



Diocese of Madison

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Update: Diocese offers findings on allegations against Rev. William A. Nolan

MADISON — Following a thorough investigation and subsequent recommendation by the Diocese's Sexual Abuse Review Board, the Diocese of Madison now announces Bishop Donald Hying's determination that previously announced allegations of sexual misconduct made against Rev. William A. Nolan are deemed not to be credible.

In May 2018, two separate allegations of sexual misconduct against Fr. Nolan were brought forward and made public: one involving a man who claimed abuse from the time he was twelve or thirteen years old, until he was seventeen or eighteen (2006-2011), another involving a single incident with a man when he was twenty-one years old (2012). Upon receiving the allegations, Bishop Robert Morlino immediately excluded Fr. Nolan from sacred ministry and pledged cooperation with local law enforcement. In order to avoid impeding the work of law enforcement, the bishop postponed further canonical investigations into the alleged misconduct until all criminal investigations had concluded.

In early June 2018, the Janesville Police Department informed officials of the Diocese of Madison that it would not be pursuing any criminal investigation against Fr. Nolan concerning the alleged incident in 2012. However, regarding the alleged incidents from 2006-2011, the Jefferson County District Attorney charged Fr. Nolan with six counts of sexual assault of a child. On July 12, 2018, Fr. Nolan entered a plea of not guilty and his case proceeded to a full jury trial.

On September 12, 2019, Judge William F. Hue dismissed one of the six counts, and on September 13, 2019, Fr. Nolan was acquitted on all of the five remaining counts.

Upon the completion of the criminal trial, the Church's canonical investigation into the allegations commenced. The diocesan investigator collected materials from the criminal trial, police files, diocesan files, and also conducted additional interviews.

On January 7th and again on February 18, 2019, the diocesan investigator presented all materials to the Diocesan Sexual Abuse Review Board – comprised of five lay experts from the judicial, psychological, and law enforcement fields, as well as one diocesan priest. Thereafter, the materials were presented separately to Bishop Donald Hying, along with the review board's unanimous finding that based on all available evidence and certain significant inconsistencies – including impossibilities involving timing and location in one of the allegations - there is no credible basis for either of the allegations brought against Fr. Nolan.

Today, Bishop Donald Hying makes clear publically his assessment, in total agreement with the review board, that the allegations of sexual abuse made against Fr. Nolan are not credible. In the coming days Fr. Nolan will be reinstated to his previous status as a retired priest of the Diocese of Madison in good standing. Diocesan leadership has stated clearly and consistently the presumption of innocence which was to be afforded Fr. Nolan since the time allegations first emerged. At this time, Bishop Hying emphasizes once again the presumption of innocence and right to a good name owed to Fr. Nolan – particularly in light of

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his complete acquittal in all criminal charges facing him and the lack of credible evidence to support allegations against him.

Although Fr. Nolan will have regained his faculties to minister publicly as a priest, as per the norm for retired priests in the Diocese of Madison, he will not have any parish assignment. Further, Fr. Nolan has determined that he will not undertake any public ministry in a parish setting.

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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