



October 14, 2002 - Statement of Donna M. Morrissey, Spokeswoman, Archdiocese of Boston

The Archdiocese of Boston announces in accordance with its policy for handling allegations of sexual misconduct with minors by members of the clergy today placed Father Roger N. Jacques, Pastor of Saint Joseph Parish in Waltham, 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 our agreement with civil authorities calls for notification to the Attorney General’s office within forty-eight hours in cases such as this.

The complaint made against Father Jacques was recently reported for the first time to the Archdiocese of Boston regarding allegations that would have occurred approximately twenty years ago. Pastoral and counseling support has been offered to both the person making the allegation and the accused priest.

The first priority of the Archdiocese of Boston is the protection of children. Any action taken in the course of an investigation should not be construed as implication of guilt against the accused cleric.

Our obligation as representatives of the Church and as a community, legally and morally, is to fully investigate all 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 Jacques will receive a salary and medical benefits but he will not have permission to perform any public ministry in the Church. As in all cases, efforts are made to respect the rights of all parties and, to the best of our ability, to maintain their reputations. Should the allegation be proven groundless we will do all we can to restore the priest’s reputation.

Representatives of the Archdiocese of Boston have met with the parish staff of Saint Joseph Parish. Efforts are at present being made to inform the people of the parish regarding this situation. Bishop Richard G. Lennon, Regional Bishop of the West Region, along with other Archdiocesan pastoral support representatives and clinical social workers will be present at the weekend Masses to inform parishioners and to be present to the parish community.

Our prayers continue to be with victims and their families, the faithful of the Archdiocese, the priests, deacons, men and women religious, and all those who have been affected by instances of child abuse by members of the clergy.

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