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SAO PAULO, Brazil — May 21, 2019
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Pope Francis accepted the resignation of Bishop Vilson Dias de Oliveira of Limeira.

The bishop is being investigated by authorities for extortion of priests, mismanagement of the diocese's funds and covering up alleged cases of abuse against minors by area priests. His resignation was announced May 17.

"I request my resignation for the sake of the church of Christ and for the good of this diocese," said the bishop in a statement read to parishioners.

"I take with me in my heart this learning, in the confidence and assurance that this work is from God, and I place myself at the disposal of the Holy Mother church to serve her no matter the place and ministry entrusted to me by God from now on," the bishop said.

According to the Sao Paulo state police, Oliveira took $975 from a local parish to build an artesian well in his beach house in Itanhaem. When faced with the accusation, the bishop confessed he obtained a "donation" from the parish and alleged he was facing financial problems.

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Local media reported that the bishop gave investigators documents confirming that, in the past four years, he purchased two properties on the coast of Sao Paulo state, worth more than $243,000.

The bishop, who has led the Limeira Diocese for the past 12 years, is also under investigation for possibly having helped cover up cases of sexual abuse committed by Fr. Pedro Leandro Ricardo, in the cities of Americana, Limeira and Araras.

Since February, several altar boys have accused Ricardo of sexual abuse. The priest has been suspended from his religious duties until further notice.

Pope Francis accepted Oliveira's resignation and designated Archbishop Orlando Brandes of Aparecida as a temporary replacement.