



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement from Diocese of Green Bay relating to Father Werner

GREEN BAY, Wis. (June 15, 2013) – On April 20, the Diocese of Green Bay released a statement saying that it had received an allegation of abuse of a minor against Father Justin N. Werner, a senior (retired) priest. In following the Policies of Appropriate Conduct of the Diocese, Father Werner was temporarily restricted from performing any public ministry pending the outcome of an investigation by an independent professional investigator.

The independent investigator has concluded the allegation against Father Justin Werner is unsubstantiated. Thus, the restrictions of Fr. Werner's ministry have been lifted by Bishop David L. Ricken.

At the same time, we as a diocese must be diligent in our due process to ensure the safety of our children and to advocate on behalf of victims/survivors. Therefore, the investigation regarding the allegation of abuse from the 1970's continues.

We regret the pain and suffering that Fr. Werner and all those involved had to experience during this investigation. We ask for prayers for all victims/survivors of clergy sex abuse, the person who brought forth the allegation and for Fr. Werner.

Diocesan policies for keeping children safe are and will continue to be rigorous. The policies include:

- Mandated background checks and abuse prevention training of all staff and volunteers in our parishes, schools and diocesan offices (approximately 26,000 people)
- Barring from ministry any clergy who have a credible allegation of abuse of a minor against them
- Mandatory reporting of all credible allegations of abuse to local law enforcement authorities. This has ensured that due process within our legal system takes place. Year after year, the Diocese has demonstrated its compliance with its policies, with national standards, and adherence to state law.

More information is available on the diocese's website (www.gbdioc.org) under the section titled "Protecting Our Children."

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Who we are: The Catholic Diocese of Green Bay works to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ by helping people in need and by providing academic, leadership and spiritual formation opportunities to parish and school leaders. 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.

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