish. This includes a fiduciary responsibility to hold accountable all those who manage the financial affairs of each parish, especially those in administration.

On September 20, 2011, Fr. Michael Rodriguez was removed as administrator of the parish of San Juan Bautista based on credible information and documents that show that he intentionally and materially failed to comply with the Manual of Policies and Procedures of Parish Finances of the Roman Catholic Diocese of El Paso. Fr. Rodriguez's handling and use of donated funds has compromised the financial integrity of San Juan Bautista. I have appealed repeatedly to Fr. Rodriguez to make a complete disclosure and a thorough accounting of his financial administration of the parish but refused to do so.

Due to the seriousness of Fr. Rodriguez's mishandling of funds and his failure to provide a complete accounting, I have had to resort to an extraordinary measure in order to protect the patrimony and restore the financial integrity of San Juan Bautista Parish. The purpose of the legal action that I have filed against Fr. Rodriguez and his brother David Rodriguez is to enable the Diocese of El Paso and the parish of San Juan Bautista, to perform an accurate accounting of the amounts and use of all donated funds and to recover any funds that have been misappropriated.

Fr. Rodriguez and those acting in concert with him, had no right to appropriate for themselves funds donated to the parish in a manner that violated the Manual of Policies and procedures of the Parish Finance of the Roman Catholic Diocese of El Paso. We are mere administrators of the Church's temporal goods and we all must be accountable for all things entrusted to us.

Most Rev. Armando X. Ochoa, DD