



FINANCE

DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

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Memo

To: Pastors, Parochial Administrators, Parish Stewards, School Administrators
From: Glen Faulkner – Parish Security Coordinator
Date: January 9, 2023
Re: Payroll scamming attempts

It seems as if the methods of stealing are limited only by a perpetrator's imagination.

Two parishes in the Sacramento Diocese were recently struck by thieves targeting payroll activities.

In one case, the Diocese Finance office received an email purportedly sent by a parish bookkeeper asking for specific payroll information for that parish. When contacted to verify details about the request, we learned that the person identified in the email as the sender never sent that message. Apparently the sender's email was hacked or was otherwise compromised and the email request for payroll information was likely an effort to acquire sensitive data for illegitimate purposes. Email accounts can be hacked via data breaches, phishing attempts, unsecured Wi-Fi networks, or through other efforts.

A second incident involved a parish office employee who received an email that was represented as originating from another employee of the same parish asking for the message "sender's" payroll check to be sent to a new direct deposit account. Closer examination revealed the sender's email domain was different from the real parish employee's legitimate email address.

Fortunately in both situations the thieves' efforts were not successful.

Particularly when responding to messages asking for sensitive or confidential information, please consider carefully checking the sender's email address against previous messages and personally verifying the message with the sender using a second method of validation (e.g. calling or speaking to the requester in person or by telephone).

More information about avoiding and reporting social engineering attacks like phishing and text message scams can be found at:

<https://www.scd.org/news/be-vigilant-social-engineering-email-phishing-and-text-message-scams>

I am also available if you have any questions (gfaulkner@scd.org / 916-733-0125).