

Garcia Pleads Guilty to Sexual Misconduct Charges in Williamson County Court

Juan Carlos Garcia, a former associate pastor at St. Philip Catholic Church in Franklin, pleaded guilty Monday in Williamson County Court to charges stemming from a 2024 indictment on multiple counts of sexual misconduct involving both minors and adults.

Garcia entered a plea to all the original charges. In making the plea, Garcia admitted his guilt, was sentenced to seven years at 100% in state prison, and will be listed on the Tennessee Sex Offender Registry. He also agreed not to contest laicization from the priesthood.

The charges, filed in February 2024, included one count of continuous sexual abuse of a child, one count of aggravated sexual battery, four counts of sexual battery by an authority figure, and two counts of sexual battery. The indictment followed an investigation initiated by the Franklin Police Department after the Diocese of Nashville contacted law enforcement in November 2023 with information received about alleged misconduct by Garcia.

A teen parishioner at St. Philip reported to church officials that Garcia had engaged in improper touching. The Diocese, following its Safe Environment Policy, promptly reported the incident to the Tennessee Department of Children's Services and retained a former FBI agent to conduct an internal investigation. Garcia was removed from active ministry and barred from public ministry pending the outcome of the criminal investigation. The Holy See (Vatican) has also remained informed and involved from the outset of this matter, directing the appropriate canonical processes.

The Diocese of Nashville's Review Board reviewed the findings and recommended Garcia's removal. The Diocese then provided the full investigative report and related materials to the Franklin Police Department. Garcia surrendered at the Williamson County Jail following the indictment. He has been held in the Williamson County Jail since his arrest.

Ordained in 2020, Garcia previously served as associate pastor at St. Rose of Lima Church in Murfreesboro before his 2022 assignment to St. Philip.

Throughout the process, the Diocese has stated it is fully cooperating with civil authorities and continues to offer victim assistance to those affected by abuse within the church's ministries. Individuals with relevant information have been urged to contact the Franklin Police Department.

Additional information on the Diocese's Safe Environment policies, reporting any suspected abuse to civil and Church authorities, and the victim assistance program is available at www.dioceseofnashville.com.