

# Statement on Fernando Cristancho

*October 31, 2008*

Fernando Cristancho was a priest of the Diocese of Istmina-Tado, Colombia. Cristancho's assignment in the Archdiocese was at St. Ignatius, Hickory, from 1999-2002. In July 2002, Cristancho refused an assignment to another parish from Cardinal William H. Keeler, then Archbishop of Baltimore, which led to the revocation of his faculties to minister in the Archdiocese of Baltimore on July 8, 2002.

On September 26, 2002, representatives of the Archdiocese met with the Catholic community at St. Ignatius for a town meeting. Further, Cardinal Keeler wrote to Cristancho's bishop in Colombia about the revocation of Cristancho's faculties and urged that Cristancho be permanently dismissed from the clerical state. Only the priest or his diocesan bishop may petition the Holy See for laicization.

Cristancho has had no assignment and has not been permitted to function as priest in the Archdiocese of Baltimore since July 2002. It was subsequent to the revocation of his faculties to function as a priest that the Archdiocese learned that Cristancho had fathered triplets with a woman through in-vitro fertilization, and much later that he was accused and found by a court to have sexually abused two of his children.

The Archdiocese of Baltimore is committed to the openness and transparency called for in the U.S. Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. We encourage anyone who has any knowledge of child sexual abuse to come forward, and to report it immediately to civil authorities. If clergy or other church personnel are suspected of committing the abuse, we ask that you also call the Archdiocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection Hotline at 1-866-417-7469.

In light of the court's finding of abuse, which the Archdiocese learned through media reports this week, the Archdiocese plans to issue statements in *The Catholic Review* and in the parish bulletin of St. Ignatius, Hickory.