



July 25, 2002 - Statement of Reverend Christopher J. Coyne, Spokesman, Archdiocese of Boston Concerning Fr. LaVoie

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The Archdiocese of Boston in accordance with its policy for handling an allegation of sexual misconduct with a minor by a member of the clergy today placed Reverend Victor LaVoie, Pastor of Saint Eulalia Parish in Winchester, Massachusetts on administrative leave and removed him from all assignments pending further review of an allegation made against him. This policy calls for a thorough investigation by the Delegate's Office and notification to proper legal authorities in cases such as this.

The allegation made against Father LaVoie was recently reported for the first time to the Archdiocese of Boston regarding an incident that occurred over twenty years ago. Following the policy it was determined that the allegation had enough substance to warrant further investigation by the Archdiocese of Boston and met the criteria to place Father LaVoie on administrative leave.

The first priority of the Archdiocese of Boston is the protection of children. The rights of the victim and the accused priest are to be respected and any action taken in the course of an investigation should not be construed as implication of guilt of the accused cleric. Our obligation as representatives of the Church and as a community, legally and morally, is to fully investigate all past allegations of abuse of a minor. Until the resolution of the investigation by representatives of the Church and by the proper authorities is complete, Father LaVoie will continue to receive his salary and medical benefits but he will not have permission to perform any public ministry in the Church. If the allegation proves to be groundless, efforts will be made to restore the priest's reputation.

Representatives of the Archdiocese of Boston have met with the parish staff of Saint Eulalia. Efforts are at present being made to inform the people of the parish regarding this situation. Bishop Irwin, Regional Bishop-North Region of the Archdiocese of Boston, will be present at the weekend Masses to inform parishioners and provide assistance during this difficult time for the parish community. A clinical social worker will also be available to provide assistance at the parish at the Masses.

Our prayers are with victims and their families, the faithful of the Archdiocese, and all those who have been effected by instances of child abuse by members of the clergy.

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