



Roman Catholic
Archdiocese of Newark

Office of Communications and Public Relations

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Serving in the Archdiocese
DATE: January 7, 2020
RE: Gift Card Scams Alert

We have heard of numerous and varied phone calls, emails, and text scams in recent months. In many instances, the scammers have stepped up their game, researching parish/school/clergy/staff information online (parish bulletins, websites, etc.), which then allow them to customize the scam to seem more legitimate.

As a periodic reminder, please beware of electronic messages that are seemingly from a parish or archdiocesan priest asking for money or gift cards because of some urgent need, such as helping patients in a hospital. These are fraudulent phishing and scam emails.

Please be assured that no priest of the Archdiocese would ever legitimately ask for funds or gifts in this way. You are encouraged not to respond to such messages and to report any incident to the New Jersey Cyber Crimes Unit.

Please alert your parish/school community that you never solicit via email or text messages and that they should view any such a communication/inquiry as suspicious and contact the parish/school office directly. Anyone who believes they are a victim of this type of scam should report the scam to the New Jersey Cyber Crimes Unit at (609) 584-5051, ext. 5664, or online at <https://www.njsp.org/division/investigations/cyber-crimes.shtml>

Following is a brief notice for use in your community's bulletin, newsletter, or email:

>GIFT CARD SCAM ALERT: Please beware of fraudulent emails or text messages claiming to be from a pastor or a representative of the archdiocese asking you to purchase gift cards to help the poor or sick. Such fraudulent activity should be reported to the State of New Jersey Cyber Crimes Unit at (609) 584-5051, ext. 5664, or online at www.njsp.org/division/investigations/cyber-crimes.shtml>. Please feel free to call the parish or school office to validate the authenticity of any suspicious email claiming to be from our priests or staff.

Thank you for your vigilance.