



DIOCESE OF DAVENPORT

Department of Communication

News

For Immediate Release

DATE: May 23, 2013
FROM: Deacon David Montgomery
Diocese of Davenport

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RE: Fr. Harness reinstated as pastor of Holy Family Parish, Davenport

From Bishop Martin Amos, Bishop of Davenport:

Fr. Harness has been reinstated as pastor of Holy Family Parish in Davenport. After an extensive month-long investigation by Detective James Sweeney, Sweeney & Associates, the Diocese of Davenport Review Board advised me that Father Harness should be restored to ministry. Father Harness will resume his ministry immediately.

This press release is being sent to the media sources throughout the diocese to report the outcome of the investigation, but also in the hope of helping to restore the good character of Fr. Harness.

The incident that prompted the report occurred in approximately 1990. It was reported that Fr. Harness inappropriately touched a minor during a game that was played at a high school retreat. The game was played in full view of as many as 50 students and 10 adults. None of the witnesses observed nor has anyone else reported any inappropriate behavior by Father Harness.

The diocese reported the incident to the Scott County Attorney in compliance with the Memorandum of Understanding between the diocese and the County Attorney. The Scott County Attorney gave permission to the diocese to investigate the case.

My concern is to protect the rights of all those involved in this case. I must also comply with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Charter and Norms relating to the process to be followed and with the legal requirements mandated by the courts. While the investigation proceeded, the diocese was required to remove Fr. Harness from active ministry.

Part of the extensive investigative process is to ascertain whether there are additional people who have not yet reported incidents of abuse or misconduct. We have learned over a period of many years that some people cannot come forward unless someone has made a report before them. No other reports of inappropriate behavior have been received by the diocese regarding Fr. Harness.

This has been a painful process for everyone involved. I hope that in the end, the process that the diocese follows will restore the dignity of all those who have been harmed.

In order to protect the privacy of the reporter, the diocese declines to provide details about the report.

To report child sexual abuse

Contact the Iowa Department of Human Services Child Abuse Hotline: 800-362-2178

If the abuse involves clergy or church personnel, also notify

Alicia Owens, Victim Assistance Coordinator: 563-349-5002 | PO Box 232 Bettendorf, IA 52722-0004

vacdav@attglobal.net

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