



Diocese of Madison

702 S. High Point Rd.
Madison, WI 53719
Phone (608) 821-3033

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For Immediate Release

Brent King

Director of Communications

Diocesan Statement Regarding Retired Priest's Arrest and Court Appearance; Accusations of Sexual Abuse of a Minor

(Madison) Diocese of Madison offers the following brief statement, regarding the recent arrest and initial appearance in court of a retired priest of the diocese, Fr. William Nolan:

The diocese recently learned that Fr. William Nolan (64) was arrested by the Fort Atkinson police, with charges pending. Today, we were informed that he has been charged with six counts of second-degree sexual assault of a minor (under the age of 16), as documented in the formal criminal complaint, filed today in Jefferson County Circuit Court.

Upon learning of his arrest and pending charges a diocesan representative contacted the Fort Atkinson police assuring them of our full cooperation. Simultaneously, and although Fr. Nolan has been retired since 2007 and does not hold any ecclesiastical office or function, Bishop Morlino placed him on what is commonly called "administrative leave," as required by the Essential Norms in force in the dioceses of the USA. This includes a total exclusion from any exercise of priestly ministry while the matter is pending. The diocese also began its own canonical process of investigating these allegations, and the diocesan Sexual Abuse Review Board was engaged.

Fr. Nolan retired from full-time ministry in the diocese in 2007, at his request. His last assignment was as pastor of St. Joseph Parish, Fort Atkinson, from 2002-2007. This is when and where the allegations being investigated are claimed to have taken place. They were brought directly to the civil authorities in Fort Atkinson and were only shared with Church officials as Fr. Nolan's arrest was set in motion. This is the very first the diocese has heard of these accusations.

Previously Fr. Nolan had served at parishes in Cambridge, Janesville, Watertown, and Madison. Until the current allegations, the diocese had received no allegations of misconduct connected to any of his assignments.

The Diocese of Madison has no further information or comment to share regarding these allegations at this time. As previously stated, we will cooperate fully with those investigating the allegations and desire to allow the legal process to run its course.

We appeal to all to cooperate and respect the legal proceedings and for prayers for all affected by these very serious charges.

As always, any allegation of sexual misconduct should be brought to the attention of law enforcement officials. If allegations involve priests, deacons, or other Church personnel, regardless of when they are said to have occurred, they should also be reported to the Diocese of Madison, by way of the Sexual Misconduct Question and Reporting Line, 608-821-3162. The diocesan policies regarding sexual abuse allegations, and instructions for making a report of sexual misconduct, are available on the diocesan website: madisondiocese.org/safe-environment.

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