



*Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston*

*Office for Communications*

## **ARCHDIOCESE OF GALVESTON-HOUSTON**

### **Media Advisory**

For immediate release

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## **Archdiocesan Statement on Monsignor Frank Rossi**

The Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston categorically rejects the unprofessional, biased and one-sided reporting contained in today's Associated Press story headlined "The Reckoning." At each step in this matter, Cardinal DiNardo has reacted swiftly and justly — and has always kept the welfare of the Pontikeses in mind. A number of the quotes attributed to the Cardinal are an absolute fabrication.

After Mrs. Pontikes reported an inappropriate relationship with Monsignor Rossi to the Archdiocese on April 6th 2016, Cardinal DiNardo removed him from the parish less than a week later and then sent Monsignor Rossi on April 21 to a treatment center for an assessment. Upon his return to Houston, Monsignor Rossi formally resigned from the parish on May 6th. He then went to a rehabilitation program until early December.

At the request of the Pontikeses, the Archdiocese entered into a tolling agreement with them — which basically suspended the time limit during which the Pontikeses could file a lawsuit. There was later a mutual agreement to enter into a confidential mediation process, which is still ongoing.

On August 1, 2017, Laura Pontikes, accompanied by her psychologist, met with a representative of the Archdiocese and Laura made, among other requests, a demand for a \$10 million payment.

Monsignor Rossi completed his rehabilitation process and was recommended to be returned to active ministry by the professionals who assessed him. Cardinal DiNardo, at the request of the Pontikeses, agreed not to reassign Msgr Rossi in any capacity in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. He communicated this decision to the Pontikeses and Mr. Pontikes expressed his gratitude for that decision.

The Archdiocese will continue cooperating with the authorities looking into this matter.

*Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston serves 1.7 million Catholics in 10 counties.  
It is the largest Roman Catholic diocese in Texas and the 5th largest in the United States.*

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