

Update on Father Joseph Bonafed

Bishop Edward C. Malesic of the Diocese of Greensburg announced today that the findings of a six-month canonical investigation determined that the allegations of child sexual abuse against Father Joseph E. Bonafed were not substantiated.

Father Bonafed was suspended from ministry on August 29, 2018 after the Diocese of Greensburg received an allegation of child sexual abuse dating back 28 years.

The District Attorney of Westmoreland County declined to press charges against Father Bonafed. Once the District Attorney announced the conclusion of his investigation, the Diocese of Greensburg began an extensive canonical investigation – which is essentially a review of conduct based on Church Law, also known as Canon Law.

An existing Diocesan Review Board heard details of the Canonical Investigation with regard to child sexual abuse and advised the Bishop that the allegations were not substantiated. This group of advisors includes lay experts and one member of the clergy. Since 2002, Diocesan Review Boards have been required of every Diocese by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People."

An independent group of investigators spent six months gathering information to present to the Diocesan Review Board. In the course of the investigation into child sexual abuse allegations, allegations relating to inappropriate conduct in the workplace, in violation of the Diocesan Pastoral Code of Conduct, were reported and investigated.

Bishop Malesic often models a process of receiving consultation from clergy and lay people before making decisions regarding a cleric's suitability for any type of ministry. Therefore, details of the investigation were presented to two other independent boards. One is comprised of lay experts including a law enforcement officer, a human resources manager and a clinical psychologist whose task is to advise the Bishop on Pastoral Code of Conduct cases; the other the Priest Personnel Board, comprised of clergy from the Diocese, which advises the Bishop on the assignments of priests and deacons.

Each gave recommendations to the Bishop on the matter of Father Bonafed's inappropriate conduct in the workplace. Independently, they unanimously recommended to Bishop Malesic that Father Bonafed not resume pastoral ministry.

After a discussion with Father Bonafed and his canonical advocate, Father Bonafed freely resigned his pastorates at Saint Edward's Parish in Herminie and Holy Family Parish in West Newton, and will be taking a leave of absence.