

Report of the Diocesan Background Check Administrator

November 5, 2020

Saints Peter and Paul Church, South River, New Jersey

Your Eminence, Very Reverend and Reverend Fathers, brothers and sisters in Christ:
Glory to Jesus Christ!

For the last three years, our Diocese has been using Protect My Ministry (PMM) to complete background checks for clergy, church workers, ministry leaders, and volunteers. While the adoption process was slow, all parishes are now on board. Having worked with this system for some time, I see a number of advantages.

First, it removes an administrative burden from parish priests, who already have to account for all things great and small in their corner of the Kingdom. Having one contact person for the Diocese makes it easy to arrange for background checks and find out the results.

Second, PMM tracks changes to federal, state, and local laws that impact the background check process. Taking these laws into account, the system recommends the best possible background check given the current and previous residences of the applicant. None of us have to be legal scholars to get this right.

Third, keeping records and searching them for relevant information is easy, since they are stored securely on PMM's servers. Hard copies don't have to be mailed to the diocese in addition to being stored in the parish.

Finally, the system makes it easy to rescreen applicants whose background checks have expired. This is relevant now, as the checks that were done in 2017 are coming up for renewal.

I am grateful for my brother priests for so many things. In this respect, they have been diligent in sending along the names of new teachers, volunteers, and candidates for minor orders. They have shown themselves to be good judges of character, as the checks have not returned any criminal records.

May our Lord strengthen and encourage us to glorify Him in all things, even sorting out the "fine grain" of administrative tasks that call our attention away from the larger task of the care of souls.

With love in Christ,
Archpriest Leonid Schmidt