

Pope Leo Ousts California Bishop Accused of Embezzling \$250,000 Amid Brothel Allegations

A shocking scandal involving a bishop in California is sending waves through the Catholic community and raising renewed concerns about integrity in spiritual leadership.

According to Reuters, Pope Leo has accepted the resignation of Bishop Emanuel Hana Shaleta, the leader of the Chaldean Catholic Eparchy of St. Peter the Apostle in San Diego, after he was arrested and accused of stealing approximately \$250,000 from his church. The move comes as Shaleta faces a growing list of criminal charges tied to alleged financial misconduct.

Shaleta had served the San Diego-based Chaldean Catholic community since 2017, shepherding a significant population of believers. Reuters reported that the region is home to roughly 71,000 Chaldean Catholics.

The allegations surfaced after a church employee reportedly noticed discrepancies in financial records and alerted authorities. As Reuters noted, the alleged misconduct occurred in 2024, eventually leading prosecutors to file 16 felony charges, including embezzlement and money laundering. Shaleta has pleaded not guilty to the charges.

The situation escalated when Shaleta was arrested on March 5 at San Diego International Airport while preparing to board an international flight.

According to Fox News, prosecutors believe rent payments connected to a church social hall may have played a key role in the alleged fraud. Authorities say the rent was paid to

Shaleta in cash, and he reportedly reimbursed the church using funds from another account intended to help individuals struggling to pay their rent.



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Fox News reported that the monthly payments were more than \$30,000, and investigators believe roughly \$272,000 in church funds are unaccounted for.

The Fox News report also noted that these charges come as Shaleta has been described as having a “secret double life,” including claims that Shaleta had traveled to areas associated with the red-light district in Tijuana, Mexico.

In recent years, the church has witnessed multiple high-profile failures among leaders across denominations. These moments can shake the faith of many, but they also highlight the urgent need for prayer, accountability and spiritual discernment within the body of Christ.

Scripture reminds believers in 1 Corinthians 10:12, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall.”

As more cases involving ministers and church leaders continue to surface, believers are called to pray for truth to come to light, for justice where wrongdoing has occurred and for restoration where repentance is possible. Just as importantly, the church must seek the Lord for discernment and integrity in leadership, asking God to raise up shepherds who will faithfully guard His people and steward His church with righteousness.

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