

Archdiocese of Baltimore warns consumers of check scam

Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien is warning Catholics and consumers at large about a fake check scam bearing the name of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

The scam involves fraudulent sweepstakes notices informing recipients they've won a cash prize resulting from various drawings. Attached to the notice is a check, which is billed as an advance on the recipient's "winnings." The letter requests that money be wire transferred to pay for taxes and fees.

"We are attempting to alert unsuspecting recipients of these letters not to act on them," said Archbishop O'Brien, who received notice of the scam from the Better Business Bureau of Greater Maryland and consumers across the country.

"Sadly, many of the people we've heard from have initially believed in the validity of the offer because the name of the Church is included," he said. "We are assuring people we are not involved and urging them to contact consumer protection agencies for further direction."

While the Better Business Bureau said that several variations on the scam are being employed, one involves the Archdiocese of Baltimore on the check attached to the fake sweepstakes notice.

Contact the Better Business Bureau of Greater Maryland at (410) 347-3990.