



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Diocesan statement on sentence in Thomas case

GREEN BAY, Wis. (Oct. 28, 2016) – The Diocese of Green Bay learned today of the sentence handed down in the case involving Father Richard Thomas, a diocesan priest.

As a diocese, we are saddened by this situation. We are also very grateful to the person who came forward to report the allegations and to civil authorities for their work on the case. Upon receiving the report of misconduct on the part of Father Thomas, the diocese notified civil authorities and their investigation began. Following the policies of the Diocesan Code of Pastoral Conduct, Father Thomas, a senior (retired) priest, is restricted from performing any public ministry.

The Diocese asks for prayers for all involved in this matter.

The Diocese remains committed to the protection of children and vulnerable adults. Its policies include permanently removing from ministry any clergy who have a substantiated allegation of abuse of a minor against them. In addition, the Diocese requires all clergy, employees, and volunteers in all parishes, schools and diocesan offices to complete mandatory background checks and training on keeping children safe. Since 2003, 35,284 background checks have been completed and 37,054 people have completed the “VIRTUS – Protecting God’s Children” program. (Data reported July 2016)

If you know of an incident of sexual abuse of a person who is now under the age of 18 by a priest, deacon, employee or volunteer, please immediately call the civil authorities and then the diocese.

If the person was abused as a minor but is now an adult, please contact:

Jayne Stefanic
Diocesan Assistance Coordinator
Catholic Diocese of Green Bay
P.O. Box 23825
Green Bay, WI 54305-3825
Telephone: 1-877-270-8174 or 920-272-8174
E-mail: jstefanic@gbdioc.org

We always encourage you to report the incident to local civil authorities. More information is available on the Diocese’s website (www.gbdioc.org) under the title “Protecting Our Children.”

###

Who we are: As friends and followers of Jesus, the Catholic Diocese of Green Bay is devoted to fostering households and communities of discipleship through the mission and ministry of the Catholic Church. We are missionary disciples striving to lead all people to the Kingdom of God. Established in 1868, the diocese is composed of 324,000 Catholics in 16 counties: Brown, Calumet, Door, Florence, Forest, Kewaunee, Langlade, Manitowoc, Marinette, Menominee, Oconto, Outagamie, Shawano, Waupaca, Waushara and Winnebago.

Contact: Justine Lodi, director of communications, at 920-272-8213 or jlodi@gbdioc.org; or Sarah Bradford, communications coordinator, at 920-272-8209 or sbradford@gbdioc.org.