



Diocese of Madison

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Update: Diocese determines allegation against Rev. Patrick Doherty credible

MADISON — Agreeing with the findings of Diocesan Sexual Abuse Review Board, Bishop Donald Hying has determined that an allegation of sexual abuse brought against Rev. Patrick Doherty has the semblance of truth. As such, Rev. Doherty (85), who has been out of ministry since 1993, will be placed on the diocese's list of those priests (or former priests), determined to have been credibly accused of acts of sexual abuse against minors.

The allegation against Rev. Doherty arose after a full diocesan review of all clergy personnel files was announced last year. Rev. Doherty's accuser, who does not wish to be named, asserts that the abuse occurred over forty years ago. Rev. Doherty has been without the faculties to function as a priest since 1993, owing to publically-known struggles with alcoholism and reported disreputable behaviors with adult men. Bishop Hying, has now reinforced previously applied restrictions on Rev. Doherty, who is not to present himself for ministry as a priest, and, in accord with Church law, Bishop Hying has forwarded the case for review and consideration of further action at the level of the Vatican.

Prior to ceasing his ministry, Rev. Doherty had worked in a number of smaller parishes along the Wisconsin River, including the linked parishes of St. Barnabas, Mazomanie and St. John the Baptist, Mill Creek; St. John, Patch Grove and St. Lawrence O'Toole, Mt. Hope; as well as Immaculate Conception, Boscobel; and St. Luke, Plain. He also served at the now-merged St. Michael, Berlin, at St. Patrick in Janesville, and briefly at St. Joseph, Ft. Atkinson.

Diocese of Madison officials have notified civil and ecclesiastical authorities of this finding, both in the place of the reported crime and in the place of Rev. Doherty's current residence.

This media release follows upon previous releases of June 11, 2019, September 3, 2019, and September 14, 2019, updating the larger community (Catholic and non-Catholic) about the comprehensive review of sexual abuse allegations against clergy of the Diocese of Madison. Presently, any diocesan priests who have had even one credible allegation brought against him have been listed on the diocesan website, for the public's information.

As was mentioned in those previous releases, there remains the Church's investigation into the matter of Fr. William A. Nolan, who has been acquitted of criminal charges by a jury in Jefferson County. The Church's investigation of the matter, which had been paused so as not to interfere with the criminal process, is expected to be concluded in the coming month. While Fr. Nolan remains on administrative leave, we emphasize again the presumption of innocence which he is due.

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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