



DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

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FINANCE

Memo

To: Pastors, Parochial Administrators, Parish Stewards, School Administrators
From: Glen Faulkner – Parish Security Coordinator
Date: June 3, 2024
Re: Phone call scam attempt

A parish in the Sacramento Diocese reported a telephone scam attempt last week.

The parish received what appeared to be an international call from a Spanish-speaking man who identified himself as “Father Alexander” calling from the human resources department of the “Roman Diocese of Sacramento.”

The caller asked who was in charge at the parish and said he was calling regarding a renewal fee that needed to be paid for the parish to continue to offer the sacraments.

This attempt was not successful. The parish’s phone system captured the incoming call number as 52-33-433-63206.

This is a variation of other scams attempted against parishes in our Diocese. Previous incidents have involved callers who claimed to be working for an international package delivery company that needed to deliver licenses that allow parishes to offer the sacraments or claiming to be priests working for other dioceses who were trying to arrange the delivery of these materials.

The details of these attempts differ slightly, but they continue to occur. These callers attempt to gain the confidence of parish staff by asking them to write down package or folio numbers and will sometimes indicate a sense of urgency to get compliance. These callers are frequently seeking credit card information from a parish, but they often ask for personal information such as cell phone numbers for the parish priest or even the parish employee who answered the call.

This information is valuable since suspects can use it to perpetrate other scams against parishioners by making their calls appear to originate from the parish priest or from office staff.

Calls from individuals seeking confidential information and/or claiming to involve the shipment of religious materials should be scrutinized. These calls may originate from international or out-of-state numbers but can also be spoofed to appear as if they are coming from a known and trusted party. If you are not certain of a caller’s identity, ask for the caller’s name and verify their identity by calling the caller’s organization using a published phone line or through a second method of communication like email.